

**William Shakespeare's
38 Plays:
Retellings in Prose**

By David Bruce

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SMASHWORDS EDITION

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COMEDIES

Chapter I: ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*All's Well That Ends Well*)

Male Characters

King of France.

Duke of Florence.

Bertram, Count of Rousillon.

Lafeu, an old Lord.

Parolles, a follower of Bertram.

Rinaldo, a Steward.

Lavache, a Professional Fool.

Female Characters

Countess of Rousillon, Mother to Bertram.

Helena, daughter to Gerard de Narbon, a famous physician,
some time since dead.

An old Widow of Florence.

Diana, daughter to the Widow.

Mariana, neighbor and friend to the Widow.

Minor Characters

Several young French Lords, serving with Bertram in the
Florentine wars.

Lords attending on the King, Officers, Soldiers, etc.

Scene

Partly in France and partly in Tuscany.

Rousillon is in the south of France.

CHAPTER 1 (All's Well That Ends Well)

— 1.1 —

A number of people spoke together in the palace of Bertram, the Count of Rousillon: Bertram; his mother, the Countess of Rousillon; Helena, her ward; and Lafeu, an elderly lord.

The Countess said, “In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.”

She was delivering her son to the King of France. Her husband, who was her son’s father, had died, and her son had become the King of France’s ward. Now her son, Bertram, was going to the court of the King of France. The Countess was saying that by allowing her son to go to the King’s court, her grief at being separated from her son was such that it was like she was burying a second husband.

Bertram said to her, “And I in going, madam, weep anew over my father’s death, but I must pay heed to his majesty’s command, whose ward I am now and to whom I am evermore in subjection.”

Lafeu said, “You shall find of the King a husband, aka a protector, madam; you, Bertram, sir, shall find of the King a father. This King who is to all men and at all times good must of necessity maintain his virtue in his dealings with you. Your worthiness is such that it would stir virtue up where it was lacking rather than lack virtue where there is such abundance.”

“What hope is there of his majesty’s health being restored?” the Countess asked.

“He has abandoned his physicians, madam,” Lafeu said. “Under their medical practices he has made his life

miserable with hope; he has stayed alive and suffered pain in the hope of finding a cure, but now he finds no advantage in the process except only the losing of hope by time. Time passed, and now he has lost all hope of recovering his health.”

The Countess said, “This young gentlewoman, Helena, had a father — oh, that word ‘had’! How sad a passage, both a turn of phrase and a way to the next life, it is! — whose skill as a physician was almost as great as his honesty. Had his skill stretched as far as his honesty, it would have made nature immortal, and the god of death would have lots of time for play because of lack of work. I wish, for the King’s sake, her father the physician was still living! I think it would be the death of the King’s disease.”

“What is the name of the man you speak of, madam?” Lafeu asked.

“He was famous, sir, in his profession, and it was his great right to be so: Gerard de Narbon,” the Countess replied.

“He was excellent indeed, madam,” Lafeu said. “The King very recently spoke of him admiringly and mournfully. Her father the physician was skillful enough to be alive forever, if knowledge could be set up against human mortality.”

“What is it, my good lord, the King languishes of?” Bertram asked.

“A fistula, my lord,” Lafeu replied.

A fistula is an ulcerous sore.

“I had not heard about it before,” Bertram said.

“I wish that it were not widely known,” Lafeu replied.

He then asked the Countess, “Was this gentlewoman here — Helena — the daughter of Gerard de Narbon?”

The Countess replied, “She was his sole child, my lord, and she is bequeathed to my guardianship — she is now my ward. I have high hopes for her. Her education and upbringing promise good things, as do the mental qualities she inherited. These things make fair gifts fairer; for where an unclean character carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity. They are virtues and traitors, too.”

Think of thieves. We prefer that thieves be stupid so that they are easily caught. We do not want thieves to have good qualities such as bravery and intelligence because the good qualities make the thieves more competent and successful at committing evil. Instead, we prefer that people of good character have good qualities.

The Countess continued, “Helena’s good qualities are the better for their innocence; she was born with a clean mind and she works hard to achieve a good character.”

“Your commendations of her, madam, have caused her to cry tears,” Lafeu said.

“Salty tears are the best brine a maiden can preserve her praise in,” the Countess said. “The memory of her father never approaches her heart without the cruelty of her sorrows taking all vivacity from her cheeks.

“No more of this, Helena; please, no more, lest it be thought you affect — display — a sorrow rather than have”

The Countess’ own grief rose in her and she did not finish her sentence.

Helena thought, *I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it, too. I show my sorrow in my face, but I feel my sorrow in my mind, too.*

Lafeu said, “Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead; excessive grief is the enemy to the living.”

The Countess said, “If the living is an enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal.”

The Countess agreed with Lafeu; the living must handle grief the correct way. In the *Iliad*, Achilles does not handle his grief at the death of his friend Patroclus the right way; his grief is excessive. Odysseus explains the right way to mourn for the dead: A loved one dies, we mourn for a while, and then we return to living our life. Mourning a dead person excessively can destroy a living person.

Bertram changed the subject by saying, “Madam, I desire your holy wishes.”

Lafeu said, “How are we to understand that?”

He was pointing out that Bertram was rude to change the subject so abruptly. They were giving advice to Helena about how to handle grief, advice that would also help the Countess, and Bertram ought not to change the subject so abruptly.

The Countess, however, blessed her son: “Be you blest, Bertram, and may you succeed your father in manners and other acquired characteristics, as you do in his shape and appearance! May your nobility and virtue contend for empire in you, and may your acquired goodness share with your inherited qualities!

“Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none. Be capable and prepared to deal with your enemy rather in power than in use — if you are powerful enough to resist your enemy, your enemy will refrain from attacking you.

“Protect and value your friend’s life as you protect and value your own life.

“Be rebuked for silence, but never be criticized for speech. Accept whatever other gifts Heaven is willing to give you as a result of your own efforts and my prayers — may these Heavenly gifts descend upon your head!

“Farewell.”

She then said to Lafeu, “My lord, my son is an unseasoned and inexperienced courtier. My good lord, advise him.”

Lafeu replied, “Bertram cannot lack the best advice — the best people shall accompany his love.”

Lafeu was aware that good companions would advise their friend well.

“May Heaven bless him!” the Countess said. “Farewell, Bertram.”

She exited.

Bertram said to Helena, “May the best wishes that can be forged in your thoughts be servants to you! Be comforting to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her. Serve her well.”

“Farewell, pretty lady,” Lafeu said to Helena. “You must live up to the good reputation of your father.”

Bertram and Lafeu exited.

Alone, Helena said to herself, “Oh, I wish that were all I had to do! I don’t think about my father; and these great tears on my face now would grace his memory more than those I shed for him when he died. What was he like? I have forgotten him. My imagination carries no one’s face in it but Bertram’s.

“I am undone and ruined. There is no life for me, none, if Bertram is away from me. It is the same as if I were to love a bright particular star and think to wed it — Bertram is so

above me in social rank. I must be comforted in his bright radiance and parallel light, not in his sphere. The sphere I am in is lower than the sphere that Bertram is in. I can see the light that comes from his sphere, but I can never reach the sphere that he is in.”

Helena was referring to the astronomical beliefs of her society. The Earth was thought to be the center of the universe, and the planets and stars were located in spheres above and surrounding the Earth. The planets and stars stayed in their own spheres and did not travel in between spheres.

Helena continued speaking to herself, “The ambition in my love thus plagues itself: I want to marry above my station. The hind — the female deer — that would be mated by the lion must die for love.

“It was pretty pleasure, although it was also a plague, to see Bertram every hour, to sit and draw his arched brows, his hawk-like eye, his curls, on the canvas of my heart — a heart too capable of taking in and perceiving every line and trick of his sweet appearance.

“But now he’s gone, and my idolatrous fancy must sanctify his relics.”

She heard a noise, looked up, and said, “Who is coming here?”

Parolles entered the room. His name suggested the French word “*paroles*,” which means “words.” Parolles was boastful and full of words and exaggerated his courage, of which he had little or none.

Helena recognized him and said to herself, “He is one who goes with and accompanies Bertram. I treat this man as a friend for Bertram’s sake, and yet I know that he is a notorious liar. I think that he is in a great way a fool, and

entirely a coward; yet these fixed evils of foolishness and cowardice are so suitably lodged in him that they find acceptance and take precedence when virtue's steely bones look bleak in the cold wind."

This man, Parolles, was a bad man, but he was so well suited to be a bad man and so ill suited to be a good man that people accepted his badness. Some scoundrels are accepted by others who know that they are scoundrels. Parolles, however, attempted to keep his badness secret, although in time people often found out about his true character.

Helena continued talking to herself, "It is true that very often we see cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly."

A wise servant can serve a foolish master. An ill-dressed, and therefore cold, servant, can serve an extravagant and overdressed master.

Parolles greeted Helena, "May God save you, fair Queen!"

"And may God save you, King!" Helena replied.

"I am no King," Parolles said.

"And I am no Queen," Helen replied.

"Are you meditating on virginity?"

"Yes," Helena replied.

She was in fact a virgin, and she wanted to be married to Bertram, something that was very unlikely to happen. How could she, a virgin, pursue marriage with a man while still retaining her modesty?

She said to Parolles, "You have some tinge of a soldier in you. Let me ask you a question. Man is the enemy to female virginity; how may we women *barricado* — defend with barricades — our virginity against him?"

“Keep him out,” Parolles replied.

“But he assails our virginity; and our virginity, although valiant, is yet weak in its defense. Unfold to us women some warlike resistance we can use to defend our virginity,” Helena said.

“There is none,” Parolles said. “Man, sitting down before you, will undermine you and dig deep and blow you up.”

Parolles was using military terminology. “To sit down before” meant “to besiege.” “To undermine” meant “to dig deep and lay a mine” and “to blow you up” meant “to cause an explosion that will blow you up.”

He was also punning. The man’s penis would dig deep in a metaphorical mine and plant a seed that would cause the woman’s belly to blow up with pregnancy.

“Bless our poor virginity from underminers and blowers up!” Helena said. “Is there no military policy or trick in which virgins might blow up men?”

Parolles replied, “Virginity being blown down, man will all the more quickly be blown up.”

Once a virgin is successfully blown down, perhaps on a bed, the man’s penis will quickly be blown up — it will become erect.

He continued, “By Mother Mary, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves made, you lose your city.”

The way to blow a man down again is to cause him to orgasm. This is something that a woman can do by making use of the breach — opening — in her. Once the man orgasms, his penis will stop being erect. But by that time, what is being defended — virginity — has been lost.

He continued, “It is not politic in the commonwealth of nature to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase and there was never a virgin begotten until virginity was first lost.”

Loss of virginity leads to rational increase — a woman loses her virginity and then gives birth to a rational creature. The only way for a virgin to be born is for a virgin — the future mother — to lose her virginity.

He continued, “That substance which you are made of is metal and mettle — stuff and disposition — used to make new virgins. You are a woman, and you were born to make new virgins. Virginity by being once lost may be ten times found; once you lose your virginity, you can give birth to ten virgin children. If you keep forever your virginity, you lose forever the ability to make new virgins. Virginity is too cold a companion; away with it!”

“I will stand for it a little, although therefore I die a virgin,” Helena said.

Her words were ambiguous. The first and most obvious meaning was that she would continue to be a virgin for a while even though it might mean that she would die while she was still a virgin. In this society, however, “a stand” is “an erection,” and “to die” means “to have an orgasm.” Therefore, another meaning of what she had said was this: “I will stand, aka submit to, an erection for a while, although by doing that I will have an orgasm and my virginity will come to an end.”

Parolles said, “There’s little that can be said in the defense of virginity; virginity is against the rule of nature. To speak in favor of virginity is to accuse your mother, who ceased to be a virgin, and that is most indubitably disrespect to your mother.

“He who hangs himself is a virgin in this respect: virginity

murders itself.”

A person who commits suicide and a virgin are similar in that a suicide and a virgin are denying life to any future progeny. Therefore, their genes will not be continued in their progeny who are never born.

He continued, “The suicides and the virgins should be buried in highways in unsanctified ground, as desperate offenders and offendresses against nature. Virginitly breeds mites, much like a cheese does. Both breed their own destruction. The virgin leaves behind no progeny and so ensures the death of the virgin’s line. The cheese becomes a breeding place for insects that will eat it. Virginitly and cheese consume themselves to the very rind, and so die with feeding their own stomach.

“Besides, virginitly is peevish, proud, idle, and made of self-love, which is the most prohibited sin in the canon law. Don’t keep your virginitly; you cannot choose but lose by it, and so out with it! Within ten years a loss of virginitly will make itself ten virgins, which is a goodly increase; and the principal itself — the former virgin — is not much the worse for the loss of her virginitly, so away with virginitly!”

Helena asked, “How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?”

In other words, by what means could a woman lose her virginitly to a man she loves in such a way that would be pleasing to her? What means could she use to do this? Her situation, of course, was that she would have to marry above her social station in order to lose her virginitly to the man she loved. What means could be used to make that possible?

Parolles replied, “Let me see. How would she do? Indeed, she would do badly because she would like a man who never liked virginitly.”

According to Parolles, if a man takes away a woman's virginity, that man must dislike virginity.

He continued, "Virginity is a commodity that will lose the gloss with lying unused and untouched; the longer virginity is kept, the less virginity is worth. Off with it while it is sellable; answer the time of request and sell while there is a demand.

"Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out of fashion. She is richly suited, but unsuitable, just like the brooch and the toothpick, which wear not now."

In other words, virginity is out of fashion, just like an old courtier who wears old fashions such as wearing a brooch or a toothpick in his cap. In this society, toothpicks were newfangled devices that came from Italy, and people used to wear them in their cap to show that they had traveled. At this time, doing that was out of fashion.

Parolles continued, "Your date is better in your pie and your porridge than in your cheek."

Dates are eighty percent sugar, and date sugar is simply ground-up dates. In this society, dates were often used instead of sugar to sweeten pies and porridge. Parolles' words, however, contained sexual innuendo. A date is phallic-shaped fruit, and "pie" is slang for "vagina." In addition, he was punning on the word "date," one meaning of which refers to age. It is better to have your date (fruit or penis) in your pie (food or vagina) than to have your date (age) appear in your cheeks in the form of wrinkles.

He continued, "And your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French withered pears. It looks ill, and it tastes dry; indeed, it is a withered pear; it was formerly better. Indeed, yet it is a withered pear."

He used the word "pear" to refer to the vulva.

Parolles then asked, “Will you do anything with your virginity?”

Helena replied, “I will not give up my virginity yet.”

She thought, *I will not give up my virginity yet, yet there shall your master have a thousand loves.*

She was willing to give up her virginity to Bertram if she could marry him. Once she was married to him, he could enjoy her a thousand times. And since she was using the word “thousand” to refer to a large number rather than a specific number, she meant that he could enjoy her a thousand — and more — times.

She thought over what she would say next, and she decided to use the word “there” to mean two things: “in my vagina” and “in the court.” In the court Bertram could meet many kinds of women with whom to have an affair. But if he were to marry Helena, she could play many loving roles for him. And if he were to enjoy her a thousand times, it would not be one experience repeated a thousand times but would instead be many kinds of loving experiences. She could fulfill the roles of the French lovers in the court.

Helena said out loud, “There shall your master have a thousand loves.”

Helena wanted to keep her virginity until she was married, but at least some ladies in the French court would not be like her in that respect. Bertram would be tempted, and he could — and possibly would — fall.

She began to list the loves Bertram could enjoy: “A mother and a mistress and a friend, a phoenix, a Captain and an enemy, a guide, a goddess, and a sovereign, a counselor, a traitress, and a dear.”

A phoenix is metaphorically a marvel; literally, the phoenix

is a mythological bird, only one of which exists at a time. When the phoenix dies, it burns, and a new phoenix is born from the ashes.

Many of these terms came from the love poetry of the time and culture, as did these, including some oxymora she then mentioned: “His humble ambition, his proud humility, his jarring concord, and his discord dulcet, his faith, his sweet disaster.”

A “sweet disaster” is “an unlucky star or an unfavorable planet.” This society believed in astrology and the belief that planets and stars can have a good or a bad effect on us.

There were more names for the lovers whom Bertram could enjoy in the court of the French King. In addition to the names Helena had already mentioned, she now mentioned “a world of pretty, foolish, adopted Christian names, that blind Cupid, god of love, gives when he acts as a gossip — a godparent — and gives out names for infants at the baptismal font.”

She hesitated and said, “Now shall he — I don’t know what he shall. God send him good fortune! The court’s a learning place, and he is one —”

Helena had not mentioned Bertram’s name, so Parolles, confused, interrupted and asked, “Which one, in faith? Who are you talking about?”

“One whom I wish well,” Helena said. “It is a pity”

She stopped and sighed.

“What’s a pity?” Parolles asked.

Helena replied, “It’s a pity that wishing well does not have something tangible in it, which might be perceived, so that we, the poorer and lower born, whose baser and lower stars confine us to making wishes, might have real effects of our

good wishes — that is, real and true and actually existing good fortune — follow our friends, and show what we can only think (rather than do), which never return us thanks.”

In other words, she wished Bertram well, and wished that her good wishes for him would come true. Unfortunately, wishing someone well often did not result in a wish come true, and simply wishing someone good fortune rather than being able to actually give someone good fortune was ungratifying.

A page entered the room and said, “Monsieur Parolles, my lord is calling for you. He wants to see you.”

The page exited.

“Little Helen, farewell,” Parolles said. “If I can remember you, I will think of you at court.”

This was not very polite: *If I can remember you!*

Helena politely said, “Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star.”

This society believed in astrology. On the surface, Helena was saying that Parolles was born under a star that governed kindness, and therefore Parolles shared in that characteristic and was kind. However, the charitable star could have been predominant or retrograde.

“I was born under Mars, I was,” Parolles, who regarded himself as a military man, said.

“I especially think,” Helena said, “that you were born under Mars.”

“Why under Mars?” Parolles asked.

“The wars have so kept you under that you must necessarily have been born under Mars,” Helena said.

“Kept you under” means “kept you in a lowly position.” Parolles was a parasite, a hanger-on. He followed Bertram, who paid his expenses, around.

“When he was predominant,” Parolles said.

“Predominant” means “in the ascendant” or “dominate.”

“When he was retrograde, I think, rather.”

“Retrograde” means “declining” or “moving in a contrary direction.” A military man would prefer being born when the planet Mars is predominant. A person who wanted to be kind would prefer to be born when a charitable star is predominant.

“Why do you think so?”

“You go so much backward when you fight,” Helena said.

In other words, he spent a lot of time retreating.

“That’s for advantage,” Parolles said.

In other words, those were tactical retreats.

In her reply, Helena used “advantage” as meaning “personal advantage.”

“So is running away, when fear proposes one runs to reach safety; but the mixture that your valor and fear makes in you is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear — the fashion — well.”

“A good wing” is “fast flight.” Parolles retreated quickly.

Parolles replied, “I am so busy with business that I must attend to that I cannot answer you aptly. I will return from the court of the French King as a complete and perfect courtier.

“As a complete and perfect courtier, I will denaturize —

educate — you so that you will be capable of hearing a courtier’s counsel and understand what advice shall thrust upon you; otherwise, you will die in your unthankfulness, and your ignorance will do away with and destroy you.”

Parolles’ advice to Helena had been for her to give up her virginity. When he returned as a complete and perfect courtier, his advice would be the same. He would denaturize her; that is, he would change her nature so that she would no longer be a virgin. This kind of advice and denaturing would involve thrusting. Parolles equated virginity as being a kind of death, and his advice to her was to avoid that kind of death.

Parolles’ words about being a complete and perfect courtier inspired him, and he gave good advice to Helena: “Farewell. When you have leisure, say your prayers; when you have no prayers left to say, remember your friends. Get yourself a good husband, and treat him as he treats you; since he is a good husband, he will treat you well. And so, I say farewell.”

He exited.

Alone, Helena said to herself, “Our remedies often in ourselves lie, although we ascribe those remedies to Heaven. The fateful sky, aka Heaven, gives us free scope. It gives us free will, and it pulls backward our slow designs only when we ourselves are dull and sluggish.

“What power is it that raises my love so high — to one of Bertram’s rank? What power is it that makes me see, and cannot feed my eye? In my mind I see what I want, but I am separated from it.

“The mightiest space in fortune nature, including human nature, brings to join like likes and kiss like native things. Two people may be greatly different in personal fortune yet be so like likes — so compatible — that nature, including

human nature, will bring them together so that they can kiss.

“Impossible be strange attempts to those who weigh their pains in sense and believe that what has been cannot be. People who sensibly count the costs of unusual courses of action think that such action is impossible, and they think that things that have actually happened cannot be real.

“Whoever strove to show her merit who did fail to achieve her love?”

Helena believed in taking action. By taking meritable action, she believed that she could win her love.

She formulated a plan: “The King’s disease — my plan may deceive me, but my goals are set and will not leave me. I have made up my mind, and I will put my plan into action.”

— 1.2 —

In a room of the King of France’s palace in Paris, the French King stood, holding a letter. With him were many lords and attendants. At this time, the people of Florence and Siena, two cities in the Tuscan region of Italy, were at war against each other.

The King said, “The Florentines and Sieneese are by the ears; they have fought with equal fortune and continue a defiant war that is full of boasting on both sides.”

“By the ears” meant “fighting like beasts”; some animals when fighting will go for their opponents’ ears.

“So it is reported, sir,” the first lord said.

“The report is most credible and believable,” the King said.

Using the royal plural, he said, “We here consider it a certainty; our cousin the King of Austria vouches for it.”

In this culture, a monarch often used the word “cousin” to refer to another monarch. The word did not mean that they were related; it simply meant that they were fellow monarchs.

The King continued, “The King of Austria cautions us that the Florentines will appeal to us for speedy aid. Concerning this, our dearest friend prejudices the business and would seem to have us deny this request.”

The first lord said to the King of Austria, “His love and wisdom, of which your majesty has proof, may plead for amplest credence. His love and wisdom are evidence that you should carefully consider what he writes.”

“He has armed our answer,” the French King said, “and the Duke of Florence is denied before he comes here. Yet, for our gentlemen who mean to fight in the Tuscan war, they freely have our royal permission to fight on either side.”

“This war may well serve as a training ground for our gentry, who are longing for military exercise and exploit.”

The King looked up and asked, “Who is he who is coming here?”

Bertram, Lafeu, and Parolles entered the room.

“It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord,” the first lord said. “It is young Bertram.”

The King said to Bertram, “Youth, you have your father’s face. Generous nature, rather with carefulness than in haste, has well composed and produced you. May you inherit your father’s moral character, too! Welcome to Paris.”

“My thanks and duty are your majesty’s,” Bertram said.

“I wish I had that bodily soundness — health — now that I had when your father and myself in friendship first tried

our soldiership! Your father had a deep knowledge of the military service of the time and the bravest and most excellent soldiers were his disciples.

“He lasted long, but haggish age stole on us both and wore us out so that we were out of action.

“It much restores me to talk about your good father. In his youth he had the wit that I can well observe today in our young lords, but they may jest until their own scorn returns to them unnoted before they can hide their levity in honor. Young lords today laugh so much at other people that they don’t realize that other people laugh at them; fortunately, they grow up and become honorable and stop laughing at other people. Your father never laughed at others.

“Your father was like a courtier. His pride was not touched with contempt toward other people, and his sharpness of intellect was not touched with bitterness toward other people. If they ever were touched with these qualities, it was your father’s social equal who brought them into being, and your father’s honor, acting as a clock to itself, knew the true minute — the right time — when his sense of grievance bid him to speak up, and at this time his tongue obeyed his hand. His tongue said only what the hand of his clock of honor bid him to say — he did not overstate or understate his grievance but said only the right thing.

“Those who were below him in social rank he treated as creatures of another place — he treated them as if they were of a higher social rank than they actually had. And he bowed his eminent head to their low ranks, making them proud of his humility. He was humble as he received the praise of the poor.

“Such a man might be an example to these younger times; if his example were followed well, it would demonstrate to these young lords that they now are regressing and

becoming worse.”

Bertram replied, “The memory of my good father, sir, lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb. The attestation and affirmation of my father’s good character lives not in his epitaph as much as it does in your royal speech.”

“I wish I were with him!” the King said. “He would always say ... I think I hear him say it now; his praiseworthy words he scattered not superficially in ears, but grafted and implanted his words to make them grow there and to bear fruit ... ‘Let me not live’ ... this his good melancholy often began at the end and conclusion of an entertainment, when it was over and out. ‘Let me not live,’ said he, ‘after my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff — the charred wick hindering further burning — of younger spirits, whose apprehensive and perceptive senses disdain all but new things; whose minds are completely occupied with devising new fashions of clothing and whose loyalties expire before their fashions.’”

“This he wished. I after him do after him wish the same thing, too — I survived him, but I follow him in wishing for the same thing. Since I can bring home neither wax nor honey, I wish that I quickly were set free from my hive, to give some laborers room.”

“You are loved, sir,” the second lord said. “They who least lend love to you shall lack you first. Those who least love you will miss you first.”

“I fill a place, I know it,” the French King replied. He wanted to die, to vacate the place he filled.

He then asked Bertram, the Count of Rousillon, “How long has it been, Count, since the physician at your father’s palace died? He was very famous.”

“He died some six months ago, my lord.”

“If he were still living, I would try him and see if he could cure my illness,” the King said. “Lend me an arm; the other doctors have worn me out with several different medical treatments; nature and sickness contend over my illness at their leisure.

“Welcome, Count. My son’s no dearer to me than you are.”

“I thank your majesty,” Bertram replied.

— 1.3 —

The Countess, a Steward, and a professional Fool, whose job was to entertain the Countess, were in a room of the palace in Rousillon.

The Countess said to the Steward, “I will now hear what you have to say about this gentlewoman: Helena.”

The Steward replied, “Madam, the care I have had to make your life even and unruffled I wish might be found in the record of my past endeavors because we wound our modesty and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we ourselves publish them. People ought not to praise their own good deeds and qualities.”

By mentioning “publish,” aka “making known publicly,” the Steward was hinting that what he had to say ought to be said in private. He did not want the Fool present when he talked about Helena.

Getting the hint, the Countess looked around and noticed the Fool. She said, “What is this knave doing here? Get you gone, sirrah.”

“Sirrah” was a way of addressing a male of lower social rank than the speaker.

Although the Fool had a lower social rank than the Countess, the Fool did have privileges, such as being able

to speak frankly to those of a higher social rank. This Fool took advantage of that privilege and did not leave immediately. He would use the opportunity to engage in foolery, and then he would leave.

The Countess continued, “The complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe, but it is because of my slowness and lack of mental acuity that I do not because I know that you don’t lack the folly to commit them and I know that you have ability enough to make such knaveries yours. You are both a fool and a knave.”

“It is not unknown to you, madam, that I am a poor fellow,” the Fool said.

“Well, and so what of it, sir?” the Countess asked.

“No, madam, it is not so well that I am poor, although many of the rich are damned, but if I may have your ladyship’s good will to go to the world, Isbel the serving woman and I will do as we may.”

“To go to the world” meant “to get married.” The Fool wanted to do as married people in the world do: “To do” meant “to have sex.”

“Will you need to be a beggar?” the Countess asked, aware that having a wife involves expenses.

“I beg your good will in this case,” the Fool answered.

“In what case?” the Countess asked.

“In Isbel’s case and my own,” the Fool said.

In this society, one meaning of the word “case” was “vagina.”

The Fool continued, “Service is no heritage.”

This proverb meant that servants neither inherit an estate

nor leave behind an estate to be inherited after they die.

The Fool continued, “And I think I shall never have the blessing of God until I have issue of my body; that is, until I have children. People say that bairns — children — are blessings.”

“Tell me your reason why you will marry,” the Countess said.

“My poor body, madam, requires it,” the Fool replied. “I am driven on by the flesh; and he must needs go whom the Devil drives.”

“Is this all your worship’s reason?” the Countess asked.

“Indeed, madam, I have other holy reasons such as they are,” the Fool said.

The Fool was punning. “Holy” referred to “hole,” or “vagina.” In this culture, the word “reasons” was pronounced much like the word “raisings,” which in this context referred to “erections.”

“May the world know those holy reasons?” the Countess asked.

“I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are,” the Fool replied, “and, indeed, I marry so that I may repent.”

“You will repent your marriage sooner than you repent your wickedness,” the Countess said.

“I am out of friends, madam, and I hope to have friends for my wife’s sake,” the Fool said.

“Such friends are your enemies, knave,” the Countess said.

Such friends would commit adultery with his wife.

“You’re shallow and superficial, madam, in judging great friends,” the Fool said, “for the knaves come to do that for me which I am weary of. He who plows my land spares my team and gives me leave to bring in the crop; if I be his cuckold, he’s my drudge.”

The Fool was speaking metaphorically. Other men would plow his wife and allow him to bring in the harvest: a child. By doing his plowing for him, the other men would make the Fool a cuckold: a man with an unfaithful wife.

He was also willing to completely reverse his position in order to create comedy. Just a moment ago, he had said that he desperately wanted to marry Isbel so he could have sex with her. Now he was talking about being weary of having sex with Isbel and therefore being happy when other men did his husbandly duty.

The Fool said, “He who comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he who cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood; he who loves my flesh and blood is my friend; ergo, he who kisses my wife is my friend. If married men could be contented to be what they are — cuckolds — there would be no fear in marriage.

“Young Charbon the Puritan and old Poysam the Catholic Papist, however much their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one and the same — horned. They may knock horns together, like any deer in the herd.”

“Charbon” means “good meat,” and “poysam” means fish. In this culture, Puritans ate meat and Catholics ate fish on Fridays. But married Puritan men and married Catholic men, despite their difference in religion, are alike in being cuckolds — according to the Fool, all married men are cuckolds. Cuckolds were said to have horns that were invisible to them.

The Countess asked the Fool, “Will you always be a foul-

mouthed and calumnious knave?”

“I am a prophet, madam; and I speak the truth the nearest, shortest, most direct way,” the Fool said.

He sang:

“For I the ballad will repeat,

“Which men very true shall find:

“Your marriage comes by destiny,

“Your cuckoo sings by kind.”

A man marries by individual destiny, but when it comes to a cuckoo singing its song to a married man, that is something that happens by nature — it is natural for every married man to become a cuckold and therefore it is natural for the cuckoo to sing its song to mock him.

Cuckoo birds were thought to mock cuckolds by singing, “Cuckoo! Cuckoo!” Cuckoos lay their eggs in other birds’ nests, and so the other birds end up raising the cuckoos’ offspring.

“Get you gone, sir,” the Countess said to the Fool. “I’ll talk more with you soon.”

“May it please you, madam, that he tells Helen to come to you,” the Steward said. “I am going to speak to you about her.”

The Countess said to the Fool, “Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman that I want to speak with her. Helen, I mean.”

The Fool sang:

“Was this fair face the cause, quoth [said] she,

“Why the Grecians sacked Troy?”

“Fond [Foolishly] done, done fond [foolishly],

“Was this King Priam’s joy?

“With that she sighed as she stood,

“With that she sighed as she stood,

“And gave this sentence [wise saying] then;

“Among nine bad if one be good,

“Among nine bad if one be good,

“There’s yet one good in ten.”

In Christopher Marlowe’s play *Doctor Faustus*, Faust says these lines to a demonic spirit impersonating Helen of Troy:

“Was this the face that launch’d a thousand ships,

“And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?

“Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

“Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it flies!

“Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.

“Here will I dwell, for Heaven is in these lips,

“And all is dross that is not Helena.

“I will be Paris, and for love of thee,

“Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sack’d;

“And I will combat with weak Menelaus,

“And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;

“Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,

“And then return to Helen for a kiss.

*“O, thou art fairer than the evening air
“Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
“Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
“When he appear’d to hapless Semele;
“More lovely than the monarch of the sky
“In wanton Arethusa’s azur’d arms;
“And none but thou shalt be my paramour!”*

The Fool’s song and Marlowe’s poetry were in part about the Trojan War. Paris, Prince of Troy, had foolishly run away with Helen, the wife of King Menelaus of Sparta, and brought her back to Troy. The Trojan War was fought to get Helen of Troy back for her legal husband.

“Ilium” is another name for “Troy.”

In the Trojan War, Achilles, the greatest Greek warrior, died after a poisoned arrow struck his heel.

Semele was the mortal mother of the god Bacchus; Jupiter, King of the gods, was his father. He promised to give Semele anything she wanted if she would sleep with him. After they had slept together, she told him that she wanted to see him in his full divine glory rather than just in the form he took when he appeared to mortals. Because he had sworn an inviolable oath, he did as she requested. Unable to endure the sight, she burst into flames. She was already pregnant with Bacchus, but Jupiter rescued the fetus and sewed it in his thigh until it was ready to be born. Because Bacchus had been “born” from an immortal god, Bacchus was himself an immortal god.

Arethusa was a nymph who was pursued by the river-god Alpheus. In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, she was transformed into a stream. According to Marlowe’s poem, she had sex

with Jupiter, god of the sky.

“One good in ten?” the Countess said. “You corrupt the song, sirrah.”

She knew that the Fool’s song really ended in this way:

“Among nine good if one be bad,

“There’s yet nine good in ten.”

The original song had presumably been about men — King Priam’s sons born to his Queen, Hecuba — but the Fool clarified that he was singing about women.

The Fool replied, “One good woman in ten, madam; this is a purifying of the song. I wish that God would serve the world so all the year! We would find no fault with the tithe-woman, if I were the parson.”

The parson was entitled to take possession of the tithe-pig: one pig in every ten. The Fool was saying that if he were the parson he would be happy if one woman out of ten was a good woman.

The Fool continued, “One in ten, did he say! If we might have a good woman born every time a blazing star — a comet or a nova — was seen or every time an earthquake occurred, it would mend the lottery well — it would improve the odds of a man finding a good woman to be his wife. Right now, a man may draw his heart out before he plucks a good woman out of the lottery that is marriage.”

“You’ll be gone, Sir Knave, and do as I command you,” the Countess said.

“That man should be at woman’s command, and yet no hurt done!” the Fool said.

In 1 Corinthians 11:13, St. Paul wrote this: *“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and*

the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (King James Version).

The Fool continued, "Though honesty be no Puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a proud heart."

In this society, laws required ministers to wear a surplice, a white linen vestment worn by Anglicans. Puritan ministers often wore a Genevan black gown, the clerical garb of Calvinists, under the white surplice. Thus, they rebelled under a show of obeying the law.

The Fool was saying that he would obey the Countess' orders, but that he would continue to do his job as a Fool: to make her laugh and to provide satire — humorous criticism — as necessary.

The Fool said, "I am going, indeed. The business is for Helen to come hither. I will go and get her."

He exited.

"Well, now," the Countess said.

"I know, madam," the Steward said. "I know that you love your gentlewoman Helen entirely and sincerely."

"Indeed, I do," the Countess said. "Her father bequeathed her to me, and she herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds. More is owing to her than has been paid to her, and more shall be paid to her than she'll demand."

The Countess was using financial language. "Bequeathed" means "bestowed [like property]." "Advantage" means "financial profit or interest." "Title" means "legal possession."

Definitely, the Countess thought very highly of Helena.

The Steward said, “Madam, I was very recently much closer to her than I think she wished me. She was alone, and she was talking to herself. She thought, I dare say, that she did not know that her words were reaching any other person’s ears.

“The content of her talk was that she loved your son, Bertram. Lady Fortune, she said, was no goddess, not when she had put such difference between her estate and Bertram’s estate.

“Love, she said, was no god, not when he would not exert his might except only where social ranks were even.

“Diana, she said, was no Queen of virgins, not when she would allow her poor knight — Helena herself — to be surprised and captured, without Diana providing a rescue in the first assault or a ransom afterward.

“These words Helena delivered in the most bitter depth of pain and sorrow that I ever heard a virgin exclaim. This I held my duty to speedily acquaint you with, since, in the loss — the loss of Helena’s virginity, or the loss of your son in marriage — that may happen, it concerns you to know it.”

“You have performed this honestly,” the Countess said. “Keep it to yourself. Many signs informed me of this previously, but they hung so tottering in the balance that I could neither believe nor misdoubt. I was unable to be sure that Helena loved my son or that Helena did not love my son. Please, leave me. Keep this information in your bosom and don’t share it. I thank you for your honest care, and I will soon speak further with you.”

The Steward exited.

Helena entered the room.

The Countess said quietly to herself, "Even so it was with me when I was young. I was in love then just like Helena is now. If ever we are nature's, these pangs of love are ours. This thorn rightly belongs to our rose of youth — it is natural to fall in love, although falling in love brings pain. We are born with red blood, and passionate disposition is born in that blood. A passionate disposition is the show and seal of nature's truth, where love's strong passion is imprinted in youth. It is entirely natural to be passionate when one is young. We remember days long past, and we know that our passions were our faults, but we did not think then that they were faults.

"Helena's eye is sick with love. I see that she is now in love."

"What is your pleasure, madam?" Helena asked. "What do you want?"

"You know, Helen, that I am a mother to you," the Countess replied.

"You are my honorable mistress," Helena said.

Among other definitions, a mistress is a woman who is the guardian of a minor.

Helena did not want to call the Countess her mother because if the Countess were her mother, then Bertram would be her brother and she could never marry him. She would, however, like for the Countess to be her mother-in-law.

"No, I am a mother," the Countess said. "Why not a mother? When I said 'a mother,' I thought you reacted as if you saw a serpent. What's in the word 'mother' that you startle when you hear it? I say that I am your mother, and I put you in the catalogue of those who were born from my womb.

“It is often seen that adoption strives with nature and choice breeds a native slip to us from foreign seeds. Through adoption we make our own what was previously foreign.”

She was comparing adopting a child to grafting a branch onto a tree.

The Countess continued, “You never oppressed and troubled me with a mother’s groan in childbirth, yet I express to you a mother’s care. God’s mercy, maiden! Does it curdle your blood to say I am your mother?”

Helena began to cry.

The Countess said, “What’s the matter that causes this distempered messenger of wet, the many-colored Iris, goddess of the rainbow, which is created by light shining through drops of water, to round your eye? Why shed tears? Why? Because you are my daughter?”

“Because I am not,” Helena said.

She meant that she was crying because she was not the Countess’ daughter-in-law.

The Countess said, “I say, I am your mother.”

“Pardon me, madam,” Helena replied. “The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother. I have a humble origin; his family has an honored name. My parents have no great social standing; his are all noble. My master is my dear lord, and I live as his servant, and I will die as his vassal. He must not be my brother.”

“Then I must not be your mother?” the Countess asked.

“You are my mother, madam,” Helena said. “I wish you were — as long as my lord your son were not my brother — indeed my mother!”

She wanted the Countess to be her mother-in-law, but she

was unwilling to openly say this.

Helena continued, "Or if you were the mother of us both, I would care no more for it than I do for Heaven, as long as I were not his sister."

Perhaps Helena meant that it is impossible to love something more than Heaven and that she would love having the Countess as her mother-in-law equally as much as she loved Heaven.

Helena still was not willing to speak openly of her love for Bertram. If she had been willing, she might have said, "Or if you were the mother of us both, I would care no *less* for it than I do for Heaven, as long as I were not his sister." Or perhaps she might not have said that. Soon, Helena would say that she loved Heaven first, Bertram second, and the Countess third.

Helena cared for Heaven; if the Countess were Helena's mother-in-law and Bertram's mother, it would be Heavenly.

She continued, "Is there no other option? Must I, being your daughter, have him as my brother?"

"Yes, Helen, there is another option: You might be my daughter-in-law," the Countess said. "God forbid that you don't mean it! God forbid that you don't mean that you love my son!"

The Countess wanted to have Helena as her daughter-in-law.

She continued, "The words 'daughter' and 'mother' make your pulse race. What, pale in your face again? My fear has caught your fondness."

The Countess' fear was that Helena might not love her son. Helena reacted with paleness to the Countess'

acknowledgement that she knew that Helena loved her son.

The Countess continued, “Now I see the mystery of your loneliness, and I find the source of your salt tears. Now to all my senses it is completely obvious that you love my son. Fabricated excuses are ashamed, against the proclamation of your passion, to say you do not love my son. I am completely unable to say that.

“Therefore tell me the truth, but tell me then that it is so, that you do love my son. For, look, your cheeks confess, the one to the other that you love my son, and your eyes see your love for my son so obviously shown in your behaviors that in your eyes’ own manner — by weeping — they speak it.

“Only sin and hellish obstinacy tie your tongue, making it so that truth should be doubted.

“Speak, is it so? Do you love my son? If it is so, you have wound a fine ball of yarn.”

Winding a fine ball of yarn is a positive image. Once the yarn is wound into a ball, it won’t get tangled. Having a son soon married to a good woman is a good thing.

The Countess continued, “If it is not so, forswear and deny it; however, I charge you as Heaven shall work in me on your behalf, tell me truly.”

“Good madam, pardon me!” Helena cried.

“Do you love my son?” the Countess asked.

“Give me your pardon, noble mistress!” Helena pleaded.

“Do you love my son?” the Countess asked again.

“Don’t you love him, madam?” Helena asked.

“Don’t try to avoid answering the question,” the Countess

said. “My love has in it a bond of which the world takes note. My love for him is that of a mother for her son. Come, come, disclose to me the state of your affection, for your passions have to the full informed against you.”

Helena knelt and said, “Then, I confess, here on my knee, before high Heaven and you, that more than I love you, and next to the love I have for high Heaven, I love your son.

“My relatives were poor, but honest; so is my love. Don’t be offended, for it doesn’t hurt him to be loved by me. I don’t follow him with any token of presumptuous wooing, nor would I have him until I deserve him, yet I shall never know how that desert should be earned.

“I know I love in vain and strive against hope, yet in this captious and inteemable sieve that is hope I still pour in the waters of my love and lack not to lose still.”

The word “captious” means both “capacious” and “deceptive.” The word “inteemable” means “unretentive.”

She was saying that her hope of marrying Bertram is a sieve that “takes in” in two senses: 1) it takes in all the emotion and love she pours into it (the sieve is capacious), and 2) it takes her in — it fools her into thinking, aka hoping, that marrying Bertram is possible (the sieve is deceptive). Because it is a sieve, it is unretentive — it does not retain water (or love) and it can never be filled up.

Helena continued, “Thus, Indian-like, religious in my error, I adore the Sun, which looks upon his worshipper but knows of him no more.”

She meant that she looked at and loved Bertram, but although Bertram sometimes saw her, he knew little about her — he certainly did not know that she loved him.

Helena continued, “My dearest madam, let not your hate

encounter with my love for loving where you do, but if you yourself, whose aged honor is evidence of a virtuous youth, did ever in so true a flame of liking wish chastely and love dearly that your Diana was both herself and love — that Diana was the goddess both of chastity and of love — oh, then, give pity to a woman — me — whose state is such that she cannot choose but lend and give love where she is sure to lose, a woman — me — who seeks not to find that which her search implies, but riddle-like lives sweetly where she dies! I seek only to love your son and live where he lives so I can at least see him and be happy in that although I know that I cannot marry him and that makes me feel like dying.”

The Countess was intelligent. Bertram was in Paris, and Helena wanted to be where Bertram was, and so the Countess asked, “Haven’t you had recently the intention — tell me the truth — of going to Paris?”

“Yes, madam, I have.”

“Why? Tell me the truth.”

“I will tell you the truth,” Helena said. “By grace itself I swear I will. You know that my father left me some prescriptions — instructions on how to make medicines — of rare and proven effects, such as his reading and true experience had collected for general effectiveness, and you know that he desired me to carefully preserve them and employ and distribute them, as these are prescriptions whose great powers are greater than are generally recognized. Among all these prescriptions, there is a remedy, proven and set down, to cure the desperate languishings that the King suffers from and which are thought will kill him.”

“This was your motive to go to Paris, was it?” the Countess asked. Helena had not mentioned her son. She commanded,

“Speak.”

Helena said, “My lord your son made me think of this; otherwise, Paris and the medicine and the King would perhaps have been absent from the conversation of my thoughts.”

“Do you think, Helen,” the Countess said, “that if you should offer your supposed aid, the King would receive it? He and his physicians are of the same mind. He believes that his physicians cannot help him, and they believe that they cannot help him. How then shall they give any credence to a poor unlearned virgin, when the schools, which have emptied their learning into the physicians, have left the King’s disease to run its own course?”

“Here’s something more than my father’s skill, which was the greatest of his profession,” Helena said, “and that is that his good prescription shall because of my legacy be sanctified by the luckiest stars in Heaven.”

Her legacy was that she was the daughter of the greatest physician of her father’s time. Because of her father’s skill, and because she was the daughter of her father, it made sense to think that the Heavens would smile on her attempt to cure the King.

Helena continued, “If your honor would only give me permission to try my success at curing the King, I would venture the well-lost — lost in a good cause, if I should lose — life of mine on his grace’s cure by such a day and hour.”

“Do you believe you can cure the King?” the Countess asked.

“Yes, madam; in fact, I know I can.”

“Why, Helen, you shall have my permission and love,

means and attendants, and my loving greetings to those of my family and friends in court. I'll stay at home and pray for God's blessing on your attempt to cure the King. Leave tomorrow, and be sure of this, whatever I can do to help you, you shall not miss."

CHAPTER 2 (All's Well That Ends Well)

— 2.1 —

The King of France and many young lords who were leaving to go to Italy and fight on the side of the Florentines or on the side of the Sienese were in a room in the King's palace. Bertram and Parolles were also present.

The King of France said, "Farewell, young lords. Do not throw away from you these warlike principles I have told you. And you, the other group of my young lords, farewell. Share my advice between you; if both groups of young lords gain by my advice, then my gift stretches itself as it is received, and the gift is enough for both groups."

The first lord said, "It is our hope, sir, after we have well entered the lists of soldiers, to return to Paris and find your grace in health."

"No, no, that cannot be," the King said, "and yet my heart will not confess that it has the malady that is besieging my life."

"Farewell, young lords; whether I live or die, may you be the sons of worthy Frenchmen. Let the upper class of Italy, excepting some men, see that you come not to woo honor, but to wed it. Those men I except are those who inherit only the fall from a high place of the last monarchy, that of the Holy Roman Empire; such men are bated, aka lowered or lessened in position, because they do not live up to the ideals of their ancestors. They inherit only the physical part of their ancestors but not their morals or virtues. When the bravest quester shrinks, find what you seek, so that the goddess Fame may cry your name out loud. I say, farewell."

The second lord said, "May health serve your majesty and do your bidding!"

The King said, "Those girls of Italy, take heed of them: They say that our Frenchmen lack language to deny them, if they make demands. Beware of becoming captives to love, before you serve in war."

Both groups of lords said, "Our hearts receive your warnings."

"Farewell," the King said.

He then said to some lords, "Come over here to me."

The King and some of the lords talked together quietly.

Bertram, Parolles, and two lords also talked together.

The first lord said to Bertram, "Oh, my sweet lord, it's a pity that you will stay behind and not go with us to the war!"

Parolles interrupted, "It is not his fault, the spark."

A "spark" is a "young dude" or "young man about town."

The second lord said, "Oh, it will be a brave and splendid war!"

"It will be very admirable," Parolles said. "I have seen those wars."

Bertram said, "The King has commanded me to stay here, and he has made a fuss about me being 'too young' and telling me 'next year' and 'it is too early for you to go to war.'"

Parolles said, "If your mind is resolved to go to the war, boy, steal away bravely and go to the war in Tuscany anyway."

Bertram replied, "I shall stay here and be the foremost horse in a team of horses led by a woman. I will squeak my shoes as I dance on the flat masonry, until all honor has been entirely purchased by the soldiers in Italy, and I will wear no sword except the decorative sword that gentlemen wear at dances! By Heaven, I'll steal away."

"There's honor in that kind of theft," the first lord said.

"Commit the theft, Count," Parolles said.

"I am your accessory and assistant; and so, farewell," the second lord said.

Bertram replied, "I am growing deeply attached to you, and our parting is like a body being torn in half."

"Farewell, Captain," the first lord said.

"Sweet Monsieur Parolles!" the second lord said.

Parolles replied, "Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin. Good and lustrous sparks, a word. You are good metals with good mettle.

"You shall find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain Spurio, with his scar, an emblem of war, here on his sinister — left — cheek; it was this very sword I am holding that entrenched it on that cheek. Say to him that I live, and observe his reaction for me."

"We shall, noble Captain," the first lord said.

The lords exited.

"May Mars be fond of you as his apprentices!" Parolles said to the departing lords.

He then asked Bertram about his plans: "What will you do?"

An excited Bertram had thought about stealing away and going to the Tuscan war, but a calmer Bertram said now, “I will stay here and serve the King.”

Parolles said, “Show a more ample courtesy to the noble lords; you have restrained yourself within the bounds of too cold an *adieu*. Be more expressive to and unrestrained with them, for they are the ornaments on the cap of the times. They are walking on the right — the popular and fashionable — path, and they eat, speak, and move under the influence of the most popular and fashionable star. Even if the Devil should lead the dance, such leaders are to be followed. Go after them, and make a more prolonged farewell.”

“I will be sure to do so,” Bertram replied.

“They are worthy fellows,” Parolles said, “and they are likely to prove to be most muscular swordsmen.”

Bertram and Parolles exited.

Lafeu entered the room, knelt, and said, “I ask pardon, my lord, for myself and for my tidings.”

“I’ll fee you to stand up,” the King replied.

This meant that the King would pay him to stand up.

“Then here’s a man who is standing, who has bought his pardon,” Lafeu replied.

He was like a man who had taken money from the King and bought his pardon.

Lafeu added, “I wish you had kneeled, my lord, to ask me mercy, and that at my bidding you could stand up.”

The King, who was so ill that he could not kneel and then stand up again without assistance, replied, “I wish I had so that I could have broken your head, and asked your mercy

for breaking it.”

“Indeed, across,” Lafeu said.

They were friendly enough that they could joust verbally. By saying “across,” Lafeu was saying that the King had not jousted well — his joking was not all that funny. When a jouster’s lance hits his opponent across, it is not well aimed and is not straight.

Lafeu continued, “But, my good lord, this is what I came here for: Do you want to be cured of your infirmity?”

“No,” the King said bluntly. He had given up hope that he could be cured.

“Will you eat no grapes, my royal fox?” Lafeu said.

He was referring to one of Aesop’s fables: A fox wanted to eat grapes that were hanging from a vine, but he could not reach them, and so he said, “I bet those grapes were sour, anyway.”

Lafeu added, “Yes, but you will eat my noble grapes, if my royal fox could reach them. I have good news: The grapes are within your reach. I have seen a medicine that’s able to breathe life into a stone, make a rock come alive, and make you dance a lively canary dance with spritely fire and motion. This medicine’s simple touch is powerful enough to raise King Pepin from the dead, and to give his son, great Charlemagne, a pen in his hand, and write to her a love letter.”

“What ‘her’ is this?” the King asked.

“Why, Doctor She,” Lafeu replied. “My lord, there’s a woman arrived, if you will see her. Now, by my faith and honor, if I may seriously convey my thoughts in this my light speech, I have spoken with one who in her sex, years, profession of what she is able to accomplish, wisdom, and

constancy has amazed me more than I dare blame my weakness due to old age. The amazement I feel because of her I cannot lay to my old age. Will you see her? That is her request. Will you know her business?"

The King was smiling because Lafeu's praise of Doctor She was so enthusiastic.

Lafeu said, "Once you have done that, then feel free to laugh well at me."

"Now, good Lafeu, bring in the Doctor She who has so filled you with admiration. We with you will utter our wonder, too, or take away your wonder by wondering how you came to have it."

"I'll satisfy you that my wonder is deserved, and I won't be all day about it either."

He went to the door, just outside of which Helena — Doctor She — was waiting.

The King said, "Thus he always introduces his special trifles."

Lafeu returned with Helena, who was shy and apprehensive in the presence of the King.

Lafeu said to Helena, "Come along."

"This haste has wings indeed," the King said sarcastically.

"Come along," Lafeu repeated. "This is his majesty; say what you have to say to him. You are so apprehensive that you look like a traitor, but such traitors his majesty seldom fears. I am Cressida's uncle, and I dare to leave you two alone together; fare you well."

Cressida's uncle was Pandarus. During the Trojan War, he was the go-between for Cressida and her lover, Troilus. From Pandarus' name we get the word "pander."

Lafeu exited.

Using the royal plural, the King said, “Now, fair one, does your business pertain to us?”

“Yes, my good lord,” Helena replied. “Gerard de Narbon was my father; he had an established reputation as a physician.”

“I knew him,” the King said.

“Then I will omit my praises about my father,” Helena said. “You knew him, and so you know his good qualities. When he was on his deathbed, he gave me many written instructions for making various medicines. One medicine in particular was the dearest outcome of his medical practice, and of his old experience the only darling. This medicine he bade me store up, as if it were a third eye — as if it were as valuable as eyesight that brought special knowledge. He wanted me to keep this medicine safer than my own two eyes; he regarded this medicine as dearer than my own two eyes.

“I did as my father asked, and hearing that your high majesty is infected with that malignant disease which the honor of my dear father’s gift stands chief in power to cure, I come to offer this medicine and my medical care with all dutiful humbleness.”

“We thank you, maiden,” the King said, using the royal plural. “But we may not be so believing in a cure, when our most learned doctors leave us, saying that they cannot help us, and when the physicians of the congregated college have concluded that the laboring medical art can never ransom life when the ill body that contains it is not aidable.

“I say we must not so stain our judgment, or hope foolishly, to prostitute our past-cure malady to medical quacks, or to divorce our great self and our reputation by behaving in an

unroyal fashion and esteeming and valuing a senseless help when such help we deem to be past sense and irrational.”

“My duty then shall pay me for my pains,” Helena said. “I will no longer try to force my services on you, but I humbly entreat from your royal thoughts a modest one that I can bear with me when I go back home again.”

As a young, single woman, Helena was modest. She was worried about appearing to be immodest by appearing before and talking to the King, and she wanted an acknowledgement from him that she had acted with good motives.

“I cannot give you less,” the King said. “I am grateful. You thought to help me; and such thanks I give as one near death gives to those who wish him to live. But what I know fully, you know no part; I know all my peril, and you know no medical art.”

Helena replied, “What I can do can do you no harm to try, since you fully believe there is no cure and that you will die.

“He who of greatest works is finisher often does them by the weakest minister. So Holy Scripture in babes has judgment shown, when judges have been babes; great floods have flowed from simple sources, and great seas have dried when miracles have by the greatest been denied.”

1 Corinthians 1:27 states, “*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty*” (King James Version).

Psalm 8:2 states, “*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger*” (King James

Version).

Matthew 11:25 states, *“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes”* (King James Version).

Exodus 17:6 states, *“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel”* (King James Version).

Exodus 14:16, 21-22 states, *“But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. [...] And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. / And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left”* (King James Bible).

In Exodus, the great Pharaoh of Egypt was unable to perform miracles, but God gave Moses the power to perform miracles.

Helena continued, “Often expectation fails and most often it fails there where most it promises, and often it hits where hope is coldest and despair most fits. Sometimes we get what we want after we have given up hope of getting it.”

The King replied, “I must not listen to you. Fare you well, kind maiden. You must pay yourself when your pains are not accepted and used. Offers not taken reap only thanks for their reward.”

Helena said, “Divinely inspired good deeds thus by speech are barred. It is not so with Him Who knows all things as it is with us who shape our guesses about reality by superficial appearances. But we are most presumptuous when we mistake the help of Heaven for the act of men.”

Helena was implicitly comparing herself to an Old Testament prophet who was being turned away from a King.

She continued, “Dear sir, to my endeavors give consent. Of Heaven, not me, make an experiment. I am not an impostor who proclaims that I will do something that I cannot do. You should know that I think and you should think that I know most certainly that my medical knowledge is not lacking in power nor are you past cure. I am confident that my medicine will cure you.”

“Are you so confident?” the King asked. “Within what space of time do you hope I will be cured?”

Helena replied, “With the greatest Grace — God — lending grace, aka mercy, you shall be cured before twice the horses of the sun shall bring their fiery torchbearer his daily ring. You shall be cured before twice in murk and western damp moist Hesperus — Venus, the evening star — has quenched her sleepy lamp by sinking into the western sea. Or you shall be cured before four and twenty times the pilot’s hourglass has told how the thievish minutes pass. Within one day, or two days, what is infirm shall fly away from your sound parts, health shall live free and sickness shall freely — readily — die.”

“What do you dare venture upon your certainty and confidence that I will be cured?” the King asked.

Helena replied, “If I fail to cure you, then accuse me of impudence, of having the boldness of a strumpet. Let my shame be publicly proclaimed. Let my maiden’s name be

calumniated by odious ballads sung about me. In addition, let my reputation be seared and branded in other ways. And, worse, if it is in fact worse than losing my maidenly reputation, let my life be ended with vilest torture by prolonged and extended stretching of my body on the rack.”

The King said, “I think that some blessed spirit speaks his powerful sound within you, who are a weak organ. And what impossibility would slay in common sense, sense saves another way — what common sense says is impossible, a different sense believes to be true.

“Your life is dear; for all that life can rate as worthy of life has in you estimate. You have everything that we consider valuable in life: youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all that happiness and the prime of youth can happy call.

“Your risking these things in your bet that you can cure me intimates to me that either you have infinite medical skill or you are monstrously desperate.

“Sweet practitioner of the medical art, your medicine I will try — your medicine that administers your own death if I die.”

Helena said, “If you are not cured in one or two days, or if I come up short in giving you the healthful properties of which I spoke, unpitied let me die a well-deserved death. If I don’t help you, death’s my fee, but if I do help you, what do you promise me?”

“Make your demand,” the King said. “Tell me what you want.”

“But will you give me what I ask?” Helena asked.

“Yes, I swear by my scepter and my hopes of Heaven,” the King replied.

Helena said, “Then you shall give me with your Kingly hand what husband in your power I will command. You will give me whatever man to marry I chose from among those men you have the power to marry off. Exempted be from me the arrogance to choose from forth the royal blood of France — I will not choose to marry French royalty. I will not insist that my low and humble name be allowed to propagate with any branch or image of your state. But such a one, your vassal, whom I know it is allowed for me to ask for, I want you to bestow on me.”

Bertram was the King’s ward. As Bertram’s guardian, the King had the right to arrange a marriage for him to anyone of equal rank; however, Helena was not of equal rank to Bertram. Still, Bertram was not so high ranking that he was French royalty.

“Here is my hand,” the King said. “The promises observed — that is, once you have done what you have promised — your will by my performance shall be served: You will get what you ask for. So make the choice in your own time, for I, who am now resolved to be your patient, on you continually rely.

“More should I question you, and more I must, although more to know could not be more to trust. I trust you completely without knowing more about you.

“I would like to know from whence you came and how you were escorted here, but go now and rest with an unquestioned welcome and undoubted blessing.”

He shouted for an attendant, “Give me some help here, ho!”

Then he said to Helena, “If you proceed as high as was promised by your word, my deed shall match your deed.”

The Countess was talking to her Fool in the Count of Rousillon's palace. She wanted the Fool to carry a letter to the French King's court and wanted to know if the Fool would behave himself there.

"Come on, sir," she said. "I shall now make you show the height of your upbringing. I will test you to see what kind of man you are."

"I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught. I know my business is only to the court," the Fool replied.

"Better fed than taught" was a phrase said about the spoiled children of rich people. Such children were well born but badly disciplined. They were well fed but had not learned good manners. The Fool was criticizing the court, which according to the Fool did not value gentle nurture and a good upbringing.

The Fool was also denigrating the court by saying that his business was "only" to the court. If his business was only to the court, it must not be important business.

"Only to the court!" the Countess said. "Why, what place do you consider special, when you dismiss the court with such contempt? Only to the court!"

"Truly, madam, if God has lent a man any manners, he may easily pull it off and be a success at court," the Fool said, continuing his criticism of the court. "He who cannot make a leg kneel, put off his cap, or kiss his hand and say nothing has neither leg, cap, hands, nor lip, and indeed such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court."

According to the Fool, to be a success at court, all one had to do was to engage in some showy displays of etiquette.

The Fool continued, "But as for me, I have an answer that will serve all men."

“By the Virgin Mary,” the Countess said, “that’s a bountiful answer if it fits all questions.”

“It is like a barber’s chair that fits all buttocks: the skinny buttocks, the squat buttocks, the muscular buttocks, or any other buttocks,” the Fool said.

“Will your answer serve as an appropriate answer to all questions?” the Countess asked.

“It will be as appropriate as ten groats — ten four-penny coins — is for the hand of an attorney,” the Fool said.

Ten groats was the usual fee for an attorney’s services.

The Fool continued, “It will be as appropriate as your French crown for your taffeta punk.”

A taffeta punk was a prostitute dressed in showy taffeta clothing. A French crown was a piece of money; it also referred to the baldness caused by syphilis, which was known as the French disease. In other words, a French crown was both what a prostitute received for her services and what she gave to those who used her services.

The Fool continued, “It will be as appropriate as Tib’s rush for Tom’s forefinger.”

“Tib” and “Tom” were names for “lass” and “lad.” Country girls would make rings out of rushes and give them to boyfriends. Country girls would also rush to their boyfriends, or to parts of their boyfriends. A forefinger would fit into a ring, and a forefinger or a “forefinger” would fit into another kind of hole.

The Fool continued, “It will be as appropriate as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday or a morris for May Day.”

Pancakes were often served on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent began. Morris dances were performed on May

Day.

The Fool continued, “It will be as appropriate as the nail is to its hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding quean — hussy — to a wrangling knave, as the nun’s lip to the friar’s mouth, and as the pudding to its skin.”

The Fool was distorting a well-known proverb: “As fit as a pudding for a friar’s mouth.”

A pudding is a sausage.

The Countess asked, “Do you have, I say, an answer of such fitness for all questions?”

“From below your Duke to beneath your constable, it will fit any question,” the Fool said.

His answer would fit any question the way a barber’s chair would fit any set of buttocks, including those of a Duke and those of a constable.

“It must be an answer of very monstrous size that must fit all demands,” the Countess said.

“It’s nothing but a trifle, indeed, if the learned would speak the truth about it,” the Fool replied. “Here it is, and all that belongs to it. Ask me if I am a courtier: It shall do you no harm to learn.”

The Countess said, “To be young again, if only we could.”

It is good not to be so old that one cannot learn.

She continued, “I will be a fool in questioning you, hoping to become wiser by your answer. I ask you, sir, are you a courtier?”

“Oh, Lord, sir!” the Fool said. This was his all-purpose answer to any question. These words were used at court to avoid answering questions. These words could also be used

to reply to statements. With different inflections, the meaning of the three-word answer could vary.

The Fool continued, “There’s a simple putting off — disposing of — the question. More, more, give me a hundred questions or conversational tidbits.”

“Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, who loves you,” the Countess said.

“Oh, Lord, sir!” the Fool said. “Let your words come thickly, thickly — don’t spare me.”

“I think, sir, you can eat none of this simple food.”

“Oh, Lord, sir!” the Fool said. “Put me to it! Challenge me! I want you to!”

“You were recently whipped, sir, I think,” the Countess said.

“Oh, Lord, sir! Don’t spare me!” the Fool said.

This is not the thing to say while being whipped.

The Countess said, “Do you cry, ‘Oh, Lord, sir!’ at your whipping, and ‘Don’t spare me?’ Indeed, your ‘Oh, Lord, sir!’ is very sequent to your whipping. You would answer very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to it.”

She was engaging in wordplay. “Answer to” meant both “reply to” and “suffer the consequences of.” “Bound to it” meant both “obliged to reply” and “bound to the whipping post.”

“I never had worse luck in my life in my ‘Oh, Lord, sir!’ answer,” the Fool said. “I see things may serve well for a long time, but not serve well forever.”

“I see that I am playing the noble housewife who has the time to entertain herself so merrily with a Fool,” the

Countess said.

In other words, she was wasting time.

“Oh, Lord, sir!” the Fool said. “Why, there my answer serves well again.”

“Put an end, sir, to your foolish business,” the Countess said.

She gave the Fool a letter and said, “Give this to Helen in Paris and urge her to write an immediate answer back. Commend me to my kinsmen and my son. This is not much.”

“Not too much commendation to them?” the Fool asked.

“Not too much work for you to do,” the Countess replied. “Do you understand me?”

In his answer, the Fool understood the word “understood” to have a bawdy meaning. A “stand” is an “erection”; erections can be fruitful if they result in the birth of a child.

“I understand you most fruitfully,” the Fool replied. “I am there before my legs.”

Because of his erection, part of the Fool would be in Paris before his legs arrived there.

“Hasten back home again,” the Countess said.

— 2.3 —

Bertram, Lafeu, and Parolles spoke together in a room in the French King’s palace. They were talking about the French King’s miraculous recovery from his deadly illness. Lafeu was holding a printed ballad about the King’s miraculous recovery.

Lafeu said, “They say miracles are past, and we have our

philosophical persons to make commonplace and familiar, things that are supernatural and without a natural cause. Hence it is that we make trifles of terrors, barricading ourselves with seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to fear of the unknown.”

Protestants felt that the age of miracles was past, while Catholics believed that miracles were still possible in the latter — modern — age.

“Why, it is the rarest theme of wonder that has shot out in our latter times,” Parolles said.

“And so it is,” Bertram said.

Lafeu said, “To be given up by the physicians —”

Parolles interrupted, “So I say.”

“— physicians who follow Galen and physicians who follow Paracelsus,” Lafeu said.

Galen was an ancient physician, while Paracelsus was a modern physician.

Parolles interrupted, “So I say.”

Lafeu said, “Of all the learned and accredited practitioners —”

Parolles interrupted, “Right! So I say.”

Lafeu said, “Who said that the King was incurable —”

Parolles interrupted, “Why, there it is. So say I, too.”

Lafeu said, “Who said that the King could not be helped —”

Parolles interrupted, “Right; as it were, a man assured of a —”

Lafeu interrupted, “— uncertain life, and sure death.”

Parolles said, “Right, you say well; so would I have said.”

“I may truly say,” Lafeu said, “it is a novelty to the world.”

“It is, indeed,” Parolles said. “If you will have it in showing, you shall read it in — what do you call it there?”

Lafeu read out loud the title of the printed ballad: “*A Showing of a Heavenly Effect in an Earthly Actor.*”

“That’s it,” Parolles said. “I would have said the very same.”

Lafeu said, “Why, a dolphin is not more vigorous than the King now. By my word, I speak in respect —”

Parolles said, “It is strange, it is very strange, that is the brief and the tedious of it.”

Parolles was using highfalutin’ language. He used “the brief and the tedious” rather than “the long and the short.” Next he would use “facinerious” rather than “extremely wicked.”

He continued, “And he’s of a most facinerious spirit who will not acknowledge it to be the —”

Lafeu interrupted, “— very hand of Heaven.”

“Yes, so I say,” Parolles said.

Lafeu said, “In a most weak —”

Parolles interrupted, “— and debile, aka feeble, agent, great power, great transcendence, which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made than alone the recovery of the King, as to be —”

Lafeu interrupted, “— generally thankful.”

“That’s what I was going to say,” Parolles said. “You said it well. Here comes the King.”

The King, Helena, and some attendants entered the room.

Lafeu said, “The King is *lustig*, aka frolicsome, as the German says. I’ll like a maiden all the better, while I have a tooth in my head. Why, the King’s able to lead her in the quick-stepping, lively dance known as the *coranto*.”

Parolles said, “*Mort du vinaigre!* Is not this Helen?”

He was so shocked that he mangled his French and said something that could possibly be translated as “Death of vinegar!”

“By God, I think so,” Lafeu said. He, of course, knew that she was Helena, but he had become aware that Parolles was a fool and so he was not inclined to be helpful to him.

The King ordered an attendant, “Go, call before me all the lords in the court.”

He said to Helena, “Sit, my preserver, by your patient’s side, and with this healthy hand, whose banished sense you have called back from the exile that is death, a second time receive the confirmation of my promised gift, which but awaits your naming. You will now choose your husband.”

Four lords entered the room. These were lords who were wards of the King, who had the right to marry them to a woman of an equal social status. Bertram joined the four lords.

The King said to Helen, “Fair maiden, look at these lords. This youthful parcel of noble bachelors stands at my bestowing, over whom both sovereign power and father’s voice I have the power to use. Make your free choice among these men. You have power to choose, and they have no power to reject you. Choose freely.”

Helena said to the lords, "To each of you may one fair and virtuous mistress fall, when the god of Love pleases! May each of you get a beautiful and virtuous woman to marry! To each of you, but one!"

She was being modest. She wanted one lord — Bertram — to marry her, and she wanted to avoid the boast that she was beautiful and virtuous. She would claim that she was virtuous, but she was unwilling to claim that she was also beautiful. Others, however, were to claim that she was both beautiful and virtuous.

Lafeu said, "I would give my bay horse Curtal, so named because of his docked tail, and his trappings and harness, for my teeth to be no more broken than these boys' and for my beard to be as little written on my face."

The King said to Helena, "Look them over well. Not one of those young lords lacks a noble father."

Helena stood up and said to the lords, "Gentlemen, Heaven has through me restored the King to health."

The lords replied, "We understand it, and we thank Heaven for you."

She said, "I am a simple maiden, and therein wealthiest in that I avow I truly am a maiden. If it pleases your majesty, I have done already."

She already knew her choice.

She continued, "The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper to me, 'We blush that you should choose, but if you are refused, let the pallor of death sit on your cheek forever. We'll never come there again.'"

The King said, "Make your choice and see what happens. Whoever shuns your love shuns all his love in me."

Helena said, “Now, Diana, virgin goddess, from your altar do I fly, and to imperial Love, that god most high, do my sighs stream.”

She moved to the first lord and said, “Sir, will you hear my suit?”

The first lord said, “Yes, and I will grant it.”

Helena wanted to marry Bertram, so this answer did not suit her.

“Thanks, sir,” she said. “All the rest is mute.”

In other words, she would not make her suit to him.

She moved to the next lord.

Lafeu said, “By my life, I swear that I would rather be in this choice than throw on and endure ames-ace — worthless ecclesiastical clothing.”

He was saying that it was better to be in the world, get married, and have sex with Helena than to be a celibate member of the clergy.

“Amice,” sometimes spelled in this culture as “ames,” is ecclesiastical clothing; “ace” figuratively means “worthless.”

By the way, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in this culture the word “amice” was spelled in many ways: “amyse,” “amis(e,” “ames,” “amyss(e,” “amys(e,” “amias,” “ammess,” and “amyce,” as well as “amice.”

Helena said to the second lord, whose admiration of her was evident in his eyes, “The honor, sir, that flames in your fair eyes, before I speak, too threateningly replies to my question: ‘Sir, will you hear my suit?’”

The threat was that the lord would ask Helena to marry

him. Any of the four lords would be happy to honor and marry her.

Helena continued, "May Love make your fortunes twenty times above her — me — who so wishes such fortune for you, and may Love make your fortunes twenty times above her humble love!"

The second lord said, "I wish no better than you, if you please."

"Receive my wish for you, which I hope that great Love will grant!" Helena said. "And so, I take my leave of you."

Lafeu was too far away to hear what was being said. He could see Helena going from lord to lord and he thought that the lords were rejecting her, rather than that she was rejecting the lords.

"Do they all reject her?" Lafeu said. "If they were sons of mine, I'd have them whipped, or I would send them to the Turks to make eunuchs of."

Helena said to the third lord, "Be not afraid that I your hand should take. I'll never do you wrong for your own sake. Blessing upon your vows! And in your bed may you find fairer fortune, if you ever wed!"

"These boys are boys of ice," Lafeu complained. "None of them will marry her. Surely, they are bastards to the English; the French never begot them."

Helena said to the fourth lord, "You are too young, too happy, and too good to make yourself a son out of my blood."

"Fair one, I think not so," the fourth lord replied. "I would be happy if you were the mother of my son."

Lafeu said, referring to Bertram, "There's one grape yet; I

am sure your father drank wine, and we all know that good wine makes good blood, but if you are not an ass, I am a fourteen-year-old youth. I have known you already, and I know that you are an ass.”

Why would he think that Bertram is an ass? Because Bertram associated with Parolles, who was an ass, as shown by the recent conversation between Parolles and Lafeu. Also, Bertram had been rude while Lafeu was visiting Rousillon.

Helena said to Bertram, “I dare not say I take you, but I give myself and my service, for as long as I live, to your guiding power.”

She said to the King, “This is the man I choose to marry.”

The King said, “Why, then, young Bertram, take her; she’s your wife.”

“My wife, my liege!” Bertram said. “I shall entreat your highness in such a business to give me leave to use the help of my own eyes. When it comes to taking a wife, let me make my own choice.”

“Don’t you know, Bertram, what she has done for me?” the King asked.

“Yes, my good lord,” Bertram replied, “but I never hope to know why I should marry her.”

“You know that she has raised me from my sickbed,” the King said.

“But does it follow, my lord, that I must bring myself down to pay for your raising up?” Bertram asked. “I know her well. She had her upbringing at my father’s charge. That a poor physician’s daughter should be my wife! My disdain and contempt for her would corrupt and ruin me forever!”

The King said, “It is only the title of ‘poor physician’s daughter’ that you disdain in her, and I can build up her title. It is strange that our veins’ blood, poured all together in a basin, would quite confound making any distinction of color, weight, and heat, yet our blood — lineage and ancestral descent — make so mighty differences.

“If she is all that is virtuous, except for that title that you dislike, the title and name of ‘poor physician’s daughter,’ then you dislike virtue because of the name, but don’t do that.

“From the lowest place when virtuous things proceed, the place is dignified by the doer’s deed. Where great additions — titles and names — swell, and virtue does not swell, it is a dropsied, puffed-up honor.

“Good alone is good without a name. Vileness is vile without a name.

“The property should be valued by what it is, not by the title.

“Helen is young, wise, and fair; she inherited these things from nature, and these things breed honor.

“True honor scorns what calls itself honorable as a result of ancestry and is not like the real thing, which is honorable as a result of honorable behavior.

“The mere word ‘honor’ is a slave that appears and is debauched on every tomb, on every grave it is a lying trophy, and as often it is dumb and silent where dust and damned oblivion is the tomb of honored bones indeed. The word ‘honor’ is often given to those deceased who do not deserve it and as often withheld from those deceased who do deserve it.

“What should now be said? If you can like this creature of

God as a maiden, I can create the rest. Virtue and she herself are her own dower; honor and wealth are her dower from me.”

“I cannot love her, nor will I strive to love her,” Bertram said.

“You wrong yourself, if you should strive to make your own choice,” the King said.

If Bertram insisted on choosing his own wife, he would get on the King’s bad side, and that was not wise.

Helena, who did not want Bertram to be hurt, said to the King, “That you are well restored to health, my lord, I’m glad. Let the rest go. I need no reward for what I did.”

“My honor’s at the stake,” the King said.

He was referring to bear-baiting, in which a bear was tied to a stake and then tormented by dogs.

The King added, “To defeat this challenge to my honor, I must produce and use my power.”

He said to Bertram, using the contemptuous insult “boy,” “Here, take her hand, proud and scornful boy, unworthy of this good gift. You in vile misprision — disdain — shackle up my love and her desert.”

In addition to meaning “disdain,” the word “misprision” punned on “false imprisonment.”

The King continued, “You put her in a scale and weigh her against yourself and find her lacking. You cannot dream that we, placing ourselves in her scale that is deficient compared to yours, shall outweigh you so much that your scale will fly up to the crossbeam. You will not know that we have the power to plant your honor where we please to have it grow.

“Check your contempt. Obey our will, which labors for your good. Don’t believe your disdain, but immediately do your own fortunes that obedient right that both your duty to us owes and our power claims, or I will throw you from my care forever into the staggering and careless lapse of youth and ignorance. I will let loose both my revenge and hate upon you, in the name of justice, without pity in any form.

“Speak; give me your answer.”

The King really did have the power he claimed. He would be a formidable enemy.

Bertram backed off: “Give me pardon, my gracious lord, for I submit my fancy and affection to your eyes. When I consider what creation of greatness and what share of honor flies where you bid it, I find that she, who recently was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now praised by the King. She, being ennobled by such praise, is as if she were born so noble.”

“Take her by the hand, and tell her she is yours,” the King ordered.

This action, called a handfasting, in this society was itself a legal contract of marriage, although the church also wanted a religious marriage ceremony. A marriage feast usually soon followed the marriage ceremony.

The King continued, “I promise to Helena a counterweight: I cannot raise her birth as high as yours, but I will make her wealth more than yours.”

“I take her hand,” Bertram said, doing so.

The King said, “Good fortune and the favor of the King smile upon this contract of marriage. The religious marriage ceremony shall follow quickly upon my royal command, which I now give: It will be performed tonight.

“The solemnizing marriage feast shall wait for a time, until friends who are absent now can arrive and share in the feast.

“As you love her, so is your love to me. If your love for her is religious, holy, and true, it is good; if it is not religious, holy, and true, it errs.”

Everyone exited except for Lafeu and Parolles, who were a short distance apart.

Lafeu walked over to Parolles and asked him, “Did you hear that, monsieur? I would like a word with you.”

“What is your pleasure, sir? What do you want?”

“Your lord and master did well to make his recantation,” Lafeu said.

The word “recantation” is interesting. A religious heretic can recant his or her heresy.

Parolles took umbrage, both to Lafeu’s use of the word “recantation” and to Bertram being called his “lord and master.” He regarded himself as Bertram’s equal.

“Recantation! My lord! My master!” Parolles said.

“Yes,” Lafeu replied. “Aren’t the sounds I speak a language?”

“They are a very harsh language,” Parolles replied, “and not to be understood without bloodshed following. My master!”

Lafeu asked, “Are you companion to the Count Rousillon?”

The word “companion” meant both “rascal” and “associate.”

“To any Count, to all Counts, to what is man,” Parolles

replied.

Parolles was claiming to be on equal terms with all men. Lafeu rejected this because he had a low opinion of Parolles and considered him to be Bertram's servant.

Lafeu said, "To what is Count's manservant. Count's master is of another style."

Count Rousillon's master was the King of France. Lafeu was saying that Parolles was the manservant of a Count, but he, Lafeu, knew the Count's master well.

"You are too old for me to fight, sir," Parolles said. "Let it satisfy you, you are too old."

Parolles was saying that he would fight Lafeu because of Lafeu's insults, except that Lafeu was too old to fight.

"I must tell you, sirrah, that I am a man," Lafeu said. "That is a title that you will not have even when you are old."

"What I can do only too well, I dare not do," Parolles said. "I could easily beat you, but because of your age, I will not."

Lafeu said, "I did think you, for the time it takes to eat two meals, to be a pretty wise fellow. You made tolerable conversation about your travels. Your conversation might pass you off as an intelligent person, yet the numerous showy military sashes and banners you wear in manifold ways dissuaded me from believing you to be a vessel of very much capacity. You wear so many military sashes and banners that you look like a ship flying many flags.

"I have now found you out, and I know what you are, which isn't much. When I lose you again, I won't care. Yet you are good for nothing but taking up; and you are scarcely worth taking up."

“Taking up” has such meanings as “picking up,” “arresting,” and “rebuking.”

“If you had not the privilege of old age upon you —” Parolles began.

“Do not plunge yourself too far in anger, lest you hasten your trial,” Lafeu said, referring to a trial by combat. “If this trial should happen — may the Lord have mercy on you for the hen — woman — you are!

“So, my good window of lattice, fare you well. Your window I need not open, for I look through you.”

Lafeu was saying that Parolles was common; common alehouses had latticework windows. His many sashes also made him look like a latticework window.

Lafeu said, “Give me your hand.”

He was willing to depart with a handshake; it wasn’t as if he and Parolles were going to fight — ever. A trial by combat would never happen. Lafeu was too old to fight, and Parolles was too cowardly to fight. And trials by combat were reserved for such crimes as treason.

Parolles still took umbrage: “My lord, you give me most egregious indignity. You have egregiously insulted me!”

“Yes, I have, and with all my heart; and you are worthy of every insult.”

“I have not, my lord, deserved these insults,” Parolles replied.

“Yes, indeed, you have deserved every last bit of these insults, and I will not take back even a tiny bit of one of them.”

“Well, I shall be wiser,” Parolles said.

He meant that he would not talk to Lafeu in the future, but Lafeu took the meaning literally.

“Be wiser as soon as you can,” Lafeu said, “for you have to taste a quantity of your foolishness before you grow wise. If ever you are bound in your sashes and banners and beaten, you shall find out what it is to be proud of your bondage — your sashes and banners that you bind to your body.

“I desire to continue my acquaintance with you, or rather my knowledge of you, so that I may say in the default that he is — you are — a man I know.”

When Parolles’ character was weighed, he would be found lacking — he would be in default.

“My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation,” Parolles said.

“I wish the vexations were hell-pains for your sake, and I wish my poor doing would be eternal. If I had the power, I would damn you to hell — that is what I would do. For some kinds of doing, I — old man that I am — am past doing, and now I will pass by you. My old age still allows me to do that motion.”

Lafeu exited.

Alone, Parolles said to himself, “Well, you have a son who shall take this disgrace off me. I will fight him.”

Actually, Parolles was in no danger of actually getting in a fight; he knew that Lafeu had no son, only a daughter.

He continued, “Scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! Well, I must be patient; there is no fettering of authority. I’ll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him on any suitable and convenient occasion, and I would beat him even if he were double and double a lord. I’ll have no more pity on his old

age than I would on — I'll beat him, if I could but meet him again.”

Lafeu returned. Parolles had his chance. Parolles did not take his chance.

Lafeu said, “Sirrah, your lord and master is married; there's news for you: You have a new mistress.”

“I most unfeignedly, genuinely, and sincerely beseech your lordship to make some reservation of your wrongs,” Parolles said. “Do not display them. Bertram is my good lord. He Whom I serve above is my master.”

Actually, one meaning of “lord” is “master.”

“Who? God?”

“Yes, sir.”

“The Devil is the being who is your master,” Lafeu said to the fancily dressed Parolles. “Why do you garter up your arms in this fashion? People wear garters on their legs. Do you make stockings out of your sleeves? Do other servants do so? Since you do this, it would be best for you to set your lower part where your nose stands — let your penis serve as your nose.

“By my honor, I swear that if I were only two hours younger, I would beat you. I think that you are a general offence, and every man should beat you. I think you were created so that men could get exercise by beating you.”

“This is hard and undeserved treatment, my lord,” Parolles said.

“That is bull, sir. You were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel out of a pomegranate — petty theft,” Lafeu said. “You are a vagabond and no true traveller; you travel without the necessary legal documents. You are saucier

with lords and honorable personages than the warrant of your birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are not worth another word, else I would call you 'knave.' I leave you."

He exited.

Parolles said to himself, "Good, very good; it is so then. That's the way it stands between us. Good, very good. Let it be concealed awhile."

Bertram entered the room.

He said, "I am ruined and forfeited to cares and worries forever!"

"What's the matter, sweet heart?" Parolles asked, trying to get Bertram's attention.

"Although before the solemn priest I have sworn and I have married her, I will not bed her," Bertram said.

"What? What's the matter, sweet heart?" Parolles asked again.

"Oh, my Parolles, they have married me! I'll go to the Tuscan wars, and never bed her."

"France is a dog hole, and it no longer deserves the tread of a man's foot. Let's go to the wars!"

"There's a letter from my mother," Bertram said. "What the content is, I don't know yet."

"Yes, that should be known," Parolles said. "To the wars, my boy, to the wars! He wears his honor in a box — vagina — unseen, who hugs his kinky-wicky wife here at home, expending his manly marrow — his semen — while in her arms, marrow that should sustain the bound and high jump of Mars' fiery steed."

Possibly, a kinky-wicky wife is one who kicks — humps —

when her husband's wick — penis — is inside her.

Parolles continued, "Compared to other regions, France is a stable; we who dwell in it are jades, aka broken-down horses. Therefore, to the war!"

"It shall be so," Bertram said. "I'll send Helena, my wife, to my house, acquaint my mother with my hatred of her, and tell my mother for what reason I am fled. I will write to the King that which I dare not speak to him; his recent gift to me shall equip me so that I can fight on those Italian battlefields where noble fellows strike blows. War is no strife when compared to the dark, unhappy house and the detested wife."

"Will this *capriccio* hold in you?" Parolles asked. "Are you sure?"

"*Capriccio*" is Italian for "caprice" or "whim."

"Go with me to my chamber, and advise me," Bertram said. "I'll send her immediately away. Tomorrow I'll go to the wars, and she will go to her single sorrow."

"Why, these balls rebound; there's noise in it. It is hard," Parolles said.

Using tennis as a metaphor, Parolles was saying that Bertram was playing the game as it ought to be played, hitting the ball hard and making the tennis ball bounce.

Parolles added, "A young man married is a man who's marred."

A proverb stated, "Marrying is marring."

Parolles continued, "Therefore, let's go away and bravely leave her; let's go. The King has done you wrong, but hush, it is so."

Helena and the Fool, who had arrived from the Count of Rousillon's palace with a letter for her, spoke together in a room of the French King's palace.

Helena, who had read the letter, said, "My mother greets me kindly; is she well?"

"She is not well; but yet she has her health," the Fool said. "She's very merry, but yet she is not well, but thanks be given, she's very well and wants nothing in the world, but yet she is not well."

The Fool was punning on these two meanings of "well": 1) in good health, and 2) in Heaven. A proverb stated, "He is well since he is in Heaven."

"If she is very well, what is ailing her, so that she's not very well?" Helena asked.

"Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things," the Fool said.

"What two things?"

"One, that she's not in Heaven, whither may God send her quickly! The other is that she's on Earth, from whence may God send her quickly!"

Parolles entered the room.

"Bless you, my fortunate lady!" he said to Helena.

"I hope, sir, I have your good will to have my own good fortunes," Helena replied.

"You had my prayers to lead them on, and to keep them on, you have my prayers still," Parolles said.

He then asked the Fool, "Oh, my knave, how does my old lady?"

Parolles had pronounced “does” much like the way many people pronounce “dies.” This was common in this society.

“Provided that you inherited her wrinkles and I her money, I wish she did as you say,” the Fool replied.

“Why, I say nothing,” Parolles said.

“Indeed, then you are the wiser man, for many a man’s tongue shakes out his master’s undoing. Often, men say things that ruin the men’s masters. To say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have nothing is to be a great part of your entitlement, which is within a very little of nothing — and that is what you will inherit from her.”

“Go away!” Parolles said. “You are a knave.”

“You should have said, sir, before a knave you are a knave,” the Fool said. “That is, you should have said, sir, that before me you are a knave. This would have been the truth, sir.”

“Before me” was an oath, and it also meant “physically here before me.” The Fool was calling Parolles a knave.

“Go on, you are a witty fool,” Parolles said. “I have found you out.”

“Did you find me in yourself, sir? Or were you taught to find me?” the Fool asked.

“Did you find me in yourself, sir?” had a double meaning: 1) “Did you find me by yourself?” and 2) “Did you find foolery in yourself?”

The Fool already knew the answer to the question: Parolles was very much a fool.

The Fool said, “The search, sir, was profitable, and much fool may you find in you, even to the world’s pleasure and the increase of laughter.”

“You are a good knave, indeed, and you are well fed,” Parolles said, alluding to the saying “Better fed than taught.”

Parolles then said to Helena, “Madam, my lord will go away tonight; a very serious business calls on him to take action. The great prerogative and rite of love, aka the marriage consummation, which as your due the present time claims, he does acknowledge, but he puts it off due to a compelled restraint. He will not consummate the marriage yet. The lack of the consummation, and its delay, is strewn with sweet-scented flowers, which distil now into a sweet-smelling liquid in the curbed time, to make the coming hour overflow with joy and pleasure drown the brim. The delay will increase anticipation, which will increase the enjoyment of the consummation of your marriage.”

“What else is my husband’s will?” Helena asked.

“That you will take your immediate leave of the King and say that your leaving so quickly is your own idea and that you have a good reason for this haste,” Parolles said. “Make up whatever excuse you think may make your immediate departure plausible and necessary.”

“What more does he command?”

“That, having obtained permission from the King for your immediate departure, you immediately go to him and find out his further pleasure.”

“In everything I wait upon his will,” Helena said. “I am an obedient wife.”

“I shall report it so to him,” Parolles said.

“Please do,” Helena said.

Parolles exited.

Helena said to the Fool, "Come, sirrah."

They exited.

— 2.5 —

Lafeu and Bertram spoke together about Parolles in a room in the French King's palace.

Lafeu said, "But I hope your lordship does not think that he is a soldier."

"Yes, I do, my lord, and of a very valiant proven character," Bertram replied.

"He himself has told you that," Lafeu said.

"Yes, but I also have heard it from other warranted and legitimate testimony."

"Then my compass dial does not go true," Lafeu said. "It does not point north. I mistook this lark for a bunting. I mistook a good man for a poor man."

"I do assure you, my lord, that he is very great in knowledge and accordingly valiant," Bertram said.

"I have then sinned against his experience and transgressed against his valor," Lafeu said, "and my state that way is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in my heart to repent. My soul is in danger of damnation because of the way I have misjudged him."

He looked up, saw Parolles entering the room, and said, "Here he comes. Please, make us friends; I will pursue the friendship."

Parolles walked over to Bertram and said, "These things shall be done, sir."

Parolles was flashily dressed, as always, and Lafeu's

resolution — if it was really was a resolution — to be friends with him vanished. He decided that if he had made a mistake about Parolles' character, it was thinking that Parolles' character was better than it actually was; in other words, Parolles was a worse man than Lafeu had previously thought him to be. To be honest, Lafeu also did not think that Bertram was nearly as good a man as he ought to be. Lafeu may not have meant it when he said that he was wrong about Parolles and wanted to be reconciled to him. In contrast to Parolles, Bertram was high ranking, and Lafeu would not criticize him openly.

Lafeu said to Bertram about Parolles, "Please, sir, tell me who's his tailor? Who made this mannequin?"

He was pretending that Parolles was a tailor-made man — that a tailor had made his clothes, and that his clothes made the man; in other words, Parolles' clothes were better than he himself was. The clothes were military, but Parolles was in no way a military man.

"Sir?" Parolles said.

Pretending that "Sir" was the name of the tailor, Lafeu said, "Oh, I know him well. I do, sir. He, sir, is a good workman, a very good tailor."

The implication was Parolles was a very good mannequin.

Bertram asked Parolles, "Is Helena going to the King?"

"She is."

"Will she leave tonight?"

"Yes, just as you want her to," Parolles answered.

Bertram said, "I have written my letters, put my valuables in a casket, and given orders for our horses. Tonight, when I should take possession of the bride, I will end my

marriage before I begin it.”

Lafeu said while looking straight at Parolles, “A good traveller is something good at the latter end of a dinner because he can tell tales, but a traveller who lies three thirds — all! — of the time and uses a known truth to pass a thousand false nothings with, should be once heard and thrice beaten.”

He then said to Bertram, “May God save you, Captain.”

Bertram said to Parolles, “Is there any unkindness between my lord and you, monsieur?”

Parolles replied, “I don’t know how I have deserved to run into my lord’s displeasure.”

In his reply, Lafeu took “run into” as “rush headlong into”: “You have made shift to run into it, boots and spurs and all, like the clown who leaped into the custard at a festival, and out of it you’ll run again, rather than suffer question for your residence.”

Vagabonds were questioned about their residence; they could be whipped for being where they ought not to be and for traveling without the legal documents needed for traveling.

“It may be you have mistaken him, my lord,” Bertram said.

Bertram used the word “mistaken” to mean “made a mistake about his character,” but in his reply Lafeu used it to mean “take for evil.” He also used the word “take” to mean “apprehend.”

“And I shall do so always, even if I were to take him at his prayers,” Lafeu said to Bertram. “Fare you well, my lord; and believe this of me, there can be no kernel in this light nut; the soul of this man is his clothes. Don’t trust him when it comes to important matters. I have kept such

creatures as pets, and I know their natures.”

He then said to Parolles, “Farewell, monsieur. I have spoken better of you than you have or ever will deserve at my hand, but we must do good against evil.”

Lafeu exited.

“He is an idle, foolish, stupid lord, I swear,” Parolles said.

“I think so,” Bertram replied, agreeing with his companion, but he sounded doubtful.

Parolles heard the doubt in his voice.

“Why, don’t you know him?” Parolles asked. “Haven’t you figured out what his real character is yet?”

“Yes, I do know him well, and common speech gives him a worthy reputation,” Bertram said.

Helena, accompanied by an attendant, entered the room, and as she walked over to them, Bertram said to Parolles, “Here comes my ball and chain.”

Helena said to Bertram, “I have done, sir, what I was commanded to do by you. I have spoken with the King and have procured his leave for an immediate departure, but he wants to have some private conversation with you.”

“I shall obey his will,” Bertram said. “You must not marvel, Helen, at my course of action, which seems inappropriate to the time and which does not fulfill the ministration and required office on my particular role as your husband. At this time I am not fulfilling my obligations as a husband. I was not prepared for such a business as marriage; therefore, I am very much unsettled. This drives me to entreat you to immediately make your way home. I prefer that you wonder why rather than that you ask me why I entreat you to do this, for my reasons are

better than they seem and my arrangements have in them a need greater than shows itself at first sight to you who don't know them."

He handed her a letter and said, "Give this to my mother. It will be two days before I shall see you, so I leave you to your wisdom."

"Sir, I can say nothing, except that I am your most obedient servant," Helena said.

In this culture, good wives were obedient wives.

"Come, come, no more of that," Bertram said.

"And I always shall with true observance seek to increase that wherein toward me my homely stars have failed to equal my great fortune," Helena said.

Helena's "homely stars" were planets whose astrological influence had doomed her to a lowly birth. Her "great fortune" was being married to Bertram, as well as the fortune the King was giving to her. Helena was saying that she would do all she could to make up for her lowly birth. Bertram was refusing to sleep with her, and she knew that it was because of her birth.

"Let that go," Bertram said. "My haste is very great. Farewell. Hurry home."

"Please, sir, I beg your pardon," Helena said.

"Well, what do you want to say to me?"

"I am not worthy of the wealth I own, nor do I dare to say it is mine, and yet it is," Helena said. "But, like a timid thief, I most gladly would steal what law does vouch to be my own."

"What would you have?" Bertram asked.

“Something; and scarcely so much,” Helena said. “Nothing, indeed. I would not tell you what I want, my lord. But yes, I will, indeed: Strangers and foes part, and do not kiss.”

She was asking for a kiss as they parted from each other.

“Please, don’t stay here, but hasten to your horse,” Bertram said.

He was unwilling to kiss her.

“I shall not break your bidding, my good lord,” Helena said. “I will do as you say.”

She asked her attendant, “Where are my other men, monsieur?”

Then Helena said to Bertram, “Farewell.”

Helena exited; she and her attendant talked quietly.

Bertram said quietly after her departing form, “Go toward home, where I will never come while I can shake my sword or hear the drum.”

He said to Parolles, “Let’s go, and prepare for our flight.”

Parolles replied, “Bravely, *coragio!*”

“*Coragio*” is Italian for “courage.”

CHAPTER 3 (All's Well That Ends Well)

— 3.1 —

The Duke of Florence talked with two French lords in a room in his palace in Florence. Some attendants and soldiers were present.

The Duke of Florence said, “So now from point to point and in every particular you have heard the fundamental reasons for and causes of this war, the deciding of which has let forth much blood and thirsts to let forth much more blood.”

The first French lord said, “Holy seems the quarrel upon your grace’s part, but black and fearful upon the part of the opposer.”

“Therefore we marvel much that our cousin, aka fellow-sovereign, the King of France, would in so just a business shut his bosom against our prayers for aid.”

The second French lord replied, “My good lord, the reasons and explanations of our government I cannot comment on, because I am a common man and an outsider to the great doings of a council of state. I can only imperfectly guess at what happens in such proceedings, and therefore I dare not say what I think about them, since I have found myself in my uncertain guesses to be mistaken as often as I guessed.”

“Let it be as the King of France wants,” the Duke of Florence said.

The first French lord said, “But I am sure the younger men of our nation, who grow ill because of their ease, will day by day come here for medical help. The bloodletting of the war will heal them.”

In this society, bleeding was often used to medically treat a patient.

The Duke of Florence said, “Welcome they shall be, and all the honors that can fly from us shall on them settle. You know your places well; when better places become available, they become available for your advantage. You shall have those places. Tomorrow we go to the battlefield.”

— 3.2 —

The Countess of Rousillon and the Fool spoke together in the Count of Rousillon’s palace.

The Countess said, “It has all happened as I would have had it, except that he has not come along with her.”

“Truly,” the Fool said, “I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.”

“What have you seen that makes you think so?” the Countess asked.

“Why, he will look at his boot and sing, he will mend the flap of his top-boot and sing, he will ask questions and sing, he will pick his teeth and sing. I know a man who had this trick of melancholy; he sold a splendid manor for a song.”

“Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come,” the Countess said.

She opened and read the letter that the Fool had brought to her.

The Fool said, “I have no mind to Isbel since I was at court: our old ling and our Isbels of the country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels of the court.”

“Old ling” means “salted codfish.” In this society, the word

“salt” is an adjective meaning “lecherous,” and “cod” is a word meaning “male genitals,” so the Fool was using the phrase “old ling” to refer to men. He meant that the men and the women of the French King’s court were superior to the men and women of Count Rousillon’s court, and so he cared no longer for the Isbel in Rousillon.

The Fool continued, “My Cupid’s brains are knocked out, and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.”

Reading the letter, the Countess said, “What have we here?”

The Fool replied, “Exactly what you are holding in your hand.”

He exited.

The Countess read out loud her son’s letter to her:

“I have sent you a daughter-in-law: She has healed the King, and ruined me. I have wedded her, but not bedded her; and I have sworn to make the ‘not’ eternal.”

In fact, Bertram had sworn to make the ‘not’ eternal in more ways than one. He had sworn not to bed Helena eternally, and in the wedding ceremony he had sworn to make the marriage knot eternal. In addition, the maidenhead is known as the hymen or virginal knot, and in swearing not to bed her, he was swearing to let her keep her virginal knot forever.

The Countess continued to read the letter out loud:

“You shall hear I have run away. I am writing you so that you know it before the report comes. If there is room enough in the world, I will stay a long distance away from Rousillon. My duty to you. Your unfortunate son, BERTRAM.”

The Countess said, “This is not done well, rash and unbridled boy. You have fled from the favors of such a good King, and you pour his indignation upon your head because you hold in contempt a virgin maiden who is too virtuous to be held in contempt by an Emperor.”

The Fool came into the room and said, “Oh, madam, yonder is heavy news within; it comes from two soldiers and my young lady!”

“What is the matter?” the Countess asked.

“There is some comfort in the news, some comfort: Your son will not be killed as soon as I thought he would,” the Fool said.

“Why should he be killed?” the Countess asked.

“That’s what I say, madam, if he runs away, as I hear he does,” the Fool said. “The danger is in standing to it; that’s the loss of men, though it be the begetting of children.”

The Fool was punning. A soldier standing in the line of fire can be shot and killed, so running away improves the soldier’s chance of survival. “Standing” is also something that a penis does, and that can lead to the begetting of children. Both military men and fathers-to-be die. In this society, one meaning of “to die” is “to have an orgasm.”

The Fool continued, “Here they come, and they will tell you more. As for my part, I heard only that your son has run away.”

The Fool exited.

Helena and the two gentlemen who had recently arrived walked over to the Countess.

The first gentleman said to the Countess, “May God save you, good madam.”

Helena said to her, “Madam, my lord and husband is gone, forever gone.”

The second gentleman said, “Don’t say that.”

“Be calm,” the Countess advised Helena.

The Countess then said, “Please, gentlemen, I have felt so many sudden strokes of joy and grief that the first appearance of neither, at the beginning, can make me act like a woman and cry. Please tell me where is my son.”

The second gentleman replied, “Madam, he’s gone to serve the Duke of Florence. We met him as he was going there, for from there we came, and, after attending to some business in hand here at the court, thither we travel again.”

Helena said, “I have a letter from him to me, madam; it gives me license to travel the world as a beggar.”

She read the letter out loud:

“When you can get the ring upon my finger, a ring that shall never come off, and when you can show me a child whom I am father to and who has been born from your body, then call me your husband, but instead of such a ‘then’ I write a ‘never.’ You shall never meet these two conditions.”

Helena said, “This is a dreadful sentence.”

The Countess asked, “Did you bring this letter, gentlemen?”

The first gentleman replied, “Yes, madam, we did. But considering the contents of the letter, we are sorry that we did.”

The Countess said to Helena, “Please, lady, have a better mood and disposition. If you appropriate all the griefs and say that they are yours, you rob me of a share of them. He

was my son, but I wash his name out of my blood, and you are my only child.”

She asked the gentlemen, “My son is headed toward Florence, is that right?”

“Yes, madam,” the second gentleman said.

“And his intention is to become a soldier?”

The second gentleman said, “Such is his noble purpose; and believe it, the Duke of Florence will lay upon him all the honor that good fitness claims.”

“Will you return there?” the Countess asked.

“Yes, madam,” the first gentleman replied, “with the swiftest wing of speed.”

Helena read out loud another line from the letter: “*Until I have no wife, I have nothing in France.*”

She said, “It is bitter.”

The Countess asked, “He wrote that in his letter?”

“Yes, madam.”

The first gentleman said, “It is but the boldness of his hand, perhaps, which his heart was not consenting to. He may have written something that he does not mean.”

The Countess said, “Nothing in France, until he has no wife! There’s nothing here that is too good for him except only his wife, and she deserves a lord whom twenty such rude boys might tend upon and call her each hour mistress.”

One meaning of the word “mistress” was “female boss.”

She asked the two gentlemen, “Who was with him?”

The first gentleman replied, "Only a servant, and a gentleman whom I have for some time known."

"The gentleman was Parolles, wasn't he?" the Countess asked.

"Yes, my good lady," the first gentlemen said. "It was he."

"He is a very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness," the Countess said. "Because of the bad influence of Parolles, my son corrupts the goodness he inherited."

"Indeed, good lady," the first gentleman said, "Parolles has over your son a good deal too much of bad influence, which greatly profits him."

"You're welcome, gentlemen," the Countess said. "I will entreat you, when you see my son, to tell him that his sword can never win the honor that he loses. I will write more that I will entreat you to take to him."

"We serve you, madam," the second gentleman said, "in that, and in all your worthiest affairs."

"That is not so, except as we mutually serve each other," the Countess replied. "Please come with me."

The Countess and the two gentlemen exited.

Alone, Helena said to herself, "'*Until I have no wife, I have nothing in France.*' Nothing in France, until he has no wife! You shall have no wife, Rousillon, none in France. That way, you will have everything again. Poor lord! Is it I who am chasing you from your country and exposing those tender limbs of yours to the events of the none-sparing war? And is it I who am driving you from the light-hearted, sportive court, where you were shot at with fair eyes, to a battlefield where you will be the mark of smoky muskets? Oh, you bullets, you leaden messengers, that ride upon the violent speed of fire, may you fly with false aim. May you

move the always-peering air that sings with piercing.”

Helena wanted all the bullets fired at her husband to miss him. If they were to pierce and pass through anything, let it be the air, which sings with a sound as the bullets pass through it. The air is a match for — a peer or equal of — the bullets. No matter how many bullets pierce and pass through the air, the air is not wounded. Bullets cannot conquer it. And the air does not wound or conquer the bullets.

Helena continued, “Bullets, do not touch my lord and husband. Whoever shoots at him, I am the person who set him there to be shot. Whoever charges on his forward — in the front lines — breast, I am the caitiff who made him be present there to be charged upon. And, although I do not kill him, I am the cause and the reason why his death was so effected. It would be better if I met the ravenous, starving lion when it roared with the sharp constraint of hunger. It would be better if all the miseries that nature owns were mine at once. No, come home, Count of Rousillon, my husband, from the dangerous place where honor wins a scar, and where as often it loses everything, including life.

“I will be gone from France. My being here keeps you there. Shall I stay here to keep you there? No, no, even if the air of Paradise fanned the house and angels did all the work of servants. I will be gone so that rumor, pitying you, may report my flight to you and console your ear. Come, night; end, day! For with the dark, I, the poor thief who stole a husband, will steal away.”

— 3.3 —

The Duke of Florence, Bertram, Parolles, some soldiers, a drummer, and some trumpeters stood in front of the Duke’s palace.

The Duke of Florence said to Bertram, “You are the general of our cavalry; and we, great in our hope, wager our best love and faith upon your promising fortune.”

Bertram replied, “Sir, it is a charge of responsibility too heavy for my strength, but yet we’ll strive to bear it for your worthy sake to the extreme edge of hazard.”

“Then go you forth,” the Duke of Florence said, “and may Lady Fortune play upon your prosperous helmet and be your auspicious mistress!”

Bertram prayed to Mars, god of war, “This very day, great Mars, I put myself into your file of soldiers. Make me but like my thoughts, and I shall prove to be a lover of your drum, and a hater of love.”

— 3.4 —

The Countess of Rousillon and the Steward talked together in a room of the Count of Rousillon’s palace. The Steward, who was named Rinaldo, had delivered to the Countess a letter that Helena had given to him the previous night.

“Alas!” the Countess said. “And would you take the letter from her? Didn’t you know she would do as she has done, by sending me a letter? Read it again.”

The Steward read the letter, which was written in the form of a sonnet, out loud:

“I am Saint Jaques’ pilgrim, thither gone:

“Ambitious love hath so in me offended,

“That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,

“With sainted [saintly] vow my faults [sins] to have amended.

“Write, write, so that from the bloody course of war

“My dearest master, your dear son, may hie [hurry]:

“Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far

“His name with zealous fervor sanctify:

“His taken [undertaken] labors bid him me forgive;

“I, his despiteful [spiteful] Juno, sent him forth

*“From courtly friends [friends connected with the court],
with camping [living in tents set up in military camps] foes
to live,*

“Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth:

“He is too good and fair for Death and me:

*“Whom [Death] I myself embrace, to set him [my husband]
free.”*

In the letter Helena said that she would be a religious pilgrim and visit the shrine of Saint Jaques le Grand; religious pilgrims heading to that shrine often lodged in Florence, Italy.

In the letter she compared herself to the goddess Juno, wife of Jupiter, King of the gods. Juno had given to Hercules twelve labors that seemed impossible to accomplish. Helena's intention, she wrote, was to embrace Death and die, thus setting her husband free from his marriage.

The Countess said, “Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words! Rinaldo, you never lacked good sense as much as now when you let her leave in this way. Had I spoken with her, I could have well diverted her intentions, which by writing me this letter she has prevented.”

“Pardon me, madam,” the Steward said. “If I had given you this last night, she might have been overtaken, and yet she writes that pursuit would be only in vain.”

“What angel shall bless this husband who is unworthy of his wife?” the Countess said. “He cannot thrive unless her prayers, which Heaven delights to hear and loves to grant, relieve him from the wrath of greatest justice.

“Write, write, Rinaldo, to this husband who is unworthy of his wife. Let every word weigh heavy on — emphasize — her worth that he does weigh too lightly; that he weighs her too lightly is my greatest grief. Though he little feels it, set it down sharply.

“Dispatch the most convenient messenger: When it happens that he hears that she is gone, he will return; and I hope that she, hearing that he has returned, will speed her foot again, led here by pure love.

“Which of them — Bertram or Helena — is dearest to me, I am unable to discern.

“Provide a messenger.

“My heart is heavy, and my old age makes me weak. Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.”

— 3.5 —

An old widow stood outside the walls of Florence along with her daughter, Diana. With them were her friend and neighbor Mariana and other citizens. The Florentine army had won a military victory and was returning to Florence, and the old widow and her companions had come to see the army.

The widow said, “Come, for if they approach the city, we shall entirely lose the sight.”

They began to walk to a position that they thought the army would pass by.

Diana said, “They say the French Count of Rousillon has

done very honorable service.”

“It is reported that he has captured their greatest commander,” the widow said, “and that with his own hand he slew the Duke of Siena’s brother.”

A military trumpet sounded from a different direction the widow and her companions expected. The sound was a tucket, which identified a particular individual.

The widow said, “We have lost our labor; they have gone a different way. Listen! You may know who is arriving by their trumpets.”

“Come, let’s return to Florence again, and satisfy ourselves with what other people tell us about the return of our army,” Mariana said.

She then said, “Well, Diana, take heed of this French Count — the Count of Rousillon. The honor of a maiden is her name — the name of virgin — and no legacy is so rich as chastity.”

The widow said to her daughter, Diana, “I have told my neighbor Mariana how you have been solicited by a gentleman who is the Count of Rousillon’s companion.”

“I know that knave — hang him!” Mariana said. “He is named Parolles, and he is a filthy officer — a pander — in those suggestions he makes to the young Count. Beware of both of them, Diana; their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these instruments of lust are not the things they seem to be. Many maidens have been seduced by them, and the misery is that their example, that so terribly shows the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for all that dissuade other maidens from being seduced. Instead, the other maidens are limed with the twigs that threaten them. They are like birds that have been captured in sticky birdlime. I hope I don’t need to advise you further, but I

hope your own grace and virtue will keep you where you are, even though there were no further danger known but the modesty that is so lost.”

Of course, there was a further danger in a young woman losing her virginity before being married — pregnancy. Another danger was becoming what was known as “damaged goods”; if men knew that she had lost her virginity, they would refuse to marry her.

Diana replied, “You shall not need to fear me losing my virginity.”

“I hope so,” the widow said.

Helena, who was wearing the clothing of a religious pilgrim, walked toward them.

The widow said, “Look, here comes a pilgrim. I know she will lodge at my house; thither the pilgrims send one another. I’ll question her.”

The widow said to Helena, “May God save you, pilgrim! Whither are you bound?”

“To the shrine of Saint Jaques le Grand. Where do the palmers — religious pilgrims — lodge, I ask you?”

The widow replied, “At the inn bearing the sign of Saint Francis here beside the city gate.”

“Is this the way?” Helena asked.

“Yes, indeed, it is,” the widow said.

They heard military drums coming toward them.

The widow said, “Listen! They are coming this way.”

She said to Helena, “If you will tarry, holy pilgrim, just until the troops have come by, I will conduct you where

you shall be lodged. I will do this because I think I know your hostess as well as I know myself.”

“Is the hostess yourself?” Helena asked. She had a quick intelligence.

“If that shall please you, pilgrim, yes,” the widow said.

“I thank you, and I will wait until you have leisure to show me the way,” Helena said.

“You came, I think, from France?”

“I did so.”

“Here you shall see a countryman of yours who has done worthy service,” the widow said.

“What is his name, please?” Helena asked.

“The Count Rousillon. Do you know such a person?”

“Only by hearsay, and what I have heard describes him as being very noble. I don’t know what he looks like.”

Diana said, “Whatever he is, he’s well esteemed here. He stole away from France, it is reported, because the King had married him against his liking. Do you think it is true?”

“Yes, certainly, it is entirely the truth,” Helena said. “I know his wife.”

“A gentleman who serves the Count of Rousillon reports only coarse things about her,” Diana said.

Helena asked, “What’s his name?”

“Monsieur Parolles,” Diana said.

“Oh, I believe the same as him,” Helena said. “As the subject of praise, or compared to the worth of the great Count of Rousillon himself, she is too mean and common

to have her name repeated. All her merit is a well-guarded chastity — I have not heard her chastity questioned.”

“Alas, poor lady!” Diana said. “It is a hard bondage to become the wife of a husband who detests her!”

The widow said, “I am sure, good creature, that wherever she is, her heart weighs sadly. This young maiden here — my daughter, Diana — might do her a shrewd turn, if she pleased.”

Displaying her quick intelligence, Helena asked, “How do you mean? Is it perhaps that the amorous Count solicits her for an unlawful purpose?”

“He does indeed,” the widow said, “and he bargains with all who can in such a suit corrupt the tender honor of a maiden. But she is armed for him and keeps her guard in the most honest defense of her chastity.”

Mariana said, “May the gods forbid she do anything else!”

“Now the soldiers are coming,” the widow said.

Drums sounded, and flags fluttered. Bertram, Parolles, and other soldiers marched into view.

The widow pointed out some notable soldiers: “That is Antonio, the Duke of Florence’s eldest son. That is Escalus.”

“Which is the Frenchman?” Helena asked.

Diana pointed and said, “He is the soldier with the plume. He is a very gallant fellow. I wish that he loved his wife. If he would be more virtuous, he would be much better looking. But isn’t he a handsome gentleman?”

“I like him well,” Helena said.

“It is a pity he is not virtuous,” Diana said. “There’s that

same knave who leads him to these places.”

She was unwilling to use the word “brothels.”

She continued, “If I were his wife, I would poison that vile rascal.”

“Which is he?” Helena said.

“That jackanapes — buffoon — wearing all the military sashes,” Diana said. “Why is he melancholy?”

“Perhaps he was hurt in the battle,” Helena said.

Parolles said to himself, “Lose our drum! Damn!”

The military drum was a symbol of regimental honor, just like the military colors — the flag.

Mariana said, “He’s shrewdly vexed at something. Look, he has spied us.”

“Indeed!” the widow said, looking at Parolles. “Hang you!”

Mariana said, “And hang your courtesy, because you are a ring-carrier!”

A ring-carrier is a pander, a go-between. Parolles was currently engaged in trying to convince Diana to sleep with Bertram. The pander could carry a real ring, or the promise of a ring. Many maidens give up their virginity to men who falsely promised to marry them.

Bertram, Parolles, and the other soldiers exited.

“The troop is past,” the widow said. “Come, pilgrim, I will bring you to where you shall stay. Of penitents bound by oath there’s four or five already at my house who are heading to the shrine of great Saint Jaques.”

“I humbly thank you,” Helena said. “If it pleases this matron and this gentle maiden to eat with us tonight, I will

gratefully pay the charge, and to reward you further, I will bestow some precepts on this virgin that are worthy of note.”

They replied, “We accept your offer kindly.”

— 3.6 —

Bertram and two French lords spoke together in their military camp near Florence. The two French lords, who were brothers named Dumain, had earlier visited the Countess of Rousillon; they had carried a letter to Helena. (See 3.2.)

The second lord said, “My good lord, put Parolles to the test; let him have his way. Let him attempt to get the regimental drum back.”

The first lord said, “If your lordship does not find that he is a hilding — a good-for-nothing fellow — have no more respect for me.”

“On my life, my lord, I swear that Parolles is a bubble, an empty thing,” the second lord said.

“Do you think I am so far deceived in him?” Bertram said. “Do you really think that I am that mistaken in my estimate of his character?”

“Believe it, my lord,” the second lord said. “To my own direct knowledge, without any malice, and speaking about him as if he were my relative, he’s a most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of not one good quality worthy your lordship’s maintenance. You pay for his food and lodging, but trust me, he is not worth the expense.”

“It is fitting that you know him for what he is,” the first lord said, “lest, with you trusting too much in his virtue, which he doesn’t have, he might during some great and

trusty business fail you in a major crisis.”

“I wish I knew in what particular action I could test him,” Bertram said.

“There is none better than to let him rescue his drum,” the first lord said, “which you hear him say so confidently he will undertake to do.”

The second lord said, “I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly surprise and capture him; such soldiers I will have, whom I am sure he will think are from the enemy. We will bind and hoodwink — blindfold — him so that he shall suppose no other but that he is carried into the military camp of the adversaries, when in reality we will bring him to our own tents. Your lordship should be present at his examination. If, for the promise of sparing his life and in the highest compulsion of base fear, he does not offer to betray you and deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my judgment in anything. He will betray you in return for the promise that his life will be spared.”

“Oh, for the love of laughter,” the first lord said, “let him ‘rescue’ his drum from the enemy. He says he has a stratagem to do it. When your lordship sees the bottom — the complete lack — of his success in it, and to what metal, as well as mettle, this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted, if you do not give him John Drum’s entertainment, your inclination to like him cannot be removed.”

“John Drum’s entertainment” means “rejection” and “unceremonious dismissal.”

The first lord then looked up and said, “Here he comes.”

Parolles walked over to the group.

The second lord whispered to Bertram, “Oh, for the love of laughter, do not hinder the honor of his design. Let him rescue and fetch away from the enemy his drum in any case.”

“How are you now, monsieur!” Bertram said to Parolles. “This drum sticks sorely in your disposition — it wounds your state of mind.”

“A plague on it!” the first lord said. “Let it go! It is only a drum.”

“‘Only a drum’!” Parolles said. “Is it ‘only a drum’? A drum lost in that way! That was an ‘excellent’ command — to charge in with our cavalry upon our own flanks, and to attack our own soldiers!”

The first lord said, “That was not to be blamed upon the command of the military engagement. It was a disaster of war that Julius Caesar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.”

“Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success,” Bertram said. “We won the battle, but we suffered some dishonor in the loss of that drum, and that drum cannot be recovered.”

“It might have been recovered,” Parolles said.

“It might,” Bertram said, “but it cannot now be recovered.”

“It is to be recovered,” Parolles said. “Except that the merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer — all too often people don’t receive the credit they deserve for their accomplishments; that credit goes to people who don’t deserve it — I would have that drum or another like it, or *‘hic jacet.’*”

“*Hic jacet*” is Latin for “Here lies.” It was the beginning of many epitaphs. Parolles was saying that if he could be sure to get the credit he would deserve, he would get the drum

back or die in the attempt.

Bertram said, “Why, if you have a stomach — the courage — for it, monsieur, if you think your practical skills in strategy can bring this instrument of honor again into its native quarter, then be courageous and of great spirit in the enterprise and go on and do it. I will honor the attempt for a worthy exploit: if you speed well and succeed in it, the Duke shall both speak of it and extend to you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness. The Duke shall reward you well with words and with material gifts.”

“By the hand of a soldier, I swear that I will undertake it,” Parolles said.

“But you must not now slumber in it,” Bertram said. “You must act quickly.”

“I’ll go about it this evening,” Parolles said, “and I will immediately write down the problems I will need to solve, encourage myself in my certainty of overcoming those problems, and put myself into my mortal preparation for either suffering death or causing others to suffer it. By midnight look to hear further from me.”

“May I be bold enough to acquaint his grace the Duke of Florence that you are going to get the drum back?” Bertram asked.

“I don’t know what the outcome of my attempt will be, my lord,” Parolles said, “but I vow to attempt to recover the drum.”

“I know you are valiant,” Bertram said, “and I will vouch for the capability of your soldiership. Farewell.”

“I do not love many words,” Parolles said, and then he exited.

The second lord said, “He does not love many words — no more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange fellow, my lord, who so confidently seems to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done? He says that he will be damned if he doesn’t do this act, and yet he would rather be damned than to do it.”

The first lord said to Bertram, “You do not know him, my lord, as we do. It is certain that he will steal himself into a man’s favor and for a week escape a great deal of discoveries, but when you find him out, you have him ever after. Parolles can fool a man for a week, but then the man wises up and knows Parolles’ true character forever.”

Bertram said, “Do you think he will make no attempt at all of doing this thing that he so seriously says that he will do?”

“He will make no attempt, none in the world,” the second lord said. “Instead, he will return with an invented story and clap upon you two or three probable lies, but we have almost hunted him down. You shall see his fall tonight; for indeed he is not worthy of your lordship’s respect.”

“We’ll make some entertainment for you with the fox before we metaphorically skin him,” the first lord said. “He was first smoked out and exposed by the old lord Lafeu. When Parolles’ disguise and he are parted, tell me what a sprat — a small fish — you shall find him. You shall see that he is a sprat this very night.”

“I must go look after my twigs,” the second lord said. “He shall be caught.”

The twigs were metaphorical and referred to a trap. Twigs and branches were coated with sticky birdlime as a way to catch birds.

“Your brother shall go along with me,” Bertram said to the

second lord.

“As it pleases your lordship,” the second lord said. “I’ll leave you.”

He exited.

Bertram said to the first lord, “Now I will lead you to the house, and show you the lass I spoke of.”

“But you say she’s chaste,” the first lord said.

“That’s her only fault,” Bertram said. “I spoke with her only once and found her wondrously cold, but I sent to her, by this same foolish coxcomb — Parolles — whom we have in the wind, tokens and letters that she sent back to me, and this is all I have done. She’s a beautiful creature. Will you go with me and see her?”

“With all my heart, my lord.”

— 3.7 —

Helena and the widow spoke together in a room in the widow’s house.

Helena said, “If you doubt that I am Bertram’s wife, I don’t know how I shall assure you further without losing the grounds I work upon. In order for my plan to work, I need to keep my presence in Florence hidden from my husband.”

“Although my estate has fallen, I was well born,” the widow said. “I have never been acquainted with this kind of business, and I would not expose my reputation now to any act that might stain it.”

“Nor would I wish you to,” Helena said. “First, trust me when I say that the Count of Rousillon is my husband. Also trust that what I have spoken to you with your sworn secrecy is true from word to word. If you do these two things, then you cannot err by bestowing the good aid that I

shall borrow from you.”

“I should believe you,” the widow said, “for you have showed me that which well proves you’re great in fortune.”

“Take this purse of gold,” Helena said, “and let me buy thus far your friendly help, which I will overpay and pay again when I have found it. The Count woos your daughter, lays down his wanton siege before her beauty, and is resolved to seduce her. Let her finally say that she consents; we will direct her in the best way to do it.

“Right now his importunate blood will deny her nothing that she’ll demand. The Count wears a ring that has passed downward in his house from son to son, some four or five generations since the first father wore it. This ring he values very richly, yet in his mad fire, to buy the means by which to satisfy his lust, this ring would not seem too dear to him to give up, however much he repents giving it up after he satisfies his lust.”

“Now I see what you intend to do with your plan,” the widow said.

“You see that it is lawful, then,” Helena said. “It is no more than that your daughter, before she pretends to be won, desires this ring to be given to her. She will set up a place and a time where and when she is supposed to sleep with him. But she will allow me to sleep with him while she herself is most chastely absent. After this is done, to her dowry I’ll add three thousand crowns to what has passed to you already.”

“I have yielded,” the widow said. “I will do it. Give my daughter instructions for how she shall proceed so that the time and place for this very lawful deceit may prove fitting and agreeable. Every night he comes with musicians of all sorts and songs composed to seduce her. From our eaves we command him to go away, but he persists as if his life

depends on it.”

“Why then tonight let us put our plot in motion,” Helena said. “If it succeeds, it is a wicked meaning in a lawful deed and a lawful meaning in a lawful act, where both do not sin, and yet it is a sinful fact.”

If Helena slept with her husband, they would not be doing a sinful act because they were married. However, Helena had to do a sinful act — deceive her husband — in order to get her husband to sleep with her. In addition, her husband, although he was not in fact committing adultery, thought that he was sleeping with a woman who was not his wife. Despite the deceit committed, or thought to be committed, they were still doing a lawful act.

Helena then said to the widow, “But let’s go about setting this plot in motion.”

CHAPTER 4 (All's Well That Ends Well)

— 4.1 —

Outside the Florentine military camp, the second French lord and five or six soldiers waited to ambush Parolles.

The second French lord said, “He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner. When you burst out of hiding upon him, speak whatever terrible language you will. Although you don’t understand it yourselves, it doesn’t matter, for we must not seem to understand him unless we have someone among us whom we produce to be an interpreter.”

The first soldier said, “Good Captain, let me be the interpreter.”

“Aren’t you acquainted with him?” the second lord asked. “Does he know your voice?”

“No, sir, I promise you,” the first soldier replied.

The second lord asked, “But what linsey-woolsey will you reply to us?”

Literally, linsey-woolsey is cloth made of linen and wool. Figuratively, it is a mishmash of language.

“Even such as you speak to me,” the first soldier replied.

The second lord said, “Parolles must think that we are some band of foreign soldiers in the enemy’s payroll. Be aware that he has a smack of all neighboring languages; therefore, we must everyone be a man of his own fancy and not know what we speak one to another — as long as we seem to know what we speak to each other, we will know enough for our purpose. The language of jackdaws is gabble enough and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must

seem very intelligent. But crouch and lie in ambush! Here he comes, to pass two hours in a nap, and then to return and swear to the lies he invents.”

Parolles walked onto the scene, unaware that soldiers were crouching in ambush.

“Ten o’clock,” he said. “After no longer than three hours, it will be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible lie that carries it off. They begin to smoke me out and expose me, and disgraces have recently knocked too often at my door. I find that my tongue is too foolhardy, but my heart has the fear of Mars and of his creatures before it, not daring to do the reports of my tongue. I don’t dare do what my tongue says I will do.”

The second lord said quietly so that Parolles could not hear him, “This is the first truth that your own tongue was ever guilty of.”

“What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such intention?” Parolles said. “I must give myself some wounds, and say I got them in the exploit of recovering the drum, yet slight wounds will not carry it off. They will say, ‘Did you come away with such slight wounds?’ And great wounds I dare not give myself. Wherefore, what’s the physical evidence I can show them? Tongue, I must put you into a dairy woman’s mouth and buy myself another tongue from Bajazet’s mule, if you prattle me into these perils.”

Dairy women were known for being talkative.

Bajazet was a character in a Turkish history who rode a mule. Why would Parolles want to buy a tongue from a Turkish mule? It would be better for him to have a tongue that cannot speak any human language than to have a tongue that continually got him into trouble. When it comes

to human language, mules are mutes, and Turkish mutes are slaves who are forced to remain mute because their tongues have been cut out. It would be better for Parolles to have no tongue — or a tongue that has been cut out — than to have a tongue that continually got him into trouble.

The second lord said, “Is it possible he should know what he is, and still be what he is? Wouldn’t he try to change and become better?”

Parolles said, “I wish the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword. I need to produce some evidence intended to show that I have been fighting.”

“We won’t let you off so easily,” the second lord said.

Parolles said, “Or I could shave my beard, and then say I did it as part of a stratagem.”

“It would not work,” the second lord said.

“Or I could drown my clothes in a stream or river, and say I was stripped,” Parolles said.

“That would hardly serve,” the second lord said.

“Suppose I swore I leaped from the window of the citadel,” Parolles said.

“How high would the window be?” the second lord said to himself.

“Thirty fathoms,” Parolles said, thinking out loud to himself. “One hundred and eighty feet.”

“Three great oaths would scarcely make that be believed,” the second lord said.

“I wish I had any drum of the enemy’s,” Parolles said. “I would swear I recovered it.”

“You shall hear one soon,” the second lord said.

“A drum now of the enemy’s —” Parolles mused.

A drum sounded, and the soldiers ambushed Parolles.

The second lord began to speak nonsense: “*Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.*”

The other soldiers replied with more nonsense: “*Cargo, cargo, cargo, villiando par corbo, cargo.*”

“*Cargo*” is Spanish for “charge.”

The soldiers seized him.

“Oh, ransom me, ransom me!” Parolles cried.

He wanted to be held for ransom rather than killed.

The soldiers blindfolded him, and he cried, “Do not cover my eyes.”

The first soldier said, “*Boskos thromuldo boskos.*”

Parolles said, “I know you are the Muscovites’ regiment, and I shall lose my life for lack of knowing your language. If there be anyone here who is German, or Dane, low Dutch, Italian, or French, let him speak to me. I’ll reveal information that shall lead to the defeat and ruin of the Duke of Florence.”

“*Boskos vauvado,*” the first soldier said. “I understand you, and I can speak your tongue. *Kerely bonto,* sir, betake yourself to your faith and say your prayers, for seventeen daggers are at your bosom.”

“Oh!” Parolles cried.

“Oh, pray, pray, pray!” the first soldier said. “*Manka revania dulce.*”

“*Revania*” is Hungarian for “screeching,” and “*dulce*” is Latin for “sweet.”

The second lord said loudly, “*Oscorbidulchos volivorco.*”

“The general is content to spare you yet,” the first soldier said. “And, blindfolded as you are, he will lead you on to gather information from you. Perhaps you may give him information that will save your life.”

“Oh, let me live!” Parolles cried. “And all the secrets of our military camp I’ll reveal: the strength of their force and their plans. I’ll speak wonders.”

“But will you do so truly and faithfully?” the first soldier asked.

“If I do not, damn me,” Parolles said.

“*Acordo linta,*” the first soldier said. “Come on; you are granted a space of time to live.”

“*Linta*” is Portugese for “agreement.”

Some soldiers took Parolles away.

The second lord said, “Go, tell the Count Rousillon and my brother that we have caught the woodcock, and we will keep him muffled and quiet until we hear from them.”

A woodcock is an easily captured bird that was thought to be stupid.

The second soldier replied, “Captain, I will.”

The second lord said, “Parolles will betray us all unto ourselves. He will tell us everything although he thinks that we are the enemy. Inform the Count Rousillon and my brother about that.”

“I will do so, sir,” the second soldier replied.

“Until then I’ll keep him in the dark and safely locked up,” the second lord said.

— 4.2 —

Bertram and Diana talked together in the widow’s house.

Bertram said, “They told me that your name was Fontibell.”

“No, my good lord, my name is Diana.”

Bertram wasn’t much of a lover: He couldn’t even remember her name. Of course, he had heard that her name was Diana, but in trying to remember it, the image of a fountain with a statue of Diana came to mind, and he mistakenly thought that her name was “Fontibell,” a name that means “Beautiful Fountain.”

“You are named after a goddess,” Bertram said, “and you are worthy of your name, with additional titles! But, fair soul, in your fine frame does love have no position? If the quick fire of youth does not light up your mind, you are no maiden, but a monument — a tomb. When you are dead, you will be such a one as you are now, for you are cold and stern, and now you should be as your mother was when your sweet self was begotten.”

“When I was begotten, my mother was chaste and did not engage in illicit sex,” Diana said. “She was married.”

“So should you be,” Bertram said.

False promises of marriage are part of the arsenal of the seducer.

“No,” Diana said. “My mother did but such duty as, my lord, you owe to your wife.”

“Speak no more of that,” Bertram said. “I ask you, do not strive against my vows. Do not resist me because of my

marriage vows. I was compelled to marry her, but I love you by love's own sweet constraint, and I will forever do you all rights of service."

"Yes, you men serve us women until we sexually serve you," Diana said, "but when you have our roses — our maidenheads — you barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves with regret and you mock our bareness."

"How I have sworn that I will serve you!" Bertram said.

"It is not the many oaths that make the truth," Diana said, "but the plain single vow that is vowed truly. The number of oaths is not important; what is important is whether the oath is sworn morally and with sincerity. What is not holy, that we swear not by, but instead we take the Highest to witness our oath. So then, please, tell me, if I should swear by God's great attributes that I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths when I did love you ill — when my love for you is ill?"

Bertram's "love" for Diana was ill; he wanted to seduce her and then abandon her.

Diana continued, "To swear by him whom I profess to love, and yet to work against him and make him sin by committing adultery has no logic. Therefore, your oaths are mere words and a poor contract that lacks the seal that would make it legally binding, at least in my opinion."

"Change it! Change your opinion!" Bertram urged. "Be not so holy-cruel — so cruel by being holy! Love is holy, and my integrity never knew the crafty plots that you charge men with engaging in. Stand off no more, but give yourself to my lovesick desires, which then will recover. Say that you are mine, and my love as it begins shall ever so persevere."

Diana said, "I see that men make ropes in such a scarre so

that we'll forsake ourselves."

This may sound like nonsense, but that is because she was using obsolete words. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a rope is "[o]utcry, clamour; cries of distress or lamentation." Also according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "scarre" can be a spelling of "scare," which can mean "[f]ear, dread." By the way, the Norwegian verb "*rope*" means "shout, scream, call."

Therefore, this is what Diana was saying: "I see that men make cries of distress when they are afraid they won't get what they want so that we women will forsake ourselves." In other words, men will say anything to get immoral sex.

She then pointed to a ring on Bertram's hand and said, "Give me that ring."

"I'll lend it to you, my dear," Bertram said, "but I have no power to give it to you."

"Won't you give it to me, my lord?" Diana asked.

"It is an honor — an heirloom — belonging to our house, bequeathed down from many ancestors," Bertram said. "It would be the greatest disgrace in the world for me to lose its possession."

"My honor's such a ring as that," Diana said. "My chastity's the jewel of our house, bequeathed down from many ancestors; it would be the greatest disgrace in the world for me to lose my chastity. Thus your own proper wisdom brings in the champion Honor on my side, against your vain assault on my chastity."

"Here, take my ring," Bertram said, giving her the ring. "May my house, my honor, and indeed, my life be yours, and I'll be commanded by you."

"When midnight comes, knock at my bedchamber-

window,” Diana said. “I’ll arrange things so that my mother shall not hear. Now I will charge you in the bond of truth, when you have conquered my yet maiden bed, to remain there only an hour and do not speak to me. My reasons are very strong; and you shall know them when this ring shall be delivered back to you again. And on your finger in the night I’ll put another ring, so that what in time proceeds may betoken to the future our past deeds.”

In the marriage ceremony, the man and the woman exchange rings. Helena, of course, would be the woman in bed with Bertram, who could remain only an hour with her and not talk to her because Helena did not want to be recognized by the sound of her voice or to be seen in the morning light. She did, however, want to spend some time with Bertram after sex.

Diana said, “*Adieu*, until then; then, don’t fail to appear. You have won a wife of me, although there my hope is done. Once I give up my virginity in this manner, I also give up my hope of ever becoming a wife.”

In fact, Bertram would win a wife — Helena — from Diana.

Bertram said, “A heaven on earth I have won by wooing you.”

He exited.

Diana said, “For which live long to thank both Heaven and me!”

Their ideas of heaven/Heaven were different.

Diana continued, “You may do so in the end. My mother told me just how he would woo, as if she sat in his heart; she says all men have the same oaths. He has sworn to marry me when his wife’s dead; therefore, I’ll lie with him

when I am buried. Since Frenchmen weave plots as if they were weaving a braid, let those marry who will — I intend to live and die a maiden. But I think it no sin to deceive and cozen and cheat him who would unjustly win.”

— 4.3 —

The two French lords spoke together in the Florentine camp. Some soldiers were present.

The first lord said, “You have not given Bertram his mother’s letter?”

“I delivered it an hour ago,” the second lord said. “There is something in it that stings his nature, for as he read it he changed almost into another man.”

“He is very much worthy of the blame laid upon him for shaking off so good a wife and so sweet a lady,” the first lord said. “He rejected his wife, who is a good woman.”

“He especially has incurred the everlasting displeasure of the King, who had even tuned his bounty to sing happiness to him,” the second lord said. “The King would have made him a very wealthy and much-respected man. I will tell you something about Bertram, but you must let it dwell darkly with you. Don’t tell anyone.”

“When you have spoken it, it is dead, and I am its grave,” the first lord said.

“Bertram has perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most chaste reputation, and this night he fleshes his sexual desire in the spoil of her honor,” the second lord said. “He has given her his ancestral ring, which is an heirloom, and he thinks himself a made man in the unchaste arrangement.”

The second lord was using a hunting term when he used the word “fleshes.” When a dog makes a kill while hunting, it

is rewarded with a piece of the flesh of the kill.

“Now, may God delay our rebellion!” the first lord said. “All of us sin and rebel against God, but let us fight temptation and put off sinning as long as possible. As we are ourselves — that is, without the benefit of the grace of God — what things are we!”

“We are entirely our own traitors,” the second lord said. “We are traitors to the person whom we ought to be. And as in the common course of all treasons, we always see the traitors reveal themselves with boasting conversation until they attain their abhorred aims, with the result that he who in this action plots against his own nobility in his proper stream overflows and destroys himself. That is, he who plots against his own nobility will succeed and will undo his own nobility with his own plots. His nobility ought to stay in its own proper course, but by giving in to his evil impulses the man destroys himself as if he has been caught in an overflowing flood.”

The first lord said, “Isn’t it a sign of damnation in us to be trumpeters of our unlawful intents? Bertram has been boasting about corrupting a chaste and virtuous maiden. Shall we not then have his company tonight?”

“Not until after midnight,” the second lord said, “for his schedule is full until that hour.”

“Midnight approaches quickly,” the first lord said. “I would gladly have him see his companion — Parolles — dissected, so that he might take a measure of his own judgments, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit. Bertram is wrong in his opinion of Parolles; if he can realize that, he may realize that he is wrong in his opinion of his wife. Up until now, Bertram has treated Parolles as if he were a precious jewel, but we know that Parolles is a counterfeit gem that has until now been put in an elaborate

setting.”

“We will not meddle with Parolles until Bertram comes,” the second lord said, “for the presence of the one must be the whip of the other.”

Both Parolles and Bertram will be the whip of the other. Parolles will be exposed as a coward in the presence of Bertram, but Bertram will realize his mistaken judgment of Parolles in the presence of Parolles.

“In the meantime, what do you hear about these wars?” the first lord asked.

“I hear there is an overture of peace,” the second lord said.

“I assure you, a peace has been reached,” the first lord said.

“What will Count Rousillon do then?” the second lord asked. “Will he travel further, or will he return again to France?”

“I perceive, by this question,” the first lord said, “that you are not altogether of his council. You do not give him counsel.”

“Let it be forbid, sir,” the second lord said. “If that were true, I would be a great deal responsible for his act — this seduction, which, we know, is unethical.”

“Sir, his wife some two months ago fled from his house,” the first lord said. “Her intention was a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le Grand, which holy undertaking with most austere sanctity she accomplished, and while she resided there the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief. In the end, she made a groan with her last breath, and now she sings in Heaven. She died.”

“How is this known to be true?” the second lord asked.

“The stronger, more convincing evidence of its truth is by

her own letters, which shows her story to be true, even to the point of her death,” the first lord said. “Her death itself, which she herself could not say had come, was faithfully and truly confirmed by the rector of the place.”

“Does Count Rousillon have all this information?” the second lord asked.

“Yes,” the first lord said, “and he has the particular confirmations, point from point and in every detail confirmed, to the full substantiation of the truth.”

“I am heartily sorry that he’ll be glad of this,” the second lord said.

“How mightily sometimes we make for ourselves comforts of our losses!” the first lord said.

“And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in tears!” the second lord said. “The great dignity and respect that his valor has here acquired for him shall at home be encountered with a shame as ample.”

“The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together,” the first lord said. “Our virtues would cause us to be proud, if our sins did not whip us, and our sins would cause us to despair, if we did not cherish our virtues.”

A servant entered the room.

The first lord asked, “Where’s Bertram, your master?”

“He met the Duke of Florence in the street, sir, from whom he has taken a solemn leave,” the servant replied. “His lordship will leave tomorrow morning for France. The Duke of Florence has offered him letters praising him to the King of France.”

“They shall be no more than is needful there, even if they were more than they can commend,” the second lord said.

“They cannot be too sweet for the King’s tartness,” the second lord said.

He looked up and said, “Here’s his lordship now.”

Bertram entered the room.

“How are you now, my lord!” the second lord said. “Isn’t it after midnight?”

“I have this night dispatched sixteen pieces of business, which could each have taken a month to sort out. Here’s a list of the pieces of business that I have undertaken with success in succession: I have taken ceremonious leave of the Duke of Florence, said my *adieux* to those nearest him, buried a wife, mourned for her, wrote to my mother that I am returning to France, hired my means of transportation home, and between these main parcels of dispatch effected many nicer and more trivial pieces of business; the last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet.”

The last piece of business was sleeping with “Diana,” as he supposed, but that was not finished because she could become pregnant, and/or she could insist that she become his wife, as he had promised her he would when his first wife had died.

The second lord said, “If the business be of any difficulty, and in the morning you will depart from hence, it requires haste from your lordship.”

“I mean, the business has not ended because I am afraid that I will hear of it hereafter,” Bertram said. “But shall we have this dialogue between the fool and the soldier? Come, bring forth this counterfeit, false image of a soldier; he has deceived me, like a double-meaning, equivocating prophesier.”

Some prophets use equivocation in their answers to

questions. Croesus, King of Lydia, wanted to attack Persia, but first he went to the Oracle of Delphi and asked the Oracle what would happen if he attacked the mighty Kingdom of Persia. The Oracle replied, “A mighty Kingdom will fall.” Lydia attacked Persia, and a mighty Kingdom did fall: the mighty Kingdom of Lydia.

“Bring Parolles forth,” the second lord said. “He has sat in the stocks all night, poor gallant knave.”

A person sitting in the stocks has his legs (and/or arms and/or head) restrained. The word “gallant” in this context meant “fancily dressed.”

Bertram said, “It does not matter. His heels have deserved it because they have usurped his spurs for so long.”

Parolles’ heels ran away from battle, usurping his spurs, which ought to be used to spur his horse to go into battle. “Usurping his spurs” also meant that Parolles had falsely claimed to have knightly valor.

Bertram then asked, “How does Parolles carry himself?”

By “carry himself,” Bertram meant “comport himself,” aka “conduct himself.”

“I have told your lordship already, the stocks carry him,” the second lord said. “They carry his weight. But to answer you as you would be understood, he weeps like a wench who has spilled her milk. He has confessed his sins to Morgan, whom he supposes to be a friar, from the time he first remembers anything from his life to this very immediate disaster of his being set in the stocks, and what do you think he has confessed?”

“He has confessed nothing about me, has he?” Bertram asked.

“His confession is taken and written down, and it shall be

read to his face,” the second lord said. “If your lordship is in it, as I believe you are, you must be patient until you can hear it.”

Parolles, blindfolded and guarded by the first soldier, walked to a place close to them.

“A plague upon him!” Bertram said. “Blindfolded! He can say nothing about me.”

“Hush! Hush!” the first lord said. “Hoodman comes!”

They spoke quietly enough that Parolles could not hear them.

Hoodman was the blindfolded player in the game hoodman blind, aka blindman’s buff or blindman’s bluff. The word “buff” at one time meant “small push.”

The first lord then began speaking nonsense: “*Portotartarosa.*”

The nonsense word included the word “Tartar”; in this society, Tartars were known for being savage. “*Porto*” is Latin for “I carry.”

The first soldier said to Parolles, “He calls for the tortures. What will you tell us without your being tortured?”

“I will confess everything I know without constraint,” Parolles said. “If you pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more.”

A pasty is a small pastry with its crust pinched together so that the filling, often meat and vegetables, is inside. One meaning of “pinch” is “inflict bodily pain.”

“*Bosko chimurcho,*” the first soldier said.

“*Bosko*” is Polish for “divinely.”

“*Boblibindo chicurmurco*,” the first lord said.

“You are a merciful general,” the first soldier said. “Our general orders you to answer what I shall ask you out of a list of questions.”

“And I will answer with the truth, as I hope to live,” Parolles said.

The first soldier read out loud, “*First demand of him how many horsemen the Duke of Florence has.*”

He asked Parolles, “What do you say to that?”

Parolles answered, “Five or six thousand, but they are very weak and unserviceable. The troops are all scattered, and the commanders are very poor rogues, I swear upon my reputation and credit and as I hope to live.”

“Shall I set down your answer so?” the first soldier asked.

“Do,” Parolles said. “I’ll take the sacrament on it, how and in which way you will.”

Some people disagreed on how to take the sacrament, whether while sitting or while kneeling.

“All’s one to him — he doesn’t care,” Bertram said. “What a past-saving — damned to Hell — slave this man is!”

“You’re deceived, my lord,” the first lord said ironically. “This is Monsieur Parolles, the expert in military affairs, aka gallant militarist — that was his own phrase — who had the whole theory of war in the knot of his sash, and the practice in the chape — the metal plate where the dagger-point goes — of the sheath of his dagger. He understands both the theory and the practice of war.”

A lady who favored him would knot his sash, and the chape would be of use when the dagger is not in use.

The second lord said, "I will never trust a man again because he keeps his sword clean and polished, nor will I believe he can have everything in him because he wears his apparel neatly and elegantly."

"Well, that's set down," the first soldier said.

"Five or six thousand horsemen, I said — I will say the truth — or thereabouts," Parolles said. "Set it down, for I'll speak the truth."

"He's very near the truth in this," the first lord said.

"But I will not learn words to give him thanks for it, considering the reason he delivers the truth," Bertram said.

"They are poor rogues," Parolles said. "Please, set that down in writing."

"Well, that's set down," the first soldier said.

"I humbly thank you, sir," Parolles said. "The truth's a truth: The rogues are marvelously poor."

The first soldier read out loud, "*Demand of him, of what strength they are in foot soldiers.*"

He then asked Parolles, "What do you say to that?"

Parolles replied, "Truly, sir, if I were to live only until this present hour, I will tell the truth. Let me see. Spurio has a hundred and fifty foot soldiers. Sebastian has the same number. Corambus has the same number. Jaques has the same number. Gultian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii have two hundred and fifty foot soldiers each. My own company, as well as the companies of Chitopher, Vaumond, and Bentii have two hundred and fifty each. So the official list of men, both the rotten men and the sound men, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand heads, half of whom dare not shake snow from off their military

cloaks, lest they shake themselves to pieces.”

Bertram asked, “What shall be done to Parolles?”

“Nothing, but let him have thanks,” the first lord replied.

Presumably, Parolles would not welcome the kind of “thanks” he would receive.

The first lord added, “Ask him about my character, and what credit I have with the Duke of Florence.”

The first soldier said to Parolles, “Well, that’s set down.”

He then read out loud, “*You shall ask him whether one Captain Dumain, a Frenchman, is in the camp; what is his reputation with the Duke; what is his valor, honesty, and expertness in wars; and you shall ask him whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt Captain Dumain to revolt.*”

“Well-weighing sums of gold” are “heavy amounts of gold” and “influential amounts of gold.”

The first soldier asked Parolles, “What do you say about this? What do you know about it?”

“I beg you,” Parolles said, “to let me answer each particular question. Ask me each question one at a time.”

“Do you know this Captain Dumain?” the first soldier asked.

“I know him,” Parolles said. “He was a patcher’s apprentice in Paris, from whence he was whipped for getting the sheriff’s fool pregnant — she was a dumb innocent who could not tell him no.”

A patcher is either a cobbler who mends shoes or a tailor who mends clothing.

The sheriff would have custody of feeble-minded citizens whose estates were worth little. The King would have custody of feeble-minded citizens whose estates were worth much.

Captain Dumain was angry and made a motion as if he were going to attack Parolles.

Bertram said to the first lord, who was Captain Dumain, "Please, don't do anything. Restrain your anger and keep your hands away from Parolles, although I know his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls. He is sure to meet with an 'accident' that will take his life."

The first soldier asked, "Well, is this Captain in the Duke of Florence's camp?"

"Upon my knowledge, he is, and he is lousy," Parolles said.

The word "lousy" was both an insult and literally meant. Military camps were full of lice.

Bertram looked at the first lord and stifled a laugh.

The first lord said to Bertram, "Don't look that way at me; we shall hear about your lordship soon."

The first soldier asked, "What is Captain Dumain's reputation with the Duke of Florence?"

"The Duke knows him for no other than a poor officer of mine," Parolles said, "and he wrote to me this other day to kick him out of the band of soldiers. I think I have his letter in my pocket."

"By mother Mary, we'll search your pocket for it," the first soldier said.

"In all seriousness, I do not know that it is in my pocket," Parolles said. "Either it is there, or it is in a file with the Duke's other letters in my tent."

“Here it is,” the first soldier said. “Here’s a paper. Shall I read it to you?”

“I don’t know whether it is the Duke’s letter or not,” Parolles said.

“Our interpreter does his job well,” Bertram said.

“Excellently,” the first lord agreed.

The first soldier read out loud, “*Diana, the Count’s a fool, and wealthy with gold —.*”

Parolles interrupted, “That is not the Duke’s letter, sir; that is a warning to a proper maid in Florence, one named Diana, to take heed of the allurements of Bertram, Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish — he is very horny. Please, sir, put away the letter.”

“No, I’ll read it first,” the first soldier said, “if you don’t mind.”

“My intention in writing the letter, I say, was very honest in behalf of the maid,” Parolles said, “for I knew the young Count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity and devours up all the fry it finds.”

When it came to virgins, Bertram, according to Parolles, was like a whale feeding on large numbers of small fish.

Bertram said, “Damnable both-sides rogue! He pretends to be a friend, but he is not a friend.”

The first soldier read the letter out loud:

“*When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it;*

“*After he scores, he never pays the score.*

“*Half won is match well made; match, and well make it.*

“*He never pays after-debts, take it before.*

“And say that a soldier, Diana, told you this:

“Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss.

“You can count on this, the Count’s a fool, I know it,

“Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.

“I am yours, as he vowed to you in your ear,

“PAROLLES.”

His advice to Diana was to receive payment in advance for what Bertram would take away from her. Indeed, according to Parolles, the only way to get money from Bertram, who was happy to get things on credit and then never pay, was to make him pay in advance. In other words, Parolles was advising Diana, more or less, to sell her virginity. Why less? Because he — Parolles — would like her to give away her virginity to him, something he hinted at when he wrote that men are to mell — have sex — with, while boys are not worth kissing. The implication was that Bertram was a boy, while Parolles was a man. But overall, Parolles regarded sex as a woman’s sellable commodity.

“Half won is match well made; match, and well make it” referred to a sexual match between Bertram and Diana. Parolles was saying this: When a match is well made, with all conditions agreed to, it is a match that is half won; therefore, continue to make the match and to make it good. In other words, Parolles wanted Diana to sell her virginity, but to get a good price for it.

Bertram said, “Parolles shall be whipped through the army with this rhyming poem written on his forehead.”

The second lord said ironically, “This is your devoted friend, sir, the multiple linguist and the armipotent — mighty in arms — soldier.”

“I could endure anything before but a cat, and now he’s a cat to me,” Bertram said.

The first soldier said, “I perceive, sir, by the General’s looks, we shall be obliged to hang you.”

“Give me my life, sir, in any case,” Parolles pleaded. “It is not that I am afraid to die, but that, because my sins are so many, I would like to spend the remainder of my natural life in repentance. Let me live, sir, in a dungeon, in the stocks, or anywhere, as long as I may live.”

“We’ll see what may be done,” the first soldier said, “as long as you confess freely; therefore, once more let’s talk about this Captain Dumain. You have answered the question about his reputation with the Duke and about his valor. Now answer this question: How honest is he?”

“He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister,” Parolles replied. “As for rapes and ravishments, he parallels Nessus, the Centaur who attempted to rape the wife of Hercules. He does not believe in keeping his oaths; when it comes to breaking them, he is stronger than Hercules. He will lie, sir, with such volubility and fluency that you would think truth were a fool. Drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bedclothes; but his servants know his habit of peeing the bed and so they lay him in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, about his honesty. He has everything that an honest man should not have; of what an honest man should have, he has nothing.”

Impressed by Parolles’ over-the-top villainy, the first lord said, “I begin to love him for this.”

“For this description of your honesty?” Bertram said. “I say a pox upon him! To me, he’s more and more a cat.”

The first soldier asked Parolles, “What do you have to say

about his expertness in war?"

"Truly, sir," Parolles said. "He has led the drum before the English tragedians."

English acting troupes used to advertise an upcoming play by parading behind a drum. Parolles was saying that Captain Dumain's experience with drums was not with military drums, but with actors' drums.

Parolles continued, "To tell lies about him, I will not, and more of his soldiership I don't know, except, in that country — England — he had the honor to be the officer at a place there called Mile End, to instruct for the doubling of files. I would do the man what honor I can, but of this — his service at Mile End — I am not certain."

The citizen militia of London used to train at Mile End Green, where they engaged in such military drills as the doubling of files. This was not a professional militia, and it was mocked for its amateurishness.

The first lord said, "He has out-villained villainy so far that the rarity redeems him. His villainy is so excessive that it is entertaining rather than simply despicable."

Bertram said, "I say a pox on him; he's still a cat."

The first lord was right: Parolles' insults were inventive and entertaining; in comparison, Bertram's insults were repetitive and boring.

The first soldier said to Parolles, "His qualities being at this poor price, I need not ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt."

Parolles replied, "Sir, for a small French coin he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it, and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually."

In other words, for a small French coin he would sell his eternal salvation, ensure that his immediate descendants would not inherit it, and furthermore ensure that *all* his descendants would not possess it.

“What kind of man is his brother, the other Captain Dumain?” the first soldier asked.

The second lord, who was the other Captain Dumain, asked, “Why does he ask him about me?”

“What kind of man is he?” the first soldier repeated.

“He is even a crow of the same nest,” Parolles replied. “He is not altogether as great as the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil. He excels his brother as a coward, yet his brother is reputed one of the best cowards who exists. In a retreat he outruns any lackey who runs alongside his master’s carriage; in contrast, when he is supposed to march forward to meet the enemy, his legs cramp.”

The first soldier asked, “If your life is saved, will you undertake to betray the Duke of Florence?”

“Yes, and also the Captain of his cavalry, Count Rousillon,” Parolles replied.

“I’ll confer quietly with the General, and find out what he wants to do,” the first soldier said.

Parolles said quietly to himself, “I’ll have no more of military drumming — a plague on all military drums! I have run into this danger only because I wanted to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy, the Count Rousillon. Yet who would have suspected an ambush where I was captured?”

“There is no remedy, sir,” the first soldier said. “You must die, the General says, you who have so traitorously revealed the secrets of your army and made such

pestiferous reports of men with very noble reputations. You can serve the world for no honest use; therefore, you must die. Come, headsman, off with his head.”

“Oh, Lord, sir! Let me live, or let me see my death!” Parolles pleaded. “At least, take off my blindfold.”

The first lord said, “You shall have your blindfold taken off, and you shall take your leave of all your friends.”

The first lord removed Parolles’ blindfold and then asked him, “So, look around you. Do you know anybody here?”

“Good morning, noble Captain,” Bertram said.

“God bless you, Captain Parolles,” the second lord said.

“May God save you, noble Captain,” the first lord said.

The second lord asked, “Captain, what greeting will you send to my Lord Lafeu? I am going to France and can take him your greeting.”

The first lord asked, “Good Captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet you wrote to Diana on behalf of the Count Rousillon? If I were not a complete coward, I would compel you to give it to me, but fare you well.”

Bertram and the lords exited.

The first soldier said to Parolles, “You are ruined. You are undone, Captain, all but your scarf; that still has a knot in it.”

“Who cannot be crushed by a plot?” Parolles said.

The first soldier said, “If you could find a country where there were only women who had received so much shame, you might begin an impudent, shameless nation. Fare you well, sir; I am going to France, too. We shall speak about you there.”

The first soldier exited with the other soldiers.

Alone, Parolles said to himself, “Still I am thankful. If my heart were great, it would burst with shame at this. Captain I’ll be no more, but I will eat and drink, and sleep as softly and gently as any Captain shall. Simply being the base thing I am shall make me live. That man who knows that he is a braggart, let him fear this, for it will come to pass that every braggart shall be found to be an ass. Rust, sword! Cool, blushes! And, Parolles, live safest in shame! Since you have been fooled, by Foolery thrive! There’s a position and a means to live for every man alive.”

If Parolles were a better man, he would die from shame. But he was not a better man, and he knew it, so he resolved to live and to eat, drink, and sleep well. Since he had been made a fool of, why not make a living by being a Fool?

Parolles did not know it, but the first lord had found his foolishness entertaining; others would as well.

Parolles then said before exiting, “I’ll go after them.”

— 4.4 —

Helena, the widow, and Diana spoke together in a room in the widow’s house in Florence.

Helena said to the others, “That you may well perceive I have not wronged you, one of the greatest in the Christian world — the King of France — shall be my surety, aka guarantor, before whose throne it is needful, before I can fully accomplish my goals, to kneel.

“Previously, I did for him a desirable task, as dear almost as his life. Gratitude for this task would peep forth through the flinty bosom of a Tartar, one of a people not known in our society for gratitude, and would respond with thanks.

“I duly am informed that his grace the King is at

Marseilles, to which place we have convenient and appropriate means of transportation. You must know that I am thought to be dead. Now that the army is disbanding, my husband is hurrying home, where with Heaven's aid and with the permission of my good lord the King, we'll be before we are expected."

The widow said, "Gentle madam, you have never had a servant to whose trust your business was more welcome. I am glad that you are able to confide in me."

Helena replied, "Nor have you, mistress, ever had a friend whose thoughts more truly labor to recompense your love and friendship. Doubt not that Heaven brought me up to provide your daughter's dowry for a good marriage, and doubt not that Heaven fated your daughter to be my motive — my means of causing my husband to act in a certain way — and helper to a husband.

"But, oh, strange men! They can make such sweet use of what they hate, when lecherous trusting of the deceived thoughts defiles the pitch-black night, and so lust plays with what it loathes — me, Helena — in place of that which is away and not present — Diana. His lust made him enjoy me, whom he hates.

"Bertram's lust that he trusted was deceived, and defiled the pitch-black night and made it even darker with his attempt to commit adultery, which he believed that he had committed although actually he slept with me and not with Diana.

"But let's talk further about this later.

"You, Diana, under my poor instructions yet must suffer to some extent on my behalf."

Diana replied, "As long as it is an honest, chaste death that goes with your impositions, I am willing to suffer death at

your command.”

Helena said, “Yet, I tell you this: With merely the word the time will bring on a metaphorical summer, when briers shall have leaves as well as thorns, and be as sweet as sharp.”

“The word” is Bertram saying “yes” to his marriage vows — and meaning it. Once Bertram truly commits to his marriage vows, all will be well.

Helena continued, “We must leave. Our wagon is prepared, and time invigorates us. All’s well that ends well; always the end crowns the work.”

The Latin “*finis coronat opus*” means “the end crowns the work.”

Helena continued, “Whatever the course, the end is the renown. Whatever occurs to get us there, the conclusion determines the praise.”

— 4.5 —

The Countess, Lafeu, and the Fool spoke together in a room in the Count of Rousillon’s palace. They were talking about Bertram and Parolles.

Lafeu said to the Countess, “No, no, no, your son was misled by a snipped-taffeta fellow there, whose villainous saffron would have made all the unbaked and doughy — raw — youth of a nation in his color.”

A fashion of the time was to wear two sets of sleeves of different colors. The set of sleeves on the outside was made of taffeta and had cuts in them in order to reveal the color of the set of sleeves underneath. Parolles wore such fashionable clothing, some of which was saffron-colored, and Lafeu was saying that Parolles’ influence on inexperienced young men would make them that color —

saffron, aka yellow, symbolic color of cowardice.

Lafeu continued, “If not for Parolles, your daughter-in-law would have been alive at this hour, and your son would still be here at home, and more advanced in wealth and status by the King than by that red-tailed bumblebee I speak of.”

Parolles was the red-tailed buzzing bumblebee; he wore fancy clothing and made noise as he chattered.

The Countess said, “I wish I had never known him; it resulted in the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman whom nature ever had praise for creating. If she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother in childbirth, I could not have owed her a more-rooted love. I loved Helena.”

“She was a good lady,” Lafeu said. “She was a good lady. We may pick a thousand salads before we light on such another herb.”

The Fool said, “Indeed, sir, she was the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather, the herb of grace.”

The herb of grace is rue.

Lafeu said, “Marjoram and rue are knot-herbs. They are not for salads, you knave; they are nose-herbs. They are for smelling, not for eating.”

Flowers and sweet-smelling herbs were grown in intricately designed beds called knots.

The Fool replied, “I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in either grace or grass.”

Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, fell out of the grace of God, went insane, and ate grass like an animal. His story is told in the Biblical Book of Daniel.

“Which do you profess yourself to be: a knave or a fool?”

Lafeu asked.

The Fool replied, “A Fool, sir, at a woman’s service, and a knave at a man’s.”

“Why do you make this distinction?” Lafeu asked.

The Fool replied, “I would cheat the man of his wife and do his service.”

“So you would be a knave at his service, indeed,” Lafeu said.

“And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service,” the Fool said.

He was punning. To service an animal is to mate it. A literal Fool’s bauble is a scepter with the figure of a head on one end. The Fool was using the word “bauble” metaphorically to refer to his penis, which he would use to service a man’s wife.

Lafeu replied, “I will answer my question for you: You are both a knave and a fool.”

“At your service,” the Fool said.

“No, no, no,” Lafeu said. The Fool already worked for the Countess. Lafeu liked the Countess, and he did not want to hire the Fool away from her.

“Why, sir, if I cannot serve you,” the Fool said, “I can serve as great a Prince as you are.”

“Who would that be?” Lafeu asked. “A Frenchman?”

“Truly, sir, he has an English name; but his fisnomy — physiognomy, aka facial features — is hotter in France than in England,” the Fool said.

“What Prince is that?” Lafeu asked.

“The Black Prince, sir,” the Fool said, “alias the Prince of Darkness, alias the Devil.”

Edward the Black Prince was the son of King Edward III of England. He was called the Black Prince because of his black armor. In 1346, on a French battlefield, he played the role of a hero as he and his soldiers defeated the entire French army in the Battle of Crécy. He is why the Black Prince had an English name.

What was the Black Prince’s French name? The Devil is associated with fire, as well as with blackness, and the French name “Lafeu” means “The Fire.” The Fool was joking that Lafeu had the facial features of the Devil.

Lafeu appreciated the joke; he tipped the Fool.

He said, “Wait, there’s some money for you. I am giving you this tip not to tempt you from your master you are talking about; continue to serve the Devil.”

The Fool then claimed to be heading toward Heaven.

He said, “I am a woodland fellow, sir, who has always loved a great fire; and the master I speak about always keeps a good fire. But surely he is the Prince of the World; let his nobility remain in his court. I am for the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be too little for pomp to enter. Some people who humble themselves may enter, but the many will be too sensitive to cold and too fond of comfort, and they’ll be for the flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire.”

“Go your ways and leave now,” Lafeu said. “I begin to be weary of you, and I tell you that before I do in fact get weary of you, because I would not fall out with you. Go on your way: Let my horses be well looked after, without any tricks.”

Some unethical hostlers were reputed to grease the horse's teeth with candlewax so that it could not eat many oats. Other hostlers were reputed to butter hay because horses will not eat buttered hay. That way, the hostler could charge horses' owners over and over for the same bundle of hay.

"If I put any tricks upon them, sir, they shall be jades' tricks," the Fool replied, "which are their own right by the law of nature."

Jades were ill-trained or bad horses, which had their own tricks. While being saddled by an inexperienced rider, a horse could fill its lungs with air. When the inexperienced rider attempted to climb onto the horse, the saddle would slide down to the horse's belly.

The Fool exited.

Lafeu said, "The Fool is a shrewd and unhappy knave."

Some people respond to their unhappy cynicism by creating humor; Lafeu thought that the Fool was one such person. Professional Fools create satire, and some satirists are unhappy cynics.

"So he is," the Countess said. "My lord and husband who has gone to Heaven got much entertainment out of him. By my husband's request and authority, the Fool remains here, and the Fool thinks my husband's authority gives him carte blanche to be saucy and impertinent. Indeed, the Fool has no pace, but runs where he will."

A trained horse keeps to a measured, steady pace, but the Fool was like a wild horse that ran wherever it wanted.

"I like him well," Lafeu admitted. "His sauciness is not amiss. I take no offence to it."

He added, "I was about to tell you that since I heard of the

good lady's death and that my lord your son was returning home, I urged the King my master to speak on behalf of my daughter. His majesty, without being prompted, remembered by himself that when they were children, he had first proposed that they be married.

"His highness has promised me that he will arrange the marriage, and there is no better way to stop the displeasure he has conceived against your son. This marriage will reconcile the King and your son.

"How does your ladyship like it? Do you approve of your son marrying my daughter?"

"I am very much content, my lord," the Countess said, "and I wish it happily effected. I am happy for the marriage to take place."

"His highness comes posthaste from Marseilles," Lafeu said. "He is of as able body as when he was thirty years old. He will be here tomorrow, or I am deceived by a man who has seldom failed in gathering such information."

"This news makes me rejoice," the Countess said. "I have hoped that I shall see the King before I die. I have received letters telling me that my son will be here tonight. I ask your lordship to remain with me until my son and the King meet together."

"Madam, I was just thinking about what manners I might use to properly ask to be invited into your home for this meeting," Lafeu said.

"You need only plead the privilege that goes with your honored self," the Countess said. "As the father of the woman who will marry my son, you may certainly stay here."

"Lady, of that marriage I have made a bold charter, but I

thank my God it holds yet,” Lafeu said. “I boldly took action to make the marriage happen, and I am happy that it will happen.”

The Fool returned and said, “Oh, madam, yonder’s my lord your son with a patch of velvet on his face. Whether there is a scar under it or not, the velvet knows, but it is a splendid patch of velvet. His left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a half, but his right cheek is worn bare.”

A velvet patch was used to cover a facial war wound. Velvet of two pile and a half was good-quality velvet.

Lafeu said, “A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good livery — visible sign — of honor, so most likely that is why he is wearing the velvet.”

The Fool said, “But it is your carbonadoed face.”

Meat that has been carbonadoed for cooking has had slits made in it. The Fool was still thinking of fire, but he was also thinking of a different reason for wearing a velvet patch. A person with syphilitic sores on his face would have the sores slashed so that the infection could drain.

Lafeu said to the Countess, “Let us go see your son, please. I long to talk with the young noble soldier.”

The Fool said, “Indeed, there’s a dozen of them, with delicate fine hats and very courteous feathers that bow their heads and nod at every man.”

CHAPTER 5 (All's Well That Ends Well)

— 5.1 —

Helena, the widow, and Diana, accompanied by two attendants, stood on a street in Marseilles.

Helena said, “But this exceedingly great haste as we journey day and night must be wearing your spirits low. We cannot help it, but since you have made the days and nights as one and are wearing out your gentle limbs in my affairs, be certain that you so grow in my recompense that nothing can unroot you. You will be rewarded — you can be confident of that.”

A gentleman walked down the street.

Seeing him, Helena said, “This is a good time to see a gentleman. This man may help me be heard by his majesty’s ear, if he would expend some effort on my behalf.”

She said to the gentleman, “May God save you, sir.”

“And you,” the gentleman replied.

“Sir, I have seen you in the court of the King of France,” Helena said.

“I have been there sometimes,” the gentleman replied.

“I do presume, sir, that you still have a reputation as a good man, and therefore, since I am goaded by many pressing reasons, which force me to put aside formal etiquette, I ask you for the use of your own virtues, for which I shall now and continue to be thankful to you.”

“What do you want me to do?” the gentleman asked.

“I hope that you will please give this poor petition to the King of France and aid me with that store of power you have to come into the King’s presence.”

“The King’s not here,” the gentleman said.

“Not here, sir!” Helena exclaimed.

“Not here, indeed,” the gentleman said. “He departed from here last night and with more haste than is his custom.”

“Lord, how we lose our pains!” the widow said.

Unruffled, Helena said, “All’s well that ends well yet, although time seems to us so adverse and our resources unfit.”

She asked the gentleman, “Please tell us where he has gone.”

“Indeed, as I understand it, he has gone to Rousillon, where I am going.”

“Please, sir,” Helena said, “since you are likely to see the King before I do, hand this paper to his gracious hand.”

She gave him a paper.

Helena continued, “Your doing this I presume shall render to you no blame but rather make you thank your pains for doing it. I will follow you with what good speed our resources will contrive for us.”

“I’ll do this for you,” the gentleman said.

“And you shall find yourself well thanked,” Helena said, “no matter what happens. We must start traveling again. Go, go, help us.”

— 5.2 —

The Fool and Parolles stood in front of the Count of

Rousillon's palace.

Parolles, whose fortunes had drastically declined, and whose clothing was much less clean than formerly, asked the Fool very politely, "Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu this letter. I have before now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes, but I am now, sir, muddled because of Lady Fortune's moody dislike of me, and I smell somewhat strongly of her strong displeasure."

Parolles smelled as if he had fallen into a fishpond. In this society, garbage was thrown into ponds, where fish, including carp, were raised for food.

The Fool replied, "Truly, Lady Fortune's displeasure is only sluttish, if it smells as strongly as you speak of it. I will henceforth eat no fish of Lady Fortune's buttering. Please, stand downwind so that I don't smell you."

Fish were frequently buttered when served.

"You don't need to hold your nose, sir," Parolles said. "I was speaking metaphorically."

"Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stinks, I will hold my nose," the Fool said. "I would do that against any man's stinking metaphor. Please, stand further away."

Parolles requested, "Please, sir, deliver this paper to Lord Lafeu for me."

"Bah! Please stand further away," the Fool said. "You want me to give a paper from Lady Fortune's toilet to a nobleman! Look, here he comes himself."

Lafeu walked over to them.

The Fool said to him, "Here is a purr of Lady Fortune's, sir, or of Lady Fortune's cat — but not a musk-cat — who has

fallen into the unclean fishpond of her displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied because of this. Please, sir, treat the carp as you may; for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my smiles of comfort and leave him to your lordship.”

In this society, the word “purr” means many things: 1) the purr of a cat, 2) the knave in a deck of cards used to play the game Post and Pair, and 3) animal manure.

Civet cats and musk deer were known for their glands that were used to make perfume. Parolles’ scent was nothing like the sweet-smelling scents of perfume.

Carp refers both to the fish and to a human chatterbox.

The Fool used “smiles of comfort” ironically. His smiles — jokes directed at Parolles’ misfortune — hardly comforted Parolles. However, the Fool did call Parolles ingenious, which is a compliment. Although Parolles was a scoundrel, his scurrility was so thorough going that other people marveled at it and had a kind of respect for him.

The Fool exited.

Parolles said to Lafeu, “My lord, I am a man whom Lady Fortune has cruelly scratched.”

“And what would you have me do about it?” Lafeu asked. “It is too late to pare her fingernails now. What have you done to play the knave with Lady Fortune, with the result being that she should scratch you? She in herself is a good lady and would not have knaves thrive long under her. There’s a quart d’ecu — a small coin — for you. Let the justices make you and Lady Fortune friends. I am busy.”

Some justices’ jobs were to take care of the poor.

Parolles said, “I beg your honor to hear me say one single word more.”

Lafeu said, “You are begging for a single penny more. Here, you shall have it. Don’t bother speaking your word.”

“My name, my good lord, is Parolles,” he said.

Lafeu said, “You beg more than one ‘word,’ then,” referring to Parolles’ name. In French, the word “*paroles*” meant “words.”

Looking closer at the bedraggled Parolles, and recognizing him, Lafeu said, “God’s passion! Give me your hand. How is your drum?”

He had heard all about Parolles’ adventure with the drum.

Parolles cried, “Oh, my good lord, you were the first who found me out and discovered what kind of a man I really am!”

“Was I, truly?” Lafeu said. “Then that means I was the first who lost you.”

“It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace, for you did bring me out,” Parolles said.

“Get out, knave!” Lafeu said. “Do you put upon me at once both the duty of God and the duty of the Devil? One brings you in grace and the other brings you out of grace.”

Trumpets sounded.

Lafeu said, “The King’s coming; I can tell by his trumpets. Sirrah, ask for me later. I had a conversation about you last night. Although you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat; come on, follow me.”

Parolles had fallen greatly in status, as shown by Lafeu calling him “sirrah.” But Lafeu would provide for him: Lafeu would keep Parolles fed in return for Parolles’ amusing him.

Parolles said, "I praise and thank God for you."

— 5.3 —

The King of France, the Countess, Lafeu, the two French lords, and some attendants were in a room in the Count of Rousillon's palace.

Using the royal plural, the King said to the Countess, "We lost a jewel when we lost Helena and our own worth and value were made much poorer by it, but your son, as if he were insane in his foolishness, lacked the sense to fully know her worth and value."

"That is in the past, my liege," the Countess said, "and I beg your majesty to consider that it was done because of natural rebellion. It was done in the blaze of youth, when oil and fire, too strong for reason's force, overbears it and burns on."

"Oil" means "semen," while "fire" is sexual desire. The Countess wanted the King to believe that her son's passions had opposed his reason, and to not believe that her son had opposed the King. Actually, it was Bertram's pride that had caused him to reject Helena because of her low birth. If he had been ruled by passion, he would have slept with her. However, it should be noted that the Countess meant that her son had felt passion for a woman other than Helena.

"My honored lady," the King replied, "I have forgiven and forgotten all; although my revenges were high bent like an arrow in a fully bent bow, and I watched for the best time to shoot him."

"This I must say," Lafeu said, "but first I beg for pardon. The young lord did to his majesty, his mother, and his lady offence of mighty note, but he did to himself the greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife whose beauty astonished the survey of the most experienced eyes, whose words took all

ears captive, whose dear perfection made hearts that scorned to serve others humbly serve her.”

“Praising what is lost makes the remembrance dear,” the King said. “Well, call Bertram to come here. We and he are reconciled, and the first view of him shall kill all reopening of old wounds. Let him not ask for our pardon. The nature of his great offence is dead, and deeper than oblivion we bury its relics that would incense anger. We will not entertain any thoughts that arouse anger toward him. Let him approach me as if he were a stranger who had never offended me, and inform him that it is our will he should do this.”

An attendant said, “I shall, my liege.” He exited to carry out his errand.

The King asked Lafeu, “What does he say about your daughter? Have you spoken to him?”

“All that he is, is at the disposal of your highness,” Lafeu replied.

“Then we shall have a match,” the King said. “Bertram and your daughter will be married. I have letters that were sent to me that set him high in fame and reputation. He served well in war.”

Bertram entered the room.

“He looks well after his experience in Italy,” Lafeu said.

The King said, “I am not a day of a single season, for you may see a sunshine and a hail in me simultaneously, but to the brightest beams divided clouds give way, so come forward, Bertram. The time is fair again.”

“For my faults, which I highly repent, dear sovereign, give pardon to me,” Bertram said.

The King replied, "All is well and good. Say not one word more about the time that has passed by. Let's take the instant by the forelock, the way that we should seize Lady Fortune and opportunity, for we are old, and on our quickest decrees the inaudible and noiseless foot of Time steals before we can effect them. Do you remember the daughter of this lord: Lafeu?"

"Admiringly, my liege," Bertram said. "At first I struck my choice upon her, before my heart dared to make too bold a herald of my tongue."

Bertram was saying that he loved Lafeu's daughter first and wanted to marry her, but he was too shy to make his desire to marry her known.

He continued, this time speaking about Helena without mentioning her name, "The sight of Lafeu's daughter became implanted in my eyes, and contempt lent me a scornful perspective, which warped the line of every face other than the face of Lafeu's daughter and which scorned a fair color, or expressed that the fair color was stolen, and which extended or contracted all proportions to a most hideous object."

Bertram was saying that his love for Lafeu's daughter warped his perception of every other woman, including Helena, making him see Helena in a false light. The implication was that this caused him to reject marriage to Helena.

He continued talking about Helena: "Thence it came that she whom all men praised and whom I myself, since I have lost her, have loved, was in my eye the speck of dust that offended it."

In other words, before Helena died, the sight of her offended Bertram. But since Helena had died, he had come to love her.

“Well excused,” the King said. “That you loved Helena strikes some bad deeds away from the great account of your good and bad deeds, but love that comes too late, like a remorseful pardon slowly carried, to the great sender becomes a sour offence, and love cries, ‘She who is gone is good.’”

A pardon too slowly carried arrives too late to help the pardoned person, thus giving the pardoner a bad feeling. Love that comes too late is like that; Bertram said that he loved Helena, but he said that only after she had died, when he could only mourn her.

The King continued, “Our rash faults make a trivial valuation of important, serious things we have, not knowing them until we know their grave. Often our displeasures, which are to ourselves unjust, destroy our friends and afterward weep over their ashes and dust. Our own love waking cries to see what’s done, while shame very late sleeps out the afternoon. Love comes to its senses too late, only after our displeasures have destroyed our friends.

“Let this be this sweet Helen’s knell, and now forget her. Send forth your amorous token for fair Madeleine, Lafeu’s daughter. The main consents are had, and here we’ll stay to see our widower’s second marriage-day.”

The Countess said, “Make this marriage better than the first, dear Heaven. Bless it! Or, before my son and Lafeu’s daughter meet, Nature, cease my existence!”

Lafeu said to Bertram, who was supposed to soon be his son-in-law, “Come on, my son, in whom my house’s name must be digested — my daughter will take your name, while my house’s name will be swallowed up — give a favor from you to sparkle in the spirits of my daughter, so that she may quickly come.”

Bertram gave him a ring.

Lafeu looked at the ring and said, "By my old beard, and every hair that's on it, Helen, who is dead, was a sweet creature. Such a ring as this, the last time that I took her leave at court, I saw upon her finger."

He had kissed Helena's hand when he took leave of her, and so he had closely observed her ring.

"This ring was not hers," Bertram said. It was the ring that he thought that Diana had given to him.

"Now, please, let me see it," the King said. "My eye, while I was speaking, often was fastened on it."

He looked at the ring and said, "This ring was mine, and when I gave it to Helen, I told her that if her fortunes ever stood in necessity of help, if she sent this token to me I would relieve her. Do you have the craftiness to rob and deprive her of what should help her most?"

"My gracious sovereign," Bertram said, "however it pleases you to take it so, the ring was never hers."

The Countess said, "Son, I swear on my life, I have seen her wear it, and she valued it as much as she valued her life."

"I am sure I saw her wear it," Lafeu said.

"You are deceived, my lord; Helena never saw this ring," Bertram said. "While I was in Florence, this ring was thrown to me from a window. It was wrapped in a paper, which contained the name of the woman who threw it. She was a noblewoman, and she thought I was single, but when I had acknowledged that I was married and had informed her fully that I could not answer in that course of honor as she had made the overture, she was sad because of this knowledge and ceased pursuing me, although she would

never take the ring back again.”

The King said, “Plutus, the god of wealth himself, who knows the tincture and elixir that will turn base metals into gold, thus multiplying the precious metal, has not more knowledge of the mystery of Nature than I have knowledge of this ring. It was mine, and then it was Helen’s. These things are true no matter who gave the ring to you. So then, if you have self-knowledge, confess that it was hers, and then confess by what rough enforcement you got this ring from her. She called on the saints to be her guarantors that she would never take this ring off her finger, unless she gave it to you yourself in bed, where you have never come to be with her, or if she sent it to us after she had suffered a great disaster.”

“She never saw this ring,” Bertram repeated.

“You lie,” the King said. “As I love my honor, I swear that you lie. You make misgiving fears come to me that I would gladly shut out of my mind.”

The King was afraid that Bertram had murdered Helena.

He continued, “If it should prove that you are so inhuman ... it will not prove to be true ... and yet I don’t know that ... you hated her with a deadly hatred, and she is dead. Nothing, except to close her eyes myself, could make me believe that she is dead more than to see this ring. Take him away.”

Guards seized Bertram.

The King said, “The evidence that was already in my possession before I acquired the evidence of this ring, however this matter turns out, shall accuse my fears of little foolishness and vanity, since I foolishly and vainly feared too little.”

In other words, the evidence the King had previously acquired would show that the King's fears were not foolish and were not in vain, aka devoid of value; instead, the King had foolishly and vainly not feared enough.

He put the ring on his finger and ordered, "Take Bertram away! We'll examine this matter further."

Bertram said, "If you shall prove that this ring was ever hers, you shall as easily prove that I, as her husband, shared her bed in Florence, a city that Helena has never been in."

The guards took Bertram away.

The King said, "My thoughts are dismal."

The gentleman whom Helena had asked to deliver a paper to the King (see 5.1) entered the room and said, "Gracious sovereign, whether I have been to blame or not, I don't know. Here's a petition from a Florentine, who has for four or five of your stopping places on your journey arrived too late to deliver it to you yourself. I undertook to deliver this petition to you, vanquished by the fair grace and speech of the poor suppliant, who by this time I know is here in Rousillon waiting to talk to you. Her importuning appearance showed that her business is important, and she told me, in a sweet verbal summary, that her business did concern your highness with herself."

The King took the petition, which soon became apparent was from Diana and was about Bertram, and read it out loud:

"Upon his many protestations to marry me when his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won me. I slept with him. Now that the Count Rousillon is a widower, his vows are legally due to me, and my honor is paid to him. He is legally obliged to marry me, but he stole away from Florence, taking no leave of me, and I have followed him to

*his country in order to get justice: Grant me justice, King!
In you justice best lies; otherwise a seducer flourishes, and
a poor maiden is ruined.*

“DIANA CAPILET.”

Hearing this, Lafeu immediately decided that he did not want Bertram to marry his daughter.

Lafeu said, “I will buy myself a son-in-law at a fair and pay the toll for this one. I’ll have nothing to do with him.”

Fairs were notorious for selling stolen goods, but Lafeu was saying that he could buy a better son-in-law than Bertram at a fair. He was also saying that he would pay the toll that was required to sell something — in this case, Bertram — at a fair.

The King said, “The Heavens have thought well of you, Lafeu, and so they have brought forth this discovery.”

In this culture, a respectable woman would not travel alone, and the King knew that other people must have traveled with her.

He ordered, “Seek these petitioners. Go speedily and bring the Count back again.”

Attendants exited to carry out the orders.

He said to the Countess, “I am afraid that the life of Helen, lady, was foully snatched.”

The King thought that Helena had been murdered on Bertram’s orders.

The Countess said, “Now may justice be done on the doers!”

Bertram, guarded, returned.

The King said to him, "I wonder that you still desire to marry, sir, since wives are monsters to you, and since you flee from them as soon as you swear to marry them."

The widow and Diana entered the room.

The King asked, "What woman is that?"

Diana replied, "I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine, descended from the ancient Capilet. I understand that you know my petition to you, and therefore you know to what extent I may be pitied."

The widow said, "I am her mother, sir, whose age and honor both suffer under this complaint we bring, and both shall cease without your remedy. Unless you make the Count of Rousillon marry my daughter, my aged self and my honor will die."

"Come here, Count," the King said. "Do you know these women?"

"My lord, I neither can nor will deny that I know them," Bertram said. "Do they charge me with anything else?"

"Why do you look so strangely upon your wife?" Diana asked.

"She's no wife of mine, my lord," Bertram said.

"If you shall marry, you give away this hand," she said, pointing to his hand, "and that is mine because it was pledged to me as part of the betrothal ceremony. You give away Heaven's vows, and those are mine. You give away myself, which is known to be mine. For I by vow am so embodied yours and so united to you that she who marries you must marry me. She will either marry both of us or marry neither of us."

Lafeu said to Bertram, "Your reputation comes up too short

for my daughter. Your reputation is deficient, and you are no husband for her.”

Bertram said, “My lord, this is a foolish, doting, and desperate creature, whom I have laughed with sometime. Let your highness lay a more noble thought upon my honor than to think that I would sink it here. You should think more highly of my honor than to think I would lower myself by marrying this woman.”

“Sir, as concerns my thoughts, you will find them ill friends to you until your deeds make them your friends. I hope that your honor proves to be fairer than I think it is.”

“My good lord,” Diana said, “ask him upon his oath, if he thinks he did not take my virginity.”

“What do you say to her?” the King asked Bertram.

“She’s impudent, my lord, and she was a common gamester — prostitute — to soldiers in the military camp,” Bertram replied.

“He does me wrong, my lord,” Diana said. “If I were a common prostitute, he might have bought me at a common price. Do not believe him. Oh, behold this ring, whose high sentimental value as an heirloom and great material value as a ring lack an equal, yet for all that he gave it to a common prostitute of the camp, if I am one.”

“He blushes, and he is hit,” the Countess said. “Of six preceding ancestors, that ring, conferred by will and testament to the succeeding heir, has been owned and worn. This woman is his wife. That ring’s a thousand proofs.”

The King said, “I thought you said that you saw someone here in court who could be your witness.”

“I did, my lord, but I am loath to produce so bad a witness. His name’s Parolles.”

“I saw the man today, if he is a man,” Lafeu said.

“Find him, and bring him here,” the King ordered.

An attendant exited to carry out the order.

“What about him?” Bertram asked. “He’s considered to be a most perfidious slave, with all the stains and blemishes of the world censured and disparaged, whose disposition sickens when it speaks a truth. Am I either to be considered that or this on the basis of what is uttered by this man who will say anything?”

The King said, “She has your ring.”

“I suppose so,” Bertram said, reluctantly. “It is certain I liked her, and mounted her and had sex with her in the wanton way of youth. She knew to keep her distance and played hard to get and angled for me, maddening my sexual eagerness with her restraint, as all impediments in the course of sexual desire create more sexual desire, and in the end, her infinite cunning, with her commonplace charm, subdued me to the point I met her price. She got the ring, and I had that which any inferior man might have haggled for at a market.”

Diana said, “I must be patient and calm. You, who have dismissed and turned away a very noble first wife, may justly give me less than you gave her. I yet say to you — since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband — ask for your ring, I will return it to you, and you give my ring to me again.”

“I don’t have it,” Bertram said.

“What ring was yours, I ask you?” the King asked Diana.

“Sir, my ring was much like the ring on your finger,” Diana replied.

“Do you know this ring?” the King asked. “This ring was his recently.”

“And this is the ring ‘I’ gave to him in bed,” Diana said.

The King asked, “The story that you threw the ring to him out of a window is false then?”

“I have spoken the truth,” Diana said.

Parolles entered the room.

Bertram said, “My lord, I confess that the ring was hers.”

The King replied, “You boggle — become alarmed — shrewdly. Every feather startles you.”

By “shrewdly,” the King meant “severely,” but Bertram boggled shrewdly in another sense: He knew that Parolles could provide evidence to corroborate Diana’s testimony and so he had admitted that the ring was hers.

The King asked Diana about Parolles, “Is this the man you spoke of?”

“Yes, my lord.”

The King said to Parolles, “Tell me, sirrah, but tell me the truth, I order you. Don’t fear the displeasure of your master, whom I’ll keep from harming you if you tell the truth. What do you know about him and this woman here?”

Parolles replied, “So please your majesty, my master has been an honorable gentleman. He has had tricks in him, which gentlemen have.’

Parolles did not want to offend either Bertram or the King, so he wanted his comments to be understood in more ways than one.

“Honorable gentleman” could be understood positively, but

given Bertram's actions we would not call him an honorable gentleman in a positive sense. However, he is honorable in that he is touchy and proud about his honor, and he is a gentleman in that he engages in the tricks that many men of his position in society engage in.

The King said, "Come, come, get to the point: Did he love this woman?"

"Truly, sir, he did love her, but how?" Parolles said.

"Please tell us how," the King said.

"He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman," Parolles said.

"A woman" is "a female commoner" as opposed to "a gentlewoman."

"How is that?" the King asked.

"He loved her, sir, and he loved her not," Parolles said.

Bertram had sex with a woman, but he did not want to marry the woman. His "love" for her was sexual, not romantic.

The King said, "You are a knave, and you are no knave. What an equivocal companion is this man! This fellow is evasive and quibbling and equivocating!"

"I am a poor man, and at your majesty's command," Parolles said.

Lafeu said, "He's a good drummer, my lord, but a bad orator. He makes a lot of noise, but little sense."

"Do you know that he promised to marry me?" Diana asked Parolles.

"Truly, I know more than I'll speak," Parolles said.

“Won’t you speak all that you know?” the King asked.

“Yes, so please your majesty,” Parolles said. “I did go between them, as I said, but more than that, he loved her. Indeed he was mad for her, and talked of Satan and of Limbo and of Furies and I don’t know what. He was in torment because he loved her. Yet I had so much credit and such a good reputation with them at that time that I knew of their going to bed, and of other proposals, such as him promising her marriage, and things that would bring down bad things on me if I were to speak about them; therefore, I will not speak what I know.”

“You have spoken all already, unless you can say that they are married,” the King said, “but you are too subtle and devious in giving your evidence; therefore, stand aside.”

The King then said to Diana, “This ring I have, you say, was yours?”

“Yes, my good lord.”

“Where did you buy it? Or who gave it to you?”

“It was not given to me, nor did I buy it.”

“Who lent it to you?”

“It was not lent to me either.”

“Where did you find it, then?”

“I did not find it.”

“If it were yours by none of all these ways,” the King asked, “how could you give it to him?”

“I never gave it to him,” Diana said.

Lafeu said, “This woman’s an easy glove, my lord; she goes off and on at pleasure. She is easily changeable.”

“This ring was mine,” the King said. “I gave it to his first wife.”

“It might be yours or hers, for anything I know,” Diana said.

“Take her away,” the irritated King said. “I do not like her now. Take her to prison, and take Bertram away.”

He said to Diana, “Unless you tell me where you got this ring, you die within this hour.”

“I’ll never tell you,” Diana said.

“Take her away,” the King ordered.

“I’ll make good on my story, my liege,” Diana said. “I can bring forward a witness.”

“I think now that you are some common prostitute,” the King said.

“By Jove, I swear that if I ever sexually knew a man, it was you,” Diana said.

In other words, she swore that she was a virgin.

“Why have you accused him all this while?” the King said.

“Because he is guilty, and he is not guilty,” Diana said. “He ‘knows’ I am no maiden, and he’ll swear to it; I’ll swear I am a maiden, and he does not know it. Great King, I am no strumpet, I swear by my life. I am either a virgin maiden, or else I am this old man’s wife.”

She was referring to Lafeu.

“She abuses our ears with her words,” the King said. “Take her to prison.”

Diana said to the widow, her mother, “Good mother, fetch my witness.”

She added, “Wait, royal sir.”

The widow exited.

Diana continued, “The jeweler who owns the ring is sent for, and ‘he’ shall be a witness for me. But as for this lord, who has abused me, as he ‘knows’ himself, although yet he never harmed me, here I quit — acquit and leave — him. He himself ‘knows’ he has defiled my bed. At that time he got his wife with child. Although she is ‘dead,’ she feels her young one kick. So there’s my riddle: One who is ‘dead’ is quick — she is alive and she feels her unborn baby kicking.”

The widow returned with Helena.

Diana continued, “And now behold the answer of the riddle.”

The King asked, “Isn’t there a magician present who beguiles the accurate function of my eyes and makes me see something that is not there? Is what I see real?”

Magicians were reputed to be able to raise the spirits of the dead.

“No, what you see is not real, my good lord,” Helena said. “It is but the shadow of a wife you see, the name and not the thing.”

Helena meant she had the title of “wife,” but she was not a real wife because her husband had rejected her. But Bertram, seeing her and realizing from what had been said that he had slept with her and that she was pregnant with his child, immediately repented and immediately considered her to be his wife both in name and in deed.

He said to Helena, “You are both, both. I beg you to pardon and forgive me!”

“Oh, my good lord,” Helena replied, “when you thought I was this maiden Diana, I found you wondrously kind. There is your ring, and look, here’s your letter, which says this: ‘*When from my finger you can get this ring and are by me with child,*’ et cetera. What the letter states as conditions have been done. Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?”

Bertram said to the King, “If she, my liege, can make me know clearly all that has happened, I’ll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.”

Helena said, “If it does not appear plain and if it proves to be untrue, then may divorcing death step between me and you!”

She then said to the Countess, “Oh, my dear mother, do I see you living?”

Lafeu said, “My eyes smell onions; I shall weep soon.”

He said to Parolles, “Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkerchief. So, I thank you. You shall go home with me and wait on me as a servant. I’ll be entertained by you.”

Parolles bowed obsequiously.

Lafeu said, “Let your courtesies alone, for they are scurvy ones. Stop bowing.”

The King said, “Let us from point to point every particular point of this story know, to make the exact truth in pleasure flow.”

He said to Diana, “If you are yet a fresh uncropped flower, choose for yourself a husband, and I’ll pay your dower. For I can guess that by your honest aid, you kept a wife a wife, and you kept yourself a virgin maiden. Of that and all the progression of events, more or less, the resolution of loose ends more leisure shall express. All yet seems well, and if it

ends the bitter past so fittingly and meet, then more welcome is the sweet.”

EPILOGUE (*All's Well That Ends Well*)

The King now says to you, the reader:

“The King’s a beggar, now the play is done.

“All is well ended, if this suit is won,

“That you express content, which we will repay,

“With striving to please you, day exceeding day.

“Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts;

“Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.”

In other words, the King and all the other characters in this book are actors, and they have been playing roles and striving more and more each day in order to entertain you, the readers, who are their audience. Now the “King” is a beggar who begs you for applause (and good reviews online). The “King” wants the audience and the actors to exchange roles. The audience can act by applauding while the actors make no more sounds, but the actors and playwright and book author will repay the applause (and good online reviews) with gratitude.

Chapter II: AS YOU LIKE IT

Cast of Characters (As You Like It)

DUKE SENIOR, living in exile.

FREDERICK, his Brother, Usurper of his Dominions.

AMIENS & JAQUES: Lords attending upon the banished Duke.

LE BEAU, a Courtier, attending upon Frederick.

CHARLES, a Wrestler.

OLIVER, JAQUES, & ORLANDO: Sons of Sir Rowland de Boys.

ADAM & DENNIS: Servants to Oliver.

TOUCHSTONE, a Clown.

SIR OLIVER MARTEXT, a Vicar.

CORIN & SILVIUS: Shepherds.

WILLIAM, a Country Fellow, in love with Audrey.

A person representing Hymen, god of marriage.

The Women

ROSALIND, Daughter to the banished Duke.

CELIA, Daughter to Frederick.

PHOEBE, a Shepherdess.

AUDREY, a Country Wench.

Other Characters

Lords, Pages, Foresters, and Attendants.

CHAPTER 1 (As You Like It)

— 1.1 —

Orlando, the third and youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, was talking about his life with Adam, an aged servant of the de Boys family. Some of Orlando's problems in life came from primogeniture, in which the bulk of the family estate is passed down to the oldest son, leaving much less of an inheritance for any younger sons. Such was the case with Orlando. The oldest son's name was Oliver, and Orlando and Adam were talking in Oliver's garden.

Orlando said, "I remember, Adam, that this is the reason why my father left me in his will the small sum of a thousand crowns. But as you said, he also gave my oldest brother, Oliver, the responsibility of raising me well — as a gentleman — if Oliver was to receive our father's blessing. Oliver is raising the middle brother — Jaques — well. Oliver sent him to the university, and according to all reports he is making wonderful progress. But Oliver keeps me at home like a person without money in rural areas. But is 'keep' the right word for a gentleman of my birth? My 'keep' is much like the keeping of an ox in a stall. Oliver's horses are being better taken care of than I am. They are well fed, and well-paid hostlers teach them what they need to know. But I, his own brother, gain nothing under him but bodily growth into adulthood. Even the animals lying on dunghills to keep warm owe him that much. Besides this nothing that he so plentifully gives me, the something that nature gave me — my social standing by birth — his behavior seems to seek to take away from me. He lets me eat with his farm workers, will not allow me the place of a brother, and, as much as he is able to, he undermines my noble birth with a lack of proper education. Adam, this grieves me, and the spirit of my father, which I think is

within me, begins to mutiny against this brother-imposed servitude. I will no longer endure it, though so far I know no intelligent way to avoid it.”

Adam looked away and then replied, “Yonder comes my master, your eldest brother.”

Orlando said, “Go stand aside, Adam, and you shall hear how he will taunt me.”

Oliver walked up to Orlando and said mockingly, “Now, sir! What are you doing here?”

“Nothing,” Orlando replied. “I can do nothing. I have not been educated to make anything of myself.”

“If you are not making anything, then what are you marring?”

“Sir, I am helping you to mar that which God made, a poor unworthy brother of yours. I am marring myself with idleness for lack of something better to do.”

“Then be better employed, and be quick about it.”

“Shall I keep your hogs and eat scraps with them? That is what the prodigal son did in Luke 15:11-32. He received his inheritance and spent it and was forced to become a servant swineherd and eat the swine’s food to keep himself from starving. But what prodigal portion have I spent, that I should come to such penury as did the prodigal son? I have never received my inheritance.”

“Do you know where you are, sir?”

“Very well, sir. I am in your garden.”

“Do you know to whom you are speaking, sir?”

“Yes, I know you better than you know me,” Orlando replied. “I know that you are my eldest brother, and you

should know that I share your heritage and family and blood. According to primogeniture, you are my better, because you were first born, but primogeniture does not deny my heritage. Even if twenty brothers were born in between you and me, I would still have as much of our father in me as you have. However, I confess that your being born first makes you the head of our family and therefore entitled to more respect than I am.”

Angry, Oliver hit Orlando and called him a name: “Take that, boy!”

Angered by the blow and the insult, Orlando seized Oliver and held on to him to protect himself from any more blows.

He said to Oliver, “You are too young in strength; you are weaker than I am, and you are not the fighter that I am.”

“Do you dare to lay hands on me, villain!”

A villain can be either a rogue or a peasant. Oliver used the word to mean “rogue,” but in his reply Orlando used the other meaning.

“A villain is a peasant,” Orlando said. “I am no villain. I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys; he was my father. Anyone who says that such a father gave birth to villains is three times a villain. If you were not my brother, I would not take this hand from your throat until my other hand had pulled out your tongue for saying that our father had given birth to a villain. By saying that, you have insulted yourself.”

Adam said, “Sweet masters, don’t fight. In memory of your father and for your father’s sake, make peace with each other.”

Oliver said, “Let me go, I say.”

“I will not let you go until I want to,” Orlando replied.

“First, listen to me. My father charged you in his will to give me a good education; instead, you have trained me like a peasant, not allowing me the chance to acquire the accomplishments of a gentleman. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure your treatment; therefore, give me the education that a gentleman ought to have, or give me the small inheritance that my father left me in his will. With that small inheritance, I will leave here and seek my fortune elsewhere.”

“And what will you do? Will you beg after you have spent your inheritance? Well, sir, go inside the house. I will not long be troubled with you; you shall have some part of what you want. Leave me now.”

“I will bother you no more than is necessary to get what I need.”

Oliver said to Adam, “Go with him, you old dog.”

Adam said, “Is being called ‘old dog’ my reward for serving your family for decades? Truly, I have lost my teeth in your family’s service. May God be with my old master! He would not have called me an old dog.”

Orlando and Adam left the garden.

Alone, Oliver said, “So this is what it comes down to. It’s a showdown between you and me. You have become a nuisance to me. You have grown wild, Orlando, but I will give you your medicine and curb your wildness. And that medicine will not be one thousand crowns.”

He summoned a servant: “Come here, Dennis!”

Dennis arrived and asked, “How may I help you?”

“Isn’t Charles, Duke Frederick’s wrestler, here to speak with me?”

“Yes, he is here at the door and wants to speak with you.”

“Call him in.”

Dennis left to get Charles.

“This is a good way to solve my problem,” Oliver said.
“Tomorrow there will be wrestling.”

Charles entered and said, “Good day to your worship.”

“Good Monsieur Charles, what’s the new news at the new court?”

“The news at the court,” Charles said, “is the old news. Old Senior has been banished by his younger brother, Duke Frederick. Three or four lords who greatly respect Duke Senior have gone into exile — in their case, voluntarily — with him. Duke Frederick allowed them to go into exile so he could seize their lands and revenues and enrich himself.”

“Can you tell me if Rosalind, Duke Senior’s daughter, is banished with her father?”

“She has not been banished,” Charles replied. “Duke Frederick’s daughter, Celia, so loves Rosalind, with whom she has been friends since both were in the cradle, that Celia would have followed her into exile — or if prevented from following her, she would have died of grief. Rosalind is at the court, and her uncle, Duke Frederick, loves her no less than his own daughter, Celia — never have two ladies loved each other as Celia and Rosalind do.”

“Where will the old Duke — Duke Senior — live?”

“People say that he is already in the Forest of Arden, and that he has many merry men with him, and there in the forest they live like the old Robin Hood of England. People say that many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and they spend the time without cares, as was the case in the

Golden Age of classical mythology. They live without cares and with great ease.”

“Will you wrestle tomorrow before Duke Frederick?”

“Yes, I will,” Charles said. “In fact, this is why I am here. I have learned from secret sources that your younger brother Orlando intends to put on a disguise and wrestle against me. However, tomorrow, sir, I wrestle to protect and improve my reputation, and any wrestler who escapes from me without suffering a broken limb shall acquit himself well. Your brother is but young and tender, and out of respect for you, I am loath to defeat and injure him, as I must do, for my own reputation, if he wrestles against me. Therefore, because I respect you, I came here to tell you these things so that either you might convince him not to wrestle me or prepare yourself to endure disgrace when I defeat your youngest brother. A wrestling match between him and me is something that he — not I — wants. My wrestling your youngest brother is completely against my will.”

“Charles, I thank you for your respect for and loyalty to me, which you will find I will most appropriately reward. I have previously learned of my brother’s plan to wrestle you and I have tried unobtrusively to dissuade him from wrestling you, but he is determined to carry out his plan. I tell you, Charles, that my youngest brother is the most ruthless young fellow of all France. He is full of ambition, he envies every man’s good qualities and abilities, and he is a secret and villainous contriver against me, his birth brother. Therefore, use your own discretion. As for myself, I would prefer that you break his neck than his finger. But be careful because if he thinks that you have defeated him by even by a little and if he fails to score a notable victory against you, he will plot against you and try to poison you. He will try to trap you with some treacherous plot, and he

will never leave you alone until he has killed you by some indirect means or other so that he is not punished for your death. I am almost in tears as I tell you truly that no one as young and as villainous as Orlando is alive today. I am his brother, and I speak as a brother, but if I were to explain to you his real character in every detail, then I must blush and weep and you must look pale and wonder.”

“I am heartily glad I came here and spoke to you,” Charles said. “If Orlando comes to wrestle me tomorrow, I will give him his payment. If he ever again walks without crutches, I will retire from professional wrestling. May God bless you.”

“Farewell, good Charles,” Oliver said.

Charles left, and Oliver said to himself, “Now I will provoke this gamester — my youngest brother. I hope I shall see an end of him — his death. My soul, I do not know why, hates nothing more than him, yet he is endowed with the qualities of a gentleman. He has never been schooled and yet he is learned, and he is full of gentlemanliness. He is enchantingly — as if they were under a spell — beloved by all ranks of people, and indeed the world itself loves him. Especially my own subjects, who best know him, love him so much that they prefer him to me and they despise me. But this shall not last much longer. Charles the wrestler shall solve my problems. All that I need to do is to find Orlando and incite the boy to wrestle tomorrow, and I will go right now and do that.”

— 1.2 —

On the lawn in front of the Duke’s palace, Celia and Rosalind talked.

Celia said, “Please, dear cousin, be merry.”

“Dear Celia, I already am showing more happiness than I

feel, and yet you want me to appear to be even happier? Unless you can teach me to forget my banished father, you must not tell me to think about any extraordinary pleasure.”

“Here I see that you do not love me as much as I love you,” Celia said. “If my uncle, Duke Senior — who is your banished father — had banished your uncle, Duke Frederick — who is my father — as long as you stayed with me, I could have taught myself to regard your father as my father. You would do the same thing for me if you loved me as much as I love you.”

“Well, I will forget the condition of my situation in life, so that I can rejoice in the condition of your situation in life.”

“You know that my father has no child but me,” Celia said, “and he is unlikely to have any more children. When my father dies, you shall be his heir because what he has taken away from your father by force, I will give to you. I swear it. If I break this oath, let me turn into a monster. Therefore, my sweet and dear Rose, be happy.”

Rosalind replied, “From here on, I will, cousin, and I will think of games for us to play together. Let me see. What do you think about falling in love?”

“Go ahead and fall in love,” Celia replied, “so we can laugh about it. But do not fall in love for real and in earnest. Fall in love no further than you can get out of love with an innocent blush and with your honor and reputation intact.”

“What shall we do to amuse ourselves, then?”

“Let us sit and mock the good housewife — make that hussy — Fortune so that she turns away from the wheel that she spins and then gives either good or bad fortune according to the turn of the wheel. Once Fortune has abandoned her Wheel of Fortune, she will be forced to give away her gifts in equal measures.”

“I wish that we could do that,” Rosalind said, “because Fortune’s gifts are mightily misplaced. Fortune is blind, and it shows when she gives gifts to women.”

“That is true because those women whom Fortune makes beautiful she rarely makes virtuous, and those women she makes virtuous she usually makes ugly.”

“No,” Rosalind objected. “You are mixing up Fortune and Nature. Fortune determines whether we have good or bad fortune, and Nature makes us attractive or ugly.”

Touchstone, a professional fool, aka court jester, walked close to Celia and Rosalind. His job was to make Duke Frederick and others laugh, and he got his name from a stone that was used to test the purity of gold and silver. To call Touchstone a fool was not really an insult — it was more of a job description like calling someone a tailor or cobbler. As a fool, Touchstone had the privilege to insult other people without being punished for it — although sometimes he could be threatened with punishment.

“Are you sure about that?” Celia asked. “Nature may make a woman beautiful, but Fortune may make her fall in a fire and mar her beauty. Nature may have given us enough wit and intelligence to mock Fortune, but did not Fortune send in this fool to stop our mocking her?”

“Indeed, Fortune is more powerful than Nature,” Rosalind replied. “This is shown by Fortune sending in a fool to stop us from using our wits — our gifts from Nature — to make fun of Fortune.”

“Perhaps this is not the work of Fortune,” Celia said. “Perhaps Nature sees that our natural wits are too dull to discuss such goddesses as Fortune, and therefore Nature sent us this fool to be our whetstone and sharpen our wits instead of our knives. The dullness of a fool always sharpens the wits of other people.”

Celia asked Touchstone, "Hello, wit. Where are you going?"

"Mistress, you must go to your father."

"What warrants making you the messenger?" Celia asked.

"I have no warrant for your arrest, but on my honor I was told to come to you and deliver a message."

"That's a fancy phrase: 'on my honor.' Where did you learn that phrase, fool?" Rosalind asked.

"I learned it from a certain knight who swore by his honor that the pancakes were good and swore by his honor that the mustard was bad. I disagree: The pancakes were bad and the mustard was good. Nevertheless, the knight did not commit perjury."

"Tell us your reasoning," Celia said. "Use the great heap of your knowledge to prove that the knight did not commit perjury."

"Yes, please prove that," Rosalind said. "Unmuzzle your wisdom."

"I will indeed," Touchstone said, "but first stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave."

Celia replied, "By our beards, if we had them, we swear that you are a knave."

"If I were a knave, I would swear by my knavery that I am a knave. But I have no knavery. Anyone who swears by something that he or she does not have commits no perjury. This knight swore by his honor, but he had no honor. Either he never had any honor, or if he once had honor, he had sworn it away by breaking oaths before he ever saw those pancakes or that mustard."

"Please tell which knight you mean," Celia said.

“A knight whom old Frederick, your father, respects.”

“In that case, my father’s respect is enough to honor him, so enough! Talk no more about that knight — you will be whipped for slander one of these days.”

“It is a pity that fools may not speak wisely about what wise men do foolishly. That is part of the job of a fool.”

“You are saying the truth,” Celia said. “A book burning was held recently, and many books of satire perished in the flames. Ever since then, the little wit that fools have has been silenced, and the little foolery that wise men have has become greatly more apparent. A fool who mocks the foolishness of wise men helps keep wise men wise.”

She looked up and said, “Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.”

Rosalind said, “He seems eager to tell us something. His mouth is full of news.”

“He will force his news on us the way that parent pigeons force their nestlings to feed,” Celia said.

“We will be force-fed and crammed with news.”

“If we were birds or animals at the market, we would be more valuable because birds and animals are sold by weight,” Celia said.

She greeted Monsieur Le Beau: “*Bon jour*, Monsieur. What’s the news?”

“Fair princess, you have missed out on some good entertainment.”

“Entertainment? What kind of entertainment?”

“I’m not quite sure how to answer that,” Monsieur Le Beau said.

Rosalind said, “Answer it the way that your wit and fortune allow you to answer it.”

“Or answer it as the Destinies decree,” Touchstone said. “The Destinies are the Fates, and they rule our lives.”

“Well said,” Celia complimented Touchstone. “You are using a trowel to coat your words with learning.”

“I am a jester,” Touchstone said. “My rank is my reputation. I must keep up my rank.”

“Unless you keep up your rankness, you won’t be able to smell yourself,” Rosalind joked.

Monsieur Le Beau said, “You amaze me, ladies. I wanted to tell you about some good wrestling that you are missing.”

“Tell us what kind of wrestling,” Rosalind said.

“I will tell you about the wrestling that has already happened, and if you want to, you can see the rest of the wrestling — the best part is yet to come,” Monsieur Le Beau said. “Here, where you are now, is where the wrestling will take place.”

“Tell us about the wrestling that is already over, that is dead and buried,” Celia said.

Monsieur Le Beau began, “There comes an old man and his three sons —”

Celia interrupted him: “I could match this beginning with an old fairy tale. Many old fairy tales are about an old man and his three children.”

“They are three proper young men, of excellent growth and presence.”

“Presence?” Rosalind asked. “They must have had

proclamations hanging from their necks — proclamations that begin, ‘Be it known to all men by these presents — by this public proclamation’”

Monsieur Le Beau continued, “The eldest of the three sons wrestled with Charles, Duke Frederick’s champion wrestler. Charles quickly threw him and broke three of his ribs. There is little hope that he will survive. Charles then did the same thing with the second son and the third son. They are still lying there. Their poor old father is crying with such grief that all the witnesses of the wrestling are crying with him.”

Touchstone asked, “What is the entertainment that these ladies have been missing, Monsieur Le Beau?”

“Why, the wrestling that I have been talking about.”

“Men may grow wiser everyday,” Touchstone said. “This is the first time that I ever heard that the breaking of ribs was entertainment for ladies.”

“It is also the first time that I have heard it,” Celia said.

“Does anyone else want to see this wrestling and listen to the broken ‘music’ of breath performed with broken ribs?” Rosalind asked. “Is anyone else tempted to listen to the breaking of ribs? Celia, shall we see this wrestling?”

“You must see the wrestling, if you stay here,” Monsieur Le Beau said. “This is the place where the wrestling will take place, and this is the time for the wrestling to start.”

“That is true,” Celia said. “I see that the wrestlers and the crowd are coming. Let us stay here and watch the match.”

Duke Frederick, various Lords, Orlando, Charles, and many others walked over to Celia, Rosalind, Touchstone, and Monsieur Le Beau.

Duke Frederick said, “The youthful challenger — Orlando — is determined to wrestle Charles, although we have tried to dissuade him. His own recklessness is putting him in peril.”

“Is he Orlando?” Rosalind said, gesturing to a man.

“Yes, he is, madam,” Monsieur Le Beau said.

“It’s a pity — he is too young,” Celia said. “Yet he looks strong and like a wrestler. He looks as if he could defeat Charles.”

“Hi, daughter and niece,” Duke Frederick said. “Have you come here to see the wrestling?”

“Yes, my liege,” Rosalind said, “as long as it’s OK with you.”

“You will take little delight in it, I can tell you,” he said. “The odds are greatly against this young man. I would gladly convince Orlando not to wrestle Charles, but he won’t listen to me. Speak to him, ladies; see if you can persuade him not to wrestle Charles.”

“Bring Orlando over to us, good Monsieur Le Beau,” Celia said.

Duke Frederick said to Monsieur Le Beau, “Do that. I will leave so that the princesses can talk to Orlando privately.”

Monsieur Le Beau said to Orlando, “Challenger, the princesses want to talk to you.”

“I will go to them with all the respect and duty that is due to them,” Orlando replied.

Rosalind asked him, “Young man, have you challenged Charles the wrestler?”

“No, fair princess. Charles is the general challenger: He

will wrestle anyone who wants to wrestle him. I came here like others to wrestle him and test the strength of my youth.”

“Young gentleman, you are too bold for your age,” Celia said to Orlando. “You have seen cruel proof of this man’s strength in the number of ribs that he has broken. If you looked at yourself carefully and carefully considered what you are able to do, you would feel fear and choose another activity to engage in. Both of us ask you, for your own sake, to think about your own safety and not wrestle Charles.”

“Do as Celia asks, young sir,” Rosalind said. “Your reputation shall not be harmed by it. We will plead to Duke Frederick to stop the wrestling match before it starts. You will not be blamed for not wrestling Charles.”

“Thank you, but no,” Orlando said. “Do not regard me badly because I am refusing your request. I hate to deny anything to two such fair and excellent ladies as you. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me as I wrestle Charles. If Charles defeats me, then I will be the only one who is shamed, and I have never had good fortune anyway. If Charles kills me, then so be it. I am willing to die. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have no friends to mourn me. I shall do the world no injury, for in the world I have nothing. In the world, I only fill up a space, and when I am dead, perhaps a better person will take my place.”

Rosalind said, “The little strength that I have, I wish that I could give to you to help you in this match.”

“And I wish that I could give you the little strength that I have,” Celia said, “so it could be added to hers.”

“Fare you well,” Rosalind said. “I hope to God that you can defeat Charles although I know that the odds are against you.”

“I hope that you get your heart’s desire,” Celia said.

Charles said loudly, “Let’s get started. Where is the young gallant who is eager to be buried and lie with his mother Earth?”

“I am ready to wrestle you, sir,” Orlando said, “but I am not ready to lie with my mother Earth. My goal is different.”

Duke Frederick said, “This wrestling match will consist of only one round and one fall.”

Charles boasted, “I am sure that you will not be able to persuade this man to undertake a second round although you could not dissuade him from undertaking a first round. I will defeat him so badly that he won’t be able to wrestle a second round.”

Orlando said to Charles, “You intend to mock me after the round, and that’s OK if you can defeat me, but you should not mock me before the round. But let’s get started.”

“May Hercules, the strongest of the ancient Greek heroes, give you success,” Rosalind said to Orlando.

“I wish I were invisible so I could grab the strong Charles by the leg and help Orlando,” Celia said.

Charles and Orlando started to wrestle.

Rosalind said about Orlando, “He is an excellent young man!”

“If I had the Roman god Jupiter’s power of hurling thunderbolts, I would shoot down Charles,” Celia said.

Orlando threw Charles and won the wrestling match.

“No more!” Duke Frederick said. “The wrestling match is over.”

“I am ready to wrestle some more,” Orlando said. “I am not yet winded; in fact, I am not even properly warmed up.”

“How are you, Charles?” Duke Frederick asked.

“He is unconscious and cannot speak, my Lord,” Monsieur Le Beau said.

“Carry him away,” Duke Frederick said.

He asked Orlando, “What is your name, young man?”

“Orlando, my Lord. I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.”

“I wish that you were the son of some other man. The world regarded your father as an honorable man, but I always found him to be my enemy. Your athletic victory today would have pleased me better if you were a member of some other family. But may you fare well; you are a gallant youth. Still, I wish that you had told me that another man is your father.”

Most of the people present left, leaving behind Rosalind, Celia, and Orlando. Rosalind and Celia stood apart from Orlando.

Celia was disappointed in her father’s reaction to learning who Orlando’s father was. She felt that her father had been rude to Orlando.

She said to Rosalind, “If I were my father, I would have acted better than my father did.”

Orlando said to himself, “I am very proud to be Sir Rowland’s son, his youngest son, and I would not change that even to be Duke Frederick’s adopted heir.”

Rosalind said to Celia, “My father loved Sir Rowland as if Sir Rowland were his soul, and everyone else in the world shared my father’s good opinion of Sir Rowland. Had I

before known that this young man was his son, I would have added tears to my entreaties because of my fear that he would be injured or killed in this wrestling match.”

Celia replied, “Gentle cousin, let us go and thank and encourage Orlando. My father’s rough and malicious words to him wound me in my heart.”

They went to Orlando, and Celia said, “Sir, you have well deserved this athletic victory. If you keep your promises in love as well as you keep your promises in wrestling — doing far more than anyone expected — your wife will be happy and fortunate.”

Rosalind removed a necklace from her neck and gave it to Orlando, saying, “Wear this for me: a woman who is out of favor with fortune. I wish that I could give you more, but I lack more to give.”

Rosalind expected Orlando to thank her, but he only stared at her.

She said to Celia, “Shall we go, cousin?”

Celia replied, “Yes.”

To Orlando, Celia said, “Fare you well, fair gentleman.”

Orlando did not reply to the two young women. Already, he was in love with Rosalind, and he found himself unable to speak. He was brave enough to wrestle Charles, Duke Frederick’s champion wrestler, but he was not brave enough to speak to Rosalind.

But Orlando did reprimand himself, to himself, “Can’t I even say, ‘I thank you?’ My bravery has disappeared, and the man I am right now is only a mannequin, a mere lifeless block.”

Already, Rosalind was in love with Orlando. Hearing him

mutter to himself, she said to Celia, “He is calling for us to come back to him.”

Eager to talk to Orlando, she said to herself, “My good fortune left me earlier in life. Now I am losing my pride and chasing this young man. I will ask him what he wants.”

Rosalind asked Orlando, “Did you call, sir? Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown more than your enemies.”

She thought, *That’s a pretty good hint to him that he has overthrown me and that I am in love with him.*

Poor Orlando could not speak; he could only stare.

Celia said to Rosalind, “Are you ready to go now?”

Rosalind replied to her, “Yes, I am ready.”

To Orlando, she said, “Fare you well.”

As Rosalind and Celia left, Rosalind thought, *Orlando needs to be educated in romance. For one more thing, he has to learn how to be comfortable when talking to a young woman he likes. Unless he can do that, he will not go far in love. Unless he is comfortable when talking to a young woman he likes, he is unlikely ever to be the father of her children.*

If Orlando could have heard Rosalind’s thoughts, he would have agreed with her. He said to himself, “What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue? I could not speak to Rosalind, although she wanted me to speak to her. Poor Orlando, you have been overthrown! Charles could not defeat you, but this much weaker woman has conquered you.”

Monsieur Le Beau walked up to Orlando and said, “Good sir, I do in friendship advise you to leave this place. Although you have earned and deserve high praise, true

applause, and respect, yet Duke Frederick is now of such a temperament that he misinterprets all that you have done. It is better for you to imagine the kind of person Duke Frederick is than for me to tell you.”

“I thank you, sir,” Orlando replied, adding, “Please, tell me this: Which of the two young women who were here at the wrestling match is the daughter of Duke Frederick?”

“Fortunately, neither of the two young women has Duke Frederick’s bad manners,” Monsieur Le Beau replied, “but the shorter of the two is his daughter, Celia. The other, taller young woman is the daughter of the banished Duke Senior. Her name is Rosalind, and her usurping uncle is keeping her here to keep his daughter company. The two young women love each other more than sisters do. However, I can tell you that Duke Frederick has recently taken a dislike to Rosalind, his well-born niece, for no other reason than that the citizens praise her for her virtues and pity her for her good father’s sake. I swear by my own life that quickly Duke Frederick’s hatred for Rosalind will erupt. Sir, farewell. Later, in a better world, I would like to know you better.”

“I am much obliged to you,” Orlando said. “Goodbye.”

Monsieur Le Beau left.

Orlando said to himself, “Now I must go from the frying pan into the fire. I must go from the tyrant Duke Frederick to my tyrant eldest brother, Oliver. And, oh, I am in love with the Heavenly Rosalind.”

— 1.3 —

In a room of Duke Frederick’s palace, Rosalind and Celia were talking.

Celia said to Rosalind, “Why, cousin! You are so quiet!

May Cupid, the god of love, have mercy on you! Can't you speak a word?"

"You have heard of people who are so poor that they aren't even able to throw scraps of food to a dog. I am not able to throw even a word to a dog."

"Your words are too precious to be cast away upon curs," Celia said. "Throw some of your words at me. Some people throw rocks at dogs to maim them and make them lame, so come, throw your words at me and lame me."

"If I did that, both of us would then be hurt. You would be lamed with words, and I would be crazy."

"Are you depressed because of your father?"

"Yes, but I am also depressed because of the man who should be the father of my child, when I have one. I am crazy in love with someone who can't even speak to me. Right now, the world is wearisome and full of briers."

"They are only burs, cousin, that have been thrown at you because of your foolish behavior when you chased after a man as if you were on a holiday. Act conventionally, and you will not suffer in this way. Unless we walk in the well-trodden paths, our petticoats will catch burs."

"I could shake those burs off the bottoms of my petticoats; these burs are in my heart."

"Hem them away."

"I could 'hem' them away, if I could have Orlando."

"Come, come, wrestle with your affections."

"My affections are for a better wrestler than myself!"

"If you get your wish, eventually you will wrestle him, with you lying flat on your back with your legs apart," Celia

said. “But let us put aside these jokes and instead talk earnestly. Is it really possible, that you — so suddenly — have fallen in love with old Sir Rowland’s youngest son?”

“Duke Senior, my father, loved his father dearly.”

“Does it therefore follow that you should love his son dearly? By this kind of argument, I should hate Orlando because my father hated his father dearly, but I do not hate Orlando.”

“No, do not hate Orlando — for my sake.”

“Why shouldn’t I hate Orlando? By this kind of argument, I ought to hate him — by this kind of argument, he deserves my hatred.”

“Let me love him because he deserves my love. You can love him because I love him.”

Rosalind added, “Look, here comes your father, Duke Frederick.”

“His eyes are full of anger,” Celia said.

Duke Frederick and some Lords entered the room.

Duke Frederick said to Rosalind, “Madam, as quickly as you safely can, get out of my court.”

“Do you mean me, uncle?”

“Yes, I mean you, niece. If, after ten days, you are found within twenty miles of my court, you will die.”

“Please, uncle, tell me the nature of my offence. Tell me what I have done wrong. If I know my own thoughts and desires — if I am not dreaming or insane, and I don’t think that I am — then I, dear uncle, have never come close to thinking or desiring anything that would offend you.”

“So say all traitors,” Duke Frederick replied. “If they could be cleared by their own words, all of them would be as innocent as virtue itself. Let me tell you plainly that I do not trust you.”

“Even your mistrust cannot make me a traitor: Tell me the grounds on which you believe that I am a traitor.”

“You are your father’s daughter. That is enough reason to think that you are a traitor.”

“I was my father’s daughter when you took his Dukedom,” Rosalind said. “I was my father’s daughter when you banished him. Treason is not inherited, my Lord. But even if treason were contagious and we did catch it from our friends, how does that apply to me? My father was no traitor. My good Lord, do not think that my poverty has made me a traitor. Although I am poor, I am not a traitor.”

“Dear sovereign father, listen to me,” Celia said.

“Celia, I have allowed Rosalind to stay here for your sake. If not for you, I would have made her go with her father when he went into exile.”

“I did not then beg you to have Rosalind stay here. That was your own decision, made because you yourself wanted her to stay and because you felt remorse for your own actions. I was too young at that time to value Rosalind, but now I know her. If she is a traitor, then so am I. We always have slept together, gotten up together, been educated together, eaten together, and wherever we went, we went together and inseparable, like the two swans that pull the chariot in which Juno, the Roman goddess of marriage, rides.”

“Rosalind is too cunning for you,” Duke Frederick replied. “Her deceptive charm, her silence, and her patience appeal to the people, and they pity her. You are a fool: She robs

you of your reputation — you will appear brighter and seem more virtuous after she is gone. So do not open your lips. Firm and irrevocable are the judgment and the punishment that I have given to her. She is banished from my Dukedom.”

“Then give me the same judgment and punishment,” Celia said. “I cannot live without Rosalind’s companionship.”

“You are a fool,” Duke Frederick said to Celia.

He said to Rosalind, “You, niece, prepare yourself for your journey into exile. If you are still here after ten days, I swear that you will die.”

He and the other Lords left the room.

“Oh, my poor Rosalind,” Celia said, “where will you go? Are you willing to exchange fathers? I will give you my father in return for your father. Please, do not be more grieved than I am.”

“I have more cause for grief.”

“No, you don’t,” Celia said. “Be cheerful. Don’t you know that my father, Duke Frederick, has banished me?”

“No, he has not.”

“Hasn’t he? You, Rosalind, lack the love that ought to teach you that you and I are one. Shall we be sundered? Shall we be parted, sweet girl? No. Let my father seek another heir. Therefore plan with me how we may flee into exile. Let us plan where to go and what to take with us. Do not seek to go alone, to bear your griefs by yourself and leave me here. I swear by the Heavens, which have grown pale because of our sorrows, that no matter what you say, I will go with you into exile.”

“Where shall we go?” Rosalind asked.

“To seek my uncle — your father — in the Forest of Arden.”

“We will be in danger. We are two young virgins traveling so far alone! Our feminine beauty will make us even more of a target for criminals than money alone would.”

“I will wear poor and mean clothing and with a kind of brown paint will darken my face to make myself look like a peasant instead of a court lady. You can do the same thing. If we look like poor peasants, we shall be able to travel and never be bothered by assailants.”

“Wouldn’t it better,” Rosalind replied, “if, because I am tall for a woman, I were to dress and act like a man? I could carry a gallant short sword upon my thigh, a boar-spear in my hand, and a swashing and martial outside appearance, while I hide in my heart whatever womanish fears I feel. I will do what other cowards do — I will act as if I am brave when I do not feel brave at all. And you and I could be brother and sister.”

“What shall I call you when you are dressed like a man?”

“I’ll have no worse a name than the god Jupiter’s own page,” Rosalind said. “He saw a boy named Ganymede and kidnapped him to be his cup-bearer. Therefore, call me Ganymede. But what name will you take?”

“I will take a name that is suitable to my new situation in life. I will no longer be called Celia. Instead, call me Aliena — the Estranged One. My father and I are now estranged.”

“Cousin, here’s a good idea. Let’s take Touchstone the fool with us when we leave your father’s court. Wouldn’t he be a comfort as we travel?”

“He will be happy to go with me and travel the wide world with me,” Celia said to Rosalind. “Leave it to me to talk to

him. Let us go now and get our jewels and our wealth together. We will plan the best time and the safest way to leave so that we will escape the pursuit that will be made after my father discovers that I have gone into exile with you. Now we can go contently — we are going into liberty and not into banishment.”

CHAPTER 2 (As You Like It)

— 2.1 —

Duke Senior, the Lord Amiens, and a few other Lords were talking together in the Forest of Arden. All of them were dressed like foresters.

Duke Senior said, “Now, my companions and brothers in exile, have we not grown used to our new way of life and don’t we now agree that this way of life is better than a life of artificial splendor? Are not these woods freer from danger than the envious and malicious court? Here we feel only the penalty of Adam, who was sent away from the Garden of Eden into exile. We feel the different seasons, such as the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter’s wind, which, when it bites and blows upon my body, even as I shrink with cold, I smile and say, ‘This is no flattery: These are counselors who powerfully tell me what I really am.’ Sweet are the uses of adversity — adversity makes men wise. Adversity is like an ugly toad that according to folklore is poisonous and yet has a jewel — the toadstone — in its head that protects itself and others from poison. Our life is free from interruption from other people, and here we can listen to the trees, read the running brooks, and learn about natural theology from stones. Everything here in Nature is good.”

Amiens, a Lord who had followed Duke Senior into exile and who was a good singer, said, “I would not change anything. Happy is your grace, who can translate the harshness of fortune into so quiet and so sweet a state of mind. You are able to look at bad fortune and see what good may come from it.”

“Come, shall we go and kill us a deer and eat venison?” Duke Senior asked. “And yet it irks me that the poor

dappled fools, being native citizens of this scarcely populated territory, should in their own land have their round haunches gored with arrowheads.”

A Lord said, “Indeed, Duke Senior, the melancholy Jaques grieves at that, also, and accordingly, he swears that you do more usurp the deer’s territory than your younger brother, Duke Frederick, usurped your territory when he banished you. Today my Lord of Amiens and I did creep up behind Jaques as he lay under an oak whose ancient root pokes out near the brook that flows noisily through this wood. To that place came a poor stag that had been separated from its herd. A hunter had wounded it, and indeed, my Lord, the wretched animal heaved forth such groans that their discharge did stretch his leathern coat until it seemed that he would burst his hide, and the stag’s big round tears trickled down his innocent nose as they chased each other, arousing pity. The melancholy Jaques looked at the hairy stag as it stood on the edge of the brook and added its tears to the brook’s water.”

“What did Jaques say?” Duke Senior asked. “Knowing him, he would have drawn moral lessons from this stag’s suffering.”

The Lord replied, “You are correct. Jaques made a thousand similes. Seeing the stag dropping his tears into the stream, Jaques said, ‘Poor deer, you are making a last will and testament the way that materialistic humans do. You give more to what already has too much. The stream of water hardly needs your tears.’ Seeing the stag alone, abandoned by its herd, Jaques said, ‘Misery stops a stream of visitors. A poor or ill person has few visitors.’ Soon, a carefree herd of deer that had eaten its fill of grass in a meadow ran by the wounded stag and did not stop to greet him. Seeing this, Jaques said, ‘Run on, you fat and greasy citizens. This is the current fashion. Why should you bother

to look upon this poor and broken wretch here?’ Thus he harshly criticized and pierced the heart of the country, city, court, and even our way of life here. He swore that we are mere usurpers and tyrants and whatever is worse than usurpers and tyrants, because we frighten the animals and kill them in their Heavenly assigned and native dwelling places.”

“Did you leave him to his contemplations?” Duke Senior asked.

A second Lord said, “We did, my Lord. He was weeping and commenting on the sobbing deer.”

“Show me where he is,” Duke Senior said. “I love to debate him when he is in one of these moralizing moods because then he has a lot to say.”

The first Lord said, “I will take you to him right away.”

— 2.2 —

In a room in his palace, Duke Frederick questioned some Lords.

“Is it possible that no one saw Celia and Rosalind leave the palace? It cannot be. Some villains in my court knew about this and assisted them.”

A Lord said, “I cannot find anyone who saw your daughter leave. The ladies, her attendants of her chamber, saw her go to bed in the evening, and early in the morning, they found her bed empty.”

Another Lord said, “Duke Frederick, the vulgar and despicable clown at whom so often you have been accustomed to laugh is also missing. Hisperia, the princess Celia’s gentlewoman, confesses that she secretly overheard Celia and Rosalind much compliment the good qualities and accomplishments of Orlando, the wrestler who recently

defeated the sinewy Charles. Hisperia believes that wherever Celia and Rosalind are gone, Orlando is surely with them.”

Duke Frederick said, “Send someone to Orlando’s brother Oliver. The messenger must bring Orlando to me, or if Orlando is gone, the messenger must bring Oliver to me. I will make Oliver find Orlando. Do this at once. Meanwhile, we will continue to inquire after and search for these foolish runaways and bring them back.”

— 2.3 —

In front of Oliver’s house, Orlando and the family’s aged servant, Adam, met.

Orlando asked, “Who’s there?”

Recognizing Orlando’s voice, Adam said, “My young master! My gentle master! My sweet master! You memory of old Sir Rowland! Why, what are you doing here? Why are you so virtuous? Why do people love you so much? And why are you gentle, strong, and valiant? Why were you so foolish that you defeated the strong wrestler of the moody Duke Frederick? Your praise has come home before you have come home. Don’t you know, master, that for some men virtues and accomplishments are dangerous to have because they make other people jealous and murderous? Your virtues and accomplishments are like that. Gentle master, your virtues and accomplishments are sanctified and holy traitors to you. What kind of a world is this, when what is good and beautiful in a man poisons him and leads to his death!”

“What’s the matter? What’s going on?” Orlando said.

“Unhappy youth!” Adam replied. “Don’t come inside here. Under this roof lives someone who is the enemy of all your good qualities. Your brother — no, he does not act like a

brother. Yet he is the son — but no, I won't call him the son of the man I was about to call his father. But under this roof lives someone who has heard the praise you received for defeating Charles, and this night he means to burn down the place where you are accustomed to sleep and so kill you. If he fails to kill you that way, he has other ways to stop your heart. I overheard him and his plans. This house is no home; this house is a slaughterhouse. Abhor it, fear it, and do not enter it.”

“Then where, Adam, do you think I should go?”

“It does not matter where you go, as long as you don't come here.”

“Do you want me to become a beggar and beg for my food? Or do you want me to make a living as a thief wielding a base and violent sword on the highway? To live, I must do these things — I don't know any other way to make my living. Yet I will not become either a beggar or a robber, no matter what. I prefer to subject myself to the malice of a bloodthirsty brother who does not treat me as a brother.”

“Don't do that,” Adam said. “I have five hundred crowns, money that I thriftily saved from my wages while I worked for your father. I saved up this money to live on in my old age when my old limbs would lie lame and forgotten in some corner. Take this money. God, Who feeds the ravens and providently cares for the sparrow, will be my comfort in my old age! Here is the gold — all this I give to you. Let me be your servant and accompany you in your journey. Though I look old, I am still strong and healthy. In my youth I never drank alcohol and I never lived recklessly and shamefully in such a way that would make me weak and debilitated. Therefore, my old age is like a vigorous winter — it is frosty, but kindly. Therefore, let me go with you. I will do the service of a younger man in whatever needs to be done.”

Adam had studied Psalm 147:9 and Luke 12:6 and Luke 12:24:

Psalm 147:9: *“He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.”*

Luke 12:6: *“Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?”*

Luke 12:24: *“Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?”*

Orlando replied, “Good old man, in you I see the faithful service of the ancient world. At that time, people worked out of a sense of duty and not only for money. You don’t follow the custom of these days when no one will work except for a promotion, and once they have the promotion, they stop working so hard. You are not like such people. But by serving me, you are pruning a rotten tree that cannot yield even a blossom in return for all your pains and husbandry. But come with me. We will travel together, and before we have spent your life savings, we will find a steady, sober, and humble way of life.”

“Master, lead, and I will follow you to the last gasp, with truth and loyalty. From when I was seventeen years old until now when I am almost fourscore years old, I have lived here, but now I will live here no more. When they are seventeen years old, many people seek their fortunes, but at fourscore years old it is far too late for me to do so. Still, my fate cannot be better than to die well and not in my master’s debt.”

Adam was a faithful steward. He served the right master and not the wrong master.

Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone were walking together. Rosalind, dressed like a young man, was going by the name Ganymede. Celia, dressed like a young peasant woman, was going by the name Aliena.

Rosalind said, “By Jupiter, how weary I am in spirit!”

“Ganymede, I would not care about my spirit, if my legs were not so weary,” Touchstone said.

Rosalind said, “I could disgrace my man’s clothing and cry like a woman, but I must comfort the weaker vessel because a man’s jacket and trousers ought to be more courageous than a petticoat; therefore, be courageous, good Aliena!”

“Please bear with me,” Celia said. “I cannot go any further.”

They stopped walking.

Touchstone said, “For my part, Aliena, I had rather bear with you than bear you — I do not want to carry you. Still, I should bear no cross if I did bear you because I think you have no Elizabethan coins bearing a cross as a decoration in your purse.”

Rosalind looked around and said, “Well, this is the Forest of Arden.”

“Now I am in the Forest of Arden,” Touchstone said. “Well, I am a bigger fool now than I was at home. When I was at home, I was in a better place; still, travellers have to be content with what they find.”

“That’s good advice, Touchstone,” Rosalind said. “Please take it.”

Corin, an old shepherd, and Silvius, a young shepherd who was in love with a young shepherdess named Phoebe,

walked into the travelers' sight and hearing.

Rosalind said, "Look, two men are coming here. They are a young man and an old man talking earnestly."

Corin said to Silvius, "That is the way to make her scorn you always."

"Corin, I wish that you knew how much I love her!"

"I can partly guess because I have been in love before."

"No, Corin, you are old, and so you can not guess how much I love her — even if in your youth you were as true a lover as ever sighed upon a pillow at midnight as you thought about your love. If your love was ever like my love — but I am sure that no man ever loved any woman as much as I love Phoebe — then how many really ridiculous actions did you do because of your love?"

"They run into a thousand really ridiculous actions that I have forgotten."

"Then you never did love as heartily as I love! Unless you remember even the slightest folly that love has made you commit, you have not loved. If you have never sat as I do now, wearying your hearer by constantly praising your loved one, you have not loved. If you have not run away from your friends abruptly, as my love now makes me do, you have not loved."

Silvius ran away, crying the name of the woman he loved: "Phoebe! Phoebe! Phoebe!"

Rosalind watched him run away, and then she said, "Poor shepherd! After learning about your lovesickness, I now am feeling my own. You have probed your wound, and now I feel the pain of my wound."

"And I am remembering my own lovesickness,"

Touchstone said, satirizing being in love. “I remember that when I was in love I broke my sword on a stone and told him ‘Take that!’ for coming at night because of Jane Smile. Yes, I had to beat my genitalia each night because of Jane Smile. I remember kissing her wooden beater for washing clothes and kissing the cow’s udders that her pretty chapped hands had milked. I remember wooing a pea plant as a substitute for Jane Smile. I took two peascods from the plant and then I gave them back to the plant, weeping tears and saying, ‘Wear these for my sake.’ If Jane Smile were to accept a gift from me, that would mean that she was giving me permission to woo her. And if cods are testicles and peas are a piece, aka a penis, her wearing them would make me happy. By the way, every man needs a codpiece.”

Touchstone paused, and then added, “We who are true lovers do strange things, but as all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly. As all who love must die, so all who love must act foolishly. Love makes us do foolish things, but love also means that we are a part of the natural order.”

Rosalind said, “You are speaking wiser than you are aware of.”

“Aware or beware?” Touchstone asked. “I shall never beware of my own wit until I hurt my shins by banging up against it.”

“The lovesickness of this young shepherd is much like my own,” Rosalind said.

“And his lovesickness is like mine, but my lovesickness is growing stale,” Touchstone said.

Celia said, “Please, will one of you ask that man over there if he will sell us any food? I am faint from hunger and feel as if I am almost dying.”

Touchstone had little respect for rural countrymen; he regarded them all as hicks. He called to Corin, using an insulting term: “Hey, you clown!”

“By quiet, fool,” Rosalind said to Touchstone. “He is not your kinsman. He is not a professional fool.”

Corin replied, “Who is calling?”

Touchstone replied, “Your betters, sir.”

To himself, Corin said, “If they were not my betters, they would be very wretched indeed.”

To Touchstone, Rosalind said, “Be quiet.”

To Corin, Rosalind said, “Good evening to you, friend.”

“And to you, gentle sir,” Corin replied courteously, “and to you all.”

“Please, shepherd,” Rosalind said, “if either courtesy or money can in this deserted place buy hospitality, take us to a place where we may rest ourselves and eat. Here is a young maiden much exhausted by travel; she is fainting from hunger.”

“Fair sir, I pity her and I wish, for her sake more than for my own, I was better able to relieve her than I am, but I am a shepherd who works for another man and I do not get the wool from the sheep I shear. The wool and profit belong to my master, who has a churlish disposition and cares little about finding his way to Heaven by doing deeds of hospitality. Besides, his cottage, his flocks, and his pastureland are now for sale, and at our cottage now, because my master is away, there is nothing for refined people to eat. But come and see for yourself what food is there. As for myself, I will make you very welcome there.”

“Who is the person who is thinking of buying his flock and

pasture?” Rosalind asked.

“That young lover whom you saw here but a moment ago, but he is only thinking about it. I don’t expect him to make a real offer to buy them.”

“Please, if you can do so ethically and without taking advantage of the young shepherd,” Rosalind said, “buy for us the cottage, the flock, and the pastureland, and we will pay for them.”

Celia added, “And we will increase your wages. I like this place, and I willingly could spend my time here.”

Corin was willing to buy the place for them. He said, “Assuredly this place is to be sold. Come with me. If you like what you see of the land, the profit that can be made, and this kind of life, I will be your very faithful shepherd and buy it with your gold right away.”

They followed Corin.

— 2.5 —

In another part of the Forest of Arden, Jaques and some other lords listened to Amiens sing this song:

“Under the greenwood tree

“Whoever loves to lie with me,

“And turn his merry note

“Unto the sweet bird’s throat,

“Come here, come here, come here.

“Here shall he see

“No enemy

“But winter and rough weather.”

The song celebrated the good parts of living in the Forest of Arden — love and singing and birdsong — while acknowledging the bad parts — winter and rough weather. In the Forest of Arden, the enemies are winter and rough weather. In the court, in contrast, the enemies can be much worse.

Jaques requested, “Sing more, more, please, more.”

“My singing more will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jaques. You will become sad.”

“So be it,” Jaques said. “I enjoy melancholy. Sing more, please, more. I can suck melancholy out of a song, just like a weasel sucks eggs. More, please, more.”

“My voice is ragged. I know I cannot please you.”

“I do not want you to please me. I want you to sing. Come, more — sing me another stanza. Do you call them stanzas?”

“Call them by whatever name you want, Jaques,” Amiens replied.

“No, I don’t care about their names — they are not written on an IOU, and so they owe me nothing. A list of names of sections of music is not very useful; a list of people who owe me money would be very useful indeed. Will you sing?”

“Yes, but I will sing more at your request than to please myself.”

“Well, then, if ever I thank any man, I will thank you. But what people call thanks nowadays is like the encounter of two dog-faced baboons, who bow to each other by rote and without meaning it. Whenever a man thanks me heartily, I feel as if I have given him a penny and he is thanking me with the overenthusiastic thanks a beggar uses to thank

someone who gives him money. But come, Amiens, sing.”

To the other Lords, Jaques said, “All of you who will not be singing, please be quiet.”

“Well, I’ll finish singing the song,” Amiens said. “Sirs, finish the preparation of the meal for Duke Senior and us. Place a blanket on the ground. Duke Senior will drink under this tree.”

Amiens said to Jaques, “Duke Senior has spent all day looking for you.”

“And I have spent all day avoiding him,” Jaques replied. “He is too eager to debate me, in my opinion. I think of as many issues and topics as he does, but I just give Heaven thanks for my ideas — I do not feel that I need to show them off or boast about them. But, please, sing and warble.”

Amiens sang, “*Whoever shuns ambition —*”

Everyone joined in and sang with Amiens:

“And loves to live in the Sunshine,

“Seeking the food he eats

“And pleased with what he gets,

“Come here, come here, come here.

“Here shall he see

“No enemy

“But winter and rough weather.”

Jaques said, “Now let me sing some additional words to this song. I wrote these words yesterday although I do not have a lot of creativity.”

“And I’ll sing it,” Amiens said.

Jaques said, “It goes like this:

“If it comes to pass

“That any man acts like an ass,

“Leaving his wealth and ease,

“A stubborn will to please,

“Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame:

“Here shall he see

“Fools as gross as he,

“If he will come to me.”

The other Lords had moved closer to Jaques. They were in a circle around him.

“What does ‘ducdame’ mean?” Amiens asked.

Jaques replied, “It is a Greek — as in ‘It’s Greek to me’ — magic spell used to gather fools in a circular formation.”

He paused, and then said, “Well, I’ll take a nap. If I can’t go to sleep, I will find something else to do — I’ll rail against all the first-born of Egypt. Exodus 11:5 states, *‘And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.’* Exodus 12:29-30 states, *‘And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. During the night Pharaoh got up, he along with all his officials and all the Egyptians, and there was a loud*

wailing throughout Egypt because there wasn't a house without someone dead.' As for myself, I will rail against the first-born Duke Senior, who has had bad fortune and become a gypsy and led his followers — now also gypsies — into the wilderness. I will rail against him if I can't sleep because if I cannot, it will be because his followers have woken me up so Duke Senior can talk to me."

Amiens said, "I will find Duke Senior. The meal is prepared."

— 2.6 —

Nor far from the place where the meal had been prepared for Duke Senior and his followers, Orlando and Adam were walking, exhausted and hungry.

Adam said to Orlando, "Dear master, I can go no further. I am dying of hunger. I will lie down here, and my grave will be here. Farewell, kind master."

Orlando replied, "You must have more courage now. Live a little longer; be comforted a little; cheer yourself up a little. If this wild and uncultivated forest has anything savage in it, I will either be food for it or kill it and bring it here as food for you. Your imagination is making you think that you are closer to dying than you really are. For my sake, be comforted. Hold off death awhile and keep death at arm's length. I will return here and be with you soon, and if I don't bring you something to eat, I will give you permission to die, but if you die before I return, you will have mocked my efforts."

Adam nodded and Orlando said, "Well said! You look more cheerful, and I will return to you quickly. Yet you are lying in the cold air. I will carry you to some shelter. You will not die for lack of a dinner, if anything lives in this lonely forest. Be of good cheer, good Adam!"

Amiens had arrived with Duke Senior at the place where the meal was waiting. Jaques was out of sight.

“I have been searching for Jaques,” Duke Senior said. “I think that he must be transformed into a beast because I can find the man nowhere.”

A Lord said, “My Lord, he was here a moment ago. He was happy and playful, and he was listening to a song.”

“Are you really talking about Jaques, the melancholy man?” Duke Senior asked. “If he, who is full of melancholy and of discords, becomes musical, very soon the music made by the spheres as they move in the sky will become discordant. Go and find him. I want to talk to him.”

Jaques walked up to the group, and the Lord said, “He has saved me the trouble of finding him. Here he comes.”

“How are you, monsieur?” Duke Senior said. “What kind of a life is this when your poor friends must seek you and beg for your company? Why, you look happy!”

Jaques was happy; he had met Touchstone, who had been wearing the motley costume that identified him as a professional fool. The cottage that Rosalind and Celia had bought was near Duke Senior’s camp.

He said, “A fool, a fool! I met a fool in the forest, a motley fool — a fool wearing motley! It is a miserable world in which your friends must seek you and beg for your company, but as I do live by eating food, I met a fool who lay down and warmed himself in the Sunshine, and he criticized Lady Fortune with carefully chosen words and with rhetorical eloquence, and yet he was a motley fool.

“I said to him, ‘Good day, fool,’ but he replied to me, ‘No, sir, fortune favors fools, so do not call me a fool until

Heaven has sent me good fortune.’

“And then the fool took a watch from his pouch, and looking on it with lackluster eye, said very wisely, ‘It is ten o’clock. Thus we may see how the world goes. It is but an hour ago since it was nine, and after one hour more it will be eleven. And so, from hour to hour, we grow riper and riper — more mature and more mature — and then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot, and thereby hangs a moral tale.’”

Jaques thought, *If instead of using the word “hour,” the fool had used the word “whore,” he would have said, “And so, from whore to whore, we rut and rut, and then, from whore to whore, we rot and rot with venereal disease, and thereby hangs an anatomical tail.” The anatomical tail, of course, would be a penis.*

Jaques continued, “When I heard the motley fool thus moralize on the times, my lungs began to crow like the rooster named Chanticleer in Chaucer’s ‘Nun’s Priest’s Tale.’ I was impressed that fools should be so deeply contemplative, and I laughed without intermission for an hour by his watch. What a noble fool! What a worthy fool! Motley is the only clothing to wear.”

“Which fool are you talking about?” Duke Senior asked.

“He is a worthy fool!” Jaques said. “He has been a courtier at court, and he says that if ladies are young and beautiful, they always know it, and his brain, which is as dry as the left-over biscuit that remains after a long sea voyage, is crammed with strange topics and observations, which he utters in mangled forms and with dry wit. I wish I were a fool! My ambition is to wear a motley coat.”

“You shall have one,” Duke Senior said.

“It is my only suit — my only request to you and the only

outfit I will need to wear,” Jaques said, “provided that you get rid of any thoughts that I am wise. Such thoughts are rank and need to be weeded. I must have the freedom — a license as free as the wind — to blow my criticisms on whomever I please. That is the job of fools. Those people who are most galled with my satiric criticisms must laugh the hardest. Why, sir, must they laugh so hard? The ‘why’ is as plain as the way to the parish church: He whom a fool does very wisely hit with criticism will act wisely, although he is hurt by the criticism, to appear not to be hurt by the criticism. They will act foolishly if they allow their hurt to show. Wise men will appear not to smart from the satiric criticism, although they do in fact smart. Unless a man appears to appreciate the jokes, other people will think that the jokes were aimed at him, and the wise man’s folly will be laid bare by the random satirical hits of the motley fool. So give me a motley costume and permission to speak my mind, and I will use satire to thoroughly cleanse the foulness from throughout the infected world if people will patiently receive my medicine.”

“Don’t be silly!” Duke Senior said. “I can tell you what you would do.”

Jaques replied, “For less than two cents, tell me your thoughts.”

“You would commit a most mischievous foul sin when you would chide the sins of other people,” Duke Senior said. “An old proverb says, ‘He finds fault with others and does worse himself.’ You yourself have been a libertine. You have been as sensual as the brutish sting of animal lust itself. All the swollen sores and evils that have come to a head like boils, that you with your freedom and immorality have caught, you would vomit into the whole world.”

Jaques ignored Duke Senior’s criticism of his past and returned to his defense of satire: “How can anyone who

denounces pride in general be said to have denounced any person in particular? Pride is as huge as the sea, and trying to indulge one's pride uses up all the resources available. What particular woman in the city do I name when I say that the women of the city bear the cost of princes on their unworthy shoulders by spending too much on expensive clothing as they try to appear to be of a higher class than they are? Who can come in and say that I mean her, when both she and her neighbor are doing exactly the same thing? Or what about a person who thinks that I am criticizing him in particular? He has a lowly job but dresses in expensive clothing — suppose he tells me that I don't pay for his expensive clothing and therefore it is of no concern to me. How can he say that without admitting that my criticism of him is true? What about that? How have my words hurt him? If my criticism is just, then he deserves the criticism. If he does not deserve the criticism and is free of sin, then my criticism will fly past him like a wild goose and will not harm him.”

Jaques heard a noise, looked around, and said, “But look, someone is coming.”

With his sword drawn, Orlando walked toward the group.

Orlando ordered, “Stop, and eat no more.”

“Why, I have eaten nothing yet,” Jaques said.

“Nor shall you, until those who most need the food have eaten,” Orlando said.

“What cocky young man is this?” Jaques asked.

Duke Senior asked Orlando, “What makes you so rude and so bold, man? Are you in distress, or do you simply hate good manners?”

“I am in distress,” Orlando replied. “The thorny point of

bare distress has taken away from me the use of smooth good manners and civility. However, I was brought up in civilized society and I have had some good breeding. But again, I say, don't eat anything. Anyone who touches any of this fruit will die — they must wait to eat until I and my needs have been satisfied.”

Jaques said, “If you will not be answered with reasons, I must die. But if reasons are not sufficient, perhaps raisins will be. Raisins make up part of our meal.”

“What do you want?” Duke Senior said to Orlando. “Your gentleness shall force us more to help you than your force shall move us to gentleness. If you are polite, that will persuade us more quickly to give you what you need than your threatening us will persuade us to give you what you need.”

“I am close to dying of hunger; therefore, let me have food,” Orlando said.

“Sit down and eat, and welcome to our meal,” Duke Senior replied.

“You are speaking to me very gently and hospitably,” Orlando said, sheathing his sword. “Pardon me, please. I thought that all things were savage here, and therefore I have acted like a savage. But whoever you are in this hard-to-reach lonely place, who sit under the shade of melancholy boughs and forget and neglect the creeping hours of time, if ever you have looked on better days, if you have ever been where bells have knolled to alert people to go to church, if you have ever sat at any good man's feast, if ever from your eyelids you have wiped a tear and know what it is to pity and be pitied, then let my kindness and nobility persuade you that I am civilized. Now I blush with shame, and I put away my sword.”

“It is true that we have seen better days,” Duke Senior said,

“and we have heard the holy bell knoll to tell us to go to church and we have sat at good men’s feasts and wiped our eyes of tears that sacred pity has caused. Therefore, welcome and sit down and take whatever you desire to satisfy your needs.”

“For a little while longer, then, refrain from eating,” Orlando said. “Wait while I, like a doe, go to find my fawn so I can bring it here and give it food. Nearby is an old poor man, who with me has many weary steps limped in pure love. Until that man — who is oppressed with the two evils of age and hunger — has eaten, I will not touch a bite.”

“Go and bring him here,” Duke Senior said. “We will not eat until you return.”

“Thank you,” Orlando said. “May God bless you for your hospitality.”

Orlando left to get Adam.

Duke Senior said to Jaques, “You can see that we are not the only ones who are unhappy: This wide and universal theater known as the world presents more woeful pageants than the scene in which we play our parts.”

Jaques replied, “All the world is a stage, and all the men and women in it are merely actors: They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his lifetime plays many parts. His parts are for seven ages.

“First, he plays the infant, mewling and puking in the wet nurse’s arms.

“Second, he plays the whining schoolboy with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping like a snail as he unwillingly goes to school.

“Third, he plays the lover, sighing like a furnace breathing out smoke and singing a woeful ballad about his

girlfriend's eyebrows.

“Fourth, he plays the soldier, full of strange oaths and bearded like the leopard, fiercely protective of his honor, impetuous and quick in quarrel, facing the mouth of a cannon as he seeks fame, which lasts no longer than a bubble.

“Fifth, he plays the judge, with a fair round belly stuffed with tasty chicken, the bribe of choice, and he plays the part with wise sayings and clichéd examples.

“Sixth, he plays an old man — the lean and slippered and ridiculous pantaloons — wearing spectacles on his nose and a moneybag at his side. The carefully preserved pants that he wore as a young man are now a world too wide for his shrunken legs, and his big manly voice, regressing to a childish treble, squeaks and whistles as he speaks.

“Seventh, and last, he plays the really old man — the part that will end his history — in his second childhood in utter forgetfulness, without teeth, without eyes, without taste, smell, or enjoyment, without everything.”

Orlando now returned. He was carrying Adam, an old man of much virtue and loyalty and generosity.

Duke Senior said to Orlando, “Welcome. Set down your venerable burden, and let him eat.”

“I thank you most for him,” Orlando said.

Adam said weakly to Orlando, “There is need for you to thank him.”

He said to Duke Senior, “I scarcely can speak to thank you for myself.”

“Welcome,” Duke Senior said again. “Fall to. Eat. I will not trouble you now with questions about your fortunes.”

He ordered, "Give us some music, and, good Amiens, sing."

Amiens sang, "*Blow, blow, you winter wind.*

"You are not as unkind

"As man's ingratitude;

"Your tooth is not as keen,

"Because you are not seen,

"Although your breath is cruel.

"Heigh-ho! Sing heigh-ho to the green holly.

"Most friendship is feigning, most loving is mere folly.

"So sing heigh-ho to the holly!

"This life is most jolly.

"Freeze, freeze, you bitter sky,

"That does not bite as deeply

"As forgotten favors.

"Though you turn waters to ice,

"Your sting is not so sharp

"As the pain of a friend who has forgotten you.

"Heigh-ho! Sing heigh-ho to the green holly.

"Most friendship is feigning, most loving is mere folly.

"So sing heigh-ho to the holly!

"This life is most jolly."

Suffering can be physical or mental. The mental suffering caused by man's ingratitude is worse than the physical

suffering caused by a cold winter wind.

As Amiens sang, Adam and Orlando ate. Orlando also whispered to Duke Senior, who now said, "If you are really the good Sir Rowland's son, as you have whispered to me that you are, and as I can see a strong resemblance to him depicted and living in your face, then be truly welcome here. I am Duke Senior, and I truly respected your father. We will now go into my cave and you can tell me the rest of your story."

To Adam, he said, "Good old man, you are as welcome as your master is."

To Orlando, he said, "Support him by the arm."

To Adam, he said, "Give me your hand."

To both Orlando and Adam, he said, "Now I want to hear about your histories and adventures."

CHAPTER 3 (As You Like It)

— 3.1 —

In a room of his palace, Duke Frederick was questioning Oliver. Some other Lords were present.

Duke Frederick said to Oliver, “You have not seen him since the wrestling match? Sir, sir, that is not possible. If I were not for the most part made of mercy, I would not seek Orlando since I have you here to take the brunt of my revenge. But note well: Find your brother, wherever he is. Seek him diligently, with candle if need be, like the parable in Luke 15:8-10 about the woman who lost a silver coin, lit a candle, and searched for the coin until she found it. Bring your brother back here dead or alive within the next twelve months, or return no more to seek a living in our territory. All of your lands and all of the things worth seizure that you call yours we now seize into our hands. We will keep them until you return with your brother and use his testimony to acquit yourself of the crimes of which we think you are guilty.”

“I wish that your highness knew my thoughts and feelings,” Oliver said. “I have never loved my brother in my life.”

“Then you are even more of a villain than I thought,” Duke Frederick said, ignoring the way that he had treated his own brother: Duke Senior.

To the others, he said, “Throw Oliver out of the palace; my officers will seize his house and lands. Do this quickly and send him on his way.”

— 3.2 —

In the Forest of Arden, Orlando hung a love poem on a tree and said, “Hang there, my verse, as a witness of my love,

and you, thrice-crowned goddess and queen of night — crowned once as the Moon goddess Luna, a second time as Diana on Earth, and a third time as Proserpina, aka Persephone, in the Underworld — look with your chaste eye, from your pale sphere above, upon Rosalind, who is a virgin like yourself. Because she is a virgin, she is one of your followers. She, your follower, rules my life. Rosalind! These trees shall be my books and in their bark I will write my thoughts so that every eye that looks in this forest shall see testaments to your excellence everywhere. Run, run, Orlando — carve on every tree testaments to the beautiful, virginal, and indescribable she.”

Orlando ran.

Nearby, the old shepherd Corin and the professional jester Touchstone were talking.

Corin asked Touchstone, “And how do you like this shepherd’s life, Mr. Touchstone?”

“Truly, shepherd, in itself, it is a good life, but because it is a shepherd’s life, it is a bad life. Because it is solitary, I like it very well; but because it is lonely, I don’t like it at all. Now, because it is in the fields, it pleases me well; but because it is not in the court, it is boring and does not please me. Because it is a simple life, it suits me well, but because there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach and does not suit me. Do you have any philosophy in you, shepherd?”

“No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is,” Corin said, “and I know that a man who lacks money, resources, and happiness is without three good friends. I know that the property of rain is to be wet and the property of fire is to burn, that good pasture makes fat sheep, and that a great cause of the night is lack of the Sun, and that a man who has acquired no intelligence either

by birth or education may complain that he lacks a good upbringing or that he comes from a stupid family.”

“Such a man as yourself is a natural philosopher,” Touchstone said. “Have you ever been at court, shepherd?”

“No, indeed.”

“Then you are damned,” Touchstone said.

“I hope not.”

Touchstone was joking, as jesters so often do, and Corin knew it.

“Indeed, you are damned like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.”

Corin knew about roasting eggs in ashes. They needed to be turned, or they would roast only on one side.

“I am damned like an ill-roasted egg for not being at court? Explain why you think that.”

“If you have never been at court, then you have never seen good manners. If you have never seen good manners, then your manners are wicked. Wickedness is sin, and sin results in damnation. You are in a dangerous position, shepherd.”

“Not at all, Touchstone,” Corin replied. “The good manners that are suitable for the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behavior of the country folk is most mockable at the court. You told me that you do not greet each other at the court without kissing each other’s hands. That custom would be unhygienic, if courtiers were shepherds.”

“Explain your reasoning. Quickly, explain your reasoning.”

“We are always handling our ewes, and their fleeces, as you know, are greasy.”

“Why, the hands of courtiers also sweat. The grease of an ewe is as wholesome as the sweat of a man. You have not made a good argument. Therefore, make a better one.”

“In addition to that, our hands are hard.”

“Your lips will feel them the sooner when you kiss them, and so you do not need kiss very long. Come up with a better argument.”

“We use tar when treating the injuries of our sheep, and so tar is often on our hands. Would you have us kiss tar? In contrast, the hands of the courtier are perfumed.”

“You shallow thinker! Compared to a good steak, you are a piece of flesh covered with maggots. Learn of the wise, and perpend. Perfume has a base of civet, which is the secretion from the anal glands of a civet cat. Tar is a cleaner substance than civet. Can you come up with a better argument?”

“You have too courtly a wit for me. I give up.”

“Will you give up, still damned?” Touchstone joked. “God help you, shallow man! May God make an incision in you and let the bad blood and damnation out. You are ill.”

“Sir, I am a trustworthy laborer,” Corin said. “I earn what I eat, earn what I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man’s happiness, am glad of other men’s good luck and lives, resigned to any afflictions I face, and my greatest pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck.”

“That is another foolish sin in you: you bring the ewes and the rams together and attempt to get your living by the copulation of animals. You act as a pimp to the leading sheep of the flock and you betray a she-lamb only a year old by breeding her to a crooked-horned, old, possessed-of-an-unfaithful-ewe ram — that is an unreasonable and

unethical match of female and male. If you are not damned for this, the Devil himself will not allow such evil beings as shepherds to enter his Hell — I cannot see any other way that you can escape Hell.”

Corin said to Touchstone, “Look, here comes young Master Ganymede, the brother of my new female employer, Aliena.”

Rosalind walked toward them. She was reading one of the love poems that Orlando had tied to trees.

Rosalind read out loud this poem:

“From the East Indies to the West Indies,

“There is no jewel like Rosalind.

“Her worth, being mounted on the wind,

“Through all the world bears Rosalind.

“All the pictures fairest sketched and lined

“Are but black compared to Rosalind.

“Let no fair be kept in mind

“But the fair face of Rosalind.”

Touchstone knew that this was bad poetry. He said to Rosalind, who as usual was dressed in men’s clothing and going by the name Ganymede, “Writing good poetry is difficult; writing bad poetry is easy. I can rhyme you poetry like that for eight years without stopping, except for dinners and suppers and sleeping-hours. That kind of poetry jogs along like dairy women bumpily riding to the market.”

Bad poetry or not, it was love poetry about her, so Rosalind said, “Be quiet, fool!”

Touchstone was not quiet. He said, “Here’s an example of

the bad poetry I will write:

“If a male deer — a hart — do lack a female deer — a hind,

“Let him seek out Rosalind.

“If the cat will seek its own kind,

“So be sure will Rosalind.

“Winter garments must be stuffed with padding — that is, lined,

“And stuffed must be slender Rosalind.

“They who reap must make sheaves and them bind;

“Then put them on a cart with Rosalind.”

Rosalind smiled. She knew that prostitutes were placed on a cart to be taken to prison. She also knew what kind of stuffing of a young woman Touchstone was referring to.

Touchstone continued his bad poetry:

“The sweetest nut has the sourest rind,

“Such a nut is Rosalind.

“He that sweetest rose will find

“Must find love’s prick and so will Rosalind.”

Rosalind smiled again. She knew that “prick” had a double meaning.

Touchstone said about the bad poetry that Rosalind had been reading, “This is the very false gallop of unmetrical verses. Why do you infect yourself with them?”

“Be quiet, you dull fool! I found them on a tree.”

“Truly, the tree yields bad fruit.”

“I will graft the tree with you, and then I will graft it with a medlar branch. Then the tree will bear the earliest fruit in the country — you will be rotten before you are half ripe, and that is the true quality of the medlar. The medlar is not ripe enough to eat until it is rotten. This is an appropriate comparison because you are a meddler.”

“You have spoken, but whether you have spoken wisely, we will let the forest judge.”

Celia had found one of the poems that Orlando had written and then tied to a tree. She walked toward Rosalind and Touchstone. She did not see them because her eyes looked down as she read the poem.

Rosalind said, “Be quiet, Touchstone!”

Keeping in character as Ganymede, a wise thing to do to prevent mistakes that could reveal her secret identity, she said, “Here comes my sister, reading. Let’s stand aside and spy on her.”

Celia read out loud, “*Why should this a desert be?*”

“*Because it is unpeopled? No:*

“*Tongues I’ll hang on every tree,*

“*That shall civil sayings show:*

“*Some, how brief the life of man*

“*Runs his erring pilgrimage,*

“*That the stretching of the span of a hand*

“*Limits his sum of age;*

“*Some, of violated vows*

“*Between the souls of friend and friend:*

*“But upon the fairest boughs,
“Or at every sentence’s end,
“Will I ‘Rosalinda’ write,
“Teaching all who read to know
“The quintessence of every soul
“Heaven would in miniature show.
“Therefore Heaven Nature charged
“That one body should be filled
“With all graces wide-enlarged:
“Nature presently distilled
“Helen’s cheek, but not her heart,
“Cleopatra’s majesty,
“Atalanta’s better part,
“Sad Lucretia’s modesty.
“Thus Rosalind of many parts
“By Heavenly council was devised,
“Of many faces, eyes, and hearts,
“To have the features dearest prized.
“Heaven decreed that she these gifts should have,
“And I to live and die her slave.”*

The poem may have been badly written, but it was complimentary to Rosalind: Heavenly beings had conspired to give her the best qualities of ancient heroines. According to the author of the poem, the Heavenly beings had given

Rosalind the beauty of Helen of Troy but not her character — Helen had deserted her daughter and husband and had run away with Paris, Prince of Troy.

The Heavenly beings also had given Rosalind the majesty of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt.

The Heavenly beings also had given Rosalind the “better part” of Atalanta, who wished to preserve her chastity. Being swift, she challenged her suitors to a foot race. If she won the foot race, she would remain unmarried. If a suitor won the footrace, she would marry that suitor. For a long time, she remained a virgin, but Venus, the goddess of sexual passion, helped Hippomenes to win the foot race. She gave him three golden apples, and during the foot race, he dropped the golden apples, one at a time. Atalanta picked up the golden apples, and this slowed her down enough that Hippomenes won the race and married her. Fortunately, Rosalind did not get the worse part of Atalanta: her cruelty. All the suitors who lost the footrace were killed.

The Heavenly beings also had given Rosalind the modesty of Lucretia, who committed suicide after being raped by Sextus Tarquinius, the son of the Etruscan King: Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. The Romans then threw out the Etruscan King and started the Roman Republic.

Rosalind and Touchstone now came out of hiding. Rosalind startled Celia by exclaiming, “Oh, preacher. With what tedious homilies about love have you been wearing out your parishioners? You should have warned them in advance: ‘You will need great patience to listen to this!’”

“You are false friends for spying on me,” Celia joked. Then she said to Corin, “Shepherd, go away a little so that we can have some privacy.”

Because she wanted to engage in girl talk with Rosalind,

she said to Touchstone, “Go with him.”

Touchstone said, “Come, shepherd, let us make an honorable retreat. We may not be with bag and baggage, yet we will have my scrip — my pouch — and scrippage — the coins I put in it.”

As Corin and Touchstone walked away, both Rosalind and Celia smiled. They knew that “bag and baggage” referred to the military equipment that could be taken away by soldiers as they retreated. They also knew that “bag and baggage” were less-than-complimentary terms when applied to women. A “bag” is an unattractive or elderly woman. “Baggage” is a woman of immoral life — a strumpet. “Baggage” can also be used playfully to describe a cunning or saucy young woman. They also knew that professional jesters have the freedom to use such terms. In return, the jesters’ victims were allowed to freely call the jester a fool, a term that was not exactly an insult.

Celia asked Rosalind, “Did you hear these verses?”

“Oh, yes, I heard them all, and more, too; for some of the verses had more feet than the verses could bear or carry.”

“That doesn’t matter. The feet should bear the verses.”

“True, but these feet were lame and could not bear themselves outside the verse and therefore stood lamely in the verse.”

Celia asked, “Did you hear these poems without wondering how it came to pass that your name is written in the bark of trees and poems about you are hung in the trees?”

“If this is a nine-days’-wonder, I had experienced seven of the nine days before you came here just now. Look at this poem: I found it on a palm-tree. I was never so be-rhymed since Pythagoras’ time, when I was an Irish rat, which I can

hardly remember. Pythagoras thought that souls could be reincarnated in the bodies of animals, and the Irish thought that they could rid themselves of rats with the use of rhyming incantations.”

“Can you guess who wrote these poems and carved your name into the bark of trees?”

“Is it a man?” Rosalind joked.

“Yes, and he wears a necklace around his neck — a necklace that you once gave him.”

Celia asked, “Are you blushing?”

Rosalind knew that the man had to be Orlando, but she wanted Celia to say his name.

“Please tell me. What is the man’s name?”

“Lord, it is difficult for friends to meet, but mountains can be moved by earthquakes and so meet. This is true even though people usually think that friends may meet, but mountains never greet. You already know the answer, don’t you?”

“No,” Rosalind lied. “Who is it?”

“Is it possible that you don’t know?”

“I don’t know. Please, I urgently ask you to tell me who he is who wrote the poems.”

“Oh, wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful — and yet again wonderful, and after that, wonderful beyond all words!”

“Celia, please! Do you think that because I am dressed like a man that I am a man in my disposition! One inch of delay more is like the distance it would take to journey to the South Seas on an expedition of discovery. Please, tell me

immediately what I want to know! Who wrote those poems! Speak up, and speak up quickly! I wish that you could stammer, so that you could pour this mystery man out of your mouth the way that wine comes out of a narrow-mouthed bottle: either too much at once, or none at all. These, of course, alternate, and I would eventually learn the name that I want to know. Please, take the cork out of your mouth so that I can drink your news. Stop teasing me, and pour out the name that I want to know.”

“You want to know the name so that you can put a man in your belly.”

Rosalind thought, *Celia is referring either to my being pregnant with a son or to the act that could result in my being pregnant with a son. But yes, I want her to name the name of Orlando, whom I want to father my children.*

She asked, “Is he a normal man and made by God? What manner of man is he? Is his head worth a hat? Is his chin worth a beard?”

“He has only a little beard.”

“Well, God will send him more beard, if the man will be thankful. I can wait for the growth of his beard if you will now tell me on whose chin it will grow.”

Finally, Celia stopped teasing Rosalind and gave her the answer that she had hoped and expected to hear: “It is young Orlando, who conquered the wrestler and your heart both in an instant.”

Happy, Rosalind said, “May the Devil take you if you are lying. Speak truthfully, serious and honest maiden.”

“Truly, he is Orlando.”

“Orlando?”

“Orlando.”

Rosalind was delighted, but she was in disguise and dressed as a young man — something that could interfere with Orlando’s wooing of her. She said, “What shall I do with my man’s jacket and trousers?”

She then inundated Celia with questions: “What was he doing when you saw him? What did he say? How did he look? How was he dressed? What is he doing here? Did he ask about me? Where is he now? What happened when he departed from you? And when shall you see him again? Answer me in one word.”

“To answer all those questions in one word, I would need the large mouth of Rabelais’ comic creation: the giant Gargantua. Such a quantity of all-run-together syllables is too large for any normal-sized mouth. To say yes and no to your questions is more time-consuming than to answer the questions of a religious catechism.”

“Does Orlando know that I am in this forest and that I am wearing men’s clothing? Does he look as healthy as he did the day he wrestled?”

“Counting the specks of dust in a ray of Sunshine is as easy as answering the questions of a lover, but I will tell you where I saw him. Pay attention. I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn.”

“The oak is known as the tree of Jupiter, as well it should be known, since it drops such fruit.”

“Please listen, good madam.”

“Proceed.”

“There he lay, stretched along the ground, like a wounded knight.”

“Though it would be a pity to see such a sight, such a figure well becomes the ground.”

“Cry ‘whoa!’ to your tongue, please. It prances along in an ill-timed manner. He was dressed and equipped like a hunter hunting a male deer: a hart.”

“This is ominous,” Rosalind said. “He comes here to kill my heart.”

“I would like to sing my song without accompaniment. You are making me sing out of tune.”

“Don’t you know that I am a woman? What I think, I must speak. Sweetie, speak on.”

“You are making me forget which words to use — but look! Isn’t that him coming this way?”

Rosalind looked up and saw Orlando and Jaques walking together. She said, “Yes, it is him. Let us hide and spy on him.”

Orlando and Jaques had met in the forest. Now they were humorously and courteously insulting each other.

“I thank you for your company,” Jaques said, “but, to be honest, I would have preferred to be alone.”

“As had I,” Orlando replied, “but, because it is good manners, I also thank you for your company.”

“May God be with you, and may the two of us meet as seldom as we can.”

“I do desire that we may become better strangers.”

“Please, mar no more trees by writing names on their bark and hanging love poems from their branches.”

“Please, mar no more of my verses by reading them badly.”

“Is Rosalind your love’s name?”

“Yes, exactly.”

“I do not like her name.”

“There was no thought of pleasing you when she was given a Christian name at her baptism.”

“How tall is she?”

“She stands just as high as my heart.”

“You are full of pretty answers. You must know some goldsmiths’ wives — you must have learned your pretty answers by memorizing the inscriptions on the inside of rings.”

Jaques thought, “*She stands just as high as my heart.*”
Good grief!

“That is not so, but I am answering your questions, which you seem to have learned from those on inspirational and religious posters.”

“You have a nimble wit. I think it was made from the swift heels of the swift runner Atalanta. Will you sit down with me? We two shall rail against our mistress the world and all our misery.”

“I will criticize no living person in the world but myself, whose faults I know best.”

“The worst fault you have is being in love,” Jaques said.

“It is a fault that I will not exchange for your best virtue. I am weary of you.”

“To tell the truth, I was looking for a fool when I found you.”

“He is drowned in the brook. Look in the brook, and you

shall see him.”

“There I shall see my own reflection.”

“In my opinion, that which would be reflected is either a fool or nothing.”

“I will stay no more with you. Farewell, Mr. Love.”

“I am glad that you are leaving. *Adieu*, good Monsieur Melancholy.”

Jaques walked away, and Rosalind whispered to Celia, “I will speak to Orlando like a saucy lackey and trick him while I pretend to be a young man.”

Rosalind said to Orlando, “How are you, forester?”

“Very well. What do you want?”

“Please, what o’clock is it?”

“You should ask me about the time of day in more general terms — there is no clock in the forest and so I can’t be specific.”

“Then there is no true lover in the forest,” Rosalind, dressed as Ganymede, said. “If there were a true lover in the forest, we would be able to tell the exact time by counting the number of the lover’s sighs per minute and the number of the lover’s groans per hour. That would tell the lazy passage of Time.”

“Why not the swift passage of Time? Wouldn’t the lover’s sighs and groans tell that?”

“Not at all, sir,” Rosalind replied. “Time passes differently for different kinds of people. For some people, Time ambles pleasurably. For some people, Time trots hard. For some people, Time gallops quickly. For some people, Time stands still.”

“For whom does Time trot hard?”

“Time trots hard and violently for a young maiden between the day of her engagement and the day of her marriage. Even if that time is a week, time trots so hard that it seems like seven years.”

“For whom does Time amble pleasurably?”

“Time ambles pleasurably for a priest who does not know Latin and a rich man who does not have the gout. The priest sleeps easily because he cannot study the Bible and other religious works, all of which are in the language of the learned: Latin. Therefore, he lacks the burden of hard study that makes him waste away. The rich man lives merrily because he feels no pain and knows no burden of heavy and painful poverty. For these men, Time ambles pleasurably.”

“For whom does Time gallop quickly?”

“Time gallops quickly for a thief on his way to the gallows. Although he goes as slowly as he can, he thinks that he gets there too quickly.”

“For whom does Time stand still?”

“Time stands still for lawyers during the period when the law courts are not in session. The lawyers sleep and do not see Time passing.”

“Where do you live, pretty youth?” Orlando asked.

“I live with this shepherdess, my sister, here in the outskirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat.”

“Were you born here?”

“Yes, just like a rabbit that lives where it was born.”

“Your speech is more citified than it should be in so remote

a dwelling.”

“I have been told that by many people,” Rosalind replied, “but indeed an old religious uncle of mine taught me to speak; in his youth, he lived in a city. I am citified enough to be interested in what o’clock it is. He understood courtship too well because in the city he fell in love. I have heard him read many lectures against it, and I thank God that I am not a woman who is afflicted with all the many giddy offences of which he says women are guilty.”

“Can you remember any of the principal evils that he claimed that women are guilty of?”

“There were none that really stood out. They were all similar to one another the way that halfpence, which have similar markings, are. Every fault seemed monstrous until its fellow fault came to match it.”

“Please, tell me about some of them.”

“No, I will not give away my medicine to anyone except those who are sick. There is a man who haunts the forest, who abuses our young trees by carving ‘Rosalind’ on their bark. He hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies upon brambles. All of these deify the name of Rosalind. If I could meet that fancy-monger, I would give him some good counsel, for he seems to have the sickness of love upon him.”

“I am he who is so shaken by lovesickness. Please tell me your remedy for my lovesickness.”

“You have none of the marks of lovesickness that my uncle taught me. He taught me how to know when a man is in love. I am sure that you are not a prisoner in that flimsy cage of rushes. You are not a prisoner of love.”

“What are the marks of lovesickness that your uncle taught

you?”

“They were a lean cheek, which you have not; dark circles under the eyes, which you have not; an impatient spirit, which you have not; a neglected beard, which you have not, but I pardon you for that because you have little beard — your beard is as big as a younger brother’s revenue. Other marks were that your stockings should be ungartered, your hat should be without a band, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoes untied, and everything about you demonstrating a desperate neglect of how you are dressed. But you are no such man: You are meticulous in your apparel, and you seem to love yourself more than you love someone else.”

“Fair youth, I wish I could make you believe that I am in love.”

“Make me believe it! You may sooner make the woman whom you love believe it. I think that she is apter to believe than to admit that she does believe it. That is one of the ways in which women lie about their real feelings. But are you truly the man who hangs the verses on the trees — the verses wherein Rosalind is so praised and admired?”

“I swear to you, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that man, that unfortunate man.”

“But are you as much in love as your rhymes say that you are?”

“Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much I am in love with Rosalind.”

“Love is merely a madness, and, I tell you, lovers deserve to be treated the way that madmen are — kept in a dark house and whipped to get the demon that causes their madness out of them. The reason that lovers are not punished in that way and cured of their lovesickness is that the madness is so common that the whippers are in love,

too. Yet I am an expert in curing lovesickness through my advice.”

“Have you ever cured anyone of lovesickness?”

“Yes, one person, and in this manner. He pretended that I was his loved one, and I made him pretend everyday to woo me, at which time I would, being but a Moonish — that is, changeable and fickle — youth myself, be sad, effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, capricious, affected, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, and full of smiles. I acted as if I felt every emotion or as if I felt no emotion. I acted one way, and then I acted the opposite way. Both boys and women are for the most part creatures of this color: changeable and fickle. I would like him, then I would loathe him. I would entertain him, then I would forswear him. I would weep for him, then I would spit at him. By acting in this way, I drove lovesickness out of my suitor and I delivered to him another kind of madness: He renounced the world, and he decided to live in complete religious seclusion. In this way, I cured him, and I am willing to cure you in the same way — I will wash your heart and make it as clean as a sound sheep’s heart — there will not be one spot of love in your heart.”

“I don’t want to be cured of my lovesickness, youth.”

“I will cure you, if you will call me Rosalind and come everyday to my cottage and woo me.”

“I have such faith in my love for Rosalind that I accept your challenge — you will not be able to cure me of my love for her,” Orlando said. “Now tell me where your cottage is.”

“Come with me and I will show you where it is. While we walk, you can tell me where in the forest you live. Will you come with me?”

“With all my heart, good youth.”

“You must call me Rosalind.”

She asked Celia, “Come, sister, will you go with us?”

Rosalind thought, *My meetings with Orlando will work out well. He needs to talk to me, not write poetry about me.*

— 3.3 —

In another part of the forest, Touchstone was talking to Audrey, a goatherd. Jaques was close enough to them to overhear what they said.

“Come quickly, good Audrey. I will help you with your goats, Audrey. And what do you think, Audrey? Am I the man for you? Do the simple features of my face content you?”

“Your features!” Audrey said. “Lord help us! What features!”

“I am here with you and your goats, just like the most capricious of the Roman poets, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.”

Touchstone knew that Audrey had never heard of Ovid, author of *Metamorphoses*.

Jaques enjoyed watching Touchstone court Audrey: A well-educated man was courting an ill-educated young woman. Jaques said to himself, “Touchstone’s knowledge is being put to ill use. His company cannot appreciate his intelligence and education. This is worse than the god Jupiter coming down from Mount Olympus to spend time as the guest of peasants in a thatched cottage.”

Touchstone said, “When a man’s verses cannot be understood, and when a man’s good jokes are not understood, it metaphorically kills a man just like an

argument over a big bill for a short visit in a small room. But I doubt that forest-dwelling people have heard that the great playwright Christopher Marlowe was killed in an argument about a big bill. Truly, Audrey, I wish that the gods had made you poetical.”

“I do not know what the word ‘poetical’ means. Does it mean being respectable in deed and word? Does it mean being truthful?”

“No, indeed. The truest poetry is the most feigning — the most imaginative. Lovers are fond of poetry, and what lovers swear in poetry may be said to be lies.”

“Do you wish then that the gods had made me poetical?”

“I do, truly. You have sworn to me that you are chaste. If you were a poet, I could hope that you were lying.”

“Don’t you want me to be chaste?” Audrey asked.

“No, indeed, unless you were ugly. Chastity and beauty are like honey and sugar — two things that when they go together are too sweet. No one needs to pour honey on sugar.”

Jaques said to himself, “This fool sometimes makes sense.”

Touchstone thought, *When a woman is beautiful, I hope that she is not chaste so that I may sleep with her without having to marry her.*

“Well, I am not beautiful,” Audrey said, “and therefore I pray that the gods will make me chaste.”

“Indeed, you should wish that you be chaste. Wasting chastity on a dirty slut is like putting good meat on a dirty dish.”

“I am not a slut, though I thank the gods I am ugly.”

“Well, praised be the gods that you are ugly! Sluttishness may come hereafter. But be it as it may be, I want to marry you, and to that end I have met with Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the nearby village, who has promised to meet me here and to marry us.”

“I would like to see this meeting,” Jaques said to himself.

“I agree to marry you,” Audrey said. “May the gods give us joy!”

“Amen,” Touchstone said. “A man could, if he had a fearful heart, hesitate about getting married here because here we have no church but the forest, no congregation but horned beasts. That could make a man afraid that the horns were an evil omen. Horns are the symbol of a cuckold — a man with an unfaithful wife. But what of that! Have courage, Touchstone! Horns may be odious, but they are inevitable. It is said, ‘Many a man thinks that his wealth is exhaustible.’ That is true: Many men have horns and will never see the end of the horns that his wife gives him. Well, horns are the dowry that having a wife gets him. The husband does not get his own horns. Horns? Definitely they exist. Do only poor men get horns? No, no; the noblest stag has horns as big as the horns of the rascal. Is the single man therefore blessed because he lacks horns? No.

“A town with a wall is better off than a village without a wall, and so a married man with horns is better off than a bachelor without horns. The horns protect the man’s head like the walls protect the town. It is better to know the art of defense than not to know it, and it is better to get horns than to have no sex at all. To say the truth, a wife is worth defending.”

He paused, and then said, “Here comes Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the next village.”

Touchstone said, “Sir Oliver Martext, we are happy to see

you. Will you marry us here under this tree, or shall we go with you to your chapel?"

"Is there anyone here to give away the woman?"

"I will not take her as the gift of any man. I don't want sloppy seconds," Touchstone said.

"Truly, she must be given away, or the marriage is not lawful."

Jaques came forward and said, "Proceed with the wedding. I will give her away."

Touchstone said to Jaques, "Good day, good Master What-do-ye-call-it."

Jaques knew that Touchstone was pretending not to want to say "Jaques" in front of the priest — one way to pronounce "Jaques" is "Jakes," a word meaning "toilet."

Touchstone continued, "How do you do, sir? It is good to see you. I enjoyed talking to you the last time we met. I am very glad to see you. We have a little ceremony taking place here."

Touchstone added, "You may keep your head covered. Keep your hat on your head. No one is here to whom you need show that much respect."

"Will you be married today, motley fool?" Jaques asked.

"The ox has a yoke, sir. The horse has a bridle. The falcon has bells attached to its feet in order to make it easier to find. Men have sexual desires that need to be in some way controlled. Pigeons stroke their beaks together, and marriage allows men and women to kiss — and more."

"And will you, a man of good breeding, be married under a bush like a beggar?" Jaques asked. "Go to a church, and have a good priest who can tell you what marriage is. This

Sir Oliver fellow will only join you together as they join together the sections of wood paneling on walls. One of you will turn out to be a bad panel and like green timber over time will warp, and the two of you will be pulled apart.”

Touchstone said, “Perhaps I will be better off married by Sir Oliver than by another priest. He is not likely to marry me properly, and if I am not married properly, I will have a good excuse later to leave my wife.”

“Come with me,” Jaques said, “and let me give you advice.”

Touchstone said, “Come with me, sweet Audrey. We must get married, or we will live in bawdry.”

He added, “Farewell, good Master Oliver. Let us not sing this popular song:

“Oh, sweet Oliver,

“Oh, handsome Oliver,

“Don’t leave me behind.’

“Instead, let us sing this song:

“Go away quickly,

“Begone, I say,

“I will not go to the wedding with you.”

Jaques, Touchstone, and Audrey left, leaving Sir Oliver behind, who said, “It does not matter that no wedding was performed. None of these capricious rascals will succeed in mocking me enough to drive me away from pursuing my calling.”

In another part of the forest, Rosalind and Celia were talking. Rosalind was upset because Oliver had not come to woo her at the time they had arranged.

“Don’t talk to me,” Rosalind said. “I am going to cry.”

“If you want to cry, then cry. But remember that tears do not become a man.”

“Don’t I have a good reason to cry?”

“You have as good a reason as anyone to cry, so therefore cry.”

“Orlando’s red hair is the same color as the hair of Judas, who betrayed Christ with a kiss.”

“I think that his hair is somewhat browner than the hair of Judas, but his kisses are like those of Judas.”

“Actually, his hair is a good color,” Rosalind said.

“His hair is an excellent color,” Celia said, humoring her friend. “Chestnut is the very best color.”

“And his kisses are as full of saintliness as the touch of holy bread — bread blessed in the church and then distributed to the poor.”

“He has acquired a pair of the cast-off, cast-iron, chaste lips from a statue-in-progress of Diana, goddess of virginity. Not even a nun who has pledged herself to a life of cold and barren chastity kisses with greater purity. The very ice of chastity is in his kisses.”

“But why did he swear that he would come this morning, and he has not come?”

“To be certain, there is no truth in him.”

“Do you think so?”

“Yes. I do not think that he is a pick-pocket or a horse-thief, but as for his truthfulness in love, I think that his promises are like an empty goblet or a hollow, worm-eaten nut.”

“You do not think that he is trustworthy in love?”

“If he were in love, he would be trustworthy, but I do not think that he is in love.”

“You have heard him swear plainly that he was.”

“‘Was’ is not ‘is,’” Celia said. “Besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tavern owner who overcharges and swears that the bill is accurate. Both of them lie.”

She added, “Orlando is staying here in the forest with your father, Duke Senior.”

Rosalind said, “I met my father the Duke yesterday and talked to him. Because I am in disguise and because it has been many years since he last saw me, he did not recognize me. He asked about my parents, and I said that they were as good as he was. He laughed and stopped asking me about them. But why are we talking about fathers, when we could be talking about a man such as Orlando?”

“Orlando is an excellent man!” Celia said. “He writes excellent verse, speaks excellent words, swears excellent oaths and breaks them excellently on the heart of his lover, the way that an inexperienced jousting, who spurs his horse on only one side, breaks his staff across the shield of his opponent rather than directly upon the shield. Both Orlando and the novice jousting are notable fools, but everything is excellent when one is young and foolish.”

Celia looked up and said, “Who is coming here?”

Corin walked up to Rosalind and Celia and said, “Both of

you have often asked about the young shepherd who laments being in love, whom you saw sitting by me on the ground, praising the proud disdainful shepherdess whom he loved.”

“Well, what about him?” Celia asked.

“If you want to see a pageant truly played between two opposites — one with the pale complexion of true love and the other with the red glow of scorn and proud disdain — go with me a little distance and I will show it to you.”

“Come, let’s go with Corin,” Rosalind said. “The sight of lovers feeds those in love.”

She said to Corin, “Bring us to this sight, and you will be able to say that I proved to be a busy actor in their play.”

— 3.5 —

In a nearby part of the forest, the young shepherd Silvius was pleading with his beloved, Phoebe, who did not love him.

Silvius said, “Sweet Phoebe, do not scorn me. Do not, Phoebe. Say that you do not love me, but do not say it so bitterly. The common executioner, whose heart is hard because it is accustomed to death, says ‘Forgive me’ before he drops his ax on the criminal’s neck. Will you be crueler than an executioner who dies and lives by drops of blood?”

Rosalind, Celia, and Corin arrived and witnessed the rest of the scene between the two lovers.

Phoebe replied, “I don’t want to be your executioner. I run away from you because I don’t want to injure you. You tell me that murder is in my eye. That is very clever of you: It is certain, and very probable — ha! — that eyes, which are the frailest and softest things and which shut their coward gates — their eyelids — against the assaults of specks of

dust, ought to be called tyrants, butchers, murderers! Now I am frowning on you with all my heart. If my eyes can wound, now let them kill you. Go ahead and pretend to faint. Go ahead and fall down now. If you cannot, then out of shame stop lying that my eyes are murderers! Go ahead and show me the wound that my eye has made in you. If you scratch yourself with a pin, some mark will remain behind. If you put your hand on some rush plants and lean on them, your palm will bear a mark and indentation for a short while. But my eyes, which I have been darting at you, have not hurt you. I am sure that eyes have no force that can harm anyone.”

“Oh, dear Phoebe, if you ever — and that may be soon — meet someone young and handsome who makes you fall in love, then you shall understand the invisible wounds the sharp arrows of love make.”

“Until that time, do not come near me. And when that time comes, go ahead and mock me. Do not pity me then because until that time comes I will not pity you.”

Rosalind had promised to be a busy actor in their play, and now she came forth and said to Phoebe, “And why won’t you pity this young man, I ask you? Who is your mother? Who taught you to insult and exult, both at the same time, over the wretched? You have no beauty — to go to bed in the dark, you must carry a candle, unlike a beautiful woman whose beauty lights up the darkness. So why are you proud and pitiless?”

Phoebe stared at Ganymede. She had fallen in love at first sight with Rosalind, whom she thought to be a young man.

Rosalind noticed Phoebe staring at her and asked, “Why, what do you mean by this? Why are you staring at me?”

Amused, she realized that Phoebe had fallen in love with her. She said to Phoebe, “I see no more in you than in the

ordinary ready-made — not specially made — goods for sale in the market. By God, I think you mean to ensnare my eyes, too, and make me love you the way that this young shepherd loves you! No, proud mistress, do not hope that I will fall in love with you. Your inky and ugly brows, your black and ugly silk hair, your black, beady, ugly eyes, and your yellowish-white complexion will not subdue me and make me adore you.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “You foolish shepherd, why do you follow her like the foggy south wind puffing with sighs and tears? You are a thousand times better looking than this woman is. It is such fools as you who fill the world full of ugly children after you marry ugly women. It is not her mirror that flatters her — you do. With you serving as her mirror, she sees herself looking more beautiful than the features of her face justify.”

Rosalind said to Phoebe, “Young woman, know yourself: Get down on your knees and fast and thank heaven for this good man’s love: For I must tell you as a friend in your ear, ‘Sell when you can: you are not for all markets. Get a man while you can. You are not pretty enough to get many offers.’ Beg this man to forgive you, and take his offer. Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer — ugliness is at its most ugly when it is combined with scornfulness.”

Phoebe replied, “Sweet youth, please criticize me for a year without stopping. I prefer to hear you criticize me than to hear this man woo me.”

“Silvius has fallen in love with your scornfulness,”
Rosalind said to Phoebe.

“And now Phoebe is falling in love with my anger,”
Rosalind said to Celia and Corin.

To Silvius, Rosalind said, “If this is true, as quickly as she answers you with frowns, I’ll rebuke her sharply with bitter

words.”

She asked Phoebe, “Why are you looking at me like that?”

“I bear you no ill will.”

“Please, do not fall in love with me,” Rosalind said. “I am falser than vows made when drunk. Besides, I don’t like you.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “If you want to know where I live, my cottage is in that grove of olive trees over there.”

She asked Celia, “Will you go with me now, sister?”

She advised Silvius, “Shepherd, woo Phoebe vigorously.”

She said to Celia, “Come, sister.”

She advised Phoebe, “Shepherdess, look more favorably on Silvius, and do not be proud. Even if everyone in the world could see you, he is the only man who would find you attractive.”

She said to Celia and Corin, “Come, let us return to our flock.”

Rosalind, Celia, and Corin departed, and Phoebe said to herself, “Dead Shepherd, dear Christopher Marlowe, now I understand what you meant when you wrote, ‘Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?’”

Silvius began, “Sweet Phoebe —”

Phoebe asked, “What do you want, Silvius?”

Silvius said, “Sweet Phoebe, pity me.”

“Why, I am sorry for you, gentle Silvius.”

“Wherever sorrow is, relief should be. If you feel sorrow at my grief in love, you should give me your love. That way,

both your sorrow and my grief would be exterminated.”

“You have my love. Is not that neighborly? Christ said in Mark 12:31, *‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’*”

Silvius said, “That is not the kind of love I want. I want you.”

“Why, that is covetousness. The Bible says in Exodus 20:17, *‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.’*”

She thought to herself, *I have given my heart to that young man — the neighbor of Silvius — who criticized me. Silvius is coveting something that belongs to his neighbor.*

She added, “Silvius, I have hated you, but now I will endure your company, which previously was irksome to me. I am doing this not because I love you, but because you can talk about love so well. I also have an errand for you, but you must not ask for anything more than your own happiness that I find you useful.”

Silvius replied, “So holy and so perfect is my love for you and I am so lacking in your favor that I will think it a most plenteous crop to glean the leftover and broken ears of corn after the farmer has reaped the main harvest. In other words, I will be grateful for whatever scraps of attention you throw to me. Smile at me once in a while, and I will live upon those smiles.”

Phoebe asked, “Do you know the young man who spoke to me a moment ago?”

“Not very well, but I have met him often. He bought the cottage and the pasture that the churlish peasant once owned.”

“Don’t think that I love him, though I am asking about him. He is only a silly boy, yet he talks well. But what do I care for words? Still, words do well when he who speaks them pleases those who hear them. He is an attractive youth — well, not very attractive. Certainly, he is proud, and yet his pride becomes him. He will make a proper man. The best thing about him is his complexion; and faster than his tongue offended me, his face healed the offense. He is not very tall, yet for his age he is tall. His legs are but so-so, and yet they are good. His lips had a pretty redness — a little riper and more luxurious red than the red of his cheeks. His cheeks’ color was just the difference between red and pink. Some women, Silvius, had they looked as closely at him as I did, would have almost fallen in love with him. As for me, I neither love him nor hate him. Still, I have more cause to hate him than to love him. What right had he to criticize me the way he did? He said my eyes were black and ugly and my hair was black and ugly. I remember that he scorned me. I am surprised that I didn’t criticize him. But that does not matter. Omittance is no quittance — just because I didn’t criticize him then does not mean that I can’t criticize him now. I will write to him a very taunting letter, and you will give it to him. Will you do that, Silvius?”

“Phoebe, with all my heart.”

“I will write the letter immediately. The content is in my head and in my heart. I will be bitter with him and very short — exceedingly curt — with him. Let’s go, Silvius.”

CHAPTER 4 (As You Like It)

— 4.1 —

In another part of the forest, Rosalind, Celia, and Jaques were talking.

Jaques said to Rosalind, “Please, pretty youth, let me become better acquainted with you.”

“They say you are a melancholy fellow.”

“I am melancholy. I do love being melancholy better than laughing.”

“Those who are either too sad or too merry are abominable fellows and betray themselves to every modern criticism — they are worse than drunkards when it comes to making themselves targets for ridicule.”

“Why, it is good to be serious and thoughtful and say nothing.”

“Why then, it is good to be a post in the ground. A post says nothing.”

“I have my own kind of melancholy. I do not have the scholar’s melancholy, which is envious. I do not have the musician’s melancholy, which is imaginative. I do not have the courtier’s melancholy, which is proud. I do not have the soldier’s melancholy, which is ambitious. I do not have the lawyer’s melancholy, which is politic. I do not have the lady’s melancholy, which is nice. I do not have the lover’s melancholy, which is all of these. I have my own kind of melancholy, which is compounded of many ingredients, extracted from many objects, and indeed the various thoughts inspired by my travels. These thoughts wrap me in a very moody melancholy.”

“You are a traveller!” Rosalind said. “By my faith, you have great reason to be melancholic. I am afraid that you may have sold your own lands to see the lands of other men. If that is the case, if you have seen much and have nothing, then you have rich eyes and poor hands.”

“Yes, I have gained my experience.”

“And your experience makes you sad and serious. I would rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad, especially if I would have to travel to acquire my sadness!”

Orlando arrived; he was an hour late for his appointment to woo Rosalind.

Orlando said, “Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind!”

Jaques recognized that this sentence was in iambic pentameter. It had five feet of two syllables each with the stress on the second syllable. Unrhymed iambic pentameter is known as blank verse.

Jaques said, “It is time for me to go. May God be with you, if you are going to talk in blank verse.”

“Farewell, Monsieur Traveller,” Rosalind said. “Since you are a traveller, you ought to act like other travellers. Be sure that you lisp with a cute foreign accent and wear strange suits of foreign fashions. Be sure to disparage all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with the land where you were born, and almost criticize God for making you look like an Englishman. If you don’t do these things, I will hardly think you have ridden in a gondola.”

Jaques departed.

Rosalind said to Orlando, “How are you, Orlando! Where have you been all this while? You think that you are a lover! If you ever play such another trick on me, do not

ever come within my sight.”

Orlando objected, “My fair Rosalind, I came within an hour of the time I promised to be here.”

“Came within an hour of the time you — who are supposedly a lover — promised to be here! A man who will divide a minute into a thousand parts and break only one part of the thousandth part of a minute in the affairs of love is a man about whom it may be said that Cupid has patted him on the shoulder, but I swear that that man’s heart has not been wounded by Cupid’s arrow.”

“Pardon me, dear Rosalind.”

“No. If you are ever again so late for a date, come no more within my sight. I would prefer to be wooed by a snail.”

“By a snail?”

“Yes, by a snail,” Rosalind said. “Though the snail comes slowly, he carries his house with him. He has something to offer a woman — more than you can offer, I think. Besides, the snail brings its destiny with him.”

“What destiny is that?”

“Snails have what look like horns,” Rosalind said. “Men who are late for dates must expect to be made cuckolds. The snail comes pre-equipped with horns and therefore knows what to expect.”

I get it, Orlando thought. I had better not be late for dates for Rosalind. If I am late, she will get another boyfriend.

“Virtuous women are not horn-makers, and my Rosalind is virtuous.”

“And I am your Rosalind.”

Celia said to Rosalind, “It pleases him to call you Rosalind,

but he has a better-looking Rosalind than you.”

I get it, Orlando thought. If I am late for dates, my loved one and her friends will think that I have another girlfriend.

Rosalind smiled at the expression on Orlando’s face, and then she said to him, “Come, woo me, woo me, for now I am in a good mood and likely enough to consent to love you. What would you say to me now, if I were your precious Rosalind?”

“I would kiss her before I spoke.”

“No, you had better speak first, and when you were stuck for something to say, then you could kiss her. Very good orators, when they are out of words to say, will spit, but lovers who are out of words to say — God help us! — should take the cleaner option and kiss.”

“Suppose Rosalind declines to kiss me?”

“Then you have a new subject to talk about: You can beg her for a kiss.”

“Who could be out of words to say when he is with the woman he loves?”

“You had better be out of me than in me if I were your girl — or I would think that my virtue is less impressive than my wit,” Rosalind joked.

“Let’s talk about a different ‘out.’ Would I be out of suit?”

“A suit can mean a suit of clothing. If you were in me, you would be out of suit. But given that I am virtuous, you would not be out of your apparel, but you would still be out of your suit — that is, request. I would make you give up your attempt to seduce me. Am I not your Rosalind?”

“I am happy to say that you are, because I want to talk

about her.”

“Well, let me pretend to be her and say that I will not have you as my boyfriend.”

“Then let me be me and say that I will die.”

“Do not yourself die. Die by proxy — have a lawyer act for you by proxy. But seriously, people have examined the verses of the Bible and concluded that this poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all that time not one man has died in real life because of love. Troilus loved Cressida, but he had his brains dashed out with a Greek club, yet he did what he could to die from love before he died from the club and he is regarded as an exemplary lover. Leander would have lived for many happy years, even if his loved one, Hero, had become a nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night. Leander, that good youth, went into the Hellespont to wash himself but started cramping and was drowned. The foolish coroners of that age said that the cause of his death was his love for Hero of Sestos. They said that he drowned when a storm arose while he was swimming in the Hellespont to visit his lover. All of these tales of men who have died from love are lies. Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but the men did not die because of love.”

“I do not want the real Rosalind to think like this. I believe that her frown might kill me.”

“Trust me, her frown will not kill a fly.”

I get it, Orlando thought. Some of the ideas of romantic love are exaggerated. Still, love really does exist.

Rosalind said, “But come, now I will be your Rosalind in a more agreeable mood. Ask me for whatever you want. I will grant it.”

“Then love me, Rosalind.”

“Yes, I will — on Fridays and Saturdays and all the other days of the week.”

“And so you will have me?”

“Yes, and twenty more men like you.”

“What are you saying?”

“Are you not good?”

“I hope so.”

“Can one desire too much of a good thing?”

I get it, Orlando thought. Rosalind has a healthy interest in having sex, and it is a good idea for me to marry her so that each of us is committed to the other.

Rosalind said to Celia, who had been listening to and laughing at the conversation between Rosalind and Orlando, “Come, sister, you shall be the priest and marry us.”

She added, “Give me your hand, Orlando. What do you say, sister?”

Orlando said, “Please, marry us.”

Celia was laughing hard. She said, “I cannot say the words.”

Rosalind pretended that Celia had forgotten words that no woman who was either married or wanted to be married would forget: “You must begin, ‘Will you, Orlando — ’”

“OK,” Celia said, “Will you, Orlando, take Rosalind to be your lawfully wedded wife?”

“I will.”

Rosalind knew that “will” is not the same as “do.” She wanted a real commitment, and so she asked, “Yes, but when?”

“Right now, as fast as Aliena can marry us.”

“Then you must say, ‘I take you, Rosalind, as my lawfully wedded wife.’”

“I take you, Rosalind, as my lawfully wedded wife.”

I get it, Orlando thought. Rosalind wants a real commitment, not a promise to be committed.

Rosalind said to Celia, “I should ask you for the wedding license. But I do take you, Orlando, as my lawfully wedded husband.”

I get it, Orlando thought. If I make a commitment to Rosalind, she will make a commitment to me.

Rosalind added, “I am a girl who has raced ahead of the priest and answered the priest’s question before he even asked it — a woman’s thought always runs ahead of her actions.”

“All thoughts are like that — they are winged.”

“Now tell me how long you would have her after you have possessed her — that is, married her and slept with her.”

“Forever and a day.”

“Say ‘for a day.’ Leave out the ‘forever.’ No, no, Orlando. Men are April when they woo, and December when they wed. Virgins are May when they are virgins, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of you than a Barbary cock-pigeon is of his hen, more clamorous than a parrot protesting against rain, more fond of novelty than an ape, more changeable in my desires than a monkey. I will weep for nothing, like a statue of Diana gushing

water in a fountain — I will do that when you are disposed to be merry. I will laugh like a hyena when you want to go to sleep.”

“Will my Rosalind act like that?”

“I swear by my life that she will act the way that I act.”

I get it, Orlando thought. The first flush of romantic love will not last. At times Rosalind will get on my nerves, and no doubt at times I will get on her nerves. But even though the first flush of romantic love will not last, a committed relationship can last.

“But Rosalind is wise.”

“Or else she would not have the wit to act like this. The wiser she is, the more wayward she will be. Close the doors upon a woman’s wit, and it will fly out of the window. Shut the window, and it will fly out of the keyhole. Stop up the keyhole, and it will fly out the chimney with the smoke.”

“A man who had a wife with such a wit, he might say to her, ‘Wit, where do you wander? What are you thinking! Where are your senses!’”

“You may want to wait to say that when you see your wife’s wit going to your neighbor’s bed.”

“And what wit could have wit enough to make an excuse for that?”

“She would say that she went to seek you there. You shall never find her without her excuse, unless you find her without a tongue. Any woman who cannot make her sin the fault of her husband should never breastfeed her child — because her child will turn out to be a fool. Breast-fed children get either wisdom or foolishness from the milk of the mother.”

I get it, Orlando thought. A good marriage will consist of years of happiness. A bad marriage will consist of years of unhappiness. An unhappy wife can make her husband's life a living Hell. A happy wife can make her husband's life a living Heaven. A wise husband will not ignore his wife. He will pay attention to her, and he will show up when he tells her he will show up — or have a damn good reason for not showing up. Before and after I marry Rosalind, I had better treat her right. And if I treat her right, I am sure that she will treat me right.

He said, “For the next two hours, Rosalind, I will have to leave you.”

Rosalind assumed an overly dramatic, joking tone: “No, dear love! I cannot be away from you for two whole hours!”

“I must have dinner with Duke Senior. By two o'clock I will be with you again.”

Rosalind continued with an overly dramatic, joking tone: “Yes, go on your way. Go on your way. I knew the kind of man whom you would turn out to be: a faithless lover. My friends told me as much, and I thought no less. Your flattering tongue won me over. But don't worry about it. I am just one more woman who has been cast away and so I will die!”

Both Rosalind and Orlando smiled. No man had ever died of love — and neither had any woman.

Rosalind asked, seriously, “So you will return at two o'clock?”

“Yes, sweet Rosalind.”

I mean it, Orlando thought, I have learned my lesson. If I don't come on time, I will have a damn good reason.

Rosalind said, “I swear, and I mean it — so help me, God — and I also swear the pretty little oaths that lovers swear that if you break even the tiniest part of your promise or come even one minute late, I will think you the most pathetic breaker of promises and the most hollow lover and the most unworthy of her whom you call Rosalind who may be chosen out of the gross band of the unfaithful lovers. Therefore, beware my anger and keep your promise.”

“I will keep my promise as religiously as I would if you were really Rosalind. Goodbye.”

“Well, Time is the old judge who examines all such offenders, and so Time will determine the truth of your promise. When the time comes for you to return here, we will see if you are actually here. Goodbye.”

Orlando departed.

Celia, who had been amused by the conversation between Rosalind and Orlando, said to Rosalind, “You have severely criticized all women in your love-talk with Orlando. We women should remove all your male clothing and show the world first that you are a female and second that like a foul bird, you have dirtied your own nest.”

“Oh, cousin, cousin, cousin, my pretty cousin, I wish that you knew how many fathoms deep I am in love! But the depth of my love cannot be sounded: My affection has an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal. My love is so deep that it cannot be measured.”

“Or, rather, your love is bottomless. As fast as you pour in love, it runs out.”

“No, let Cupid judge how deeply in love I am. Let Cupid, that same wicked bastard of Venus, who conceived during an affair with Mercury, who was not her husband, judge

how deeply in love I am. Let that same wicked bastard, who was the result of an impulse and was born of madness, judge how deeply in love I am. Let Cupid, that blind rascally boy who abuses everyone's eyes because his own are out, judge how deeply in love I am. Cupid is blindfolded when he shoots his arrows, and they cause people to look at each other differently. I tell you, Aliena, that I cannot stand being away from Orlando: I will go and find a shadowy place and sigh until he returns.”

“And I will take a nap.”

— 4.2 —

Jaques and some Lords, who were dressed like foresters, had been hunting in the forest. The hunt had been successful; they had killed a horned stag.

Jaques asked, “Whose shot killed the deer?”

One of the Lords replied, “Sir, it was my shot.”

“Let us present this Lord to Duke Senior in a triumphal procession as if he were a Roman conqueror,” Jaques said. “We should set the stag's horns on this Lord's head to serve as a victorious wreath.”

He asked a forester, “Do you have a song that is right for this occasion?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Sing it. It does not matter whether it is in tune, as long as it makes enough noise.”

The forester sang, “*What shall he have who killed the deer?*”

“*He shall have the deer's leather skin and horns to wear.*”

“*Then let us sing to him as we go home.*”

The other Lords picked up the carcass of the deer and started to carry it back to their camp.

The forester sang, *“Do not scorn to wear the horn;*

“It was a crest before you were born:

“Your father’s father wore it,

“And your father bore it:

“The horn, the horn, the lusty horn

“Is not a thing to laugh at and to scorn.”

— 4.3 —

Rosalind and Celia were talking.

Rosalind said, “What do you say now? Is it not past two o’clock? Orlando is not here!”

“I promise you that with pure love and troubled brain, he has taken his bow and arrows, told everyone that he was going hunting, and set off to take a nap. Most lovers can’t sleep because they are thinking about their beloved. Orlando is not like that.”

She added, “Look at who is coming now.”

Silvius, carrying a letter, walked up to them and said to Rosalind, “My errand is to you, fair youth. My gentle Phoebe asked me to give you this letter. I do not know its contents, but judging by Phoebe’s stern expression and angry and waspish movements while she was writing it, it must bear an angry message. Please pardon me. I am only a guiltless messenger.”

Rosalind read the letter and said, “Patience herself would be shocked by this letter and want to start a fight. If I can bear this letter, then I can bear anything. Phoebe writes that

I am not handsome and that I lack manners. She calls me proud, and she says that she could not love me even if men were rare as the phoenix. Since only one phoenix lives at a time, reproducing by cremating its old self and arising anew from the ashes, Phoenix is telling me that she would not love me if I were the last man on Earth. My God! But why is she writing to me? I do not want her love — her love is not the hare that I am hunting.”

She said to Silvius, “Shepherd, you wrote this.”

“No, I did not,” Silvius protested. “I did not know its contents. Phoebe wrote it.”

“No, you are a fool if you think that I will believe that. You wrote this letter because you love Phoebe — you are now the most foolish kind of lover. I saw her hands. She has hands like leather. Her hands are brown like the color of sandstone. Truly, I thought that she was wearing gloves, but those were really her hands. She has the hands of a hard-working housewife, but that does not matter. I say that she did not write this letter. This letter was written by a man in a man’s handwriting.”

“No, this is her letter and her handwriting.”

“Why, this letter is written in a boisterous and cruel style — a style fit for someone who is looking for a fight. Why, she challenges me to fight like a Muslim Turk challenges a Christian to fight. The gentle brain of a woman could not write such outrageously rude sentences and such black words — they are blacker in meaning than the ink in which they are written on the page. Would you like to hear me read this letter out loud?”

“Yes, please, because I do not know what Phoebe says in the letter, although I have heard too many of Phoebe’s cruel words.”

“Phoebe has Phoebe-ed you in the past. Now she is Phoebe-ing me. Listen to the words that the tyrant wrote.”

Rosalind read out loud, “*Are you a god into a shepherd turned,*

“*So that a maiden’s heart you can have burned?*”

Rosalind commented, “Can a woman rant and rave like this?”

Silvius said, “Do you call that ranting and raving!”

Rosalind read out loud, “*Why, having laid your godhead apart,*

“*Are you warring with a woman’s heart?*”

Rosalind commented, “Did you ever hear such ranting and raving?”

Rosalind read out loud, “*Whiles the eyes of man did woo me,*

“*They could do no harm to me.*”

Rosalind commented, “Men could not hurt her. In other words, she is calling me a beast.”

Rosalind read out loud, “*If the scorn of your bright eyes*

“*Has power to raise such love in my eyes,*

“*Then in me what strange effect*

“*Would they work if you looked at me with kind aspect!*

“*While you criticized me, you I did love;*

“*How then might your prayers move!*

“*He who brings this love letter to thee*

“*Little knows this love in me:*

“And by him send a sealed letter that tells me your mind;

“Whether that your youth and disposition kind

“Will the faithful offer take

“Of me and all that I can make;

“Or else by him my love deny,

“And then I’ll think about how I will die.”

Silvius said, “This is a love letter to you! She is not at all challenging you to a fight!”

“Poor shepherd!” Celia said to Silvius.

“Do you pity Silvius?” Rosalind asked Celia. “Don’t! He deserves no pity.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “Will you love such a woman as Phoebe? Why? She has used you! She has made you an instrument and is playing bad music on you! She has used you to carry her love letter to another man! Well, go back to her, for I can see that love has made you a tame snake — your snake is tame. Tell her that if she loves me, I order her to love you. If she will not love you, I will never have her unless you beg me to have her. If you are a true lover, leave immediately and don’t say a word.”

She looked up and said to Celia, “Here comes more company.”

Silvius departed, and Oliver, the oldest brother of Orlando, walked up to Rosalind and Celia, who of course did not recognize him.

“Good day, pretty women,” Oliver said courteously. “Please tell me, if you know, where in this part of the forest stands a shepherd’s cottage in a grove of olive trees?”

Celia replied, “It is west of here, in a neighboring valley. The row of willows by the murmuring stream will take you to the cottage if you keep the willows on your right side. But at this time of day, the cottage stands empty. No one is at home.”

Oliver replied, “If my eye has profited from my hearing, then I know who you are from the description I have heard of you: ‘The boy is good looking, feminine, and carries himself as if he were an older sister. The woman is short and darker than her brother.’ Are you the owners of the cottage I asked about?”

“It is no boast, since you have asked us directly, to say that we are the owners of that cottage,” Celia replied.

“Orlando sends his regards to both of you, and to that youth whom he calls his Rosalind, he sends this bloody handkerchief,” Oliver said.

Then he asked Rosalind, “Are you that youth?”

“I am, but what does all of this mean?”

“I will have to tell you some shameful things about myself if you want to know who I am — and how, and why, and where Orlando’s handkerchief was stained with blood.”

“Please, tell us your story,” Celia said.

“When Orlando recently departed from you, he made a promise to return again in an hour.”

Rosalind thought, *Actually, within two hours. Apparently, Orlando wanted to make sure that he got here on time.*

Oliver continued, “But while he was walking in this forest, thinking both bitter and sweet thoughts of love, something happened. He glanced to the side, and saw something unexpected. Under an oak, whose boughs were mossy with

age and whose aged top was bare and dry, he saw a wretched ragged man with long, wild hair. A green and gold snake had wreathed itself around this man's neck and its threatening head was approaching his open mouth. Suddenly, seeing Orlando, it unwrapped itself from the man's neck and zigzagged away and slithered under a bush in whose shade a lioness, with udders all sucked dry by its cubs, lay crouching with its head on the ground. With catlike patience, it watched to see when the sleeping man should get up because lions and lionesses — the monarchs of the animal kingdom — will not prey on anything that seems to be dead. Seeing this, Orlando approached the man and discovered that the man was his oldest brother."

"I have heard him speak of that same brother," Celia said. "He called him the most unnatural brother and the most lacking in brotherly love who ever lived among men."

"And well might Orlando describe him in that way because I know for myself that his oldest brother was exactly like that."

"What did Orlando do?" Rosalind asked. "Did he leave him there to be food for the suckled and hungry lioness?"

"Twice he turned his back on his oldest brother and thought to leave him there, but his natural affection was stronger even than his desire for revenge, and his nature was stronger than his desire to give his oldest brother the just desserts that he had earned. Therefore, Orlando battled and quickly defeated the lioness. Hearing the noise of that battle, I awoke."

"Are you Orlando's oldest brother?" Celia asked.

"Was it you whom he rescued?" Rosalind asked.

"Was it you who so often plotted to kill him?" Celia asked.

“It was I, but it is not I,” Oliver replied. “I do not stop myself from telling you what kind of man I was, since my conversion to a better kind of man tastes so sweet.”

“But what about the bloody handkerchief?” Rosalind asked.

“I’m coming to that. When my brother and I had tearfully told our stories from the first part to the last part, and I had, for example, told him how I came to be in that deserted part of the forest, Orlando led me to Duke Senior, who gave me fresh clothing and a meal and then placed me in Orlando’s care. Orlando then led me to his cave. There he stripped off his clothing, and I saw that the lioness had torn some of the flesh of his arm away. All this time, Orlando had bled, and now he fainted, and as he fainted, he cried out the name of Rosalind. To tell the rest of the story briefly, I revived him and bound up his wound. After a short time, Orlando — being strong at heart — sent me here, stranger as I am, to tell you this story so that you might excuse his broken promise. He wanted me to give this napkin dyed in his blood to the shepherd youth he calls Rosalind.”

Hearing that it was Orlando’s blood on the handkerchief, Rosalind fainted.

“Ganymede! Sweet Ganymede!” Celia cried.

“Many people faint when they see blood,” Oliver said.

“In this case, there is more to it,” Celia said. “Cousin Ganymede!”

Celia was so upset that she did not call Ganymede “Brother Ganymede.”

“Look, he is regaining consciousness,” Oliver said.

“I wish I were at home,” Rosalind said.

“We’ll lead you there,” Celia said.

She said to Oliver, "Please, take him by the arm."

"Be of good cheer, young man," Oliver said. "But are you a man? You lack the heart of a man."

"I do lack the heart of a man — I confess it," Rosalind said.

She paused, recovered somewhat, and then added, "Anyone would think my faint was well counterfeited! I put on a good act! Please, tell your brother how well I pretended to faint. Heigh-ho!"

"This was no counterfeit," Oliver said. "You did not fake your faint. Your face is too pale for me to believe that you faked this. You genuinely fainted."

"I faked it, I assure you," Rosalind said. "I am a good actor."

"Well, then, be brave and fake being a man," Oliver said.

"So I do," Rosalind said, "but, truly and rightfully, I should have been a woman."

"Come, Ganymede, you look paler and paler. Please, let's go home."

Celia said to Orlando, "Good sir, come with us."

"Yes, I will," Oliver said. "I must bear back to Orlando the news of whether or not you will excuse him for his absence, Rosalind."

"I will think about my answer," Rosalind said, "but tell him how well I faked my faint. Let's go."

Oliver and Celia held on to Rosalind's arms and helped her walk to the cottage.

CHAPTER 5 (As You Like It)

— 5.1 —

Touchstone and Audrey were talking about getting married.

“We shall find a time to be married, Audrey. Be patient, gentle Audrey.”

“The priest — Sir Oliver Martext — was good enough to marry us, despite everything that the old gentleman — Jaques — said.”

“He was a most wicked Sir Oliver, Audrey. He was a most vile Martext. But, Audrey, I have heard that a young man here in the forest lays claim to you — like me, he wants to marry you.”

“Yes, I know who he is. His name is William, but he has no legal claim on me. I have already said that I want to marry you. Look. Here comes the man you mean.”

“It is meat and drink to me to see a hick. Indeed, we who have good wits have much to answer for. We are always making fun of hicks. We cannot restrain ourselves.”

William politely said, “Good day, Audrey.”

“Good day to you, William.”

William politely said to Touchstone, “And good day to you, sir.”

“Good day, gentle friend. Cover your head — you don’t need to take off your hat to show me respect. Please cover your head. How old are you, friend?”

“Twenty-five, sir.”

“A mature age. Is your name William?”

“Yes, sir.”

“It is a good name. Were you born in the forest here?”

“Yes, sir, thank God.”

“‘Thank God.’ That is a good thing to say. Are you rich?”

“Moderately, sir.”

“‘Moderately’ is a good answer, a very excellent answer, but wait, it is not. It is a moderately good answer. Are you wise?”

“Yes, sir, I have a good mind.”

“Why, you say well, but I do now remember a saying: ‘The fool thinks that he is wise, but the wise man knows that he is a fool.’ The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth. This taught other people that grapes were made to eat and lips to open. Do you love Audrey?”

“Yes, I do, sir.”

“Give me your hand. Are you learned? Are you educated?”

“No, sir.”

“Then learn this from me: To have is to have. It is a figure of speech in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one empties the other; for all well-known writers do agree that the Latin word ‘*ipse*’ means he. Now know this: You are not *ipse*, for I am he.”

“Which he, sir?”

“The he, sir, who will marry Audrey. Therefore, you hick, abandon — which in the vulgar language means leave — the society — which boorish people call company — of this female — which in the common language is woman.

Put all this together, and it means this: Either you abandon the society of this female, or you will perish, hick. Or, to say it in words that you will understand, you will die. To make it absolutely clear, I will kill you, make you go to a better world, translate your life into death, translate your liberty into bondage. I will poison you, or beat you with a club, or put a steel sword in you. I will fight you in a duel. I will overwhelm you with crafty plots. I will kill you in a hundred and fifty different ways, so therefore tremble and depart.”

“Do go away, good William,” Audrey said.

William looked at Audrey. It was clear that she preferred to marry Touchstone, so William said politely to Touchstone, “God bless you, sir,” and then he walked away.

Corin now arrived on the scene and said to Touchstone, “Ganymede and Aliena are looking for you. Come quickly!”

“Let’s hurry, Audrey,” Touchstone said.

He said to Corin, “I’m coming. I’m coming.”

— 5.2 —

In another part of the forest, Orlando said to Oliver, “Is it possible that on so little acquaintance you should have fallen in love with Aliena? That as soon as you saw her, you loved her? That as soon as you loved her, you wooed her? That, as soon as you wooed her, she agreed to marry you? Do you really mean to marry her?”

Oliver replied, “Do not criticize the giddiness — the haste — of these events. Do not criticize her poverty, the short time she and I have known each other, my sudden wooing of her, or her quick agreement to marry me. Instead, be like me and love Aliena. Say with me, ‘I love Aliena.’ Say with

her that she loves me. Give your consent to this marriage so that she and I may live happily married together. This will work out to your advantage. I will give to you our father's house and his estate that he bequeathed to me. I will live here and die here as a shepherd."

"You have my consent to marry Aliena," Orlando said. "Let your wedding be tomorrow. I will invite Duke Senior and all of his happy followers to the wedding. Go to Aliena and prepare for the wedding."

Orlando added, "Look, here comes my Rosalind."

Rosalind walked up to them and said to Oliver, "God bless you, brother-in-law," meaning that they would become in-laws because Oliver would marry Aliena, Ganymede's "sister."

"God bless you, fair sister-in-law," Oliver said. Like Orlando, he referred to Rosalind as a female, ignoring her disguise as Ganymede.

Oliver departed.

Rosalind said, "My dear Orlando, how it grieves me to see you wear your heart in a sling!"

"It is my arm."

"I thought that your heart had been wounded with the claws of a lion."

"My heart has been wounded, but by the eyes of a lady."

"Did your brother tell you how I counterfeited a faint when he showed me your handkerchief?"

"Yes, he did, and he told me greater wonders than that."

Rosalind thought, *He told you of his sudden love for Celia. I wonder if he told you of any other wonders.*

She said, "I know what you mean: the upcoming marriage. It is true that nothing was ever so sudden except the fight of two rams charging at each other and trying to hurt each other, and Julius Caesar's theatrical brag of 'I came, saw, and overcame.' Your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked at each other, no sooner looked at each other but they loved each other, no sooner loved each other but they sighed, no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason for the sigh, no sooner knew the reason for the sigh but they sought a remedy to stop the sighs. In doing these things, they have made a pair of stairs leading to marriage. They will have to climb those stairs quickly, or they will enjoy the honeymoon before they enjoy the wedding ceremony. They are in the very passion of love and they must be together — clubs cannot part them."

"They shall be married tomorrow, and I will invite the Duke to the wedding. But how bitter it is to look at happiness through another man's eyes! Tomorrow my heart will be heavier than ever because I have not gotten what I wish for and must look at how happy my brother is because he has gotten what he wished for."

"Do you want me to pretend to be Rosalind for you tomorrow?"

"I can live no longer by merely imagining what I want instead of actually having it."

Rosalind thought, *Orlando has matured. He is ready to marry.*

"I will weary you then no longer with idle talk," Rosalind said. "Listen to me. I will tell you something important. I know that you are a gentleman of good intelligence. I am not telling you this so that you should think that I am smart because I think that you are smart. I also am not trying to acquire a greater reputation except that I am trying to get

you to believe that I want to help you. Believe, please, that I can do strange things. I have, since I was three years old, studied with a magician who is most knowledgeable in his white art and who does not practice damnable black magic. If you really love Rosalind as much as your behavior says you do, then when your brother marries Aliena, you shall marry Rosalind. I know into what circumstances of fortune she is driven; and it is not impossible to me, if it appears not inappropriate to you, to set her before your eyes tomorrow. She will be her own human self and not a phantom. Your soul shall not be in danger.”

“Do you really mean that you can do these things?”

“Yes, I do. I swear it by my life, which I value highly. I am a magician, but I am a white magician. Therefore, put your best clothes on and invite your friends to your wedding. If you want to be married tomorrow, you will be. And if you want to marry Rosalind tomorrow, you will.”

Rosalind heard a noise. She looked around, saw Phoebe and Silvius, and said, “Look, here comes a lover of mine and a lover of hers.”

Phoebe, who was angry, said to Rosalind, “Young man, you have done me much discourtesy. You showed Silvius the letter that I wrote to you.”

“I do not care,” Rosalind said. “It is my deliberate intention to be spiteful and discourteous to you. You are being followed by a faithful shepherd — Silvius — look at him and love him because he worships you.”

Phoebe said, “Good shepherd, tell this youth what it is to love.”

“It is to do nothing but sigh and weep, and so do I for Phoebe.”

Phoebe said, “And I for Ganymede.”

Orlando said, “And I for Rosalind.”

Rosalind said, “And I for no woman.”

Silvius added, “It is to be entirely faithful and full of devotion for the loved one, and so am I for Phoebe.”

Phoebe said, “And I for Ganymede.”

Orlando said, “And I for Rosalind.”

Rosalind said, “And I for no woman.”

Silvius added, “It is to live in a world of the imagination, a dream world, with emotions and wishes, with adoration, duty, and obedience, with humbleness, patience and impatience, purity, endurance, and dutiful respect, and so live I for Phoebe.”

Phoebe said, “And I for Ganymede.”

Orlando said, “And I for Rosalind.”

Rosalind said, “And I for no woman.”

Phoebe said to Rosalind, “If this is true, why do you blame me for loving you?”

Silvius said to Phoebe, “If this is true, why do you blame me for loving you?”

Orlando said, “If this is true, why do you blame me for loving you?”

Rosalind asked Orlando, “To whom are you speaking?”

“To Rosalind — a woman who is not here, and who does not hear me.”

“Please, no more of this,” Rosalind said. “It is like the howling of Irish wolves at the Moon.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “I will help you, if I can.”

She said to Phoebe, “I would love you, if I could.”

She said to everyone, “Tomorrow, all of you meet me as a group.”

She said to Phoebe, “I will marry you, if I ever marry a woman, and I will be married tomorrow.”

She said to Orlando, “I will satisfy you, if ever I satisfied a man, and you will be married tomorrow.”

She said to Silvius, “I will content you, if what pleases you will content you, and you will be married tomorrow.”

She said to Orlando, “As you love Rosalind, meet me tomorrow.”

She said to Silvius, “As you love Phoebe, meet me tomorrow.”

She added, “And as I love no woman, I will meet all of you tomorrow. So farewell. Remember the commands that I have given to you.”

“I will not fail to meet you tomorrow, if I am alive,” Silvius said.

“Nor I,” Phoebe said.

“Nor I,” Orlando said.

— 5.3 —

In another part of the forest, Touchstone said, “Tomorrow is the joyful day, Audrey. Tomorrow we will be married.”

“I want to marry you with all my heart,” Audrey said, “and I hope it is not an unchaste desire to really want to be a married woman.”

She looked up and said, “Look, here come two of the banished Duke’s pages.”

One of the pages said to Touchstone, “Hello, honorable gentleman.”

“Hello,” Touchstone replied. “Come, sit down, and sing a song.”

“We will sing,” the other page said. He joked, “Sit in the middle,” referring to a song with a lyric about “the fool in the middle.”

The first page asked, “Shall we begin singing at once, without hawking or spitting or saying we are hoarse, which are the prologues before the singing of a bad voice?”

“Yes, let us begin singing immediately,” the other page said, “and let us both sing in unison. We shall sing like two gypsies riding on one horse.”

They sang this song:

“It was a lover and his lass,

“With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,

“That over the green wheat field did pass

“In the springtime, the only pretty marriage- and ring-time,

“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:

“Sweet lovers love the spring.

“Between the rows of the rye,

“With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino

“These pretty country folks would lie,

“In the springtime, the only pretty marriage- and ring-time,

*“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:
“Sweet lovers love the spring.
“This carol they began that hour,
“With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
“How that a life was as brief as the life of a flower
“In the springtime, the only pretty marriage- and ring-time,
“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:
“Sweet lovers love the spring.
“And therefore seize the present time,
“With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino;
“For love is crowned with the spring — the prime —
“In the springtime, the only pretty marriage- and ring-time,
“When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:
“Sweet lovers love the spring.”*

Touchstone said, “Truly, young gentlemen, though there was no great content in the ditty, yet the song was sung out of tune.”

“You are deceived, sir,” a page said. “We kept time, we lost not our time. We kept the rhythm.”

“You did lose the time,” Touchstone replied. “I consider it but time lost to hear such a foolish song. May God be with you, and may God mend your voices! Come, Audrey. Let’s go.”

Touchstone thought, *The song had content. Carpe diem. Seize the day. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may. What are the young lovers doing between the rows of the rye? The he*

is giving the she a green gown. Their activity results in the girl getting grass stains on the back of her gown. I was overly critical. Why? People expect me to be overly critical. Being overly critical is a way to be funny and make puns about time.

— 5.4 —

Duke Senior, Amiens, Jaques, Orlando, Oliver, and Celia were gathered together.

Duke Senior asked, “Do you believe, Orlando, that the young Ganymede can do everything that he has promised?”

“I sometimes do believe that he can, and sometimes I do not. I am like those people who are afraid that their hopes are unfounded and are afraid that they will be disappointed.”

Rosalind, Silvius, and Phoebe now arrived.

Rosalind said, “Everybody, be patient once more, while we review our agreement.”

Rosalind said to Duke Senior, “You say that if I bring here your Rosalind, you will give her away in marriage to Orlando here?”

“Yes, I will, and I would even if I had kingdoms to give away with her.”

Rosalind said to Orlando, “And you say that you will marry her, if I bring her here?”

“Yes, I will, and I would even if I were of all kingdoms King.”

Rosalind said to Phoebe, “You say that you will marry me, if I am willing to marry you?”

“Yes, I will, and I would even if I were to die one hour

later.”

Rosalind said to Phoebe, “But if you refuse to marry me, you say that you will marry this most faithful shepherd, whose name is Silvius?”

“That is the agreement we have made.”

Rosalind said to Silvius, “You say that you will marry Phoebe, if she is willing to marry you?”

“Yes, I will, and I would even if marriage to her and death were the same thing.”

Rosalind said, “And I have said that I will straighten everything out.”

She then talked to several people in order:

“Keep your word, Duke Senior, to give away your daughter in marriage.

“Keep your word, Orlando, to marry Duke Senior’s daughter.

“Keep your word, Phoebe, that you will marry me, or if you refuse to marry me, to marry instead this shepherd, Silvius.

“Keep your word, Silvius, that you will marry Phoebe if she refuses to marry me.

“Now I will leave to make all these things come true.”

Rosalind and Celia left the others.

Duke Senior said, “I do see in this shepherd boy, Ganymede, some things that remind me of my daughter’s appearance.”

Orlando said, “My Lord, the first time that I ever saw him, I thought that he was a brother to your daughter. But, my good Lord, this boy was born in the forest, and he has been

tutored in the fundamentals of many dangerous and magical studies by his uncle, who he says is a great magician, hidden in the circle of this forest.”

Touchstone and Audrey arrived.

Jaques said, “Apparently, another great Biblical flood is coming, and these couples are coming to the ark. Here comes a pair of very strange beasts, which in all tongues are called fools.”

“Salutation and greeting to you all!” Touchstone said.

“My good Lord, bid him welcome,” Jaques said to Duke Senior. “This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest. He swears that he has been a courtier.”

Touchstone said, “If any man doubts that, let him put me to the test. I have trod a slow, stately dance. I have flattered a lady; I have been hypocritical with my friend and deceptively courteous with my enemy. I have ruined three tailors by not paying my bills. I have had four quarrels, and I almost fought one duel.”

“How was the duel settled?” Jaques asked.

“I met with the man with whom I had quarreled, and we discovered that the quarrel rested upon the seventh cause.”

“What is the seventh cause?” Jaques asked.

Jaques then added, “My good Lord, I hope that you like this fellow.”

Duke Senior replied, “I like him very well.”

“Thank you, sir. I return the compliment,” Touchstone said to Duke Senior. “I have pressed in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives who wish to be married, to swear to be faithful and to forswear to be unfaithful.

Marriage requires us to be faithful, but blood — sexual passion — sometimes makes us want to break our vow to be faithful. This woman is a poor virgin, an ugly thing, but my own. It is a whim of mine, sir, to take that which no other man will. Rich chastity dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house — it is like a beautiful pearl in a foul oyster.”

Duke Senior said to Jaques about Touchstone, “Truly, he is very quick and full of sense and intelligence.”

Touchstone said, “According to the fool’s bolt, sir, and such dulcet diseases. Remember: A fool’s bolt — that is, his arrow or wit — is soon shot. Like other fools, I quickly let my arrows fly. For fools, that is a sweet disease.”

Jaques asked, “What about the seventh cause? What did you mean by saying that the quarrel rested upon the seventh cause?”

Touchstone said, “The quarrel rested upon a lie seven times removed.”

He said to Audrey, “Keep your knees together, Audrey.”

Then he said, “Let me explain, sir. I disliked the cut of a certain courtier’s beard. He sent me word that if I said his beard was not cut well, he was of the opinion that it was cut well. This is called the Retort Courteous.

“If I sent him word again that it was not well cut, he would send me word that he cut it to please himself. This is called the Quip Modest.

“If I sent him word again that it was not well cut, he would send me word that he did not value my judgment. This is called the Reply Churlish.

“If I sent him word again that it was not well cut, he would answer that I did not speak the truth. This is called the Reproof Valiant.

“If I sent him word again that it was not well cut, he would say that I lied. This is called the Counter-cheque Quarrelsome.

“The two that are left are the Lie Circumstantial and the Lie Direct.”

“How often did you say that his beard was not well cut?” Jaques asked.

“I dared go no further than the Lie Circumstantial, and he dared not give me the Lie Direct, and so we measured swords, said that they were uneven in length and therefore fighting a duel would not be fair combat, and we parted.”

“Can you name again the degrees of the lie?” Jaques asked.

“Of course, sir. We have books that tell us how to quarrel with each other without breaking any rules. They are like books of etiquette for quarreling. I will name you the degrees of the lie: The first, the Retort Courteous; the second, the Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Counter-cheque Quarrelsome; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct. All of these you may say but avoid fighting a duel except for the Lie Direct, and even with that you may avoid fighting a duel if you use an If. I knew of one case when seven justices could not settle a quarrel, but when the two arguing parties met together, one of them thought of an If: ‘If you said this, then I said that.’ The two parties shook hands and swore to be brothers. The word ‘If’ is a remarkable peacemaker; there is much virtue in the word ‘If.’”

Jaques said to Duke Senior, “Isn’t this jester a rare fellow, my Lord? He’s as good as this when speaking on any subject, and yet he is a fool.”

“He uses his reputation as a fool to sneak up on people and

shoot his arrows of wit at them,” Duke Senior said.

Low, soft music played. Rosalind and Celia now appeared. They were wearing women’s clothing, and they had brought Hymen, the male god of marriage ceremonies, with them.

Hymen said, “There is laughter in heaven when earthly affairs are put right and people are as one.”

Hymen said to Duke Senior, “Good Duke, greet your daughter, Rosalind. I, Hymen from Heaven, brought her to you. Yes, I brought her here so that you could join Rosalind’s hand with Orlando’s hand. They have pledged their hearts to each other.”

Rosalind said to her father, Duke Senior, “To you I give myself, for I am yours.”

Rosalind said to her beloved, Orlando, “To you I give myself, for I am yours.”

Duke Senior said to Rosalind, “If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter.”

Orlando said to Rosalind, “If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.”

A disappointed Phoebe said, “If sight and shape be true, why then, my love *adieu!*”

Rosalind said to Duke Senior, “I will have no father, if you be not he.”

Rosalind said to Orlando, “I will have no husband, if you be not he.”

Rosalind said to Phoebe, “I will never wed a woman, if you be not she.”

“Quiet!” Hymen ordered. “I will banish confusion by

making all these strange events clear. Here are eight people who must take hands and be married, if truth is true.”

Hymen said to Orlando and Rosalind, “You and you no cross shall part. No argument shall ever separate you.”

Hymen said to Oliver and Celia, “You and you are heart in heart. You have given your hearts to each other.”

Hymen said to Phoebe, “You to his love must accord, or have a woman as your Lord. Unless you marry Silvius, Rosalind will be your husband.”

Hymen said to Touchstone and Audrey, “You and you are securely bound together, like winter and foul weather.”

Hymen said to the four couples, “While we sing a wedding hymn, all of you will talk to each other and ask each other questions. Satisfy your curiosity. Discuss how you came here, and talk about your upcoming marriages. That way, your amazement will diminish.”

Many people sang this song:

“Wedding is the crown that great Juno, goddess of marriage, wears,

“O blessed bond of board and bed!

“It is Hymen — marriage — who peoples every town.

“Solemn wedlock then be honored.

“Honor, solemn honor and renown,

“Is due to Hymen, the god of every town!”

Duke Senior said to Celia, “My dear niece, you are as welcome here as is my daughter.”

Phoebe said to Silvius, “I will not go back on my promise. You will be my husband. Your faithfulness to me makes

me love you. We are one.”

Jaques de Boys, the brother of Oliver and Orlando, suddenly arrived with news.

He said, “Let me say a few words. I am the second son of old Sir Rowland, and I bring these tidings to this fair assembly. Duke Frederick, hearing that every day men of high rank resorted to this forest, made ready a mighty army. They were on foot and under his personal command. The purpose of the army was to capture his brother, Duke Senior, and put him to the sword and kill him. Duke Frederick came to the outskirts of this forest, where he met an old religious man. After some conversation with him, Duke Frederick was converted both from his attempt to kill his brother and from this world. He has bequeathed his crown to his banished brother, and he has restored all their lands to those who were exiled with his banished brother. On my life, I swear that this is true.”

Duke Senior said, “Welcome, young man. You have brought handsome gifts to your brothers’ weddings. Oliver will get the land of his late father, and Orlando, who is marrying my only child, Rosalind, will get my powerful Dukedom after I die.”

He added, “Now, in this forest, let us perform the four weddings that here were well begun and well conceived. Afterward, all of this happy number who have endured difficult days and nights with us shall share the good of our returned fortune, according to their ranks. In the meantime, let us forget this newly acquired courtly honor and enjoy our rustic revelry. Play, musicians! And you, brides and bridegrooms all, with your happiness overflowing its cup, dance.”

“Jaques de Boys, sir, just a moment,” Jaques said. “If I heard you rightly, Duke Frederick will now lead a religious

life as a monk and has cast away life in the glamorous court?"

"That is true," Jaques de Boys replied.

"I will go to him," Jaques said. "He has converted to a religious life, and from converts such as him there is much to be heard and learned."

Jaques said to Duke Senior, "To you I leave your former rank; because of your patience and your virtue, you well deserve it."

Jaques said to Orlando, "To you I leave a love that your true faith truly deserves."

Jaques said to Oliver, "To you I leave your land and love and great allies at the court."

Jaques said to Silvius, "To you I leave a long and well-deserved sex life."

Jaques said to Touchstone, "To you I leave marital argument because the loving part of your marriage will last about two months."

To everyone, Jaques said, "So, enjoy your pleasures. I am for other than for dancing measures. I am melancholy, and I do not dance."

"Stay, Jaques, stay," Duke Senior said.

"I am not the man to enjoy a celebration," Jaques said. "I will stay at your soon-to-be-abandoned cave to hear later whatever you want to say to me."

Jaques left.

Duke Senior said to everyone, "Proceed, proceed. We will begin these marriage rites the same way that we hope that they will end: in true delights."

They danced and celebrated.

EPILOGUE (*As You Like It*)

The author of this book now whisks you, the reader, back to the year 1600 or so, when Shakespeare was still alive, and when male actors performed the roles of all women in plays.

A young man who has just finished performing the role of Rosalind in *As You Like It* now steps in front of the theatrical curtain and says, “It is not the fashion to see the lady recite the epilogue, but it is no more unbecoming than to see the Lord recite the prologue. If it is true that good wine needs no advertising, then it is true that a good play needs no epilogue. Nevertheless, good wine is advertised, and good plays are made better with the help of good epilogues.

“But I am in a strange position. I do not have a good epilogue, and I cannot ingratiate myself with you in the behalf of a good play!

“I am not costumed like a beggar; therefore, begging will not become me. Instead, I will bewitch you and cast a spell on you.

“I will begin with the women. I command you, women, because you love men, to like as much of this play as pleases you.

“And I command you, men, because you love women — and I see by your smiles that none of you hates women — that between you and the women this play may please.

“If I were a woman, I would kiss as many of you men as had beards that pleased me, complexions that I liked, and breaths that were not foul.

“I am sure that the many men who have good beards or

good faces or sweet breaths will, for the kind offer I have made, applaud to bid me farewell when I curtsey.”

The male actor curtsies and exits to great applause.

Chapter III: THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Comedy of Errors*)

SOLINUS: Duke of Ephesus, an ancient Greek town on the coast of Ionia in what is now Turkey.

EGEON: a merchant of Syracuse, a town in Sicily.

ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS and ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE: twin brothers, and sons to EGEON and EMILIA.

DROMIO OF EPHEBUS and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE: twin brothers, and slaves of the two ANTIPHOLUSES.

BALTHAZAR: a merchant.

ANGELO: a goldsmith.

FIRST MERCHANT: friend to Antipholus of Syracuse.

SECOND MERCHANT: to whom Angelo is a debtor.

PINCH: a schoolmaster and would-be exorcist.

EMILIA: wife to Egeon; an Abbess at Ephesus.

ADRIANA: wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.

LUCIANA: Adriana's sister.

LUCE: Kitchen maid to Adriana.

A Courtesan.

Jailer, Officers, Attendants.

SCENE: Ephesus.

Epidamnus: a town on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea between the Italian Peninsula and the Balkan Peninsula.

Epidaurus: a town in Greece at the Saronic Gulf.

The Porcupine: name of the house where the courtesan lives.

The Phoenix: name of the house where Antipholus of Ephesus and Adriana live.

The Centaur Inn: name of the inn where Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse stay.

Marks, ducats, angels: units of money.

CHAPTER 1 (*The Comedy of Errors*)

— 1.1 —

In a hall in the palace of Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus, Egeon, a merchant of Syracuse, had been sentenced to death unless he could raise a thousand marks to ransom himself. Present were Duke Solinus, Egeon, a jailer, and some police officers and attendants.

Egeon said, “Proceed, Solinus, and kill me. Dying will end all my woes.”

The Duke of Ephesus replied, “Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more.”

Egeon thought, *If the Duke of Ephesus considers what I just said to be pleading for my life, he must have a guilty conscience. Apparently, he does not like the law that he feels obligated to enforce.*

The Duke of Ephesus continued, “I am not inclined to bend our laws and avoid enforcing them. The enmity and discord that of late has sprung from the rancorous outrage of your Duke of Syracuse to our merchants, who are fair-dealing countrymen of Ephesus, who lacked the money to ransom their lives and therefore paid with their blood his penalty that came from enforcement of his rigorous statutes, ensure that I will allow no pity to replace my threatening looks. Because of the deadly quarrels between your seditious countrymen and our citizens of Ephesus, the governments of Ephesus and of Syracuse have forbid by law any traffic or trade between these two cities. Indeed, the penalty for disobeying these laws is severe. If anyone born at Ephesus is seen at any markets and fairs in Syracuse, he will die and his possessions will be forfeited to the Duke of Syracuse unless he can raise a thousand marks to pay the penalty for

breaking the law and so save his life. The same is true if anyone born at Syracuse is seen at any markets and fairs in Ephesus. Your possessions, valued at the highest rate, are not worth even a hundred marks, and therefore by law you are condemned to die by beheading before the Sun sets.”

“Still, I have this comfort,” Egeon said. “When I die with the evening Sun, all my woes shall end and be done.”

“Well, merchant of Syracuse,” the Duke of Ephesus said, “tell us briefly the cause for your leaving your native home in Syracuse and the reason why you came to Ephesus.”

“You could not have given me a heavier task than to tell you my griefs, which are unspeakable. Yet, so that the world may witness that my capital punishment has come about because of natural affection and not because of a vile offence, I will tell you about my sorrows. I was born in Syracuse, and I wed a woman who was fortunate except that she married me, but I could have made her happy except that our luck was bad. With her I lived in joy; our wealth increased because of the prosperous voyages that I often made to Epidamnus, a town on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea. Unfortunately, my agent in Epidamnus died there and I needed to take care of the goods that were then left untended. I left my wife at Syracuse and sailed to Epidamnus. We were separated and lacked our usual kind embracings for almost six months, but my wife, almost fainting because of the pleasing punishment that women bear — pregnancy — voyaged to join me at Epidamnus. She had not been long there before she became the joyful mother of two good sons — identical twins so alike that they could not be distinguished except by their names. That very hour, and in the same inn, a woman of a low social class was delivered of a similar burden; she gave birth to male twins, both identical. I bought those boys — their parents were very poor — and I brought them up to serve

my sons. My wife, considerably proud of her two sons, daily asked me to take our family back to our home in Syracuse. Reluctantly, I agreed. This was unfortunate. Too soon, we went aboard a ship. We had sailed only a league — three nautical miles — from Epidamnus, and then the always wind-obeying deep sea began to cause us alarm that we might be in danger. We did not long retain hope that we would be safe. The Heavens allowed us some obscured light to see by, and what we saw gave our fearful minds a dreadful certainty that we would immediately die. I myself would gladly have embraced death, but the incessant weeping of my wife, who mourned what she saw must come, and the piteous plaints of the pretty babes, who cried because that is what babies do — they were ignorant of the danger they were in and so did not know enough to be afraid — forced me to seek a way to delay their deaths and mine. This is what we did because we could find no wiser action to do. The sailors sought safety by taking the lifeboat and leaving the ship, which was about to sink, with us still aboard. My wife, more careful for the latter-born son — or was he the earlier-born son? — tied him to the end of a small spare mast such as seafaring men keep on board in case storms damage the mast. To our son one of the other twin sons — one of the two slaves — was tied. I myself tied the two remaining boys to the other side of the small spare mast. Having secured the children to the mast that would keep them afloat, my wife and I tied ourselves to the mast, one of us at each end. The ship sank, and we floated on the mast with the current, going straight, we thought, to Corinth. At length the Sun, gazing upon the Earth, dispersed the rain and fog that obscured our vision. The sea became calm, and we saw two ships from afar sailing straight to us from different directions. One ship I think came from Corinth; the other ship came from Epidaurus. Before they arrived — but let me stop speaking now. Guess what happened from what I have already told you.”

“No, continue to speak, old man,” the Duke of Ephesus said. “Do not stop speaking now. Perhaps we will pity — but not pardon — you.”

“If the gods had pitied us, I would not now with good reason call them merciless to us! Before the two ships, which came from different directions, could travel ten leagues and meet, our floating mast hit a mighty rock with such force that the mast was split in two. In this unjust separation, my wife and I were both left with something to take delight in and something to take sorrow in. Her part of the mast was burdened with less weight than mine, but it was not burdened with less woe. The wind swept it away with more speed than it did my part of the mast, and I saw my wife and the two boys with her taken up into the ship carrying fishermen from Corinth, so we thought. Later, the other ship — the one from Epidaurus — rescued the other two boys and me. They knew who I was, and they gave an excellent welcome to their shipwrecked guests. They would have relieved the Corinthian fishermen of their catch — my wife and the two boys with her — but the ship from Epidaurus was very slow of sail, and therefore it sailed home to Epidaurus. Thus have you heard how I have been separated from happiness. My life of misfortunes has been prolonged, allowing me to tell the sad stories of my own life.”

“For the sake of those whom you mourn,” the Duke of Ephesus said, “do me the favor to tell in full what has befallen your family and you until now.”

“My youngest boy — if indeed he is the youngest, for certainly he is the eldest boy in my care,” Egeon said, “at eighteen years of age became curious about his brother. He begged me to allow him and his slave, whose brother had also been lost, to go out into the world and seek their lost brothers. Both of them had been given the names of their

lost brothers as a way to honor those lost brothers. I allowed them to go. My sons were now both named Antipholus; the slaves were now both named Dromio. Out of love for and the hope of seeing the son who had been lost, I risked losing the son whom I had saved and raised. I allowed him to travel in search of his brother. A few years later, I decided to travel to find my lost son — or sons, as was now the case. I spent five summers traveling in furthest Greece and roaming through Asia and its furthest boundaries. Finally traveling homeward, I came to Ephesus. Here, I had no hope of finding my sons, yet I am loath to leave unsearched this town or any other town or any place where men may dwell. But here I must end the story of my life. I would be happy when I die if all my travels had assured me that my twin sons still live.”

The Duke of Ephesus said, “Hapless Egeon, you are a man whom the Fates have marked to bear extreme and dire misfortune! Believe me, were it not against our laws, as well as against my crown, my oath, and my office — Princes may not go against these things, even if they would like to; instead, they must do their duty — my soul would argue in your favor. But, although you have been sentenced to die, and a sentence, once passed, may not be repealed without great damage to the Prince’s honor, yet I will help you as much as I can. Therefore, merchant of Syracuse, I will allow you to spend this day raising money with which you can save your life. Go to all the friends you have here in Ephesus. Beg or borrow to raise the money and live. If you are unable to raise the money today, then you are doomed to die tonight. Jailer, keep him in your custody. Go with him as he attempts to raise money.”

The jailer replied, “I will, my lord.”

Egeon thought, *Hopeless and helpless does Egeon wend, but all he is doing is delaying his life’s end.*

Three people arrived in the marketplace of Ephesus. They were Antipholus of Syracuse, Dromio of Syracuse, and a merchant who was a friend to Antipholus of Syracuse.

The merchant said to Antipholus of Syracuse, “For these reasons, you should say that you are from Epidamnus. If you do not, your possessions and money will be confiscated. This very day a merchant from Syracuse was arrested after he arrived here. Because he does not have enough money to pay the ransom for his life, he will die — as is the law of Ephesus — before the weary Sun sets in the West. Now I return to you your money that you gave to me for safekeeping.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said to Dromio of Syracuse, “Take this money to the Centaur Inn, where we are staying, and stay there, Dromio, until I come to you. Within an hour, it will be time for the midday meal. Until then, I will view this town, look at the businesses and markets, gaze upon the buildings, and then return and sleep at the inn because I am stiff and weary from our long journey.”

“You have asked me to take this money,” Dromio of Syracuse said. “Many a man would take you at your word, and take the money and run, having so good an opportunity.”

He took the money and exited.

Antipholus of Syracuse said to the merchant, “He is a trustworthy rascal, sir. Very often, when I am tired because of cares and melancholy, he brightens my mood by making merry jests. Will you walk with me about the town, and then go to my inn and dine with me?”

The merchant replied, “I am invited, sir, to visit certain merchants, in business with whom I hope to make

considerable profit. Therefore, I beg your pardon, but I cannot eat dinner with you. However, if it is OK with you, at five o'clock, I will meet you at the marketplace and stay with you until bedtime. Because of my business, I must leave you now."

"Farewell until then," Antipholus of Syracuse said. "I will go and roam at random, wandering up and down to view the town."

"Sir, I leave you to your own devices, and I wish you happiness."

The merchant exited.

"He wishes me happiness," Antipholus of Syracuse said, "but happiness is the thing I cannot get. As I roam this world, I am like a drop of water that seeks another drop in the ocean. Falling into the ocean in an attempt to find his fellow, the drop of water — unseen by his fellow and inquisitive about his fellow — mingles with the other drops. Like that drop of water, I, unlucky as I attempt to find a mother and a brother, roam everywhere."

Dromio of Ephesus — not Dromio of Syracuse — now appeared on the scene.

Antipholus of Syracuse saw him and, mistaking him for Dromio of Syracuse, thought, *Here comes the almanac of my true birthdate. When I see him, I know how old I am because he and I were born on the same day.*

Antipholus of Syracuse said to Dromio of Ephesus, "What's happening? How is it that you have returned so soon?"

"Returned so soon!" Dromio of Ephesus said. "Rather, I have arrived too late. The capon — a castrated rooster — burns, and the pig is so over-cooked that it falls from the

spit. The clock has struck twelve upon the bell — it is late for the midday meal! — and my mistress has struck me once upon my cheek. She is so hot because the meat is cold; the meat is cold because you have not come home; you have not come home because you have no appetite; and you have no stomach because you ate a big breakfast. But we who know what it is to fast and pray — to not eat while praying that you will return home soon so that all of your family can eat together — are paying the penalty for your absence from home today.”

“Stop your windy breath, sir,” Antipholus of Syracuse ordered. “Tell me this, please. Where have you left the money that I gave you?”

“Oh, the sixpence you gave me on Wednesday to pay the saddler for my mistress’ crupper — the strap that goes around the horse’s tail and keeps the saddle from sliding forward? I gave it to the saddler, sir. I did not keep it.”

“I am not in the mood for jokes now,” Antipholus of Syracuse replied. “Tell me, without jokes and without delay, where is the money? We are strangers here, so how dare you allow so great a sum of money out of your sight?”

“Please, sir, joke when you are sitting down and eating dinner. I from my mistress have come to you posthaste. If I return without you, my head shall pay for it indeed. My mistress will treat me like a doorpost on which accounts are chalked up — that is, scored — in a tavern. The scores are marks, and my mistress will hit me and score a mark upon my head. Really, I think that your stomach, like mine, should be your clock, and should tell you when to strike out for home without the necessity of being sent a messenger.”

“Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season; this is not the right time for such jokes. Reserve your jokes for a merrier hour than this. Where is the gold that I entrusted to

you?”

“Entrusted to me, sir? Why, you gave no gold to me.”

“Come on, Sir Rascal, stop your foolishness, and tell me what you have done with the money that I put you in charge of.”

“My only charge has been to fetch you from the marketplace to the Phoenix, which is the name of your home, and a very good name it is, sir, to eat dinner. My mistress and her sister are waiting for you.”

“Tell me in what safe place you have deposited my money,” Antipholus of Syracuse said, “or I shall break that merry head of yours that keeps telling me jokes that I am not in the mood to hear. Where are the thousand marks that I gave to you?”

“I have some marks you made on my head,” Dromio of Ephesus said, “and I have some marks my mistress made on my shoulders, but between the beatings I have received from the two of you I do not have a thousand marks. If I should return to your worship those particular marks, perhaps you would not bear them patiently.”

“Your mistress’ marks? What mistress — what female boss — do you have?”

“Your worship’s wife, my mistress at the Phoenix, your home. She is hungry because she is fasting until you come home to dinner, and she really wishes that you would hurry home to dinner.”

“What! Will you mock me to my face even after I have forbidden you to make jokes? There, take that, you rascal.”

Antipholus of Syracuse took off his hat and started hitting Dromio of Ephesus with it. Both Antipholuses used their hats to hit their slaves. Both hats were made of a soft

material and did not cause pain or leave a mark. Both Dromios screamed when they were hit with a hat because they loved to make noise and exaggerate and complain. The wife of Antipholus of Ephesus also caused no pain when she hit Dromio of Ephesus.

“What do you mean by this, sir?” Dromio shouted. “For God’s sake, hold your hands and stop hitting me! If you will not, then I will take to my heels and run away!”

He ran away.

Antipholus of Syracuse said, “Upon my life, by some trick or other, this rascal has had all my money taken from him — by a cheat, no doubt. People say that this town of Ephesus is full of con men — nimble jugglers who deceive the eye, dark-working sorcerers who manipulate men’s minds, soul-killing witches who deform the body, disguised cheaters, fast-talking mountebanks, and many similar engagers in sin. If that is true, it is a good reason to leave Ephesus all the sooner. I’ll go to the Centaur Inn and look for Dromio. I greatly fear my money is not safe.”

CHAPTER 2 (The Comedy of Errors)

— 2.1 —

In front of the house of Antipholus of Ephesus, his wife, who was named Adriana, and her sister, who was named Luciana, spoke together.

“Neither my husband nor the slave has returned,” Adriana said. “I sent Dromio to quickly find his master. Surely, Luciana, it is two o’clock now.”

“Perhaps some merchant invited your husband to eat with him, and from the marketplace he’s gone somewhere to dinner on business. Good sister, let us dine and not worry about your husband. A man is master of his liberty as far as the women in his life are concerned; he comes and goes as he pleases. But when it comes to business, time is their master, and they come and go as their business demands of them. Chances are, your husband is attending to his business, so be patient, sister.”

“Why should men have more liberty than women do?”

“Because their business always lies out of doors. They do not do their business at home.”

Adriana said, “Look, whenever I act the way that he is acting now, he gets mad at me.”

“He is your husband. He is the bridle of your will. A wife should obey her husband.”

“Only asses should have such a bridle.”

“Why, headstrong liberty is lashed with woe,” Luciana said. “There’s nothing under Heaven that men do not have dominion over, whether it is on land, in the sea, or in the sky. The female beasts, the female fishes, and the female

winged fowls are their males' subjects; they are subjected to the males' control. Men, who are more divine than women because God created Adam before Eve and because God created Eve from the rib of Adam, are the masters of all these beasts, fish, and fowl. Men are the lords of the wide world and the wild watery seas. Men are endowed with intellectual sense and souls. Men have more preeminence than fish and fowls. Men are the masters and lords of their females. Therefore, you should obey your husband."

"This servitude of women to men is the reason you stay unwed," Adriana said.

"No, not this servitude," Luciana said. "Instead, I stay unwed because of the troubles of the marriage bed. I am not so much worried about obeying my husband, when I have one, as I am worried about my husband being unhappy and taking his unhappiness to bed. I am worried about him being unfaithful to me."

"But, if you were wedded, you would have some sway — some influence — over your husband."

"Before I learn to love a husband, I will learn how to obey a husband and make him happy."

"What would you do if your husband were to veer off the course of a stable marriage and start to pursue another woman?"

"I would endure it patiently until he returned to his true course and came home."

"If you could stay unmoved by your husband's infidelity, that would indeed be patience!" Adriana said. "It is no marvel that you are waiting to marry. Such meekness can be practiced while you have no cause not to be meek. A wretched soul, bruised with adversity, we tell to be quiet

when we hear it cry. But were we burdened with a similar weight of pain, as much or more would we ourselves complain. Therefore, you — who have no unkind husband to make you grieve — would relieve my grief by urging me to be patient and enduring. But if you live to be married to an unkind husband, you will reject and leave behind you the foolish patience you advise me now to have.”

“Well, I will marry one day and then I can put my ideas into practice,” Luciana said.

She looked up and said, “Here comes your man Dromio now. Your husband must be near.”

Adriana asked Dromio of Ephesus, “Is your tardy master now close at hand?”

“His two hands have been very close to me — my two ears are witness to that,” he replied. “They have been boxed.”

“Did you talk to him? Did he tell you what he intends to do? Do you know what is in his mind?” Adriana asked.

“He spoke his mind upon my ears. Ask not for whom the hands told — they tolled blows upon my ears the way that the tongue of a bell tolls with blows. Damn his hands — I could scarcely hear the words he spoke and understand them.”

Luciana asked, “Did he speak ambiguously, and so you could not understand his meaning?”

“No, he struck my ears so plainly that I could feel his blows very well. But he hit me so dreadfully that I could not understand what he was saying because I could not stand up under his blows.”

“Please tell me,” Adriana said, “whether he is coming home. It would seem that he would have a good reason for you to tell me if he is not coming home.”

“He has a good reason indeed, mistress,” Dromio said. “He is horn-mad.”

“Horn-mad, you rascal!” Adriana said. “Are you saying that I have been unfaithful and cuckolded him and given him horns?”

“I do not mean that he is cuckold-mad. I mean that he is horn-mad in the sense of a horned beast such as a bull or stag that is so angry that it charges people and tries to hurt them with its horns. It is certain that he is stark raving mad. When I asked him to come home to dinner, he asked me for a thousand marks in gold. This conversation ensued:

“‘It is dinnertime,’ quoth I.

“‘My gold!’ quoth he.

“‘Your meat does burn,’ quoth I.

“‘My gold!’ quoth he.

“‘Will you come home?’ quoth I.

“‘My gold!’ quoth he. ‘Where is the thousand marks I gave you, villain?’

“‘The pig,’ quoth I, ‘is burned.’

“‘My gold!’ quoth he.

“‘My mistress, sir,’ quoth I.

“‘To Hell with your mistress! I do not know your mistress; damn your mistress!’”

“Quoth whom?” Luciana asked.

“Quoth my master — your sister’s husband,” Dromio replied. ‘I know,’ quoth he, ‘no house, no wife, no mistress.’ I had thought that if he did not come home that he would give me a message to deliver to you with my

tongue, but the only message I have brought home is the one that I carry on my shoulders — that is where he beat me.”

“Go back to him, rascal, and bring him home,” Adriana ordered.

“Go back again, and be beaten and sent home again? For God’s sake, send some other messenger.”

“Go back, slave, or I will hit you across your head,” Adriana said.

“And he will bless that cross by giving me another beating across my head. Between you I shall have a holy head. In fact, if you two hit me hard enough, my head will be full of holes.”

“Go now, prating peasant!” Adriana said. “Fetch your master home.” She made a motion as if she were going to kick Dromio.

“Am I so round with you as you are with me, that like you would a soccer ball you must spurn me with your foot? You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither. If I am to last in this service, you must encase me in leather for my protection.”

Dromio exited.

Luciana said, “Your impatience really shows in your face right now.”

“My husband favors his female tramps with his presence,” Adriana said, “while I stay at home and starve for lack of his merry looks and company. Has increasing age taken my former alluring beauty from my poor cheeks and replaced it with homeliness? If so, then my husband has wasted my beauty by ignoring me. Are my discourses dull? Is my wit barren? Am I unable to say interesting things? If my former

voluble and sharp discourse is marred, it is my husband's unkindness that blunts it more than ever hard marble could. Do his female tramps entice him with their gay and pretty clothing? It is his fault that I do not have better clothing to wear — he controls my household expenses. The faults that are found in me are faults that he caused. He is the reason for my ruin. He could easily and quickly restore my decayed beauty with a sunny look, but he is an unruly dear — like a deer that breaks out of its enclosure, he breaks out of the walls of his home and eats away from home. Poor me! He does not treat me like he should treat his wife — he treats me as if I were a laughingstock! I can imagine his female tramps and him laughing at me!”

“This is self-harming jealousy,” Luciana said. “Get rid of it.”

“Unfeeling fools can easily get rid of such jealousy,” Adriana said. “They do not feel the pain that I feel. I know my husband's eyes feast on other women outside our home; otherwise, he would be here right now. Sister, you know that my husband promised to give me a necklace. I would gladly give up the necklace if my husband would be faithful to me!

“An enameled piece of jewelry can lose its beauty, yet the gold in it will remain valuable. This is true of aging husbands and wives. Unfortunately, others can touch the gold, and if the gold is often touched, the gold can wear away, thus making the jewelry less valuable. Similarly, a man can be touched if he gives in to temptation, thus making the man less valuable. No man who has a good reputation should shame it with falsehoods and corruption. I believe that my husband is golden, but he is allowing his female tramps to wear away his gold. Because my beauty can no longer please my husband's eyes, I'll weep what's left of my beauty away, and die as I weep.”

How many fond fools serve mad jealousy! Luciana thought. *Adriana is fond of her husband, and she suffers from excessive jealousy.*

— 2.2 —

Standing in a public place, Antipholus of Syracuse said, “The gold I gave to Dromio has been safely deposited at the Centaur Inn and the heedful, competent slave has wandered forth to seek me. By my own calculation and the information I received from the inn’s host, I do not see how it is possible for me to have so recently seen Dromio — there simply has not been enough time. This is puzzling, but it did happen. I see Dromio coming toward me now.”

Dromio of Syracuse walked up to him.

“How are you now, sir?” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “Is your merry mood altered? If you love beatings, jest with me again. You never heard of the Centaur Inn? You never received gold from me? Your female boss sent you to bring me home to dinner? My home is named the Phoenix? Were you insane when you said such things to me?”

“What?” Dromio of Syracuse said. “When did I ever say such things?”

“You said these things to me just now, right here, not half an hour ago.”

“I have not seen you since you sent me from here to go to the Centaur Inn with the gold you gave me.”

“Rascal, you denied ever having received gold from me, and you told me that you had a female boss and that she had a dinner waiting for me. I hope that your head, which I beat, felt that I was displeased.”

“I am glad to see you in this merry mood,” Dromio of Syracuse said, “but what do you mean by this jest? Please,

master, tell me.”

“Do you think I am joking? Do you mock me to my face? Here, take this, and take that!”

Antipholus of Syracuse took off his hat and struck Dromio of Syracuse twice.

“Stop, sir, for God’s sake! Now your joke has turned serious. Why are you beating me? This is not part of any bargain that I made.”

“Why am I beating you? Sometimes I am in a good mood and I let you be my jester and make jokes and engage in fun conversation. But you are so saucy that you go too far and make jokes when I am in a serious mood. You even treat my hours for serious work as if they were happy hours at a public tavern. Remember this proverb: When the Sun shines, let foolish gnats make sport, but let them creep in crannies when the Sun hides its beams. In other words, there is a right time for all things. There is a right time for jokes, and there is a right time for serious business. If you want to jest with me, look at my face and determine my mood. Once you know my mood, you can fashion your behavior so that it is appropriate for my mood. If you do not take my advice, I will beat my advice into your sconce.”

“Sconce? You are using the word ‘sconce’? Showing off your vocabulary, are you? Although I am only a slave, I know that sconce has three meanings. One, it can mean a head. Two, it can mean a small fort. Three, it can mean a protective screen. If you should stop beating me as if you were using a battering ram against a fortress, I would prefer ‘sconce’ to mean a head. But if you continue to beat me, I must get a sconce — a small fort — to protect my head and ensconce my head with a protective screen for further protection. Otherwise, you will beat my head into my

shoulders. But, sir, why are you beating me?"

"Don't you know?"

"All I know, sir, is that you are beating me."

"Shall I tell you why I am beating you?"

"Yes, sir, and tell me wherefore, for they say every why has a wherefore."

"Let me explain the 'why' first. I am beating you because you mocked me. Now let me explain the 'wherefore.' I am beating you because you mocked me a second time."

"Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season, when the 'why' and the 'wherefore' have neither rhyme nor reason? I don't think that any man has ever been beaten for less reason than I have been today. Well, sir, I thank you."

"Thank me for what?"

"I thank you because you gave me something for nothing."

"I will make that up to you by giving you nothing for something, but isn't it time for the midday meal?"

"No, sir," Dromio of Syracuse said. "It can't be time for dinner. If it were time, the meat would be ready, but it lacks something that I have."

"What is that?"

"Tenderizing."

"The best way to tenderize a steak is to beat it with a meat mallet. If the meat has not been tenderized, then it will be tough."

"If it is tough, sir, I beg you not to eat it."

"What is your reason?"

“If you try to eat tough steak, it might make you angry, and then you would tenderize me.”

“Dromio, learn the right time to make a joke. There’s a right time for all things.”

“I would have dared to deny that that is true — before you became so angry at me.”

“By what rule of logic and argumentation would you deny that?”

“I would deny it, master, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of Father Time himself.”

“Let’s hear your reasoning.”

“There is no right time that a man who grows bald naturally — from old age — can recover his hair. Therefore, there is not a time for everything.”

“Couldn’t he recover his hair by fine and recovery? That is a way for men to get legal possession of property.”

“Yes, master, a man can pay a fine fee for a wig and thus recover the lost hair of another man. The best wigs are made from real hair.”

“Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as hair is, so plentiful an outgrowth?”

“Hair is a blessing that Father Time bestows on furry beasts; what Father Time has scanted men in hair he has given them in intelligence.”

“Objection! Many men have more hair than intelligence.”

“Men who have more hair than intelligence still have enough intelligence to lose their hair. They pursue the wrong kind of women, catch syphilis, and lose their hair as a consequence of the disease.”

“Didn’t you just now conclude that hairy men are straightforward, candid plain dealers who lack the intelligence needed to be deceptive and engage in fraudulent behavior?”

“Plain dealers take what is called the direct approach with women, sir. Their idea of flirting is to say ‘Fancy a f**k?’ The plainer the dealer, the quicker he is to catch syphilis and lose his hair. At least he has a policy in mind when he grows bald.”

“What is the reason for the policy?”

“There are two reasons, sir, and they are sound reasons.”

“Sound? I doubt it.”

“Sure reasons, then.”

“Nope. I am still doubtful. I suspect a falsehood.”

“Certain ones then.”

“Name them, and let’s see if they are certain.”

“The first reason is the money he will save in haircuts, and the second reason is that no longer will a hair fall into his soup.”

“All this time you have tried to prove that not everything has a right time.”

“Yes, and I did prove that, sir. There is no right time — or any time at all — that a man who grows bald naturally can recover his hair.”

“But your reasoning was not substantial; why, the reasoning is so off that your debating opponents have no time to recover from your arguments because your opponents are stunned by your arguments’ silliness.”

“Therefore, I will improve my argument: Time himself is bald and therefore until the world ends Time will have bald followers. Anyone who follows Father Time will grow old and will grow bald.”

“I knew you would have a bald conclusion,” Antipholus of Syracuse said.

He looked up and said, “Look! Two women — I don’t know who they are — are beckoning for us to go over to them.”

A wondering look on his face, Antipholus of Syracuse, accompanied by Dromio of Syracuse, walked over to the two women, who were Adriana and Luciana.

“Yes, Antipholus, look at me as if I were a stranger and frown at me,” Arianna said. “Some other woman has your looks of love. Pretend that I am not Adriana and pretend that I am not your wife. At one time, without being urged, you would spend time with me. You would tell me that words were never music to your ear unless I had spoken them. You would tell me that an object was never pleasing to your eye unless I had shown it to you. You would tell me that a touch was never welcome to your hand unless I was holding hands with you. You would tell me that meat was never tasty unless I had carved the meat for you.

“How did it come to be, husband, that you are now estranged from yourself? You and I are married, and in marriage two become one. You and I are one undividable whole, incorporate. By being joined with you, I am better than I would be by myself alone. How then can you regard me as a stranger? I am part of you, and the two of us make up you. Do not try to tear yourself away from me! Know, my love, you can separate the two of us as easily as you can put a drop of water into the churning sea and take out that exact drop of water, with nothing added to it or taken away

from it. If you try to take me out of yourself, you will find the task impossible because we are one being, not two.

“It would hurt me deeply and touch me to the quick if you were ever to hear that I were licentious and that this body, which is consecrated to you, had been contaminated by ruffian lust! If that should ever happen, wouldn’t you spit at me and kick me and scream at me that I am married to you? The forehead reveals character — wouldn’t you tear the stained skin from my harlot’s brow and tear my wedding ring from my finger and break my wedding ring with a deep vow of divorce?”

“I know that you are capable of doing those things, and therefore I believe that you would do those things. You should know that in fact I have been stained by adultery; my blood has been mingled with the sin of lust. What do I mean by this? You and I are one, and if you commit adultery, then I am contaminated by the adultery you committed — the poison of your adultery infects my blood, and that contamination makes me a whore. Therefore, if you keep your marriage vows and sleep in the bed of the wife you married, I will live unstained and you will live without dishonor.”

“Why are you saying these things to me, pretty woman?” Antipholus of Syracuse asked. “I do not know you. I have been in Ephesus for only two hours. This town and your conversation are both strange to me. I have heard every word you said to me, but I do not understand even one word of what you have said.”

Luciana said, “For shame, brother-in-law! You have changed! When have you ever treated my sister like this! She sent Dromio to you to bring you home for dinner.”

“She sent Dromio to me?”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “She sent me?”

Adriana said, “Yes, I sent you, Dromio. And when you returned from seeing him, you said that he had beaten you, and as he was beating you, he said that he did not live in this house and he said that I was not his wife.”

Antipholus of Syracuse asked Dromio of Syracuse, “Did you talk, sir, with this gentlewoman? Are you confederates with her? What plot did you two form?”

“I talk to her, sir?” Dromio of Syracuse replied. “I have never even seen her until now!”

“Rascal, you are lying,” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “I know that you are lying because you earlier said to me in the marketplace exactly the things that she said she told you to say to me.”

“I have never spoken to her in my entire life.”

“How then is it possible that she knows our names and calls us by them? Is she perhaps clairvoyant?”

Adriana said to Antipholus of Syracuse, “You are supposed to be a serious man, yet you conspire disgustingly with your slave to deceive me and make me angry! Perhaps I must suffer because of your estrangement from me, but do not make that wrong worse by treating me with contempt.

“I will hold on to your sleeve. You, my husband, are a strong elm tree. I, your wife, am a weak vine. Although I am weak, I am married to your strength, and therefore I share your strength. If anything possesses you except me, it is dross; it is usurping, parasitic ivy, a brier, or worthless moss that, because it has not been cut off, infects your sap and lives by harming you.”

Antipholus of Syracuse thought, *She is talking to me. She is talking about me. Was I married to her in a dream? Am I dreaming now and thinking that I am hearing all of this?*

What error is making our — her and my — eyes and ears behave this way? Until I know for sure what is happening, I will pretend that this delusion is reality.

Luciana ordered, “Dromio, go and tell the servants to set the table for dinner.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “I wish I had my rosary beads! At least I — sinner that I am — can cross myself. This is the fairyland! Oh, spite of spite! We are talking with goblins, changelings, and sprites. Unless we obey them, this will ensue: Witches in the form of owls will suck away our breath, or fairies will pinch us black and blue.”

Luciana said, “Why are you talking to yourself and not answering me? Dromio, the Greek word *dromeos* means runner, but you are a drone, a snail, a slug, a foolish blockhead!”

“I have been transformed, master, haven’t I?” Dromio of Syracuse asked.

“I think that your mind has been transformed in some way, and so has mine.”

“Master, I think that I have been transformed both in mind and in body.”

“You still have your own body.”

“No, I am sure that I have not. I am an ape. I am a counterfeit — or perhaps I am a fool. Or I am both.”

Luciana said, “If you have been changed into anything, then you have been changed into an ass.”

“That is true,” Dromio of Syracuse said. “She rides me — she teases and criticizes me. And I long for grass — I long to go to pasture and be relieved of responsibility and have freedom. If I were not an ass, then I would know her as

well as she knows me.”

Adriana said, “Let us stop this foolishness. I decline to act like a foolish child and weep while my husband and his slave laugh at all my sorrows.”

She said to Antipholus of Syracuse, “Come, sir, let us go in our house and eat.”

She said, “Dromio, keep the door.”

She added, “Husband, I’ll dine upstairs with you today and listen to your confession of a thousand idle pranks.”

She said to Dromio of Syracuse, “If anyone asks you for your master, say that he is dining away from home and let no one enter the house. We do not want to be disturbed.”

She said to Luciana, “Come, sister.”

She finished by saying, “Dromio, do your job as doorkeeper well.”

Antipholus of Syracuse thought, *Am I on Earth, in Heaven, or in Hell? Am I sleeping or waking? Am I insane or in my right mind? Do these people know me and I don’t know myself? I’ll say as they say and do as they do and continue in this course of action despite all the confusion. I will continue in this course of action no matter what are the risks and consequences.*

Dromio of Syracuse asked him, “Master, shall I be the porter at the door? Shall I be the doorkeeper?”

Adriana answered for him, “Yes, and let no one enter, lest I break your pate — your head.”

Luciana said, “Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.”

They left to eat dinner.

CHAPTER 3 (The Comedy of Errors)

— 3.1 —

Before the house of Antipholus of Ephesus were standing Antipholus of Ephesus; Dromio of Ephesus; Angelo, who was a goldsmith of Ephesus; and Balthazar, who was a merchant of Ephesus.

“Good Signior Angelo, please excuse us,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “My wife is shrewish when I come home late. Please say that I lingered with you at your shop so that I could see you make her necklace. Also, please say that you will bring it here tomorrow. But look here at my slave. He is a rascal who would impudently swear that he met me in the marketplace and that I beat him, and that I said I had given him a thousand marks in gold, and that I denied that I was married to my wife and lived in my house.”

He said to Dromio of Ephesus, “You drunkard, what did you mean by saying all of this?”

“Say what you will, sir, but I know what I know. I know that you beat me in the marketplace. I can prove it with evidence from your own hand. If my skin were made of parchment, and the blows you gave me were ink, your own handwriting on my back and shoulders would tell you what I think.”

“I know what I think: I think you are an ass,” Antipholus of Ephesus said.

“Indeed, judging from the wrongs I suffer and the blows I bear, it does appear that I am an ass. I should kick back when I am kicked. If I would do that when I am in such a predicament, you would keep away from my heels and beware of this ass.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "You're solemn, Signior Balthazar. I pray to God that our entertainment and meal will show you my good will toward you and that you are welcome here."

"Your welcome and friendship are much more valuable to me than your most excellent delicacies," Balthazar replied.

"Signior Balthazar, whether one is served flesh or fish, a hearty welcome is not a substitute for a good meal. A hearty welcome cannot make up for a bad meal. As we know, a hearty welcome is not the equal of even one good course."

"Good food, sir, is common," Balthazar said. "Every man can provide that."

"And a good welcome is even more common than good food," Antipholus of Ephesus said. "All that is required for a good welcome is words."

"A little food and a great big welcome makes a merry feast," Balthazar said.

"Yes, to a niggardly host, and to a guest who eats less than the host, but though my food is mean, eat it with my best wishes for you," Antipholus of Ephesus said. "You may eat better food elsewhere, but it will not be served to you with a better heart than mine."

He tried to open the door of his house, but it would not budge. He said, "That's odd. My door is locked. Dromio, call for someone to unlock the door and let us in."

Dromio called, "Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicel, Gillian, Ginn!"

Antipholus of Ephesus was a successful man with many servants.

Dromio of Syracuse, who was serving as porter, called from inside the house, “Blockhead, drudge, cuckold, fool, idiot, clown! Either go away, or shut up! Are you trying to use a spell to get women by calling the names of so many? One woman is one too many. Go, get away from the door.”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “Which fool has been made our porter? My master is out here waiting in the street.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “Let him walk from here to wherever he came from — that will keep his feet from growing cold.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “Who is talking from inside my house? Whoever you are, open the door!”

“Right, sir,” Dromio of Syracuse replied. “I will tell you when I will open the door after you tell me a good reason why I should open the door.”

“Why should you open the door? You should open the door so that I can eat my dinner. I have not eaten today.”

“You will not eat here today,” Dromio of Syracuse replied. “Come again — when you are invited.”

“Who are you who is keeping me out of my own house — the house I own?”

“Right now, I have the job of the porter, sir, and my name is Dromio.”

“Rascal!” Dromio of Ephesus exclaimed. “You have stolen both my job and my name. The one never got me credit; the other always got me much blame. If you had been Dromio today in my place in the marketplace, you would have changed your job as porter for that of a target for blows and you would have changed your name of Dromio to the name of Ass. To have avoided that fate, you would have to have changed your face from that of mine or have changed your

name from Dromio to another human name to avoid being beaten like an ass.”

Antipholus of Syracuse started to bang on the door.

Luce, a servant to Adriana, now arrived and asked, “What a turmoil I hear! Dromio, who are these people banging on the door?”

Dromio of Ephesus recognized Luce’s voice and said, “Let my master in, Luce.”

Luce replied, “No, your master comes too late. Tell your master that.”

She knew that the meal had already been served and was being eaten. She also thought that her master was upstairs eating, not growing angry outside the door.

“I have to laugh at that,” Dromio of Ephesus said. “Let me have at you with some words: Shall I come in with my staff? Shall I make myself at home?”

“Let me have at you with some other words,” Luce replied. “When should you come in? Can you tell? The answer is never. If you come in here, you will need more than just a staff — you will need an entire army.”

From inside the house, Dromio of Syracuse said, “Luce — if your name is Luce — you have answered him well.”

Antipholus of Ephesus yelled, “Can you hear, minion? Let us in! Please?”

Luce replied, “I have already answered your question with my own questions: ‘When should you come in? Can you tell?’”

Dromio of Syracuse said to Luce, “You have already answered the question: ‘The answer is never.’”

Antipholus of Ephesus pounded on the door.

Dromio of Ephesus said, “Well struck! You answered a verbal blow from Luce with a physical blow on the door.”

Antipholus of Ephesus yelled, “Luce, you baggage, you good-for-nothing woman, let me in.”

“Let you in? Says who?” Luce yelled.

“Master, knock hard on the door,” Dromio of Ephesus said.

“Let him knock until the door aches,” Luce yelled.

Antipholus of Ephesus yelled, “You’ll regret this, minion, if I beat the door down.”

Luce replied, “Not likely, since we have a pair of stocks in this town. The police will put you in the stocks, and *I* will torment *you*.”

Hearing all the racket, Adriana arrived and said, “Who is it at the door who keeps making all this noise?”

From inside the house, Dromio of Syracuse replied, “Truly, your town is troubled with unruly fellows.”

“Is that you, wife?” Antipholus said. “I wish that you had arrived earlier.”

Adriana, thinking that her husband was upstairs eating dinner, said, “Your wife, Sir Rascal! Go and get away from the door! Get out of here!”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “If Sir Rascal is sent away in pain, then I — a regular rascal — will indeed suffer sorely.”

“Here is neither a meal, sir, nor a welcome,” Angelo said. “We would be happy to have either.”

Balthazar said, “We have been debating whether good food or a good welcome is better, but it looks like we shall

depart with neither.”

“Your guests are standing at the door, master,” Dromio of Ephesus said cheekily. “Tell them that they are welcome in your home.”

“There is something in the wind — some reason why we cannot get in,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “Something is wrong.”

“Something in the wind?” Dromio of Ephesus said. “That would be us. You would know that a cold wind is blowing if your clothing were made of thinner material. Your food inside the house is warm, but you are standing out here in the cold. It makes a man as angry as a mad-horn horned buck to be so treated.”

Antipholus of Ephesus ordered, “Go and fetch me some tool that I can use to break down the door.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “Break anything here, and I’ll break your rascally head.”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “A man may break a word with you, sir, and words are but wind, and therefore I will break wind in your face and not in a direction away from you.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “It seems that you want your head broken. Damn you, rascal!”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “I am spending way too much time in the great out of doors — let me in! Please!”

Dromio of Syracuse replied, “Yes, I will let you in — when fowls have no feathers and fish have no fins.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Dromio of Ephesus, “Well, I’ll break in. Go and borrow a crowbar.”

Dromio of Ephesus willfully misunderstood what his master had said: “A crow bare? A crow without feathers?”

Master, do you mean it? For every fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather. If a crow bare will get us inside the house, we will pluck a crow together. Once we are inside the house, then that Dromio and this Dromio can settle our argument."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "Stop fooling around! Go! Bring back an iron crowbar."

"Be patient, sir," Balthazar said. "Don't break down your own door. If you do, you will harm your reputation and you will make people suspect that your wife has disobeyed you and dishonored you. So far, her reputation as a wife has been excellent. Consider this: You have long known that your wife is wise, that she is sober and virtuous, and that she is mature and modest. Because of this, you should conclude that she has a good reason — unknown to you right now — for locking the door and keeping you out of your own house. This reason she will explain to you later. Take my advice. Depart quietly now, and let all of us go and eat dinner at the Tiger Inn. Around evening, return — alone — to your house and talk to your wife about why she locked the door against you. If you use your strong hands to break down the door now, you will cause rumors to be spread by crowds of people. So far, your reputation is unblemished. Keep it that way, or people will remember the day you broke your own door down — and they will remember it even when you die. Gossip spreads from person to person to person, and everyone who hears the gossip remembers it."

"You are right," Antipholus of Ephesus said. "I will leave quietly. Although I am in no mood to be merry, and my wife obviously does not want me to be merry, I will change my mood — with effort — and stop being angry and instead be merry. I know a courtesan who converses well and excellently. She is pretty and witty; she is wild and yet

she is gentle. We will dine with her. My wife has often accused me — unjustly — of having an affair with this woman whom I am talking about, but I swear that I am faithful to my wife and that I have never slept with this woman although I like looking at and talking to her. I would tell you if I had slept with her — we are all guys here, and the story would be a good one to tell in the locker room if I were the kind of man who has affairs. We will go to her house for dinner.”

He said to Angelo, “Go to your home and fetch the necklace — it should be finished by this time. Bring it to the Porcupine, which is the name of the courtesan’s home. If for no other reason than to spite my wife, I will give the necklace to the courtesan. Good sir, make haste. Since my own door refuses to open up for me, I’ll knock elsewhere and see if that door will disdain me.”

“I’ll meet you at the Porcupine an hour or so from now,” Angelo said.

“Please do,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “This jest at my wife’s expense shall also cost me some expense.”

— 3.2 —

Luciana and Antipholus of Syracuse had finished dining with her sister, Adriana, and now they were talking together.

Luciana said to Antipholus of Syracuse, whom she thought was married to her sister, “Is it possible that you have forgotten the duty of a husband? Antipholus, this is still the spring of your love for Adriana. Have the roots of your love for her started to rot so early? Shall a love that should vigorously grow instead lie in ruins? If you wed my sister only because of her wealth, then for the sake of her wealth treat her with more kindness. If you like another woman, then like that woman stealthily and not openly. Conceal

your false love by acting in such a way that my sister is blind to it. Do not let my sister look at you and know by looking at you that you like another woman. Make sure that your tongue does not speak of the other woman. Look sweetly at my sister, treat my sister well, and mask your infidelity by appearing to be faithful. Although you engage in vice, appear to be the friend of virtue. Look as if you are a good husband, even though another woman has tainted your heart. Teach sin to appear like a holy saint. Be unfaithful to my sister in secret — she need not know. Why should a thief brag about his crimes? It is a double sin to be unfaithful in bed and to let your wife know during dinner that you are unfaithful. A sinful, shameful man can have a good reputation if he acts discreetly, but a bad deed becomes doubly bad when done indiscreetly. We poor women! We are trusting. We easily believe that you love us. You may like another woman in your heart, but as long as outward appearances make it seem that you love us, you can control us as you wish and we will orbit you the way that a planet orbits the Sun. Therefore, gentle brother-in-law, go inside the house again. Comfort my sister, cheer her up, and call her your wife. Tell some white lies and flatter her — the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.”

“Sweet mistress,” Antipholus of Syracuse said, “I do not know your name, and I do not know by what miracle you know my name. Your knowledge and your grace are the equal of the wonders of the divine Earth. Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak. My understanding is Earth-bound and smothered in errors; it is feeble, shallow, and weak. Reveal to me the hidden meaning of your words, which accuse me of deceit. My soul is pure and guiltless, and yet you are accusing me of marital infidelity — something that I have never been guilty of; after all, I am not married. Are you a goddess? Are you trying to make me into something that I am not? Transform me then, and

to your power I'll yield. I am willing to change in order to please you. But if I am who I think I am, then I know well that your weeping sister is not my wife. I am not married to her, and I owe no allegiance to her wedding bed. I am inclined to love you far, far more than I am to love her.

“Sweet mermaid — sweet Siren — do not sing a song that will drown me in your sister's flood of tears. Sing a song that will encourage me to love you, and I will madly dote on you. Spread your golden hairs over the silver waves, and maiden, I will lie on your hair as if it were a bed. In that glorious daydream, I would think that death would be a benefit if I could die — while having an orgasm — in your lap. True love is light and therefore floats. You inspire love in me, and true love is the kind of love I hope that you inspire. But if you are a Siren urging me on to my destruction here in Ephesus, this town of magic, then the love you inspire in me is false and I hope that the false love will sink and drown.”

“Are you insane? You must be, if you can think such thoughts!”

“I am not mad, but I am amazed and I hope to be mated — with you, the woman whom I love. How all of these things are occurring here in Ephesus, I do not know.”

“You have a fault that your eyes have caused,” Luciana said, thinking, *He has fallen in love with me because he thinks that I am beautiful. This is lust, not true love. He is married to my sister!*

“My eyes have been blinded by the sunny beams of your beauty,” Antipholus of Syracuse said.

“Gaze at the beauty of the woman you should gaze at, and all will be well. Gaze at my sister.”

“It is as good to close one's eyes, sweet love, as to look on

night.”

“Do not call me your love. Call my sister your love.”

“I will call your sister’s sister my love.”

“My family has three daughters, one of whom lives far away. My sister’s sister is my sister.”

“Your sister’s sister is you, and you are the better part of my own self. You are my eye’s clearer eye and my dear heart’s dearer heart. You are my food, my fortune, and the goal of my sweet hope. You are my only Heaven on Earth, and you make me believe in Heaven hereafter.”

“All this is what my sister is to you — or should be.”

“Call yourself your sister, sweetheart, because I am one with you. I will love you and I will spend my life with you. You have no husband, and I have no wife. Give me your hand.”

“Wait! Stay here. I will go and get my sister. I want to know what she thinks of all this, and I want her to know that I am behaving properly. I value her opinion of me.”

As Luciana exited, Dromio of Syracuse ran up to Antipholus of Syracuse, who asked, “How are you, Dromio? Why are you running so fast?”

“Do you know me, sir? Am I Dromio? Am I your slave? Am I myself?”

“You are Dromio, you are my slave, you are yourself.”

“I am an ass, I am a woman’s man, and I am besides myself.”

“Which woman’s man are you, and how are you besides yourself?”

“I am besides myself because I am owed to a woman — one who claims me, one who haunts me, one who will have me.”

“What claim does she have on you?”

“The claim she has on me is like the claim you would have on a horse — she says that she owns me. This is beastly. I do not mean that I am a beast, but I do mean that that beastly woman is laying claim to me.”

“Who is she?”

“She is a very reverent body — no one can talk about her without apologizing to God for the foul language necessary to describe her. I have only lean luck in this wedding match, and yet she makes her part of it a wondrously fat marriage.”

“What do you mean by a fat marriage?”

“Sir, she is the kitchen wench and she is all grease; I do not know not what to do with her except to make a lamp of her and run away from her by the light she will make. I bet that the rags she wears and the tallow in them will burn for the length of a harsh winter in Poland. If she lives until doomsday, she will burn a week longer than the whole world.”

“What complexion does she have?”

“Swarthy, like my shoe, but her face is not kept half as clean. She sweats so much that you would be up to your ankles in perspiration.”

“That’s a fault that soap and water will mend.”

“No, sir. Her dirt is too engrained. Noah’s flood could not clean her face.”

“What’s her name?”

“Nell. ‘Ell’ with an ‘n’ in front. Her name is fitting because she is more than an ell. Her name and three quarters — that’s an ell and three quarters of an ell — will not measure her from hip to hip. Remember, please, that an ell is forty-five inches.”

“So she bears some breadth?”

“She is no longer from head to foot than from hip to hip; she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out the locations of countries by looking at her.”

“In what part of her body stands Ireland?”

“In her buttocks. I found Ireland’s bogs by looking at Nell’s spongy, boggy backside.”

“Where is Scotland?”

“A ness is a promontory or cape, and Scotland has many place names with that word including the Loch Ness. We non-Scots think of Scotland as being a barren place, and I found Scotland in the barrenness of the hard calluses in the palm of her hand.”

“Where is France?”

“In her forehead; France is armed and in revolt, making war against her hair. She has a receding hairline and will soon be bald.”

“Where is England?”

“I looked for the chalky white cliffs of Dover in her mouth, but I could find no whiteness in her teeth, so I guess that rainy England is located in her chin, because of all the perspiration that rains down her face from France.”

“Where is Spain?”

“I did not see hot Spain, but I felt it in the hot breath

coming from her nostrils.”

“Where are America and the Indies?”

“Where are those fabulously wealthy areas of land? I saw them in her nose, which was decorated with rubies, valuable bright red carbuncles, and sapphires, which are also known as pimples, bright red lumpy boils, and pustules. Spain does a flourishing trade with America and the Indies, sending ships to take on cargo, and perspiration drips down Nell’s nose and gets in her Spanish nostrils.”

“Where are the Low Countries, including Belgium and the Netherlands?”

“Oh, sir, I did not look so low and so I did not see her nether regions.

“To conclude, this drudge, or witch, laid claim to me, called me Dromio, swore I was engaged to marry her, and told me what private marks I had on my body, including the birthmark on my shoulder, the mole on my neck, and the big wart on my left arm. Shocked and amazed by such knowledge, I ran from her as if she were a witch. I believe that if my breast had not been made of faith — I am protected by the metaphorical breastplate of righteousness and by my heart of steel — she would have transformed me into a dog with a docked tail and made me tread a wheel that would turn a spit in the kitchen.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said, “Go and hurry down to the port. If the wind blows in any direction away from shore, we will not stay in this town tonight. If any ship is going to set sail, come to the marketplace. I will wait there until you return to me. Everyone knows us here in Ephesus, although we know no one. That isn’t right. This must be a town full of witches and magicians, and it is time, I think, for us to leave, to go, and to depart.”

“As from a bear a man would run for his life,” Dromio said, “so will I fly from her who would be my wife.”

He exited.

Antipholus of Syracuse said, “No one but warlocks and witches live here, and therefore it is high time that I not be here. A woman here calls me her husband, but I abhor her as a wife. She has a beautiful sister, who has such gentle graciousness and such enchanting presence and such marvelous conversation. But if everyone here is a witch, then she is a witch, too, although she seems to be a goddess. She has almost made me a traitor to myself, assuming that she is trying to tempt me to my doom, like a mermaid who is a Siren who sings beautifully so that sailors jump from their safe ships and swim to her dangerous shore. To prevent myself from succumbing to her temptation, I will figuratively, like Ulysses did literally, put wax in my ears so that I cannot hear her Siren song.”

Angelo, carrying a necklace, walked up to Antipholus of Syracuse and said, “Master Antipholus —”

“Yes, that’s my name.”

“I know it is, sir. Look, here is the necklace. I hoped to have taken it to you at the Porcupine, but I needed to stay in my goldsmith shop and finish it.”

“What do you want me to do with this?”

“Whatever you want, sir. I made it for you.”

“Made it for me, sir! I did not order it to be made.”

“Yes, you did — not once, nor twice, but twenty times. Go home with it and make your wife happy. Soon, at suppertime, I’ll visit you and you can pay me for the necklace.”

Angelo thought, I delayed coming to the Porcupine with the necklace on purpose. My respected and respectable friend should give the necklace to his wife and not to a courtesan. Also, the necklace should help resolve whatever quarrel my friend and his wife are having.

“Please, sir, take the money now, for fear you will never again see the necklace or the money.”

“Funny! You are a merry man, sir. I will see you later.”

Angelo exited.

Antipholus of Syracuse said, “What I should think of this, I cannot tell. But I think that no man is so silly that he would refuse so beautiful a necklace when it is offered to him. I see that a man need not be a con man to live here — not when people in the streets simply hand over to him such golden gifts. I will go to the marketplace and wait for Dromio. If any ship is leaving this town, then we will board it.”

CHAPTER 4 (The Comedy of Errors)

— 4.1 —

In a public place stood three people: the goldsmith Angelo, a merchant to whom he owed money, and a police officer who was dressed in the tough leather uniform that the police officers of Ephesus customarily wore for protection.

The merchant said to Angelo, “You know that the money you owe me was due at Pentecost, which is always fifty days after Easter, counting Easter as one of the days. I have not much bothered you by asking for the money you owe to me, and I would not do so now, but I must travel to Persia, and therefore I need money for my voyage. Therefore, pay me immediately, or I will be forced to have this police officer arrest you for bad debt.”

Angelo courteously replied, “Nearly the same amount of money that I owe you is owed to me by Antipholus. Just before I met you, I gave him a necklace that he is going to pay me for at five o’clock. If you would, please walk with me to his house. He will pay me the money he owes me, and I will pay you the money I owe you with my thanks.”

Antipholus of Ephesus and Dromio of Ephesus now arrived on the scene, having just left the courtesan.

The police officer saw them and said, “You need not walk to his house. Antipholus has saved you that labor — he is walking toward us now.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Dromio of Ephesus, “While I go to the goldsmith’s house, you go and buy a piece of rope. I will use it to brandish as I shout at my wife and her confederates for locking me out of my own house today. That is the gift I will bestow on her and them. I see the

goldsmith. Go, Dromio. Buy a piece of rope and take it to me at my house.”

I am buying a thousand pounds a year. I am buying a piece of rope, Dromio thought. I am being sarcastic, of course. Even if I bought a piece of rope every day for a year, the weight would not add up to a thousand pounds. I know that my master would not really hurt his wife, so the piece of rope I will buy will be a piece of thin twine that would not hurt even if it were used as a whip instead of as a stage prop. That will save my master money. I, of course, could well receive a thousand poundings from my master — three beatings a day for a year! Ouch! Ouch! Ouch! A smart schoolboy who is sent out to find a branch to be whipped with knows to bring back a twig.

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Angelo, “A man would be well helped if you said that you would help him — ha! I told the courtesan that you would show up for dinner with the necklace, but neither you nor the necklace showed up. Perhaps you thought that you and I would be too friendly if we were chained together, and so you did not come to me with the golden links of the necklace.”

“All joking aside, Antipholus, here is the bill for the necklace,” Angelo said. “It lists how much your necklace weighs to the exact carat, and it describes the fineness of the necklace’s gold and its intricate workmanship. The total cost amounts to three ducats more than I owe to this gentleman. Please, pay him immediately because he is about to go on a voyage and stays here only to receive the money.”

“I don’t have the money on me,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “Besides, I have some business to take care of in town. Good Signior, take the stranger to my house and take the necklace with you and tell my wife to pay you the sum you have written on the bill. I will try to take care of my

business quickly and may be able to return soon enough to see you at my house.”

Angelo asked, “Then you will bring the necklace to your wife yourself?”

“No. Take the necklace with you in case I do not quickly arrive.”

“Well, sir, I will. Do you have the necklace?”

“If I don’t have the necklace, then, sir, I hope you have it. If you don’t, you will not get any money from me.”

“Please, sir, give me the necklace,” Angelo said. “Both wind and tide are waiting for this gentleman, and I am to blame for having held him here so long.”

“Good Lord! You are using this tarrying to excuse the breach of your promise to meet me at the Porcupine! I should have criticized you for not bringing the necklace to me there, but like a shrewish man, you were the first to begin to brawl.”

The merchant said to Angelo, “The time is passing. Please, sir, pay me.”

Angelo said to Antipholus of Ephesus, “You hear how he importunes me for his money. Please give me the necklace!”

“Why, give the necklace to my wife and she will give you your money.”

“Come, come, you know I gave the necklace to you just a few minutes ago. Either give me the necklace to give to your wife or give me a note that tells your wife to give me the money.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Angelo, “You are running this joke into the ground. Where is the necklace? Let me

see it, please.”

The merchant said to Angelo, “My business is urgent and cannot wait for this delay.”

The merchant then said to Antipholus of Ephesus, “Good sir, say whether you’ll pay me or not. If you will not, I will have the police officer arrest Angelo.”

“I pay you! Why should I pay you!”

Angelo said, “You should pay him the money you owe me for the necklace.”

“I don’t owe you anything until you deliver the necklace to me.”

“You know that I gave you the necklace half an hour ago.”

“You did not give me a necklace. You wrong me much when you say that you did.”

“You wrong me more, sir, when you say that you did not receive the necklace. Think how this is going to affect my business reputation!”

The merchant said to the police officer, “Well, officer, arrest Angelo the goldsmith for failing to pay his debt.”

“I do arrest you, Angelo, and I order you in the Duke’s name to obey me.”

“This is going to hurt my business reputation,” Angelo said to Antipholus of Ephesus. “Either consent to pay this sum for me, or I will have this police officer arrest you for failing to pay your debt.”

“You want me to pay for a gold necklace that I never received! Have me arrested, foolish fellow, if you dare.”

Angelo said, “Officer, here is the money for your fee to

arrest someone for failure to pay his debt. Arrest Antipholus. I would have my own brother arrested if he should treat me so badly and so openly.”

“I arrest you, sir,” the police officer said. “You have heard the charge made against you.”

“I will obey you until I post bail,” Antipholus of Ephesus said to the police officer.

He then said to Angelo, “Rascal, you shall pay for this with all the metal in your goldsmith’s shop.”

“Sir, sir, you will find that the law in Ephesus is on my side. I do not doubt that you will suffer notorious shame.”

Dromio of Syracuse returned from the harbor and said to Antipholus of Ephesus, “Master, a ship from Epidamnus is staying at Ephesus only until her owner comes aboard, and then, sir, she sails away. I have carried aboard the ship our baggage, and I have bought the oil, the balm, and the liquor you wanted. The ship is rigged and ready to sail, the merry wind blows in the right direction, and the crew is waiting for their owner, captain, and yourself to board ship so they can set sail.”

“What! Are you a madman? Why, you silly sheep, what ship of Epidamnus is waiting for me?”

“The ship you sent me to, to hire passage on it.”

“You drunken slave, I sent you to buy a piece of rope, and I told you why I wanted the rope.”

“It is just as likely that you sent me to buy a noose so that you can hang yourself,” Dromio of Syracuse said. “I repeat, sir, that you sent me to the harbor to find a ship to sail on.”

“I will talk to you later about this, and I will teach your ears to listen to me more carefully,” Antipholus of Ephesus said.

“Go to Adriana, you rascal — hurry and go straight to her. Give her this key, and tell her that in the desk that is covered with Turkish tapestry is a bag filled with ducats. Let her send it to me. Tell her that I have been arrested in the street and I need the money to bail myself out of jail. Go, slave, and hurry!”

He said to the police officer, “Let’s go, officer. Take me to prison until I get the bail money.”

The merchant, Angelo, the police officer, and Antipholus of Ephesus all exited.

Dromio of Syracuse said to himself, “I must go to Adriana’s house, which is where we earlier dined, and where Nell, aka Dowsabel, claimed that I was engaged to be her husband. Dowsabel is my name for her when I am being sarcastic. It is derived from the French *douce et belle* and the Italian *dulcibella*, meaning ‘sweet and pretty’ or ‘sweetheart.’ There I must go, although against my will, for servants must their masters’ orders fulfill.”

— 4.2 —

In a room in the house of Antipholus of Ephesus, Adriana and Luciana were talking.

“Luciana, did he really try to make you fall in love with him? Could you tell by his eyes whether or not he was serious? Yes or no? How did he look? Red or pale? Serious or merry? What conclusion did you make from watching the changing expressions of his face?”

“First he said that you have no right of him. He said that you and he were not married.”

“He meant that he does not live up to his duties as a husband. That is true, and that increases my vexation.”

“Then he swore that he was a stranger here.”

“That is both truly sworn and falsely sworn. He acts strangely, and yet he is no stranger.”

“Then I pleaded on behalf of you.”

“And how did he respond?”

“I begged that he love you, and he begged that I love him.”

“With what persuasion did he tempt you to love him?”

“He used words that might have been persuasive if his had been a honorable courtship. He first praised my beauty and then he praised my speech.”

“Did you praise him?” Adriana asked quickly and urgently.

“Be patient, please.”

“I cannot and I will not be patient and still. My tongue, although not my heart, shall have what it wants, and my tongue wants to criticize him. He is deformed, crooked, old and sere, ugly, bad bodied, and unshapely everywhere; he is vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, and unkind; he is badly deformed in body and worse deformed in mind.”

“Who could be jealous then of such a man? No one mourns for an evil when it is gone.”

“Yes, but what I think about him is better than what I say about him, and furthermore I wish that other women did not look at him so favorably. What I say about him and what I think about him are two different things. A lapwing bird builds nests on the ground, and when a predator approaches the nest, the lapwing often pretends to be hurt and hops away on one leg and cries loudly to distract the predator and move it away from the nest. My heart prays for my husband, although my tongue curses him.”

Dromio of Syracuse ran up to Adriana and breathlessly exclaimed, “Here! Go! The desk! The bag! Sweetie-pie!

Now! Make haste!”

Adriana thought, *It must be important. He is so excited that he called me “Sweetie-pie.” That is quite a liberty for a slave to take.*

Luciana asked, “Why are you out of breath?”

“I have been running fast.”

“Where is your master, Dromio?” Adriana asked. “Is my husband well?”

“No, he is not well. He is in Tartarus and Limbo, worse than Hell. A Devil in an everlasting garment has him. The Devil is one whose heart is as hard as steel. The Devil is a fiend and a goblin, pitiless and rough. The Devil is a wolf — nay, worse, he is a fellow dressed in a tough and protective leather uniform. The Devil is a ‘friend’ who creeps up on you from behind. The Devil is a ‘friend’ who claps you on the shoulder. He is one who knows the passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands so that he can track sinners. The Devil is a hunting hound that sometimes goes in the opposite direction that its prey is following, and yet he is a hound that can track sinners well. Sometimes, it is good to know where sinners have been as well as to know where they are going. The Devil who has your husband is one that before Judgment Day carries poor souls to Hell.”

“Why, man, what is the matter?”

“I do not know what the specific matter is. My master just told me to come here and get him money for bail.”

“What, has he been arrested? Tell me at whose suit he has been arrested.”

“It is true that your husband has been arrested by a police officer — a Devil — and is now in prison. I don’t know at

whose lawsuit he has been arrested, but I can tell you that a policeman who was wearing a protective leather jacket — part of the official uniform of police officers here in Ephesus — arrested him. Will you send your husband, mistress, the money that is in his desk so that he can redeem himself by bailing himself out of jail?”

“Go and fetch it, sister,” Adriana said to Luciana, who took the key from Dromio and left to get the money.

Adriana said, “My husband is a businessman and must have been arrested for bad debt, but I wonder how he could be in debt without my knowing about it. Tell me. Was he arrested because of a legal bond?”

Even in an emergency, Dromio of Syracuse willfully misunderstood words. “Was he arrested because of a linen band of cloth? No. He was arrested because of something much stronger. Something that has links like a chain. He was arrested because of a necklace. Listen! Can you hear it ring?”

“Hear the links of the necklace ring? Don’t you mean jangle?”

“No, I just heard the bell of a clock. It is time that I was gone. It was two o’clock before I left my master, and the clock just struck one.”

“Is time running backward? I have never heard of that happening before.”

“Oh, yes, it does happen to hours. When an owe-er — someone who looks at all his debt and says ‘ow’ and so is an ow-er — who cannot pay his debts sees a police officer ahead of him, he runs back the way he came. And of course it is illegal to be a woman who is paid to cry ‘Oh! Oh! Oh!’ Therefore, when an oh-er or a ’ho-er sees a police officer in front of her, she runs back the way she came. Both are

afraid of being arrested.”

“Time running back the way it came! As if Time were in debt! How foolishly you think!”

“Time is a bankrupt, and he owes more than he’s worth. We never have enough Time to accomplish what we want to accomplish in any season. Indeed, Time is a thief, too. Haven’t you heard men say that Time comes stealing on by night and day? If Time is a bankrupt and a thief, and a police sergeant appears in Time’s way, doesn’t Time have a reason to turn back like an owe-er or an ow-er or an oh-er or a ’ho-er every day?”

Luciana returned with the money for bail.

“Go, Dromio,” Adriana said. “There’s the money; carry it straight to my husband and bring him home immediately.”

She said to Luciana, “Come, sister. What I am imagining is too much for me. What I am imagining causes me both pleasure and pain. I imagine the comfort that my husband will get when he is bailed out of jail, but I also remember the way that my husband has been treating me.”

— 4.3 —

Antipholus of Syracuse, who was wearing the necklace that Angelo the goldsmith had given to him, stood on a public street and said to himself, “Every man I meet here in Ephesus greets me as if I were his very good friend. Every man calls me by my name. Some give money to me; some invite me to dinner; some give thanks to me for kindnesses; some offer to sell me commodities. Just now a tailor called me into his shop and showed me silks that he said he had bought for me and then he took my measurements. Surely these are tricks of my imagination, and surely sorcerers who were educated in Lapland, that country of magic, live here.”

Dromio of Syracuse walked up to Antipholus of Syracuse and said, “Master, here’s the gold you sent me for. What, have you gotten redemption from the picture of old Adam in his new apparel?”

Dromio of Syracuse thought, *Odd. My master seems not only to have bailed himself out of jail without the money to do it with, but he also has acquired a new gold necklace. Has the police officer suddenly turned super-friendly?*

“What gold is this? And what Adam do you mean?”

“I don’t mean that Adam who kept the Garden of Eden, but I do mean that Adam who keeps the prison. The Adam I mean wears leather — the skin of the calf that the father ordered to be killed for the Prodigal Son. The Prodigal Son’s father was happy to see his son and had the fatted calf killed to provide a feast to celebrate his son’s return, but the Adam I mean wears a police officer’s leather uniform and arrests prodigals who cannot pay their debts. Of course, the first Adam’s first clothing was made of fig leaves, but both Adams later wore animal skins for clothing. Remember Genesis 3:21: ‘*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*’ The Adam I mean is the one who came from behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and made you forsake your liberty. The Adam I mean is the opposite of the good angel who released Paul from prison in Acts 12:5-7: ‘*So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God. On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison. And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter’s side and woke him up, saying, ‘Get up quickly.’ And his chains fell off his hands.*’”

“I have no idea what you are talking about.”

“You don’t? Why, I am speaking plainly about a plain case. I am talking about the man who walks around looking like the musical instrument called a bass that is still in its leather case. This man, sir, who is dressed in a leather uniform, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a reason to sob and arrests them and lets them rest in prison. He, sir, takes pity on bankrupt men who cannot afford new clothing and gives them new suits — suits of law, aka lawsuits. I am talking about a man who while making an arrest does more damage with his nightstick than a soldier does with his bayonet.”

“Are you talking about a police officer?”

“Yes, sir, I am talking about the sergeant of the band, the man who brings a man to court to answer for breaking his bond. This sergeant apparently thinks that men are always going to bed, and therefore often says, ‘God give you good rest!’ But actually he is always thinking about good arrests that will stand up in courts.”

“That is a good place for you to rest and stop your joking. Are any ships leaving Ephesus tonight? Can we set sail tonight?”

“Why, sir, I brought you word an hour ago that the ship *Expedition* is setting sail tonight. Unfortunately, you were then arrested by the police officer and so were forced to wait for the ship *Delay*. By the way, here are the angels — the gold coins — that you sent me to get so that you could pay your bail.”

“You are confused in your mind, and so am I. Here in Ephesus, we wander around in illusions of our mind. May some blessed power deliver us from here!”

The courtesan walked over to them and said, “Well met,

Master Antipholus. I see, sir, from the necklace that you are wearing that you have seen the goldsmith who failed to show up for dinner and bring the necklace to you — that is why you left before we enjoyed our after-dinner dessert. I assume that this is the necklace that you promised to give me.”

Antipholus of Syracuse had never seen the courtesan before and so he thought that she was a figure of evil: one of the many witches reputed to live in Ephesus. He said, “Satan, avoid! I charge thee, tempt me not,” using some of the words of Jesus as they appeared in the 1599 Geneva Bible: “*Then said Jesus unto him, ‘Avoid, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve’*” (Matthew 4:10). “*Avoid, Satan*” was another way of saying, “Get away from me, Satan” or “Depart, Satan” or “Get lost, Satan.”

Dromio of Syracuse asked, “Master, is this person Mistress Satan?”

“She is the Devil.”

“No, she is worse. She is the Devil’s dam, aka the Devil’s mother. She has appeared here in front of us dressed like a woman with loose — or nonexistent — morals. In other words, she looks like an cheap date. Sometimes, women say, ‘God damn me!’ That is the same thing as saying, ‘God, make me an cheap date’ or ‘God, make me a dam, aka mother.’ It is written that Devils sometimes appear to men like angels of light: ‘*And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*’ (2 Corinthians 11:14). Light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn; ergo, cheap dates will burn — they will give men a venereal disease that will make the men burn when they pee. Do not go near her, master. On second thought, she looks like she might be a very expensive ‘date.’”

“Your slave and you are very funny, sir,” the courtesan said. “Will you go with me? Shall we enjoy our after-dinner dessert here in my house?”

“Master, if you do go and eat with her, expect to use a spoon to eat soft food, such as children and old people use to eat with, for you would have to be simple-minded to eat with such a woman as this. If you do go and eat with her, make sure that you use a spoon with a long handle.”

“Why, Dromio?”

“Whoever wants to eat with the Devil must have a long spoon.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said to the courtesan, “Avoid, fiend! Get lost! Why are you talking to me about after-dinner dessert? You are, like everyone else here in Ephesus, either a sorceress or magician. I conjure you to leave me and be gone.”

“We made a trade at dinner: I gave you a diamond ring and you promised to give me a gold necklace. Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner, or, in exchange for my ring, give me the necklace you promised to give to me, and I’ll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.”

As the courtesan had said, Antipholus of Ephesus and she had made a trade at dinner: She had given him her diamond ring worth forty ducats, and in return he had promised to give her a gold necklace worth two hundred ducats. If the courtesan was unable to get the necklace, she wanted to at least get her ring back.

Dromio of Syracuse said, “Some Devils ask for only the parings of one’s fingernails, a straw, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin, a nut, a cherry pit, or other items that can be used in making potions or casting spells, but this female Devil, who is greedier, wants to have a necklace. Master, be wise:

Do not give her the necklace. For if you give it to her, the Devil will shake the links of the necklace like the links of a chain and frighten us with it. Remember Revelation 20:1-2: *‘And I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.’*”

“Please, sir,” the courtesan said. “Give me my ring back, or else give me the necklace. I hope that you do not intend to cheat me.”

“Avaunt, you witch!” Antipholus of Syracuse said. “Get away from me, you witch!”

Then he added, “Come, Dromio, let us go.”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “A courtesan accusing us of cheating is like a peacock with its ornate feathers accusing someone of being proud. Mistress, you know all about that. Pride is one of the seven deadly sins, and it is personified by a whore — the citizens of Babylon were proud, and the whore of Babylon had something written on her forehead: *‘And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH’*” (Revelation 17:4).

Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse exited, leaving behind the courtesan, who said to herself, “It must be that Antipholus is insane, or he would never behave in this way. He has a ring of mine that is worth forty ducats, and for that ring he promised me a necklace. Now he refuses to give me either the ring or the necklace. The reason why I think that he is insane, besides the way he was acting just now, is the wacky story he told me today at dinner: He said that his own door was shut and locked so that he could not enter his home. Apparently, his wife,

knowing about his fits of insanity, purposely locked the door to keep him from entering the house. Now I need to go to his home and tell his wife a lie. I will say that her husband, who is a lunatic, rushed into my house and took away my ring from me by force. This course of action is the best that I can choose because forty ducats is too much for me to lose.”

— 4.4 —

On a street of Ephesus stood Antipholus of Ephesus and the police officer.

“Don’t be afraid, officer,” Antipholus of Ephesus said. “I will not try to run away. I’ll give you, before I leave you, as much money as is needed to bail me out of jail. My wife is in a wayward mood today, and she will not easily believe a messenger who gives her the news that I have been arrested in Ephesus. That unwelcome news will, I tell you, sound harshly in her ears.”

Dromio of Ephesus arrived, carrying the piece of rope that he had been sent to buy.

Antipholus of Ephesus said to the police officer, “Here comes my man; I think he brings the money needed to bail me out of jail.”

He called, “Now, sir! Have you gotten what I sent you for?”

“Here’s something that, I warrant you, will pay them all back for the way they treated you,” Dromio of Ephesus said, holding the piece of rope: a thin, limp piece of twine.

“But where’s the money?”

“Why, sir, I paid the money for the rope.”

“You paid five hundred ducats, rascal, for a rope?”

“I will give you five hundred ropes in return for five hundred ducats.”

“To what end or purpose did I order you to hurry home?”

“To get a piece of rope, sir — the rope’s end, and having accomplished that purpose I have returned.”

“I intended to use that piece of rope as a stage prop to hold as I threaten my wife,” Antipholus of Ephesus said, looking at the thin, limp piece of twine that Dromio of Ephesus had brought to him.

He added, “And to my purpose for that end of rope, sir, I welcome you,” and he started hitting Dromio of Ephesus with the thin, limp piece of twine.

“Good sir, calm down,” the police officer said to Antipholus of Ephesus.

“Why don’t you tell me to be patient?” Dromio of Ephesus said. “I am the one who is suffering adversity! Remember what the Prayer Book version of Psalm 94:13 says: ‘*That thou mayest give him patience in time of adversity.*’”

“Be good, now,” the police officer said. “Hold your tongue.”

“It would be better if you told him to hold his hands still,” Dromio of Ephesus, who was still being hit with the twine, said.

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “You son of a whore! You senseless rascal!”

“I wish I were without senses, sir — especially the sense of touch. That way, I would not feel your blows.”

Of course, the blows from the twine did not hurt. Dromio of Ephesus simply liked to complain.

“You are sensible in — that is, you understand — nothing but blows, and so you are like an ass.”

“I am an ass, indeed,” Dromio of Ephesus said. “You may prove it by looking at my long ears.”

He said to the police officer, “Indeed, I have served my master for many long years — from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and I have had nothing at his hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats me by beating me. When I am warm, he cools me by beating me. I am awakened from sleep by being beaten. When I sit, I am ordered to stand up by being beaten. When I need to leave our home, I am driven from it by being beaten. When I return home, I am welcomed by being beaten. I bear my beatings on my shoulders the way that a beggar woman bears her brat. Someday, one of his beatings will make me lame, and then I will be a beggar who limps from door to door.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “Come, let’s go and meet my wife, who I see is walking toward us with some other people.”

Adriana, Luciana, and the courtesan walked toward Antipholus of Ephesus, Dromio of Ephesus, and the police officer. With them was a man called Pinch because of his pinched face. He had the reputation of being a learned conjuror, although he did not use Latin in his exorcisms.

Dromio of Ephesus said to Adriana, “Mistress, *respice finem*, which is Latin for ‘respect your end.’ Or, better, *respice funem*, which is Latin for ‘respect your rope.’ Beware of having your end come at the end of a rope; for many people, at the end of the rope is a noose. You have heard parrots that have been taught to say ‘rope.’ By the way, have you noticed that your husband has the end of a rope?”

“Are you still blabbing!” Antipholus of Ephesus said, using his hat to hit Dromio of Ephesus.

“What do you think now?” the courtesan asked Adriana.
“Don’t you think that your husband is mad?”

Adriana replied, “His incivility and terrible behavior confirm no less.”

She then said, “Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer. Get my husband back in his right senses, and I will give you whatever you will demand.”

Luciana said, “It’s sad. How fiery and sharp and angry he looks!”

“Look how he trembles in his frenzy!” the courtesan said.
“He has been possessed by a malevolent spirit.”

Pinch said to Antipholus of Ephesus, “Give me your hand and let me feel your pulse.”

Antipholus of Ephesus replied, “Here is my hand, and let it feel your ear.”

He hit Pinch on the ear.

Pinch attempted an exorcism: “I order you, Satan, who is housed within this man, to leave this man’s body as ordered by my holy prayers and to hurry home to the pit of darkness. I exorcise you with the help of all the saints in Heaven!”

“Shut up, you doting and doddering wizard, shut up! I am not mad,” Antipholus of Ephesus said.

“I wish that you weren’t, you poor distressed soul!” Adriana said.

Antipholus of Ephesus said to her, “You loose woman, you hussy, are these your customers? Did this companion with

the yellow pinched face revel and feast at my house today while you shut and locked the door to prevent me from entering my own house?"

"Husband, God knows that you ate dinner at home. I wish that you had stayed at home until now — you would have avoided all this trouble and gossip and shame and embarrassment!"

"You say that I dined at home!" Antipholus of Ephesus said to his wife.

He asked Dromio of Ephesus, "Rascal, what do you say about that?"

"Sir, you did not dine at home, and that is the truth."

"Isn't it true that my door was shut and locked so that I could not enter my own house?"

"It is true that your doors were locked and you were shut out of your own house."

"Is it true that my wife insulted me after locking me out of my house?"

"Yes, your wife insulted you after locking you out of your house."

"Didn't her kitchen-maid rail at, taunt, and scorn me?"

"Yes, she did; the kitchen-vestal who keeps the fire going scorned you."

"Didn't I depart from there in a rage?"

"Truly, you did depart in a rage. My bones bear witness that you departed in a rage because they have felt the depth of your rage."

Adriana asked Pinch, "Is it a good idea to pretend to agree

with my mad husband when he says such crazy things?”

“There is no shame in it,” Pinch replied. “This slave has figured out that agreeing with his master is a good way to keep him from being violent.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Adriana, “You convinced the goldsmith to have me arrested.”

She replied, “I gave Dromio money to take to you so that you could bail yourself out of jail when he came here and urgently asked for it.”

“Gave me money!” Dromio of Ephesus said. “She might have given me heart and goodwill and her best wishes, but as for money, she gave me not even a farthing, master.”

Antipholus of Ephesus asked him, “Didn’t you go to her and ask her to give you a bag full of gold ducats so you could bring it to me?”

Adriana said, “He came to me and asked me for it, and I gave it to him.”

Luciana added, “And I witnessed her doing it.”

“May God and the rope maker bear witness that I was sent to get nothing but a piece of rope!” Dromio of Ephesus said.

“Mistress, both the slave and his master are possessed by malevolent spirits — I can tell by their pale and deadly looks,” Pinch said. “They must be bound and laid in some dark room.”

Antipholus of Ephesus asked his wife, “Adriana, why did you lock me out of my own home?”

He asked Dromio of Ephesus, “And why didn’t you give me the bag full of gold ducats?”

Adriana replied, "I did not, gentle husband, lock you out of your own home."

Dromio of Ephesus replied, "And, gentle master, I received no gold. But I acknowledge, sir, that we were locked out of the house."

Adriana said to Dromio of Ephesus, "You lying rascal. You lied twice just now."

Antipholus of Ephesus said to his wife, "Adriana, you lying harlot, you have lied in everything you said. You have plotted with a damned pack of scoundrels to mock me and make me a laughingstock. But with my fingernails I will pluck out your false eyes that want to see me mocked and shamed!"

Adriana screamed, and three or four men came and tried to tie up Antipholus of Ephesus, who fought them.

Adriana said, "Tie him up! Tie him up! Don't let him come near me!"

Pinch shouted, "We need more help! The fiend possessing him is powerful!"

"The poor man!" Luciana said. "How pale and wan he looks!"

Finally tied up, Antipholus of Ephesus shouted, "What, are you trying to murder me? Police officer, I am your prisoner. Are you going to allow them to take me from you?"

The police officer said, "Let him go. He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him."

Pinch pointed to Dromio of Ephesus and said, "Tie up this man because he is also possessed by a malevolent spirit."

Men tied up Dromio of Ephesus.

Adriana asked, “What are you doing, you silly police officer? Do you take pleasure in seeing a wretched man do outrage and harm to himself?”

“He is my prisoner,” the police officer said. “If I let him go, I will be required to pay the debt he owes.”

Adriana replied, “I will pay the debt before I leave you. Take me to my husband’s creditor. Once I know what the debt is and I am satisfied that it is genuine, I will pay it.”

She said to Pinch, “Good master doctor, see my husband safely conveyed home to my house. This is a very unhappy day!”

“You are a very unhappy strumpet!” Antipholus of Ephesus said to his wife.

“Master, I have been tied up and bound to you because of you,” Dromio of Ephesus said.

Antipholus of Ephesus replied, “Rascal, why are you enraging me!”

“Why should you be bound for nothing?” Dromio of Ephesus asked. “Since they think that you are insane, you should act as if you are insane. Shout, ‘The Devil!’ Let them think that you are talking to the Devil that is supposed to be possessing you.”

“May God help these poor souls,” Luciana said. “How crazily they talk!”

“Take my husband and his slave to our home,” Adriana said.

She then said, “Sister, come with me. We will go with this police officer.”

Everyone left except for Adriana, Luciana, the police officer, and the courtesan.

Adriana asked the police officer, “Who charged my husband with not paying his debt and got him arrested?”

“Angelo, a goldsmith. Do you know him?”

“I know the man. What is the sum my husband owes?”

“Two hundred ducats.”

“For what is it owed?”

“Your husband ordered and received a gold necklace.”

“My husband ordered a gold necklace to be made for me, but as far as I know, he never received it.”

The courtesan said, “I told you earlier that your husband in a fit of insanity came to my house today and carried away my ring — I saw him wearing my ring just now. Just after he carried away my ring, I saw him on the street wearing a gold necklace.”

“That may be true, but I have never seen the necklace,” Adriana said. “Come, police officer, take me to the goldsmith. I want to learn the truth about what is going on.”

Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse entered the scene. Because Antipholus of Syracuse was afraid of the witches and warlocks with whom Ephesus seemed to be infested, he had drawn his sword and made Dromio of Syracuse draw his dagger.

Seeing them, Luciana cried, “May God have mercy! Your husband and his slave have gotten loose!”

Adriana said, “And they are brandishing weapons. Let’s call for more help to have them tied up again.”

The police officer cried, “Let’s run away — or they’ll kill us!”

Everyone ran away, leaving Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse behind by themselves.

Antipholus of Syracuse said, "I see that these witches are afraid of swords."

"The woman who called herself your wife ran away," Dromio of Syracuse said.

"Let's go to the Centaur Inn and fetch our baggage from there. I wish that we were safe and sound on board a ship quickly sailing away from Ephesus."

"Let's stay here tonight," Dromio of Syracuse said. "The inhabitants will surely not do us harm. You have seen that they are afraid of weapons and that they speak kindly to us and that they have given gold to us. I think that Ephesus is a town filled with good people, and except for the mountain of mad flesh who claims to be engaged to marry me, I could find it in my heart to stay here always and become a warlock."

"I would not stay here tonight even if doing so would get me all the possessions of the entire town. Therefore, let's go and get our baggage and carry it on board ship."

CHAPTER 5 (*The Comedy of Errors*)

— 5.1 —

Angelo the goldsmith and the merchant to whom he owed money stood on a street in front of an abbey, aka nunnery.

“I am sorry, sir, that I have hindered you from starting your travels,” Angelo said, “but I swear that Antipholus received the necklace from me, although he very dishonestly denies it.”

“What is his reputation here in Ephesus?”

“He is very well regarded, sir. He receives infinite credit from businesspeople, he is highly beloved, and he is second to none who live here in the town. On the basis of his word alone, I would lend him my entire net worth.”

He thought, *Or I would have until today — he must not be in his right mind now.*

“Speak softly. I think that is him walking over there.”

Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse walked toward them. Antipholus of Syracuse was still wearing the gold necklace around his neck.

“That is him,” Angelo said, “and he is wearing around his neck the gold necklace we were talking about although he swore to the police officer that he had not received it. Good merchant, sir, draw nearer to me so that you can support me. I’ll speak to him.”

Angelo then said, “Signior Antipholus, I wonder much that you would put me to this shame and trouble, and not without some scandal to yourself. You swore to the police officer that you had not received the gold necklace, but now I see that you are openly wearing it around your neck.

In addition to being legally charged with not paying your debt, as well as suffering shame and imprisonment, you have done wrong to this man, who is my honest friend. He would have hoisted sail and put to sea today except that he had to stay here because of the controversy revolving around the necklace. Can you now deny having received that necklace from me?"

"I did receive this necklace from you. I know that I have never denied receiving this necklace from you."

The merchant, who had been a witness, said, "Yes, you did deny receiving the necklace from Angelo, sir, and you swore to the police officer that you did not receive the necklace from Angelo."

"Oh, really? And who has ever heard me deny receiving the necklace or swear that I never received it?"

"These ears of mine heard it," the merchant said. "You know that they heard it. Shame on you, wretch! It is a pity that you are allowed to walk on the streets alongside honest men."

"You are a villain to accuse and slander me in this way. I'll prove that I am an honorable and honest man to you right now, if you dare to draw your sword and stand against me."

"I do dare to draw my sword, and I do call you a villain."

Both Antipholus of Syracuse and the merchant drew their swords. Angelo the goldsmith did not.

Adriana, Luciana, the courtesan, and a few other people arrived on the scene.

"Stop!" Adriana said. "Don't hurt my husband, for God's sake! He is insane. Some of you get inside his guard and take his sword away. Tie up Dromio, too, and take them to my house."

Dromio of Syracuse said, "Run, master, run. For God's sake, find a place we can take refuge in. Look, here is an abbey. Let us find sanctuary here, or we are ruined!"

Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse ran inside the abbey.

The Abbess, who was named Emilia, walked out of the abbey and said, "Be quiet, people. Why are you thronging around the abbey gate?"

"We want to fetch my poor mentally disturbed husband from here," Adriana said. "Let us come in so that we may tie him up securely and take him home so he can recover from his madness."

"I knew that he could not be in his right mind," Angelo said to the merchant.

"I am sorry now that I drew my sword against him," the merchant replied.

"How long has madness possessed him?" the Abbess asked.

"This week he has been heavy in spirits, sour, melancholy, and much different from the man he used to be," Adriana said, "but not until this afternoon did his sickness make him violently angry."

"What is the reason for his madness? Has he lost a lot of wealth because of a shipwreck? Has he buried a dear friend? Has he fallen in love with another woman? That is a sin that is very common in youthful men who allow their eyes to wander. Which of these sorrowful things have happened to him?" the Abbess asked.

"None of these, except the last one," Adriana said, glancing at the courtesan. "He has some other woman who draws him away from home."

The Abbess thought, *I will attempt to find out the cause of this man's madness by questioning his wife. I will see how she has been treating — or mistreating — him. Because she suspects that he has been unfaithful to her, she may have been shrewish and too badly mistreated him. We must find a mean between extremes. Not enough of something is bad. Too much of something is bad. Exactly the right amount is good.*

“If he leaves home to see another woman, you should criticize him for that.”

“Why, so I have.”

“Yes, but not roughly enough.”

“As roughly as my modesty would let me.”

“Perhaps you criticized him only in private.”

“In private, yes, but in public, too.”

“Yes, but you did not criticize him strongly enough.”

“It was the only topic of our conversation. In bed I did not allow him to sleep because I kept talking about it. At meals I did not allow him to eat because I kept talking about it. When we were alone together, it was the only topic I talked about. When we were in the company of other people, I often mentioned it. Always, and over and over, I told him that what he had done was vile and bad.”

“And because of your shrewishness, this man went mad. The venomous clamors of a jealous woman are a poison more deadly than the poison that comes from the bite of a mad dog. Based on what you just told me, it seems your railing at him hindered his sleep, and therefore his head is now disoriented. You said that you seasoned his food with your upbraidings: Clamorous meals have as a consequence poor digestion, from which comes the raging fire of fever.

What is a fever but a fit of madness? You said that his entertainments were marred by your brawls. Unless one engages occasionally in sweet recreations, one suffers moody and dull melancholy, which is related to grim and comfortless despair, and at the heels of despair follow a huge infectious troop of pale illnesses and foes to life. You have disturbed his life-preserving rest, his meals, and his sweet entertainments. When that happens to any man or beast, the result is madness. Based on what you have told me, I have concluded that your jealous fits have driven from your husband his ability to use his wits.”

Luciana defended her sister: “Adriana never reprehended him except mildly and gently, while he behaved in a rough, rude, and wild manner.”

She asked her sister, “Why do you bear these rebukes? Why don’t you defend yourself?”

“The Abbess is right,” Adriana replied. “She said the things necessary for me to see that I was wrong.”

She then said, “Good people, enter the abbey and lay hold of my husband and carry him out.”

“No, I will not allow any person to enter the abbey,” the Abbess said.

“Then let your servants bring my husband out.”

“No. He entered my house in order to get sanctuary, and he will get it. As long as he is in the abbey, he is beyond the reach of the law. He shall be protected from being taken away by your hands until I have brought him to his wits again, or tried to bring him back to his wits but failed.”

Adriana said, “I will look after my husband and be his nurse and feed him healthy food. This is my duty as his wife, and I will have no one else but me do it. He is my

husband in sickness and in health; therefore, let me take my husband home with me.”

“Be patient and stay calm,” the Abbess said. “I will not allow him to leave here until after I have used the tried and tested means I have of restoring him to health: wholesome syrups, medicinal drugs, and holy prayers. This will make him a formal — a well-formed, aka normal — man again. It is a part and parcel of my oath — it is a charitable duty of my religious order. Therefore, depart and leave him here with me.”

“I will not go away and leave my husband here,” Adriana said. “It ill suits your holiness to separate a husband and a wife.”

“Be quiet and depart. You shall not take him away from here.”

The Abbess went inside the abbey.

Luciana advised her sister, “Complain to the Duke of Ephesus about this indignity.”

“Yes, I will fall prostrate at his feet and never rise until my tears and prayers have persuaded his Grace to come in person here and take away by force my husband from the Abbess.”

The merchant said, “By this time, I think, the shadow cast by the sundial points at five — it is five o’clock. Soon, I am sure, the Duke himself in person will come this way to the melancholy vale — the place of death and sorrow-causing execution — behind the drainage ditches of the abbey here. Such is the news that I have heard today.”

Angelo asked, “Why is the Duke going there today?”

“To see an old merchant from Syracuse, who unluckily put into this bay against the laws and statutes of this town. He

will be beheaded publicly for his offence.”

“Look, the Duke and the old merchant are coming,” Angelo said. “We will witness the old merchant’s death.”

Luciana said to Adriana, “Kneel to the Duke before he passes the abbey.”

Duke Solinus, accompanied by his attendants, and Egeon, the old merchant from Syracuse, now arrived. The Headsman — the executioner — and other officers also arrived. Egeon was bareheaded in readiness for his beheading.

Duke Solinus said, “Yet once again proclaim it publicly that if any friend will pay the ransom for this respectable old merchant, then the old merchant shall not die. We value and respect him that much.”

Adriana knelt and said loudly, “Give me justice, most sacred Duke, against the Abbess!”

Duke Solinus said, “The Abbess is a virtuous and a reverend lady: It cannot be that she has done wrong to you.”

“May it please your Grace, I am concerned about Antipholus, my husband, whom I made Lord of me and all I had, with your approval as shown by your letters in support of him. This ill day, a most outrageous fit of madness took him with the result that desperately he hurried through the street. His slave, who was as insane as my husband, went with him. They annoyed the citizens of Ephesus by rushing into their houses and taking away rings, jewels, and anything that my husband in his madness wanted. I was able for a time to have my husband tied up and sent home, while I attempted to make amends for the wrongs he had committed here and there in his madness. Very quickly, and I do not know how he did it, he escaped

from the men who were guarding him, and he and his insane slave, each extremely angry, with drawn swords, met us again and madly attacked us, and chased us away until, after raising more help, we came again to tie them up. Then they fled into this abbey, where we pursued them. And here the Abbess shuts the gate against us and will not allow us to fetch my husband out, nor will she send him out so that we may take him away from here. Therefore, most gracious Duke, command that my husband be brought out of the abbey and taken to his home so that he may receive help for his madness.”

Duke Solinus said, “Long ago your husband served me in my wars, and when you married him and made him master of your bed, I promised — giving my word as Prince — to do him all the grace and good I could.”

The Duke then ordered, “Go, some of you, knock at the abbey’s gate and order the Abbess to come to me. I will settle this matter before I leave here.”

One of Adriana’s servants arrived and said to her, “Oh, mistress, mistress, run away and save yourself! My master, Antipholus, and his man, Dromio, have both broken loose. They have beaten the maids one after the other and tied up Doctor Pinch. They have singed his beard off with brands of fire, and as it burned, they threw on him great pails of muddy water from puddles to quench his burning hair. My master, Antipholus, mocks Doctor Pinch by telling him to stay calm and carry on, and all the while his man Dromio uses scissors to give Doctor Pinch the haircut of a fool. Surely, unless you immediately send some help, between them they will kill Pinch the conjurer.”

“Be quiet, fool! Your master and his man are here in the abbey, and everything that you have said is false.”

“Mistress, I swear upon my life that I am telling you the

truth. I have almost not had time to breath since I witnessed it. Your husband cries for you, and he vows that when he finds you he will smear charcoal all over your face and so disfigure you.”

Some cries sounded.

The servant continued, “Listen! I hear him, mistress. Run away! Go now!”

Duke Solinus said, “Come, stand by me, Adriana and Luciana; fear nothing. Guards, be ready to use your weapons!”

“It is my husband!” Adriana said. “All of you are witnesses that my husband can do impossible things. He travels about invisibly. Just now we had him trapped in the abbey here, but now he is over there. Human reason cannot explain how that happened. The abbey has high walls around it and only one gate: the one in front of us.”

Antipholus of Ephesus and Dromio of Ephesus ran over to the group of people.

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “Give me justice, most gracious Duke. Give me justice! Remember the service that long ago I did for you when I stood over you in the wars and suffered deep scars in order to save your life. In return for the blood that I shed then to save your life, grant me justice now.”

Egeon thought, *Unless the fear of death is making me imagine things, I see Antipholus, my son, and Dromio, his slave.*

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “Give me justice, sweet Prince, against that woman there! She is the woman whom you gave to me to be my wife. She has abused and dishonored me in the most egregious ways possible!

Beyond imagination is the wrong that she this day has shamelessly done to me.”

“Tell me what has happened, and you will find that I am just and fair,” Duke Solinus said.

“On this day, great Duke, she shut and locked the door of my house so that I could not get in, while she with people of low character feasted in my house.”

“That would be a grievous fault!” Duke Solinus said.

He asked Adriana, “Tell me, woman, did you do what your husband says you did?”

“No, my good Lord. Three of us — I myself, my husband, and my sister — today dined together. I swear on my soul that what my husband said is not true!”

Luciana said, “May I never stay awake during the day, nor sleep at night, if what my sister is telling your Highness is not the simple truth!”

Angelo the goldsmith thought, *That is perjury! Both women lied! In this instance, the madman is telling the truth and justly making charges against them!*

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “My Liege, I am in my right mind and I know what I am saying. I am neither drunk and disturbed with the effect of wine, nor am I heady-rash and provoked with raging ire, although the wrongs that I have endured might make someone wiser than I insane. This woman locked me out of my house today and kept me from eating dinner there. That goldsmith there, if he were not in league with her, could bear witness to what I say, for he was with me then. He departed from me to go and fetch a necklace, promising to bring it to the Porcupine, where Balthazar and I dined together. Our dinner done, and the goldsmith not coming to the Porcupine, I went to seek him.

In the street I met him, and in his company was that gentleman, a visiting merchant. Also with them was a police officer. At that time this goldsmith perjured himself by swearing that I this day received the necklace from him — the necklace that, God knows, I have never seen. The goldsmith then had the police officer arrest me. I obeyed the orders of the police officer, and I sent my slave home to get a bag of ducats so I could post bail. My slave returned with no ducats. Then I politely spoke to the officer and asked him to go in person with me to my house. On our way there, we met my wife, her sister, and a rabble consisting of her vile confederates. Along with them they brought a man named Pinch, who is a hungry, lean-faced villain; a mere skeleton; a mountebank; a threadbare magician and a fortune-teller; a needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch; a dead-looking man. This pernicious slave pretended to be a conjurer, and he gazed into my eyes and felt my pulse. He was so scrawny that he seemed to have no face, but he disconcerted me by staring steadily at me. He cried out that I was possessed. Then all together they fell upon me, tied me up, carried me away from there, and left me and my slave, both of us bound together, in a dark and dank room with an arched ceiling at home. Eventually I was able to use my teeth to gnaw in two the ropes binding us. I gained my freedom, and I immediately ran here to see your Grace, whom I beseech to give me ample satisfaction for these deep shames and great indignities.”

Angelo said, “I can in part vouch for the madman’s story. I know for a fact that he did not dine at home and I know for a fact that he was locked out of his house.”

Duke Solinus asked, “Did he receive a necklace from you, or not?”

“He did, my Lord. People here saw that he was wearing the necklace when he ran into the abbey just now.”

The merchant said to Antipholus of Ephesus, "In addition, I will swear that these ears of mine heard you confess that you had received the necklace from Angelo although you had earlier sworn in the marketplace that you had not received it. When I said that you had earlier sworn that you had not received the necklace, we quarreled and drew our swords, and then you fled into this abbey here, from whence, I think, you have come by a miracle."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "I have never been inside the walls of this abbey, and you have never drawn a sword against me. In addition, I have never seen the necklace, so help me, Heaven! Most of the things you are saying about me are false."

"Why, what an intricate case this is!" Duke Solinus said. "I think you all have drunk a potion from the cup of the pagan goddess Circe and been enchanted. If all of you had really driven Antipholus into this abbey, he would still be there. If he were really mad, he would not be able to speak so rationally. Adriana says that he dined at home; Angelo the goldsmith denies that."

Duke Solinus turned to Dromio of Ephesus and asked, "What have you got to say about this?"

Dromio of Ephesus pointed to the courtesan and replied, "Sir, Antipholus dined with this woman at the Porcupine."

The courtesan said, "He did, and from my finger snatched that ring he is wearing."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "It is true that I received this ring from her."

Duke Solinus asked the courtesan, "Did you see him enter the abbey here?"

"Yes, as surely and as clearly, my Liege, as I see your

Grace.”

“Why, this is strange,” Duke Solinus said.

He turned and ordered one of his men, “Go tell the Abbess to come out here.”

The man left to go and get the Abbess.

Duke Solinus then said, “I think that all of you are either confused or stark mad.”

Egeon, who had been quiet, now said, “Most mighty Duke, give me permission to speak a few words. Perhaps I see a friend here who will save my life and pay the sum that may deliver me from execution.”

“Speak freely, man of Syracuse. Say whatever you wish.”

Egeon asked, “Isn’t your name, sir, Antipholus? And isn’t that man your bondman, aka slave, Dromio?”

Dromio of Ephesus replied, “Within this hour I was his bondman, sir — he and I were bonded, aka bound, together. But he, and I thank him for it, gnawed in two the bonds that bound me. Now am I Dromio and his man, aka slave, unbound.”

Egeon said, “I am sure that both of you remember me.”

“By looking at you, we remember in what situation we were recently, sir. For lately we were bound and tied up, as you are now. Are you one of Pinch’s patients, sir?”

“Why do you look at me as if you do not know me?” Egeon asked. “You know me well.”

Antipholus of Ephesus replied, “I have never seen you in my entire life until now.”

Egeon said, “Grief has changed me since you saw me last,

and hours filled with cares have used time's deforming hand to write wrinkles on my face. But please tell me, don't you recognize my voice?"

"No," Antipholus of Ephesus said.

Egeon asked, "How about you, Dromio?"

"No. Trust me, sir, I do not."

"I am sure that both of you do," Egeon said.

Dromio of Ephesus said, "I am sure I do not, and whatever a man denies, you who are bound are bound to believe him."

"Not know my voice!" Egeon said. "Time, you who are so very severe, have you so cracked and split my poor tongue in seven short years, that now my only son does not know my feeble key of untuned cares? My voice is like unmelodious music, and my song describes my sorrows. Although this lined face of mine is now hidden by winter's drizzled snow that stops tree sap from circulating — that is, my white beard — and although all my veins have frozen my blood and made it cold, yet my night of life, aka old age, has some memory left, my wasting lamps that are my eyes have some fading glimmer left, and my dull and deaf ears are still able to hear a little. All these old witnesses tell me that you are my son Antipholus. I cannot be wrong about that."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "I have never seen my father in my life."

Upset, Egeon said, "You know that it has been only seven years since we parted in Syracuse, boy."

He hesitated and then said, "But perhaps, my son, you are ashamed to acknowledge that I am your father because I am a prisoner."

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “You come from Syracuse, and the Duke and all who know me in this town can bear witness that I have never seen Syracuse in all my life.”

Duke Solinus said, “I can tell you, merchant of Syracuse, that for twenty years I have been the patron of Antipholus, during which time he has never seen Syracuse. I see that your old age and the danger you are in are making you talk foolishly.”

Emilia now walked up to Duke Solinus, bringing with her Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse.

She said, “Most mighty Duke, behold a man who has been much wronged.”

The two Antipholuses stood side by side, and the two Dromios stood side by side.

Everyone stared at them.

Adriana said, “I see two husbands, or my eyes deceive me.”

Duke Solinus looked at the two Antipholuses and said, “One of these men must be the genius — the attendant spirit that follows him throughout his life and looks exactly like him — of the other.”

He looked at the two Dromios and said, “The same is true of these two other men.”

He then asked of both sets of men, “Who is the natural man, and who is the attending spirit? Who can tell the difference?”

Dromio of Syracuse said, “I, sir, am Dromio; command the spirit who looks exactly like me to go away.”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “I, sir, am Dromio; please, let me stay.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said to his father, “Are you Egeon?
Or are you his ghost?”

Dromio of Syracuse looked at Egeon and said, “It is my old
master! Who has tied him up?”

Emilia said, “No matter who bound this man, I will loosen
this man’s bonds and gain a husband by his liberty. Speak,
old Egeon, if you are the man who once had a wife named
Emilia who bore to you in one birth two beautiful sons. If
you are that same Egeon, speak, and speak to the same
Emilia, who is me!”

“Unless I am dreaming, you really are Emilia,” Egeon said.
“If you are she, tell me what happened to that son who
floated away with you on the fatal raft?”

“He and I and the twin Dromio were all rescued by men of
Epidamnus, but by and by violent fishermen of Corinth
used force to take Dromio and my son away from me. They
took my son away and left me with the men of Epidamnus.
What then happened to my son and his slave, I cannot tell. I
eventually arrived at this fortune that you see me in.”

Duke Solinus thought, *Why, here we see that the story that
the old merchant of Syracuse told me this morning is true.
Look at these two Antipholuses; these two are entirely
alike. And look at these two Dromios; they are the same in
appearance. The merchant of Syracuse told me about the
wreck at sea, and I now know that Egeon and Emilia are
the parents to these children, who by accident have finally
met.*

He asked one of the Antipholuses, “Antipholus, did you
come originally from Corinth?”

Antipholus of Syracuse replied, “No, sir, not I; I came from
Syracuse.”

Duke Solinus said to the two Antipholuses, “Stand a little distance apart from each other; I do not know which of you is which.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “I came originally from Corinth, my most gracious Lord —”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “And I came with him.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “We were brought to this town by that most famous warrior, Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.”

Adriana asked, “Which of you two dined with me today?”

Antipholus of Syracuse replied, “I did, gentle mistress.”

“Are you my husband?”

Antipholus of Ephesus said, “He is not. I can most emphatically say that.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said, “I can confirm that I am not married to Adriana, although she said that I was her husband. And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here, called me brother.”

He said to Luciana, “What I told you then, when we were alone after dinner, I hope I shall have leisure to make good, if this is not a dream that I see and hear.”

Angelo said, “That is the necklace, sir, which you received from me.”

Antipholus of Syracuse said, “It is, sir. I do not deny it.”

Antipholus of Ephesus said to Angelo, “And you, sir, had me arrested because of this necklace.”

Angelo replied, “I think I did, sir. I do not deny it.”

Antipholus of Syracuse handed the necklace to Antipholus

of Ephesus, who hung it around the neck of his wife, Adriana.

Adriana said to her husband, "I sent money to you, sir, to be your bail. Dromio was supposed to give you the money, but I think he did not bring it."

Dromio of Ephesus said, "No money was sent by me."

Antipholus of Syracuse said, "I received the bag of ducats you sent, Adriana, and Dromio of Syracuse, my slave, brought them to me. I see that my brother and I met each other's slave, and I see that I was mistaken for my brother, and he for me, and thereupon these errors arose."

Antipholus of Syracuse gave the bag of gold ducats to his brother, Antipholus of Ephesus.

Antipholus of Ephesus said, "With these ducats I pay the ransom for my father here."

"You need not do that," Duke Solinus said. "I hereby pardon your father without ransom and allow him to live."

The courtesan said to Antipholus of Ephesus, who was wearing her ring, "Sir, I must have that diamond ring that you are wearing; it is mine."

Antipholus of Ephesus took off the ring and gave it to the courtesan, saying, "Here, take it; and thank you very much for entertaining me."

Emilia said, "Renowned Duke, please go with us into the abbey here and hear all of us tell our stories. If anyone here has suffered any wrong from the mishaps of this day, come and keep us company, and we shall make everything right. For thirty-three years, it has been as if I have labored to give birth to you, my twin sons, and until this hour right now I did not give birth. Now I am able to see and enjoy my two sons. The Duke, my husband, and my twin

children, and you two Dromios, who are the calendars of my twins' nativity, having been born in the same hour and on the same day as them, go into the abbey and enjoy the feast that celebrates a birth or baptism. After enduring grief for so long, it is time to enjoy festivity!"

Duke Solinus said, "With all my heart, I'll celebrate and enjoy this feast."

Emilia cut the bonds of Egeon, and hand in hand they walked into the abbey.

Everyone exited except for the two Antipholuses and the two Dromios and Adriana and Luciana.

Dromio of Syracuse said, "Master, shall I fetch your baggage from the ship?"

Antipholus of Ephesus asked, "Dromio, what baggage of mine have you put on board a ship?"

"All of your belongings that were at the Centaur Inn, sir."

Antipholus of Syracuse said to Antipholus of Ephesus, "He thought he was talking to me."

Antipholus of Syracuse said to Dromio of Syracuse, "I am your master, Dromio. Come and go with us. We'll take care of the baggage later. Embrace your brother there; rejoice with him."

The two Antipholuses went inside the abbey. Antipholus of Ephesus went in while holding hands with Adriana, his wife. Antipholus of Syracuse went in while holding hands with Luciana, Adriana's sister.

Dromio of Syracuse said to his brother, "A fat friend at your master's house thought that I was you and entertained me in the kitchen during dinner today. She now shall be my sister, not my wife."

“I think that you are my mirror, and not my brother,” Dromio of Ephesus replied. “I see by you that I am a sweet-faced youth. Will you go into the abbey with me and see the celebration?”

“I will not go in ahead of you, sir. You are the older brother, so you should go in first.”

“Am I the older brother? We don’t know for sure. How shall we decide who is older?”

“Let’s draw straws. Until then, you will enjoy the rights of the older brother.”

Dromio of Ephesus said, “No. Instead, let’s do this. We came into the world brother and brother, so now let’s go into the abbey hand in hand, and not one before the other.”

Dromio of Syracuse and Dromio of Ephesus held hands and walked into the abbey together.

Chapter IV: LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Love's Labor's Lost*)

MALE CHARACTERS

FERDINAND, King of Navarre. King Ferdinand falls in love with the Princess of France.

BIRON, Lord, attending on the King. Biron falls in love with Rosaline.

LONGAVILLE, Lord, attending on the King. Longaville falls in love with Maria.

DUMAIN, Lord, attending on the King. Dumain falls in love with Katherine.

BOYET, MARCADÉ, Lords, attending on the Princess of France.

DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, a fantastical Spaniard.

SIR NATHANIEL, a Curate.

HOLOFERNES, a Schoolmaster.

DULL, a Constable.

COSTARD, a Clown.

MOTE, Page to Armado.

A Forester.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

The PRINCESS of France.

ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHERINE, Ladies, attending on the Princess. Rosaline is a black woman.

JAQUENETTA, a country Wench.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Officers and Others, Attendants on the King and the Princess.

SCENE: Navarre.

NOTA BENE: For the translations of the Latin quotations in Act 4, scene 2, I used the Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Love's Labor's Lost*:

Shakespeare, William. *Love's Labor's Lost*. Ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. New York. Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1996. Print.

CHAPTER 1 (Love's Labor's Lost)

— 1.1 —

In his park — an expanse of land stocked with game birds and animals — Ferdinand, the King of Navarre, was talking with his attendants Biron, Longaville, and Dumain. Navarre was a small country in between France and Spain. Attendants can be nobles, as is the case with Biron, Longaville, and Dumain. As he talked, King Ferdinand held a document.

King Ferdinand said, “Let fame, which all men hunt after in their lives, live inscribed upon the bronze plates of our tombs and then grace — honor — us in the disgrace of death, when, in spite of cormorant-devouring Time, the endeavor of this present breath and life may buy that honor which shall dull the keen edge of Death’s scythe and make us heirs of all eternity.”

Death can be disgraceful because it results in the rotting of our bodies, but one way that we can disgrace death is by achieving fame and having our reputation continue to live after our bodies die.

The time that we have to live is short because Time is like the greedy bird named the cormorant. The cormorant gulps its prey, and Time gulps the minutes and hours and more of our lives.

King Ferdinand continued, “Therefore, brave conquerors — for so you are, you who war against your own affections and passions and the huge army of the world’s desires. Our recent edict shall strongly stand in force: Navarre shall be the wonder of the world because our court shall be a little Academy, calm and contemplative in the art of proper living.

“You three, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, have sworn to live with me as my fellow-scholars for a term of three years, and to keep those statutes that are recorded in this document here. Your oaths are spoken, and now you must sign your names, so that the evidence of his own handwriting may strike down the honor of the man who violates the smallest clause written here in this document.

“If you are armed — properly prepared — to do as you have sworn to do, sign your name to your deep and solemn oaths, and keep your oaths, too.”

Longaville said, “I am resolved to keep my oath. It is only a fast lasting three years. The mind shall banquet, though the body pine and starve. Fat paunches have lean pates — heads and what is in them — and dainty bits make the ribs fat, but quite bankrupt the wits.”

Longaville signed the document.

Dumain said, “My loving lord, I — Dumain — am mortified: I am dead to Earthly pleasures. The grosser and cruder kind of these delights of the world I — Dumain — throw upon the gross world’s baser slaves. Let lesser people enjoy such lesser pleasures.

“When it comes to love, wealth, and pomp, I pine and die — I reject them all. Instead of enjoying such pleasures, with all these others who sign the oath I will live a philosophic life.”

Dumain signed the document.

Biron said, “I can only repeat what Longaville and Dumain have already said. So much, dear liege, I have already sworn. That is, I have already sworn to live and study here three years.

“But there are other strict observances such as not to see a

woman in that term of three years, which I very much hope is not written there. And other strict observances such as one day in a week to touch no food and to eat only one meal on each of the other six days, which I hope is not written there. And then such other strict observances as to sleep only three hours in the night, and not be seen to shut one's eyes during all the day, which I fervently hope is not written there — I have been accustomed to think no harm all night and to make a dark night also of half the day.”

Biron was thinking of this proverb: He who drinks well sleeps well, and he who sleeps well thinks no harm. He was accustomed to sleeping all night and napping much of the day.

Biron continued, “Oh, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep — to not see ladies, to study, to fast, and to not sleep!”

King Ferdinand said, “Your oath is passed to pass away from these. You swore an oath to renounce all of these.”

“Let me say no, my liege, if you please,” Biron replied. “I swore only to study with your grace and to stay here in your court for the space of three years.”

Longaville said, “You swore to that, Biron, and to all the rest.”

“By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest,” Biron said.

Matthew 5:37 of the King James Bible states, “*But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*”

Matthew 5:37 says to swear either yes or no, but Biron was saying that he had sworn both yes and no — yes to part of the oath, and no to the rest of the oath. When he had sworn to the oath, he was agreeing to keep part of the oath, but the

rest of his swearing was only in jest.

Biron then asked, “What is the end — the purpose — of study? Let me know.”

King Ferdinand replied, “Why, to know that which otherwise we would not know.”

“So you mean things hidden and barred from common sense?” Biron asked.

“Yes, that is study’s godlike recompense,” King Ferdinand said.

“Come on, then; I will swear to study so that I will know the thing I am forbidden to know,” Biron said. “For example, I will study where I may dine well, when to feast I expressly am forbidden. Or I will study where to meet some fine mistress, when mistresses from common sense are hidden. Or, having sworn to a too-hard-to-keep oath, I will study how to break it and yet not break my word — my troth.

“If study’s gain be thus and this be so, study knows that which yet it does not know. Ask me to swear an oath to learn this, and I will never say no. This is the kind of hidden and secret knowledge that I would like to know.”

King Ferdinand said, “These things you talk about are the stops — the obstructions — that hinder study quite and tempt our intellects to indulge in vain delight.”

Biron said, “Why, all delights are vain, but the delight is most vain that with pain purchased does acquire pain — the most vain delight is one that is acquired with difficulty and also brings difficulty with it.”

Pursuing such a delight is done in vain. An archaic meaning of the word “vain” is “foolish,” and so pursuing such a delight is foolish. Why pursue something that will

bring you pain when that pain is not worth the price to acquire it?

Biron continued, “For example, painfully to pore upon a book to seek the light of truth, while truth the while does treacherously blind the eyesight of its look — its sight. Light seeking light does light of light beguile and cheat. So, before you find where light in darkness lies — before you discover the clarification of obscure and esoteric knowledge — your light grows dark by the loss of your eyesight.”

Biron was referring to the belief that engaging in excessive reading could make one blind.

Biron continued, “Let me study how to please the eye indeed by fixing it upon a fairer eye — the eye of a woman. Such a fairer eye will dazzle the beholder, and although it will blind him, it yet shall be his guiding light and give him the light that blinded him.

“Study is like the Heaven’s glorious Sun that will not be deeply searched with saucy and insolent looks. The Sun will not permit you to stare at it.

“Little have continual plodders ever won except base authority from others’ books.

“The original astronomers named the planets. These Earthly godfathers of Heaven’s lights — the astronomers — who give a name to every planet get no more profit from their shining, starlit nights than those who walk and don’t know what the names of the planets are.”

Astronomers are learned people who give names to planets the way that godfathers give names to infants, but how much practical and personal profit can a person get out of naming — or knowing the names of — the planets? We can learn about constellations and such things by reading

books, but is that knowledge practical?

Biron continued, “To know too much is to know nothing but fame, and every godfather can give a name.”

“Fame” is “what is said about something.” The excessive studying of books results in a lack of knowledge through personal experience: One knows little more than what one has read. True, an acquisition of knowledge by the excessive studying of books can get one a name — but a name is something that any godfather can bestow.

King Ferdinand said, “How well Biron has read! He is able to reason against reading!”

Dumain said, “He has proceeded — argued — well in his attempt to stop all good proceeding — all good advancement of knowledge!”

One meaning of “to proceed” is “to get a university degree.” Dumain was saying in part that Biron was proceeding to make arguments in order to keep others from proceeding — from getting a university degree.

Longaville said, “He weeds the wheat and still lets grow the weeding.”

He meant that Biron was pulling up the wheat and allowing the weeds to grow. Biron was praising the wrong thing and dispraising the right thing.

Biron replied, “The spring is near when green geese are a-breeding.”

Green geese are young geese that cackle. Here Biron was saying that Dumain and Longaville were cackling — making critical comments about him — as if they were green geese — young fools.

Dumain asked, “How does what you said follow from what

we said?”

“It is fit, aka suitable, in its place and time,” Biron replied.

“In reason what you said is nothing,” Dumain said. “It makes no sense.”

Biron made a reference to “no rhyme or reason” by saying, “It is something then in rhyme.” If something is with no rhyme or reason, it has no reasonable explanation or purpose.

Maybe Dumain did not understand the reason why Biron had said what he said, but he could understand that “weeding” and “a-breeding” rhymed.

King Ferdinand said, “Biron is like a malicious sneaping and nipping frost that bites the first-born infants — the buds — of the spring.”

“Well, let’s say I am,” Biron said. “Why should proud summer boast before the birds have any cause to sing? Why should I take joy in any abortive — stopping before it starts — birth? At Christmas I no more desire a rose than I wish for a snow during May’s new-fangled mirth. Instead, I like each thing that in season grows.”

Earlier, Biron had argued against excessive studying. Now, he was arguing against doing things out of season. Things ought to be done at the right time for doing them. Each natural season has its own delights; each time of a man’s life has its own delights. Yes, there is a time for intensive study, but Biron and the others were past that time — they were too old to be pupils. Now was the time for them to pursue ladies.

Biron added, “So I say to you that to study now is too late. It would be like climbing over the house to unlock the little gate.”

“To climb over the house to unlock the little gate” is “to do something absurd.”

King Ferdinand said, “Well, you should sit this oath out. Go home, Biron. *Adieu.*”

“No, my good lord,” Biron said. “I have sworn to stay with you, and although you can say I have spoken more in favor of barbarism and uncivilized ignorance than for that angel knowledge you have spoken in favor of, yet, confident, I’ll keep what I have sworn and endure the penance of each day of each of the three years.

“Give me the paper; let me read the same, and to the strictest decrees I’ll sign my name.”

King Ferdinand handed the document to Biron and said, “How well this yielding rescues you from shame!”

Biron read out loud, “*Item: That no woman shall come within a mile of my court.*”

He asked, “Has this item been publicly proclaimed?”

Longaville replied, “Yes, four days ago.”

Biron said, “Let me read the penalty.

He read out loud, “*On pain of losing her tongue.*”

He asked, “Who devised this penalty?”

“Indeed, that did I,” Longaville said.

“Sweet lord, why?” Biron asked.

“To frighten them away from here with that dread penalty,” Longaville replied.

“It is a dangerous law against gentility, good manners, and civilized behavior!” Biron said.

He read out loud, “*Item: If any man be seen to talk with a woman within the term of three years, he shall endure such public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise.*”

Biron said to King Ferdinand, “This article, my liege, you yourself must break, for you know well that the French King’s daughter, who is a maiden of grace and complete majesty, is coming here as an ambassador to speak with yourself about surrendering the territory of Aquitaine to her decrepit, sick, and bedridden father. Therefore, this article was made in vain, or else the admired Princess comes vainly hither.”

“What do you say, lords?” King Ferdinand said. “Why, this was quite forgotten.”

“Excessive study evermore — always — overshoots and misses the target,” Biron said. “While excessive study does study to have what it would, it forgets to do the thing that it should, and when it has the thing it hunts for most, it is won as towns are with fire — so won, so lost.”

In times of warfare, an enemy town can be set on fire so that it can be won. Setting the town on fire can win — conquer — the town, but often the town is also lost — destroyed — because of the fire.

A person committed to study may learn and so get what he would — what he wants — but that person may lose what he should be getting; for example, he may lose out on getting a wife.

King Ferdinand said, “We must because of necessity dispense with and set aside this decree. The French Princess must necessarily reside here in the palace.”

Biron said, “Necessity will make us all break our oaths three thousand times within this three years’ space. Every man is born with his own passions, and these passions are

not mastered by his efforts and might — mastering these passions requires the special grace of God.

“If I break my oath, this phrase shall speak for me; I am forsworn on ‘complete necessity.’ And so to the items of the oath at large I write my name.”

He signed his name on the document.

Biron added, “And he who breaks any of these items in the least degree stands in attainder of — condemned to — eternal shame. Temptations are to other men as to me. But I believe, although I seem so loath to sign my name, I am the last who will last keep his oath.”

Biron’s words were ambiguous. He may have meant that he was the last man to sign his name to the oath and he was the last man who would keep the oath — in other words, he would not keep his oath. Or he may have meant that he was the last man to sign his name to the oath and he was the man who would longest keep the oath.

He then asked, “But is there no quick and lively recreation allowed to us?”

“Yes, there is,” King Ferdinand replied. “Our court, you know, is frequently visited by a refined traveller from Spain. He is a man rooted in all the world’s new fashions, and he has a mint of phrases in his brain. He is one whom the music of his own vain tongue ravishes like enchanting harmony. He is a man of compliments, courteous manners, and nice distinctions, whom right and wrong have chosen to act as umpire of their state of discord. This child of fancy, this fantastic creature, who is Armado hight, during the intermissions of our studies shall relate in high-born words the worth of many a knight from tawny, sun-burnt Spain lost in the world’s debate — he will tell us about many knights who died in the world’s wars. Such stories are told in Spanish chivalric romances.

“What you delight in, my lords, I don’t know, not I. But, I protest, I love to hear him lie, and I will use him for my entertainment.”

Biron said, “Armado is a most illustrious wight, a man of fire-new, fresh-from-the-mint words, and he is fashion’s own knight.”

Armado used affected language, and so King Ferdinand and Biron were using affected words as they talked about him. “Hight” means “named,” and “wight” means “man.”

“Costard the swain and Armado shall be our entertainment,” Longaville said. “And so let’s begin to study; three years is only a short time.”

A “swain” is a “rural fellow” or a “yokel.” The word “costard” meant both “a large apple” and “a head.”

Anthony Dull and Costard walked over to King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain. Dull, a constable, was carrying a letter.

Dull asked, “Which is the Duke’s own person?”

By “Duke,” he meant King Ferdinand. In this society, “Duke” meant “Ruler,” and so it was synonymous with “King.”

“This man, fellow,” Biron replied. “What do you want?”

“I myself reprehend his own person, for I am his grace’s tharborough,” Dull said, “but I would see his own person in flesh and blood.”

Dull made malapropisms. Instead of the word “reprehend,” he meant “represent.” The word “reprehend” means “reprimand.” By “tharborough,” Dull meant “farborough,” a kind of constable.

“This is he,” Biron said, indicating King Ferdinand.

“Signior Arme ... Arme ... commends you,” Dull said. He could not pronounce “Armado.” He also should have said, “commends himself to you,” not “commends you.”

Constable Dull handed King Ferdinand the letter and added, “There’s villainy abroad. This letter will tell you more.”

“Sir, the contempts thereof the letter are as touching — concerning — me,” Costard said.

Costard meant “contents,” not “contempts,” although “contempts” was a fitting word for the contents of the letter.

Reading the letter, King Ferdinand said, “This is a letter from the magnificent Armado.”

“However low is the matter — the content — of the letter, I hope in God for high words,” Biron said.

He was hoping that the letter used highfalutin language even if the content of the letter was trivial. Such a letter would be funny. Biron was well aware of Armado’s penchant for fancy words.

“That is a high hope for a low Heaven — a high hope for a small blessing,” Longaville said. “That’s not much to hope highly for. May God grant us patience!”

“Patience to hear?” Biron asked. “Or patience to refrain from laughing?”

“To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately,” Longaville said. “Or to refrain from both.”

“Well, sir, it may be that the style shall give us cause to climb in the merriness,” Biron said.

He was punning on “style” and “stile” — a stile consisted of steps that allowed people to climb over a wall or a fence.

Costard said, “The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta. The manner of it — the state of the case — is, I was taken with the manner — I was caught in the act.”

“In what manner?” Biron asked.

Costard replied, “In manner and form following, sir.”

This was a legal formula used to introduce a detailed description of a crime.

Costard continued, “All these three — manner, form, and following — as I will describe now.

“I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form — the bench — and taken following her into the park, which, put together, is ‘in manner and form following.’ Now, sir, as for the manner — it is the manner of a man to speak to a woman. As for the form — in some form.”

Costard had followed Jaquenetta, a rural woman, because he wanted to talk to her. The manner of a man is to want to talk to a woman. The word “manner” means “the way things are done.” As for the form, a woman has a womanly form.

Biron asked, “Is the form the reason for the following, sir?”

Costard replied, “As it shall follow in my correction — my punishment — and may God defend the right!”

The words “May God defend the right” were used in trials by combat. A high-ranking person could accuse another high-ranking person of a capital crime. If no proof were available, the two could fight to the death. The reasoning was that God would ensure that the person who was in the right would kill the person who was in the wrong. Whoever lost the combat, therefore, was guilty.

King Ferdinand asked Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, “Will you listen carefully and attentively to this letter?”

Biron answered, “We will, just as if we were listening to the words of an oracle.”

An oracle of the gods answers important questions.

Costard, who knew the contents of the letter, said, “Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh.”

Some of his malapropisms were appropriate: “simplicity,” in place of “simplicity.”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*Great deputy, the welkin’s vicegerent and sole dominator of Navarre, my soul’s earth’s god, and my body’s fostering patron.*”

King Ferdinand was “the welkin’s vicegerent.” He was a ruler on Earth, and as such he was God’s deputy on Earth. This culture believed that God chose who would be King.

Costard said, “Not a word of Costard yet.”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*So it is —*”

“It may be so, but if he says it is so, he is, when it comes to telling the truth, only so-so,” Costard said.

King Ferdinand ordered, “Peace!”

Costard replied, “May peace belong to me and to every man who dares not fight!”

King Ferdinand said, “By ‘Peace,’ I mean, ‘Be quiet.’ Say no more words.”

“Say no more words of other men’s secrets, I beg you,” Costard said.

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*So it is, besieged with sable-colored melancholy, I did commend the black-*

oppressing humor to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook myself to walk. The time when? About the sixth hour; when beasts most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment which is called supper: so much for the time when. Now for the ground which; which, I mean, I walked upon: it is yclept thy park.”

Armado used all those words to say this: I was feeling depressed, and so, around suppertime, I took a walk in your park.

King Ferdinand read out loud, *“Then for the place where; where, I mean, I did encounter that obscene and preposterous event, that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebony-colored ink, which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest, or seest; but to the place where; it standeth north-north-east and by east from the west corner of thy curious-knotted garden: there did I see that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth”* —

Armado used all those words to say this: There in the park near your garden I saw something I consider obscene that caused me to write you this letter.

He compared the perpetrator of the something obscene to a minnow — a small, insignificant fish. He saw the something obscene near the curious-knotted garden — fashionable decorative gardens of the time were laid out in intricate designs.

Costard asked, “Me?”

King Ferdinand read out loud, *“that unlettered small-knowing soul”* —

The word “unlettered” means “uneducated.”

Costard asked, “Me?”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*that shallow vassal*” —

Costard asked, “Still me?”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*who, as I remember, hight Costard*” —

Costard said, “Oh, it is me!”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*who, sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict and continent canon, which with — oh, with — but with this I passion to say wherewith*” —

Armado used the word “passion” as a verb meaning “grieve.” “Sorted and consorted” meant “associated and accompanied.”

Costard said, “He is going to write that he found me with a wench.”

The word “wench” meant “woman” and was often used affectionately.

King Ferdinand read out loud, “— *with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment, by thy sweet grace’s officer, Anthony Dull; a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation.*”

Dull said, “That is me, if it shall please you; I am Anthony Dull.”

King Ferdinand read out loud, “*For Jaquenetta — so is the weaker vessel called whom I apprehended with the aforesaid swain — I keep her as a vessel of the law’s fury; and I shall, at the least of thy sweet notice, bring her to trial. Thine, in all compliments of devoted and heart-burning heat of duty.*”

Armado had used all those words to say this: I have arrested Jaquenetta and as soon as you, King Ferdinand, give the order, I will put her on trial.

The letter was signed, “DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.”

Biron said, “This is not so well as I looked for, but the best that ever I heard.”

King Ferdinand said, “Yes, the best for the worst — this is an excellent example of a badly written and pretentious letter.”

He then asked Costard, “But, sirrah, what do you say about this?”

“Sirrah” was a word used to address a man of much lower social rank than the speaker.

“Sir, I confess to being with the wench,” Costard replied.

“Did you hear the proclamation about not being in the company of women?” King Ferdinand asked.

“I do confess much of the hearing it, but little of the marking of it,” Costard said. “I heard it, but I did not pay much attention to it.”

“It was proclaimed that a man would be imprisoned for a year if he were caught with a wench,” King Ferdinand said.

“I was not taken with a wench, sir. I was taken with a damsel.”

“Well, the proclamation also used the word ‘damsel.’”

“She was no damsel, sir. She was a virgin.”

“The proclamation used many different words for a woman, including the word ‘virgin.’”

“If the proclamation did use the word ‘virgin,’ then I deny

her virginity. I was taken with a maiden.”

“This maiden will not serve your turn, sir,” King Ferdinand replied.

He meant that using the word “maiden” would not keep Costard from being punished.

“This maiden will serve my turn, sir,” Costard said.

He meant that the maiden would serve him sexually.

King Ferdinand said, “Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: You shall fast for a week with bran and water.”

Costard said, “I had rather pray a month with mutton soup.”

In this society, the word “mutton” was sometimes used to refer to a whore.

King Ferdinand continued, “And Don Armado shall be your jail keeper.

“My Lord Biron, see that Costard is delivered over to Don Armado.

“And now we go, lords, to put in practice that which each to the others has so strongly sworn. It is time that we begin to study.”

King Ferdinand, Longaville, and Dumain exited.

Biron said, “I’ll bet my head against any goodman’s hat that these oaths and laws will prove to be an idle scorn. They are useless and ought to be scorned.”

A goodman is a man with a rank below that of a noble. The title “goodman” especially applies to a farmer or a yeoman, aka freeholder.

Biron then said to Costard, “Sirrah, come on.”

“I suffer for the truth, sir,” Costard said. “For it is true that I was caught with Jaquenetta, and Jaquenetta is a true girl, and therefore I welcome the sour cup of prosperity! Affliction may one day smile again; and until then, sit thee down and keep me company, sorrow!”

Costard had mixed up his words, using “prosperity” when he meant “affliction,” and vice versa.

—1.2—

Don Adriano de Armado was talking to Mote, his young page, in King Ferdinand’s park. A page is a youthful attendant to a person of high rank.

Armado said, “Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?”

He expected that Mote would answer that it is a sign that the man of great spirit is in love, but Mote answered, “It is a great sign, sir, that he will look sad.”

Armado said, “Why, sadness is one and the self-same thing as melancholy, dear imp.”

“No, no,” Mote said. “Oh, Lord, sir, no.”

“How can thou distinguish between sadness and melancholy, my tender juvenal?”

By “juvenal,” Armado meant “juvenile.”

Mote replied, “By an easily understandable demonstration of the application, my tough signior.”

Mote was punning on “signior” and “senior.”

“Why tough signior? Why tough signior?” Armado asked.

“Why tender juvenal? Why tender juvenal?” Mote answered.

“I spoke it, tender juvenal, as a congruent epitheton appertaining to thy young days, which we may nominate ‘tender,’” Armado said.

“Congruent epithon” is a fancy way of saying “appropriate description.”

Mote said, “And I, tough signior, as an appertinent title to your old age, which we may name ‘tough.’”

“Appertinent” is an obsolete, fancy way of saying “appertaining” or “suitable.” Mote was mocking Armado’s use of fancy words.

Armado commented, “Pretty and apt.”

“What do you mean, sir?” Mote asked. “That I am pretty, and my saying is apt? Or that I am apt, and my saying is pretty?”

“Thou art pretty, because thou art little.”

“I am little pretty, because I am little,” Mote said. “Wherefore am I apt?”

Armado replied, “And therefore you are apt, because you are quick.”

“Are you saying that to praise me, master?” Mote asked.

“Yes, I say it in thy condign praise.”

“Condign” means “well-deserved.”

Mote said, “I will praise an eel with the same praise.”

“You will praise an eel by saying that it is quick — ingenious?” Armado asked.

“I will praise an eel by saying that it is quick — swift,” Mote said.

“I do say that thou art quick in answers,” Armado said.
“Thou heatest my blood.”

Hot blood is angry blood.

“I understand, sir,” Mote said.

“I love not to be crossed,” Armado said.

Mote thought, *He speaks the complete opposite of the truth; he loves crosses, but crosses do not love him.*

In this society, coins were decorated with crosses.

“I have promised to study three years with the Duke,”
Armado said.

“You may do it in an hour, sir,” Mote said.

“That is impossible.”

“How many is one counted three times — one times
three?”

“I am ill at reckoning,” Armado said. “I am bad at math;
math is something suitable for a tapster, aka bartender —
someone who lacks my great spirit.”

“You are a gentleman and a gamester, sir,” Mote said.

A gamester is a gambler.

“I confess to being both,” Armado said. “They are both the
varnish — polish — of a complete man.”

“Then, I am sure, you know how much the gross sum of
deuce-ace amounts to.”

A deuce-ace is a throw of the dice resulting in a one and a
two.

“It doth amount to one more than two,” Armado said.

“And that is what the low-born common people call three,” Mote said.

“That is true.”

Mote said, “Why, sir, is this such a piece of study? Was that hard? Now here you have completed your study of three, even before you have blinked three times. How easy it is to join the word ‘years’ to the word ‘three,’ and then you can study three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell you.”

The dancing horse was a famous performing horse of the time named Morocco. In addition to dancing, it would use its hoof to tap out numbers on the ground, seemingly solving simple arithmetic problems.

“That is a most fine figure!” Armado said.

The figure was a figure of speech, or word play. A figure is also a number.

Mote thought, *This figure proves that you are a cipher.*

A cipher is a zero — it is nothing.

“I will hereupon confess that I am in love,” Armado said, “and as it is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base — low-born — wench. If drawing my sword against the disposition of affection would deliver me from the reprobate thought of it, I would take Desire prisoner, and ransom him to any French courtier for a newly devised courtesy such as a new fashionable bow. I think it would be scornful to sigh. Methinks I should outswear Cupid. Comfort, me, boy, by telling me what great men have been in love.”

“Hercules is a great man who has been in love, master,” Mote answered.

“Most sweet Hercules!” Armado said. “Give me some more authoritative examples, dear boy. Name some more, and, my sweet child, let them be men of good reputation and carriage.”

One meaning of the word “carriage” is “bearing or demeanor.” Mote, however, used it in a different sense.

“Samson, master,” Mote replied. “He was a man of good carriage, great carriage, for he carried the town-gates on his back like a porter, and he was in love.”

Judges 16:3 states this: *“And Samson slept till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gates of the city and the two posts, and lifted them away with the bars, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the mountain that is before Hebron”* (1599 Geneva Bible).

“Oh, well-knit, strongly built Samson!” Armado said. “Strong-jointed Samson! I do excel thee in my rapier as much as thou didst me in carrying gates. I am in love, too. Who was Samson’s love, my dear Mote?”

“A woman, master.”

“Of what complexion?”

One meaning of the word “complexion” is “disposition or temperament.”

Mote replied, “Of all the four, or the three, or the two, or one of the four.”

This society believed that the mixture of four humors in the body determined one’s temperament. One humor could be predominant. The four humors are blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. If blood is predominant, then the person is sanguine (optimistic). If yellow bile is predominant, then the person is choleric (bad-tempered). If black bile is

predominant, then the person is melancholic (sad). If phlegm is predominant, then the person is phlegmatic (calm).

Armado said, "Tell me precisely of what complexion."

Instead of understanding "complexion" to mean "disposition or temperament," Mote deliberately misinterpreted it to mean skin coloring.

"Of the sea-water green, sir," Mote said.

Many young girls of the time suffered from "green-sickness." Falling in love was thought to cause this illness, but we now believe that the young girls were actually anemic from iron deficiency.

"Is that one of the four complexions?" Armado asked.

"I have read that, sir; and it is the best of them, too," Mote said.

"Green indeed is the color of lovers; but to have a love of that color, methinks Samson had small reason for it," Armado said. "He surely affected — loved — her for her wit."

One reason green is the color of lovers is that young women would meet their lovers and get what was called a green gown. The women would lie on their backs and get grass stains on their gowns.

"It was so, sir," Mote said, "for she had a green wit."

A green wit is an immature wit, aka immature intelligence.

"My love is most immaculate white and red," Armado said.

"Most maculate thoughts, master, are masked under such colors," Mote said.

The word “immaculate” means “unstained”; “maculate thoughts” are “stained or sinful thoughts.”

“Define, define, well-educated infant,” Armado said. “Explain what you mean.”

“My father’s wit and my mother’s tongue, assist me!” Mote said, deliberately changing the phrase “mother’s wit.”

“Sweet invocation of a child,” Armado said. “That was very pretty and pathetic! That was very pretty and moving!”

Mote sang this song:

“If she be made of white and red,

“Her faults will never be known,

“For blushing cheeks by faults are bred

“And fears by pale white shown:

“Then if she fear, or be to blame,

“By this you shall not know,

“For still her cheeks possess the same

“Which naturally she does own.”

Maculate thoughts are sinful thoughts and thinking them in the company of others can cause a white-skinned person to be embarrassed by having blameworthy thoughts and to blush red, thus allowing other persons to know that the blushing person is embarrassed. And fear causes a Caucasian to grow pale, or white. But if a person has a complexion naturally composed of white blotches and red blotches, then who knows what that person is thinking?

Mote said, “This is a dangerous rhyme, master, against the cause of white and red.”

Armado asked, "Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?"

In this society, ballads about "King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maiden" were common at one time. King Cophetua was an African who had no interest in women until he saw a beggar-maiden named Penelophon and fell in love with her.

Mote replied, "The world was very guilty of such a ballad some three ages ago, but I think now it is not to be found; or, if it were, it would be acceptable neither for the writing nor the tune."

"I will have that subject newly writ over, so that I may example my digression by some mighty precedent," Armado said.

His "digression" was a "moral lapse." He wanted to have a new version of the ballad written because it would show that another man — who was great — was guilty of the same digression or transgression as he.

He added, "Boy, I love that country girl whom I took in the park with the rational hind Costard. She deserves well."

A rational hind is a yokel who is capable of showing some intelligence.

By "took," Armado meant "arrested."

Mote thought, *She well deserves to be whipted; and yet she deserves a better lover than my master.*

In this society, law officials punished prostitutes by whipping them.

"Sing, boy," Armado said. "My spirit grows heavy in love."

"And that's a great marvel because you love a light

wench,” Mote said.

Light wenches were promiscuous women who had light heels that could be easily lifted in the air along with parted knees.

“I say, sing,” Armado said.

“Wait until this company of people has passed by,” Mote said.

Constable Dull, Costard, and Jaquenetta walked up to them.

Dull said to Armado, “Sir, the Duke’s pleasure is that you keep Costard secure, and you must suffer him to take no delight nor no penance, but he must fast three days a week.”

Instead of “penance,” Dull meant to say “pleasance,” which means “pleasure.”

Dull continued, “As for this damsel, I must keep her at the park. She has been assigned the job of being a dairy-maiden. Fare you well.”

“I betray myself with blushing,” Armado said.

He was thinking sinful thoughts.

He said to Jaquenetta, “Maiden!”

She replied, “Man.”

“I will visit thee at the lodge.”

“That’s nearby.”

“I know where it is situated.”

“Lord, how wise you are!”

“I will tell thee wonders,” Armado said.

“With that face?” Jaquenetta replied.

This was an idiomatic expression that meant, “Really? I don’t believe you!”

“I love thee,” Armado said.

“So I heard you say,” Jaquenetta replied.

This was another idiomatic expression that meant, “Really? I don’t believe you!”

“And so, farewell.”

“May fair weather follow you!” Jaquenetta said.

Constable Dull said, “Come, Jaquenetta, let’s go!”

Dull and Jaquenetta exited.

Armado said to Costard, “Villain, thou shalt fast for thy offences before thou shalt be pardoned.”

“Well, sir, I hope, when I do it, I shall do it on a full stomach,” Costard said.

“On a full stomach” was an idiomatic expression meaning “courageously.”

Armado said, “Thou shalt be heavily punished.”

“I am more bound to you than your servants are bound to you, for they are but lightly rewarded,” Costard said.

Armado said to Mote, “Take away this villain; shut him up.”

Mote said to Costard, “Come, you transgressing slave; let’s go!”

Costard said to Armado, “Let me not be pent up, sir. I will fast, being loose.”

He meant that he would fast even if he were loose and not shut up in a cell, but his words could also be interpreted as saying that he would fast as a treatment for having loose bowels.

“No, sir,” Mote said. “That would be fast and loose.”

“Fast and loose” was the name of a rope trick that con men pulled to make money.

Mote added, “You shall go to prison.”

“Well, if ever I do see the merry days of desolation that I have seen, some shall see.”

Costard meant to say “jubilation,” not “desolation.”

Mote asked, “What shall some see?”

“Nothing, Master Mote, but what they look upon,” Costard said. “It is not for prisoners to be too silent in their words, and therefore I will say nothing. I thank God I have as little patience as another man; and therefore I can be quiet.”

As usual, Costard misused words. Instead of “silent,” he meant to say “loud.” And he had meant to say “as much patience,” not “as little patience.”

Mote and Costard exited, leaving Armado alone.

Armado said to himself, “I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which is basest, doth tread.”

By “affect,” he meant “love.” Even when talking to himself, he used and misused both fancy words and ordinary words. Or perhaps he really meant that Jaquenetta’s foot was baser — nastier — than her shoe.

He continued, “I shall be forsworn, which is a great argument — evidence — of falsehood, if I love.”

Yes, perjury — falsely swearing — is great evidence of falsehood.

He continued, “And how can that be true love which is falsely attempted? Love is a familiar, a spirit attending a witch; Love is a devil — there is no evil angel but Love.

“Yet was Samson so tempted, and he had an excellent strength; yet was Solomon so seduced, and he had a very good wit. Cupid’s butt-shaft — blunt arrow — is too hard for Hercules’ club; and therefore too much odds for this Spaniard’s rapier.

“The first and second cause will not serve my turn.”

Armado was thinking about having a duel with Cupid, the god who shot arrows that caused people to fall in love. The first and second causes of fighting a duel were being accused of committing a capital crime such as treason, and being accused of being dishonorable. Cupid was causing Armado to commit a crime in violation of King Ferdinand’s recently announced law, and he was causing Armado to lose honor by breaking an oath that he had sworn.

He continued, “The *passado* — forward thrust of the rapier — Cupid respects not, and the *duello* — dueling code — Cupid regards not. Cupid’s disgrace is to be called ‘boy,’ but his glory is to subdue men. *Adieu*, valor! Rust, rapier! Be still, drum! For your manager — master — is in love; yea, he loveth. Assist me, some extemporal god of rhyme, for I am sure I shall turn sonneteer. Devise, wit; write, pen — I am for whole volumes in folio.”

Now that Armado was in love, he was going to follow the courtly custom of writing love sonnets to the woman he loved. He was calling upon some god to help him write enough sonnets to fill up a large book — a folio.

CHAPTER 2 (Love's Labor's Lost)

— 2.1 —

The Princess of France had arrived in the park of King Ferdinand. With her were her lady attendants Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine, and her male attendant Boyet. Also present were lords and other attendants.

Boyet said, “Now, madam, summon up your dearest spirits, your best powers. Consider whom the King your father sends, to whom he sends, and what’s his message. The King your father sends yourself, who is held precious in the world’s esteem, to parley with the sole inheritor — possessor — of all perfections that a man may own, the matchless King Ferdinand of Navarre; the issue to be discussed is of no less weight than the territory of Aquitaine, which is valuable enough to be a dowry for a Queen.

“Be now as prodigal of all dear — valuable — grace as Nature was in making graces dear — expensive — when she starved the general world other than yourself and prodigally gave them all to you.”

The Princess of France replied, “Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, although it is only average, does not need the painted flourish of your praise. Beauty is bought by the judgment of the eye, not made available by the base sale of merchants’ tongues — the flattering praise of merchants trying to sell stuff by calling it beautiful is worthless. I am less proud to hear you count — spell out — my worth than you are much willing to be accounted wise because you spend your wit in the flattering praise of mine.

“But now to task the tasker: You have been tasking me with your false flattery of my ‘beauty,’ and now I have a

task for you. Good Boyet, you are not ignorant that all-telling rumor has noised abroad that the King of Navarre has made a vow that until painstaking and diligent study has worn away three years, no woman may approach his silent court.”

Using the royal plural, she said, “Therefore to us it seems a necessary course of action, before we enter his forbidden gates, to know what he wants us to do, and in that behalf and for that purpose, confident of your worthiness, we single you out as our best-moving and most persuasive fair solicitor.

“Tell him that the daughter of the King of France, on serious business, craving quick dispatch of that business, importunes personal conversation with his grace.

“Go quickly to him and say all this, while we wait, like humble-faced petitioners, to learn what his high will desires.”

Boyet replied, “Proud to be entrusted with this employment, willingly I go.”

“All pride is willing pride, and yours is so,” the Princess of France replied. “All pride, including yours, originates in the will — the wish or desire.”

Boyet exited to carry out his errand.

The Princess of France asked, “Who are the votaries, my loving lords, who are vow-fellows with this virtuous Duke?”

Votaries are people who have taken an oath or vow.

The first lord said, “Lord Longaville is one.”

The Princess asked, “Do you know the man?”

Maria said, “I know him, madam. At a feast celebrating the

marriage between Lord Perigort and the beauteous heir of Jaques Falconbridge, which was solemnized in Normandy, I saw this Longaville. He is reputed to be a man of excellent personal qualities. He is interested in culture and arts, and he has a glorious reputation in military matters. He has both a contemplative and an active life. Everything that he puts his mind to becomes him — he does nothing ill that he wants to do well.

“The only soil of his fair virtue’s gloss, if virtue’s gloss will stain with any soil, is that his sharp wit is matched with too blunt a will. The edge of his wit has the power to cut, and his will always wills — wants — to spare none who come within his power.”

The Princess said, “He is probably some merry mocking lord, isn’t he?”

“So people say who most know his moods and disposition,” Maria said.

“Such short-lived wits do wither as they grow,” the Princess said, alluding to the proverb “Soon ripe; soon rotten.”

She then asked, “Who are the rest of the votaries?”

Katherine said, “Another is the young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth, one of all whom virtue loves because they love virtue. He has the most power to do most harm, although he least knows evil, because he has the intelligence to make an ill bodily shape seem to be good, and he has a bodily shape that would win grace and favor even if he had no intelligence. I saw him at the Duke Alencon’s once; and my report of his goodness falls very short of his great worthiness.”

Rosaline said, “Another of these students was at that time there with Dumain, if I have heard the truth. Biron they call

him, and some people called him by the nickname Berowne, which sounds like a sad name — Brown. But a merrier man, within the limit of becoming and suitable mirth, I never spent an hour's talking with. His eye begets occasion for his wit; for every object that his eye catches, his wit turns to a mirth-moving jest, which his fair tongue — the expresser of his fancy — delivers in such apt and gracious words that aged ears play truant and avoid listening to serious discussions in order to listen to his tales and his younger hearers are quite ravished with delight, so sweet and voluble is his discourse.”

“God bless my ladies!” the Princess said. “Are they all in love, causing each to garnish her beloved with such adorning ornaments of praise?”

The first lord said, “Here comes Boyet.”

Boyet walked over to the group.

The Princess asked, “Now, what admittance shall we enjoy, lord? Shall we be admitted into the palace?”

“The King of Navarre had notice of your fair approach,” Boyet replied, “and he and his associates in their oath were all ready to meet you, gentle lady, before I came. Indeed, thus much I have learned. He means to lodge you outdoors, in this field, like one who comes here to besiege his court in wartime, rather than to seek a dispensation for his oath, a dispensation that would let you enter his house, which now lacks servants.”

King Ferdinand needed fewer servants because of his avowed dedication to study.

Boyet looked up and said, “Here comes the King of Navarre.”

King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, Dumain, and some

attendants walked over to the group.

King Ferdinand said, "Fair Princess, welcome to the court of Navarre."

The Princess replied, "The word 'fair' I give you back again, and 'welcome' I have not yet had. The roof of this court — the sky — is too high to be yours; and a welcome to the wide fields is too base to be mine."

"You shall be welcome, madam, to my court," King Ferdinand said.

"I will be welcome, then," the Princess said. "Conduct me there."

"Hear me, dear lady," King Ferdinand said. "I have sworn an oath."

"May our Lady help my lord!" the Princess said. "He'll be forsworn and break his oath."

Our Lady is Mary, the mother of Jesus.

"Not for the world, fair madam, by my will," King Ferdinand said.

"By my will" was an oath: "I swear."

"Why, will shall break it," the Princess said. "Will and nothing else."

In her reply, the Princess used "will" to mean both "willpower" and "desire." King Ferdinand's willpower would cause him to break the oath because he desired to break it; in other words, he could break his oath if he chose to, and desire would make him want to and so he would choose to break his oath.

"Your ladyship is ignorant about what my oath is," King Ferdinand said.

The Princess said, “If my lord were ignorant about the content of his oath, his ignorance would be wise, whereas now his knowledge is evidence of his ignorance.

“I hear that your grace has sworn not to be hospitable. It is a deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord, and it is a sin to break it.

“But pardon me. I am too sudden-bold, too hastily presumptuous. To teach an academic — and you are one because you have chosen to pursue knowledge for three years — ill becomes me.

“Please read the purpose of my coming here, and quickly give me a response concerning my petition to you.”

“Madam, I will, if quickly I may,” King Ferdinand said.

“You will give me a reply all the sooner, so that I can go away,” the Princess said, “for you’ll prove perjured if you make me stay.”

The Princess handed King Ferdinand a document that the King began reading.

Biron asked Rosaline, “Didn’t I dance with you in Brabant once?”

Rosaline asked Biron, “Didn’t I dance with you in Brabant once?”

“I know you did,” Biron said.

“How needless it was then to ask me that question!” Rosaline said.

“You must not be so quick,” Biron said, using the word “quick” to mean “impatient, hot-tempered, and sharp and caustic.”

Rosaline, deliberately misinterpreting the word “quick” to

mean “fast,” replied, “My quickness is due to you who spurs me with such questions.”

She was alluding to the proverb “Do not spur a willing horse.”

Biron said, “Your wit’s too hot, it speeds too fast, it will tire.”

He was alluding to the proverb “A free horse will soon tire.” A free horse is one that has been given the reins; it can run freely without the rider restraining its speed.

Rosaline replied, “Not until it leaves the rider in the mire.”

She had no intention of reining in — restraining — her wit.

In an attempt to change the subject, Biron asked, “What time of day is it?”

Rosaline replied, “The hour that fools should ask about.”

“Now may fair — good luck — befall your mask!” Biron said.

Like the other noble ladies of the time, Rosaline sometimes wore a mask to protect her face from the Sun when she was outside and she sometimes attended masquerades, but she was not currently wearing a mask.

Rosaline said, “May fair befall the face it covers! May the face under the mask be beautiful!”

“And may your beautiful face send you many loving admirers!” Biron said.

“Amen, as long as you make up none of my many loving admirers!” Rosaline said.

“No, for then I will be gone,” Biron said.

Having finished reading the document, and occasionally

using the royal plural, King Ferdinand said, “Madam, your father here in this document states that he made the payment of a hundred thousand crowns. That amount is only one half of the entire sum disbursed by my father in the wars waged by your father.

“But let’s say that my father or I myself, although neither of us has, received that sum, yet there remains unpaid a hundred thousand more crowns. In security of that loan, one part of the territory of Aquitaine is legally bound to us here in Navarre, although it is not valued as highly as the money that was loaned.

“If then the King your father will restore to us just that one half which is unsettled because it has not been repaid, we will give up our rights in Aquitaine, and we will hold and enjoy fair friendship with his majesty your father.

“But that repayment, it seems, he little intends, because here in this document he demands that we repay the hundred thousand crowns that he claims to have already paid us, and he does not demand, as is his right, on payment to us of a hundred thousand crowns, to have his title to all of Aquitaine restored. He wants us to repay money that we never received, and he wants us to keep our title to part of Aquitaine. We would much rather give up our title to part of Aquitaine and have the money repaid to us that our father lent your father. We prefer to have the money because Aquitaine, as it is, is gelded; it has been divided into two parts and the part we have title to is not worth the amount of money my father lent to your father.

“Dear Princess, were not your father’s requests so far from reason’s yielding — if they were not so unreasonable — your fair self should make a yielding against some reason in my breast. Your beautiful self would make me generous although right is on my side, and you would go well satisfied to France again.”

The Princess replied, "You do the King my father too much wrong, and you wrong the reputation of your name, by seeming not to confess having received that money which has so faithfully been repaid."

"I protest that I never heard of the repayment of that money," King Ferdinand said, "and if you can prove that the money has been repaid, I'll repay it back to the King of France or yield to him Aquitaine."

"We arrest your word," the Princess said. "We seize upon your word as surety that you will do what you just said you will do."

She then said, "Boyet, you can produce acquittances — legal documents showing that the money has been repaid — for such a sum from special officers of Charles, the King of Navarre's father."

"Satisfy me that this is so," King Ferdinand said. "Produce the documents."

Boyet said, "So please your grace, the packet containing those and other legal documents has not yet come. Tomorrow you shall be able to see them."

"That shall be sufficient for me," King Ferdinand said. "At that time I will yield to all reasonable demands. In the meantime, receive such welcome at my hand as honor without breach of honor may make tender of to your true worthiness."

"You may not come, fair Princess, within my gates, but here outside my gates you shall be so received that you shall deem yourself lodged in my heart, although you are denied fair harbor in my house."

"Your own good thoughts will excuse me, and so farewell. Tomorrow we shall visit you again."

The Princess said, “May sweet health and fair desires accompany your grace!”

“Your own wish I wish for you in every aspect!” King Ferdinand said, and then he exited.

Biron said to Rosaline, “Lady, I will commend you to my own heart.”

“Please, give my commendations to your heart,” Rosaline said. “I would be glad to see it.”

“I wish you could hear it groan,” Biron said. He was feeling lovesick.

“Is the fool sick?” Rosaline asked.

“Sick at heart.”

“Alas, treat your illness by bleeding.”

In this society, physicians treated many illnesses by bleeding the patient. Physicians felt that bleeding would help restore the proper proportion of the four humors: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. Today, we know that this is quackery.

Biron asked, “Would bleeding my heart do any good?”

“My medical knowledge says that yes, it would.”

“Will you prick my heart with your eye?”

In this society, a person in love was thought to shoot a beam out of his or her eyes. The beam would enter the eyes of the loved one and go straight to his or her heart.

Rosaline replied, “*Non point*, but I would with my knife.”

“*Non point*” was French for “No point,” which has two meanings. Rosaline was saying there was no point to doing as Biron suggested, and her eye had no point and so was

incapable of piercing his heart. In contrast, a knife could do that very easily with its point.

“Now, may God save your life!” Biron said.

“And may God save yours from long living!” Rosaline said.

“I cannot stay and give you thanks,” Biron said.

He withdrew.

Dumain said to Boyet, “Sir, please, let me have a word with you. What lady is she whom I was talking to?”

“She is the heir of Alencon; Katherine is her name.”

“She is a gallant lady. Monsieur, fare you well.”

Dumain exited.

Longaville asked Boyet, “Please, let me have a word with you. Who is she in the white dress?”

“She is a woman sometimes, if you saw her in the light.”

“Perhaps she is light in the light,” Longaville said.

He was punning. Perhaps she would be revealed as a light — promiscuous — woman if seen in the light — if seen properly.

He then said, “I desire her name.”

“She has but one for herself; to desire that would be a shame,” Boyet replied.

Longaville asked, “Please, sir, whose daughter is she?”

“Her mother’s, I have heard.”

“God’s blessing on your beard!” Longaville said.

He was making the point that Boyet’s venerable beard was

inconsistent with the joking answers he was making to Longaville's questions. A person capable of growing a beard like that should give serious answers to serious questions.

"Good sir, be not offended," Boyet said. "She is an heir of Falconbridge."

"My anger is ended," Longaville said. "She is a very sweet lady."

"That is not unlikely, sir," Boyet said. "That may be the truth."

Longaville exited.

Biron asked Boyet, "What's the name of the woman wearing the cap?"

"Rosaline, by good hap," Boyet replied. "Rosaline, it so happens."

"Is she wedded or no?"

"She is wedded to her will, sir, or something like that."

One meaning of the word "will" was "sexual desire."

What does "something like that" mean? Biron will find out that Rosaline is single, and so, if Boyet's insinuation is correct, she is a single woman who pursues satisfying her sexual desires.

"You are welcome, sir," Biron said. "*Adieu.*"

Biron's tone was angry because he was not getting a serious answer to his question. Some welcomes are ill. He also did not want to hear that a woman he had fallen in love with was wanton. When he said that Boyet was welcome, he may have been punning: Boyet was well cum — had cum well — as a result of spending time with Rosaline.

Personal experience would be one way for Boyet to know that Rosaline was wedded to her will, or something like that.

“Farewell to me, sir, and welcome to you,” Boyet replied.

“Welcome to you” meant “You are welcome to go.” A proverb of the time stated, “Welcome when you go.” Again, some welcomes are ill.

Boyet may have meant this: “I will fare well when you go, and be assured that the next time I welcome you, I will again have well cum.”

Some people can say, “Welcome,” and make it sound nasty. Boyet was one such person.

Biron exited.

Maria said, “That last man to leave is Biron, the merry madcap lord. You can’t speak to him without hearing a jest — not a word with him but a jest.”

“And every jest is only a word,” Boyet said.

The Princess said, “It was well done of you to take him at his word — you gave him word for word. He likes to engage in argumentative exchanges of words, and you did that.”

It is true that Biron liked to engage in wordplay, sometimes malicious, but his questions to Boyet were serious. Boyet, however, was a ladies’ man, and he saw in Biron a threat. Here was a case of two men — Biron and Boyet — disliking each other almost at first sight.

“I was as willing to grapple as he was to board,” Boyet said.

Boyet was referring to warfare. Two ships would sometimes use grappling hooks to get the ships next to each

other so that a ship could be boarded and the sailors fight face to face.

If Biron wanted to board something, that something would be Rosaline's body, but Boyet was willing to grapple with him to keep that from happening, possibly because he wanted to board her — and all the other ladies present.

Note that Rosaline was quiet. Did she not hear Boyet and Biron talking, or was she embarrassed and pretending that she had not heard their conversation?

Maria said, "You were two hot sheeps, indeed."

Biron and Boyet had fought like two angry rams butting horns to see which ram would be able to mate.

Much of the two men's dislike for each other showed in their body language, but some showed in the tone of their words to each other.

"Why not use the word 'ships' instead of 'sheeps'?" Boyet asked. "We are no sheep, you sweet lamb, unless we feed on your lips."

"You sheep, and I pastor," Maria said. "Shall that finish the jest?"

"So long as you grant pasture for me," Boyet said, moving to kiss her.

Maria stopped the kiss and said, "Not so, gentle beast. My lips are no common, though several they be."

She was punning. A common is pastureland held in common; any citizen can use it. Pastureland that is referred to as several, however, is privately owned. It is severed — separate — from common land. Maria was saying that her lips were privately owned, by herself, and they were several — more than one.

“Your lips belong to whom?” Boyet asked.

“To my fortunes and me,” Maria said.

“Good wits will be jangling, aka squabbling,” the Princess said, “but, gentlefolk, agree that this civil war of wits would be much better used on the King of Navarre and his fellow book-men; for here such verbal wrangling is misapplied.”

Boyet said, “If my observation, which very seldom lies — that is, is mistaken — of the heart’s silent eloquence as disclosed by eyes doesn’t deceive me now, the King of Navarre is infected.”

“With what?” the Princess asked.

“With that which we lovers title ‘affected,’” Boyet replied. “He is in love.”

“What is your reason for believing that?” the Princess asked.

“Why, all his powers of expression retired to the court of his eye, peeping through desire — all he could do was to look at you with desire.

“His heart, like an agate, with your print impressed, proud with its form, in his eye pride expressed.”

Agate stones were sometimes engraved with the image of a person. Boyet was saying that King Ferdinand’s heart was proud because it bore the Princess’ image, and this pride was expressed in the King’s eyes.

Boyet continued, “His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see, stumbled with haste in his eyesight to be.”

In other words, King Ferdinand’s tongue was annoyed because it had the power only to speak and was unable to see the Princess’ beauty, and so it wanted to be capable of

sight. Because of this, King Ferdinand's tongue stumbled when he talked to the Princess because his tongue was metaphorically hurrying to his eyes to share in the eyesight.

Boyet continued, "All senses to that sense — the sense of sight — did make their repair, to feel only through looking on the fairest of fair."

In Boyet's verbal image, all of King Ferdinand's other senses gave primacy to the sense of sight because that is the sense that sees the fairest of fair — the most beautiful of all, who is the Princess. His other senses hoped to share in the sense of sight and to share in the emotion aroused by that sense and so rushed to the King's eyes.

Boyet continued, "It seemed to me that all his senses were locked in his eye, like jewels in crystal for some Prince or Princess to buy, which, tendering their own worth from where they were glassed, did point you to buy them, along as you passed."

Jewels were sometimes carried in a crystal — glass — container so that prosperous buyers could look at them. The King's senses had, in Boyet's visual image, rushed to the crystal of the King's eyes and could now be seen as if they were jewels displayed in a glass container. The Princess could, if she looked, see them, and if she wanted, she could buy and possess them.

Boyet continued, "His face's own margins quoted such amazes that all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes."

In Boyet's verbal image, the King's face was a page in a book. His eyes were the main text, and the rest of his face was the margins. In books of the time, notes appeared in the margins, including the left and right margins, rather than only as footnotes. Often, the notes included arrows pointing to a place in the main text. The rest of the King's face directed attention to the King's eyes, where readers

could see that the King was enchanted by seeing the Princess.

Boyet concluded, “I’ll give you Aquitaine and all that is his, if you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.”

Boyet believed that King Ferdinand was so in love with the Princess that if she gave him only one kiss, he would give her Aquitaine and everything else that belonged to him.

“Let’s go to our pavilion,” the Princess said. “Boyet is disposed.”

She meant that he was disposed to be merry and make jokes.

Boyet said, “I am disposed only to speak that in words which the King’s eyes have disclosed. I have only made a mouth of his eye, by adding a tongue that I know will not lie. All I have done is to say in words what the King’s eyes were saying in looks.”

Rosaline said, “You are an old love-monger — trafficker in love — and you speak skillfully and cleverly.”

Maria said, “He is Cupid’s grandfather and learns news from Cupid.”

Rosaline said, “Then Venus resembles her mother and not her father, for her father is only grim.”

Venus, the beautiful and fun-loving goddess of love, was Cupid’s mother. If Boyet were Cupid’s grandfather, he would be Venus’ father. Rosaline meant that Venus must get her beauty from her mother, not from her father.

“Do you hear, my mad wenches?” Boyet asked. “Are you listening to me?”

“No,” Maria said.

“Well, then, do you see?” Boyet asked.

He meant this: Do you see what I am trying to tell you?

Rosaline replied, “Yes, we see — our way to be gone.”

“You are too hard — too difficult — for me,” Boyet replied.

Boyet was a ladies’ man, but the ladies had defeated him. He had not succeeded in even getting a kiss.

CHAPTER 3 (*Love's Labor's Lost*)

— 3.1 —

Don Adriano de Armado and Mote, his page, talked together in King Ferdinand's park.

Armado said, "Warble, child; make passionate my sense of hearing."

He wanted Mote to sing a passionate love song.

Mote sang a song titled "Concolinel."

After the song was over, Armado said, "Sweet air! Go, tenderness of years; take this key, give enlargement to the swain, bring him festinately hither. I must employ him in a letter to my love."

As usual, Armado was using fancy language. "Tenderness of years" was a way of referring to the young boy: Mote. The swain was the yokel Costard, and "festinately" meant "quickly" and was derived from the Latin "*festina*," which means "hurry."

Mote asked, "Master, will you win your love with a French brawl?"

"How meanest thou?" Armado asked. "Brawling in French?"

Actually, a French brawl was a French dance in which the dancers moved sideways.

"No, my complete master," Mote replied, "but to jig off a tune at the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet, humor it with turning up your eyelids, sigh a note and sing a note, sometimes through the throat, as if you swallowed love with singing love, and sometimes through the nose, as if

you snuffed up love by smelling love.”

Mote was describing a lover — but an odd lover. This lover would sing a song as if it were a jig — a lively dance. The lover would also dance as he sang — he would move his feet as if he were dancing the dance known as the canary — a lively Spanish dance. At the same time as he was moving his feet, he would sigh a note and sing a note, and sometimes the note would come through his throat and sometimes it would come through his nose.

Mote then began describing the way that Armado ought to dress if he were a stereotypical lover: “Wear your hat penthouse-like over the shop of your eyes; have your arms crossed on your thin-belly doublet like a rabbit on a spit; or your hands in your pocket like a man in imitation of the old painting that I know you have seen.”

Shops sometimes had penthouses: projecting roofs. Mote was saying that lovers wore hats with broad brims. They also were thin because they wasted away with longing because they could not eat, and they either kept their arms crossed across their chest or they kept their hands in their pockets. Some painters painted portraits in which the subjects’ hands were kept in pockets because hands can be difficult to paint.

Mote continued with an additional detail of how Armado the lover ought to act: “Don’t keep too long singing one tune, but sing only a snippet.”

Why ought Armado the lover to act this way?

Mote said, “These are lovers’ behaviors and manners; these are lovers’ moods; these are the things that betray and seduce coy wenches, who would be betrayed and seduced even without these. In addition, these things make them men of note — do you note me? Are you paying attention to me? The men most inclined to do these things become

men of reputation.”

Armado asked, “How hast thou purchased this experience? How do you know this?”

Mote answered, “By my pennyworth of observation.”

Armado began to speak, “But oh —”

Unable to come up with the right words, he repeated himself, “But oh —”

Mote sang a line from a popular song: “*For oh, for oh, the hobby-horse is forgot.*”

In some dances, the dancers wore a hobby-horse — a figure of a horse that was attached to their waist. It made a comic image since the dancer appeared to be on horseback. “Hobby-horse” was also slang for “prostitute.”

Armado asked, “Callest thou my love a ‘hobby-horse’?”

“No, master,” Mote replied, “the hobby-horse is only a colt, and your love perhaps is a hackney.”

A colt was an uncut — uncastrated — young male horse, but the word “colt” was used to describe a lascivious person of either sex. A “hackney horse” was a horse for hire, and the word “hackney” was slang for “prostitute.”

Mote added, “But have you forgotten your love?”

“Almost I had,” Armado said.

“Negligent student!” Mote said. “Learn her by heart.”

“By heart and in heart, boy.”

“And out of heart, master. All those three I will prove.”

“What wilt thou prove?” Armado asked.

“I’ll prove to be a man, if I live,” Mote said. “And now I

will prove this: You love her by, in, and without your heart.

“By heart you love her, because your heart cannot come by — possess — her.

“In heart you love her, because your heart is in love with her.

“And out of heart you love her — you are out of heart because you cannot enjoy her.”

Armado said, “I am all these three, just as you said.”

Mote thought, *And you are three times as much more, and yet nothing at all. You are still a zero.*

Armado ordered Mote, “Fetch hither the swain: Costard. He must deliver a letter for me.”

Mote said to himself, “This is a message well sympathized and fittingly contrived; a horse will be ambassador for an ass.”

Armado was the ass; the horse was Costard, who would deliver the letter. To be called either an ass or a horse was an insult.

“What sayest thou?” Armado asked.

Mote said, “Indeed, sir, you must send the ass upon the horse, for he is very slow-gaited.”

To keep out of trouble, Mote was now referring to Costard as the ass. Because the ass moved slowly, he needed to be sent on horseback to perform his errand of delivering the letter.

Mote said, “But I go now. I ought to leave and get Costard.”

“The way is very short. Away! Go!” Armado said.

“I go as swiftly as lead, sir,” Mote replied.

“What is your meaning, my pretty ingenious page? Is not lead a metal that is heavy, dull, and slow?”

“*Minime*, honest master; or rather, master, no,” Mote replied.

The word “*minime*” is Latin for “not at all.”

“I say lead is slow,” Armado stated.

“You are too swift, sir, to say so,” Mote said. “Is that lead slow which is fired from a gun? Are lead bullets slow?”

“Sweet smoke of rhetoric!” Armado said. “He reputes me a cannon; and the bullet, that’s he. I shoot thee at the swain.”

“‘Bang!’ goes the cannon, and away I flee,” Mote said.

He exited.

Alone, Armado said to himself, “Mote is a most acute juvenal; he is voluble and free of grace!”

By “juvenal,” Armado meant “juvenile,” but Mote was also a satirist — a funny critic — like the Roman poet Juvenal.

Armado continued, “By thy favor, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face.”

The welkin is the sky.

He continued, “Most rude melancholy, valor gives place to thee. I am now melancholy rather than valorous.”

He then looked up and said, “My herald is returned.”

Mote returned with Costard.

Mote said, “Here is a wonder, master! Here’s a costard that has broken a shin.”

The word ‘costard’ meant either an apple or a head, neither of which has a shin — the lower part of a leg.

Armado said, “Here is some enigma, some riddle. Come, thy *l’envoi*; begin.”

He was asking for a *l’envoi*, which was the conclusion of a piece of writing and which often explained the writing’s moral.

Costard, however, thought that Armado was referring to a treatment for a broken shin.

Costard said, “No egma, no riddle, no *l’envoi*; no salve in the mail, sir. Oh, sir, plantain, a plain plantain! No *l’envoi*, no *l’envoi*; no salve, sir, but a plantain!”

“Egma” was the way Costard pronounced “enigma.”

The treatment that Costard wanted was the leaves of the plantain plant. He did not want what he thought was the treatments called egma, riddle, *l’envoi*, and salve in the mail — a mail was a kind of bag.

Knowing that Costard was mistaken about the meaning of *l’envoi*, Armado said, “By my virtue, thou enforcest laughter; thy silly thought affects my spleen; the heaving of my lungs provokes me to ridiculous smiling. Oh, pardon me, my stars! Doth the inconsiderate take salve for *l’envoi*, and the word ‘*l’envoi*’ for a salve?”

Mote asked, “Do the wise think them to be otherwise? Is not *l’envoi* a salve?”

L’envoi was a written conclusion, or an author’s farewell. The Latin word “*salve*,” which has two syllables, was used both as a greeting and as a farewell.

“No, page,” Armado said. “The word ‘*l’envoi*’ is an epilogue or discourse, to make plain some obscure

precedence that has tofore been sain.”

The archaic word “sain” meant “said,” but the word “written” was the right word and it should have been used. The archaic word “tofore” meant “earlier.”

Armado said, “I will example it: The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee, were still at odds, being but three. There’s the moral. Now the *l’envoi*.”

Mote said, “I will add the *l’envoi*. Say the moral again.”

Armado repeated, “The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee, were still at odds, being but three.”

Mote said, “Until the goose came out of door, and ended the odds by adding number four.”

Mote then said, “Now I will begin with your moral, and you follow the moral with my *l’envoi*.”

He said the moral: “The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee, were still at odds, being but three.”

Armado said, “Until the goose came out of door, ending the odds by adding number four.”

Mote said, “This is a good *l’envoi* because it ends in the goose.”

The French word for “goose” is *oie*, which is the same sound as the ending of *l’envoi*. The joke had ended with Armado saying the word “goose” — the end of the joke was “goose,” aka Armado.

Mote asked, “Would you desire more?”

Costard, realizing that Mote had called Armado a goose, aka a fool, said, “The boy has sold him a bargain, a goose, that’s flat.”

A person who has been sold a bargain has been made a fool of.

Costard said to Mote, “Sir, your pennyworth is good, if your goose be fat. To sell a bargain well is as cunning as the con game called fast and loose. Let me see, a fat *l’envoi* — aye, that’s a fat goose.”

Armado said, “Come hither, come hither. How did this conversation begin?”

Mote replied, “It began by saying that a costard had broken a shin, and then you called for the *l’envoi*.”

“True,” Costard said, “and then I called for plantain leaves. Then came in the rest of the conversation: the boy’s fat *l’envoi*, the goose that you bought; and he ended the market.”

A proverb of the time stated, “Three women and a goose make a market.” Once the goose is sold, the market is over.

Armado asked, “But tell me; how was there a costard broken in a shin?”

Mote said, “I will tell you sensibly.”

By “sensibly,” Mote meant, “in an easily understandable and commonsense way,” but Costard misunderstood “sensibly” to mean “with real emotion.”

Costard objected, “You have no feeling of it, Mote. I will speak that *l’envoi*: I, Costard, running out, that was safely within, fell over the threshold and broke my shin.”

One interpretation of Costard’s words is that as he was running from inside a building to outside the building, he tripped on the threshold and hurt his shin.

But the words supported another interpretation: Costard was having sex, he ejaculated — his semen ran out of his

penis as it was safely inside a vagina — but as he attempted one additional thrust his penis slipped out and was injured at the threshold — entrance — of the vagina. He thrust, missed the opening of the vagina, and bent his penis. In this interpretation, Costard's penis is a third leg.

Armado said, "We will talk no more of this matter."

Costard replied, "Until there be more matter — pus — in the injured shin."

Armado said, "Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee."

Costard misunderstood; he thought that Armado had said, "Sirrah Costard, I will in-Frances thee."

In this society, "Frances" was a common name for prostitutes.

Costard replied, "Oh, marry me to one Frances: I smell some *l'envoi*, some goose, in this."

"Goose" was a slang word for "prostitute."

Armado said, "By my sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty, enfreedoming thy person; thou wert immured, restrained, captivated, bound."

Costard replied, "True, true; and now you will be my purgation and let me loose."

One interpretation of this exchange, of course, is Costard was bound in prison and now Armado was going to clear — purge — him of his crime and set him loose.

But the words supported another interpretation: Costard's bowels were bound up — he was constipated. Armado was going to purge him — give him a laxative. This would loosen Costard's bowels so that he could defecate.

Armado said, "I give thee thy liberty, set thee free from

duration; and, in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this: Bear this significant to the country maid Jaquenetta.”

The “significant” was a letter that he gave to Costard.

Armado gave Costard some money and said, “Here is remuneration; for the best ward of mine honor is rewarding my dependents.”

“The best ward of mine honor is rewarding my dependents” meant “The best way to defend my honor is to reward my servants.”

Armado ordered, “Mote, follow,” and then he exited.

Mote said, “Like the sequel, I follow. Signior Costard, *adieu*.”

Costard said, “My sweet ounce of man’s flesh! My incony Jew!”

“Incony” meant “darling,” and “Jew” was Costard’s way of shortening “juvenile.”

Mote exited.

Alone, Costard said to himself, “Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration! Oh, that’s the Latin word for ‘three farthings’: ‘three farthings’ equals a ‘remuneration.’”

A farthing was worth one quarter of a penny.

Costard continued, “I will say, ‘What’s the price of this inkle — this linen yarn?’

“Back comes the reply, ‘One penny.’

“I will bargain and say, ‘No, I’ll give you a remuneration.’

“Why, it carries it away and wins the day. Remuneration! Why, it is a fairer name than ‘French crown.’ I will never buy and sell without using this word.”

Biron walked over to Costard and said, "Oh, my good knave Costard! We are exceedingly well met."

"Please, sir," Costard said, "how much carnation-colored ribbon may a man buy for a remuneration?"

"What is a remuneration?" Biron asked.

"Indeed, sir, it is a halfpenny farthing."

A halfpenny was worth two farthings, and a halfpenny farthing was worth three farthings.

"Why, then, three farthings' worth of silk," Biron said.

"I thank your worship," Costard said. "May God be with you!"

Costard started to leave, and Biron said, "Stay, rascal. I must employ thee on an errand. If you want to win my favor, my good knave, do one thing for me that I shall entreat you to do."

"When would you have it done, sir?" Costard asked.

"This afternoon."

"Well, I will do it, sir," Costard said. "Fare you well."

Again, he started to leave, but Biron said, "You don't know what it is that I want you to do."

"I shall know, sir, when I have done it," Costard replied.

"Why, villain, you must know first what I want done."

"I will come to your worship tomorrow morning to find out."

"It must be done this afternoon," Biron said. "Listen, rascal, what I want you to do is only this: The Princess comes to hunt here in the park, and in her train there is a

noble lady; when tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name, and Rosaline they call her. Ask for her, and to her white hand see that you hand over this sealed confidential letter.”

This society valued pale skin and so Biron flattered Rosaline by referring to what he called her “white hand.” But Rosaline was the darkest of the three women — Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine — and for many people in this society that made her the ugliest of the three.

He handed Costard the letter and a shilling and said, “There’s the letter and your guerdon; now go.”

A shilling is worth twelve pence, so Biron had tipped much more generously than Armado.

Mispronouncing “guerdon,” which means “reward,” Costard said, “Gardon! Oh, sweet gardon! Better than remuneration! It is eleven-pence farthing better! Most sweet gardon!”

“*Gardon*” is French for “cockroach.”

Eleven-pence farthing plus three farthings equals twelve pence. Biron’s guerdon of twelve-pence was eleven-pence farthing more than Armado’s remuneration of three farthings.

Costard said to Biron, “I will do your errand, sir, in print. I will do it to the letter. Gardon! Remuneration!”

Costard exited.

Alone, Biron said to himself, “And I, indeed, am in love! I, who have been love’s whip, a very beadle to a lovesick sigh, a censorer, nay, a night-watch constable, a domineering pedantic schoolmaster over the boy Cupid, than whom no mortal is as arrogant and proud!”

Biron was saying that he had always kept tight control of himself when it came to love. He had been like a beadle or a night-watch constable who caught prostitutes and gave them their legal punishment of a whipping. He, Biron, had been the adult master of the boy Cupid.

Biron continued, "Cupid is this blindfolded, whining, completely blind, wayward boy."

Cupid was often depicted blindfolded because love is blind.

Biron continued, "He is this senior-junior, this giant-dwarf, this Dan Cupid."

Cupid was senior and junior; he was the oldest and the youngest of gods. Love had brought order out of chaos at the beginning of the world, and so Cupid was the most senior god. However, Cupid was always depicted as a young boy, and so he was also the most junior of the gods.

Cupid was depicted as a boy, but as the god of love, he had much power. And so he was a "giant-dwarf."

"Dan Cupid" meant "Don Cupid." "Don" was a respectful title meaning "sir."

Biron continued, "Cupid is the regent of love-rhymes, the lord of folded arms, the anointed sovereign of sighs and groans, the liege of all loiterers and malcontents, the dread Prince of plackets, the King of codpieces, sole Imperator and great General of trotting apparitors."

Male lovers were stereotypically depicted with folded arms or with their hands in their pockets. Plackets were literally openings in ladies' petticoats and therefore metaphorically referred to female genitalia. A codpiece was literally a pouch that was fitted to a man's breeches and which covered the genitals and therefore metaphorically referred to male genitalia. Apparitors were legal officers who

summoned sex offenders to appear in court.

Biron continued, “Oh, my little heart! And I am to be a Corporal of his field, and wear his regimental colors like an acrobat’s hoop with its brightly colored ribbons!

“What, I! I love! I woo! I seek a wife!

“A woman is like a German clock, very complex and breaking, always being repaired, forever out of order, and never going right, being a watch, but needing to be watched so that it may still go right!”

Biron’s view of women was poor: Women needed to be constantly watched lest they commit adultery.

Biron continued, “Because I am in love, I will be perjured, which is worst of all; I will break my vow.

“And, among the three women — Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine — I love the worst of all. She is wightly — unfortunately — wanton with a forehead as soft and smooth as velvet, with two pitch-black balls stuck in her face for eyes. Yes, and by Heaven, she is one who will do the deed and have illicit sex even though Argus the hundred-eyed monster were her eunuch and her guard.”

Eunuchs — castrated men — were used to guard harems in some societies to avoid any chance of the guards sleeping with members of the harem.

Biron continued, “And I to sigh for her! To stay awake at night so that I can watch her lest she commit adultery! To pray for her!

“Bah! This is a plague that Cupid will impose on me to punish me for my neglect of his almighty dreadful little might.

“Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, woo, and groan.

“Some men must love my lady, and some men must love Joan.”

“Joan” was used to refer to a lower-class woman. Biron had in mind the proverb “Joan is as good as my lady in the dark.” “My lady” was used to refer to an upper-class woman.

Biron was in love, but he honestly felt that he was in love with the worst of the three women the Princess had brought with her from France.

Why would he think this? After all, he hardly knows her and he hardly knows anything about her.

Boyet is the reason. Boyet had managed to convey the impression in a very brief conversation that he had slept with Rosaline.

CHAPTER 4 (Love's Labor's Lost)

— 4.1 —

The Princess was going hunting in King Ferdinand's park. With her was her train of attendants and a forester, as well as Boyet, Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine.

The Princess asked, "Was that the King — that man whom we saw spurring his horse so hard up the virtually perpendicular hill?"

"I don't know," Boyet replied, "but I don't think it was he."

"Whoever he was, he showed a mounting mind," the Princess said.

Members of this society enjoyed joking about sex, and some of her listeners may have thought about a man mounting a woman.

The Princess continued, "Well, lords, today we shall have our dispatch: We will have completed our diplomatic mission and will have official leave to go. On Saturday we will return to France."

"So then, forester, my friend, where is the bush where we must stand and play the murderer in?"

Part of the official entertainment for the Princess was hunting deer. She was being taken to a place from which she could shoot an arrow at a deer. Although she did not care for hunting, part of being a good guest and ambassador involved participating in the entertainment arranged by the host.

The forester replied, "Nearby, upon the edge of yonder coppice of trees, is the stand — the hunter's station — where you may make the fairest shoot."

The fairest shoot was the best shot, but the Princess deliberately misinterpreted the words “fairest shoot” in part to mean “the most beautiful growing thing.”

She said, “I thank my beauty. I am fair and I am alive and growing and I shoot, and because of that you speak about the fairest shoot.”

“Pardon me, madam, for I did not mean it that way,” the forester said.

He did not want the Princess to think that he, a commoner, was flirting with her.

“What! What!” The Princess was in a joking mood. “First you praise me and then you take it back! Oh, short-lived pride! I am not fair! I am not beautiful! Alas and woe!”

“Yes, madam, you are fair,” the forester said. “You are beautiful.”

“Nay, never flatter me now,” the Princess said. “Where fair beauty is not, flattering praise cannot mend the brow and make a face beautiful. Here, my good and honest looking-glass, take this for telling the truth.”

She handed him some money and said, “Fair payment for foul words is more than due.”

“Nothing but fair is that which you have,” the forester said.

“See! See! My beauty will be saved by merit!” the Princess said. “Oh, heresy in fair, fit for these days! A giving hand, though foul, shall have fair praise.”

Roman Catholics believed that merit, such as that gotten by doing good works, was important in achieving salvation, in contrast to Protestants, who emphasized the importance of faith. The Princess’ merit was giving the forester a tip, and that had achieved salvation for her beauty — after

receiving the tip, the forester had said that she is beautiful.

The Princess then said, “But come, the bow. Now mercy goes to kill, and shooting well is then accounted ill.”

Although she preferred to be merciful and not kill a deer, part of her duty as ambassador was to hunt; unfortunately, if she shot well and killed a deer, it would be ill for her reputation as a person who was merciful.

The Princess continued, “Thus will I save my reputation in the shoot. Not wounding, I will say that pity would not let me do it; if wounding, then I will say that it was to show my skill.”

If she missed the deer, she could say that she felt pity for it and so she had missed on purpose so that she would not hurt it. If her arrow hit the deer, then she could say that she had shot the deer in order to demonstrate her skill at archery.

She continued, “If I kill the deer, I can say that more for praise than purpose I meant to kill, and it is no question that sometimes the thirst for glory leads us to grow guilty of detested crimes, as when, for fame’s sake, for praise, an outward part, we bend to that the working of the heart, as I for praise alone now seek to spill the blood of a poor deer that my heart means no ill.”

If she would shoot the deer in order to show her skill, she would be shooting the deer in order to gain glory. In the Princess’ opinion, causing the deer pain and taking the deer’s life only in order to gain glory was a detestable sin.

Boyet said, “Do not curst wives hold that self-sovereignty only for praise’s sake, when they strive to be lords over their lords?”

He was asking whether shrewish wives ordered their

husbands around, rather than vice versa, only to gain praise.

The Princess answered, “Yes, they do it only for praise, and praise we may give to any lady who subdues a lord.”

“Here comes a member of the commonwealth,” Boyet said.
“Here comes a citizen of this country.”

Costard walked over to the group and said, “May God give you all a good evening! Please, which of you is the head lady?”

“You shall know her, fellow, by the rest who have no heads,” the Princess said.

She may have been joking that Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine had no maidenheads — they were no longer virgins.

“Which is the greatest lady, the highest?” Costard asked.

“The greatest lady, the highest, is the thickest and the tallest,” the Princess said.

The thickest lady is the lady with the biggest waist.

“The thickest and the tallest!” Costard said. “It is so; truth is truth. If your waist, mistress, were as slender as my wit, one of these maidens’ girdles for your waist should be fit. Aren’t you the chief woman? You are the thickest here.”

“What’s your will, sir?” the Princess asked. “What do you want?”

Costard replied, “I have a letter from Monsieur Biron to one Lady Rosaline.”

“Oh, your letter, your letter!” the Princess said, delighted and curious to know the contents of the letter. “Biron is a good friend of mine.”

She took a letter from Costard and said, “Stand aside, good letter bearer.”

Then she said, “Boyet, you can carve; break up this capon.”

A capon is a castrated rooster, aka cock, that has been fattened for the dinner table, but a capon is also a love letter. According to E. Cobham Brewer’s *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* (1894), a capon is “A love-letter. In French, *poulet* means not only a chicken but also a love-letter, or a sheet of note-paper. Thus Henri IV., consulting with Sully about his marriage, says: ‘My niece of Guise would please me best, though report says maliciously that she loves poulets in paper better than in a fricasee.’”

To break up this capon meant to open the letter.

Of course, the Princess had witnessed the mean-spirited exchange of words between Boyet and Biron earlier. Remembering that may have caused her to think of a castrated cock when hearing of a love letter from Biron to Rosaline, and to refer to the letter in that way when asking Boyet to read it.

Boyet replied, “I am bound to serve.”

He looked at the letter and said, “This letter has been delivered to the wrong place; it concerns no one here. This letter is written to a woman named Jaquenetta.”

“We will read it, I swear,” the Princess said. “Break the neck of the wax, and every one give ear.”

“Break the neck of the wax” meant “Break the wax seal and open the letter,” but the Princess also had in mind breaking the neck of the capon, aka *poulet*.

Boyet read the letter, which was by Armado to Jaquenetta, out loud:

“By Heaven, that thou art fair, is most infallible; it is true that thou art beauteous; it is truth itself that thou art lovely. Thou, who are more fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer than truth itself, have commiseration on thy heroical vassal!”

By “commiseration,” Armado meant “mercy.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

“The magnanimous and most illustrate King Cophetua set eye upon the pernicious and indubitate beggar Zenelophon.”

By “illustrate,” Armado meant “illustrious.” By the phrase “pernicious and indubitate,” Armado meant “indubitably penurious” or “definitely impoverished” — “pernicious” was a malapropism for “penurious.” In this passage, he was comparing himself to King Cophetua and Jaquenetta to the beggar Zenelophon; in fact, Armado had a higher social status than Jaquenetta.

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

“And he it was that might rightly say, Veni, vidi, vici; which to annothanize in the vulgar, common language — oh, base and obscure vulgar! — videlicet, He came, see, and overcame: he came, one; see, two; overcame, three.”

Videlicet is Latin for “namely.” Julius Caesar wrote the words “*Veni, vidi, vici,*” which mean “I came, I saw, I conquered.” Armado had a fondness for archaisms, and so he wrote the archaic past tense “I see” rather than the modern “I saw.”

By “annothanize,” Armado may have meant one or more of these meanings: “anatomize, explain, interpret, gloss,

annotate.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

“Who came? The King. Why did he come? To see. Why did he see? To overcome. To whom came he? To the beggar. What saw he? The beggar. Who overcame he? The beggar. The conclusion is victory. On whose side? The King’s. The captive is enriched. On whose side? The beggar’s. The catastrophe is a nuptial. On whose side? The King’s. No, on both in one, or one in both. I am the King; for so stands the comparison: thou are the beggar; for so witnesseth thy lowliness.”

The word “catastrophe” means “denouement or outcome.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

“Shall I command thy love? I may. Shall I enforce thy love? I could. Shall I entreat thy love? I will.”

“To enforce thy love” means “to rape.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out loud:

“What shalt thou exchange for rags? Robes. For tittles? Titles. For thyself? Me. Thus, expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot, my eyes on thy picture, and my heart on thy every part. Thine, in the dearest design of industry,

“Signed, DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.”

“Tittles” are tiny, insignificant things.

By “the dearest design of industry,” Armado meant “the most heartfelt undertaking of assiduous service to a lady.”

Boyet continued reading Armado’s letter to Jaquenetta out

loud:

“Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar ’gainst thee, thou lamb, that standest as his prey. Submissive fall his Princely feet before, and he from forage will incline to play. But if thou strive, poor soul, what art thou then? Food for his rage, repasture for his den.”

The Nemean lion is the lion that Hercules killed as the first of his famous labors. Armado was referring to himself as the lion, and to Jaquenetta as the lion’s prey. The word “repasture” meant “repast”; in this case, it meant a meal in the lion’s den.

The Princess asked, “What plume of feathers is he who composed this letter? What weathervane? What weathercock? Did you ever hear better?”

A plume of feathers is metaphorically a showoff — someone who is capable of wearing feathers so that he will stand out. A weathervane is metaphorically a man who is very changeable — who constantly turns and changes similar to the way that a weathervane turns and changes with the wind. In referring to “weathervane,” the Princess was also punning on “vain.”

Boyet said, “I am much deceived if I do not remember the style.”

He meant that he remembered Armado using the same style in his speech as he had used in his letter.

“Or else your memory is bad, since you just read the letter and ought to remember its style,” the Princess said.

Boyet said, “This Armado is a Spaniard, who resides here in court; he is a phantasime, a Monarcho, and one who provides entertainment for the Prince — King Ferdinand — and his fellow bookmates.”

A phantasime is a person who behaves extravagantly.

Monarcho was the name of an insane Italian who entertained Queen Elizabeth I in her court; he believed that he was Emperor of the World.

The Princess said to Costard, "Fellow, I want a word with you. Who gave you this letter?"

"I told you," Costard said. "My lord did."

"To whom should you have given it?"

"From my lord to my lady."

"From which lord to which lady?" the Princess asked.

"From my lord Biron, a good master of mine, to a lady of France whom he called Rosaline."

"You have taken his letter to the wrong person," the Princess said, but she did not return the letter to him.

She said, "Come, lords, away."

She gave the letter to Rosaline and said, "Here, sweet, put this away. It will be your turn to receive a love letter some other day."

The Princess and a train of her attendants exited.

Boyet asked Rosaline, "Who is the suitor? Who is the suitor?"

He was teasing her by asking who was wooing her and would send her a love letter, but he pronounced "suitor" almost exactly like "shooter."

"Shall I teach you to know?" Rosaline asked.

"Yes, my container of beauty," Boyet replied.

"Why, she who bears the bow," Rosaline said, adding, "I

have finely put off — avoided — your query!”

“My lady goes to kill horns,” Boyet said, “but, if you marry, hang me by the neck if horns that year miscarry —if they are in short supply.”

By “My lady goes to kill horns,” Boyet meant that his lady boss, the Princess, had left to shoot and kill a horned deer.

The other kind of horns were the horns of a cuckold; when a man had a cheating wife who cuckolded him, horns were said to grow on the man’s head. Boyet was joking that if Rosaline were to marry, there would be no lack of horns because she would be busy cuckolding her husband with many men.

He then said, “Finely put on — a hit! My insult has found its target!”

Rosaline said, “Well, then, I am the shooter.”

“And who is your deer?” Boyet asked.

“If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near,” Rosaline said.

She was deliberating mistaking “deer” as “dear” and rejecting Boyet as her dear because, she joked, he was the type of husband she would cuckold and make grow horns.

She then said, “Finely put on, indeed! My insult has found its target!”

Maria said, “You always wrangle and combat verbally with her, Boyet, and she strikes at the brow.”

The brow, aka forehead, is where the horns of the cuckold grow; Rosaline had aimed her comic insult at Boyet’s brow.

“But she herself is hit lower,” Boyet replied. “Have I hit

her now?”

A woman’s vagina is a lower target than a cuckold’s brow. For that target to be hit, the head of a penis must enter it the way the head of an arrow must enter the center of a target.

Rosaline replied, “Shall I come upon thee with an old saying that was a man — that was mature — when King Pepin of France, Charlemagne’s father, who died in 768 A.D., was a little boy, as touching the ‘hit it’?”

Pepin the Short (*le Bref*) of France had a sister named Bellisant who was married to Alexander, the Emperor of Greece; she was falsely accused of adultery and gave birth to twin boys: Valentine and Orson.

Boyet answered, “As long as I may answer you with one as old, that was a woman — that was mature — when Queen Guinevere of Britain was a little wench, as touching the ‘hit it.’”

Queen Guinevere of Britain was famous for cuckolding her husband, King Arthur, who himself was famous for his Knights of the Round Table.

Rosaline began to sing a popular song:

“Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it,

“Thou canst not hit it, my good man.”

In other words, you, Boyet, cannot put your penis in my vagina.

Boyet then sang the next two lines:

“If I cannot, cannot, cannot,

“If I cannot, another can.”

Rosaline then exited.

Costard had enjoyed the verbal joking: “I swear that was most pleasant. How both did fit it!”

Both had fit the song; they had harmonized well together.

Another meaning was that they fit well together, just like a penis in a vagina.

Maria said, “That was a mark marvelously well shot, for they both did hit it.”

The mark is a target; the target for many men is a vagina.

Boyet said, “A mark! Oh, mark but that mark! A mark, says my lady! Let the mark have a prick in it, to aim at, if it may be.”

In archery, the prick is a bull’s-eye. In another kind of sport, it is a penis.

“You are wide of the bow hand,” Maria said. “Your hand is out.”

The bow hand is, usually, the left hand; it is the hand that holds the bow. Maria meant that Boyet had missed the bull’s-eye by shooting to the left of it.

Costard said, “Indeed, he must shoot nearer, or he’ll never hit the clout.”

The clout is a pin fixing a target; here it meant a pin in the center of the bull’s-eye. One kind of shooting is ejaculation.

When Maria had said, “Your hand is out,” she meant, “You are out of practice.”

Boyet took the meaning in another sense in his answer: “Your hand is out” equals “Your hand is out of the vagina.”

He said to Maria, “If my hand is out, then it is likely that

your hand is in.”

In other words, if I am not fingering you, it is probably because you are masturbating.

Costard said, “Then she will get the upshoot by cleaving the pin.”

One meaning of “upshoot” is “best shot,” and one meaning of “cleaving” is “splitting.” Costard meant, “Then Maria will get the best shot by shooting the arrow accurately and splitting the pin at the very center of the target.

But “upshoot,” “cleaving,” and “pin” have other meanings. Another meaning of “cleaving” was “holding fast to.”

Using the other meanings, Costard had said this: “Then she will get the man to ejaculate by firmly holding his penis.”

Maria, and the other women in this society, knew these and other double entendres.

She said, “Come, come, you talk greasily; your lips grow foul.”

“To talk greasily” is to “talk in a vulgar way.”

Costard said to Boyet, “She’s too hard for you at pricks, sir. Challenge her to bowl instead.”

One meaning was this: “Maria is too hard for you to beat at archery, sir. Challenge her to a game of bowling instead.”

Another interpretation was this: “Maria is making it too hard for you to beat her at the game of pricks — she won’t allow you to use your prick, sir. Challenge her to a game of bowling instead.”

In the game of lawn bowling, the bowl — the ball — sometimes met an obstacle. This was called rubbing. Rubbing was also a word to use to refer to masturbation

and sex.

Boyet replied, "I fear too much rubbing. Good night, my good owl — my wise person."

Boyet and Maria exited.

Alone, Costard said to himself, "By my soul, a swain — a yokel! A most simple clown!"

He was referring to Boyet.

Costard continued, "Lord, Lord, how the ladies and I have put him down! I swear, these were very sweet jests! Most incony and daring vulgar wit! When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely, as it were, it is so fitting."

Costard then compared Boyet to Armado and Mote; he thought that Boyet had the manners of Armado and the wit of Mote, so on one side Boyet was Armado and on the other side he was Mote — and Costard took pride in helping the French ladies defeat such a man as Boyet.

"Armado, on the other hand — oh, he is a most dainty man! To see him walk before a lady and to bear her fan! To see him kiss his hand! And how most sweetly he will swear!

"And his page — Mote — on the other hand, that handful of wit!

"Ah, Heavens, Boyet is a most pathetic little fellow! And I and the ladies have defeated him!"

Hearing the sounds of hunting, Costard cried, "Sola! Sola!"

This was a hunting cry, and he ran off to join the hunting party.

— 4.2 —

Holofernes the schoolmaster, Sir Nathaniel the curate, and

Dull the constable talked together in King Ferdinand's park.

A curate is a member of the clergy; it is proper to call a curate "Sir."

Holofernes is the name of Gargantua's tutor in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Rabelais' satiric masterpiece. Rabelais died in 1553.

Referring to the hunting of deer, Sir Nathaniel said, "It is a very reverend and very worthy sport, truly; and it is done in the testimony — with the warrant — of a good conscience."

2 Corinthians 1:12 reads, "*For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly pureness, and not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversation in the world, and most of all to youwards*" (1599 Geneva Bible).

Holofernes said about the deer that the Princess had shot, "The deer was, as you know, *sanguis*, in blood; ripe as the pomewater apple, which now hangeth like a jewel in the ear of *caelo*, the sky, the welkin, the Heaven; and anon, soon, falleth like a crab apple on the face of *terra*, the soil, the land, the earth."

As a schoolmaster, Holofernes showed off his knowledge by using many Latin words. For example, *caelo* is, as he said, the sky, and *terra* is, as he said, earth or land. Sometimes, he made a mistake. For example, "in blood" ought to be "*sanguine*" in Latin.

He also used strings of many synonyms in his conversation. For example, "*caelo*, the sky, the welkin, the Heaven."

"Truly, Master Holofernes," Sir Nathaniel said, "the epithets are sweetly varied, like a scholar to say the least,

but, sir, I assure ye, it was a buck of the first head.”

Holofernes had called the animal the Princess had shot a deer, but Sir Nathaniel was more specific when he called it a buck, especially when he called it a buck of the first head — a male deer that was five years old and had its first set of antlers.

Holofernes replied, “Sir Nathaniel, *haud credo*.”

“*Haud credo*” is Latin for “I don’t believe it,” but Constable Dull misunderstood and thought that Holofernes was saying that the deer was an auld grey doe. “Auld” was a way of saying “old” in Constable Dull’s dialect, and so he thought that perhaps “*haud credo*” was Holofernes’ way of pronouncing “auld grey doe.”

Constable Dull said, “It was not a *haud credo*, aka an auld grey doe; it was a pricket.”

A pricket is a two-year-old buck.

“Most barbarous intimation!” Holofernes said. “Yet a kind of insinuation, as it were, *in via*, in a way, of explication; *facere*, to make, as it were, replication, an echo, or rather, *ostentare*, to show, as it were, his inclination, after — that is, according to — his undressed and unfinished, unpolished, uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or rather, unlettered, or ratherest, unconfirmed and inexperienced fashion, to insert again my *haud credo* for a deer.”

An “intimation” is an “announcement,” and an “insinuation” is a “suggestion.”

Holofernes was saying that Constable Dull had made a very barbarous announcement that was a suggestion — a suggestion that used Holofernes’ own words of *haud credo* — and mistakenly thought that they referred to a particular type of deer.

Constable Dull repeated, “I said the deer was not an auld grey doe; it was a two-year-old buck — it was a pricket.”

Holofernes said, “Twice-sod simplicity, *bis coctus!*”

“Twice-sod” meant “twice soaked,” and “*bis coctus*” is Latin for “twice cooked.”

Holofernes continued, “Oh, thou monster Ignorance, how deformed dost thou look!”

Sir Nathaniel said, “Sir, he has never fed on the dainties that are bred in a book; he has not eaten paper, as it were; he has not drunk ink: his intellect is not replenished; he is only an animal, only sensible in the duller parts. And such barren plants are set before us, that we thankful should be, which we who of taste and feeling are, for those parts that do fructify — grow fruitful — in us more than in him.

“For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or a fool, so we see a patch set on learning, if we were to see him in a school.”

Holofernes believed that he and Sir Nathaniel were much more intelligent than Constable Dull, whom Holofernes considered to be a patch, aka fool. Anyone who saw Constable Dull in a school would, according to Holofernes, know that a fool was being made to attend lessons.

“But *omne bene*, say I — all’s well. Being of a wise old father’s mind, I say that many can brook — endure — the weather who love not the wind.”

In other words, what can’t be cured must be endured.

Sir Nathaniel was saying that Holofernes and he could not stop Constable Dull from being a fool, but they could endure him.

Constable Dull wanted to show them that he was

intelligent, so he asked them a riddle: “You two are bookmen. Can you use your wit and tell me what was a month old when Cain, a son of Adam of Garden of Eden fame, was born, but is not five weeks old as of now?”

Holofernes knew the answer: “Dictynna, goodman Dull; Dictynna, goodman Dull.”

Constable Dull asked, “What is Dictynna?”

Sir Nathaniel answered, “A title for Phoebe, for Luna, for the Moon.”

This is correct; Dictynna is an obscure title used by the Roman poet Ovid for the Moon-goddess. Dictynna, aka Britomartis, was a Cretan hunter-goddess, and Ovid identified her with the Greek hunter-goddess Artemis, whom the Romans identified with Diana, the Moon-goddess.

Holofernes said, “The Moon was a month old when Adam was no more than a month old, and the Moon did not reach five weeks old when Adam came to the age of five-score: one hundred. The allusion holds in the exchange.”

By “allusion” Holofernes meant “riddle.” The exchange was the exchange of the names Cain and Adam — the riddle worked no matter which name you used. In addition, Holofernes was making wordplay on the changes of the Moon.

Constable Dull said, “It is true indeed; the collusion holds in the exchange.”

Dull meant to say “allusion,” but it was true that Sir Nathaniel and Holofernes were colluding together in the exchange of conversation to show that they — in their opinion — were intellectually superior to Constable Dull.

Holofernes said, “God comfort thy capacity! May God

strengthen your intelligence and understanding. I say, the allusion holds in the exchange.”

Constable Dull said, “And I say, the pollution holds in the exchange; for the Moon is never but a month old, and I say besides that, it was a two-year-old buck — a pricket — that the Princess killed.”

Again, Dull meant to say “allusion,” but “pollution” was an apt word to describe the language of Sir Nathaniel and Holofernes. Certainly, such language was conducive to showing off, but it was not conducive to good communication or good conversation.

Holofernes said, “Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal and spontaneous epitaph on the death of the deer? And, to humor the ignorant, I will call the deer that the Princess killed a pricket.”

Sir Nathaniel replied, “*Perge*, good Master Holofernes, *perge* — provided that it shall please you to abrogate scurrility.”

Perge is Latin for “proceed.” “To abrogate scurrility” meant “to avoid scandalous language” — Sir Nathaniel was worried about the word “pricket.”

Holofernes said, “I will somewhat affect the letter — achieve alliteration — for it argues facility with language.”

He paused and then said, “The preful Princess pierced and pricked a pretty pleasing pricket.”

“Peful” meant “killing much prey.”

Holofernes continued, “Some say a sore; but not a sore, until now made sore with shooting.”

A sore is a four-year-old buck. Holofernes was saying that the buck was not a sore until it became sore after being shot

with the Princess' arrow.

Holofernes continued, "The dogs did yell. Add 'L' to 'sore,' and then sorel jumps from thicket."

A sorel is a three-year-old buck.

Holofernes continued, "Either it was a pricket sore, or else a sorel; in either case the people fall a-hooting. If sore be sore, then adding 'L' to 'sore' makes fifty sores of sore L."

"L" is the Roman symbol for "50."

Holofernes continued, "From one sore I a hundred make by adding but one more L. Sore L plus L equals a hundred sores."

Sir Nathaniel was impressed: "That is a rare talent!"

Constable Dull was unimpressed: "If a talent is a claw, look how he claws him with a talent."

For one meaning of "talent, Dull had in mind "talon." Holofernes was impressing Sir Nathaniel with a talent for bad word play and a talent for creating bad extemporaneous alliterative poetry; it was as if Holofernes' 'talent' was a talon clawing Sir Nathaniel.

Holofernes said, "This is a gift that I have — it is simple, simple, and it is a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions and suggestions, revolutions and reflections. These are begot in the ventricle — the hollow depths — of memory, nourished in the womb of the *pia mater*, which is a protective membrane covering the brain, and are delivered, aka given birth to, upon the mellowing of occasion and opportunity. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it."

Sir Nathaniel said, "Sir, I praise the Lord for you; and so

may my parishioners; for their sons are well tutored by you, and their daughters profit very greatly under you. You are a good member of the commonwealth.”

Sir Nathaniel, who had been worried about the word “pricket,” had just made — unaware — some mistakes of the type he feared. One meaning of “their daughters profit very greatly under you” was “their daughters increase in size — grow pregnant — under you.” The word “member” also had a second, sexual meaning.

Holofernes replied, “By Hercules, if their sons be ingenuous and intelligent, they shall want no instruction; if their daughters be capable, I will put it to them.”

Again, the passage about daughters had a second, sexual meaning. “Capable” meant “mature,” and it also meant “capable of having sex.” The phrase “put it to them” also had a second, sexual meaning.

Holofernes then looked up and said, “But *vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*; a soul feminine saluteth us.”

“*Vir sapit qui pauca loquitur*” is Latin for “A man is wise who speaks few words.”

The “soul feminine” was Jaquenetta, who walked over to Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel. She was accompanied by Costard.

Jaquenetta said to Sir Nathaniel, “May God give you a good morning, master Person.”

“Person” was her pronunciation of “Parson.”

Holofernes said, “Master Person, *quasi* pierce-one?”

“*Quasi*” is Latin for “as if” or “as if it were.”

Holofernes continued, “If one should be pierced, which is the one?”

Costard answered, “Indeed, master schoolmaster, he who is most like a hogshead.”

A hogshead is a barrel. A barrel of wine is tapped — pierced — in order to get the wine out of the barrel.

“Piercing a hogshead!” Holofernes said. “That is a good luster of conceit in a tuft of earth.”

“A good luster of conceit” is “a good spark of imagination,” and “a tuft of earth” is a “clod.” Holofernes regarded Costard as a clod, but he enjoyed Costard’s joke.

Holofernes said about the joke, “It is fire enough for a flint, and pearl enough for a swine. It is pretty; it is well.”

He was thinking of two proverbs: “In the coldest flint there is hot fire” and “Cast not pearls before swine.”

This time using the correct pronunciation of “Parson,” Jaquenetta said, “Good master Parson, be so good as to read this letter to me. It was given to me by Costard, and sent to me from Don Armado. I beseech you, read it.”

She gave the letter to Sir Nathaniel, who began to read it.

Holofernes had heard Jaquenetta say, “I beseech you,” meaning, “Please.” He now launched into a quotation using the Latin word “*precor*,” which means “I beseech” or “I ask.”

He said, “‘*Facile precor gelida quando peccas omnia sub umbra ruminat*’ — and so forth.”

The Latin means, more or less, “Easily, I pray, since you are making a mess of everything in the cool shade. It ruminates [...]”

The Latin quotation is inaccurate. The correct quotation is this: “‘*Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra ruminat*.’”

The Latin means, “Faustus, since your whole flock is ruminating in the cool shade, I pray [...]”

The Latin quotation is the first few words of the first poem in the *Eclogues*, published in 1498. Johannes Baptista Spagnolo of Mantua, who was known as the Mantuan, wrote the highly regarded *Eclogues*.

Holofernes continued, “Ah, good old Mantuan! I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice: *Venetia, Venetia, chi non ti vede non ti pretia.*”

The Italian words mean, “Venice, Venice, he who does not see you does not value you.”

In other words, anyone who sees Venice loves Venice.

Holofernes continued, “Old Mantuan, old Mantuan! Who understandeth thee not, loves thee not.”

He began to sing a musical scale of notes: “*Ut, re, sol, la, mi, fa.*”

Later, “do” replaced “ut.”

Holofernes had sung the scale of notes in the wrong order. This is the right order: *ut (do), re, mi, fa, sol, la.*

He then asked Sir Nathaniel, “Under pardon, sir, what are the contents of the letter? Or rather, as Horace says in his —”

While talking, he glanced at the letter, and surprised by what he saw, he said, “— what, on my soul, verses?”

Sir Nathaniel replied, “Aye, sir, and the verses are very learned.”

Holofernes requested, “Let me hear a staff, a stanze, a verse; *lege, domine.*”

“*Lege, domine*” is Latin for “Read, sir.”

Sir Nathaniel read the verses, which formed a sonnet:

“If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?”

The sonnet, of course, was written by Biron, who wanted Rosaline to read it. This line means, “If falling in love makes me break my oath not to fall in love, how then can I swear an oath that I am in love?”

“Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow’d!

“Though to myself forsworn, to thee I’ll faithful prove.

“Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like osiers bowed.”

In other words, when I swore my oath, I thought that it would stand as firmly as an oak and not bow before anything, but when I saw you the words of my oath became flexible like willow branches and bowed before you.

Osiers are willows.

“Study his bias leaves and makes his book thine eyes,”

In other words, seeing you, the student sets aside his favorite subject to study and instead studies your eyes.

“Where all those pleasures live that art would comprehend.

“If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice;

“Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend,

“All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder;

“Which is to me some praise that I thy parts admire.”

Biron meant that he deserved some praise for being intelligent enough to admire the personal characteristics of Rosaline.

“*Thy eye Jove’s lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder,*”

Jove is Jupiter, King of the gods.

“*Which not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.*”

“Not to anger bent” meant “not angry.”

“*Celestial as thou art, oh, pardon, love, this wrong,*

“*That sings Heaven’s praise with such an Earthly tongue.*”

Holofernes complained about Sir Nathaniel’s reading, “You find not the *apostrophas*, and so miss the accent.”

The apostrophe is used to indicate a missing vowel, and so it is used in contractions and to show other elisions — two syllables become one syllable when they are elided. If poetry contains elisions, and the elisions are not properly pronounced, words can be accented incorrectly and the meter thrown off.

But did Holofernes know what he was saying? Biron’s sonnet contains one contraction — *vow’d* — of a word that is sometimes pronounced as two syllables in poetry. Were any other elisions needed?

Holofernes said, “Let me supervise the *canzonet*.”

In other words, let me look over the little poem.

He continued, “Here are only numbers ratified; but, as for the elegancy, facility, and golden cadence of poesy, *caret*.”

“Numbers ratified” are “verses that are metrically correct” — the verses have the correct stresses and number of syllables.

“*Caret*” is Latin for “it is lacking.”

Holofernes continued with praise for Ovid, author of the

Metamorphoses. Ovid's family name is "Naso," which means "nose."

He said, "Ovidius Naso was the man, and why, indeed, Naso, but for smelling out the odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention?"

The "jerks of invention" are "flashes of inspiration." Holofernes was praising Ovid for his inspiration, and he went on to accuse Biron of being a mere imitator — someone who followed someone else.

The Latin word "*imitari*" means "to imitate."

Holofernes said, "*Imitari* is nothing: so doth the hound his master, the ape his keeper, the tired horse his rider."

To imitate someone is to be led by his example. The dog and the ape can be led by leashes tied to their necks, and a tired horse can be led by the reins. The dog, the ape, and the tired horse follow whichever man leads them by the leash or the rein.

He then said to Jaquenetta, "But, *damosella* virgin, was this directed to you?"

"*Damosella*" means "damsel" or "maiden." It is Medieval Latin.

Jaquenetta replied, "Aye, sir, from one Monsieur Biron, one of the strange Queen's lords."

The word "strange" meant "foreign."

Previously, Jaquenetta had said that Armado had sent the poem to her. Perhaps she realized that Armado was incapable of writing in this style, and perhaps she had learned from Costard that Biron had written a letter and asked him to deliver it. Of course, she was wrong when she said that Biron was one of the strange Queen's — ahem,

Princess' — lords; Biron was one of the King's lords.

Holofernes said, "I will overglance the superscript."

This meant, "I will look at to whom this is addressed."

He read out loud, "*To the snow-white hand of the most beauteous Lady Rosaline.*"

Rosaline was dark-skinned; "snow-white" was a conventional compliment in a society that valued light skin.

Holofernes then said, "I will look again on the intellect of the letter, for the nomination of the party writing to the person written unto."

The intellect of the letter was the person writing the letter — that person had used his intellect to write the letter. Holofernes wanted to find out that person's "nomination," which Holofernes misused for "name." "Nomination," however, does have a Latin root that means "name": *nomine*.

He read out loud, "*Your ladyship's in all desired employment, BIRON.*"

Biron was offering to do whatever Rosaline wanted him to do: "all desired employment."

Holofernes said, "Sir Nathaniel, this Biron is one of the votaries with the King; and here he has framed a letter to a sequent of the stranger Queen's, which accidentally, or by the way of progression, has miscarried."

A "sequent" is a "follower."

Holofernes was saying that the letter had been delivered to the wrong person, either accidentally or because of the route it had traveled.

He then said to Jaquenetta, "Trip and go, my sweet. Deliver

this paper into the royal hand of the King: it may concern much and be important. Stay not thy compliment; I forgive thy duty; *adieu*.”

Holofernes wanted Jaquenetta to hurry; she need not curtsy to him and take a formal leave-taking.

Jaquenetta said, “Good Costard, go with me.”

She then said, “Sir, may God save your life!”

“Have with thee, my girl,” Costard said. “I will go with you.”

Costard and Jaquenetta exited.

Complimenting Holofernes on his decision to have Jaquenetta deliver the letter to King Ferdinand, Sir Nathaniel said, “Sir, you have done this in the fear of God, very religiously; and, as a certain Father saith —”

The Father was a Father of the Church.

Holofernes interrupted, “— tell me not of the father; I do fear colorable colors.”

In the proverb “I fear no colors,” the word “colors” means “battle flags.” A now rare definition of “colorable” is “fraudulent.” Therefore, “colorable colors” could mean “fraudulent battle flags.” Apparently, Holofernes wanted to avoid religious disputation. Discussing religion can lead to battles, both metaphoric and physical. Holofernes may also have been thinking that the father was a Catholic priest. He wanted to avoid any disputes between Catholic and Protestant theology. Catholics could say that Protestants fought under a fraudulent battle flag, and vice versa.

Holofernes then said, “But to return to the verses: Did they please you, Sir Nathaniel?”

Sir Nathaniel replied, “I liked them marvelously well for

the penmanship.”

Holofernes said, “I dine today at the home of the father of a certain pupil of mine; where, if, before repast, it shall please you to gratify the table with a grace, I will, on my privilege I have with the parents of the foresaid child or pupil, undertake your *ben venuto*; where I will prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savoring of poetry, wit, nor invention. I beseech your society.”

“*Ben venuto*” is Italian for “welcome.”

Sir Nathaniel said, “And I thank you, too; for society, saith the text, is the happiness of life.”

Holofernes said, “And, *certes*, the text most infallibly concludes it.”

“*Certes*” is French for “certainly.”

Holofernes then said to Constable Dull, “Sir, I do invite you, too. You shall not say me nay: *pauca verba*.”

“*Pauca verba*” is Latin for “few words.” A proverb stated, “Few words are best.”

Holofernes continued, “Away! Let’s go! The gentlefolk are at their game, and we will go to our own recreation.”

— 4.3 —

Biron stood alone, holding a paper, in King Ferdinand’s park.

He said these things to himself:

“The King is hunting the deer; I am coursing — pursuing and hunting — myself.”

A husband and wife become one. Biron, who was not married, was seeking his other, better half.

Biron continued to speak to himself: “They have pitched a toil, a net into which the game will be driven so that it can be shot; I am toiling in a pitch — I am trying to get out of the mess I am in.”

He was thinking of Rosaline’s pitch-black eyes — eyes that had captured him in a net of love and had caused him to break his oath to stay away from women. Literally, pitch is boiled-down tar, a deep-black substance.

Biron continued to speak to himself: “This is pitch that defiles.”

He was thinking of this proverb: “He that touches pitch shall be defiled.”

The proverb was derived from Ecclesiasticus 13:1, which is part of the Apocrypha: “*He that toucheth pitch, shal be defiled therewith, and hee that hath fellowship with a proude man, shall be like vnto him*” (1611 King James Version).

Biron continued to speak to himself: “Defile! A foul word.

“Well, set yourself down, sorrow, and stay awhile! In other words, I must have patience. For so they say the fool said, and so say I, and therefore I am also a fool. Well proven, wit! I am definitely a fool; my thoughts prove it!

“By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax: This love kills sheep. It kills me, and therefore I am a sheep. Well proven again on my side! My wit gets much credit for correct reasoning!”

During the Trojan War, Achilles, the greatest Greek warrior, was killed. Afterwards, his armor was awarded to one of the living Greeks. According to Quintus of Smyrna’s epic poem *Posthomerica*, the armor was awarded to the Greek warrior who had done the most to recover the corpse

of Achilles. Two warriors — Great Ajax and Odysseus — had done the most to recover Achilles' corpse, and so a vote was taken to determine which of the two would get the armor. Achilles' armor was awarded to Odysseus, and this hurt Great Ajax so much that he went insane. According to Sophocles' tragedy *Ajax*, Great Ajax slaughtered sheep, thinking that they were Odysseus and Agamemnon, the main leader of the Greeks against the Trojans.

Biron continued to speak to himself: "I will not love. If I do, hang me; truly and faithfully, I will not love.

"Oh, but her eye — by this light, but for her eye, I would not love her; yes, for her two eyes."

Biron had mentioned one eye, and then he had mentioned Rosaline's two eyes. The one eye could be her vagina.

Biron continued to speak to himself: "Well, I do nothing in the world but lie, and I lie in my throat."

"To lie in one's throat" is to be an outrageous liar.

Biron continued to speak to himself: "By Heaven, I do love, and it has taught me to rhyme as I write sonnets, and to be melancholy. Here in my hand is part of my rhyme, and here is my melancholy."

He was referring to the paper he was holding in his hands; on it he had written a sonnet.

Biron continued to speak to himself: "Well, she has one of my sonnets already. The clown — Costard — bore it, the fool — me — sent it, and the lady — Rosaline — has it: sweet clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady!

"By the world, I would not care a pin, if the other three were in the same situation I am in."

In other words, Biron would not mind if King Ferdinand,

Longaville, and Dumain were also in love.

Biron looked up, saw someone coming, and said to himself, “Here comes someone holding a piece of paper. May God give him grace to groan because he is in love!”

Biron climbed a tree.

King Ferdinand walked under the tree and said, “Ay me!”

“Ay me” is an expression indicating sorrow.

Biron said to himself, “Shot by immortal Cupid and in love, by Heaven! Proceed, sweet Cupid. You have thumped him with your bird-bolt under the left pap and in his heart. Truly, I will hear secrets!”

A bird-bolt is a blunt arrow used by mortals to shoot birds.

King Ferdinand read out loud the sonnet he had written:

“So sweet a kiss the golden Sun gives not

“To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,

“As thy eye-beams, when their fresh rays have smote

“The night of dew that on my cheeks down flows:”

The “night of dew” refers to the tears that the lovesick King Ferdinand sheds at night.

“Nor shines the silver Moon one half so bright

“Through the transparent bosom of the deep,”

The “deep” is the “night.”

“As doth thy face through tears of mine give light;

“Thou shinest in every tear that I do weep:”

By “Thou shinest,” King Ferdinand meant “Your reflection shines.”

“No drop but as a coach doth carry thee;

“So ridest thou triumphing in my woe.”

In the above two lines, King Ferdinand compared the Princess of France to a woman who had conquered him and now was riding a coach — a chariot — in a Roman triumphal procession.

“Do but behold the tears that swell in me,

“And they thy glory through my grief will show:

“But do not love thyself; then thou wilt keep

“My tears for glasses, and still make me weep.”

The “glasses” are looking-glasses, aka mirrors.

“Oh, Queen of Queens! How far dost thou excel,

“No thought can think, nor tongue of mortal tell.”

King Ferdinand then said to himself, “How shall she know my griefs? I’ll drop this paper somewhere she can find it.”

He saw someone coming and said, “Sweet leaves, shade — hide — my folly. Who is he who comes here?”

He hid behind the tree and said, “What, Longaville! And he is reading! Listen, my ears.”

Biron said to himself, “Now, in your likeness, one more fool appears!”

Longaville, carrying pieces of paper stuck in his hat, said to himself, “Ay me, I am forsworn! I have broken my oath!”

Biron said, “Why, he comes in like a perjurer, wearing papers.”

In this society, people who had perjured themselves were forced to display a sign on themselves that stated their

offense.

King Ferdinand said to himself, “He is in love like me, I hope. We have a sweet fellowship in shame!”

Biron said to himself, “One drunkard loves another of the name.”

Longaville asked himself, “Am I the first who has perjured himself so?”

Biron said, “I could give you comfort. Not by just two whom I know, for there is a third. You make up the triumvirate, the corner-cap of society, the shape of Love’s Tyburn that hangs up simplicity and foolishness.”

Biron had mentioned things that formed a three. A triumvirate is a political group composed of three men. A corner-cap is a cap that has three sides. At the village of Tyburn was a gallows made of three wooden beams.

Longaville said to himself, “I fear these stubborn lines lack the power to move my beloved emotionally.”

He read out loud, “*Oh, sweet Maria, empress of my love!*”

Then he said to himself, “These verses I will tear up, and write in prose.”

He tore up the sonnet.

Biron said to himself, “Oh, rhymes are guards on wanton Cupid’s hose. Disfigure not his shop.”

In this society, the hose — tights or trousers — that men wore contained a codpiece that covered and accentuated the genitals; often codpieces were highly decorated. “Guards” are “ornamental trimmings.” “Cupid’s shop” is where he does his work — the genitals.

Longaville looked at another piece of paper and said, “This

poem shall go to my beloved.”

He read his sonnet out loud:

“Did not the Heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,

“’Gainst which the world cannot hold argument,

“Persuade my heart to this false perjury?

“Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.

“A woman I forswore; but I will prove,”

By “forswore,” Longaville meant “renounced.” By “prove,” Longaville meant “establish to be true.”

“Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:

“My vow was Earthly, thou a Heavenly love;

“Thy grace being gained cures all disgrace in me.

“Vows are but breath, and breath a vapor is:”

A proverb stated, “Words are but wind.”

“Then thou, fair Sun, which on my Earth dost shine,

“Exhalest this vapor-vow; in thee it is:”

By “exhalest,” Longaville meant “draw up” or “evaporate.”

“If broken then, it is no fault of mine:

“If by me broke, what fool is not so wise

“To lose an oath to win a paradise?”

Biron said to himself, “This is the lover-vein, which makes flesh a deity, and which makes a green goose — an immature girl — a goddess: It is pure, pure idolatry. God amend us, God amend us! We are much out of the way. May God help us! We lovers are far gone.”

Longaville asked himself, “By whom shall I send this sonnet to Maria?”

He looked up, saw someone coming, and said to himself, “Company! Wait!”

He hid himself.

Biron said to himself, “All hid, all hid — just like in the old game Hide-and-Seek that is played by children. Like a demigod here sit I in the sky, and wretched fools’ secrets heedfully overeye.”

Seeing Dumain arriving and carrying a piece of paper, he added, “More sacks to the mill! Oh, Heavens, I have my wish! All of us are in love! Dumain is transformed into a lover! We are four woodcocks in the same dish!”

Woodcocks are proverbially stupid birds.

Dumain said to himself, “Oh, most divine Kate!”

Biron, whose opinion of Katherine was different, said to himself, “Oh, most profane coxcomb!”

A coxcomb was a hat worn by a professional jester; it resembled the comb of a cock, aka rooster. In other words, Biron was saying that she had the head of a fool.

Dumain said to himself, “By Heaven, the wonder in a mortal eye!”

Biron said to himself, “By Earth, she is not a wonder. Corporal — there you lie.”

Dumain was a Corporal in the army of Love.

Dumain said to himself, “Her amber hair for foul has amber quoted.”

He meant that the amber of Katherine’s hair makes real

amber seem ugly. People see her amber hair and declare that real amber is ugly.

Actually, Dumain's words were ambiguous. They could also be interpreted as saying this: Real amber makes the amber of Katherine's hair seem ugly. People see real amber and declare that Katherine's amber hair is ugly.

Biron said to himself, "An amber-colored raven was well noted."

In other words, it would be notable to find an amber-colored raven. By saying this, Biron was also comparing Katherine to a raven; in other words, she was ugly. The raven was regarded as a foul fowl.

Dumain said to himself, "She is as upright as the cedar."

Biron said to himself, "Stoop, I say; get your head out of the clouds. She has a rounded shoulder — it looks as if her shoulder is pregnant with a child."

Dumain said to himself, "She is as fair as day."

Biron said to himself, "Yes, she is as fair as some days — the days during which the Sun doesn't shine."

Dumain said to himself, "Oh, that I had my wish!"

Longaville said to himself, "And that I had mine!"

King Ferdinand said to himself, "And I mine, too, good Lord!"

Biron said to himself, "Amen, as long as I had mine. Isn't 'mine' a good word?"

Dumain said to himself, "I would forget her, but like a fever she reigns in my blood and she will be remembered."

Biron said to himself, "A fever in your blood! Why, then

incision would let her out in saucers. Sweet misprision!
Sweet deficient comparison!”

In this society, fevers were often treated by bloodletting. A shallow incision was made so the patient would bleed, and the blood was collected in saucers.

Dumain said to himself, “Once more I’ll read the ode that I have written.”

Biron said to himself, “Once more I’ll mark how love can vary wit — how love can change an intelligent man’s thinking and cause him to express that love in different ways.”

Dumain read his poem out loud:

“On a day — alack the day! —

“Love, whose month is ever May,

“Spied a blossom passing fair”

The word “passing” meant “surpassingly.”

“Playing in the wanton air:

“Through the velvet leaves the wind,

“All unseen, can passage find;”

The word “can” — an archaic verb — meant “did.”

“That the lover, sick to death,”

The word “That” meant “So that.”

“Wished himself the Heaven’s breath.

“‘Air,’ quoth he, ‘thy cheeks may blow;

“‘Air, would I might triumph so!

“‘But, alack, my hand is sworn

“Never to pluck thee from thy thorn;

“Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,”

The word “unmeet” meant “unsuitable” and “improper.”

“Youth so apt to pluck a sweet!

“Do not call it sin in me,

“That I am forsworn for thee;

“Thou for whom Jove would swear

“Juno but an Ethiopie were;

“And deny himself for Jove,

“Turning mortal for thy love.”

The last four lines stated that Jove, aka Jupiter, King of the gods, would, for love of Katherine, say that his wife, Juno, was as ugly as an Ethiopian — most people in this society thought that Ethiopians were ugly because most people in this society valued light hair and light skin. Jove would also give up his immortality and his position as King of the gods so that he could be with Katherine.

Dumain said to himself, “This poem I will send to Katherine, and something else more plain that shall express my true love’s fasting pain. My love is fasting because it is unrequited.

“Oh, I wish that the King, Biron, and Longaville were lovers, too, like me! Ill, to example ill, would from my forehead wipe a perjured note; for none offend where all alike do dote.”

In other words, one lovesick man, to help another lovesick man, would from his forehead wipe away a mark of perjury. One way to do this would be for all men who had

sworn not to love to break their vows by loving. When everyone breaks a vow, no one points out that someone has broken the vow.

In this society, people who had perjured themselves were forced to display a sign on themselves that stated their offense. Dumain was referring to that kind of sign.

In addition, he was referring to a love sonnet that a lovesick man such as himself or Longaville could stick in his hat. The love sonnet expressed a true love, but it was a perjured note because its existence showed that the author had broken a vow not to pursue a woman.

In addition, in Dante's *Purgatory*, an angel marks seven P's on the foreheads of saved sinners beginning to climb the Mountain of Purgatory in order to purge themselves of the seven deadly sins. As each of the seven levels of the mountain is climbed, one of the seven deadly sins is purged and an angel uses a wing to remove one of the P's from the sinner's forehead.

When Dumain said that "for none offend where all alike do dote," he meant that if each of the four men — himself, King Ferdinand, Biron, and Longaville — committed perjury by breaking their oath, none of them would blame the others because they had all broken the same oath. This is true — once every man's lovesickness has been revealed.

Longaville came out of hiding and said, "Dumain, your love is far from Christian charity. You may look pale, but I also would blush, I know, if I were overheard and taken napping so."

King Ferdinand came out of hiding and said to Longaville, "Come, sir, you blush. As his is, your case is also such. You chide him, although you offend twice as much.

"You do not love Maria? Longaville did never a sonnet for

her sake write, nor ever lay his wreathed, folded arms athwart his loving bosom to keep down his heart?"

The heart of a lovesick or otherwise emotionally excited man can beat rapidly. In this society, people would thump their chest to keep their heart from beating so rapidly. In this case, Longaville could simply fold his arms over his chest — a position a lover often takes — and that would keep his heart from beating so rapidly.

King Ferdinand continued, "I have been closely shrouded in this bush and watched you both and saw that you both blushed. I heard your guilty rhymes, observed your fashion of acting, saw sighs exude from you, and noted well your passion: 'Ay me!' says one. 'Oh, Jove!' the other cries.

"One says her hairs are gold; the other says crystal are the other beloved's eyes.

"You, Longaville, would for paradise break faith, and your oath.

"And Dumain, if you were Jove, for your love you would infringe an oath.

"What will Biron say when he shall hear that your oath and faith are so infringed, which with such zeal you did swear? How he will scorn! How he will expend his wit! How he will triumph, leap with glee, and laugh at it!

"For all the wealth that ever I did see, I would not have him know so much about me."

Biron said to himself, "Now I will step forth and whip hypocrisy."

He climbed out of the tree and said, "Ah, my good liege, I pray that you pardon me! Good heart, what grace have you, thus to reprove these worms for loving, when you are the most in love?"

“Your eyes make no coaches? In your tears there is no certain Princess who appears? You’ll not be perjured because it is a hateful thing?

“Tush, you say, none but minstrels like the act of sonneting!

“But aren’t you ashamed? Aren’t you, all three of you, ashamed to be thus much overshot? All of you said an oath and made study your target, but all of you missed that target.

“Longaville found Dumain’s mote, the King did Longaville’s mote see, but I a beam do find in the eye of each of you three.”

A mote is a speck.

Biron was referring to Matthew 7:3: “*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*” (King James Bible).

Biron continued, “Oh, what a scene of foolery have I seen, of sighs, of groans, of sorrow, and of woeful teen! Oh, me, with what strict patience have I sat, to see a King transformed to a gnat! To see great Hercules whipping a gig, and profound Solomon tune a jig, and Nestor play at push-pin with the boys, and critic Timon laugh at idle toys and useless trivialities!”

Children sometimes played a game with a spinning top. They would start it spinning, and then hit it with a whip to keep it spinning. To “tune a gig” is to sing or play a song. Push-pin was a game in which children tried to get pins into the other child’s territory. Timon was a famous misanthrope whom William Shakespeare wrote about in his tragedy *Timon of Athens*.

Biron continued, “Where lies your grief, oh, tell me, good

Dumain?

“And gentle Longaville, where lies your pain?”

“And where lies my liege’s?”

“Your pains lie all about the breast. Someone bring a caudle, ho! Someone bring a medicinal drink!”

King Ferdinand said, “Too bitter is your jesting. Are we betrayed — exposed — thus to your over-view?”

“You are not betrayed by me, for I am betrayed by you,” Biron said. “I, who am honest and who holds it to be a sin to break the vow that I am engaged in, am betrayed by keeping company with men like you — men of inconstancy.”

“When shall you see me write a thing in rhyme? Or groan for Joan? Or spend a minute’s time in preening myself? When shall you hear that I will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye, a walking gait, a posture, a brow, a breast, a waist, a leg, a limb?”

Biron, seeing Jaquenetta and Costard walking towards them, started to hurry away. He had given Costard a sonnet to give to Rosaline, and he feared that he would be first exposed as a lover and then exposed to ridicule.

“Wait!” King Ferdinand said. “Why are you hurrying away so fast? Is he a true man or a thief who gallops so?”

“I run posthaste away from love,” Biron said. “Good lover, let me go.”

Jaquenetta and Costard walked over to the men.

Jaquenetta said, “God bless the King!”

Seeing the letter Jaquenetta was holding, King Ferdinand asked, “What present have you there?”

Costard replied, "Some certain treason."

King Ferdinand asked, "What is treason making — doing — here?"

Costard said, "Treason makes nothing, sir."

King Ferdinand said, "If it mars nothing either, then the treason and you go may go away in peace together."

"I beseech your grace, let this letter be read," Jaquenetta said to the King as she handed him the letter. "Our person suspects it; it is treason, he said."

As she had done previously, Jaquenetta pronounced "parson" as "person." She was also mistaken about the person who suspected the letter; that person was the schoolmaster Holofernes, not the parson Sir Nathaniel. In addition, nothing at the time had been said about treason.

Handing Biron the letter, King Ferdinand said, "Biron, read it over."

He then asked Jaquenetta, "Where did you get the letter?"

"From Costard."

King Ferdinand asked Costard, "Where did you get it?"

"From Dun Adramadio, Dun Adramadio."

Of course, he meant Don Armado.

Biron recognized his own handwriting, and he tore up the letter.

"What are you doing?" King Ferdinand asked. "What is the matter with you? Why did you tear up the letter?"

Biron replied, "It is a trifling thing like a toy, my liege, just a toy. Your grace needs not fear it."

Longaville said, “It caused Biron to feel strong emotion, and therefore let’s hear it.”

Dumain gathered up the pieces from the ground, looked at them, and said, “This is Biron’s handwriting, and here is his name.”

Biron said to Costard, “Ah, you useless blockhead! You were born to do me shame.”

He then said to King Ferdinand, “I am guilty, my lord, guilty! I confess, I confess.”

“You confess what?” King Ferdinand asked.

“I confess that you three fools lacked me — a fourth fool — to make up the mess of four who dine together at a table. He, he, and you — that’s you, my liege — and I are pick-purses in love, we are trying to steal love, and we deserve to die.”

In this society, the usual punishment for pick-purses — that is, pickpockets — was death by hanging.

Biron continued, “Oh, dismiss this audience, and I shall tell you more.”

“Now the number is even,” Dumain said.

The goose — Biron — made the number even. He was the *l’envoi*.

“True, true; we are four,” Biron said. “Will these turtledoves — these lovers, Jaquenetta and Costard — be gone?”

King Ferdinand said to Jaquenetta and Costard. “Hence, sirs; away!”

In this society, the word “sir” could be used to refer to a woman.

Costard said, “The true — loyal — folk now walk away, and they let the traitors stay.”

Costard and Jaquenetta walked away.

Biron said, “Sweet lords, sweet lovers — oh, let us embrace! We are as true — steadfast — as flesh and blood can be. We are true to our youth and the reason we were born. The sea will ebb and flow, Heaven will show its face; young blood does not obey an old decree, and we cannot cross, aka oppose, the cause, aka reason, why we were born.”

Young hot-blooded men do not obey an old decree. Even if they swear an oath to take up study and give up women, they are unable to keep that oath.

Young hot-blooded men also cannot oppose the reason why they were born — they cannot oppose their lustful feelings. We are born to have children and perpetuate the human species.

Biron continued, “Therefore, all of us must be forsworn. All of must break our oath.”

King Ferdinand asked, “Did these torn-up lines of writing reveal some love of yours?”

“Did they, ask you?” Biron replied. “Whoever sees the Heavenly Rosaline will act like an uncivilized and savage Sun-worshipping man of India, seeing the first dawning of the gorgeous east. Both will bow their vassal head and, having been struck blind, either by the Sun or by the beauty of Rosaline, both will touch the base ground with obedient breast.

“What peremptory eagle-sighted eye that dares look upon the Heaven of Rosaline’s brow will not be blinded by her majesty?”

Eagles were reputed to be able to stare at the Sun without harming their eyes, but according to Biron, the beauty of Rosaline would blind even a person with eyes like those of an eagle.

King Ferdinand said, “What zeal, what fury, has inspired you now? My love, the Princess, who is Rosaline’s superior, is a gracious Moon. Compared to my love, Rosaline is an attending star, a scarcely seen light.”

Biron replied, “My eyes are then no eyes, nor am I Biron. Oh, but for my love, day would turn to night! Of all complexions the culled sovereignty — the excellence selected as the highest — meet, as at a fair, in her fair cheek, where several worthy beauties make one perfect beauty, where nothing is missing that the desire for perfection itself does seek.

“Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues, the embellishment of all civilized languages — bah, that is painted, artificial, cosmetic rhetoric! Oh, Rosalind does not need it. To things for sale a seller’s praise belongs; sellers praise what they have for sale, hoping that someone will buy from them. Rosaline surpasses praise, and therefore praise is inadequate to do her beauty justice and so praise becomes a blot and a blemish.

“A withered hermit, five-score winters worn, might shake off fifty of his hundred years, looking her in the eye. Looking at a beautiful woman varnishes and renews an aged man, making him as if he were newly born, and to the old man with the crutch it gives the infancy of a babe in the cradle.

“Oh, beauty is the Sun that makes all things shine.”

King Ferdinand said, “By Heaven, your love is as black as ebony.”

Biron said, “Is ebony like her? Oh, wood and word divine!
A wife made of such wood would be felicity itself.

“Oh, who can help me to give an oath? Where is a Holy Bible so that I may swear beauty does beauty lack, if beauty does not learn from looking at Rosaline’s face how beauty should look. No face is fair that is not fully as black as the face of Rosaline.”

Biron was not only saying that black is beautiful; he was also saying that only black is beautiful.

“Oh, that is a paradox!” King Ferdinand said. “Black is the badge — the distinguishing sign — of Hell; it is the hue of dungeons and the suit of night. Beauty’s true badge, which is lightness, becomes the Heavens well.”

Biron replied, “Devils soonest tempt when they resemble spirits of light.”

He was thinking of 2 Corinthians 11:14: “*And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of light*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Biron continued, “Oh, if in black my lady’s forehead is decked, that black mourns that cosmetics and wigs should ravish doters with a false appearance, and therefore Rosaline was born to make black fair.

“Rosaline’s appearance changes the fashion of these days, for native blood — rosiness — is thought to be devalued like cosmetics now, and therefore a woman with a naturally pink complexion who wants to avoid dispraise, uses cosmetics to make herself black in order to imitate Rosaline’s black forehead.”

Dumain said, “To look like Rosaline, chimney-sweepers make themselves black.”

Longaville said, “And since Rosaline’s beauty became

fashionable, colliers are accounted bright.”

A collier is a dealer in charcoal or pit-coal.

King Ferdinand said, “And Ethiopians boast about their sweet complexion.”

Dumain said, “Dark needs no candles now, for dark is light.”

Biron said, “Your lady friends never dare to come in contact with rain, for fear their colors — which are due to cosmetics — would be washed away.”

King Ferdinand said, “It would be good, if yours did; for, sir, to tell you plain, I’ll find a fairer face that has not washed today.”

Biron replied, “I’ll prove that Rosaline is fair, aka beautiful, or I’ll talk until doomsday here.”

King Ferdinand said, “No devil will frighten you then so much as she.”

Dumain said, “I never before knew a man to hold such vile stuff so dear.”

Longaville raised one of his feet, on which were black shoes, and said, “Look, here’s your love. Look at my foot and see her face.”

Biron said, “Oh, if the streets were paved with your eyes, her feet would be much too dainty for such a path to tread!”

“Oh, vile!” Dumain said, “Then, as she walks, what upward lies the street would see as she walked overhead. The street, if it had my eyes, would be able to look up her skirt.”

“But what about all this?” King Ferdinand said. “Aren’t we all in love?”

“Nothing is as sure as that we are all in love,” Biron said, “and thereby we are all forsworn. All of us have broken our oath.”

“Then let us stop this chattering,” King Ferdinand said, “and, good Biron, now prove that our loving is lawful, and that our faith is not torn. Make a reasonable argument that our falling in love is allowed and that we have not actually broken our oath.”

“Yes, indeed, do that!” Dumain said. “We need some clever trickery with words to show that we have not done this evil of perjury.”

“Oh, we need some authority, some precedent, on how to proceed,” Longaville said. “We need some tricks, some subtle distinctions, that will teach us how to cheat the devil.”

“We need some salve for perjury,” Dumain said.

Biron rose to the occasion.

“It is more than necessary,” he said. “Here goes, then, affection’s men at arms. All of us are now warriors in Love’s army.

“Consider what you first did swear to do: to fast, to study, and to see no women. That is flat treason against the Kingly status of youth.

“Say, can you fast? Your stomachs are too young and inexperienced, and abstinence engenders maladies. Not eating causes illness.

“Oh, we have made a vow to study, lords, and in that vow we have forsworn our books. For when would you, my liege, or you, Longaville, or you, Dumain, in leaden and dull contemplation have learned to write such fiery, passionate verses as the prompting eyes of beauty’s tutors

have enriched you with?

“Other slow arts occupy the brain, and only the brain, and therefore scarcely show a harvest from the heavy toil of their barren and uninspired practitioners. These dreary studies occupy the brain and have no application outside of the brain.

“But love, first learned in a lady’s eyes, lives not alone immured and walled up in the brain. Instead, love, with the speed of winds and storms, runs as swiftly as thought in every faculty and function, and gives to every faculty and function a double power, over and above their customary functions.

“Love adds a precious seeing to the eye. A lover’s eyes will gaze an eagle blind. The eyes of a lover can look at an eagle and make the eagle blind, proving that the lover is brighter than the Sun, which cannot blind the eagle.

“A lover’s ear will hear the lowest sound. When the ears of a thief, who is suspicious of every sound, are shut, the lover’s ears will still be able to hear.

“Love’s feeling is softer and more sensitive than are the tender horns of snails who carry around their shell.

“Love’s tongue proves that dainty, fastidious Bacchus, the god of wine and feasting, is gross in taste in comparison.

“As for valor, is not Love a Hercules, constantly climbing trees in the garden of the Hesperides?”

One of Hercules’ famous labors was stealing some golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides, immortal nymphs who lived in the west and took care of the garden.

Biron continued, “Love is as subtle as the Sphinx and as sweet and musical as bright Apollo’s lute, which is strung with his hair.”

The Sphinx is a mythological creature with the head of a human and the body of a lion. In Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, the Sphinx, which has the head of a woman, asks Oedipus this riddle: What goes on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening? If Oedipus cannot answer this riddle correctly, the Sphinx will kill him. Fortunately, Oedipus does answer the riddle correctly: Man, who goes on hands and knees as a crawling baby, two legs as a healthy adult, and two legs and a cane as an old person.

Biron continued, "And when Love speaks, the voices of all the gods make Heaven drowsy with the harmony.

"Never has a poet dared to touch a pen to write until his ink is mixed with Love's sighs. Oh, once his pen is so mixed, then his lines ravish savage ears and plant mild humility in tyrants.

"From women's eyes I derive this doctrine. Women's eyes sparkle with the true Promethean fire — they constantly throw out sparks of the true Promethean fire."

Prometheus, who was a Titan (one of the primordial — which means existing from the beginning of time — giant gods who ruled the Earth until Zeus conquered them), stole fire from the gods and gave it to early Humankind. In some versions of the myth, the fire was the spark of life.

Biron continued, "Women's eyes are the books, the arts, the academies, that show, contain, and nourish all the world. Without the help of women's eyes, no man can prove to be excellent in anything.

"And you were fools to forswear these women, or if you keep the oath you swore, you will prove to be fools.

"For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love,

“Or for love’s sake, a word that loves — inspires and is lovable to — all men,

“Or for men’s sake, the authors of these women,

“Or for women’s sake, by whom we men are men,

“Let us immediately and once and for all time lose our oaths so that we can find ourselves, or else we will lose ourselves by keeping our oaths.”

Biron was thinking of Matthew 16:25: “*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

“It is within the beliefs of our religion to be thus forsworn, for charity itself fulfills the law, and who can sever love from charity?”

Biron was thinking of Romans 13:8: “*Owe nothing to any man, but to love one another; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

One meaning of “Who can sever love from charity?” is “Who can separate *amor* (sexual love) from *caritas* (spiritual love)?”

Biron was thinking of 1 Corinthians 13:13: “*And now abideth faith, hope and love, even these three; but the chiefest of these is love*” (1599 Geneva Bible). In many translations, the word “charity” is used instead of “love.” For example, this is the translation in the King James Bible: “*And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*”

King Ferdinand said, “Saint Cupid, then! And, soldiers, to the battlefield!”

“Saint Cupid” was a battle cry; the standard English battle cry was “Saint George!”

Biron said, "Advance your standards, and set upon them, lords. Pell-mell! Down with them! But be first advised that in our conflict you get the Sun of them."

This is one meaning of what Biron said: "Lift up the poles holding your battle flags and let's go fight the enemy. Pell-mell! Down with the enemy! But be first advised that in our conflict that you get the Sun so that it is shining in their faces; that will give us a military advantage."

This is another meaning of what Biron said: "Lift up the 'poles' in front and just under your waist and let's get on top of the ladies, lords. Fast and furious! Let's get active so that we can 'kill' the enemy! But be first advised that in our 'conflict' with the ladies we get each of them pregnant with a son."

Longaville said, "Now to plain-dealing and plain-speaking; let us lay these glozes — bits of superficial wordplay — aside. Shall we resolve to woo these girls of France?"

"Yes, and to win them, too," King Ferdinand said. "Therefore, let us devise some entertainment for them in their tents."

Biron said, "First, from the park let us conduct the ladies toward that place, and as we head there let every man seize the hand of the fair woman he loves.

"In the afternoon we will with some exceptional pastime entertain them — some sort of entertainment that we can come up with in the short time we have to do the planning.

"We know that revels, dances, masquerades, and merry hours run before fair Love, strewing her way with flowers."

"Away! Away!" King Ferdinand said. "Let's go now! No time shall be omitted that will come to pass and may by us be fitted. We will make good use of all the time available to

us.”

Biron cried, “*Allons! Allons!*”

“*Allons! Allons!*” is French for “Let’s go! Let’s go!”

King Ferdinand, Longaville, and Dumain exited.

Alone, Biron said to himself, “Sowed cockle reaped no corn.”

This means, “If you sow weeds, you will not reap wheat.”

Biron continued, “And justice always whirls in equal measure: Light wenches may prove to be plagues to men forsworn. If so, our copper buys no better treasure.”

This means, “Justice always whirls around like the Wheel of Fortune in a fair and equitable manner. Wanton women may prove to be plagues to men who have broken their vows. But even if so, our copper coins — which have little value — can buy no better treasure.”

CHAPTER 5 (*Love's Labor's Lost*)

— 5.1 —

The schoolmaster Holofernes, the curate Sir Nathaniel, and Constable Dull talked together in King Ferdinand's park. The three men had dined together at the home of the father of one of Holofernes' pupils.

Holofernes said, "*Satis quod sufficit.*"

The Latin sentence means, "Enough is sufficient." As a proverb, its meaning is this: "Enough is as good as a feast."

"I praise God for you, sir," Sir Nathaniel said to Holofernes. "Your remarks at dinner have been sharp and full of wise sayings; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affectation, audacious without impudence, learned without arrogance, and novel without heresy. I did converse the other day with a companion of the King's, who is graced with the name of, nominated, or called Don Adriano de Armado."

Holofernes said, "*Novi hominem tanquam te.*"

The Latin sentence means, "I know the man as well as I know you."

Holofernes continued, "Armado's disposition is lofty, his discourse peremptory and resolved, his tongue refined and smooth, his eye ambitious, his gait majestic, and his general behavior vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical — boastful and vainglorious. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected and foppish, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate and affectedly foreign, as I may call it."

Sir Nathaniel said, "A most singular and choice epithet — a most singular and appropriate turn of phrase."

He drew out his notebook so he could write down the phrase.

Holofernes said, “Armado draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple, aka material, of his argument, aka subject. I abhor such fanatical phantasimes.”

A phantasime is an extravagantly behaved person.

Holofernes continued, “I abhor such insociable, aka intolerable, and point-devise, aka affectedly precise and immaculate, companions.

“I abhor such rackers of orthography — he is a person who tortures correct spelling, as we can tell by the way he pronounces words.

“Armado speaks ‘dout,’ *sine* b, when he should say ‘doubt’; he speaks ‘det,’ when he should pronounce ‘debt’ — d, e, b, t, not d, e, t.”

Sine is Latin for “without.”

Holofernes continued, “Armado clepeth a calf, cauf; half, hauf; neighbor *vocatur* nebor; neigh abbreviated ne.”

“Clepeth” is an archaic verb meaning “calls.”

Holofernes pronounced the “igh” in the words “neighbor” and “neigh”; he pronounced it somewhat like one of the ways of pronouncing the German word “*ich*,” which means “I.”

“*Vocatur*” is a Latin word that means “is called.”

Holofernes was a member of an English Renaissance group who wanted English words to be spelled and pronounced as closely as possible to those Latin words on which the English word was thought to be based. The English word “doute” became “doubt” because of the Latin word “*dubitum*,” and the English word “dette” became “debt”

because of the Latin word “*debitum*.” Holofernes wanted the letter “b” in these words to be pronounced.

Holofernes continued, “This is abominable — which he would call abominable.”

People used to think that the word “abominable” came from the Latin phrase “*ab homine*,” which means “away from man,” or “unnatural.” Actually, it comes from the Latin word “*abominabilis*,” which means “contemptible.”

Holofernes continued, “It insinuateth me of insanie. *Ne intelligis, domine?* To make frantic, lunatic.”

Holofernes was complaining that such pronunciations drove him insane.

“*Ne intelligis, domine?*” is Latin for “Do you understand, sir?”

Sir Nathaniel said, “*Laus Deo, bone intelligo.*”

He had meant to say, “Praise be to God, I understand well,” but he made a mistake. He said “*bone*” instead of “*bene*.”

Holofernes said, “*Bone? Bone for bene?* Priscian is a little scratched, but it will serve.”

Priscian, who flourished in 500 A.D., was a scholar whose Latin grammar book was used for many centuries.

“To break Priscian’s head” meant “to mangle Latin grammar.” Here, Holofernes was saying that Sir Nathaniel’s Latin was a little wrong, but it would serve — Holofernes understood what Sir Nathaniel meant.

Sir Nathaniel looked up and asked, “*Videsne quis venit?*”

The Latin sentence means, “Do you see who is coming?”

Holofernes looked and then replied, “*Video, et gaudeo.*”

The Latin sentence means, “I see, and I rejoice.”

Don Adriana de Armado, Mote, and Costard walked over to Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel.

Armado greeted them: “Chirrah!”

As usual, Holofernes disliked Armado’s pronunciation: “*Quare* ‘chirrah,’ not ‘sirrah’?”

“*Quare*” is Latin for “why.”

“Sirrah” was a word used to address a male of inferior status to that of the speaker.

Armado said, “Men of peace, well encountered.”

Holofernes replied, “Most military sir, salutation.”

Mote said quietly to Costard, “They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.”

Costard replied, “Oh, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words.”

An alms-basket was a basket used to collect scraps of leftover food for the impoverished. Armado, Holofernes, and Sir Nathaniel used fancy words — those left over from the conversation of ordinary people, who do not use them.

Costard continued, “I marvel that your master has not eaten you for a word, for you are not so long by the head — as tall — as the word ‘*honorificabilitudinitatibus*.’”

“*Honorificabilitudinitatibus*” is the dative or ablative case of a Medieval Latin word that means, “In the state of being honored.” The English word “honorificability,” meaning “honorableness,” is interesting because it has only alternating vowels and consonants. The word appeared in *Bailey’s Dictionary*, published in 1721.

Costard continued to remark on Mote's small size: "You are more easily swallowed than a flap-dragon."

A flap-dragon is a raisin in brandy that has been set on fire.

Mote said, "Peace! Silence! The peal begins."

The peal was the noise of conversation between Holofernes and Armado.

Armado asked Holofernes, "Monsieur, are you not lettered?"

Mote said, "Yes, yes, he is; he teaches boys the hornbook."

The hornbook was used in teaching. A leaf of paper showed the alphabet; it was placed on a wooden rectangular block with a handle and covered with transparent horn to protect it. When heated, horn becomes malleable. When scraped thin enough, horn is transparent.

Mote asked Holofernes, "What is 'a, b,' spelt backward, with the horn on his head?"

Holofernes replied, "The answer is 'ba,' *pueritia*, with a horn added."

The word "*pueritia*" is Latin for childhood; Holofernes was calling Mote a child.

Mote said, "Baa, most silly sheep with a horn. You hear his learning."

He was making fun of Holofernes by calling him a sheep.

Holofernes asked, "*Quis, quis*, you consonant?"

"*Quis*" is Latin for "who." He was asking, "Who is the sheep, consonant?"

By calling Mote a consonant, Holofernes was saying that Mote is insignificant. A vowel can form a syllable by itself,

but a consonant cannot. To say “b,” one must say the consonant “b” and the vowel “e.”

Mote replied to Holofernes’ question, “The third of the five vowels, if you repeat them; or the fifth, if I repeat them.”

Holofernes said, “I will repeat them — a, e, i — ”

Mote finished the sentence that began with Holofernes’ “I”: “— the sheep.”

In other words, “I — that is, Holofernes — am the sheep.”

Mote continued, “The other two vowels conclude it — o, u.”

In other words, “Oh, ewe” or “Oh, you.” “U” being the fifth of five syllables, as Mote pronounced them, “u” — that is, ewe, or you, Holofernes — is the sheep.

Armado, who got the joke, said, “Now, by the salt wave of the Mediterranean, a sweet touch, a quick venue of wit! Snip, snap, quick and home! It rejoiceth my intellect: true wit!”

“Mediterraneum” was Armado’s way of pronouncing “Mediterranean.”

A “touch” is a “hit” in fencing; a “venue” is a “sword-thrust” in fencing. “Home” means “right to the target.”

“To snip-snap” is “to engage in smart repartee.” “Quick and home” means “by being quick, you hit the target.”

Mote said, “Offered by a child to an old man, who is wittold.”

A “wittold” is a witting — knowing — cuckold, the husband who knows that he has an unfaithful wife but who does nothing about it.

Holofernes asked, “What is the figure? What is the figure?”

“Figure” means “figure of speech” or “emblem.”

Mote replied, “Horns.”

Horns were said to grow on the forehead of a cuckold, and so they were the emblems of a cuckold.

Holofernes said, “Thou disputest like an infant, a child. Go, whip thy gig.”

“Whip thy gig” meant “play with your top.” A whip could be used to keep a top spinning.

Mote said, “Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip about your infamy *manu cita* — I will make a gig out of a cuckold’s horn.”

“*Manu cita*” is Latin for “with a ready hand.”

Costard said to Mote, “If I had but just one penny in the world, I would give it to you so you can buy gingerbread. Wait, there is the very remuneration I had from your boss, you halfpenny — little — purse of wit, you pigeon-egg — small egg — of discretion.”

Costard gave Mote some money and said, “Oh, if the Heavens were so pleased that they would make you my bastard, what a joyful father you would make me!

“There; you have it — the money — *ad* dunghill, at the fingers’ ends, as they say.”

A pile of manure is a dunghill; dung is manure.

Holofernes said, “Oh, I smell false Latin; Costard used ‘dunghill’ for ‘*unguem*.’”

The word “*unguem*” is Latin for “fingertip.” The Latin phrase “*ad unguem*” is Latin for “to the fingertip,” which is

idiomatic for “exact in detail.”

Armado said to Holofernes, “Arts-man, aka scholar, preambulate, aka walk ahead of the others with me, we will be singled, aka singled-out, from the barbarous. Do you not educate youth at the charge-house, aka school, on the top of the mountain?”

Holofernes replied, “Or *mons* — the hill.”

Armado said, “At your sweet pleasure, for the mountain.”

He preferred the more grandiose geographical structure.

Hearing “mounting,” as in “sexual mounting,” rather than “mountain,” Holofernes replied, “I do, *sans* question.”

“*Sans*” is French for “without.”

Armado said, “Sir, it is the King’s most sweet pleasure and affection to congratulate — salute — the Princess at her pavilion in the posteriors of this day, which the rude multitude call the afternoon.”

“Posteriors” meant “later parts,” as well as “buttocks.”

Holofernes replied, “The posterior of the day, most generous and noble-minded sir, is liable and apt, congruent and fitting, and measurable and suited for the afternoon. The word is well culled, chosen, sweet, and apt, I do assure you, sir, I do assure you.”

Armado replied, “Sir, the King is a noble gentleman, and my familiar, I do assure ye, my very good friend. As for what is inward and secret and private between us, let it pass. I do beseech and ask thee to remember thy courtesy. I beseech thee, apparel thy head.”

The phrase “remember thy courtesy” means either “take your hat off” or “put your hat on.”

Holofernes had taken off his hat for some reason.

Armado continued, “And among these private things the King and I have shared other importunate, burdensome, and most serious designs, and of great import indeed, too, but let that pass, for I must tell thee, it will please his grace, by the world, sometime to lean upon my poor shoulder, and with his royal finger, thus, dally with my excrescence, aka my hair, with my mustachio; but, sweet heart, let that pass.

“By the world, I recount no fable. Some certain special honors it pleaseth his greatness to impart to Armado, a soldier, a man of travel, who has seen the world; but let that pass.

“The very all of all, aka sum of everything, aka most important thing, is — but, sweet heart, I do implore secrecy — that the King would have me present the Princess, sweet chuck, aka sweet chick, with some delightful ostentation, or show, or pageant, or antic, aka grotesque show, or firework.

“Now, understanding that the curate and your sweet self are good at such eruptions of wit and sudden breakings out of mirth, as it were, I have acquainted you withal, to the end to crave your assistance.”

Holofernes knew immediately the kind of entertainment that he wanted King Ferdinand — and Armado — to present to the Princess of France: “Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies.”

The Nine Worthies were nine great men: three from the Bible, three from classical times, and three from romances.

The three from the Bible were Joshua, King David, and Judas Maccabaeus.

The three from classical times were Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar.

The three from romances were King Arthur, Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon.

Holofernes, however, wanted the Roman Pompey the Great and the mythological hero Hercules to be among the Nine Worthies.

Holofernes continued, “Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies. Sir Nathaniel, as concerning some entertainment of time, some show in the posterior of this day, to be rendered by our assistants, at the King’s command, and this most gallant, illustrate, and learned gentleman, before the Princess — I say none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.”

Holofernes was excited. He said “illustrate” instead of “illustrious,” and his syntax was not clear. But it was clear that he wanted to present the Nine Worthies, and he believed that they could find performers who would be fit to present the Nine Worthies.

Sir Nathaniel asked, “Where will you find men worthy enough to present them?”

Holofernes replied, “Joshua, yourself; myself; and this gallant gentleman, Judas Maccabaeus.”

Holofernes was so excited that he continued to not be clear. Perhaps he meant that he would play King David. “This gallant gentleman” was Armado.

He continued, “This swain, Costard, because of his great limb or joint and his great size, shall pass as Pompey the Great. The page, Mote, will be Hercules —”

Armado interrupted, “Pardon, sir; error. Mote is little; he is not quantity enough for that Worthy’s thumb. Mote is not even as big as the end of Hercules’ club.”

“Shall I have audience?” Holofernes said. “Listen to me.

Mote shall present Hercules in minority. He will play Hercules as a baby. His entrance and exit shall be strangling a snake; and I will have an apology — a prologue — for that purpose.”

When Hercules was an infant, Juno, Queen of the gods, who hated Hercules because her husband, Jupiter, had cheated on her and fathered Hercules with a mortal woman, sent two snakes to kill him as he slept. The infant Hercules woke up and used his great strength to strangle the two snakes.

Mote said, “An excellent device! An excellent plan! So, if any of the audience hiss, you may cry, ‘Well done, Hercules! Now you are crushing the snake!’ That is the way to make an offense gracious, although few have the grace to do it.”

Audiences hiss actors when audience members dislike them. But in this case, Holofernes could pretend that the hissing of the audience was the hissing of the snake.

Armado asked, “What about the rest of the Worthies?”

Holofernes replied, “I will play three myself.”

Mote said, “You are a thrice-worthy gentleman!”

Armado asked, “Shall I tell you a thing?”

Holofernes replied, “We attend. We are listening.”

Armado said, “We will have, if this fadge not, an antic.”

In other words, “If this presentation of the Nine Worthies does not succeed, we will have an antic — a grotesque spectacle.”

This could mean that if the presentation of the Nine Worthies failed, it would be a grotesque spectacle, or that if the presentation of the Nine Worthies failed, they would

have as a backup entertainment an antic.

He then said, “I beseech you, follow me.”

They had stopped to talk because Holofernes was so excited, but now Armado wanted to start walking again.

Holofernes said, “*Via*, goodman Dull!”

One meaning of “*Via*” in Italian is “Hurry up!”

He then said to Constable Dull, “Thou hast spoken no word all this while.”

Constable Dull replied, “Nor understood none neither, sir.”

“*Allons!*” Holofernes said. “We will employ thee. We will find something for thee to do.”

“*Allons!*” is French for “Let’s go!”

Constable Dull said, “I’ll make one in a dance, or something like that; or I will play on the tabor — a small drum — to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay.”

“Most dull, honest Dull!” Holofernes said. “To our sport, away! To our entertainment, let’s go!”

— 5.2 —

The Princess, Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine talked together. They had received presents and poems from the men of Navarre who loved them: King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain.

The Princess said, “Sweet hearts, we shall be rich before we depart Navarre and go home to France, if fairings come thus plentifully in.”

“Fairings” are presents that are called “fairings” because the word originally referred to small presents bought at fairs.

The Princess, who had received a pendant depicting a lady with a border made of diamonds, said, "A lady walled about with diamonds! Look what I have received from the loving King!"

Rosaline asked, "Madame, did anything else come along with that?"

"Nothing but this!" the Princess said, waving a piece of paper. "Yes, as much love in rhyme as would be crammed up in a sheet of paper, written on both sides of the leaf, margin and all, so that he was forced to put his wax seal on the place where he had written the name of Cupid."

"That was the way to make his godhead wax and grow," Rosaline said. "For he has been for five thousand years a boy."

People in this society believed that the world had existed for only 5,000 years, and so Cupid had been in existence all that time, and he had been a boy all that time.

Katherine said, "Yes, and he has been a wily, trouble-making fellow who deserves to be hung on a gallows, too."

"You'll never be friends with him," Rosaline said. "He killed your sister, who died because of Love."

"He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy, and so she died," Katherine said. "Had she been light, like you, of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit, she might have been a grandmother before she died. And so may you; for a light heart lives long."

The four women were able to make jokes about each other; friends sometimes engage in light teasing and light insults.

Rosaline asked, "What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?"

The word “light” can mean “lighthearted,” or it can mean “having light heels.” A woman with light heels is a wanton woman.

Katherine replied, “A light condition — disposition — in a dark beauty.”

“We need more light to find your meaning out,” Rosaline said.

“You’ll mar the light by taking it in snuff,” Katherine said. “Therefore, I’ll darkly end the argument.”

When a candle is snuffed, the light is marred — the light goes out. The idiom “to take in snuff” means “to be annoyed.”

“Whatever you do, you do it still in the dark,” Rosaline said.

One meaning of “do it” is “have sex.”

Two meanings of “still” are “always” and “not moving.”

“So do not you, for you are a light wench,” Katherine said.

Katherine had used “light” to mean “wanton.”

Deliberately misinterpreting “light” to refer to her weight, Rosaline replied, “Indeed, I weigh not as much as you, and therefore I am light.”

“You weigh me not?” Katherine said, “Oh, that means that you don’t care for me.”

“I have a great reason for that,” Rosaline said, “for ‘past cure is still past care.’ What cannot be helped is not to be worried about.”

The Princess approved of this exchange of witty lines and compared it to a tennis match in which words, not a ball,

were volleyed back and forth: “Well bandied both; this is a set of wit well played.

“But Rosaline, you have a favor, too. Who sent it? And what is it?”

By “favor,” the Princess meant a “mark of favor or esteem from a lover,” aka “love token,” but Rosaline deliberately misinterpreted the word as meaning “appearance.”

Rosaline said, “I wish you knew. If my face were as fair as yours, my favor would be as great. But be a witness to this” — she held up a piece of paper — “I have love verses, too. I thank Biron for them. The numbers — the poetic meter — are true, and if his numbering — enumeration — of my good points was also true, I would be the fairest goddess walking on the ground. In these lines of love poetry, I am compared to twenty thousand beautiful women. Oh, he has drawn my picture in his letter!”

“Is his picture of you anything like the real you?” the Princess asked.

“There is much likeness in the letters; no likeness at all in the praise,” Rosaline replied.

The letters were written with black ink, and Rosaline was black, so the letters and Rosaline were alike. But Rosaline knew, of course, that all the praise heaped on her in the love poem was much more than she deserved. In fact, all of the ladies were amused by the undeserved praise heaped upon them in their love letters.

“You are as beautiful as ink,” the Princess said. “That is a good conclusion.”

Katherine said, “Rosaline is as fair as a text B in a copy-book.”

She was referring a highly ornate gothic capital B in a

copybook — such a letter required much black ink.

Rosaline said, “Beware pencils.”

The ladies were beginning to metaphorically draw — describe — each other’s faces. Such an activity can lead to hurt feelings, even if done humorously.

Rosaline continued, “Let me not die your debtor.”

In other words, let me not die without having first repaid you the insult you gave to me and that I owe you.

She continued, “My red dominical, my golden letter, oh, that your face were not so full of O’s!”

Katherine’s face was pink and her hair was golden — light-colored. A red dominical is a red letter that was used to mark Sundays and feast days in an almanac. Golden letters were also used to mark Sundays and feast days. Katherine had survived smallpox, a disease that left her face bearing O-shaped scars.

The Princess said, “A pox on that jest! And I beshrew all shrews — I scold all scolds!”

She then asked, “But, Katherine, what was sent to you from fair Dumain?”

Katherine replied, “Madam, this glove.”

In this society, gloves were ornate and expensive.

The Princess asked, “Didn’t he send you two gloves?”

“Yes, madam, and moreover he sent me some thousand verses written by himself, a faithful lover. Those verses are a huge expression of hypocrisy, vilely written, and of profound simplicity — complete foolishness.”

Maria said, “This letter and these pearls were sent to me

from Longaville. The letter is too long by half a mile.”

“I think no less,” the Princess said. “Don’t you wish in your heart that the pearl necklace was longer and the letter was short?”

Maria wrapped her hands in the necklace and replied, “Yes, or I wish these hands might never part.”

The Princess said, “We are wise girls to mock our lovers so.”

The four men were wooing the four women in a courtly, old-fashioned way; the women wondered whether they were being mocked. The women preferred a different kind of wooing, one involving real conversation rather than undeserved and extravagant praise in love verses.

Rosaline said, “They are worse fools because they deserve to be mocked by us like this. That same Biron I’ll torture before I go back to France. Oh, I wish that I knew he were well and truly captured by love! How I would make him fawn and beg and seek and wait the season — wait until I’m ready — and observe the times — observe the rules — and spend his prodigal wits in bootless, unavailing rhymes and shape his service wholly to my commands and hests and make him proud to make me proud who jests!

“So pair-taunt-like would I oversway and override his state that he should be my fool and I his fate.”

“Pair-taunt-like” meant “like holding the winning hand in an old card game called post and pair.” A winning hand is a pair-taunt — a double pair royal.

The Princess said, “None are so surely caught, when they are caught, as a wit — an intelligent man — who has turned fool.

“Folly, in wisdom originated, has wisdom’s warrant and the

help of education and wit's own grace to grace — to do honor to — a learned fool.”

In other words, an intelligent man who believes something foolish will use his intelligence and his education to try to show that the foolish thing he believes is actually wise.

Rosaline said, “The blood of youth burns not with such excess as gravity's revolt to wantonness.”

In other words, a hot-blooded young man does not burn as fiercely as a serious, mature man who stops being serious and mature so that he can be wanton.

Maria said, “Folly in fools bears not so strong a note as foolery in the wise, when wit does dote, since all the power thereof it does apply to prove, by wit, worth in simplicity.”

In other words, a wise man who begins to act like a fool will act more foolishly than a fool because the wise man will use his wisdom to try to prove that it is worthwhile to be simple-minded.

The Princess said, “Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in his face. He is amused by something.”

Boyet walked over to the four ladies and said, “Oh, I am stabbed with laughter! I have been laughing so much that my sides hurt. Where's her grace? Where's the Princess?”

The Princess asked, “What is your news, Boyet?”

“Prepare yourself, madam, prepare yourself!” Boyet replied. “Arm yourselves, wenches, arm yourselves! Encounters are being mounted to disturb your peace.

“Lovers, disguised, are approaching you, and they are armed in arguments of love. You'll be surprised and taken off your guard. Muster your wits and stand in your own defense, or hide your heads like cowards and flee from

here.”

The Princess said, “Saint Denis to Saint Cupid!”

Saint Denis is the patron saint of France.

She continued, “Who are they who charge their breath and voices as if they were charging — loading — weapons against us? Tell us, scout; tell us, spy.”

Boyet replied, “Under the cool shade of a sycamore tree, I thought to close my eyes and nap some half an hour, but my purposed rest was interrupted because I saw King Ferdinand and his companions advancing toward that sycamore tree. Warily and carefully I stole into a nearby neighboring thicket, and I overheard what you shall hear over again, and that is, by and by, in disguise they will come here.

“Their herald is Mote, who is a pretty, knavish page, who well by heart has conned his message he will recite to you. Action and accent — the appropriate gestures and correct emphasis of words — they taught him there, telling him, ‘Thus you must speak,’ and ‘thus you must your body bear.’

“And every now and then they expressed a suspicion that being in the presence of your majestic presence would make him forget his part ‘for,’ said the King, ‘an angel you shall see, yet fear not, but speak boldly and audaciously.’

“The boy replied, ‘An angel is not evil; I should have feared her had she been a devil.’

“Hearing that, all laughed and clapped him on the shoulder, making the bold wag by their praises bolder.

“One rubbed his elbow like this to express his satisfaction, and he grinned and swore that a better speech was never spoken before.

“Another made the OK sign with his finger and his thumb and then cried, ‘*Via!* Come on! We will do it, come what will come.’

“The third he capered and danced joyously, and cried, ‘All goes well.’

“The fourth turned on the toe and attempted to pirouette, and down he fell.

“With that, they all tumbled on the ground, with a very zealous and profound laughter — but in the midst of this ridiculous amusement the solemn tears of overpowering emotion appeared and checked their folly.”

“What?” the Princess asked. “Are they coming to visit us?”

“They are, they are,” Boyet replied. “And they will be disguised. They will be dressed like Muscovites or Russians, I believe. Their purpose is to parley and talk, to court, and to dance; and every one will perform a love-feat — a feat done out of love — for his loved one, whom each man will know by the favors — the love tokens — that they formerly did bestow.”

“Will they do so?” the Princess asked. “The gallants shall be tasked, for, ladies, we shall each of us be masked and not a man of them shall have the privilege, aka grace, despite their wooing, to see a lady’s face. They will see the favors and masks and not our faces, and so they will not know who we really are.

“Rosaline, you shall wear the pendant that King Ferdinand gave to me, and that way the King will court you, thinking that you are his dear. You take the pendant, and give me the love token that Biron gave to you, and that way Biron will take me for Rosaline.

“Katherine and Maria, exchange your favors, too. That

way, your lovers will woo the wrong women because they will be deceived by these exchanges of favors.”

“Come on, then,” Rosaline said. “Wear the favors where they can be easily seen.”

Katherine asked, “But in this exchange of favors, what is your intention?”

The Princess said, “The intended result of my intention is to cross their intention. They are doing this only in mocking merriment; they want to make fun of us. And mock for mock is only my intention. They want to make fun of us, but we shall make fun of them.

“They shall unbosom their counsels of love to the wrong loved one, and we will mock them the next occasion that we meet, when, with our faces showing, we shall talk to them and greet them.”

Rosaline asked, “But shall we dance, if they ask us to dance?”

“No, we will prefer to die than move a foot,” the Princess said. “Nor to their prepared and written-out speech will we give any favor and grace, but while it is spoken each of us will turn away her face.”

Feeling sympathy for Mote, Boyet said, “Why, that contempt will kill the speaker’s heart, and quite divorce his memory from his part.”

“That is why I will do it,” the Princess said, “and I have no doubt the rest will never come in, if the speaker be out — if he is at a loss.

“There’s no such sport as sport by sport overthrown, to make theirs ours and ours none but our own.

“So shall we stay, mocking intended game, and they, well

mocked, will go away with shame.”

She wanted to play a practical joke on the men that would trump the practical joke — disguising themselves as Russians — that the men intended to play on her and the other ladies.

A trumpet sounded to announce the arrival of visitors.

Boyet said, “The trumpet sounds. Put on your masks; the men disguised as Russians have come.”

The four women put on masks to hide their faces. They also wore love tokens, but not their own.

Some black musicians arrived, along with Mote. Then came King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, all of whom were disguised as Russians. They were wearing visors and Russian clothing. A visor is a mask, or a disguise that helps hide one’s face.

Mote said, “All hail, the richest beauties on the earth!”

Boyet said, “Beauties no richer than rich taffeta.”

The ladies were wearing masks made of taffeta fabric.

Mote continued, “Here is a holy company of the fairest dames —”

The ladies turned their backs to him.

Mote continued, “— who ever turned their ... backs ... to mortal views!”

Biron whispered to Mote, “Not their backs! Their eyes, villain, their eyes!”

Mote said, “— who ever turned their eyes to mortal views! Out —”

Boyet said, “True; Mote is out of countenance indeed. He is

disconcerted.”

Mote continued, “Out of your favors, Heavenly spirits, vouchsafe not to behold —”

Biron whispered to Mote, “Not ‘not to behold’! *Once* to behold, rogue.”

Mote continued, “Once to behold with your Sun-beamed eyes ... with your Sun-beamed eyes —”

He was so disconcerted that he was forgetting the speech he had memorized.

Boyet said, “They will not answer to the epithet ‘son-beamed.’ It would be best to say ‘daughter-beamed’ eyes.”

More complained, “They do not listen to me, and that brings me out of countenance.”

Biron said, “Is this your word-perfect recitation of the speech that you promised us? Be gone, you rogue!”

Mote exited.

Rosaline, pretending to be the Princess, said, “What do these strangers want? Find out, Boyet. If they speak our language, we want some plainspoken man to tell us their intentions. Find out what they want.”

Boyet asked Biron, “What do you want with the Princess?”

“Nothing but a peaceful and courteous visit,” Biron replied.

Rosaline asked, “What do they say they want?”

Boyet replied, “Nothing but a peaceful and courteous visit.”

“Why, that they have,” Rosaline said, “so tell them to be gone.”

Boyet said, “She says, you have what you want, and you

may now be gone.”

King Ferdinand said, “Say to her, we have measured — traveled — many miles to tread a measure — dance a dance — with her on this grass.”

Boyet said to Rosaline, “They say that they have measured many a mile to tread a measure with you on this grass.”

“That is not true,” Rosaline replied. “Ask them how many inches are in one mile. If they have measured many miles, the measure then of one mile is easily told.”

Boyet said, “If to come hither you have measured miles, and many miles, the Princess bids you say how many inches make up one mile.”

Biron replied, “Tell her that we measure them by weary steps.”

Tired of “translating” the words of the “Russians,” Boyet said, “She hears you herself.”

Rosaline asked, “How many weary steps, of the many weary miles you have gone over, are numbered in the travel of one mile?”

Biron said, “We number nothing that we spend for you. Our duty is so rich, so infinite, that we may do it always without reckoning numbers. Do us the favor of showing us the sunshine of your face, so that we, like Sun-worshipping savages, may worship it. Take off your mask.”

Rosaline said, “My face is only a Moon, and it is clouded, too.”

Rosaline’s face was a face of night; it was dark. Like the Moon, it shone by reflected light. Rosaline’s face reflected the light of her superior, the Princess, whom she was pretending to be. Rosaline’s face was clouded; a mask hid

it.

King Ferdinand, who thought that Rosaline was the Princess, said, “Blessed are clouds, to do as such clouds do!”

The clouds — the masks — were blessed because they were so close to the Moon — the lady’s face, and to ladies’ faces in general.

King Ferdinand continued, “Permit, bright Moon, and these your attending stars, to shine, with those clouds removed, upon our watery eyes.”

The Moon was known for having an effect on water.

King Ferdinand wanted the ladies to take off their masks.

Rosaline replied, “Oh, vain petitioner! Beg a greater matter; beg for something more important. You now request nothing but Moonshine in the water.”

King Ferdinand said, “Then, in our measure do but permit us one change.”

The word “change” was a pun meaning both “one round of dancing” and “one change of the Moon.” The change he wanted was that the Moon be unclouded.

He added, “You wanted me to beg for something; this begging is not strange.”

“Play, music, then!” Rosaline said. “You must do it soon.”

Music began to play, but Rosaline said, “Not yet! No dance! I have changed my mind! Thus change I like the Moon.”

“Won’t you dance?” King Ferdinand said. “How did you come to be thus estranged and unfriendly?”

“You took the Moon at full, but now she’s changed,”
Rosaline replied.

“Yet still she is the Moon, and I am the man in the Moon,”
King Ferdinand said.

The King’s intentions toward the Princess included
marriage and sharing a bed.

Music began to play, and King Ferdinand said, “The music
plays; please give some response to it.”

He wanted her to dance.

Rosaline said, “Our ears allow us to have a response to
music.”

“But your legs should do it,” King Ferdinand said.

“Since you are strangers and come here by chance, we’ll
not be nice — we won’t stand on formality. Let’s hold
hands. But we will not dance.”

“Why do we hold hands, then?” King Ferdinand asked.

“Only so we can part as friends,” Rosaline said.

She then said to the other ladies, “Curtsy, sweet hearts; and
so the measure ends.”

“More measure of this measure,” King Ferdinand said. “Be
not nice.”

He wanted the music to continue, and he wanted to dance,
and he felt that the “Princess” — the masked Rosaline —
was being nice, aka shy or coy. He also wanted to dance
because some dances included kissing.

“We can afford to do no more at such a price,” Rosaline
said.

She was unwilling to dance with and to kiss King

Ferdinand.

“Prize you yourselves,” King Ferdinand requested. “Put your own price on yourselves. What buys your company?”

“Only your absence buys our company,” Rosaline said.

“That can never be,” King Ferdinand said. “If we Moscovites are absent and away from you, we cannot enjoy your company, and so we cannot buy your company.”

“Then we cannot be bought,” Rosaline said, “and so, *adieu*. I say *adieu* twice to your visor, and half of once to you.”

A visor is a mask, or a disguise that helps hide one’s face. Rosaline was strongly hinting that she knew that King Ferdinand was in disguise. By saying *adieu* twice to the King’s visor, she was saying that she would like for him to get rid of the disguise. By saying *adieu* only half of once to him, she was saying that she was rejecting him, but it was not a major rejection. Under different circumstances, such as meeting face to face with no masks and no disguises worn and no games played, the ladies and the gentlemen could possibly get along very well together.

“If you decline to dance, then let’s talk some more,” King Ferdinand requested.

“In private, then,” Rosaline replied.

“I am best pleased with that,” King Ferdinand said, and the two withdrew to a private spot and talked quietly.

Biron, disguised as a Russian, said to the masked Princess, whom he thought was his beloved, Rosaline, “White-handed mistress, I request one sweet word with you.”

The Princess replied, “Honey, and milk, and sugar; there are three sweet words.”

“No, then, let’s make it two treys, as if we were throwing

dice, and if you grow so nice and precise, I'll make my three sweet words metheglin, wort, and malmsey. These are three strong sweet drinks. Well run, dice! There's half-a-dozen sweets."

"Here is a seventh sweet word: *adieu*," the Princess said. "Since you play games while playing a game, I'll play no more with you. You cog the dice."

To "cog the dice" is to "load the dice," and so it means to defraud, deceive, and tell lies.

"One word in secret," Biron said.

"Let it not be sweet," the Princess said.

"You grieve my gall," Biron said. "You hit me in a sore spot."

"Gall!" the Princess said. "Bitter."

"And therefore suitable," Biron said.

Gall is bitter, so "bitter" is a suitable word for "gall." Biron was much disappointed in his reception by "Rosaline," and so he was bitter.

Biron and the Princess withdrew to a private spot and talked quietly.

Dumain said to Maria, who was wearing the love token that Dumain had given to Katherine, "Will you permit me to exchange a word with you?"

"Name it," Maria said.

"Fair lady —" Dumain began.

"Do you say so? Is that your word that you wish to exchange?" Maria said. "Fair *lord* — take that in exchange for your fair *lady*."

“If it will please you, let us talk as much in private, and then I’ll bid you *adieu*.”

Dumain and Maria withdrew to a private spot and talked quietly.

Katherine said to Longaville, who thought that she was Maria, “Was your mask made without a tongue?”

Some masks were held in place by a “tongue” — a piece protruding into the mouth and held by the teeth.

Katherine was asking Longaville why he was so quiet.

Longaville replied, “I know the reason, lady, why you ask.”

“Oh, I long to know what you think is the reason! Quickly, sir; I long.”

“You have a double tongue within your mask, and you would give my speechless mask half,” Longaville replied.

A double tongue is a deceptive tongue.

Katherine said, “‘Veal,’ quoth the Dutchman. Is not ‘veal’ a calf?”

“Veal” is the English word “well” pronounced with a Dutch accent.

Katherine’s last word before “veal” had been “long”: “long veal.” She was playing with the name “Longaville.”

A calf is a fool. She was calling Longaville a fool and so was teasing him.

“A calf, fair lady!” Longaville said.

“No, a fair lord calf,” Katherine replied.

“Let’s part the word.”

Parting the word “calf” gave “ca” and “lf.” Katherine’s

name began with the hard-c “ca” sound, and the word “half” ended with “if.”

Also, if they were to part the word, then half of the word would apply to both of them; half would be Katherine’s, and half would be Longaville’s. Longaville was saying, in other words, if I am a calf, aka fool, then so are you.

“No, I’ll not be your half,” Katherine replied.

She was saying that she did not want to be his better half, aka wife.

She added, “Take all, and wean it; it may prove to be an ox.”

An ox is a castrated bull.

Longaville said, “Look how you butt yourself in these sharp mocks. Will you give horns, chaste lady? Do not do that.”

If Katherine were to give horns after she was married, she would be giving her husband horns — that is, she would make him a cuckold. If she were to do that, she would be butting herself — acting in such a way that would get her a bad reputation. And by being insulting to Longaville right now, she risked getting a reputation as a shrew.

Katherine said, “Then die while you are still a calf, before your horns grow.”

“Give me one word in private with you, before I die,” Longaville said.

“Bleat softly then,” Katherine said. “The butcher hears you cry.”

Longaville and Katherine withdrew to a private spot and talked quietly.

Boyet, who had heard Katherine teasing Longaville and who had heard all the “Russian” men being verbally mocked by the ladies, said, “The tongues of mocking wenches are as sharp and keen as is the razor’s invisible edge, cutting a smaller hair than may be seen, above the sense of sense — beyond the ability of the senses to perceive — so sensible seems their conversation. Their witticisms have wings fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, and swifter things.”

“Not one word more, my maids,” Rosaline said. “Break off all conversation, break it off.”

“By Heaven, we are all dry-beaten with pure scoff and mockery!” Biron said.

To be “dry-beaten” was to be thoroughly beaten but without the shedding of blood. This had been a verbal battle that the ladies had decisively won; it had not been a physical battle.

“Farewell, mad wenches,” a greatly disappointed King Ferdinand said. “You have simple — foolish and unsophisticated — wits.”

“Twenty *adieux*, my Muscovites of the frozen north,” the Princess said.

King Ferdinand, the lords, and the black musicians departed.

The Princess said, “Are these the breeds of wits that are so admired?”

Boyet said, “They are candles, and your sweet breaths have blown them out.”

“Well-liking wits they have,” Rosaline said. “They are gross, gross; they are fat, fat.”

In other words, she was saying that the “visiting Russians” — the lords — are fatheads. “Well-liking” meant “liking well” — metaphorically, the brains of the “visiting Russians” liked well their food, which made them fat and dulled their wit.

“Oh, poverty in wit, Kingly-poor flout!” the Princess said, thinking of King Ferdinand’s insult that the ladies had simple — foolish and unsophisticated — wits. His jeer was unworthy of a King; if Kings must insult, they should be wittier than King Ferdinand had shown himself to be.

The Princess asked, “Do you think that they will hang themselves tonight? Or ever, except while wearing masks, show their faces? This pert, cheeky Biron was quite out of countenance. He was quite disconcerted.”

“Oh, they were all in lamentable cases!” Rosaline said.

“Cases” meant both “conditions” and “masks.”

She added, “The King was ready to weep because he so much wanted a good word, which he did not get.”

The Princess said, “Biron did swear himself out of all suit. He began to swear and ceased to woo.”

“Dumain was at my service,” Maria said, “and his sword was, too. ‘*Non point*,’ said I, and my servant immediately was mute.”

“*Non point*” was French for “No point,” which has two meanings.

Katherine said, “Lord Longaville said that I overcame his heart; and do you know what he called me?”

“Qualm, perhaps,” the Princess said.

Longaville may have felt that she had conquered his heart, but after being insulted by her, he probably felt a qualm —

a sudden attack of sickness — that came over him and affected his heart.

“Yes, indeed,” Katherine said.

“Go, sickness that you are!” the Princess said. “Ha!”

She was joking that since Katherine was “ill,” she should leave.

The ladies were not amused by the wit of the men who thought they loved them.

Rosaline said, “Well, better wits — more intelligent and wittier men — have worn plain statute-caps.”

By statute, people of low status, such as apprentices, had to wear simple woolen caps on certain days.

Rosaline said, “But will you listen to this? The King is my sworn love.”

“And quick and lively Biron has pledged his faith to me,” the Princess said.

“And Longaville was born to be my servant,” Katherine said.

“Dumain is mine, as surely as bark is on trees,” Maria said.

“Madam, and pretty mistresses, listen to me,” Boyet said. “Quickly they will again be here as their own selves, with no disguises, for it can never be that they will swallow and digest this harsh indignity. They cannot endure such rejection and will return here to try to improve their reception by you.”

“Will they return here?” the Princess asked.

“They will, they will, God knows,” Boyet said, “and they will leap for joy, although they are lame with blows.

Therefore exchange the favors; and, when they return, blow like sweet roses in this summer air.”

“By “blow,” Boyet meant “burst into blossom.”

The Princess, not understanding, asked, “How blow? How blow? What does that mean? Speak in such a way that I can understand you.”

Boyet said, “Fair ladies masked are roses in their bud. Dismasked, their damask — deep pink — sweet commixture of red and white shown, are angels moving aside clouds and becoming visible, or roses blown in full flower.”

“Avaunt, perplexity!” the Princess said. “Away, riddling words!”

She preferred a more easily understood way of speaking.

She asked, “What shall we do, if they return as themselves to woo us?”

Rosaline replied, “Good madam, if by me you’ll be advised, let’s continue to mock them; we can do that as well when they are not disguised as when they are disguised. Let us complain to them what fools were here, disguised like Muscovites, in unshapely clothing, and wonder who they were and to what end their shallow spectacles and their vilely penned, badly written prologue, and their rough and ridiculous way of bearing themselves was presented at our tent to us.”

Seeing the lords, now undisguised, returning, Boyet said, “Ladies, withdraw. The gallants are at hand.”

“Dash to our tents, as quickly as deer run over land,” the Princess said.

The ladies — the Princess, Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine

— ran to their tents.

King Ferdinand, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain, now wearing their usual clothing and no disguises, walked over to Boyet.

King Ferdinand asked him, “Fair sir, God save you! Where’s the Princess?”

“Gone to her tent,” Boyet replied, “Will it please your majesty to command me to do any service to her thither? Do you want me to take a message to her?”

“Say that I would like for her to permit me to speak to her one word,” King Ferdinand said.

“I will,” Boyet said, “and she will listen to you, I know, my lord.”

Boyet left to perform his errand.

In a bad mood, Biron criticized Boyet:

“This fellow pecks up wit as pigeons peck up peas, and utters it again when God does please. He is wit’s peddler, and he retails his wares at wakes and drunken wassails, meetings, markets, and fairs; and we who sell wit by the gross, the Lord knows, don’t have the grace to grace it with such a show as Boyet.

“This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve. If he had been Adam, he would have tempted Eve, instead of Eve tempting Adam in the Garden of Eden.

“He can carve meat at the table, too, and lisp and speak in an affected manner. Why, this is he who kissed his hand away in courtesy.”

In some social situations in this society, a gentleman would kiss his own hand.

Biron continued, “This man is the ape of form, the imitator of those with good etiquette, he is Monsieur the Nice, and so it is the case that when he plays at backgammon, he chides the dice using honorable — not swear — words.

“He can sing a middle-range — neither high nor low — part in a song quite respectfully, and when it comes to performing the duties of a gentleman usher, no one can beat him.

“The ladies call him sweet, and the stairs, as he treads on them, kiss his feet.

“This is the flower that smiles on everyone in order to show that his teeth are as white as a walrus’ tusk.

“And consciences, that will not die in debt, pay him the due of calling him ‘honey-tongued Boyet.’”

King Ferdinand said, “I say with my heart that I wish there were a blister on his sweet tongue, because he is the man who disconcerted Mote, Armado’s page, so much that he could not say his part!”

Seeing Boyet returning, Biron said, “See where it comes! Courteous behavior, what were you until this madman showed you? And what are you now?”

Boyet ushered the Princess, Rosaline, Maria, and Katherine into the presence of the lords.

King Ferdinand said to the Princess, “All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day!”

By “hail,” King Ferdinand meant “greetings,” but the Princess deliberately misinterpreted “hail” to refer to the principal ingredient in a hailstorm, which is foul weather, not fair weather.

She said, “‘Fair’ in ‘all hail’ is foul, I believe. Don’t call a

hailstorm fair.”

King Ferdinand, who knew that she was deliberately misinterpreting his words, said, “Construe my speeches better, if you may.”

“Then give me better wishes,” the Princess said. “I give you permission to do that.”

“We came to visit you,” King Ferdinand said, “and we intend now to lead you to our court; please give us permission to do so.”

“This field shall hold me; and so you will hold and keep your vow. Neither God, nor I, delights in perjured men.”

“Don’t rebuke me for that which you yourself provoke,” King Ferdinand said. “The virtue of your eye makes me break my oath.”

By “virtue,” King Ferdinand meant “power,” but again the Princess deliberately misinterpreted him.

She replied, “You misname the word ‘virtue’; ‘vice’ is the word you should have spoken, for virtue’s operation never breaks men’s good faith.

“Now by my maiden honor, yet as pure as the unsullied lily, I protest that even though I would endure a world of torments, I would not yield to be a guest in your house, so much I hate to be a cause of breaking any Heavenly oaths that have been vowed with integrity.”

King Ferdinand said, “Oh, you have lived in desolation here, unseen, unvisited, much to our shame.”

“Not so, my lord,” the Princess replied, “It is not so, I swear. We have had pastimes here and pleasant entertainment. A mess — a group of four — of Russians left us only recently.”

“What, madam! Russians!” King Ferdinand said, pretending to be surprised.

“Yes, indeed, my lord. They were trim gallants, full of courtship — courtliness and courting — and of stateliness.”

“Madam, tell the truth,” Rosaline said, preparing to criticize the Russians and therefore the lords. “What she said is not so, my lord. My lady, in accordance with the good manners of these days, out of courtesy gives the Russians undeserved praise.

“We four ladies were indeed confronted with four men wearing Russian clothing. Here they stayed an hour, and talked apace — quickly — and during that hour, my lord, they did not bless us with one happy, well-chosen, felicitous word.

“I dare not call them fools; but this I think, when fools are thirsty, fools would like to have a drink. I don’t think these Russians know enough to do that.”

“This jest is dry to me,” Biron said to Rosaline.

Of course, he did not think that the Russians were fools.

Biron continued, “Fair gentle sweet, your wit makes wise things foolish. When we greet, with eyes best seeing, Heaven’s fiery eye, by light we lose light — the Sun blinds us. Your capacity — your intellect — is of that nature that compared to your huge store of intelligence, wise things seem foolish and rich things seem to be poor.”

Rosaline replied, “This proves you to be wise and rich, for in my eye —”

Biron finished the joke for her: “— I am a fool, and full of poverty. And if you think that of me, then according to what I said, I am wise and I am full of wealth.”

Rosaline said, “Make sure that you take only what belongs to you; it is a fault to snatch words from my tongue.”

Biron publicly confessed his love for her: “Oh, I am yours, and all that I possess!”

“All the fool is mine?” Rosaline asked.

“I cannot give you less,” Biron said.

“Which of the visors was it that you wore?” she asked him.

Disconcerted, Biron said, “Where? When? What visor? Why do you ask me this?”

Rosaline replied, “Where? There. When? Then. What visor? That superfluous, unnecessary visor that hid the worse and showed the better face.”

Realizing immediately that ladies knew that they, the lords, had been disguised as the visiting Russians, King Ferdinand said, “We have been detected; they’ll mock us now without pity.”

Dumain said, “Let us confess and say it was a jest.”

“Dumbfounded, my lord?” the Princess asked King Ferdinand. “Why does your highness look sad?”

Rosaline cried, “Help, hold his brows! He’ll faint!”

She said to Biron, “Why do you look so pale? You are seasick, I think, having come from Moscow.”

Biron said to Rosaline, “Thus the stars pour down plagues for perjury. We are being punished for violating our oath. Can any face of brass brazen it out any longer?”

“Here stand I, lady, dart your skill at me — shoot your verbal weapons at me. Bruise me with scorn, confound me with a jeer, thrust your sharp wit quite through my

ignorance, cut me to pieces with your keen, sharp intellect, and I will never more ask you to dance, nor will I ever again in Russian clothing try to be your servant.

“Oh, I will never trust to prewritten speeches, nor to the motion of a schoolboy’s — Mote’s — tongue, nor ever come in a disguise to my loved one, nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper’s song!”

People with handicaps such as blindness sometimes played musical instruments to make a living.

Biron continued to reject ways of wooing that were affected:

“Fancy taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, three-layered hyperboles, spruce affectation, pedantic figures of speech — these summer-flies have filled me full of maggoty ostentation. I forswear them.”

Biron now vowed to woo in a different way, one more honest and less affected:

“I here protest, by this, Rosaline’s white glove — how white the hand is, God knows! — that henceforth my wooing mind shall be expressed in russet yeas and honest kersey noes. I will speak simply and understandably: I will say yes, and I will say no. My language will be plainspoken, like the plain russet and kersey clothing worn by people who don’t wear fancy clothing.

“And, to begin, wench — so God help me, la! — my love for you is sound, *sans* crack or flaw.”

Biron had begun to immediately implement his new way of wooing. No love-poetry terms for him, not now, although his speech still had many of the characteristics of formal poetry. Rosaline was no longer a goddess; he affectionately called her a wench. And he used the homespun interjection

“la,” rather than a fancy word. But he did make one mistake, which Rosaline immediately identified: He used the French word “*sans*,” which means “without.”

She said, “Talk to me sans ‘*sans*,’ please.”

He replied, “I still have a touch of the old madness. Bear with me, I am sick; I’ll leave my old madness behind by degrees.

“Wait, let us see. Write, ‘Lord have mercy on us,’ on those three — King Ferdinand, Longaville, and Dumain — they are infected with the same madness; in their hearts it lies; they have the plague, and they caught it from the eyes of you ladies. These lords have been visited with sickness; you are not free, for the Lord’s tokens on you I do see.”

The sentence “Lord have mercy on us” was written on the doors of houses in which were people infected with the plague.

Many people in this society believed that the plague was a visitation of the wrath of God.

The lords were all infected with love madness, and Biron joked that ladies were not free of that plague. “The Lord’s tokens” were physical signs of being infected with the plague, and of course, “the lords’ tokens” were the love-tokens the lords had given the ladies and that the ladies were now wearing.

The Princess replied, “No, they are free who gave these tokens to us.”

By “free,” she meant “generous.”

Biron said, “Our states are forfeit: Seek not to undo us.”

One meaning of his sentence was this: “Our estates are forfeited and subject to confiscation: Seek not to ruin us.”

Another meaning of his sentence was this: “We have forfeited much of our honor through our silly actions: Seek not to disconcert us more by continuing to mock us.”

Rosaline said, “It can’t be true that you are forfeit, for how can it be true that you are forfeit, since you are those who sue?”

The lords were suing — begging — the ladies for their love. They were suitors pleading for love.

Biron said, “Peace! Quiet! For I will not have to do with you.”

This meant both “I won’t have anything to do with you” and “I won’t have sex with you.” Biron was discouraged.

“Nor shall you not if I do as I intend,” Rosaline replied. She was unwilling to have sex with him at this time. But the double negative hinted that perhaps at some time she would be willing.

Biron said to the other lords, “Speak for yourselves; my wit is at an end. I have nothing more to say.”

King Ferdinand asked the Princess, “Teach us, sweet madam, for our rude transgression some fair excuse. Tell us how we can excuse and make up for what we have done.”

“The fairest way is confession,” she replied.

Giving him an opportunity to confess, she asked, “Weren’t you here — disguised — just a short while ago?”

“Madam, I was,” King Ferdinand admitted.

“And were you in your right mind?”

“I was, fair madam.”

“When you then were here, what did you whisper in your

lady's ear?" the Princess asked.

"That more than all the world I did respect and value her."

"When she shall challenge this, and say that you did not say that to her, you will reject her," the Princess said.

"Upon my honor, no," King Ferdinand replied. "I swear upon my honor."

"Peace! Be quiet! Don't! Having already broken your oath once, you won't hesitate to break it again."

"Despise me, when I break this oath of mine," King Ferdinand said.

"I will," the Princess said to the King, "and therefore keep your oath."

The Princess then asked, "Rosaline, what did the Russian whisper in your ear?"

She replied, "Madam, he swore that he did regard me as dear as precious eyesight, and he did value me more than all this world, and he added to all this that he would wed me, or else he would die my lover."

"May God give you joy of him!" the Princess said. "I hope that you two will be happy together! The noble King Ferdinand will very honorably uphold his word — he will do what he swore to do."

King Ferdinand objected, "What do you mean, madam? By my life, by my truth and honor, I swear that I never swore to this lady such an oath. I never said that I loved her and would marry her."

"By Heaven, I swear you did," Rosaline said, "and to plainly confirm it, look at this."

She held up a small love token — not the pendant the King

had previously given to the Princess — and said, “You gave me this, but take it, sir, back again.”

King Ferdinand said, “I gave both my faithful love and this love token to the Princess. I knew who she was by the jewel she was wearing on her sleeve.”

The jewel was the pendant depicting a lady with a border made of diamonds. One meaning of “jewel” is “precious thing.”

“Pardon me, sir,” the Princess said. “Rosaline was wearing this jewel. And Lord Biron, I thank him, is my dear lover.”

She asked Biron, “Will you have me, or your pearl, again?”

Biron’s love token to Rosaline was a pearl. One meaning of “pearl” is “precious thing.”

Biron replied, “I want nothing to do with either. I give up both of them.

“I see the trick that was played on us. Here there was an agreement, a plot. You knew ahead of time about the merriment we had planned — to dress up like Russians — and you plotted to spoil it like you would a Christmas comedy — many people jeer at actors.

“Some carry-tale, some gossip, some please-man, some yes-man, some slight zany, some lightweight comic servant, some mumble-news, some trencher-knight, some person who conquers large meals, some common Dick, some person who smiles his cheeks into wrinkles and knows that the trick is to make my lady laugh when she’s disposed to laugh, told you ladies beforehand what we intended to do.

“Once that was disclosed, you ladies exchanged favors and put on masks, and then we lords, following the signs of the love tokens, wooed just the sign — not the substance — of

whichever woman we loved. We pledged our love not to the woman we loved, but to the woman whom we thought was the woman we loved.

“Now, to add more terror to our original perjury, we are again forsworn, in will and error.

“That is pretty much what happened.”

Biron knew who was the tattletale. He had already criticized Boyet as an affected dandy who kept ladies entertained.

He said to Boyet, “And aren’t you the one who ruined our sport and made us thus untrue to our vows?”

“Don’t you know my lady’s foot by the squire — uh, square? Don’t you have her measure? Don’t you know how to please her?”

A square is a measuring instrument. “My lady” was a generic term for an upper-class woman. As a ladies’ man, Boyet had my lady’s measure, and he knew how to please her and how to squire — escort — her. The Princess, and especially Rosaline, could easily have thought that “my lady” referred to her, but they ignored that interpretation.

The word “foot” was similar to the French word “*foutre*,” which means “fuck.”

Biron continued, “Don’t you laugh upon the apple — the pupil — of her eye? Don’t you keep her entertained so that you can be at the center of her attention? Don’t you laugh with her at the things she likes to laugh at?”

One meaning of the word “eye” was “vagina.” Biron was saying that Boyet laughed as he had vaginal sex.

Biron had used the words “squire” and “apple.” In this society, “an apple-squire” meant “a pimp.”

Biron continued, “Don’t you stand between her back, sir, and the fire, holding a trencher, and jesting merrily?”

One meaning of what Biron had said was that Boyet acted as a fire screen and kept my lady from getting too hot as she faced away from him.

Another meaning involved “stand” as “erection” and “fire” as “vagina.” With that meaning, Boyet stood behind my lady and put his “stand” in the hole between the woman’s “fire” and her back. Often, the word “trencher” means “plate,” but it can also mean “knife.” Here, the trencher was a phallic symbol. One meaning of “to jest” is “to amuse oneself and others.”

Biron continued, “You put our page — Mote — out of countenance.

“Go on and mock me, you are allowed. You are a fool, and licensed fools are allowed to say whatever they want.

“Die whenever you will, a smock — a petticoat — shall be your shroud. You shall be buried like the woman you are.”

In this society, the word “die” also meant “have an orgasm.” Biron was also saying that Boyet had sex while wearing women’s clothing.

Boyet smiled derisively at Biron, who said, “You leer upon me, do you? There’s an eye that wounds like a leaden sword.”

A leaden sword was not a real sword; it was a property sword — one used in theatrical productions. (Wooden swords were also used as stage props.) It was also another phallic symbol. “*Vagina*” is Latin for “sheath” — a good place to put a sword.

Boyet replied, “Very merrily has this brave manage, this career, this gallop of words at full speed, been run.”

Biron said, “Lo, he is tilting straight! Peace! I have done. Quiet! I have finished!”

One meaning of “tilting straight” is “immediately going back to his encounters (of wit).”

Another meaning of “tilting straight” is “immediately going back to thrusting (with his penis).”

Costard walked over to the group.

Biron said to Costard, “Welcome, pure wit! You have stopped a fair fray — a good fight.”

Costard said, “Oh, Lord, sir, they want to know whether the three Worthies shall come in or not.”

“Are there only three?”

“No, sir; but it is vara fine, for every one pursents three.”

“Vara” was a dialect word meaning “very,” and “presents” was a combination of “presents” and “represents.”

Costard was saying that each of three people would appear as three different Worthies.

People who know arithmetic would deduce there would be nine — the normal number — Worthies in all.

Biron said, “And three times thrice is nine.”

Costard objected, “Not so, sir; let me correct you, sir; I hope it is not so.

“You cannot beg us, sir. I can assure you, sir, that we know what we know.”

By “you cannot beg us,” Costard meant that he was not a fool. Sometimes an incompetent person would inherit money and property, and that person’s relatives would beg the law court to be appointed guardians of the fool so they

could manage that fool's money and possessions. "To beg a fool" meant "to petition the Court of Wards to get custody of an incompetent person." "To beg someone for a fool" meant "to take that person for a fool."

One way of testing a person's competence was to ask that person to do simple arithmetic.

Costard continued, "I hope, sir, three times thrice, sir —"

Biron interrupted, "— is not nine?"

Costard replied, "Let me correct you, sir. We know to how much it does amount."

Biron said, "By Jove, I always took three threes for nine."

"Oh, Lord, sir, it would be a pity if you would have to get your living by reckoning, sir," Costard said.

"How much is it?" Biron asked.

"Oh, Lord, sir, the parties themselves, the actors, sir, will show to how much it does amount. As for my own part, I am, as they say, but to perfect one man in one poor man, Pompion the Great, sir."

"Perfect" was a combination of "present" and "perfect." Costard was supposed to be word-perfect as he presented Pompion the Great.

Costard had said that each of three men would present three Worthies. Perhaps only one of the Worthies Costard was to present was a speaking part. But actually he was wrong about the number of people presenting the Worthies: Five people presented the first five Worthies.

By "Pompion the Great," Costard meant Pompey the Great, a military and political leader of the late Roman Republic. Pompey first cooperated with and then opposed Julius Caesar, who triumphed over him.

In this society, a “pompion” was a pumpkin.

Biron asked, “Are you one of the Worthies?”

Costard replied, “It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompion the Great. As for my own part, I know not the rank of the Worthy, but I am to stand for and represent him.”

Biron said, “Go, tell them to get ready to present the Worthies.”

“We will turn it finely off, sir,” Costard said. “We will take some care. We will skillfully perform the Worthies.”

King Ferdinand said, “Biron, they will shame us with a bad performance. Let them not perform the Nine Worthies.”

“We are shame-proof, my lord,” Biron said. “We cannot be shamed any more than we already have, and it is a wise move to have now performed a worse show than the one already performed by the King and his company.”

“I say they shall not come here and present the Nine Worthies,” King Ferdinand said.

“No, my good lord, let me overrule you now,” the Princess said. “That sport best pleases that does least know how to please — where zeal strives to content and please, and the content of the play dies in the zeal of those who present it.”

Performers can be so determined to make the audience approve of their performance that their overacting ruins their performance. Nevertheless, the audience can be amused by the overacting.

The Princess continued, “Their form confounded makes most form in mirth, when great things laboring perish in their birth.”

She meant that much humor can be found when a great

enterprise goes badly wrong.

Biron said to King Ferdinand, “That is a good description of our sport, my lord. The ladies found much humor in our pretending to be Russians.”

Don Adriana de Armado walked over to the group and said to King Ferdinand, who at his coronation had been anointed with holy oil, “Anointed, I implore so much expense of your royal sweet breath as will utter a brace of words.”

A brace of words is a pair of words. In other words, Armado wanted a short private conversation with the King. The two men went aside and talked together. Costard gave King Ferdinand a paper.

The Princess asked Biron, “Does this man serve God?”

“Why do you ask?”

“He does not speak like a man whom God made,” the Princess replied.

Indeed, Armado did not speak like an ordinary human being.

Armado said to King Ferdinand, “That is all one, my fair, sweet, honey monarch; for, I protest, the schoolmaster is exceedingly fantastical; he is too, too vain, too, too vain, but we will put it, as they say, to *fortuna de la guerra*. I wish you the peace of mind, most royal couplement!”

The King had expressed some worries about the presentation of the Nine Worthies, but Armado tried to reassure him and also said that they should leave it up to the *fortuna de la guerra* — the fortunes of war. The most royal couplement was the most royal couple: the King and the Princess.

Armado exited.

King Ferdinand said, “Here is likely to be a good company of Worthies. Armado will represent Hector of Troy. The country swain Costard will represent Pompey the Great. The parish curate Sir Nathaniel will represent Alexander the Great. Armado’s page, Mote, will represent Hercules. The pedant, Holofernes, will represent Judas Maccabaeus.

“And if these four Worthies in their first show thrive, these four will change habits, and present the other five.”

Biron objected, “There are five Worthies in the first show.”

“You are deceived,” King Ferdinand said. “That is not so.”

He had miscounted, or he was saying that these five people were unworthy and incapable of presenting five Worthies.

Biron pointed out, “The pedant Holofernes, the braggart Armado, the hedge-priest Sir Nathaniel, the fool Costard, and the boy Mote — apart from a throw in the dice game *novum*, the whole world cannot again pick out five such, take each one in his vein, aka take each one for what he is.”

A hedge-priest is an uneducated priest.

In the game of *novum*, throws of five and nine are significant.

Seeing Costard approaching, King Ferdinand said, “The ship is under sail, and here she comes amain — at full speed.”

Costard, dressed as Pompey the Great, said, “I am Pompey —”

Unfortunately, he tripped and fell on the ground.

Boyet punned, “You lie, you are not he.”

Costard said again, “I am Pompey —”

Boyet said, “With a leopard’s head on your knee.”

In this society, people honored ancient heroes by ascribing to them coats of arms. Pompey’s “coat of arms” included a leopard’s head. Costard was carrying a prop shield on which was a leopard’s head; Costard was resting the shield on his knee.

Biron complimented Boyet, “Well said, old mocker. I must become friends with you.”

Costard said, “I am Pompey, Pompey surnamed the Big ___”

Dumain corrected him: “The Great.”

Costard said, “You are correct. It is ‘Great,’ sir. I am Pompey surnamed the Great, who often on the battlefield, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat.”

A targe is a light shield.

Costard continued, “And travelling along this coast, I here am come by chance, and lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France.

“If your ladyship would say, ‘Thanks, Pompey,’ I have finished my part.”

The Princess of France said, “Great thanks, great Pompey.”

Costard said, “My performance was not worth so much, but I hope I was word-perfect. I did make a little mistake in ‘Great.’”

Biron said, “I bet my hat against a halfpenny that Pompey proves to be the best Worthy.”

This was not much of a compliment. Biron was saying the other performances of Worthies would be worse than Costard’s performance of Pompey.

Sir Nathaniel, costumed as Alexander the Great, stepped forward and said, “When in the world I lived, I was the world’s commander. By east, west, north, and south, I spread my conquering might. My scutcheon plainly declares that I am Alisander —”

A scutcheon is an escutcheon — a painted shield.

Boyet interrupted, “Your nose says no, you are not Alexander the Great, because your nose stands too straight.”

Alexander the Great, conqueror of the known world, had a habit of holding his head at an angle. He also was reputed to have had an aquiline nose — one that is hooked or curved. Boyet could also have had in mind the story that Caesar Augustus once visited the preserved corpse of Alexander. Bending down to kiss Alexander’s forehead, Caesar Augustus accidentally broke Alexander’s nose.

Biron said to Boyet, “Your nose smells ‘no’ in this, most tender-smelling knight.”

Alexander the Great’s body and breath were said to smell sweet; Biron was saying that Boyet’s nose could tell that Sir Nathaniel’s body and breath did not smell sweet.

The Princess said, “The conqueror is dismayed. Proceed, good Alexander.”

Sir Nathaniel said, “When in the world I lived, I was the world’s commander —”

Boyet said, “Most true, that is right; you were so, Alisander.”

Biron said to Costard, “Pompey the Great —”

Costard replied, “I am your servant, as is Costard.”

Biron said, “Take away the conqueror; take away

Alisander.”

Costard said to Sir Nathaniel, “Oh, sir, you have overthrown Alisander the conqueror! You will be scraped out of the painted cloth for this.”

Painted cloths were decorative wall hangings, many of which depicted the Nine Worthies. Because of Sir Nathaniel’s poor performance, Alexander the Great was in danger of having his image removed from these painted wall hangings.

Costard continued, “Your lion, that holds his pole-axe sitting on a close-stool, will be given to Ajax the Great: he will be the ninth Worthy.”

The coat of arms ascribed to Alexander the Great depicted a lion seated on a throne and holding a battle-ax. Costard got part of this wrong: He said the lion was seated on a close-stool — a toilet.

Ajax the Great was a Greek warrior who was second only to Achilles in the Trojan War. Ajax’ name, unfortunately, was pronounced much like “a jakes” — “jakes” is an archaic word for “toilet.”

Sir Nathaniel was unable to speak, probably because he was disconcerted.

Costard said, “A conqueror, and afraid to speak! Run away for shame, Alisander!”

Sir Nathaniel stepped to the side.

Costard said, “There, if it shall please you, is a foolish mild man. He is an honest man, you see, and soon dashed.”

“Dashed” meant “abashed.”

Costard continued, “He is a marvelous good neighbor, indeed, and a very good bowler in the game of bowls, but

as for the part of Alisander — alas, you see how it is — he is a little overparted. He does not quite measure up to the part. But there are Worthies a-coming who will speak their mind in some other sort.”

Holofernes stepped forward, costumed as Judas Maccabaeus, the Hebrew warrior. Mote also stepped forward, costumed as the young Hercules.

Holofernes said, “Great Hercules is presented by this imp, whose club killed Cerberus, that three-headed *canus*, and when he was a babe, a child, a shrimp, thus did he strangle serpents in his *manus*.”

“*Manus*” is Latin for “hands”; “*canis*,” not “*canus*,” is Latin for “dog.” Either Holofernes wanted the word to rhyme with “*manus*,” or he had made a mistake in his Latin.

Holofernes continued, “*Quoniam* he seems to be in minority, *ergo* I come with this apology.”

“*Quoniam*” is Latin for “since”; “*ergo*” is Latin for “therefore.” By “in minority,” Holofernes meant “a child, a minor.” An apology is an explanation; Holofernes was explaining why a minor was presenting Hercules.

Holofernes said to Mote, “Keep some state — stateliness — in thy exit, and vanish.”

Mote stepped to the side.

Holofernes said, “I am Judas —”

Dumain said, “A Judas!”

Holofernes said, “Not Judas Iscariot, sir, not the betrayer of Jesus Christ. Judas I am, yclept Maccabaeus.”

“Yclept” is an archaic word meaning “called.”

Dumain said, “Judas Maccabaeus clipped is plain Judas.”

“Clipped” can mean “abbreviated” or “embraced.”

Biron said, “A kissing traitor.”

Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus by embracing and kissing him. This identified Jesus to the people who arrested him.

Biron then asked Holofernes, “How can you prove that you are Judas?”

Holofernes said, “I am Judas —”

“The more shame for you, Judas,” Dumain said.

“What do you intend by saying that, sir?” Holofernes said.

Boyet said, “To make Judas hang himself.”

Holofernes said, “You go first, sir. You are my elder.”

Biron said, “That’s a good comeback. Judas was hanged on an elder tree.”

With dignity, Holofernes said, “I will not be put out of countenance.”

Biron replied, “Because you have no face.”

Holofernes pointed to his face and asked, “What is this?”

Unfortunately for him, this provided an opportunity for some male audience members to insult him.

Boyet said, “It is a cittern-head.”

A cittern was a musical instrument that resembled a guitar. Its head was often carved into a grotesque face and head.

Dumain said, “It is the head of a bodkin.”

A bodkin was a ladies’ hairpin; the head of the hairpin was often decorated.

Biron said, "It is a Death's face — a skull — in a ring."

Longaville said, "It is the face on an old Roman coin, scarcely able to be seen because it is so worn."

Boyet said, "It is the pommel of Caesar's falchion. It is the carved hilt of Caesar's sword."

Dumain said, "It is the carved-bone face on a gunpowder flask made of bone."

Biron said, "It is Saint George's half-cheek portrait — his profile — carved on a brooch."

Dumain said, "Yes, a brooch made of lead."

Such a brooch was inexpensive compared to other brooches. Tradesmen advertised their trade with a brooch worn in their hat.

Biron said, "Yes, and worn in the cap of a tooth-drawer."

A tooth-drawer was a primitive dentist. Such a job was low-status, and so the dentist advertised who he was with a less-expensive brooch than other tradesmen wore in their hats.

Biron said to Holofernes, "And now forward, for we have put you in countenance."

One meaning of "put you in countenance" was "encouraged you."

Holofernes replied, "You have put me out of countenance. You have disconcerted me."

Biron said, "False; we have given you faces."

Another meaning of "put you in countenance" was "have given you a face or faces."

Holofernes said, "But you have out-faced them all."

“To out-face” means “to mock” or “to put to shame.”

Biron said, “Even if you were a lion, we would do so.”

Boyet said, “Therefore, as he is an ass, let him go. And so *adieu*, sweet Jude! Why does he stay and not leave?”

Dumain said, “He is waiting for the latter end of his name.”

The latter part of the name “Judas” is “ass.”

Biron said, “For the ass to the Jude; give it to him — Jude-ass, away!”

He was thinking of the fable by Aesop in which an ass finds a lion skin that huntsmen are drying. The ass wears the lion skin, and all the animals are afraid when they see him until the ass brays with pleasure and so reveals that he is only an ass.

With dignity, Holofernes said, “This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.”

In other words, the way you are acting is not nobly minded, not well bred, not considerate. He was accusing the lords of lacking proper etiquette and of not behaving like gentlemen.

Holofernes was correct. Boyet, Biron, Longaville, and Dumain were behaving badly.

The ladies and King Ferdinand had not joined in the mocking.

Boyet said, “A light for Monsieur Judas! It grows dark, he may stumble.”

The light Biron referred to was a Judas candlestick. It had places for seven candles, but one “candle,” which was made of wood and painted to resemble a candle, was called the Judas candle.

Holofernes stepped to the side.

The Princess said, “Alas, poor Maccabaeus, how he has been tormented!”

Don Adriano de Armado, costumed as Hector, stepped forward.

Biron said, “Hide your head, Achilles. Here comes Hector in arms.”

Achilles was the foremost Greek warrior in the Trojan War, and Hector was the foremost Trojan warrior.

Dumain said, “Though my mocks rebound against me, I will now be merry.”

King Ferdinand said, “Hector was but an ordinary Trojan, not a Trojan hero, in comparison to this man, Armado.”

In this society, the word “Trojan” also meant “drinking buddy.”

Boyet asked, “But is this Hector?”

King Ferdinand said, “I think Hector was not so well-built.”

Possibly, King Ferdinand was trying to be genuinely complimentary as a result of the earlier mocking of Holofernes. If so, it backfired, for the other lords continued to be mocking.

Longaville said, “His leg is too big for Hector’s.”

Dumain said, “More calf, certainly.”

In other words, Armado was more of a fool — a calf — than was Hector.

Boyet said, “No; he is best endowed in the small.”

The small is the part of the leg under the calf. Boyet was saying that Armado was endowed with small things; great things belonged to the hero Hector.

Biron said, "This cannot be Hector."

Dumain said, "He's a god or a painter, for he makes faces."

Armado said, "The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty, gave Hector a gift —"

"Armipotent" meant "powerful in the use of arms, aka weapons."

Dumain named a gift: "A gilt nutmeg."

A gilt nutmeg was a nutmeg that had been brushed with egg yolk. Such gifts were used to flavor drinks. They were also lovers' gifts.

Other members of the audience named possible gifts.

Biron said, "A lemon."

Longaville said, "A lemon stuck with cloves."

Lemons and cloves were also used to spice drinks.

Dumain said, "No, a cloven lemon."

He was punning. A "leman" is a sweetheart, and a cloven leman/lemon is metaphorically a vulva.

Armado said, "Peace! Quiet! The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty, gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion."

If the gift that the war-god Mars gave Hector was an heir, then Mars cuckolded Hector.

"Ilion" was another name for "Troy."

Armado continued, "Hector was a man so strong-winded, that certainly he would fight; yes, from morning until night,

out of his pavilion. I am that flower —”

Members of the audience began to name flowers.

Dumain said, “That mint.”

Longaville said, “That columbine.”

Mint and columbine are common, not exotic and valuable, flowers.

Armado said, “Sweet Lord Longaville, rein your tongue.”

Longaville said, “I must rather give it free rein, for it runs against Hector.”

Dumain said, “Yes, and Hector’s a greyhound.”

Some dogs were named Hector. In addition, Hector was famous for losing heart and running away from Achilles. In Homer’s *Iliad*, Hector ran three times around the walls of Troy before finally facing and fighting Achilles, who killed him.

Armado said, “The sweet war-man is dead and rotten; sweet chucks, beat not the bones of the buried. When he breathed, he was a man. But I will go forward with my device, with my performance.”

“Chucks” meant “dear friends.”

To the Princess, Armado said, “Sweet royalty, bestow on me the sense of hearing.”

In other words, please give me the satisfaction of your listening to my performance (preferably without interruptions).

The Princess replied, “Speak, brave Hector. We are much delighted.”

Armado said, “I do adore thy sweet grace’s slipper.”

Boyet whispered to Dumain, “He loves her by the foot —”

Dumain whispered back, “He may not by the yard.”

In this society, “yard” was a slang word for “penis.”

Armado said, “This Hector far surmounted Hannibal —”

By “surmounted,” Armado meant “surpassed.” Hannibal was a Carthaginian general who crossed the Alps and terrorized the Romans.

Armado continued, “The party is gone—”

This meant, the person is dead, aka Hector is dead.

In this society, the word “gone” also meant “pregnant.”

Costard said, “The party is gone, fellow Hector, she is gone; she is two months on her way to giving birth.”

Armado asked, “What meanest thou?”

Costard replied, “Truly, unless you play the honest Trojan, and do the right thing by marrying her, the poor wench is cast away. She’s pregnant; the child brags in her belly already. Because it brags already, we know that it is yours.”

Armado, and Spaniards in general, had a reputation for bragging.

Armado replied, “Dost thou infamonize me among potentates? Thou shalt die.”

“Infamonize” meant “infamize, aka defame.”

Costard said, “Then shall Hector be whipped for Jaquenetta, who is pregnant by him, and hanged for Pompey, who is dead by him.”

The usual punishment for fornication was whipping, and since Armado had threatened to kill Costard, who was

playing Pompey, Armado would also be punished for murder.

Dumain said, "Most rare Pompey!"

Boyet said, "Renowned Pompey!"

Biron said, "Greater than great! Great, great, great Pompey! Pompey the Huge!"

Dumain said, "Hector trembles."

Biron said, "Pompey is angry. More Ates, more Ates! Stir them on! Stir them on!"

Ate was the Roman goddess of strife and discord. Here Biron was using the word "Ates" metaphorically in the sense of additional exhortations for "Pompey" and "Hector" to fight.

Dumain said, "Hector will challenge him."

Biron said, "Yes, he will, if he has no more man's blood in his belly than will sup a flea. If he has even a little courage, he will challenge him to fight."

Armado said to Costard, "By the north pole, I do challenge thee."

Costard replied, "I will not fight with a pole, like a northern man. Instead, I'll slash; I'll do it by the sword. I bepray you, let me borrow my arms again."

He was referring to the weapons he had carried when he was front and center as he played Pompey. He wanted to use the stage weapons to fight Armado.

Dumain cried, "Make room for the incensed and angry Worthies!"

Costard said, "I'll do it in my shirt."

He was so eager to fight Armado that he would fight without armor.

Dumain cried, “Most resolute Pompey!”

Mote said, “Master, let me take you a buttonhole lower.”

One meaning of this was a request to Costard to allow Mote to help him take his jacket off. Another meaning was this: “Master, let me take you a peg lower.”

The idiom “take down a peg or two” means to “lower someone’s high opinion of himself.”

Armado resisted Mote’s attempt to remove his jacket.

Mote continued, “Do you not see that Pompey is uncasing — taking off some clothing — for the combat? What do you mean? You will lose your reputation.”

Armado said, “Gentlemen and soldiers, pardon me; I will not combat — fight — in my shirt.”

“You may not deny it,” Dumain said. “Pompey has made the challenge. You must fight him.”

Actually, it was Armado who had challenged Costard, who had accepted the challenge.

“Sweet bloods, I both may and will deny the fight,” Armado said.

“What reason do you have for it?” Biron asked.

“The naked truth of it is, I have no shirt under my jacket,” Armado said. “I go woolward for penance.”

He meant that he allowed the itchy wool of his jacket to touch his naked skin as a form of penance.

Boyet said, “True, and it was enjoined him in Rome for want of linen.”

In other words, yes, he does do this as a form of penance, but he is forced to because he has no shirt. Boyet was implying that Armado was too poverty stricken to have a shirt.

Boyet continued, "Since when, I'll be sworn, he wore nothing but a dishcloth of Jaquenetta's, and he wears that next to his heart for a favor, a love token."

Marcadé, one of the Princess' attendants, arrived and walked over to her and said, "God save you, madam!"

The Princess replied, "You are welcome, Marcadé, but you are interrupting our merriment."

Marcadé replied, "I am sorry, madam, for the news I bring is heavy on my tongue. The King your father —"

She knew immediately what had happened; her father had been very ill when she left France.

She said, "He is dead, for my life!"

"Yes," Marcadé said, "That is my news. My tale is told."

Marcadé's name seems to be related to Mercury, the name of the messenger of the gods. In addition, it can be split into mar-cade, or mar Arcadia. His news had ruined the happiness of King Ferdinand's park, which was a pleasant and quiet place of happiness like Arcadia.

"Worthies, away!" Biron ordered. "The scene begins to cloud."

Armado said, "As for mine own part, I breathe free breath."

He was happy that he had not had to fight. He was still a free man, and he was still breathing.

Armado continued, "I have seen the day of wrong through the little hole of discretion, and I will right myself like a

soldier.”

Armado was thinking of two proverbs: 1) One may see day at a little hole, and 2) Discretion is the better part of valor.

The first proverb meant “I am no fool.” Armado has seen the day of wrong. He is no fool; he can see that he has done wrong. That wrong was to make Jaquenetta pregnant without being married to her.

The second proverb meant “It is better to avoid danger than to confront it.” Armado and Costard had been about to fight because of Jaquenetta, whom Costard loved first but whom Armado made pregnant. A wise man would remove the reason for the fight, thereby preventing future fights. How to do that? Armado could do the right thing and marry Jaquenetta. Once she is married, Costard will have no reason to fight for her.

What does “I will right myself like a soldier” mean? Armado has made it clear that he does not want to fight; however, he also wants to do the right thing to save his honor as a soldier. Armado has realized his misdeed, and like an honorable soldier, he will make amends. He will marry Jaquenetta.

The Worthies exited.

King Ferdinand asked her, “How fares your majesty? How are you?”

The Princess ordered, “Boyet, prepare everything. I will go away from here tonight.”

King Ferdinand requested, “Madam, do not leave tonight; I do beseech you, stay.”

The Princess said again to Boyet, “Prepare everything so we can leave tonight, I say.”

She then said to King Ferdinand and the other lords, “I thank you, gracious lords, for all your fair endeavors; and entreat, out of a newly sad soul, that you vouchsafe in your rich wisdom to excuse or ignore the liberal and unrestrained opposition of our spirits, if too boldly we have borne ourselves in the exchange of conversation. Your great courtesy and affability were responsible for our speaking so freely.

“Farewell, worthy lord! A heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue. Excuse me, therefore, for coming too short of thanks for my great suit to you that was so easily obtained.”

The diplomatic mission the Princess had come on had been brought to a conclusion that was satisfactory to her.

King Ferdinand said, “The extreme end of time extremely forms all causes to the purpose of time’s speed, and often at time’s very loose decides that which long process could not arbitrate.”

The “loose” is the moment at which an archer releases, aka shoots, an arrow, and it flies away.

He meant that time as it slips quickly away forces things to come to an end point, and as a period of time comes to an end, it forces people to make decisions that would not be made so quickly if more time were available. Lack of time forces decisions to be made that could not be made even after long deliberation.

He had made a decision that concerned the Princess.

King Ferdinand continued, “And though the mourning brow of progeny forbids the smiling courtesy of love the holy suit that fain it would convince, yet, since love’s argument was first on foot, let not the cloud of sorrow jostle it from what it purposed; since, to wail friends and family lost is not by much so wholesome-profitable as to

rejoice at friends — and family — but newly found.”

He meant that although the Princess was mourning the death of her father, and although that fact forbid a smiling man who loved her to propose to her a holy suit — the King meant marriage — that he wanted to propose to her, yet since the man who loved her had loved her before her father died, she ought not to allow her sorrow to keep the lover from his purpose — which in this case is to ask her to marry him. Why? Because to mourn the loss of family and friends is not by much as beneficial to well-being as it is to rejoice because of newly found family and friends.

If the Princess were to marry him, King Ferdinand would be a new member of her family.

The phrase “not by much” is ambiguous. It could mean “a little, not a lot” or “not by a whole lot.”

Once again, language proved to be slippery. Using the right words and putting them in the right order is often incredibly difficult. Understanding the sentences of other people is also often incredibly difficult.

Using archaic language in ordinary conversation is a mistake because it impedes understanding. People won't understand what you are saying.

Similarly, using archaic forms of wooing in a more modern time is a mistake because the woman the man is courting is likely to think that such wooing is a joke.

The Princess said, “I don't understand you. My griefs are double.”

One grief was due to the death of her father; another grief was due to the death of her King.

But other people may have thought that her griefs were double because 1) She was mourning the loss of a loved

one, and 2) She was mourning because she could not understand King Ferdinand.

Biron, who had recently learned the value of clear communication, tried to help, but he was still trying to learn to speak clearly:

“Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief. You can understand the King by these badges.”

Badges are distinguishing marks. Biron now mentioned some of those distinguishing marks, which included the foolish actions of the lords:

“For you ladies’ fair sakes, we lords have neglected time and have played foul play with our oaths. We have not studied as we swore we would, but instead we have fallen in love and therefore we have broken our oaths.

“Your beauty, ladies, has much deformed us, fashioning our dispositions even to the opposite end of what we intended. Out of love for you, we have done silly things although we did not want to appear silly.

“And what in us has seemed ridiculous — as love is full of unbecoming impulses, all wanton as a child, skipping and vain, superficial and meaningless, formed by the eye and therefore, like the eye, full of strange shapes, of habits and of forms, varying in subjects as the eye rolls to every varied object in its glance. We have seemed ridiculous, but we have seemed ridiculous because we acted out of love for you.

“If this foolish presence of unrestrained love that was put on by us has — in your Heavenly eyes — been unseemly to our oaths and the serious and grave part of our character, then you should realize that those Heavenly eyes, which look upon these faults of ours, tempted us to do those foolish errors.

“Therefore, ladies, since our love is yours, the errors that love makes are likewise yours. All of the errors that we have made were made out of love for you.

“Being false once allows us to forever be true to those who make us both — fair ladies, you make us both. We have broken our vows because of you and so we have been false, but we have broken our vows so that we can always be true to you ladies.

“And even that falsehood, in itself a sin, thus purifies itself and turns to grace. Breaking our vows is a sin, but it is a sin that leads to us always being true to you. The result of our breaking our vows is a virtue that purifies the sin and turns the sin to grace.”

The Princess said, “We have received your letters that are full of love, and we have received your favors, aka love tokens, which are the ambassadors of love.

“But we maidens, talking together and judging the letters and favors, thought that they were simply courtly entertainment and pleasant jests and courtesies.

“We regarded them as a pleasant way to fill up the time — like bombast and lining.”

Bombast is stuffing that fills up space in a jacket. Another meaning of “bombast” is “high-flown language.” “Lining” refers to the lining of clothing, and the lines in a letter.

The Princess continued, “But we have not thought of them as being any more serious than this, and therefore we have met your loves in what we thought was their own fashion — like a merriment and a joke.”

The ladies had not realized that the lords were seriously in love.

Dumain said, “Our letters, madam, showed much more

than jest.”

Longaville said, “So did our looks.”

Rosaline replied, “We did not regard them like that. We did not think that they were serious, and so we did not treat them seriously.”

King Ferdinand said, “Now, at the last minute of the hour, grant us your loves.”

The Princess replied, “The time we have to decide is, I think, too short to make a world-without-end — a forever — bargain in.

“No, no, my lord, your grace is much perjured because you have broken your oath. You are full of grievous — yet dear — guiltiness; and therefore I say this to you:

“If for my love — and I don’t see why you should do this — you will do anything, I have something you can do for me.

“I will not trust your oath, so you need not swear to do this, but go speedily to some forlorn and austere hermitage, remote from all the pleasures of the world.

“There stay until the twelve celestial signs have brought about the annual reckoning of the passage of one year.

“If this austere unsociable life does not make you change the offer of marriage you made in the heat of your blood, and if frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin clothing do not nip the gaudy blossoms of your love, but if your love for me instead endures this trial and your love lasts, then, at the expiration of the year, come and claim me, claim my hand in marriage with you by virtue of these things you have done to deserve me.”

She held his hand and said, “And, by this virgin palm now

kissing your hand, I will be your wife; and until that instant I will shut my woeful self up in a mourning house, raining the tears of lamentation in remembrance of my father's death.

“If you are unwilling to do what I request, then let our hands part, and neither of us will be entitled to the other's heart.”

Still holding her hand, King Ferdinand replied, “If I would be unwilling to do this, or to do more than this, in order to pamper these faculties of mine with rest, may the sudden hand of death close my eyes!

“I will go and be a hermit — my heart is in your breast.”

King Ferdinand of Navarre and the Princess of France talked quietly together.

Dumain said to Katherine, “What will you give to me, my love? What will you give to me? A wife?”

Katherine replied, “A beard, fair health, and honesty; with three-fold love I wish you all these three.”

Dumain said, “Shall I say, ‘I thank you, gentle wife’?”

“No, my lord,” Katherine said. “For a twelvemonth and a day, I'll pay no attention to words that smooth-faced wooers say. Come to me when the King comes to my lady. Then, if I have much love, I'll give you some.”

“I'll serve you truly and faithfully until then,” Dumain said.

“Do not swear to do that, lest you be forsworn again,” Katherine said.

Dumain and Katherine talked quietly together.

“What says Maria?” Longaville asked.

His offer of marriage was implicit.

Maria replied, "At the twelvemonth's end, I'll change my black gown for a faithful lover."

"I'll wait with patience, but the time is long," Longaville said.

"The time is much like you," Maria said. "You are long in your name, and few men who are taller than you are as young as you."

Longaville and Maria talked quietly together.

Biron said to Rosaline, "Are you deep in thought, my lady? My lady, look at me. Behold the windows of my heart, my eyes. Look at the humble wooer who awaits your answer there. Impose some service on me so that I can earn your love."

"Often have I heard about you, my Lord Biron, before I saw you, and the world's large tongue, which gossips freely, proclaims you to be a man replete with mocking, full of unflattering comparisons and wounding jeers, which you will execute on all people of all ranks who lie within the mercy of your wit.

"To weed this bitter wormwood from your fruitful brain, and therewithal to win me, if you please — because without the weeding of the wormwood I am not to be won — you shall this twelvemonth term from day to day visit the speechless sick and continually converse with groaning wretches; and your task shall be, with all the fierce endeavor of your wit to make the tormented helpless people smile."

"You want me to arouse wild laughter in the throat of death?" Biron asked. "It cannot be done; it is impossible: Mirth cannot move a soul that is in agony."

Rosaline replied, “Why, that’s the way to choke a taunting, scoffing spirit, whose influence is begotten by that easy-going indulgence that shallow, laughing hearers give to fools.

“A jest’s prosperity lies in the ear of him who hears it, never in the tongue of him who makes it. So then, if sickly ears, deafened with the clamors of their own dire groans, will hear your idle scorns, then continue to make them, and I will have you and your fault as well, but if they will not, then throw away that mocking spirit, and I shall find you empty of that fault, and I will be joyful about your reformation.”

Rosaline had seen and heard Biron’s mocking spirit in abundance during the attempted performance of the Worthies. She had not liked what she had seen and heard.

“A twelvemonth! A year!” Biron said. “Well, befall what will befall, come what may, I’ll jest for a twelvemonth in a hospital.”

The Princess of France said to King Ferdinand, “Yes, my sweet lord, and so I take my leave.”

King Ferdinand said, “No, madam. We will accompany you on your way.”

Biron said, “Our wooing does not end like an old comic play. Jack has not Jill. These ladies’ good manners might well have made our sport a comedy. All they had to do was to marry us.”

King Ferdinand said, “Come, sir, the happy ending lacks only a twelvemonth and a day, and then it will end as it should.”

“That’s too long for a play,” Biron said.

Don Adriano de Armado walked over to the group and said

to the King, “Sweet majesty, vouchsafe me —”

The Princess of France asked, “Isn’t he the man who played Hector?”

Dumain affirmed, “Yes, the worthy knight of Troy.”

Armado said to the King, “I will kiss thy royal finger, and then take my leave. I am a votary; I have vowed to Jaquenetta to hold the plow for her sweet love three years.”

“To hold the plow” means “to be a farmer.” A farmer holds the plow to guide and direct it to go where it should go.

The bawdy meaning of the phrase used the word “plow” as a noun; Armado’s “plow” was located a few inches under his bellybutton. Armado would hold his plow to guide it to where it would hit its target: Jaquenetta’s vagina.

But “hold” has a secondary meaning. It can be used in “hold back” or “withhold.” A proverb states, “He who holds the plow reaps no corn.” In other words, he who does not plow reaps no crop.

The bawdy meaning of this is “He who withholds and does not use his penis reaps no infant.”

Armado continued, “But, most esteemed greatness, will you hear the dialogue that the two learned men Holofernes and Sir Nathaniel have created in praise of the owl and the cuckoo? It should have followed the end of our show.”

King Ferdinand said, “Call them forth quickly; we will do so.”

Armado called, “Ho! Come here!”

Holofernes, Sir Nathaniel, Mote, Costard, and others approached and separated into two groups.

Armado said, “This side is *Hiems*, aka Winter, and this side

is *Ver*, the Spring. The one is defended by the owl, the other by the cuckoo.

“*Hiems*” is Latin for “winter,” and “*ver*” is Latin for “spring.”

“*Ver*, begin.”

The people on the side representing Spring sang this song:

“*When daisies pied and violets blue*”

The daisies were “pied” — they were multi-colored.

“*And lady-smocks all silver-white*”

Lady-smocks are cuckoo-flowers.

“*And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue*

“*Do paint the meadows with delight,*

“*The cuckoo then, on every tree,*

“*Mocks married men; for thus sings he, ‘Cuckoo;*

“*‘Cuckoo, cuckoo.’ Oh, word of fear,*

“*Unpleasing to a married ear!*”

Cuckoo birds lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, and so they call to mind cuckolds. “Cuckoo” is a word of fear to married men because “cuckoo” sounds like “cuckold.”

“*When shepherds pipe on oaten straws*”

The shepherds’ wind instruments are made from the straw — dried stalks — of oats.

“*And merry larks are plowmen’s clocks,*”

Larks sing in the early morning, when plowmen get up. Plowmen rise with the morning lark.

“When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,”

The phrase “When turtles tread” means “When turtledoves mate.” “Daws” are the birds also known as “jackdaws.”

“And maidens bleach their summer smocks”

The young virgins bleach their summer smocks in the sunshine as they prepare to look their best in order to get boyfriends.

“The cuckoo then, on every tree,

“Mocks married men; for thus sings he, ‘Cuckoo;

“‘Cuckoo, cuckoo.’ Oh, word of fear,

“Unpleasing to a married ear!”

Then the people on the side representing Winter sang this song:

“When icicles hang by the wall

“And Dick the shepherd blows his nail”

Dick blows on his fingernails to keep his hands warm in the winter.

“And Tom bears logs into the hall

“And milk comes frozen home in pail,

“When blood is nipped and ways be foul,

The ways — roads — are foul because of snow and ice.

“Then nightly sings the staring owl, ‘Tu-whit;

“‘Tu-who,’ a merry note,”

“Tu-whit; tu-who” can be understood as “to it; to woo.”

“To it” can mean “go to it” or “to have sex.”

“While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.”

“Keel” means to “cool.” Joan would stir the pot to cool the liquid and keep it from boiling over.

“When all aloud the wind doth blow

“And coughing drowns the parson’s saw”

A “saw” is a “wise saying or platitude.”

“And birds sit brooding in the snow

“And Marian’s nose looks red and raw,

“When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,”

The roasted crabs are crabapples that have been placed in a bowl of warmed ale or wine.

“Then nightly sings the staring owl, ‘Tu-whit;

“‘Tu-who,’ a merry note,

“While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.”

Armado then said, “The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo.”

He meant that prose would ruin the mood created by the pleasing verse of the two songs. Mercury was the messenger of the gods, and so his words concerned serious business. Apollo was the god of music and the words of his songs were entertaining.

Armado then said to the readers of this book: “You go your way; we characters in this book will go our way. And so farewell.”

NOTA BENE (Love's Labor's Lost)

The following lines are thought to be a first draft of some lines that appear in Biron's long speech near the end of Act 4, scene 3:

And where that you have vow'd to study, lords,
In that each of you have forsworn his book,
Can you still dream and pore and thereon look?
For when would you, my lord, or you, or you,
Have found the ground of study's excellence
Without the beauty of a woman's face?
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive;
They are the ground, the books, the academes
From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire
Why, universal plodding poisons up
The nimble spirits in the arteries,
As motion and long-during action tires
The sinewy vigor of the traveller.
Now, for not looking on a woman's face,
You have in that forsworn the use of eyes
And study too, the causer of your vow;
For where is any author in the world
Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?
Learning is but an adjunct to ourself

And where we are our learning likewise is:
Then when ourselves we see in ladies' eyes,
Do we not likewise see our learning there?

For more information about King Pepin the Short,
Bellysant, and Valentine and Orson, see this book:

John Ashton, *Romances of Chivalry*. T. Fisher Unwin,
1887. 235-256.

Chapter V: MEASURE FOR MEASURE

MATTHEW 7:1-5 (*Measure for Measure*)

King James Version (KJV)

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

1599 Geneva Bible (GNV)

We may not give judgment of our neighbors.

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again.

3 And why seest thou the mote, that is in thy brother's eye, and perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how sayest thou to thy brother, Suffer me to cast out the mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

*5 Hypocrite, first cast out that beam out of thine own eye,
and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of
thy brother's eye.*

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Measure for Measure*)

MALE CHARACTERS

VINCENTIO, the Duke of Vienna.

ANGELO, Lord Deputy in the Duke's absence.

ESCALUS, an old Lord, joined with Angelo in the deputation.

CLAUDIO, a young Gentleman.

LUCIO, a Fantastic. Lucio often talks when he should keep his mouth shut.

Two other Gentlemen similar to Lucio.

VARRIUS, a Gentleman attending on the Duke.

PROVOST. The job of a Provost is to apprehend, keep in custody, and punish criminals.

THOMAS and PETER, two Friars

A Justice.

ELBOW, a simple Constable.

FROTH, a foolish Gentleman.

POMPEY BUM, Tapster to Mistress Overdone.

ABHORSON, an Executioner.

BARNARDINE, a dissolute Prisoner.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

ISABELLA, sister to Claudio.

MARIANA, betrothed to Angelo.

JULIET, beloved of Claudio.

FRANCISCA, a Nun.

MISTRESS OVERDONE, a Bawd.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Lords, Officers, Citizens, Boy, and Attendants.

SCENE

Vienna.

CHAPTER 1 (Measure for Measure)

— 1.1 —

In a room in the Duke of Vienna's palace, Duke Vincentio and Escalus, an important advisor, were speaking. Other lords were also present.

"Escalus," Duke Vincentio said.

"My lord."

"If I were to explain to you the essential qualities of ruling, I would appear to be in love with hearing myself talk. I know that your knowledge of that subject exceeds the boundaries of all the advice that my intellectual powers can give you. No more remains but that to your competence is added power that is as ample as your worth, and then your power and your competence can work together.

"You are as well versed in the nature of our people, the established laws and customs of our city, and the conditions for administering general justice as learning and practical experience has made anyone whom we can remember."

Duke Vincentio handed Escalus a document and said, "There is our commission for you, from which we would not have you deviate."

Duke Vincentio had highly praised Escalus' knowledge of government, and yet he was not going to let Escalus be the main ruler of Vienna during his absence. For that position, he had a different man in mind.

Duke Vincentio, using the royal plural, said to one of the other lords, "Call Angelo to come here before us."

The lord exited to carry out his task.

Duke Vincentio asked Escalus, “What do you think Angelo will be like as my representative when I am gone? You need to know that we have with special soul — after careful intellectual and spiritual consideration — selected him to be the ruler of Vienna in our absence. We have lent him our terror, dressed him with our love, and given his deputation all the organs of our own power. As my deputy, he will have all my power to give capital punishment, to show mercy, and to do all the things that we do as Duke of Vienna.

“What do you think about Angelo ruling Vienna in my absence?”

“If anyone in Vienna is worthy to undertake such ample grace and honor, it is Lord Angelo,” Escalus replied.

“Angelo is coming,” Duke Vincentio said.

Angelo entered the room.

“I am always obedient to your grace’s will,” Angelo said, “and I have come to know your pleasure. What do you want me to do?”

“Angelo, there is a kind of behavior in your life that to the observer fully unfolds your history. By looking at you and by observing your actions, people know that you are a man of good character. However, your virtuous attributes do not belong to you; they are not to be indulged in and enjoyed by only an individual. Heaven does with us as we do with torches. We do not light them only for ourselves; instead, we use them to provide light for everyone around us. If our virtues and talents do not help the people around us, it is as if we do not have them. We cannot simply concentrate on perfecting ourselves and not try to help other people.

“Our spirits are not greatly moved unless they are moved by great deeds or great causes. We are given great qualities

so that we can accomplish great things in the public sphere. Nature never lends to any of us the smallest unit of her excellence unless, like a thrifty goddess, she makes sure that she has the glory of a creditor — she makes sure that she receives thanks for the loan as well as interest for the loan. Anyone to whom Nature lends virtues and talents must use them rather than waste them.

“But I am addressing my speech to a person who can well perform the role that I am giving to him. Stay consistent to your principles, Angelo. In our absence you will take our place as ruler of Vienna. You will have the loan of all my power. You will decide whether to give death or mercy when you serve as judge; mortality and mercy in Vienna live in your tongue and heart. Old Escalus, although he was the first person I considered to take my place, is your second-in-command.”

Duke Vincentio handed a document to Angelo, saying, “Take your commission.”

“My good lord, let there be some more test made of my metal, before so noble and so great a figure be stamped upon it,” Angelo said, holding his commission.

He was punning on “metal” and “mettle.” He realized that he was young, and he wanted his mettle, or character, to be better tested before he exercised so much power. Also, Viennese coins were made of metal, and the picture of the Duke was stamped upon them.

“Let there be no more evasion of the duty that I am giving to you,” Duke Vincentio replied. “We have after mature and careful consideration decided to make you ruler of Vienna in our absence; therefore, accept your honors.

“We must leave Vienna so quickly and urgently that our departure must be given priority and so I leave undiscussed important matters. We shall write to you as time and our

important affairs shall allow us. We will tell you how it goes with us, and we want you to keep us informed about what happens in Vienna.

“So, fare you well, Angelo and Escalus. To both of you I leave your commissions, and I hope that you perform them well.”

“Give us permission, my lord,” Angelo said, “to accompany you part of the way on your journey.”

“My haste to leave does not allow you to accompany me during even part of my journey,” Duke Vincentio said. “Nor need you, on my honor, have to worry about accompanying me. Worry instead about governing Vienna. Your freedom to act is as my own. You can enforce or qualify the laws as to your soul seems good. You can be strict or be merciful as to you seems best.

“Give me your hand.”

Duke Vincentio and Angelo shook hands.

Duke Vincentio continued, “I will leave secretly and quietly. I love the people, but I do not like to appear before them in public. That can be good public relations, but I do not relish their loud applause and vehement shouts of greeting, nor do I consider a man who enjoys such things to be of sound judgment.

“Once more, fare you well.”

“May the Heavens help you accomplish your purposes!” Angelo said.

“May the Heavens conduct you in your journey and bring you back in happiness!” Escalus said.

“I thank you. Fare you well,” Duke Vincentio said, and then he exited.

Escalus said to Angelo, “I shall desire you, sir, to give me permission to have free and frank speech with you. I need information. I need to find out the full extent of my power while Duke Vincentio is gone. I know that I have some power, but I do not know its strength and extent.”

This was wise of Escalus. To obey the rules, you need to know what the rules are. Once Escalus knew for certain the limits of his power, he could be careful not to exceed those limits.

“The same is true of me,” Angelo said. “Let us withdraw together, and both of us should soon know how much power we have.”

“I will go with your honor,” Escalus said.

They left to consult the commissions that Duke Vincentio had given to them.

— 1.2 —

On a street in Vienna, Lucio and two gentlemen talked.

Lucio said, “If the Duke of Vienna with the other Dukes does not reach an agreement with the King of Hungary, why then all the Dukes will fight the King.”

“Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary’s!” the first gentleman said.

“Amen!” the second gentleman said.

Peace is a good thing for most people, but for a soldier it can be a bad thing. No war equals no work, no work equals no pay, and no pay equals no food. Unemployed soldiers in their society were often called Hungarians because they were hungry.

Lucio said to the second gentleman, “You speak like the sanctimonious pirate who went to sea with the Ten

Commandments, but he erased one commandment out of the tablet.”

“Would that commandment be ‘Thou shalt not steal?’” the second gentlemen asked.

“Yes, that is the one he erased.”

The first gentleman said, “Why, it was a commandment that commanded the captain and all the others to not follow their occupations: They went to sea to steal. There’s not a soldier of us all who, in the prayer of thanksgiving said before a meal, relishes the petition that prays for peace.”

“I never heard of any soldier who dislikes it,” the second gentleman said.

“I believe you,” Lucio said to the second gentleman, “because I think that you have never been present when grace was said.”

“You don’t?” the second gentleman said. “I have heard a prayer said before a meal a dozen times at least.”

“The kind of grace that you heard said was in meter,” the first gentleman said. “For example: Rub-a-dub-dub; thanks for the grub. Yay, God!”

“I don’t think that you have ever heard grace in any form or in any language,” Lucio said to the second gentleman.

The first gentleman added, “Or in any religion.”

Often eager to contradict others, Lucio said to the first gentleman, “Well, why not? Grace is grace, despite all controversy; for example, you yourself are a wicked villain, despite all grace.”

Lucio had shifted the meaning of “grace” from “a prayer of thanksgiving before a meal” to “God’s mercy.”

The first gentleman said, “A pair of shears went between us.”

This image referred to scissors cutting a piece of cloth. In other words, the first gentleman was telling Lucio that they were both cut from the same cloth — both of them were wicked villains. Or, more simply, “Same to you, buddy!”

“I grant that a pair of shears went between us,” Lucio said. “I am the good velvet cloth; you are the raggedy edge of the cloth that was cut off and thrown away.”

“If you are velvet, you are good velvet,” the first gentleman said. “You are a three-piled, aka three-layered, piece of velvet, I promise you. I would rather be a piece of an English kersey cloth — a simple, ordinary Englishman — than to be piled, as you are piled, for a French velvet.”

The first gentleman was insulting Lucio. He was punning on the word “piled,” one of whose meanings in their society was to be bald. (“Pile” has as one meaning soft down, which can refer to the light fuzz on the head of a bald man.) Baldness was a side effect of a common treatment for the venereal disease syphilis, which was known as the French disease. A French velvet was slang for a French prostitute. In other words, the first gentleman was accusing Lucio of being infected with syphilis that he had gotten from a prostitute.

The first gentleman concluded by saying, “Do I speak feelingly now?”

By “feelingly,” the first gentleman meant “to the purpose,” but Lucio deliberately mistook it as meaning “with feeling.”

“I think that you do have feeling when you speak. I think that your mouth has the sores of venereal disease and each word you speak causes you to feel pain. I will drink to your

health, but I will never drink out of a glass that you have drunk from lest I contract the disease from which you suffer.”

“I think I have done myself wrong, have I not?” the first gentleman said. “I should not have entered a contest of insults with Lucio. He always wins.”

“You have done yourself wrong,” the second gentleman said, “whether you are infected with venereal disease or not.”

“Look, look,” Lucio said. “Madam Mitigation comes!”

He was referring to Mistress Overdone, the proprietor of a whorehouse. She mitigated, or lessened, the sexual desire of the clients who visited her whorehouse. Her name was appropriate. To “do” a woman is to have sex with her, and whores are overdone.

Lucio said, “I have purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to —”

“To what, I ask,” the second gentleman said.

“Guess.”

“To three thousand dolors — or dollars — a year.”

“Yes, and more,” the first gentleman said.

“A French crown more,” Lucio said.

A French crown was a coin, but it also meant a bald head — a sign of someone suffering from the French disease.

The first gentleman said, “You are always saying that I am diseased, but you are wrong. I am healthy. I am sound.”

“I disagree that you are healthy,” Lucio said. “But I agree that you are sound in the way that hollow things resound

when struck. Your bones are hollow — a result of the later stages of the French disease. Impiety has made a feast of you and eaten your marrow.”

Mistress Overdone walked up to the three men.

Annoyed at being bested in insults by Lucio, the first gentleman said to her, “Which of your hips has the worst sciatica?”

Sciatica was a painful disease that was thought to be the result of the French disease.

Mistress Overdone ignored the question and said, “Well, well; there’s one over yonder arrested and being carried to prison who was worth five thousand of you all.”

“Who’s that, please?” the second gentleman asked.

“Sir, he is Claudio, Signior Claudio.”

“Claudio is going to prison? I don’t believe it,” the first gentleman said.

“You may not believe it, but it is true,” Mistress Overdone said. “I saw him arrested, I saw him carried away, and what is more, within these three days his head will be chopped off.”

“Despite all my fooling,” Lucio said, “I do not want that to happen to Claudio. Are you sure about this?”

“I am very sure about it,” Mistress Overdone said, “and the reason for Claudio to be treated like this is that he made Juliet pregnant.”

Lucio said, “Believe me, this may very well be true. Claudio promised to meet me two hours ago, and he has always been very careful to keep his promises.”

“Besides, you know, this is consistent with a conversation

that we had earlier on this subject,” the second gentleman said.

“But, most of all, this agrees with Angelo’s new proclamation,” the first gentleman said.

“Let’s go and learn the truth about this,” Lucio said.

He and the two gentlemen departed.

Mistress Overdone complained to herself, “What with the war, what with the sweating cure for people infected with syphilis, what with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am losing my customers.”

Pompey walked up to Mistress Overdone, who asked him, “What’s the news?”

Pompey said, “That man yonder is being carried to prison.”

Wanting to find out what Pompey knew, Mistress Overdone asked him, “Well, what has he done?”

“A woman.”

“But what’s his offence?”

“Groping for trouts in a peculiar river,” Pompey said.

“Groping for trouts” was a kind of fishing in which people felt for, aka tickled, trout in a hiding place in a river. “Peculiar” meant “private,” aka a place where no fishing was allowed. Pompey meant that the man — Claudio — had been tickling where no tickling was allowed. In other words, he had committed fornication.

“What, is there a maid with child by him?” Mistress Overdone asked.

“Maid” meant “maiden,” aka virgin, so Mistress Overdone should have asked about a former maid.

Pompey replied, “No, but there’s a woman with maid by him.”

Pompey was using language precisely. The pregnant woman’s unborn baby would be a virgin. In their society, a young male virgin was sometimes called a maid. Of course, the word “maid” also referred to female virgins.

Pompey asked, “You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?”

“What proclamation, man?”

“All warehouses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.”

“And what shall become of the warehouses in the city?”

“They shall stand for seed,” Pompey replied. “They would have gone down, too, but a wise burgher made an offer for them.”

Pompey enjoyed making puns. A male appendage that can stand up can be used to plant a seed in a woman’s uterus. After planting the seed, the male appendage goes down.

Burghers were middle-class men with overflowing pockets. Sometimes, burghers invested in warehouses.

Mistress Overdone asked, “But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?”

“To the ground, Mistress,” Pompey said.

“Why, here’s a change indeed in the commonwealth!”

The commonwealth is the state of the nation, but an additional meaning is people united by a common interest. A whore and her client are united.

Mistress Overdone wondered, “What shall become of me?”

Pompey replied, “Come; don’t be afraid. Good counselors lack no clients. Although you change your place of business, you need not change your trade; I’ll be your tapster still. And by tapster, I mean your pimp; I will pimp your whores for you. Courage! There will be pity taken on you — you who have worn your eyes almost out in the service, you will have allowances made for you.”

Mistress Overdone saw the Provost, whose job is to apprehend, keep in custody, and punish criminals, coming toward them.

Alarmed, she said, “What’s going on here, Thomas Tapster? We had better leave.”

Pompey looked and said, “Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the Provost to prison. The pregnant Madam Juliet is with them.”

Not wanting to meet the Provost, Mistress Overdone and Pompey left.

Claudio, who was bound and obviously a prisoner, complained to the Provost, “Fellow, why are you showing me thus to the world? Take me to prison, where I am committed.”

The Provost said, “I am not showing you off to the world out of meanness. Lord Angelo has ordered me to do this. It is a part of your punishment.”

“Thus can the demigod Authority make us pay for our offence in full in accordance with the words of Heaven in the Bible,” Claudio said. “On whom punishment falls, it falls; on whom punishment does not fall, it does not fall. Either way, justice is triumphant.”

Claudio may have been thinking about Proverbs 21:15: *“It is joy to the just to do judgment; but destruction shall be to*

the workers of iniquity.” But Zachariah 7:9 also mentions mercy and compassion: “*Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion, every man to his brother [...].*”

Lucio and the two gentlemen walked over to Claudio, the Provost, and Juliet.

“How are you, Claudio!” Lucio asked. “What is the reason for these restraints? Why are you bound?”

“The reason for these restraints is too much liberty, my Lucio,” Claudio said. “Too much liberty is a surfeit, an excess. Surfeiting — eating too much — is the father of much fasting. We eat too much, and then we do not eat at all. Similarly, every immoderate use of liberty leads to restraint. Our natures pursue, like rats that gulp down ratsbane, the poison specially intended to kill them — an evil that causes them to thirst. When we drink, we die.”

Claudio was correct. Many laws of Vienna had not been enforced for a long time, and so people such as Claudio had taken advantage of that. Now Vienna was entering a time in which those laws were strictly enforced.

“If I could speak so wisely while I was under arrest, I would send for certain of my creditors so that they could have me arrested,” Lucio said, “and yet, joking aside, I would rather have the foolishness of freedom than the wisdom of imprisonment. What offence have you committed, Claudio?”

“I have committed an offense that, if I were to mention it, would cause offense again.”

“What, is it murder?” Lucio asked.

“No.”

“Lechery?”

“You can call it that,” Claudio said.

The Provost said to Lucio, “Leave us, sir!”

He then said to Claudio, “You must go now.”

Claudio said to the Provost, “Let me speak one word, good friend.”

He then said, “Lucio, a word with you.”

“A hundred, if they’ll do you any good,” Lucio said. “Is lechery such a concern? Is lechery something that officers of the law really concern themselves with?”

“In my case, they have,” Claudio said. “I had a true contract to legally marry Juliet. Because of that true contract, I got possession of Juliet’s bed. You know the lady; she is definitely my wife, except that we have not had the wedding ceremony. We put off the wedding ceremony because we were hoping to get a bigger dowry out of the coffer of her family. We thought it best to hide our love for each other until we had time to get them to approve of our love for each other. But it so happens that our most mutual entertainment in bed that we had thought to keep hidden is now written large in the belly of Juliet — that is writing that anyone can read.”

“She is with child, perhaps?” Lucio said. “She is pregnant?”

“Unhappily, she is,” Claudio said. “And the Duke has a new deputy to rule in his absence. This deputy rules harshly, perhaps because he is young and unused to rule or perhaps because he is treating the body public like a horse he is riding for the first time — to show the horse that he is its master, he digs his spurs in its side. I don’t know whether his tyranny is due to the position that he fills or it is due to his own character. Either way, he is strictly

enforcing laws that have been ignored for nineteen years. These neglected laws were like unpolished armor that was hung on the wall and never worn. But now, the new deputy is strictly enforcing these half-asleep and neglected laws. He is surely doing this to earn a reputation.”

“I am sure that you are right,” Lucio said. “The penalty for fornication is death by beheading. Your head stands so insecurely on your shoulders that a milkmaid, if she is in love, may sigh with lovesickness and blow it off. Send after Duke Vincentio and appeal to him for mercy.”

“I have tried to do that, but Duke Vincentio is nowhere to be found,” Claudio said. “Please, Lucio, do me this kind service. Today my sister is supposed to enter a cloister and become a novice. Tell her the danger that I am in. Implore her, for me, to become friends with the strict deputy. Tell her to talk to him in person and try to persuade him to be lenient toward me. I have great hope in that because in her youth she has an eager and speechless dialect, a certain body language, that moves men. Besides, she uses reason and conversation well; she is very persuasive.”

“I hope that she is,” Lucio said, “not just for you, but for other people who have done what you have done and who would be arrested and punished just like you. You should be enjoying your life. I would hate for you to lose your life because of a game of tick-tack.”

Tick-tack was a board game in which pegs were inserted into holes. The symbolism is obvious.

“I will go and see and talk to your sister,” Lucio said.

“I thank you, good friend Lucio,” Claudio said.

“I will see her within two hours.”

Claudio said to the Provost, “Come, officer, let’s leave!”

In a room in a Viennese monastery, Duke Vincentio and Friar Thomas talked.

“No, holy father; throw away that thought. Don’t believe that the dribbling dart of love — a weakly shot arrow from Cupid — can pierce a bosom completely protected by armor,” Duke Vincentio said.

Friar Thomas had been afraid that Duke Vincentio had come to the monastery to arrange to consummate a love affair there.

Duke Vincentio continued, “Why I want you to allow me to hide myself in a friar’s habit has a purpose more grave and wrinkled and serious than the aims and ends of sexually burning youth.”

“May your grace tell me that purpose?” Friar Thomas asked.

“My holy sir, none better knows than you how I have ever loved the life withdrawn from the world. I have always lightly valued haunting social gatherings where young people show off their witless and expensive clothing.

“I have given to Lord Angelo, who is a man of strict self-discipline and firm abstinence, my absolute power and position here in Vienna; he will rule Vienna until I take over again. Lord Angelo believes that I have travelled to Poland; that is a rumor that I have caused to be spread to the public, and that rumor is believed.

“Now, pious sir, do you want me to tell you why I have done this?”

“Gladly, my lord,” Friar Thomas said.

“In Vienna, we have strict statutes and very biting laws.

These statutes and laws are the needed bits and curbs to headstrong weeds, aka people who do not contribute to society. For fourteen years we have not enforced these statutes and laws. They are like an old lion in a cave that has convinced other lions to bring food to it. These statutes and laws and the old lion no longer bite their legitimate prey.

“Now, like foolish fathers who bound together twigs of birch to make a whip, but who merely threaten their misbehaving children with it instead of actually whipping them, with the result that the misbehaving children laugh at rather than fear the whip, so our decrees might as well not exist because they are never employed. Now, liberty grabs justice by the nose, the baby beats the nanny, and good behavior is rejected in favor of bad behavior.”

“Your grace, you have always had the power to begin enforcing the laws whenever you pleased,” Friar Thomas said. “Your enforcement of the laws would be more feared than Lord Angelo’s enforcement because you are the Duke, not the Duke’s subordinate.”

“I fear that I would be too feared,” Duke Vincentio said. “It is my fault that the people ceased to fear the never-enforced laws. I gave the people the freedom to ignore the laws, and I would be tyrannous if I were to suddenly and strictly enforce the laws. When we do not enforce the laws and administer punishment for breaking them, we tacitly give our approval to the general public to break those laws.

“Therefore, indeed, my father, I have on Angelo imposed the duty of enforcing the laws. Angelo may use the authority that I have lent to him to strike to the heart of the matter and enforce the laws, all without reducing my popularity with the citizens of Vienna.

“I wish to witness what Angelo does, and to do that I need

a disguise. If I am disguised as a brother of your order, I can visit both Angelo and the people of Vienna; therefore, I ask you to give me the habit of a friar and to instruct me in how I may bear myself so that I act like a friar.

“More reasons for this action I will give to you when I have more time, but I will tell you now one more reason. Lord Angelo is straitlaced and puritanical, he keeps up his guard against the doing of evil, and he scarcely confesses that his blood flows or that his appetite leans more to bread than stone. He is so puritanical that it is as if he will not admit that he has human impulses. I want to see what happens to him as a result of his having my power. Will power change him? Is Angelo really what he now seems to be?”

— 1.4 —

Isabella, Claudio’s sister, spoke to the nun Francisca in a nunnery of Saint Clare, the religious order that Isabella wished to join.

“Do you nuns have any farther privileges?” Isabella asked.

“Aren’t these privileges enough?” Francisca replied.

“Yes, they are,” Isabella said. “I don’t wish for more privileges; instead, I wish for fewer privileges. I wish that the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare, were under stricter restraints.”

Lucio called from outside the nunnery, “Hello! May peace be in this place!”

Isabella asked, “Who’s that person who is calling?”

“It is a man’s voice,” Francisca said. “Gentle Isabella, turn the key and open the door, and find out from him what he wants. You may talk to him; I may not. You are not yet a member of our religious order.

“When you have taken the vows, you must not speak with men except in the presence of the prioress. If you speak, you must not show your face. Or, if you show your face, you must not speak.”

Lucio shouted again.

Francisca said, “He calls again; please, talk to him.”

Francisca moved a short distance away.

Isabella opened the door and said, “Peace and prosperity to you! Who is it who is calling?”

Lucio entered the room and said, “Hail, virgin, if you are a virgin, as those cheek-roses of yours proclaim that you are no less! Can you help me by allowing me to see Isabella, who is a novice of this place and the fair sister of her unhappy brother Claudio?”

“Why is Claudio ‘her *unhappy* brother?’” Isabella replied. “Let me ask, and let me let you know that I am Isabella, Claudio’s sister.”

“Gentle and fair Isabella, your brother kindly greets you,” Lucio said. “To come straight to the point, he’s in prison.”

“That is bad news!” Isabella said. “Why is he in prison?”

“For something that, if I were his judge, his punishment ought to be thanks rather than something bad. He has gotten his lover pregnant.”

“Sir, don’t joke about such things,” Isabella said.

“It is true,” Lucio replied. “Although it is my familiar sin when I speak with maidens to make jokes and to act like the deceiving lapwing, a bird that deceives people and animals in order to lead them away from its nestlings, and to make my tongue say things that are not in my heart, I would not do such things to all virgins. You are a novice in

a nunnery. I regard you as a virgin who is Heavenly and saintly. By renouncing the world, you have acquired a spirit that will be immortal in Heaven. Because of who you are, I must talk to you with complete sincerity, as if I were talking to a saint.”

“When you mock me by giving me good characteristics I do not deserve, you are blaspheming the truly good,” Isabella said.

“Do not believe it,” Lucio said. “You deserve the respect that I am giving to you.

“In few and truthful words, this is what has happened. Your brother and his lover have embraced. Just like those who eat grow full, just like blossoming time turns seeds in fallow ground to a bountiful harvest, even so her plenteous womb expresses your brother’s full tilling and husbandry. Your brother has planted his seed in her, and that seed is growing.”

“My brother has gotten someone pregnant? Is she my cousin Juliet?”

“Is she really your cousin?”

“Not literally,” Isabella said. “We are close friends — so close that we might as well be biologically related. We are like schoolgirls who call each other affectionate names — such things are silly but appropriate for schoolgirls.”

“She is the woman whom your brother made pregnant.”

“Then he should marry her.”

“This is the point,” Lucio said. “Duke Vincentio has very strangely gone from Vienna. He led many gentlemen, myself being one of them, to expect that there would soon be military action, but we have learned from those in the know that Duke Vincentio’s public utterances were an

infinite distance away from what he really means to do.

“In his place, and with all of his power and authority, he allows Lord Angelo to govern Vienna. Lord Angelo is a man whose blood is composed only of snow-broth: melted snow. Lord Angelo is a man who never feels the wanton stings and urges of sexual desire. He reduces and blunts his natural keenness of sexual desire with two things that improve the mind: studying and fasting.

“Lord Angelo wants people to fear to use the liberty that we have had recently — liberty that has ignored the hideous law, much the way that a mouse ignores a nearby lion. To do that, he has picked out a law and decided to strictly enforce it. Your brother broke that law, the punishment for which is forfeiture of his life. Lord Angelo had your brother arrested for breaking that law, and now Lord Angelo will punish your brother; that way, your brother will serve as an example to others.

“All hope is gone, unless you have the grace by your fair appeal to soften Angelo and have him reduce the punishment. That is the essence of the errand that I have run between your brother and you.”

“Is Angelo really seeking to end my brother’s life?”

“He has already condemned your brother, and I have heard that the Provost has the order to execute your brother.”

“This is dreadful,” Isabella said. “Whatever abilities and talents I have are poor and unlikely to do my brother any good.”

“Gather together all the resources that are in you,” Lucio said.

“My resources? I doubt —”

“Our doubts are traitors, and they make us lose the good we

often might win by making us afraid to make any attempt to do what good we can,” Lucio said. “Go to Lord Angelo, and let him learn that when maidens plead, men act like gods who have the power to grant them what they want — and let him learn that when maidens also weep and kneel as they plead, men give the maidens whatever they want and exactly the way the maidens want it. Maidens can be much more persuasive than you think when it comes to men.”

“I’ll see what I can do.”

“Good, but do it quickly.”

“I will get started right away,” Isabella said. “I will stay here no longer than it takes to give the Mother Superior notice of this affair. I humbly thank you. Commend me to my brother. Early this evening, I will send him news about the outcome of my pleading.”

“Farewell,” Lucio said. “I take my leave of you.”

“Good sir, *adieu*.”

CHAPTER 2 (Measure for Measure)

— 2.1 —

Angelo, Escalus, a Justice, the Provost, and some officers and attendants were meeting in a courtroom.

Angelo said, “We must not make a scarecrow of the law, setting it up to make the birds of prey afraid but letting it remain motionless so that the birds of prey grow accustomed to it and make it their perch and not their terror.”

Escalus replied, “Yes, but always let us be keen and sharp, and cut a little and prune where needed rather than let the axe fall and chop down and kill the tree. This gentleman whose life I would save — Claudio — had a most noble father!

“Your honor, whom I believe is very strict in preserving his virtue, you should realize that you yourself have sexual urges, and if the right time and right place had come along, or if the right place had come along when your sexual desire was at its height, or if you had the opportunity to act on your sexual desires and achieve the satisfaction you desired, then perhaps sometime in your life you yourself would have erred in the same way as this man whom you have sentenced to death. You yourself might have been punished in the same way by the same law.”

“It is one thing to be tempted, Escalus, and another thing to fall,” Angelo said. “I do not deny that the jury, passing sentence on the prisoner’s life, may among the sworn twelve jurors have a thief or two who are guiltier than the prisoner on trial.

“When a crime is revealed to justice, that is the crime that

justice seizes. The people who are put on trial are the people who are arrested. Who knows how many thieves have served on juries that have tried other thieves?

“It is very obvious that when we see a jewel on the ground we stoop and pick it up. We do that because we see it, but we tread upon the jewel we do not see and never think about it.

“You may not extenuate Claudio’s offence because I myself have had similar sexual urges. Instead, you should tell me that if I, who have condemned Claudio, should also commit the same offense, then the judgment of death that I gave to Claudio should also be given to me with no mercy shown or extenuating circumstances being urged.

“Sir, Claudio must die.”

“Be it as your wisdom will have it,” Escalus replied.

“Where is the Provost?” Angelo asked.

“Here I am, if it pleases your honor,” the Provost replied.

“See that Claudio is executed by nine tomorrow morning. Bring to him his confessor; let him confess his sins and be prepared to die because tomorrow morning will be the end of his Earthly pilgrimage.”

The Provost departed.

Escalus thought, *May Heaven forgive Claudio — and forgive us all! Some rise because they sin, and some fall because they are virtuous. Some people walk many times on the ice of a frozen pond and crack it without falling through; other people fall through the first time they stand on ice. Similarly, some people commit many crimes without ever being caught; other people are caught the first time they commit a crime.*

Elbow, who was a Constable, and some other law officials arrived. With them were two men named Froth and Pompey, whom they had arrested. Elbow was not good with language; he committed many malapropisms in his speech.

“Come, bring them away,” Elbow said. “If these two men are good people in a commonwealth who do nothing but use their abuses — do wicked things — in common whorehouses, I know no law. Bring them away.”

“Greetings, sir!” Angelo said. “What’s your name and what’s the matter?”

“If it please your honor, I am the poor Duke’s Constable, and my name is Elbow.”

Elbow should have said that he was the Duke’s poor Constable.

Elbow added, “I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here before your good honor two notorious benefactors.”

“Benefactors?” Angelo said. “Well, what benefactors are they? Aren’t they malefactors?”

Angelo used words better than Elbow. Angelo knew the difference between a benefactor and a malefactor.

“If it pleases your honor, I don’t know well what they are, but I do know that they are puritanical villains, that I am sure of, and I am sure that they are void of all profanation in the world that good Christians ought to have.”

Most villains are not puritanical, and most good Christians are likely to think that they prefer profession — witnessing to the world about the glory of God — to profanation. However, some villains can very well be puritanical — they are hypocritical villains.

Escalus said sarcastically, “This is well said; here is a wise officer.”

“Continue,” Angelo said. “What is the occupation or social class of these two men?”

Elbow was slow to speak.

Angelo asked, “Elbow is your name? Why don’t you speak, Elbow?”

Pompey joked, “He cannot, sir; he’s out at ‘Elbow.’”

Being out at elbow can mean wearing ragged clothing — clothing with holes in the elbows. Pompey also was joking that Elbow’s brain went out when he heard his name — Elbow was at a loss for words when he heard his name. Chances are, Elbow simply had been distracted by something and did not hear Angelo.

“Who are you, sir?” Angelo asked Pompey. “What is your occupation or social class?”

Elbow answered for Pompey, “He, sir! He is a tapster, aka bartender, sir. He is a part-time pimp. He is a man who serves a bad woman. The bad woman’s whorehouse, sir, was, as they say, plucked down in the suburbs; and now she professes to run a hot-house, which she calls a bath-house, but I think that the hot-house is a very ill house, too.”

“Why do you think that?” Escalus asked.

“My wife, sir, whom I detest before Heaven and your honor —”

“Detest?” Escalus asked. “You detest your wife?”

Elbow should have said that he professes his wife — he declares that his wife is his wife.

“Yes, sir,” Elbow replied. “My wife is a woman whom, I

thank Heaven, is an honest and faithful woman —”

“Why then do you detest her?” Escalus asked.

Escalus knew that Elbow was making malapropisms, but Escalus was not above encouraging Elbow to make a fool of himself.

“I say, sir,” Elbow replied, “I will detest myself also, as well as she, that this house, if it is not a bawd’s house, it is pity of her life because it is a wicked house.”

Elbow had stated that if the house under discussion is not a whorehouse, then it would be a pity for his wife.

“How do you know that the house is a whorehouse, Constable?” Escalus asked.

“Sir, I know it from my wife,” Elbow replied. “If my wife had been a woman cardinally given, she might have been accused of fornication, adultery, and all moral uncleanness there.”

Instead of “cardinally,” Elbow should have said, “carnally.”

Elbow was complaining that Pompey had tried to recruit Mrs. Elbow as a prostitute, or perhaps he was complaining that Froth had mistaken her for a prostitute, or both.

“This would have happened because of the woman’s agent — a pimp working for her?” Escalus asked.

“Yes, sir, by Mistress Overdone’s agent, but as my wife spit in his face, she defied him.”

Pompey said, “Sir, if it please your honor, this is not the truth.”

“Prove it before these varlets here, you honorable man,” Elbow said. “Prove it.”

Escalus said to Angelo, "Do you hear how he misuses words? He is calling us varlets, and he is calling this alleged pimp an honorable man."

Pompey said, "Sir, his pregnant wife went into our house because she was longing, saving your honor's reverence, for stewed prunes. Sir, we had only two stewed prunes in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit dish, a dish that cost some three pence. Your honors have seen such dishes; they are not China dishes, but they are very good dishes —"

Despite being under arrest, Pompey was having fun. He was deliberately putting much irrelevant detail into his speech, and he was parodying Elbow's malapropisms by saying "distant time" instead of "exact time" or "at that instant."

"Stop wasting our time," Escalus said. "The dish does not matter, sir."

"No, indeed, sir. It does not matter a pin. You are therein in the right, but let me get to the point," Pompey said. "As I say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, pregnant with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and us having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly; for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you three pence again."

"No, indeed," Froth replied.

"Very well," Pompey said to Froth. "You being then, if you remember, cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes —"

"Yes, so I did indeed," Froth said.

"Why, very well," Pompey said. "I told you then, if you

remember, that such a one and such a one were past cure of the thing you know of, unless they kept very good diet, as I told you —”

Someone listening to Pompey could think that he was talking about prostitutes who suffered from venereal disease and who ate stewed prunes as a treatment for the disease. In fact, that is what he was talking about. Basically, he was babbling in the hope of confusing the judges so that they would decide not to punish him and Froth.

“All this is true,” Froth said.

Pompey said, “Why, very well, then —”

“Come, you are a tedious fool,” Escalus said. “Speak words that are to the purpose. What was done to Elbow’s wife that he has cause to complain of? Come and tell me what was done to her.”

“Sir, your honor cannot come to that yet,” Pompey said. “‘Cum’ and ‘done to her’ — get it?”

“I am using those words with different meanings from the ones you suggest,” Escalus said.

“Sir, but you shall come to it, by your honor’s leave. And, I ask you, look at Master Froth here, sir. He is a man whose income is four-score pounds a year, and his father died at Hallowmas: November 1, aka All Saints’ Day. It was at Hallowmas, wasn’t it, Master Froth?”

“No, it was on All-Hallond Eve, aka All-Hallows Eve: October 31, aka Halloween or the Eve of All-Saints’ Day.”

“Why, very well,” Pompey said. “I hope here we speak truths. He, sir, sitting, as I say, in a lower chair, sir; it was in the Bunch of Grapes room at the tavern, where indeed you delight to sit, do you not?”

“I do indeed,” Froth said, “because it is a public room and good for winter because a fire is kept burning in it.”

“Why, very well, then,” Pompey said. “I hope here we speak truths.”

“This will outlast a night in Russia, when nights are longest there,” Angelo said to Escalus. “I’ll leave now, and I will leave the hearing of the case to you, hoping that it will be the case that you’ll find good reason to whip them all.”

Whipping was a common legal punishment.

“I think that I will find reason to whip both men,” Escalus said. “Good day to your lordship.”

Angelo exited.

Escalus said to Pompey, “Now, sir, come on. Tell me what was done to Elbow’s wife once more.”

“Once, sir? There was nothing done to her once.”

Elbow requested, “Please, sir, ask him what this man — Froth — did to my wife.”

“Please, your honor,” Pompey requested, “ask me.”

“Well, sir; what did this gentleman do to her?”

“Please, sir, look at this gentleman’s face,” Pompey said.

He added, “Good Master Froth, look upon his honor; it is for a good purpose.”

Pompey asked Escalus, “Does your honor see his face?”

“Yes, sir, very well.”

“Please, look at his face very carefully,” Pompey said.

“I am.”

“Does your honor see any harm in his face?”

“Why, no.”

“I’ll be supposed upon a book, his face is the worst thing about him,” Pompey said.

Pompey continued to parody Elbow’s malapropisms. The proper expression was to be deposed, aka sworn, upon a book — the Bible. If Pompey could entertain Escalus and make Escalus like him, he might be able to escape being punished.

Pompey continued, “Good, then; if his face is the worst thing about him, how could Master Froth do the Constable’s wife any harm? I would like your honor to tell me that.”

“He’s in the right,” Escalus, who was entertained by Pompey, said. “Constable, what do you say about this?”

“First, if you don’t mind,” Elbow said, “the house is a respected house; next, this is a respected fellow; and his mistress is a respected woman.”

Pompey knew that Elbow meant “suspected,” not “respected,” and he decided to have fun at Elbow’s expense.

Pompey said to Escalus, “I swear by my hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all.”

“Varlet, you lie,” Elbow said, rejecting the allegation that his wife was respected. “You lie, wicked varlet! The time has yet to come that my wife was ever respected by man, woman, or child.”

“Sir, she was respected by him before he married her,” Pompey said.

Anyone who did not know what the word “respected”

meant could think that Pompey was accusing Elbow of the same crime that Claudio had been convicted of.

“Which is the wiser here?” Escalus asked, smiling. “Justice or Iniquity?”

He then asked Elbow, “Is this true?”

Elbow said to Pompey, “Oh, you caitiff! Oh, you varlet! Oh, you wicked Hannibal! I respected with her before I was married to her!”

He said to Escalus, “If ever I was respected with my wife, or she with me, let not your worship think me the poor Duke’s officer.”

He said to Pompey, “Prove this, you wicked Hannibal, or I’ll make a charge of battery against you.”

Hannibal was a Carthaginian general who brought elephants and an army across the Alps so that he could attack Rome.

Escalus, who knew the correct definitions of the words “battery” and “slander,” said, “If he hits your ear, you could make a charge of slander against him, too.”

“I thank your good worship for that suggestion,” Elbow said. “What does your worship want me to do with this wicked caitiff?”

“Truly, officer,” Escalus replied, “this man has some offences in him that you would like to discover if you could; therefore, let him continue in his courses of actions until you know what offenses he has in him.”

Elbow replied, “I thank your worship.”

He then said to Pompey, “You see, you wicked varlet, now, what’s come upon you. You are to continue now, you varlet; you are to continue.”

Escalus asked Froth, “Where were you born, friend?”

“Here in Vienna, sir.”

“And do you have an income of fourscore pounds a year?”

“Yes, if it please you, sir.”

“I see.”

Escalus then asked Pompey, who now gave straight — or mostly straight — answers because he knew that he would not be punished, “What trade do you follow, sir?”

“I am a tapster, a poor widow’s tapster.”

“What is the name of the widow you work for?”

“Mistress Overdone.”

“Has she had any more than one husband?”

“She has had nine husbands, sir,” Pompey replied.
“Overdone by the last.”

“Nine!” Escalus said.

Both Pompey and Escalus smiled. “Overdone by the last” meant that she had acquired the name “Overdone” by marrying her ninth husband. However, the phrase had another meaning: Because of the nine husbands, she had been “overdone” — she was sexually exhausted.

Escalus said, “Come over here close to me, Master Froth. Master Froth, I would not have you acquainted with tapsters: They will draw you, Master Froth, and you will hang them.”

The tapsters really would draw Master Froth; they would draw alcoholic beverages for him, and they would draw money away from him. As for hanging, if Master Froth continued to frequent shady bars and whorehouses, a time

would come when he would be cheated and he would shout at a person such as Pompey, “Go hang yourself!”

Escalus said to Froth, “Get you gone, and let me hear no more of you.”

Froth, who was happy to be let go with a warning, replied, “I thank your worship. For my own part, I never come into any room in a tap-house, but I am drawn in.”

One meaning of “drawn in” is “cheated.” When a tapster draws, aka pours, beer, quite frequently there is froth at the top. One way of cheating customers is to serve more froth than beer.

“Well, stay out of trouble, Master Froth,” Escalus replied, “Farewell.”

Froth exited.

Escalus then said to Pompey, “Come here close to me, Master Tapster. What’s your name, Master Tapster?”

“Pompey.”

“What is the rest of your name?”

“Bum, sir.”

“Indeed, your bum is the greatest thing about you; therefore, in the beastliest sense you are Pompey the Great. Pompey, you are a part-time pimp, Pompey, although you disguise that occupation by also being a tapster, don’t you? Come, tell me the truth; it shall go better for you.”

“Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow who has to make a living.”

“How would you make a living, Pompey? By being a pimp — a bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? Is it a lawful trade?”

“It would be if the law allowed it, sir.”

“But the law will not allow it, Pompey,” Escalus said. “It will not be allowed in Vienna.”

“Does your worship mean to geld and spay all the youth of the city? Will all the youth of the city have their testicles and ovaries removed?”

“No, Pompey.”

“Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will go to it then. They will have sex,” Pompey said.

He added, “If your worship will have the police arrest all the prostitutes and all their clients, you need not fear the pimps — they will automatically be out of their jobs.”

“Some pretty serious enforcement of the laws is beginning, I can tell you. Soon there will be nothing but beheadings and hangings.”

“If you behead and hang all who offend that way — who buy or sell illicit sex — for only ten years altogether, you’ll be glad to give out a commission for the acquisition of more heads. If this law is enforced in Vienna for ten years, I’ll rent the best house in it at a ridiculously low price — the price that I would pay today for a room the size of a closet. Rent will be very cheap because of lack of tenants. If you live to see this come to pass, say that Pompey told you so.”

“Thank you, good Pompey,” Escalus replied, “and, in answer to your prophecy, listen carefully to me. I advise you to not let me find you before me again in court upon any complaint whatsoever. Certainly do not let me find you before me again in court for an offense related to the place you live in today. If I see you again in this court, Pompey, I shall beat you to your tent, and I will prove to be a severe

Caesar to you. Julius Caesar defeated Pompey the Great, who retreated to his tent, and I shall defeat you in court the way that Julius Caesar defeated Pompey the Great in battle. To speak plainly, Pompey, I shall have you whipped. Take this warning to heart, Pompey, and, for this time, Pompey, fare you well.”

“I thank your worship for your good advice,” Pompey said.

But he thought, *I shall do what flesh and fortune shall determine — they are my better advisors. Whip me? No, no; let a cartman whip his nag, or a law enforcement officer whip a whore. The valiant heart is not whipped out of his trade. I shall continue to be a part-time pimp.*

Pompey exited.

“Come over here close to me, Master Elbow,” Escalus said. “Come here, Master Constable. How long have you held the job of Constable?”

“Seven years and a half, sir.”

“I thought, by your readiness in the office, you had worked in it some time. You say, seven years altogether?”

“And a half, sir.”

“It has been a great challenge to you,” Escalus said. “They do you wrong to make you Constable so often. Aren’t there men in your ward who are competent to serve as Constable?”

“Truly, sir,” Elbow replied, “only a few have the intelligence to be Constable. Whenever they are chosen, they are glad to allow me to take the position. They give me some money, and I serve as Constable instead of them.”

“Bring the names of some six or seven men who are the most competent in your parish.”

“Should I bring the list of names to your worship’s house, sir?”

“Yes, to my house,” Escalus replied. “Fare you well.”

Elbow exited.

Escalus asked the Justice, “What time do you think it is?”

“Eleven a.m., sir.”

“Please come home and have lunch with me.”

“I humbly thank you.”

“I am grieved that Claudio must die, but there’s no remedy for it.”

“Lord Angelo is severe.”

“His severity is necessary,” Escalus said. “Mercy is not always mercy. Pardon is always the nurse of second woe. Being too lax in enforcing the law results in much lawlessness. But yet — poor Claudio! There is no remedy for it. Come, let us go, sir.”

— 2.2 —

In a room in the courthouse, the Provost asked a servant where Angelo was.

The servant replied, “He’s hearing a case; he will come here immediately after I tell him that you are here.”

“Good. Please tell him I am here.”

The servant departed to carry out his errand.

The Provost said to himself, “I will find out what Angelo wants to do; maybe he will relent and not sentence Claudio to death. Claudio has offended only as if he were in a dream! This is no true offense — and certainly not one that

ought to be punished by death. All social classes and all ages have been guilty of committing this vice! Why should Claudio die because he committed it!”

Angelo entered the room and asked, “What’s the matter, Provost?”

“Is it your will that Claudio shall die tomorrow?”

“Didn’t I tell you that it is?” Angelo replied. “Haven’t you received the order for Claudio’s execution? Why are you asking me about Claudio’s execution again?”

“I am asking in case I obey the order too quickly,” the Provost said. “With your permission, let me tell you that I have seen the time when, after an execution, the judge has regretted pronouncing the death sentence.”

“Ha!” Angelo said scornfully. “Let me worry about that. Do your job, or quit. If you quit, we can easily find someone to take your place.”

“I beg your honor’s pardon,” the Provost said, adding, “What shall be done, sir, with the mourning and groaning Juliet, whom Claudio got pregnant. She is very close to her hour of giving birth.”

“Take her to some place fitter for giving birth,” Angelo said, “and do it quickly.”

The servant returned and said, “The sister of the man who is condemned to die tomorrow is here and wishes to speak to you.”

“Does Claudio have a sister?” Angelo asked.

The Provost answered, “Yes, my good lord; she is a very virtuous maiden. Soon she shall join a sisterhood and be a nun, if she has not done so already.”

Angelo said, “Well, bring her here.”

The servant left the room.

Angelo said to the Provost, "See that the fornicatress Juliet is moved. Let her have the necessities she requires, but don't give her anything lavish. You shall receive an order authorizing you to do this."

Isabella and Lucio entered the room.

"May God save your honor!" the Provost said.

He started to leave the room, but Angelo told him, "Stay here a little while."

To Isabella he said, "You are welcome here. What do you want?"

"I am a woeful suitor to your honor," Isabella said. "Please, your honor, listen to me. I want to ask you to do something."

"Well, what is your suit to me?"

"There is a vice that I do most abhor," Isabella said. "I most desire that this vice should meet the blow of justice. I would prefer to not plead for leniency for a person who has committed this vice, but I must do so. What I prefer to do and prefer not to do are at war."

"What are you speaking about?" Angelo asked.

"I have a brother who is condemned to die," Isabella said. "I beg you, let my brother's vice be condemned, and not my brother."

The Provost thought, *Please, Heaven, give Isabella the ability to persuade Angelo to be lenient.*

"Condemn the vice and not the person who committed the vice?" Angelo replied. "Why, every vice is condemned even before it is committed. I would only be pretending to

do my duty if I were to condemn the vices and record them when they are committed and yet let the person who committed the vice go free.”

“Oh, the law is just but severe!” Isabella said. “I had a brother, then. I have no brother now because he is condemned to die. May Heaven keep and preserve your honor!”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “Don’t give up so easily. Plead with him some more. Beg him. Kneel down before him, and grab and hang upon his judicial robe. You are too cold; if you should need a pin, you could not with a tamer tongue ask for it. Put some emotion in your voice! Plead with him, I say!”

“Does he have to die?” Isabella asked.

“Yes, maiden,” Angelo said. “Nothing else can happen.”

“I think that something else can happen,” Isabella said. “I think that you might pardon him. If you were to pardon him, neither Heaven nor humans would grieve because of your mercy.”

“I will not pardon him.”

“Could you, if you wanted to?”

“Whatever I will not do, that I cannot do.”

“But it is possible for you to do it, and if you did it, you would do the world no wrong,” Isabella said. “Wouldn’t you pardon him if your heart were touched with the compassion for him that I feel?”

“He has been sentenced; it is too late,” Angelo replied.

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “You are too cold. You aren’t showing enough emotion.”

“Too late?” Isabella said. “Why, no, it is not too late. I, after I speak a word, may call it back again. I can change my mind.

“Believe this: No insignia that pertains to great ones — not the King’s crown, nor the sword of justice that is given to mayors and governors, nor the marshal’s truncheon, nor the judge’s robe — become them with one half as good a grace as mercy does.

“Remember this proverb: It is in their mercy that Kings come closest to gods.

“If he had been as you and you as he, you would have slipped and committed a vice like he did, but he, if he had your position, would not have been as stern and severe as you.”

“Please, leave now,” Angelo said.

“I wish to Heaven that I had your power,” Isabella said, “and that you were me. If that were so, would things be as they are now? No. I would show you what it means to be a judge and what it means to be a prisoner.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “That’s the way to do it! Go after him! Hit him hard with your words!”

“Your brother has forfeited his life because he broke the law,” Angelo said. “You are only wasting your words.”

“This is evil,” Isabella said. “Why, all the souls that have ever existed were forfeited once; Adam committed original sin and sentenced all souls to Hell. Yet God, who could have carried out that sentence, found a way to redeem souls.

“How would you be — what would happen to you when you die — if God, who is the Supreme Judge, should judge you the way that you judge other people? Oh, think about

that; and mercy will then breathe within your lips — you will be like a man who has been reborn.”

“Restrain yourself, fair maiden,” Angelo said. “It is the law, not I, that condemns your brother. Were he my cousin, my brother, or my son, he would still be sentenced to death. He must die tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow!” Isabella said. “Oh, that’s sudden! That’s too quick! Spare him! Spare him! He’s not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens we kill the fowl at the right time: after it has been fattened up. Shall we serve Heaven with less respect than we minister to our gross, Earth-bound selves? Shall we send unready souls to be judged? My good, good lord, think about this. Who has died for this offence? Many have committed it.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “Good point.”

“The law has not been dead, although it has slept,” Angelo replied. “Those many would not have dared to commit that evil offence, if the first person who disobeyed the law had been punished for his deed. Now that the law is awake, it takes note of what is done; and, like a prophet, it looks into a crystal or into a mirror that shows what future evils, either already newly conceived or soon to be conceived, will be committed because the judges have been remiss in punishing the guilty. These evils that have been in the process of being hatched and born will now have no futures. Before they begin to live, they are dead. The vices are stopped before they are committed.”

“Yet show some pity,” Isabella said.

“I show pity most of all when I show justice,” Angelo replied, “because when I show justice I pity those whom I do not know, people whom an unpunished offence would afterwards gall and harm. A criminal who is not punished will commit the same crime again. I also show pity and do

right to an offender who, because he is punished for committing one foul wrong, does not live to commit another foul wrong. Be satisfied and restrain yourself. Your brother dies tomorrow. Reconcile yourself to his death.”

“So you must be the first judge who gives this sentence of death, and my brother must be the first who suffers it. Oh, it is excellent to have a giant’s strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant. Great power must be wisely used.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “That’s well said.”

“If great men could thunder as Jove, the Roman King of the gods, himself does, Jove would never enjoy quiet because every pelting, paltry, insignificant petty officer would fill Jove’s Heaven with thunder — nothing but thunder! Merciful Heaven prefers to use the sharp and sulfurous thunderbolt to split the hard, gnarled oak rather than the soft myrtle, but man, proud man, who is dressed in a little and brief authority and who is most ignorant of what he’s most assured — the possession of his glassy essence, aka his soul, which mirrors God — acts like an angry ape and plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven that they make the angels weep, but if the angels had our fallible human nature, they would laugh themselves to death.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “Stay on the attack! Sic him, girl! He will relent. He’s coming round. I know it.”

The Provost thought, *Please, Heaven, let Isabella persuade Angelo not to kill Claudio!*

“We cannot regard our brother the way that we regard ourselves,” Isabella said. “The great have special privileges. Great men may joke with saints; this shows wit in great men, but if lesser men were to do the same thing, it would be regarded as foul profanation. Great men may also test saints to see if they are truly saintly, but again lesser men cannot do that.”

“You are in the right, girl,” Lucio whispered to Isabella. “Say more about that; drive the point home.”

“If a Captain swears, the Captain is regarded as simply angry,” Isabella said, “but if a soldier swears, it is regarded as outright blasphemy.”

“Well done,” Lucio whispered admiringly to Isabella. “I am surprised that you know such a truth.”

“Why are you telling me these things?” Angelo asked.

“Because people in authority, although they err like other people, always have a kind of medicine that will cover up their errors like skin that covers an abscess,” Isabella replied. “Go to your bosom and knock there, and ask your heart what it knows that is like my brother’s fault. If it confesses to a natural guiltiness such as his, then do not allow your heart to make your tongue pronounce a sentence of death upon my brother. You yourself must have felt the temptation that my brother felt.”

Angelo thought, *What Isabella says makes good sense and is true. Her ability to make good sense is actually inflaming me with sexual desire for her. Her good sense is inflaming my senses.*

He said, “Fare you well,” and turned to leave.

“My gentle lord, turn back,” Isabella requested.

Angelo said, “I will think about what you have said. Come back tomorrow.”

This was at least a short reprieve for Claudio. He would not be executed at least until after Angelo and Isabella had talked again.

“Listen to how I will bribe you,” Isabella said. “My good lord, turn back.”

This mention of a “bribe” surprised and shocked both Angelo and Lucio.

“What!” Angelo said. “Bribe me?”

“Yes, with such gifts that Heaven shall share with you.”

Lucio whispered to Isabella, “It is good that you are talking about Heavenly gifts. You would have ruined everything if you did not explain that.”

“I will not bribe you with foolish coins made of pure gold,” Isabella said, “or with jewels whose value rises or falls with the changes in fashion. I will bribe you with true prayers that shall go up to Heaven and enter there before sunrise. These prayers will come from preserved souls, from fasting maidens whose minds are dedicated to nothing temporal. The nuns in the religious order I will join will pray for you.”

“Well,” Angelo said. “Come to me tomorrow.”

“Good,” Lucio whispered to Isabella. “It is well. Let’s go now!”

“May Heaven keep your honor safe!” Isabella said to Angelo.

“Amen,” Angelo said, and then he thought, *I am heading toward temptation. Isabella’s prayer and my prayer are crossed; they are opposite. She prays for my honor to be preserved, but the prayer in my heart is for her honor to become compromised. I want to sleep with her.*

Isabella asked him, “At what hour tomorrow shall I come and talk to your lordship?”

“At any time before noon.”

“May God save your honor!” Isabella replied.

Isabella, Lucio, and the Provost left the room.

Angelo, now alone, said to himself, “May God save my honor from you and even from your virtue! What is this? What is happening to me? Is this her fault or mine? Who sins most: the tempter or the tempted? I can’t blame her. I can’t call her a tempter. This is my fault. I am near her the way that a piece of dead flesh is near a violet. The Sun shines on both the dead flesh and the violet. The violet is nourished, but the dead flesh rots. I do what the dead flesh does: I rot.

“Can it be true that a modest woman may more greatly sexually excite a man than a promiscuous or whorish woman? Is innocence sexually exciting? If we live in an area with a lot of wasteland, should we tear down a sanctuary so that we can build a whorehouse in its place? Plenty of prostitutes are willing to satisfy my sexual desire, so why am I sexually attracted to the chaste Isabella? Damn! Damn! Damn!

“What are you doing, Angelo? Who are you, Angelo? Do you sexually desire Isabella because of those things that make her good and make her a suitable candidate for a sisterhood of nuns?

“Oh, let her brother live! Thieves should go free despite their thefts when judges themselves steal.

“What! Do I love her? Is that why I desire to hear her speak again, and feast upon her eyes? What is it I am dreaming about? Oh, the Devil is a cunning enemy. In order to catch a saint, the Devil baits his hook with a saint! Often, the Devil uses a beautiful woman to entice a man to sin and forfeit his soul!

“The most dangerous temptation is the one that uses our goodness to entice us to sin.

“Never could the strumpet, with all of her duplicitous vigor, cosmetic art, and natural body, even once tempt me to sin, but this virtuous maid has subdued all my virtue.

“Until now, when I saw men who were foolishly infatuated with a woman, I wondered how that was possible.”

— 2.3 —

Duke Vincentio, who was now disguised as a friar, met the Provost.

“Hail to you, Provost!” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. Then, realizing that he was disguised as a friar and was not supposed to personally know the Provost, he added, “At least I think you are the Provost.”

“I am the Provost. What do you want, good friar?”

“Bound by my duty to do charity and by my blessed order, I have come to visit the afflicted spirits here in the prison. Grant me the common right of all clerics to see them and tell me the nature of their crimes, so that I may minister to them accordingly.”

“I am willing to do more than that, if more is needed,” the Provost replied.

Juliet walked over to them.

The Provost said, “Look, here comes one of the prisoners: a gentlewoman in my care, who, falling into a common fault of youth, has blistered her reputation. She is pregnant, and the young man who got her pregnant has been sentenced to death, although he is more suitable to do another such offence and father another child than to die for fathering his first child.”

“When must he die?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked.

“He is sentenced to die tomorrow,” the Provost said.

He then said to Juliet, “I have arranged a place for you to give birth. Stay here awhile, and you shall be conducted to that place.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio asked Juliet, “Do you repent, fair one, of the sin you carry?”

“I do, and I bear the shame most patiently.”

“I’ll teach you how to examine your conscience and test your penitence to see if it is sound and genuine, or merely a pretense.”

“I’ll gladly learn that,” Juliet replied.

“Do you love the man who wronged you?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked.

“Yes, as I love the woman who wronged him. I love him the way that I love myself.”

“So then it seems your most offensive act was mutually committed?”

“Yes, mutually.”

“Then your sin is of heavier kind than his.”

Juliet’s sin was literally heavier — her body grew heavier with her pregnancy. Also, she had a heavy burden to bear — she had to carry the fetus in her womb and then give birth to the child.

Some people may think that the woman is more to blame for giving birth outside marriage. Such people think that men always say “Yes,” and so it is up to the woman to say “No.” However, in their sexist society, men were thought to be more rational than women. Being more rational, men were better able to realize the consequences of their actions and men had the greater responsibility to say “No” to illicit sex.

“I do confess it, and repent it, father,” Juliet said.

“It is fitting that you do so, daughter,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “but perhaps you are repenting because you fear being punished and shamed for your sin. Perhaps you are not repenting because of your love of God. Often, we fear punishment and shame for ourselves, and we do not fear causing pain in Heavenly beings —”

Juliet replied, “I repent because what I did is an evil, and I take the shame with joy. I love the baby whom I will give birth to.”

“That is as it should be,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Your partner, I hear, has been condemned to die, and I am going to give spiritual instruction to him. May grace go with you. *Benedicite!* May God bless you!”

The disguised Duke Vincentio departed to visit Claudio.

“Claudio must die!” Juliet said. “Love injures me. My life has been spared because I am pregnant, but while I live I will always mourn the horror of Claudio’s death.”

“Claudio is to be pitied,” the Provost said.

— 2.4 —

In a room of his house, Angelo talked to himself.

“When I want to pray and think, I pray and think on different subjects. Heaven gets my empty words, while my imagination, which does not hear my tongue, anchors and fixates on Isabella. The word ‘God’ is in my mouth as if I were only mumbling His name. But in my heart is the strong and swelling evil that I have conceived in my imagination.

“The statecraft and political writings that I have studied are like a good thing that has been so often read that it has

grown dry and tedious. My dignified solemnity in which — let no man hear me — I take pride I could profitably exchange for the feathered cap of a foolish and foppish courtier. The wind would blow on the feather and make it move and feed the wearer's useless vanity.

“High position and formal manners very often, together with fancy clothing and outward appearance, wrench awe from fools and even influence the wiser souls to believe in your false appearance.

“Appearance and reality need not match. I appear to be good, but what is in my heart now is not good.

“Blood, you are blood. Reality is still reality no matter what appearance suggests.

“Suppose we write the words ‘good angel’ on the Devil's horns. Despite what is written there, the Devil is not a good angel. My name is Angelo, but what is in my heart is not angelic.”

A servant made a noise while entering the room.

Angelo, frightened because of his recognition of the sin in his heart and his thoughts about the Devil, called, “Who's there!”

The servant entered the room and said, “Isabella, a nun, wants to see you.”

“Show her the way,” Angelo replied.

The servant departed to bring Isabella, who was wearing the clothing of a novice in a nunnery, to Angelo.

Angelo said to himself, “Oh, Heavens! Why does my blood run to my heart, making it unable to function and also depriving all of my other parts of its life-giving functions? It is like way too many soldiers rushing to one place,

thereby crowding themselves so much that they are unable to fight and leaving other places undefended.

“Foolish throngs of people do much the same thing when someone faints. They all come to help him, and so they keep from him the air by which he should revive.

“Also similar is when the general public, subjects to a well-liked King, all stop what they are doing and crowd around him in flattering fondness, ignorant of what etiquette requires. Their uncouth love necessarily appears offensive.”

Isabella entered the room.

Angelo said, “How are you, fair maiden?”

“I have come to know what you will do about my brother,” Isabella said. “I have come to know your pleasure.”

“It would much better please me if you knew my pleasure than to demand to know from me what my pleasure is,” Angelo said, thinking of his sexual pleasure.

He added, “Your brother cannot live.”

“So be it,” Isabella said. “May Heaven keep your honor!”

“Yet your brother may live awhile longer, and, perhaps, he may live as long as you or me, but still he must die.”

All of us are mortal; we will die at some time.

“You are willing to delay implementing the sentence that requires my brother’s death?” Isabella asked.

“Yes.”

“Please tell me when his death will happen,” Isabella said. “During the reprieve from death, whether the reprieve be long or short, he can take steps to prepare for physical death so that he will not suffer spiritual death. I want his

soul to be healthy when his body dies.”

“Damn these filthy vices!” Angelo said. “Murder and fornication are equally filthy. A murderer steals a man who has already been made. A fornicator, by creating a pregnancy, creates an illicit image of God, in whose image we are all created. It is as easy to take away the life of a true image of God as it is to create a life that is an illicit and counterfeit image of God. Pardoning the one type of sinner is the same as pardoning the other type of sinner. If I pardon a fornicator, I might as well pardon a murderer.”

“It is set down so in Heaven,” Isabella said, “but not on Earth. Heaven regards murder and bringing a bastard into the world as equally sins, but we humans on Earth do not.”

“Do you think so?” Angelo said. “Then I shall pose to you a question to be answered quickly. Which would you prefer: The very just law now takes your brother’s life, or, to redeem him, you give up your body to such sweet uncleanness as the woman has whom he has stained with his lust?”

“Sir, believe this, I prefer to give my body than my soul. I would rather lose my mortal body than my immortal soul.”

“I am not talking about your soul. Sins that we are compelled to commit are not truly sins. They are recorded in Heaven’s book, but we are not punished for them.”

“Do you really believe that?” Isabella asked.

“No, I will not say that I do,” Claudio replied. “I can play the Devil’s advocate in order to test the people I speak to. I can think of arguments to support both sides. I am trained in law.

“But answer this. I, who am the voice and enforcer of the recorded law, have pronounced a sentence on your

brother's life. Might there not be a charity in a sin that would save this brother's life?"

Claudio, of course, was attempting to get Isabella to commit fornication with him in order to save her brother's life. To persuade her, he was trying to make her think of the fornication in this particular situation as being a good deed and a charitable act rather than a sin.

"Please do such a sin," Isabella replied. "I'll swear on my soul that it is no sin at all, but charity."

Isabella was misunderstanding Claudio. She thought the charitable act/sin was pardoning Claudio although he was guilty.

"If you would be willing to do this at the peril of your soul," Claudio said, referring to Isabella committing fornication with him, "sin and charity would be equally balanced."

Isabella again misunderstood Claudio. She thought that he was referring to her begging for her brother's life although her brother was guilty.

Isabella replied, "I do beg for my brother's life. If that is a sin, may Heaven let me bear it!"

"I hope that you will grant my suit and pardon my brother. If pardoning my brother is sin, I'll make it my prayer every morning to have it added to my own sins so that the punishment of that sin will not fall on you."

"You are not understanding me," Angelo said. "What you think I am saying is not what I am actually saying. Either you really are ignorant of what I am saying, or you are deliberately appearing to be ignorant of it, and that's not good."

"Let me be ignorant, and let me be in nothing good,"

Isabella said. “I wish to avoid the sin of pride. I wish to have the divine grace and humility to know I am no better than ignorant and sinful.”

“Wisdom wishes to appear brightest when it criticizes itself,” Angelo said. “A beauty covered by a black mask has her beauty proclaimed ten times louder than it would be if her beauty were displayed.

“But listen to me. So that you will certainly understand me, I will speak plainly, openly, and bluntly: Your brother is to die.”

“That is true.”

“And his offence is therefore, so it appears, accountable to the law. That is why he is to die.”

“True,” Isabella said.

“Let us say that there is no other way to save his life — I am not saying that this is true, or that there exists any way to save his life, but I am postulating it for the sake of argument — except that you, his sister, finding yourself sexually desired by a person who, because of his influence with the judge or because of his own great position in society, could release your brother from the manacles of the all-binding law, and that there were no other Earthly way to save him, but that either you lay down the treasures of your body and give up your virginity to this person, or let your brother die. What would you do?”

“I would do as much for my poor brother as I would do for myself,” Isabella replied. “That is, were I sentenced to be beaten and die, the bloody marks left by keen whips I would wear as I would rubies, and I would strip myself to go to my grave as if I were preparing myself to go to my bed that I have been greatly longing for. I would give up my life before I would yield my body up to shame.”

“In that case, your brother must die.”

“And if he dies, it is the better bargain,” Isabella said. “It is better for a brother to die at once, than for a sister, by redeeming him by committing fornication, to die and be damned forever.”

“Wouldn’t you then be as cruel as the sentence of death that you have so slandered and criticized?”

“Ignominy in ransom and a free pardon without conditions are two different things. Lawful mercy such as a free pardon is not at all like foul redemption — the redemption of one person being dependent upon the sin of another person.”

“You seemed recently to consider the law a tyrant, and you seemed to argue that the sliding of your brother into sin was more a frivolous triviality than a vice,” Claudio said.

“Pardon me, my lord. It often happens that to get what we want, we do not speak what we really believe. I somewhat did excuse the thing I hate — fornication — in order to help my brother, whom I dearly love, keep his life.”

“We are all morally frail,” Angelo said.

“If we are not all morally frail, then let my brother die,” Isabella replied. “If he is not a mere accomplice among many accomplices, but instead he is the only one who owns and inherits the weakness that you have mentioned, then he should die.”

“No, women are morally frail, too,” Angelo said.

“Yes, women are as frail as the mirrors where they view themselves, mirrors that are as easily broken as they make reflections of the forms standing in front of them. Women! May Heaven help them! Men, who are created in the image of God, mar their creation and debase themselves when

they take advantage of women. Call us women ten times morally frail because we are as soft as our bodies are, and we are susceptible to being seduced and giving birth to illegitimate children.”

“I think that what you said is correct,” Angelo said. “And from this testimony of your own sex — since I suppose we are made to be not so strong that we cannot be shaken by temptation — let me be bold and say that I believe your own words. Be that which you are — that is, be a woman who is capable of having children. If you are more than a woman, then you are not a woman. But if you are a woman, as your exterior clearly shows that you are, then show that you are a woman now by putting on the destined livery. Wear me and bear me.”

Angelo meant that Isabella should embrace him and bear his weight.

“I have no tongue — no language — but one, my gentle lord,” Isabella said. “Let me entreat you to speak the language that I speak.”

“Plainly conceive, I love you,” Angelo said. “Take off your nun’s clothing and have sex with me.”

“My brother loved Juliet, and you tell me that he shall die because he loved Juliet.”

“He shall not die, Isabella, if you give me love and have sex with me.”

“I know your virtue has a license in it,” Isabella replied. “You can pretend to be fouler than you are in order to uncover the faults of other people. You may be testing me.”

“Believe me, on my honor, when I say that my words express my purpose. I am saying exactly what I mean.”

“You have little honor although it is widely believed that

you have much honor,” Isabella said. “What you want is pernicious and wicked. What is good about you is appearance, not reality. I will proclaim to everyone what you really are, Angelo. I mean it. Sign for me an immediate pardon for my brother, or with a wide-open throat I’ll shout to the world what kind of man you are.”

“Who will believe you, Isabella?” Angelo said. “My name and reputation are unsoiled, my manner of life is austere, and my position in the government is high. I will make a formal statement against you. That and these other things will outweigh your accusation against me. Your own report will choke you, and you will get a reputation for slander. I have begun to feel sexual desire, and now I give my sensuality the rein and let it gallop. Force yourself to consent to my sharp appetite. Set aside all your modesty and your too lengthy blushes; both would have me give up my desire, but both inflame my desire.

“Redeem your brother and save his life by yielding up your body to my lust, or else he must not only die, but your unkindness shall draw out his death — he will be tortured for a long time before he dies.

“Come to me later and give me what I want, or by the passion that now guides me most, I’ll prove to be a tyrant to him. As for you, say what you will, my false outweighs your true.”

Claudio departed, leaving Isabella alone.

Isabella said to herself, “To whom should I complain? If I were to tell people this, who would believe me? Some mouths are perilous; they bear in them one tongue that condemns at one time and approves at another time the same thing, forcing the law to curtsy to and obey their will. These mouths use their appetite to decide what is right and what is wrong.

“I will go to my brother. Although he has fallen under pressure from his sexual urges, yet he has in him such a mind of honor that, had he twenty heads to put down on twenty bloody blocks so that they can all be cut off, he would yield them up before he would allow his sister to stoop her body to such abhorred pollution. Therefore, Isabella, live chaste, and, brother, die. My chastity is more valuable than my brother. I’ll tell him of Angelo’s request that I commit fornication, and I will bid him prepare his mind for death and his soul’s rest.”

CHAPTER 3 (Measure for Measure)

— 3.1 —

In a room of the prison, Duke Vincentio, who was still disguised as a friar, talked to Claudio.

Duke Vincentio asked, “So then you are hoping that Lord Angelo will pardon you?”

“The miserable have no other medicine than hope,” Claudio replied. “I have hope that I will live, but I am prepared to die.”

“Be absolutely sure that you will die,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Either death or life — if in fact you are pardoned — shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life:

“If I lose you, life, I lose a thing that no one but fools would keep.

“Life, you are only a breath, and you are servile to all the skyey astrological influences that hourly afflict this habitation, this body, that you have.

“You, life, are death’s fool; you seek to run away from death, but always you are running toward death.

“You, life, are not noble; all the clothing and trappings of civilized existence that you have are nursed by baseness. Human life begins with a baby that dirties its diapers and is completely dependent upon other people, all food is something that was recently alive, magnificent marble architecture begins with blocks of marble cut in a quarry, and the jewels in ornaments were dug from a pit in the ground.

“You, life, are by no means valiant because you fear the

soft and tender forked tongue of a poor snake — you are afraid that a venomous bite will kill you. The best of rest is sleep, and sleep is something that living people desire and yet living people are grossly afraid of death, which is no more than a sleep.

“Life, you are not yourself because you exist on many thousands of grains that issue out of dust. Dust a living person used to be, and to dust shall the living person return.

“Life, you are not happy because what you don’t have, you always strive to get, and what you do have, you forget and do not value it.

“Life, you are not constant because your mental state alters in strange ways, changing like the Moon.

“Life, if you are rich, you are poor because, like an ass whose back is bowed by heavy gold ingots, you carry your heavy riches during your journey, and your death unloads your riches.

“Life, you have no friends because your own children, who call you their sire, curse the gout, skin disease, and catarrh for not ending your life sooner.

“Life, you have neither youth nor age; instead, it is as if you dream about both while taking a nap after a large lunch. For all of your blessed youth, you are dependent like an old beggar is, and you beg for alms from your old parents who suffer shaking limbs from palsy. And when you are old and rich, you lack the energy, passion, strength, and beauty that would make being rich pleasant.

“Can you call any of this living? More than a thousand additional deaths lie hidden in what we call life, yet we fear death, which makes us all equal.”

“I humbly thank you for your words,” Claudio said. “To

sue to live, I find I seek to die, and, through seeking death, I find life. Therefore, let death come to me.”

Isabella came to the door and called, “Hello! May peace be found here, along with grace and good company!”

The Provost said, “Who’s there? Come in. Such good wishes deserve a welcome.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to Claudio, “Dear sir, before long I’ll visit you again.”

“Most holy sir, I thank you.”

Isabella entered the prison cell and said to the Provost, “My business is a word or two with Claudio.”

“You are very welcome to talk to him,” the Provost said.

He added, “Look, Signior Claudio, here’s your sister.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio asked, “Provost, may I have a word with you?”

“You may have as many words with me as you please.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio whispered, “I wish to overhear their conversation. Take me to a concealed place where I can overhear them.”

Duke Vincentio was disguised as a friar, and the Provost was willing to conceal the friar — and would have been willing to conceal Duke Vincentio if he had known the friar’s true identity.

The disguised Duke Vincentio and the Provost left.

“Now, sister, what’s the comfort you bring me?” Claudio asked.

“Why, as all comforts are, it is very good, very good indeed. Lord Angelo, having business in Heaven, intends to

swiftly make you his permanent ambassador in Heaven. Therefore make your best preparations speedily; tomorrow you go to Heaven.”

“Is there no remedy?”

“None, except for a remedy that, to save a head, would cut a heart in two and cause extreme anguish.”

“But is there any remedy?”

“Yes, brother, it is possible for you to live. There is a Devilish mercy in the judge, that if you’ll implore it, it will free your life, but fetter you until death.”

“Perpetual durance?”

Claudio meant life in prison, but Isabella interpreted his phrase as meaning perpetual guilt.

“Yes, just exactly that: perpetual durance, a restraint. Even if you were free to travel throughout the world, you would still be restrained.”

Isabella meant that Claudio would not be able to escape from his guilt no matter where he traveled.

“What kind of restraint?” Claudio asked.

“Such a one as, if you consented to it, would tear your honor away from you just like bark being stripped from a tree. You would be left naked, without honor.”

“Let me know the point. Speak clearly.”

“I am afraid of what you may decide, Claudio; and I quake in fear that you would value a feverous life and more greatly respect six or seven additional winters than an everlasting honor. Do you dare to die?”

“The feeling we have in death is mostly fearful anticipation

rather than pain. The poor beetle, which we tread upon, in bodily suffering endures a pang of pain as great as when a giant dies.”

Isabella meant that the suffering during death of a giant was no worse than the suffering of a beetle that is stepped on; however, her words could be interpreted as saying that the suffering during death of a beetle was as great as the suffering of a dying giant. Her words could also be interpreted as saying that all creatures, great and small, fear death, suffer during death, and want to keep on living.

“Why are you trying to make me feel shame?” Claudio asked. “Do you think that your flowery words of tenderness can make me resolve to die? Do I need your flowery words to reconcile myself to death? If I must die, I will encounter darkness as I would a bride, and hug it in my arms.”

“There spoke my brother; when you said those words a voice metaphorically came out of my father’s grave,” Isabella said. “Yes, you must die: You are too noble to save your life with dishonorable expedients.

“Angelo is a deputy who outwardly appears to be a saint. His grave visage is immovable and his deliberate words nip youth in the head the way that a falcon bites its prey to kill it. He also drives follies into hiding the way that a falcon does a fowl. Nevertheless, Angelo is a Devil. If his sin were to be vomited out of him the way that mud and silt are removed from a pond, his sin would appear to fill a pond as deep as hell.”

“The gilted Angelo!” Claudio cried.

“Oh, hypocrisy is the cunning uniform of Hell, which invests and covers the damnedest body in gilted trimmings! Hell can give a damned soul the appearance of a Puritan!

“Claudio, what do you think about this? If I were to give

Angelo my virginity, he would set you free.”

“Oh, Heavens! That cannot be true,” Claudio said.

“Yes, it is true,” Isabella replied. “He would give to you — in return for this rank offence, this sexual harassment and intended rape of me — the freedom to continue to offend him. He would allow you to continue to sin with Juliet.

“This night is the time when I should do what I abhor to name, or else you die.”

“Don’t do it,” Claudio said.

“If he wanted my life, I would throw it down for your deliverance from death as readily as I would throw away a pin.”

“Thanks, dear Isabella.”

“Be ready, Claudio, for your death tomorrow. Be prepared to die.”

“Yes,” Claudio said.

He immediately began to have second thoughts.

He asked, “Has Angelo sexual desires in him that thus can make him bite the law on the nose and treat it with contempt, when he should instead enforce the law? Surely, it is no sin, or of the seven deadly sins, it is the least sinful sin.”

“Which is the least?”

“If lechery were damnable, and with Angelo being so wise, why would he for a short bout of sex and folly be everlastingly punished in Hell? Oh, Isabella!”

“What are you saying!”

“Death is a thing to be feared.”

“And a shamed life is to be hated.”

“Yes, but to die, and go we know not where; to lie trapped in a cold corpse and to rot; to have this alert and warm body become a clod of clay, to have this spirit, which is capable of feeling delight, bathe in fiery floods or reside in a piercingly cold region of thickly layered ice; to be imprisoned in the invisible winds and blown with restless violence round about a world that is suspended in space; or to be worse than the worst of those souls whom unrestrained and uncertain thought imagine to be howling in Hell: It is too horrible!

“The weariest and most loathed worldly life that age, aches and pains of every bodily kind, penury, and imprisonment can lay on us in the Land of the Living is a paradise to what we fear we will endure when we are dead.”

“I can’t believe what I am hearing!”

“Sweet sister, let me live,” Claudio pleaded. “What sin you do to save a brother’s life, our sibling love for each other will make so much allowance for the deed that it will become a virtue.”

“Oh, you beast without a moral sense! Oh, you faithless coward! Oh, you dishonest wretch! Will you be made a man out of — be given life because of — my vice?

“Isn’t it a kind of incest, to take life from your own sister’s shame? From my illicit sex you would be ‘reborn and come to life’ again! What should I think about you?

“Heaven forbid my mother played my father fair and was faithful to him! My father never fathered such a warped and wild weed as you! You must be a bastard! I defy you! You are no brother of mine! Die! Perish! If I could stop your death simply by bending down, I would not! I would let you die! I’ll pray a thousand prayers that you die; I will not

pray a single word to save you.”

“Please, listen to me, Isabella.”

“Your sin is not a one-time occurrence; it is your career, your habitual way of life. Showing mercy to you would simply allow you to commit more fornication. It is best that you die quickly.”

“Please, listen to me, Isabella.”

Duke Vincentio, still disguised as a friar, had heard every word. Now he came out of hiding and said to Isabella, “Allow me to say a word, young sister — only one word.”

“What do you want?”

“If you will give me some of your leisure time, I want to speak with you soon. What I would ask from you is something that will benefit you.”

“I have no superfluous leisure time,” Isabella replied. “The time that I spend with you is time that must be stolen from the other things that I need to do, but I will talk to you for a while.”

She walked a short distance away, and so she was unable to hear Duke Vincentio talk to Claudio, her brother.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said, “Son, I have overheard the conversation that has passed between you and your sister. Angelo never intended to corrupt her; he only made a test of her virtue to see if his judgment of people’s characters was correct. She, having the integrity of honor in her, made him that virtuous denial that he was very glad to receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true; therefore, prepare to die. Do not comfort yourself with false hopes. Tomorrow you must die; get on your knees, pray, and get ready to die.”

“Let me ask my sister to pardon me,” Claudio said. “I am so out of love with life that I would beg to be rid of it.”

“Keep that thought. Farewell.”

Claudio went to his sister, talked briefly with her, and left the room.

As Claudio and Isabella were talking, the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “Provost, may I have a word with you?”

The Provost came forward and asked, “What do you want, father?”

“That now you have come here, you will leave. Leave me alone for a while with the maiden Isabella. My mind and my friar’s robe both proclaim that I intend no harm to her. She shall not be harmed while she is alone with me.”

“Very well,” the Provost said, and then he left the room.

Isabella came over to the disguised Duke Vincentio, who said to her, “The hand that has made you beautiful has made you good. Beauty often discards goodness — beauty and chastity seldom meet. But because grace is the soul of your character, you will always be beautiful and virtuous.

“Fortune and luck have made known to me the assault on your virtue that Angelo has made; and, except that I know of other examples of Angelo’s sinfulness, I should wonder at Angelo. What will you do to content this deputy for Duke Vincentio — Angelo — and to save your brother?”

“I am going to Angelo now to tell him what I have decided,” Isabella replied. “I prefer that my brother die by the law than that my son should be a bastard — unlawfully born. But how greatly is good Duke Vincentio deceived in Angelo! If ever he returns and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain, or I will reveal Angelo’s sinful conduct.”

“That should be a good thing to do,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “yet, as the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation; he will say that he was only making trial of you and testing your virtue. Therefore listen to what I advise. I want to help, and I have an idea that can make all things right.

“I believe that you may very righteously do a poor wronged lady a benefit that she deserves, redeem your brother from the angry law and prevent his death, do no stain of sin to your own gracious person, and much please the absent Duke Vincentio if he ever returns and hears about this business.”

“Let me hear you speak more about your plan,” Isabella said. “I have the courage to do anything that appears to be not foul and sinful to me.”

“Virtue is bold, and goodness is never fearful,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Have you heard of Mariana, the sister of Frederick, the great soldier who drowned at sea?”

“I have heard of the lady, and good words went with her name. She has a good reputation.”

“Angelo should have married her; he was engaged by oath to marry her. With such an oath, many couples have sex. When sex occurs, a wedding is mandatory. If sex does not occur, then in some situations, such as the unfaithfulness of one partner, the engagement can be lawfully and ethically broken. The wedding day of Angelo and Mariana was set, but between the time of the engagement and the wedding Frederick, Mariana’s brother, was wrecked at sea. The ship was carrying Mariana’s dowry.

“Listen to the bad things that befell the poor gentlewoman. She lost a noble and renowned brother, who in his love toward her was ever most kind and brotherly. Along with

him, she lost the greatest part of her fortune: her marriage-dowry. She also lost her husband-to-be: this Angelo who has the reputation of being so virtuous.”

“Can this be true?” Isabella asked. “Did Angelo leave her?”

“He left her in her tears, and he did not dry one of them with his comfort. He swallowed his vows to her whole and did not keep them; instead, he pretended that she had been unfaithful to him.

“In short, Angelo bestowed on her what was already hers: her own lamentation. Even now, she weeps for him, and her tears affect him the way they would marble — not at all.”

“Death would deserve much praise if it were to take this poor virgin Mariana from the world! What corruption is in this life, that it will let this man Angelo continue to live! But how can she receive any benefit from this situation?”

“You may easily heal the rupture between Angelo and Mariana. By doing so, you will save your brother, and you will do so without losing any honor.”

“Tell me how I can do this, good father.”

“The virgin Mariana still loves Angelo; his unjust unkindness that in all reason should have quenched her love for him has, like an obstacle or impediment in a current of water, made it more violent and unruly.

“Go to Angelo; answer his sexual harassment of you with a plausible obedience,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Agree with his demands and say that you will sleep with him, but with conditions. First, your stay with him must not be long. Second, the time must be dark and silent, with no one bustling about. Third, the place must be convenient for you.

“This being granted — now comes the most important part — we shall advise this wronged maiden to go to the appointment instead of you. She will go in your place; if the sexual encounter becomes public afterward, it may compel Angelo to marry her. If this plan works, your brother will be saved, your honor remain untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged by being married, and the corrupt deputy weighed in the scales of justice.

“I will go to the maiden Mariana and inform her of our plan and prepare her for the sexual encounter with Angelo.

“If you agree to participate in carrying out his plan, the benefits will justify the deceit. The benefits will be a shield against reproof.

“What do you think?”

Isabella replied, “The plan itself makes me happy, and I trust the plan will result in a very prosperous and perfect outcome.”

“It depends very much on your being able to do your part of the plan,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Go speedily to Angelo. If he wants you to go to his bed tonight, say that you agree. I will go immediately to Saint Luke’s. There, at a farmhouse surrounded by a ditch resides this dejected Mariana. At that place come and see me and tell me what happened when you met with Angelo. Meet with Angelo quickly, so that you can visit me soon.”

“I thank you for this comfort,” Isabella said. “Fare you well, good father.”

She departed.

— 3.2 —

Several people entered the room in which the disguised Duke Vincentio was standing: Elbow the Constable,

Pompey the part-time pimp, and some law-enforcement officers.

Elbow said to Pompey, “Unless we can stop you pimps from buying and selling men and women like beasts, we shall see female bellies all over the world filled with brown and white bastard — and I don’t mean just the wine we call ‘bastard.’”

The disguised Duke Vincentio thought, *Heavens! What is going on here?*

Pompey replied, “The world has two usuries: prostitution and usury. Prostitution creates bastards; usury creates interest. It has not been a merry world since the practitioners of the merrier usury — prostitution — were outlawed and prosecuted, and practitioners of the worse usury — lending money at high interest — were encouraged by order of law to grow rich and wear expensive clothing such as a furred gown to keep each usurer warm. The furs were fox on top of lamb, to signify craftiness overcoming innocence, and to signify that craft, being richer than innocence, is more important and highly regarded in this world.”

“Come this way, sir,” Elbow said to Pompey.

Then he said to Duke Vincentio, who was still disguised as a friar, “Bless you, good father friar.”

“And bless you, good brother father.”

“Father” was a term used in their society to refer to an older man as well as to a priest; Elbow was an older man.

The disguised Duke Vincentio continued, “What offence has this man committed, sir? What has he done to offend you?”

“Sir, he has offended the law,” Elbow replied, “and, sir, we

think that he is a thief, too, sir, because we have found upon him, sir, a strange picklock, which we have sent to the deputy.”

The picklock was a skeleton key that was used to unlock many doors.

Hearing this, the disguised Duke Vincentio was able to guess Pompey’s occupation.

“Heavens!” he said to Pompey. “You are a bawd, a wicked bawd! You are a pimp! The evil that you have caused to be done, that is the means by which you live. Do you ever think what it means to cram your mouth with food or clothe your back from such a filthy vice? Do you ever say to yourself, ‘From their abominable and beastly sexual touches I drink, I eat, I clothe myself, and I live?’ Can you believe that you are living a good life when its maintenance depends on such a stinking business? Mend your life! Sin no more!”

Pompey replied, “Indeed, it does stink in some ways, sir, but yet, sir, I would argue —”

“No, if the Devil has given you arguments in favor of sin, you will show that you are the Devil’s property,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

He then said to Elbow, “Take him to prison, officer: Punishment and instruction must both do their work before this rude beast will learn to mend his ways.”

“He must appear before Angelo, the Duke’s deputy, sir,” Elbow replied. “Angelo has given Pompey warning: The deputy cannot abide a whoremaster. If anyone is a whoremonger and appears before Angelo, it would be better if he were to do anything else but appear before Angelo.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio was able to recognize that Pompey had at least one good characteristic: He was not a hypocrite.

The disguised Duke Vincentio thought, *I wish that we were all as free from sin as Angelo falsely seems to be, and as free from hypocrisy as Pompey actually is.*

Elbow said about Pompey, “His neck will come to your waist — a cord, sir.”

Elbow was referring to the cord, aka rope, that Duke Vincentio wore around his waist because he was disguised as a friar. Pompey’s neck would be in a noose if he were punished for his crime by being hung.

Seeing Lucio coming toward them, Pompey said, “I spy comfort; I see money for my bail. Here’s a gentleman and a friend of mine.”

Lucio said, “How are you, noble Pompey! What, at the wheels of Caesar? Are you being led in triumph?”

In Roman triumphs, defeated enemies would walk behind the vehicle that carried their conqueror. In history, Pompey was never led in triumph. However, his sons were led in triumph after Julius Caesar defeated them in 45 B.C.E. in the Battle of Munda.

Lucio continued, “What, is there none of Pygmalion’s images, a newly made woman, to be had now by putting one’s hand in one’s pocket and extracting it clutched?”

Pygmalion was an ancient sculptor who fell in love with one of his statues: that of a lovely young woman. He prayed to Aphrodite, goddess of sexual desire, who brought the statue to life. Pygmalion married the newly created woman and together they had a son.

In their society, statues were often painted, and prostitutes

in his society used paint — makeup; therefore, when Lucio referred to Pygmalion's images, he was referring to prostitutes. Men would reach into their pockets, clutch money, and pull the money out in order to pay for the prostitute.

Lucio asked Pompey, "Do you have anything to say in reply? Huh? What do you have to say to this tune, matter, and method? Has a flood washed away sin? What do you have to say, mate? How do you like Angelo's reforms? Is your way of life completely destroyed? Are you unhappy? Are you unable to speak? How is it going for you?"

The disguised Duke Vincentio thought, *He babbles and babbles, and then he babbles worse than before!*

"How is my dear morsel, your mistress? Does Mistress Overdone still work as a procurer?"

"Indeed, sir," Pompey said, "she has eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub."

Beef was slang for flesh-food that had been prepared for consumption — or, more simply, prostitutes. A treatment for venereal disease was to sweat in a tub. Tubs were also used to salt, aka powder, beef.

"Why, this is good," Lucio replied. "This is the right of it; it must be so. A fresh whore must become a powdered bawd — it is inevitable. Are you going to prison, Pompey?"

"Yes, indeed, sir."

"Why, it is not amiss, Pompey," Lucio said. "It is hardly a surprise. Farewell. Go, and say that I sent you there. Are you going to prison for debt, Pompey? Or for what reason?"

Lucio had a cruel streak in him. He knew why Pompey was

going to prison. In fact, he may have informed on Pompey and on Mistress Overdone.

“I am going to prison for being a bawd,” Pompey replied.

Lucio said to Elbow, “Well, then, imprison him. If imprisonment is the due of a bawd, why, it is his right to be in prison. He is without doubt a bawd, and from antiquity, too. He was bawd-born — given birth by a bawd, and born to be a bawd.”

Lucio added, “Farewell, good Pompey. Commend me to the prison, Pompey. You will act like a good husband now, Pompey; you will stay at home in your house.”

“I hope, sir, your good worship will pay my bail,” Pompey said.

“No, indeed, I will not pay your bail, Pompey; it is not the fashion these days to pay the bail of bawds. Instead, I will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage, your time in prison. That is the fashion nowadays. If you do not take your time patiently, why, your mettle, aka spirit, is all the more — as will be the metal of your fetters. *Adieu*, trusty Pompey.”

Lucio then said to the disguised Duke Vincentio, “Bless you, friar.”

“And you,” the disguised Duke Vincentio replied.

“Does Bridget still paint, Pompey? Does she still wear makeup?” Lucio asked.

Elbow said to Pompey, “Come this way, sir.”

“You will not pay my bail, then, sir?” Pompey asked Lucio.

“No, Pompey, not then and not now,” Lucio replied.

He then asked, “What is the news, friar? What is the

news?”

Elbow repeated, “Come this way, sir. Come.”

“Go to your kennel, Pompey,” Lucio said. “Go.”

Elbow, Pompey, and the officers departed, leaving Lucio and the disguised Duke Vincentio alone.

“What news, friar, have you heard about the Duke?”

“I have heard none. Can you tell me of any?”

“Some say that he is with the Emperor of Russia; others say that he is in Rome. But where do you think he is?”

“I don’t know where he is, but wherever he is, I wish him well.”

“It was a mad and eccentric trick of him to steal secretly away from Vienna and usurp the beggary he was never born to. He left his high position here, and wherever he is, he has a lower position than ruler. Lord Angelo dukes it well in his absence; he severely punishes criminals.”

“He does well when it comes to punishment.”

“A little more leniency when it comes to lechery would do no harm in him; he is somewhat too crabbed that way, friar.”

“It is too prevalent a vice, and severity must cure it.”

“Yes, truly the vice is prevalent. It has many partakers and many friends, and it is impossible to stop until eating and drinking have been stopped. When there are no more people, there will be no more lechery.

“They say that this Angelo was not made by man and woman in the usual way of producing children. Is it true, do you think?” Lucio asked.

“How else could he have been made, then?”

“Some say that a sea-maid, aka mermaid, spawned him; some say that he was begotten by two dried codfishes. But it is certain that when he makes water, aka pees, his urine is hard pellets of ice — that I know to be true. He also has the reproductive capacity of a puppet — there can be no doubt about that.”

“You are full of jokes, sir, and speak rapidly,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, and then he thought, *You speak so rapidly that you speak without thinking.*

“Why, Angelo is ruthless — he is willing to take away the life of a man because of the criminal rebellion of what the man has in between his legs! Would the Duke who is absent have done this? Before he would have hanged a man for begetting a hundred bastards, the Duke would have paid for the nursing of a thousand bastards. The Duke had some feeling for the act of sex: He knew the service and utility of it, and that taught him to be merciful.”

“I never heard that the absent Duke had much of a reputation for sleeping with women; he was not inclined to engage in unethical sex.”

“Oh, sir, you are deceived,” Lucio said. “You are wrong.”

“It is not possible.”

“You don’t believe that the Duke was inclined to engage in unethical sex? Yes, he was. When he saw a beggar who was fifty years old, he used to put a ducat in her dish, if you know what I mean and I think you do. The Duke had strange fancies in him. He used to be drunk, too — I can tell you that.”

“You do him wrong, surely,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

“Sir, I was an intimate friend of his. A sly fellow was the Duke, and I believe I know the cause of his leaving Vienna.”

“What, I ask, might be the cause?”

“No, you must pardon me for not telling you,” Lucio said. “It is a secret that must be locked within my teeth and lips, but I can tell you this: The majority of his subjects believe that the Duke is wise.”

“Wise! Why, there is no question but that the Duke is in fact wise!”

“He is a very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow,” Lucio said.

“Either this is envy in you, or folly, or a mistake,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “The very stream of his life and his management of Vienna must — if a reference were needed — give him a better proclamation. His biography and the record of his rule in Vienna show him to be much better than what you have said about him. Let his achievements testify for him, and he shall appear even to the envious to be a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier. Therefore you speak ignorantly and without knowledge, or if you have some knowledge of the Duke, you have much darkened your evaluation of the Duke because of malice toward him.”

“Sir, I know him, and I love him,” Lucio said, falsely. He did not know Duke Vincentio.

“Love talks with better knowledge, and knowledge with dearer love. Someone who loved the Duke would know him better than you do, and someone who knew the Duke would love him more than you do.”

“Come, sir, I know what I know.”

“I can hardly believe that, since you don’t know what you are saying. But, if the Duke ever did return, as our prayers are that he will, let me desire you to make your charges in his presence. If you have spoken the truth, you will have the courage to maintain that it is the truth. I am bound by duty to summon you to testify before the Duke that what you have said about him is true, and so I ask you for your name.”

“Sir, my name is Lucio; my name is well known to the Duke.”

“He shall know you better, sir, if I may live to report to him what you have said about him.”

“I am not afraid of you.”

“Oh, you hope that the Duke will not return to Vienna, or you imagine that I am someone who cannot hurt you. But indeed I can do you little harm: You will swear before the Duke that you did not say these things.”

“I’ll be hanged first,” Lucio said. “You are deceived about me, friar. But no more about this. Can you tell me whether Claudio is to die or not?”

“Why should Claudio die, sir?”

“Why? For filling a bottle with a funnel, if you know what I mean and I think you do. I wish that the Duke we have been talking about would return to Vienna again. This deputy without genitals will depopulate the province with continence and abstinence from sex. He will not allow sparrows to build nests in his house eaves because sparrows are lecherous. The Duke always would have dark deeds darkly answered; he would never bring them to light. Since no one was ever charged with crimes of lechery, the crimes were never punished. I wish that the Duke would return! This Claudio is condemned to death because he took off his

pants. Farewell, good friar. Please, pray for me. The Duke, I say to you again, would eat mutton on Fridays.”

Fridays were days of abstinence from meat for Catholics, and Lucio was saying that Duke Vincentio would eat meat on days of abstinence. And since “mutton” was a slang word for prostitutes, Lucio was saying that Duke Vincentio would engage in illicit sex.

Lucio added, “He’s now past fornication because of old age, yet even now I say to you that he would kiss a beggar even if she smelt of brown bread and garlic. Say that I said so. Farewell.”

Lucio exited, and the disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “No powerful or great people can escape censure; back-biting calumny will strike at the whitest virtue. What King is so strong that he can tie up the gall in a slanderous tongue? But who is coming here?”

Escalus, the Provost, and some law-enforcement officers entered the room. With them was Mistress Overdone, who had been arrested.

Escalus said, “Go and take her away to her prison cell!”

“My good lord, be good to me,” Mistress Overdone pleaded. “Your honor has the reputation of being a merciful man, my good lord.”

“You have been warned two and three times, and yet you are again guilty of the same crime!” Escalus said. “This would make even the embodiment of Mercy swear and play the tyrant by giving you a harsh sentence.”

The Provost said, “She has been a bawd for eleven years’ continuance, may it please your honor.”

Of course, such information would not please Escalus, but “may it please your honor” was an idiom meaning “if your

honor doesn't mind my telling you."

Mistress Overdone said, "My lord, this information against me comes from Lucio. He made Mistress Kate Keepdown pregnant when the Duke was still in Vienna. Lucio promised to marry her. His child is a year and a quarter old, come the feast day of Saint Philip and Saint Jacob: May 1. I myself have taken care of his child, and see how he goes around and abuses me!"

"Lucio is a fellow who frequently disregards the law," Escalus said. "Let him be brought before us. Take her to her prison cell!"

Mistress Overdone wanted to plead with Escalus, but he told her, "Don't. No more words."

The law-enforcement officers took Mistress Overdone away.

Escalus said, "Provost, my colleague Angelo will not change his mind: Claudio must die. Let him be provided with religious advisors and all charitable preparation that Christians can provide. If Angelo administered justice with the amount of pity that I feel for Claudio, Claudio would not be going to die."

"If you don't mind my saying so," the Provost said, "this friar has been with Claudio, and he has given him spiritual counsel to help him accept his death."

"Good day, good father," Escalus said.

"May blessings and goodness fall upon you!" the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

"Where are you from?"

"I am not from this country, although now I am able to reside here for a while. I am a brother of a gracious order,

recently come from the Holy See on special business from his holiness.”

“What news is abroad in the world?” Escalus asked.

The answer given by the disguised Duke Vincentio was bitter and cynical: “None, except that so great a fever is afflicting goodness that only the death of goodness can cure the fever.

“The only things in demand in the modern world are the newest things — newness for its own sake. Obviously, we should make use of the old things that work, and we should replace them with new things only when the new things work better.

“To be aged in any undertaking is considered to be as dangerous as it is considered virtuous to be faithful in any undertaking. Obviously, it ought to be considered a virtue to be faithful only to *good* undertakings. Obviously, one should become aged only as a result of working on *good* undertakings. These days, to be virtuous is to be in danger.

“Scarcely enough trustworthiness is in existence to make societies secure and make it safe to associate with other people, but there is foolish optimism enough to make many ‘friendships’ cursed because pretend friends will take advantage of the foolish optimists. Obviously, things work out best if everyone is true to their word and no one takes advantage of another person.

“The wisdom of the world considers and thinks about these riddling problems.

“This news is old enough, we have heard it before, and yet it is news that we hear again every day.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio hesitated and then asked, “Please, sir, tell me what kind of disposition did the absent

Duke have?”

Escalus replied, “He was one who, above all other battles, fought especially to know himself. He did his best to follow this ancient piece of wisdom: Know thyself.”

“What kind of pleasure did he enjoy?”

“He preferred to rejoice at seeing another person being merry rather than himself be merry; he was a gentleman of all temperance,” Escalus said. “But let’s not talk about him, but simply pray that his business may prove to be prosperous; instead, tell me about Claudio. Is he prepared to die? I understand that you have visited him.”

“Claudio does not believe that he has received an unjust sentence from his judge. He most willingly humbles and accepts his sentence; however, his human weakness had led him to imagine possible scenarios in which he would not lose his life. I have spent time with him and let him know that none of these futile hopes has any basis in reality, and now he knows that he will die.”

“You have done your duty to Heaven and to the prisoner,” Escalus said. “I have labored to get a lesser sentence for the poor gentleman to the furthest limit of my humble ability, but Angelo is so severe in giving sentences that he has forced me to tell him that he is indeed acting like the embodiment of Justice. By that, I mean he is the embodiment of Justice without Mercy.”

“If his own life is as virtuous as he wants and expects other people to be, it is well for him, but if he fails to live up to the standards that he imposes on other people, he has sentenced himself — he shall receive the same punishment that he gives to other people,” Duke Vincentio, still disguised as a friar, said. “So it is written in Matthew 7:2: *‘For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you*

again.”

“I am going to visit the prisoner,” Escalus said. “Fare you well.”

“May peace be with you!”

Alone, the disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “He who the sword of Heaven — judicial power — will bear should be as holy as severe; he must be holy if he gives severe sentences. He must know that he is to set a good example for others to follow. He must have the grace to stand firmly on his principles, and he must have the strength to act upon them. He must not judge other people more harshly or less harshly than he judges himself. May the judge be shamed who gives the death sentence to people who commit crimes and sins that the judge himself commits and enjoys! May Angelo be twice treble shamed because he weeds my vice — which was to allow for a long time some sexual crimes to go unpunished — and lets his own vices grow!

“Oh, what vices may a man hide within him although he appears to be an angel on the outward side! The man has committed the same crimes as other people but deceived everyone by hiding his crimes. He uses worthless spiders’ strings to drag the most ponderous and substantial things to a place of shame! His hypocrisy shames his supposed virtue.

“I must apply craft against vice. With Angelo tonight shall sleep Mariana, whom he once betrothed but now despises, and so the disguised Mariana will pay Angelo what he demands from Isabella. She will pay him with falsehood — the illusion that she is Isabella. By so paying him, Mariana will fulfill the old pre-marriage contract that she and Angelo had made — with the result that Angelo *must* marry her.”

CHAPTER 4 (*Measure for Measure*)

— 4.1 —

Mariana was in the farmhouse at St. Luke's, listening to a boy sing this song:

“Take, oh, take those lips away,

“That so sweetly were forsworn;

“And those eyes, the break of day,

“Lights that do mislead the morn —

*“They are eyes so bright that the morning mistakes them
for the rising Sun.*

“But my kisses bring again, bring again,

*“Seals of love — kisses — but sealed in vain, sealed in
vain.”*

The theme of the song was a false vow of love.

“Stop singing,” Mariana, who saw the disguised Duke Vincentio coming toward them, said to the boy. “Quickly go away. I see coming here a man of comfort, whose advice has often quieted my troublesome discontent.”

The boy departed.

Mariana said to the disguised Duke Vincentio, “Please pardon me, sir. I well wish that you had not found me here listening to music. Let me excuse myself. Please believe me when I say that the music did not amuse me with unseemly merriment but it did soothe my sorrow.”

“That is good,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “although music often has such a charm that it can make

sin seem to be good, and lead good to what can harm it.

“Please, tell me whether anybody has inquired for me here today. I have promised to meet someone here just about this time.”

“No one has been here seeking you. I have sat here all day,” Mariana said.

Isabella now walked toward them.

“I always believe what you say,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “The person I was going to meet has just shown up. Now I want you to leave us alone for a little while. I hope to let you know very soon about something that will bring some advantage to yourself.”

“I am always bound to you and will obey you,” Mariana said as she exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to Isabella, “We are very well met, and you have well come at a welcome time. What is the news that you bring me from this good deputy?”

“He has a garden surrounded with a brick wall, whose western side has a vineyard. Leading into that vineyard is a gate made of wooden planks. I have two keys. The bigger key will open that gate. The smaller key opens a little door that from the vineyard leads to the garden. I have promised to visit Angelo at the garden house during the drowsy middle of the night.”

“Do you have the knowledge that is needed to find this way and reach Angelo?”

“I have carefully noted and memorized the way,” Isabella replied. “Angelo whispered guiltily to me twice how to find the way there although he did not show me the way.”

“Is there anything else — such as a password — that you two have agreed upon that Mariana ought to know?”

“No, none,” Isabella replied. “We have agreed that the tryst should take place in the dark. I also told him that ‘my’ stay must necessarily be brief because, I said, I have a servant who will come along with me and wait for me. I said that this servant believes that I am visiting Angelo to talk to him about my brother.”

“This is well thought out,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “I have not yet made known to Mariana a word of this. So far, she knows nothing about our plan.”

He called, “Mariana, come here!”

Mariana walked toward the two.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to her, “Please, become acquainted with this maiden. She has come here to do something good for you.”

“What he said is true,” Isabella said.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to Mariana, “Do you believe that I respect you and want to do good things for you?”

“Good friar, I know you do,” Mariana said. “I have always found that to be true.”

“Take, then, this woman, your new companion, by the hand. She has something to tell you. I will soon talk to you. Be quick; the damp nighttime is coming.”

Mariana asked Isabella, “Is it OK if we talk over here?”

They withdrew a short distance away and talked.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “Oh, people in high and great positions! Millions of evil eyes stare at

you. Volumes of voices speak false and antagonistic things about your actions the way that a pack of dogs howl while following a false trail. A thousand foolish wits make you the subjects of their daydreams in which they stretch you on the rack.”

Mariana and Isabella had finished their conversation.

“Welcome,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Is there an agreement to follow this plan?”

“Mariana will take the enterprise upon her, father,” Isabella said, “if you advise it.”

“I do advise it, and I also urge you, Mariana, to do this.”

Isabella said to Mariana, “You have little to say. When you depart from him, say, softly and lowly, ‘Remember now my brother.’”

“Do not fear,” Mariana said. “I will remember to say it.”

“And, gentle daughter, don’t you fear anything at all,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Angelo is your husband on a pre-contract of marriage. To bring you together like this is no sin because the justice of your title to him outweighs the deceit.

“Come, let all of us go. Our corn’s yet to reap, for our seed’s yet to sow. We have much more to do before we can reap the harvest of our plan.”

— 4.2 —

The Provost and Pompey talked together in the prison.

“Come here,” the Provost said to Pompey. “Can you cut off a man’s head?”

“If the man is a bachelor, sir, I can, but if he is a married man, he is his wife’s head, and I could never cut off a

woman's head.”

Pompey was referring to Ephesians 5:23: *“For the husband is the wife's head, even as Christ is the head of the Church, and the same is the Savior of his body.”*

“Come, sir, set aside your quibbles, and give me a direct answer,” the Provost said. “This morning Claudio and Barnardine are scheduled to die. Here is in our prison a common executioner, who in his job lacks a helper. If you will take it on yourself to assist him, it shall free you from your fetters; if not, you shall serve your full time of imprisonment and then you will be set free with a pitiless whipping, for you have been a notorious bawd.”

“Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd for longer than I can remember, but yet I will be content to be a lawful hangman. I would be glad to receive some instruction from my fellow partner.”

The Provost called the common executioner: “Abhorson! Where's Abhorson?”

Abhorson, whose name combined the words “abhor” and “whoreson,” aka son of a whore, entered the room and asked, “Are you calling for me, sir?”

“Here's a fellow who will help you tomorrow in your executions. If you think it suitable, make an agreement to employ him for the next year, and let him stay here with you. If you do not think it suitable, use him for the present and then dismiss him. Because he has been a bawd, he cannot plead that he is too good to be an executioner.”

“A bawd, sir? Damn him! He will discredit our mystery. He will discredit our skilled labor.”

In their society, “mystery” meant “skilled labor.” How to do the labor was a mystery to those who had not acquired

the skills necessary to do it.

“Come on,” the Provost said. “Being an executioner and being a bawd have the same status — they weigh the same, and it takes a feather to make one side of the scales sink.”

The Provost exited.

Pompey said, “Please, sir, give me your good favor — and I am sure that you have good favor, although you have a hangdog look. Sir, do you call your occupation a mystery?”

“Yes, sir; it is a mystery,” Abhorson replied.

“Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery,” Pompey said, “and whores, sir, being members of my occupation, use painting, thereby proving my occupation a mystery.”

The painting an artist does is definitely skilled labor, but the kind of painting referred to by Pompey was the use of cosmetics.

Pompey continued, “What mystery there should be in hanging, if I should be hanged, I cannot imagine.”

Abhorson repeated, “Sir, it is a mystery.”

“Give me proof,” Pompey requested. “Give me a good argument that it is a mystery.”

Abhorson attempted to do so:

“An executioner is a thief because he steals a man’s life.

“A thief steals clothing — and the executioner keeps the clothing of each person he executes.

“Every true man’s apparel fits the thief. If the clothing is too little [in size] for your thief, your true man thinks it big [valuable] enough. If the clothing is too big [in size] for your thief, your thief thinks it little [not as much as he

would like to have] enough. Therefore, every true man's apparel fits the thief.

“If the work of the thief is a mystery, then the work of the executioner is a mystery because the thief and the executioner are analogous.

“If the meaning of my words is mysterious to you, that is additional proof that the work of an executioner is a mystery.”

The Provost entered the room and asked Pompey, “Are you willing to be an executioner tomorrow?”

Pompey replied, “Sir, I will serve him. I find that being a hangman is a more penitent trade than being a bawd; he asks forgiveness more often.”

This was true. Before performing his duty, the executioner always asked the criminal to forgive him.

“You must provide your own chopping block and your own axe to do your duty — behead a criminal — tomorrow at four o'clock,” the Provost said to Pompey.

“Come on, bawd,” Abhorson said. “I will teach you the mysteries of my trade. Follow me.”

“I desire to learn, sir,” Pompey replied, “and I hope, if you have occasion to use me for your own turn, you shall find me ready; because truly, sir, for your kindness I owe you a good turn.”

One good turn deserves another. In their society, one of the meanings of the phrase “to turn” was “to execute.” Pompey was joking that if he ever had to execute the executioner that he would be ready to do it well.

The Provost ordered, “Tell Barnardine and Claudio to come and talk to me.”

Pompey and Abhorson departed to carry out the errand.

The Provost said to himself, "Claudio has my pity, but Barnardine, who is a murderer, gets not a jot of pity from me. If the murderer were my own brother, he would get no pity from me."

Claudio entered the room, and the Provost showed him a document and said, "Look, here's the warrant, Claudio, for your death. It is now exactly midnight, and by eight in the morning your body must die and you must become an immortal spirit. Where's Barnardine?"

"He is as fast asleep as a guiltless laborer or a traveler with weary bones. He will not wake up."

"Who can have any good effect on him?" the Provost asked, not expecting a reply. He added, "Well, go; prepare yourself."

Knocking sounded.

The Provost said, "What is that noise?"

He then said to Claudio, "May Heaven give your spirits comfort!"

Claudio exited.

The Provost said, "Coming! I hope it is some pardon or reprieve for the most gentle Claudio."

The Provost did not have to answer the door because Duke Vincentio, still in disguise, opened it and entered the room.

"Welcome, father," the Provost said.

"May the best and most wholesome spirits of the night envelope you, good Provost! Who has come here recently?"

“No one has come here since the bell for curfew rang in the evening.”

“Isabella has not been here?”

“No.”

“Some people will arrive, then, before too much longer.”

“Is there any possibility of a pardon or reprieve for Claudio?”

“There’s always hope.”

“Angelo is a severe and cruel deputy.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio replied, “No, no. Angelo’s life is consistent with the written and ruled decrees of his great justice. He subdues with holy abstinence the faults in himself that he spurs on his power to judge in others; were he stained with the same faults that he judges, then he would be a tyrant, but since he is without fault, he is a just ruler.”

The disguised Duke Vincentio knew that Angelo, like all men, had sinned. Unlike some men, Angelo was also a hypocrite. However, the disguised Duke Vincentio expected that a pardon for Claudio would come at any minute. He expected Angelo to keep the promise that he had made to Isabella.

Knocking sounded.

“Now some people have come,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. He thought that the pardon had arrived.

The Provost exited, and the disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “This is a good and gentle Provost. It is seldom that the hardened jailer is the friend of prisoners and treats them well.”

More knocking sounded.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, "What's going on? That is quite a lot of noise. Whoever is wounding the unassisting and resisting back door with these strokes is possessed with haste and urgency."

The Provost came back and said, "An officer will arrive with the key and let the knocker in. The knocker will have to stay outside until the officer arrives."

"Have you no countermanding order for Claudio yet?" the disguised Duke Vincentio asked the Provost. "Is he still scheduled to die?"

"I have received no countermanding order."

"It is close to dawn," the disguised Duke Vincentio said to the Provost, "but I tell you that you shall hear some news before morning."

"I hope that you know something good," the Provost replied, "yet I believe that no countermanding order will come. We have had no examples of leniency. Besides, on the very seat of judgment Lord Angelo has publicly said that there shall be no leniency for Claudio."

A messenger entered the room; the officer the Provost had summoned had let him in.

The Provost said, "This is Lord Angelo's messenger."

The disguised Duke Vincentio said, "And here comes Claudio's pardon."

The messenger gave the Provost a piece of paper and said, "Lord Angelo has sent you this note; and by me he has sent this further order, that you swerve not from the smallest article of it, neither in time, matter, or other circumstance. Good morning; for, as I take it, it is almost day."

“I shall obey him,” the Provost replied.

The messenger exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio thought, *This is Claudio's pardon, given by a pardoner who is guilty of the same sin as Claudio. Offense is quickly pardoned when high authority is guilty of that offense: When the guilty give pardons, a wide scope of pardons is given. Because the sin is loved, the sinner is befriended.*

He asked out loud, “Now, sir, what is the news?”

“It is exactly as I said earlier: Claudio will be given no pardon,” the Provost replied. “In fact, Lord Angelo, who seems to think that I will be remiss in doing my duty, awakens me with this unwonted urging to do my duty. I think that this is strange because he has never done this before.”

“Please, read the note to me.”

The Provost read the note out loud: *“No matter what you may hear to the contrary, have Claudio executed by four o'clock in the morning; and in the afternoon have Barnardine executed. To assure me that you have done your duty, send Claudio's head to me by five. Let this be duly performed; be aware that more depends on it than we can tell you now. Therefore, do not fail to do your duty. If you fail to do it, you do so at your peril.”*

The Provost asked, “What do you think about this, sir?”

“Who is this Barnardine who is to be executed in the afternoon?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked.

“He was born in Bohemia, but he was raised here. He has been a prisoner for nine years.”

“Nine years! Why didn't the absent Duke either set him

free or execute him? I have heard that it was his custom to not long delay in such matters.”

“Barnardine’s friends constantly got reprieves for him, and until now, in the government of Lord Angelo, it was not definitely proven that he had committed the crime that he was accused of.”

“It has now been proven?”

“Most definitely, and he himself does not deny committing the crime.”

“Has he been penitent in prison?” the disguised Duke Vincentio asked. “How has he been affected by being in prison?”

“He is a man who fears death no more dreadfully than he fears a drunken sleep; he is without worries, and he is reckless and fearless of what’s past, present, or to come. He is oblivious when it comes to life and death, and he is in a state of mortal sin.”

“He is in need of spiritual counsel.”

The Provost replied, “He will hear none. He has always been free to roam around the prison. If he had the opportunity to escape, he would not take it. He is drunk many times a day, and for many days he is entirely drunk. We have very often awakened him, as if we were going to take him to the place of his execution and showed him what seemed to be a warrant for his execution. This did not affect him at all.”

“I will ask more about him soon,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “I look at your brow, Provost, and I see honesty and resoluteness written there. If I am reading your brow incorrectly, my ancient skill and long experience is misleading me; however, with full confidence that I have

read your brow correctly, I will take a risk and if I am wrong, put myself in jeopardy.

“Claudio, whom here you have an order to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo is, who has sentenced him. Both of them are guilty of committing the same crime. To make you understand this with a clear demonstration that what I have said is true, I need a respite of only four days. To get me that respite, I want you to do for me both an immediate and a dangerous favor.”

“Please, sir, what favor?”

“I want you to delay death; I want you to not kill Claudio.”

“How dare I do that?” the Provost said. “The hour for his execution has been set, and I have a clear command, under penalty, to deliver his head to Angelo. Unless I carry out his order, I may find myself in Claudio’s position — Lord Angelo may have *me* executed!”

“By the vow of my order, I will protect you. Let my instructions be your guide. Let this Barnardine be executed this morning, and his head carried to Angelo.”

“Angelo has seen both Claudio and Barnardine, and he will know that it is Barnardine’s head.”

“Oh, death’s a great disguiser,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “and you can improve the disguise. Shave the head, and tie up the beard; and say that it was the desire of the penitent to have his head be so bared before his death. You know that before an execution the shaving of the head is commonly done — the person being executed wants the ax to quickly slice through the neck without being impeded by long hair. If anything should be the result of your action, other than thanks and good fortune, then by the saint whom I profess, I will plead against it with my life.”

“Pardon me, good father,” the Provost said. “Doing that is against my oath.”

“Who did you swear the oath to: the absent Duke, or the deputy?”

“To the Duke, and to his deputies.”

“Would you think that you have committed no offence, if Duke Vincentio were to avouch that what you did was just?”

“Yes, but what is the likelihood of that happening?”

“It is not a likelihood; it is a certainty,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Yet since I see that you are afraid, that my friar’s robes, integrity, and words cannot with ease persuade you to do this, I will go further than I meant to, so that I can pluck all fears out of you.”

He showed the Provost a document and said, “Look, sir, here is the handwriting and the seal of Duke Vincentio. You know his handwriting, I am sure; and his seal is not strange to you.”

“I know them both.”

“The contents of this document concern the return of Duke Vincentio. You shall soon read it at your pleasure, and you will find that within the next two days he will return here.

“Duke Vincentio’s return is something that Angelo does not know about because he this very day will receive letters containing extraordinary news. Perhaps he will read that Duke Vincentio is dead; perhaps he will read that Duke Vincentio has entered some monastery. However, he will not read that Duke Vincentio will return to Vienna in the next two days.

“Look, the morning star alerts the shepherd that it is time to

take the sheep out of the fold and to pasture.

“Don’t allow yourself to be bewildered by all these things. Soon you will learn more, and you will understand. Call your executioner, and order him to behead Barnardine. I will give him an immediate confession and help prepare him to go to a better place.

“You are still bewildered, but soon all of your doubts will be completely resolved.

“Come, let’s go. It is almost clearly dawn.”

— 4.3 —

In another room of the prison, Pompey said to himself, “I know as many people here as I did when I was in our house of the oldest profession. One would think it was Mistress Overdone’s own house of prostitution, because here are many of her old customers.

“First, here’s young Master Rash; he rashly borrowed money from an unscrupulous lender who wanted more than the 10 percent interest allowed by law. To get around the law, the unscrupulous lender made Master Rash take part of the loan in commodity. Master Rash paid a certain price for the commodity and was supposed to sell the commodity for ready money. Master Rash paid the lender 197 pounds for brown paper and old, stale ginger, and he sold the brown paper and old, stale ginger for around three pounds. Ginger was not much in demand because the old women, who love ginger, were all dead.

“Then there is here one Master Caper, a dancer, at the suit of Master Threepile, the seller of velvet and fine cloth, for some four suits of peach-colored satin, who now impeaches him as a beggar because he cannot pay for the clothing.

“We also have here young Dizzy, the gambler at dice.

“We also have here young Master Deepvow. Quite a few people here deeply vow to pay back their debts if they are released from prison.

“We also have here young Master Copperspur, whose spurs are made of polished copper, which he hopes that a casual observer will mistake for gold.

“We also have here Master Starvelackey, the rapier-and-dagger man. He fights in the modern style, without a shield, and he is either too cheap or too impoverished to feed his servants well.

“We also have here young Dropheir, who killed fat, foolish Pudding. In addition to killing people, Dropheir takes advantage of young heirs, lending them money at usurious rates in anticipation of forthcoming inheritances. Often, the heir drops in wealth because of the loans.

“We also have here Master Forthright the tilter. He enjoys jousting with lances and charges forward on his horse.

“We also have here the brave Master Shoetie, the great traveller who ties his shoes with a yard and a quarter of ribbon in the most extravagant style.

“We also have here wild Halfcan, who drank half a beer, thought himself wildly drunk, and stabbed Pots, the server of beer.

“We also have here, I think, forty more people I know. All are great fornicators in our trade, and now they cry, ‘Give me food for the Lord’s sake,’ out the prison windows to passersby whom they hope will be charitable.”

Abhorson the executioner entered the room and said to Pompey, “Bring Barnardine here.”

Pompey shouted, “Master Barnardine! You must rise and be hanged. Master Barnardine!”

Abhorson also shouted, "Barnardine!"

Barnardine, who had been asleep, shouted back, "A pox on your throats! Go and catch the plague! Who is making that noise there? Who are you?"

"We are your friends, sir, including the hangman," Pompey replied. "You must be so good, sir, as to rise and be put to death."

Barnardine shouted back, "Go away, you rogue, go away! I am sleepy."

Abhorson said, "Tell him he must wake up, and that quickly, too."

Pompey shouted, "Please, Master Barnardine, wake up and stay awake until you are executed, and sleep afterwards."

Abhorson said, "Go in to him, and fetch him out."

"He is coming, sir, he is coming," Pompey said. "I hear the straw of his bed rustle."

"Is the axe upon the chopping block?" Abhorson asked.

"Everything is very ready, sir."

Barnardine entered the room and said, "How are you now, Abhorson? What's the news with you?"

"Truly, sir," Abhorson replied. "I want you to quickly start your prayers because, you see, the warrant for your execution has come."

"You rogue, I have been drinking all night; I am not ready to die," Barnardine said.

"Actually, you are very ready to die," Pompey said. "Anyone who drinks all night, and is hanged early in the morning, may sleep all the sounder the next day."

“Look, Barnardine, sir; here comes your ghostly — spiritual — father. Do you think now that we are jesting?”

Duke Vincentio, still disguised as a friar, entered the room and said to Barnardine, “Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are to depart from this life, I have come to advise you, comfort you, and pray with you.”

“Friar, you do not need to advise, comfort, and pray with me,” Barnardine said. “I have been drinking hard all night, and I demand to have more time to prepare myself to die. If they will not give me more time, then they will have to beat out my brains with cudgels. I will not consent to die this day, that’s certain. Today I will not be hung or be beheaded.”

“But, sir, you must,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, “and therefore I beg you to prepare for the journey you must go.”

“I swear I will not die today no matter what any man says.”

“Listen to me.”

“Not a word,” Barnardine replied. “If you have anything to say to me, come to my ward; for from there I will not go today.”

Barnardine exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said, “Barnardine is not fit either to live or to die. His stony heart is made of gravel! Go after him, fellows; bring him to the block so his head can be chopped off.”

Abhorson and Pompey went after Barnardine.

The Provost entered the room and asked, “Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?”

The disguised Duke Vincentio replied, “Barnardine is a

creature unprepared and unfit for death. To transport him in the mind and state he is in now would be damnable because he will certainly be damned.”

The Provost said, “Here in the prison, father, there died this morning from a cruel fever a man named Ragozine, who was a most notorious pirate. He is the same age as Claudio; his beard and hair are the same color as Claudio’s. What if we ignore this reprobate named Barnardine until he is well inclined and consents to die, and instead give Angelo the head of Ragozine, who resembles Claudio much more than Barnardine does?”

“Oh, this is a welcome accident that Heaven provides!” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Send Ragozine’s head to Angelo quickly. The hour is quickly coming that Angelo set for Claudio’s death. See that this is done and the head sent just as Angelo ordered you to do. Meanwhile, I will persuade this rude wretch to die willingly.”

“This shall be done, good father, immediately,” the Provost said. “But Barnardine must die this afternoon. How shall we keep Claudio alive *and* save me from the danger that might come if it were known that he is still alive?”

“Let this be done,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, deciding that he really did not have enough time to persuade Barnardine to die just now. “Put both Barnardine and Claudio in secret cells. Before the Sun has made his daily greeting in the morning twice to the people outside this prison, you shall most definitely find that you are safe from persecution by Angelo.”

“I am your willing servant,” the Provost said.

“Quick, do what needs to be done, and send the head of Ragozine to Angelo.”

The Provost exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “Now I will write letters to Angelo — the Provost shall carry the letters to him. The letters will tell Angelo that I am close to home, and that, for good reasons, I am bound to enter publicly. I will order Angelo to meet me at the consecrated spring a league from the city; and from there, coolly, step by step, and with due observance of all things necessary, we shall proceed with Angelo.”

The Provost returned, carrying the head of Ragozine.

He said, “Here is the head; I’ll carry it to Angelo myself.”

“This is convenient,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Make a swift return because I want to talk with you about such things that no ears but yours should hear.”

“I will return as quickly as I can.”

He exited.

Isabella came to the door and said, “May Peace be found here!”

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to himself, “That is the voice of Isabella. She’s come to know if her brother’s pardon has come here yet; however, I will keep her ignorant that her brother is still alive. I will change her despair to Heavenly comforts when she least expects it.”

Duke Vincentio had a plan. He wanted Isabella to publicly accuse Angelo. In order for her to do that with the proper passion and fury, she would have to believe that Angelo had murdered her brother. That way, Angelo’s crimes would be revealed.

Isabella entered the room and said, “Here I am, with your permission.”

“Good morning to you, fair and gracious daughter.”

“The greeting is all the better because it was given to me by so holy a man,” Isabella replied. “Has Angelo sent my brother’s pardon yet?”

“Angelo has released Claudio, Isabella, from the world: An axe took off his head, which has been sent to Angelo.”

“No!” Isabella shrieked. “That is not possible!”

“Nothing else has occurred but what I told you,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Show that you are wise, daughter, by quietly enduring this.”

“Oh, I will go to Angelo and pluck out his eyes!” she said, crying.

“You shall not be admitted to his sight.”

“Unhappy Claudio! Wretched Isabella! Injurious world! Most damned Angelo!”

“This neither hurts him nor helps you even a little,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “Stop crying out therefore; give your cause to Heaven. Listen to what I say, every syllable of which you shall find to be faithful and true.

“Duke Vincentio is coming home to Vienna — Isabella, dry your tears. A member of our convent, who is Duke Vincentio’s confessor, told me this news. Already he has carried notice of Duke Vincentio’s return to Escalus and Angelo, who are preparing to meet him at the gates of Vienna. There they will give up their power. If you can, put your wisdom on that good path that I would wish it to go. If you do, you shall get what your heart most desires. You will punish Angelo, get the friendship of Duke Vincentio, get as much revenge as you want, and gain general honor.”

“I will do as you wish,” Isabella replied.

The disguised Duke Vincentio gave her a letter and said,

“Give this letter to Friar Peter. It is he who sent me news of Duke Vincentio’s return. Say, by this token, that I desire his company at Mariana’s house tonight. Her cause and yours I’ll give him full information about, and he shall bring you before Duke Vincentio, and you can accuse Angelo of all his crimes while you are face to face with him.

“As for my poor self, I am strongly bound by a sacred vow and shall be absent. Go now with this letter. Take command of your cheek-staining tears and give yourself a light heart. Never trust my holy order, if I have misled you about what will happen.”

He heard a noise and asked, “Who’s here?”

Lucio entered the room and said, “Good day, all. Friar, where’s the Provost?”

“He is not here, sir.”

Lucio said, “Oh, pretty Isabella, I am pale at heart to see your eyes so red. You must control yourself.

“I myself am compelled to dine and sup with water and bran; it is my punishment for lechery. I dare not fill my belly because of the punishment that would await me — I would lose my head. One good and fruitful meal would make me horny, and another act of lechery would make me headless. Truly, Isabella, I loved and respected your brother. If the old and eccentric Duke Vincentio — a Duke who knew dark corners — had been in Vienna, your brother would still be alive.”

Isabella exited.

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to Lucio, “Sir, the Duke would thank you but little for your reports of his doings in dark corners; the best thing about them is that they are

completely incorrect.”

“Friar, you don’t know Duke Vincentio as well as I do. He’s a better woodman — chaser of skirts — than you take him for.”

“Well, you’ll pay the penalty for what you say about him one day. Fare you well.”

“No, wait; I’ll go along with you and give you company,” Lucio replied. “I can tell you pretty tales about Duke Vincentio.”

“You have told me too many stories about him already, sir, if they are true; if they are not true, none would have been enough.”

“I once appeared in court before him for getting a wench with child,” Lucio said.

“Were you guilty?”

“Yes, I was, but I lied about it under oath. I was forced to lie; otherwise, they would have married me to the rotten medlar.”

The word “medlar” was used as a term for prostitutes. A medlar was an apple that was eaten when it was half-rotten.

“Sir, your company is fairer than honest,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “You dress better than you speak. Rest you well.”

“Indeed, I’ll go with you to the lane’s end,” Lucio replied. “If bawdy talk offends you, we’ll have very little of it. Friar, I am a kind of burr; I shall stick to you.”

— 4.4 —

Angelo and Escalus talked in a room in Angelo’s house.

Escalus said, "Every letter that Duke Vincentio has written has contradicted the letters we have previously received from him."

Claudio replied, "The letters are written in a very uneven and distracted manner. His actions seem to be those of a madman. Let's pray to Heaven that he is not afflicted with a mental disease! And why are we supposed to meet him at the gates and give back to him our commissions and authorities there?"

"I can't imagine."

"And why should we proclaim his return an hour before his entering the city gates, so that if anyone craves redress of injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street?"

"He has explained his reasons for that," Escalus said. "He wants to deal with all complaints as soon as he returns. That way, no one will be able to bring them up later."

One reason to deal with complaints earlier instead of later is so that no one could say that Angelo and Escalus had time in which to secretly influence Duke Vincentio to rule in their favor.

"Well, I say to you, let it be proclaimed early in the morning. I'll call upon you at your house. Give notice to such men of high rank and with a retinue of servants as are to meet him."

"I shall, sir. Fare you well," Escalus said.

"Good night," Angelo said.

Escalus exited.

Angelo said to himself, "My evil deed destroys me utterly, and it makes me slow-witted and dull to all proceedings. A deflowered maiden! And deflowered by an eminent person

— me — who is charged with enforcing the law against fornication! Except that her tender shame will not allow her to announce publicly that she has lost her virginity, how she could accuse me! Yet reason tells her not to dare to accuse me because my authority as Duke Vincentio’s deputy bears such respect and belief that no scandal aimed at me can touch me; instead, the person who charges me with such a scandal will be the one confounded.

“Claudio should have continued to live, except that this riotous youth, with his dangerous passion, might in time to come have taken revenge against me because his dishonored life was ransomed in such a shameful way. But I wish that he were still alive! When we once forget the knowledge of morality that God implanted in us, nothing goes right: We would, and we would not.”

Angelo was thinking of Romans 7:19: “*For I do not the good thing, which I would, but the evil, which I would not, that do I.*”

— 4.5 —

In the fields outside Vienna, Duke Vincentio, who was NOT disguised, and Friar Peter talked.

“At the suitable time, deliver these letters for me,” Duke Vincentio said, handing Friar Peter some letters.

Using the royal plural, he continued, “Like you, the Provost knows our purpose and our plot. The plot now being put in action, follow your instructions and always keep in mind the plan that I have formed, although sometimes you may have to swerve from it a little as called for by circumstances.

“Go to Flavius’ house, and tell him where I am staying. Give the same information to Valencius, Rowland, and Crassus, and tell them to bring the trumpeters to the gate,

but send me Flavius first.”

“I shall do it speedily,” Friar Peter said.

He departed to carry out his errands.

Varrius, one of Duke Vincentio’s friends, walked over to him.

Duke Vincentio said, “I thank you, Varrius; you have made good time. Come, we will walk. Some other of our friends will greet us here soon, my gentle Varrius.”

— 4.6 —

On a street near the city gates, Isabella and Mariana were talking.

“I am loath to speak so inaccurately,” Isabella said. “I must allow Angelo to think that he deflowered me. You are the one who must accuse Angelo truthfully. I myself must accuse Angelo incorrectly of deflowering me, Friar Peter said, in order to keep hidden our full plan.”

“Do what Friar Peter advises you to do,” Mariana said.

“In addition, Friar Peter tells me that if perhaps he should speak against me and seem to be on Angelo’s side, that I should not think it strange because it is a medicine that is bitter to swallow but will lead to a sweet end.”

“I wish that Friar Peter —” Mariana said.

“Look!” Isabella interrupted. “Here he comes!”

Friar Peter walked over to the two women and said, “Come with me, I have found you a place to stand that is most suitable. You will be in such a position that Duke Vincentio cannot ignore you and pass by you.

“Twice have the trumpets sounded; the highly born and

gravest citizens have taken up their positions at the gates,
and very soon Duke Vincentio will pass through the gates.
Hurry! Let's go!"

CHAPTER 5 (Measure for Measure)

— 5.1 —

At the city gate stood Friar Peter, Isabella, and Mariana, who was veiled. Passing through the city gate were Duke Vincentio, Varrius, and some lords. Waiting for Duke Vincentio were Angelo and Escalus. Also present were the Provost, Lucio, many lords, many officers, and many citizens.

Duke Vincentio greeted Angelo, “My very worthy cousin, we are fairly met!”

The two men were not biological cousins; this was simply a courteous way for two noblemen to refer to each other.

Duke Vincentio then greeted Escalus, “Our old and faithful friend, we are glad to see you.”

Angelo and Escalus replied together, “May your return bring happiness to your royal grace!”

“I give many and hearty thanks to you both. We have made inquiry about you; and we hear such good things about your justice that I must give you public thanks now, with further reward to follow later.”

“You make my obligations to you still greater,” Angelo said.

Duke Vincentio replied, “Oh, your desert speaks loudly; and I would wrong it if I were to lock it secretly away in my heart. Your merit deserves to be emblazoned in letters made of brass — a fortified residence against the tooth of time that devours everything and against the erasure that oblivion makes. Your good deeds and justice ought to be remembered. Give me your hand, and let my subjects see

me grasping your hand. That way they will know that these outward courtesies would like to proclaim favors that are hidden within my heart.”

Duke Vincentio then said, “Come, Escalus, you must walk by us on our other side.”

He added, “You two are good supporters.”

Friar Peter and Isabella then came forward.

Friar Peter said to Isabella, “Now is the right time: Speak loudly and kneel before Duke Vincentio.”

“I ask for justice, royal Duke!” Isabella shouted. “Look down upon a wronged — I would like to have said a virgin! Oh, worthy Prince, do not dishonor your eyes by looking at any other object until you have heard me make my true complaint and you have given me justice, justice, justice, justice!”

Duke Vincentio said, “Tell me your wrongs. In what have you been wronged? By whom have you been wronged? Be brief. Here is Lord Angelo, who shall give you justice. Reveal your complaint to him.”

“Oh, worthy Duke Vincentio,” Isabella said. “You ask me to seek redemption from the Devil. Hear me yourself because that which I must speak about must either punish me, if I am not believed, or wring redress from you. Hear me! Oh, hear me, here and now!”

“My lord, her wits, I fear, are not firm,” Angelo said. “She is mentally unbalanced. She has pleaded to me for her brother’s life, which was cut short by course of justice —”

“By course of justice!” Isabella, outraged, shouted.

“— and she will speak most bitterly and strangely against me,” Angelo finished.

“Most strangely, but yet most truly, will I speak,” Isabella said. “Angelo is guilty of perjury; is it not strange? Angelo is a murderer; is it not strange? Angelo is an adulterous thief, a hypocrite, a virgin-violator; are not these things strange?”

“These things are ten times strange,” Duke Vincentio replied.

“It is not truer that he is Angelo than that this is all as true as it is strange. In fact, it is ten times true; for truth is truth to the ultimate degree.”

“Take her away!” Duke Vincentio said. “Poor soul, she is saying these things because she is insane.”

“Oh, Prince, I beg you, as you believe that there is another comfort than this world — a life after death — please do not neglect and ignore what I say because you believe that I am insane! Do not consider impossible that which only seems to be unlikely. It is not impossible that someone, the wickedest villain on Earth, may seem to be as cautious, as grave, as just, as perfect as Angelo. Likewise, Angelo, in all his robes of office, his insignia, his titles, and his ceremonies, may be an arch-villain. Believe it, royal Prince. If he is less evil than I say he is, he is nothing, but he is more evil than I say he is — I lack more words to describe his evilness.”

Duke Vincentio said, “By my honesty, if she is mad — as I believe to be a fact — her madness has the most remarkable coherence of meaning, such a remarkable relationship and connection between one thing and another thing. This is the best logical thinking that I have heard come from an insane person.”

“Oh, gracious Duke,” Isabella said. “Do not insist that I am insane, and do not banish rational arguments because they do not agree with what most people think about Angelo.

Instead, let your reason serve to make the truth appear from where it is hidden, and hide the falsehood that seems to be true.”

“Many who are not mad have, surely, a greater lack of reason,” Duke Vincentio said. “What do you want to say to me?”

“I am the sister of a man named Claudio,” Isabella said. “Because of his act of fornication, he was condemned by Angelo to lose his head. My brother sent me, a novice in a sisterhood, to Angelo. A man named Lucio was my brother’s messenger to me —”

Lucio interrupted, “That’s me, if it may please your grace. I came to her from Claudio, and I urged her to try her gracious fortune with Lord Angelo to attempt to gain her poor brother’s pardon.”

“He is the man indeed,” Isabella said.

“You were not told to speak,” Duke Vincentio said to Lucio.

“No, my good lord,” Lucio replied, “nor was I told to stay silent.”

“I tell you now to stay silent,” Duke Vincentio said. “Please, take note of it, and when you have a matter that concerns you, then pray to Heaven that you know your part well.”

“I warrant your honor that I will,” Lucio said.

By “warrant,” Lucio meant “guarantee.”

“If I so order it, the warrant will be for yourself; take heed and be careful,” Duke Vincentio said.

By “warrant,” Duke Vincentio meant “an order to arrest someone.”

Isabella said, “This gentleman told part of my tale —”

Again, Lucio interrupted, “Right.”

Duke Vincentio said, “It may be right, but you are in the wrong when you speak before your time.”

He said to Isabella, “Proceed.”

“I went to this pernicious and contemptible deputy named Angelo —”

“That’s somewhat madly spoken,” Duke Vincentio said.

“Pardon my language,” Isabella said. “The words are appropriate and relevant to the subject matter.”

“The apparent madness of speech has been amended again,” Duke Vincentio said. “Come to the point. Proceed.”

“In brief, setting aside the parts I need not tell, such as how I tried to persuade him, how I prayed to him and kneeled to him, how he denied my request, and how I replied — for all of this took much time — I now begin with grief and shame to tell you the vile conclusion. He would not, except but by gift of my chaste and virgin body to his lascivious and intemperate lust, release my brother; and, after much thought, my sisterly compassion overcame my honor, and I yielded my body to him, but early the next morning, his sexual desire having been satisfied, he sent an order to have my brother beheaded.”

“This is very believable!” Duke Vincentio said sarcastically.

“I wish that it were as believable as it is true!” Isabella replied.

“By Heaven, foolish wretch, you do not know what you are saying, or else you have been induced to give false witness in a hateful conspiracy against Angelo’s honor,” Duke

Vincentio said. "First, his integrity stands without blemish. Next, it is not rational that with such vehemence he should punish faults that he has himself committed. If he had so offended, he would have judged your brother the way he judges himself and would not have had him killed. Someone has made you do this. Confess the truth, and say by whose advice you came to lodge a complaint against Angelo."

"And is this all the justice I will get?" Isabella said. "Then, you blessed guardian angels above, help me to be patient, and at the right time reveal the evil that is here hidden behind the perpetrator's position and privilege. May Heaven shield your grace from woe, as I, thus wronged, hence unbelieved go!"

"I know you would like to go," Duke Vincentio said. "An officer! To prison with her! Shall we thus permit an infectious and scandalous breath to fall on Angelo, who is so near and dear to us? This must be a plot. Who knew of your purpose and your coming hither?"

"One whom I wish were here: Friar Lodowick," Isabella replied.

Friar Lodowick was the name that Duke Vincentio used when he was disguised as a friar.

"A ghostly father, probably," Duke Vincentio said. "Who knows this Lodowick?"

The word "ghostly" was ambiguous. It could mean spiritual — or nonexistent.

"My lord, I know him," Lucio replied. "He is a meddling friar; I do not like the man. If he had been a layman, my lord, I would have beaten him soundly because of certain words that he spoke against your grace while you were away from Vienna."

“Words against me?” Duke Vincentio said. “He is a ‘good’ friar, it seems! And he set on this wretched woman here against Angelo, our deputy! Let this friar be found.”

“Only yesterday at night, my lord, I saw her and that friar at the prison. He is a saucy friar, a very impudent and bad fellow.”

Friar Peter spoke up and addressed Duke Vincentio: “Blessed be your royal grace! I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard your royal ear abused with lies. First, this woman — Isabella — has very wrongfully accused your deputy, Angelo, who is as free from sexual contact or soil with her as she is free from sexual contact or soil with someone who has not yet been born.”

“We believe no less than that,” Duke Vincentio said. “Do you know that Friar Lodowick whom she speaks of?”

“I know him to be a man who is divine and holy; he is not scurvy, and he is not a meddler in temporal affairs as this gentleman reported him to be. And, I very definitely know, he is a man who has never said bad things about your grace, as this gentleman reported.”

“My lord, Friar Lodowick said the most villainous things about you; believe it,” Lucio said.

“Well, Friar Lodowick in time may come to clear himself,” Friar Peter said, “but right now he is sick, my lord, of a strange fever. Upon his request, and his request only, because he knew that there would be a complaint made against Lord Angelo, I came here so that I could speak, as if from his mouth, what he knows to be true and what he knows to be false, and what he with his oath and all proofs will make completely clear, whenever he’s summoned to appear before you. First, however, let’s address the charge made by this woman named Isabella. This worthy nobleman Angelo, whom she so publicly and personally

accused, shall be defended. You shall hear what she said disproved in her presence, and she herself shall admit that what she said was untrue.”

“Good friar, let’s hear the evidence,” Duke Vincentio said.

Mariana, still veiled, stepped forward, as an officer took Isabella to the side.

Duke Vincentio said, “Do you not smile at this, Lord Angelo? Oh, Heaven, the vanity of wretched fools!”

He ordered some attendants, “Give us some seats.”

He then said, “Cousin Angelo, in this I’ll be impartial. I’ll let you be the judge in your own case.”

He then said, “Is this the witness, Friar Peter? First, let her show her face, and afterward speak.”

“Pardon me, my lord,” Mariana said. “I will not show my face until my husband asks me to.”

“What, are you married?” Duke Vincentio asked.

“No, my lord.”

“Are you a virgin?”

“No, my lord.”

“A widow, then?”

“Not that, either, my lord.”

“Why, you are nothing then: not a virgin, not a widow, and not a wife.”

“My lord, she may be a punk,” Lucio said, “for many of them are not a maiden, widow, or wife.”

“Punk” was a slang word for “prostitute.”

“Silence that fellow,” Duke Vincentio said. “I wish he had some cause to prattle for himself. He would have cause if he were on trial.”

“True, my lord,” Lucio said.

“My lord,” Mariana said, “I do confess I never was married, and I confess besides that I am no virgin. I have known in the Biblical sense my husband, and yet my husband does not know that he has ever known me.”

“He was drunk then, my lord,” Lucio said. “It can be nothing else.”

“For the benefit of silence, I wish that you were sleeping off a drunk, too!”

“That would keep me quiet, my lord,” Lucio said.

“This is no witness for Lord Angelo,” Duke Vincentio said. “She has said nothing about him.”

“Now I come to the point, my lord,” Mariana said. “Isabella, the woman who accuses Angelo of fornication, also in exactly the same way accuses my husband, and charges him, my lord, with committing fornication at such a time that I will swear I had him in my arms as he and I made love.”

Angelo asked, “Does Isabella accuse more men than me of committing fornication with her?”

“Not that I know of,” Mariana replied.

“No?” Duke Vincentio said. “You say that she accused your husband.”

“Why, that is true, my lord, and my husband is Angelo, who thinks he knows that he never knew my body, but who knows he thinks that he knows Isabella’s body.”

“This is a strange charge,” Angelo said. “Let’s see your face.”

Mariana replied, “My husband tells me to show my face; now I will take off my veil.”

She took off her veil and then said, “This is that face, cruel Angelo, that once you swore was worth looking at. This is the hand that, with a vowed contract, was fast locked in yours. This is the body that took away the assignation from Isabella, and this is the body that sexually satisfied you in your garden house. You thought that you were sleeping with Isabella, but you were actually sleeping with me.”

“Do you know this woman?” Duke Vincentio asked Angelo.

“Carnally, she says,” Lucio said.

“Shut up!” Duke Vincentio ordered.

“I have said enough, my lord,” Lucio replied.

“My lord, I must confess that I know this woman,” Angelo said. “Five years ago she and I talked about marriage, but the engagement was broken off, in part because the dowry that was promised was not supplied, but mainly because her reputation was ruined because of her lack of chastity — she had light heels, as they said. Since five years ago, I swear upon my faith and honor that I have not spoken to her, seen her, or heard from her.”

“Noble Prince,” Mariana said, “as there comes light from Heaven and words from breath, as there is sense in truth and truth in virtue, I am affianced this man’s wife as strongly as words could make up vows. In addition, my good lord, just last Tuesday night in his garden house he knew me in the Biblical sense as a wife.”

The pre-marriage contract between Angelo and Mariana

was one that could be broken if the dowry was not paid as agreed, or if the woman was unchaste; however, if the man and woman had sexual relations together, then the two were legally obliged to get married.

Mariana continued, “Since these things are true, let me with safety rise up from my knees or else forever be fixed here — a marble monument!”

Angelo said, “I have until now only smiled contemptuously, but now, my good lord, I ask that you give me the scope and power of justice. My patience here is wounded and irritated. I see that these poor strangely behaving women are no more than the instruments of some mightier member of a conspiracy that sets them on to make these charges against me. Let me have the power, my lord, to uncover this conspiracy.”

“Yes, with all my heart,” Duke Vincentio said. “Punish them as you please. You foolish friar and you pernicious woman, who are in a plot with Isabella, do you think that your oaths, even if you would swear on each and every saint, would be believable testimonies against Angelo’s worth and credit that are ratified by proof?”

“You, Lord Escalus, sit with Angelo; lend him your kind help to find out this abusive plot and its source. There is another friar — Friar Lodowick — who made these women make their complaint against Angelo. Let him be sent for.”

“I wish that he were here, my lord!” Friar Peter said, “because he indeed had these women make this complaint. Your Provost knows the place where Friar Lodowick lives, and he can fetch him.”

“Go do it immediately,” Duke Vincentio ordered.

The Provost exited.

Duke Vincentio said, “And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin Angelo, whom it most concerns to hear this matter, do to those who injure you as seems to you best. Give them whatever chastisement you wish. I will leave you for a while. Do not leave until you have well determined how you will treat these slanderers.”

Escalus said, “My lord, we’ll do our job as judges thoroughly.”

Duke Vincentio exited.

Escalus asked, “Signior Lucio, didn’t you say that you knew that Friar Lodowick is a dishonest person?”

Lucio replied, “*Cucullus non facit monachum*,” which is Latin for “The cowl does not make the monk.”

He added, “Friar Lodowick is honest in nothing except in his clothes; he has spoken the most villainous speeches about Duke Vincentio.”

“We shall ask you to stay here until he comes so that you can make these charges against him,” Escalus said. “This friar seems to be a notoriously bad fellow.”

“As any in Vienna, I swear,” Lucio said.

“Bring Isabella here again,” Escalus said. “I want to speak with her.”

An attendant left to get Isabella.

Escalus said to Angelo, “Please, my lord, allow me to question her; you shall see how I’ll handle her.”

Escalus meant that he would handle her by asking her questions that would reveal the truth, but Lucio pretended to take “handle” in a different — physical — sense.

Lucio said, “You will handle her no better than Angelo, by

her own report.”

“What did you say?” Escalus asked. “What do you mean?”

“Sir, I think, if you handled her privately, she would sooner confess. Perhaps, if you handle her publicly, she’ll be ashamed.”

“I will go darkly to work on her,” Escalus said.

He meant that the questions would be cunningly designed to trap her and force her to tell the truth. Lucio pretended that “darkly” meant “secretly” and “in the dark.”

Lucio said, “That’s the way; for women are light at midnight.”

The word “light” meant unchaste. Light heels were raised in the air in a position for having sex.

Isabella returned, escorted by officers.

“Come here, Mistress Isabella,” Escalus said. “Here is a gentlewoman who denies everything that you have said.”

The Provost returned, accompanied by Duke Vincentio, who was once again disguised as a friar: Friar Lodowick.

Lucio said, “My lord, here comes the rascal friar I spoke about, escorted by the Provost.”

“He arrives at a very good time,” Escalus said. “Do not speak to him until we ask you to.”

“I am mum,” Lucio replied.

Escalus said to the disguised Duke Vincentio, “Come, sir, did you set these women on to slander Lord Angelo? They have confessed you did.”

“It is false.”

“What! Do you know where you are?”

“I give respect to your great position in society,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said, adding, “Let the Devil sometimes be honored for his burning throne. Normally, we would not honor the Devil, but he has a great position in Hell so sometimes we ought to honor him because of his great position. Where is the Duke? He is the person who should hear me speak.”

“The authority of the Duke is invested in us,” Escalus said, “and we will hear you speak. Be sure that you speak justly and truly.”

“Boldly, at least,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “But, poor souls, have you come here to ask the fox to give you the sheep? You may say goodbye to your redress — your remedy for a wrong! You will not be able to set things right by acting like this. Is the Duke gone? Then your cause — justice — has been lost, too. The Duke is unjust when he rejects your obviously just appeal — you, Escalus, want justice — and he instead allows the villain whom here you have come to accuse to do the judging in this trial.”

Duke Vincentio, while still in disguise, was pointing out that with Angelo acting as judge, justice would not be the result, although Escalus was sincerely attempting to find out the truth and be just. In this particular case, Angelo should be the accused, not the judge.

Lucio said, “This is the rascal; this is the man I spoke of.”

“Why, you unreverend and unhallowed friar,” Escalus said, “is it not enough that you have suborned these women to falsely accuse this worthy man, Angelo, but with a foul mouth and in his hearing, you call him a villain? And then you turn from him to Duke Vincentio himself and accuse the Duke of injustice?”

He ordered some officers, “Take him away; to the rack with him!”

He looked at the disguised Duke Vincentio and said, “We’ll stretch you joint by joint,” and then he added so that everyone could hear, “and we will know his purpose.”

In a disgusted voice, he said to the disguised Duke Vincentio, “What! You call Duke Vincentio unjust!”

The disguised Duke Vincentio said, “Don’t be so angry. The Duke will not dare to stretch this finger of mine any more than he would dare to rack his own finger. I am not his subject, and I am not subject to the local ecclesiastical jurisdiction. My business in this state has made me an observer here in Vienna, where I have seen corruption boil and bubble until it over-ran the stew pots. You have laws for all faults, but the faults are so ignored and covered up that the strong laws are like the rules posted in a barbershop: They are as much mocked as they are respected.”

Barbershops often posted rules on their walls. For example, if someone misbehaved, the punishment might be the pulling of a tooth. The punishments were meant to provoke laughter — no one dealt them out.

“You have slandered the state!” an outraged Escalus said. “Take him to prison!”

“What can you testify against him, Signior Lucio?” Angelo asked. “Is this the man whom you told us about?”

“He is the man, my lord,” Lucio said. “Come here, goodman baldpate. Do you know me?”

Lucio called the disguised Duke Vincentio “baldpate” because friars shaved their heads. Duke Vincentio wore a cowl, aka hood, as part of his disguise, and while he was in

disguise he kept the hood up to help hide his face.

“I remember you, sir, by the sound of your voice,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

The hood kept people from seeing the disguised Duke Vincentio’s face, but it also interfered with the Duke’s seeing other people’s faces.

The disguised Duke Vincentio continued, “I met you at the prison, while the Duke was absent.”

“Oh, did you?” Lucio said. “And do you remember what you said about the Duke?”

“Very definitely, sir.”

“Do you, sir?” Lucio asked. “And do you remember calling the Duke a fleshmonger, a fool, and a coward?”

“You must, sir, change places with me, before you make that my report,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said. “You, indeed, called him those things, and others very much worse.”

“Oh, you damnable fellow!” Lucio, an inveterate liar, said. “Didn’t I grab you by the nose because of what you said?”

“I say that I love the Duke as I love myself,” the disguised Duke Vincentio said.

“Listen to what the villain is saying now, after having said his treasonable abuses!” Angelo said.

“We need not talk any longer to him,” Escalus said. “Take him to prison! Where is the Provost? Take this friar to prison! Put plenty of fetters on him. Let him speak no more. Take these giglots — these loose women — away, too, and take away the other confederate companion: Friar Peter!”

The disguised Duke Vincentio said to the Provost, "Wait, sir. Wait a while."

Angelo said, "What! Is he resisting arrest? Help arrest him, Lucio."

"Come, sir; come, sir; come, sir," Lucio said. "Damn, sir! Why, you baldpated, lying rascal, you think that you must be hooded, must you? Show us your knave's visage, with a pox on you! Show us your sheep-biting face, and be hanged for an hour! I bet that your hood will come off!"

Lucio pulled down Friar Lodowick's hood, and everyone recognized Duke Vincentio, who said to Lucio, "You are the first knave who ever made a Duke."

Normally, when someone is made a Duke, a member of royalty performs the ceremony, but Lucio, a knave, had made a friar a Duke.

Duke Vincentio said, "First, Provost, let me bail out these gentle three. Isabella, Mariana, and Friar Peter are all innocent."

Lucio attempted to stealthily leave, but Duke Vincentio said to him, "Sneak not away, sir, because Friar Lodowick and you must have a word soon. Lay hold of him and keep him here."

Lucio said, "This may prove worse to me than hanging."

Duke Vincentio said to Escalus, "What you have spoken to me, I pardon. Sit down. I will take Angelo's chair."

He then said to Angelo, "Sir, by your leave."

Angelo stood up, and the Duke sat down.

Duke Vincentio said to Angelo, "Do you have any words, or intelligence, or impudence, that can still do you service? What kind of defense can you make of your actions? If you

can make a defense, rely upon it until I tell my story, and then realize that you can make no defense. At that time, confess.”

“Oh, my dread lord,” Angelo said. “I would be guiltier than my guiltiness if I were to think I can hide my crimes when I perceive that your grace, like power divine, has looked upon them. Therefore, good Prince, no longer let a trial be held and expose my shame. Instead, let my trial be my own confession. All I beg from your grace now is immediate sentencing and death.”

Duke Vincentio said, “Come here, Mariana.”

He asked Angelo, “Tell me, were you ever contracted to marry this woman?”

“I was, my lord.”

“Go and take her away from here, and marry her immediately,” Duke Vincentio said. “Friar Peter, you perform the marriage. Once these two are married, bring Angelo back here again. Go with him, Provost.”

Angelo, Mariana, Friar Peter, and the Provost exited.

Escalus said, “My lord, I am more amazed at Angelo’s dishonor than at the strangeness of it. I did not think that he was capable of such sin.”

“Come here, Isabella,” Duke Vincentio said. “Your friar is now your Prince. As a friar, I was attentive and devoted to you, and I did my best to help you. I have changed from friar to Duke, but I have not changed my heart. I am still attentive and devoted to you, and I will do my best to help you.”

“Give me pardon,” Isabella said. “I, your vassal, have caused you pain and trouble.”

“You are pardoned, Isabella,” Duke Vincentio said. “And now, dear maiden, please be as generous to us. Your brother’s death, I know, sits at your heart, and you may wonder why I kept my identity and power hidden as I worked to save his life, instead of simply revealing my identity and power. Because I kept them hidden, your brother was lost.”

Of course, Duke Vincentio was lying. Soon he would reveal that Claudio, Isabella’s brother, was still alive. By concealing that fact now, he would make Isabella’s future happiness greater when she learned that her brother was still alive. In addition, and more importantly, he wanted Angelo to know the enormity of his sin.

Duke Vincentio continued, “Oh, most kind maiden, his death occurred too quickly. I did not think that he would be executed with such swift celerity. It knocked my plan in the head and ruined it. But may peace be with him! A life is a better life when it need not fear death. A life that lives but fears death is not as good. Your brother is enjoying Heaven and will never again die. Let this be your comfort: Your brother is happy in Heaven.”

“I am comforted by that, my lord,” Isabella replied.

Angelo, Mariana, Friar Peter, and the Provost returned. Angelo and Mariana were now married.

Duke Vincentio said to Isabella, “For Mariana’s sake, you must pardon this newly married man who is approaching here, whose lecherous imagination wronged your well-defended honor. He violated you in his imagination although not in reality. But he condemned your brother to death. This made him guilty of two things: violation of sacred chastity, and violation and breach of his promise to set your brother free. By breaching his promise to set your brother free, he became guilty of taking the life of your

brother. Because of that crime, the very mercy of the law cries out very audibly, even from Angelo's own tongue, 'An Angelo for a Claudio, a death for a death! Haste always repays haste, and leisure answers leisure. Like requites like, and MEASURE always FOR MEASURE.'"

Duke Vincentio was remembering Exodus 21:23-25: "*But if death follow, then thou shalt pay life for life. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.*"

He was correct when he said that "the very mercy of the law cries out very audibly, even from Angelo's own tongue, 'An Angelo for a Claudio, a death for a death!'"

Earlier, Angelo had said this to Isabella: "I show pity most of all when I show justice because when I show justice I pity those whom I do not know, people whom an unpunished offence would afterwards gall and harm. A criminal who is not punished will commit the same crime again. I also show pity and do right to an offender who, because he is punished for committing one foul wrong, does not live to commit another foul wrong. Be satisfied and restrain yourself. Your brother dies tomorrow. Reconcile yourself to his death."

Duke Vincentio continued, "Angelo, your guilt is evident, and even if you were to ask for mercy, your guilt would still require that you die. We condemn you to go to the very block where Claudio stooped to be beheaded, and with similar haste."

He ordered, "Take Angelo away to be beheaded!"

Mariana said, "Oh, my most gracious lord, I hope you will not mock me by giving me a husband and immediately taking him away from me."

"It is your husband who mocked you with a husband,"

Duke Vincentio said. "I want to safeguard your honor, and so I thought it fit that you marry Angelo. Otherwise, the news that he has had sex with you might give you a bad reputation and hurt your future life.

"As for his possessions, although they are forfeited to the state because Angelo is a felon, we give them to you along with all widow's rights. Buy yourself a better husband."

"My dear lord," Mariana replied. "I crave no other man, and I crave no better man, than Angelo."

"Do not crave him," Duke Vincentio said. "We have made up our mind that he shall die."

"My gentle liege —" Mariana began, kneeling.

Duke Vincentio interrupted, "You are wasting your words."

He ordered again, "Take Angelo away so that he may die!"

He then said to Lucio, "Now, sir, I turn my attention to you."

"My good lord!" Mariana said.

She then said, "Sweet Isabella, take my part. Lend me your knees, and all my life to come I'll lend you all my life to do you service."

"You are asking Isabella to do something that goes against all sense and reason," Duke Vincentio said. "If she were to kneel down and beg mercy for Angelo, her brother's ghost would break out of the stone of his tomb and take her away in horror of her actions."

"Isabella, sweet Isabella," Mariana begged, "please kneel by me. Hold up your hands, say nothing. I'll speak all that needs to be said. People say that the best men are molded out of faults; their sins keep them from being proud of their virtues. For this reason, and for the most part, they become

much better as a result of being a little bad. My husband may also become better as a result of his faults. Oh, Isabella, will you not lend a knee?"

Duke Vincentio said to Isabella, "Angelo dies because he caused Claudio's death."

Isabella remembered the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:38-39: "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*" New Testament justice is often tempered by mercy.

She said, "Most bounteous sir," and then she knelt.

She continued, "If it please you, look on Angelo, who is condemned by you to die, as if my brother had lived. I in part think that a due sincerity governed Angelo's deeds, until he looked at me and was tempted to sin. Since that is the case, let Angelo not die. My brother received only justice, in that he did the thing for which he died. My brother committed fornication, and he was sentenced to die because he was guilty of fornication.

"As for Angelo, his act did not overtake his bad intent. He wanted to commit fornication with me, but he did not. Because of that, his fault must be buried as being only an intention that perished by the way and did not become reality. Thoughts are not subjects of yours; intentions are merely thoughts. They are not real, existing deeds."

"She is right, my lord," Mariana said.

"Your suit's unprofitable," Duke Vincentio said. "Angelo shall die. Stand up, I say."

He added, "I have thought of another fault. Provost, how did it come to be that Claudio was beheaded at such an

unusual hour?”

“It was so commanded,” the Provost replied.

“Did you receive a special legal warrant for the deed?”

“No, my good lord; I received a private message,” the Provost replied.

“For which I do discharge you of your office,” Duke Vincentio said. “Give up your keys.”

“Pardon me, noble lord,” the Provost said. “I thought it was a fault, but I did not know for sure. I repented the death of Claudio, after more thought. Evidence for what I say can be found in the prison, where a prisoner, whom I was ordered to execute by a private message, is still alive.”

“Who is he?” Duke Vincentio asked.

“His name is Barnardine.”

“I wish that you had done the same for Claudio what you did for Barnardine. Go and fetch him and bring him here; let me see him.”

The Provost exited.

Escalus said, “I am sorry that one as learned and as wise as you have always appeared to be, Lord Angelo, should slip so grossly, both in the heat of passion and in a lack of tempered judgment afterward.”

“I am sorry that I have caused such sorrow,” Angelo replied, “So deeply does my sorrow stick in my penitent heart that I crave death more than I crave mercy. I deserve death, and I beg for death.”

The Provost returned, bringing with him Barnardine, Claudio, and Juliet. Claudio’s face was muffled and hidden by his clothing.

“Which one is Barnardine?” Duke Vincentio asked.

The Provost replied, “This is he, my lord,” while indicating Barnardine.

“A friar told me about this man,” Duke Vincentio said.

Addressing Barnardine, he added, “You are said to have a stubborn soul that sees no further than this world, and you act accordingly. You have been condemned to die; however, I pardon all your Earthly crimes, and I pray that you will respond to this mercy by taking action to gain better times to come, both in this life and in the next.

“Friar Peter, give him spiritual counsel. I leave him in your hands.”

Duke Vincentio then asked, “Who is that muffled fellow?”

“This is another prisoner whom I saved,” the Provost replied. “He should have died when Claudio lost his head; he greatly resembles Claudio.”

The Provost unmuffled Claudio, revealing his face.

Isabella and Mariana stood up, Isabella ran over to Claudio, and they rejoiced.

Duke Vincentio, who knew that this was really Claudio, said, “If he resembles your brother, I pardon him for your brother’s sake, and, as for your own lovely sake, give me your hand and say that you will marry me and be mine. He is my brother, too — but there will be a fitter time for us to talk about this marriage proposal.

“Because of this strange appearance of the living Claudio, Lord Angelo perceives he’s safe; he knows that he will not be beheaded. I think I see a quickening in his eye.

“Well, Angelo, your evil requites you well: You have a wife. Look that you love your wife; her worth is fully worth

yours.

“I find in myself an inclination to pardon people, and yet here’s one person whom I cannot pardon.”

He said to Lucio, “You have said that you knew me to be a fool, a coward, a lecher, an ass, a madman. What have I done to you that makes you call me such names?”

“Truly, my lord,” Lucio said. “It was all a joke. That’s just how I talk. I said those things on the spur of the moment, without thinking. I know that you can have me hanged for saying such things, but I prefer a lesser punishment, if it pleases you: Have me whipped, not hanged.”

“You shall be whipped first, sir, and hanged afterward,” Duke Vincentio said.

He added, “Provost, proclaim around about the city that if any woman has been wronged by this lewd fellow — I myself have heard him swear that he got a woman pregnant — let her appear, and he shall marry her. Once the two have been married, then he shall be whipped and hanged.”

“I beg your Highness,” Lucio said, “do not marry me to a whore. Your Highness said even now that I made you a Duke. My good lord, do not repay me by making me a cuckold.”

“Upon my honor, you shall marry her,” Duke Vincentio replied. “However, I pardon your slanders, and therefore you shall not be whipped and hanged — but you shall be married. Take him to prison, and make sure that he is married.”

“Marrying a punk — a prostitute — my lord, is very much like being pressed to death, whipping, and hanging,” Lucio said.

When a man is pressed to death, he lies on his back on a

sharp rock, and heavy weights are placed on a board on his chest. More and more weights are added until the man dies.

“Anyone who slanders a Prince deserves such punishment,” Duke Vincentio said.

Some officers took Lucio away to prison.

Duke Vincentio spoke to many people in turn:

“Claudio, make sure that you marry and restore the honor of Juliet, whom you wronged.

“May you have joy, Mariana!

“Love Mariana, Angelo. I have been her confessor, and I know that she is virtuous.

“Thank you, good friend Escalus, for your great goodness. There’s more to come. You shall be rewarded with more than mere words.

“Thank you, Provost, for your care and secrecy: You have played your role well. We shall employ you in a worthier place: You shall be promoted.

“Forgive the Provost, Angelo, who brought you the head of Ragozine instead of Claudio’s, but this is an offence that pardons itself.

“Dear Isabella, I have a proposal that much concerns your future happiness. If you say yes to my proposal of marriage, what’s mine is yours and what’s yours is mine.”

Using the royal plural, Duke Vincentio then said to everyone, “So, let us all go to our palace; there we’ll tell you some things to come that it is fitting that you know.”

Chapter VI: THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Merchant of Venice*)

Male Characters

DUKE OF VENICE.

PRINCE OF MOROCCO & PRINCE OF ARRAGON,
Suitors to Portia.

ANTONIO, a Merchant of Venice.

BASSANIO, his Friend.

GRATIANO, SOLANIO, & SALARINO: Friends to
Antonio and Bassanio.

LORENZO, in love with Jessica, Shylock's daughter.

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.

TUBAL, a Jew, Shylock's friend.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a Clown, Servant first to Shylock
and then to Bassanio.

OLD GOBBO, Father to Launcelot.

LEONARDO, Servant to Bassanio.

SALERIO, a Messenger from Venice and Gratiano's
friend.

BALTHAZAR & STEPHANO: Servants to Portia.

Female Characters

PORTIA, a rich Heiress.

NERISSA, her waiting-woman. Nerissa is a gentlewoman;
her social status is high enough that she can marry a

gentleman.

JESSICA, Daughter to Shylock.

Minor Characters

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Jailer, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

Scene

Partly at Venice, Italy, the home of Antonio and Bassanio, and partly at Belmont, Italy, the home of Portia.

CHAPTER 1 (The Merchant of Venice)

— 1.1 —

On a street in Venice, Antonio and his friends Salarino and Solanio were talking.

Antonio said, “Truly, I do not know why I am melancholy. It wearies me; you say it wearies you. But how I caught it, found it, or came by it, what stuff it is made of, whereof it is born, I do not know. Melancholy makes me such an idiot — such a want-wit — that I have much trouble to know myself.”

Salarino knew that Antonio had many merchant ships currently on the sea, and so he thought that Antonio must be worried about them.

Salarino said, “Your mind is tossing on the ocean. That is where your argosies — your large merchant ships — with their stately sails, as if they were signiors and rich burghers — gentlemen and prosperous freemen — are. They are like great floats in parades — the pageants of the sea. Your ships are so large that they look down on the petty traffickers, small ships that curtsy to them by lowering their flags to show them respect as they fly by with their woven wings.”

Solanio said, “Believe me, sir, had I such risky ventures going forth on the seas, the better part of my concerns would be about my hopes abroad. I would always be plucking a blade of grass and dropping it to find out in what direction the wind is blowing. I would always be peering at maps looking for ports and piers and anchorages. Everything that might make me fear that my risky ventures would not be successful would, no doubt, make me melancholy.”

Solanio said, “I would always be imagining harm coming to my ships at sea. Whenever I blew my breath over my soup to cool it, I would go into a fit of trembling because I would think what harm a too-great wind at sea could do to my ships. Whenever I would see the sand in an hourglass fall from the top to the bottom, I would think of shallows and of sandbars and I would see my wealth-bearing ship *Andrew* docked in sand and not in a safe port. I would see the high top of the main mast of my *Andrew* fall lower than her ribs — her wooden sides — and kiss her burial-ground. Whenever I went to church and saw the holy edifice of stone, I would immediately think of dangerous rocks, which by touching my noble vessel’s side, would scatter all her cargo of valuable spices on the ocean stream and clothe the roaring waters with my cargo of silk cloth. In short, I would always be thinking that at one moment I would own a valuable cargo, but in the next moment, due to misfortunes at sea, I would own nothing. Would I be able to think about these things and not become melancholy? No, of course not. No one needs to tell me why Antonio is melancholy. He is worried about his ships and their cargos of merchandise.”

“Believe me, I am not worried about my business ventures at sea,” Antonio said. “I thank my fortune — both my wealth and my luck — that I am not worried about such misfortunes as you think I am. I am a good businessman; I am diversified. I am not risking everything in a single ship. I am not risking everything in trading with a single country. Unless exceedingly great misfortunes happen, I will not go bankrupt anytime soon and certainly not this year. Therefore, my business ventures at sea are not making me melancholy.”

“Why, then you are in love,” Salarino said.

“Hardly,” Antonio replied.

“So you are not in love, either?” Salarino said. “In that case, we may as well say that you are sad because you are not merry. Saying that is as easy as saying that you laugh and leap and are merry because you are not sad. Now, by Janus, who has one head but two faces that look in different directions, Nature has created some strange fellows in her time. Some fellows are always happy: They have to peep through their eye-slits because their eyes are always half-closed due to constant laughter; they laugh like happy parrots at a melancholy bagpiper and at others who look as if they have been drinking vinegar and would never laugh and show their teeth during a laugh even if Nestor, the wise and old and serious advisor of the Greek army at Troy, thought that a jest was worth laughing at.”

Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano now came walking toward them. All three were Antonio’s friends, but Bassanio was Antonio’s best friend.

“Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,” Solanio said. “Here also come Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare you well. We leave you now with better company.”

“I would have stayed until I had made you merry,” Salarino said, “but now worthier friends than I can do that.”

“I regard your friendship as very dear and I know that your businesses are important,” Antonio said. “I understand why you need to leave. Your own businesses call on you, and now you embrace this occasion — the arrival of other friends — to depart.”

“Good morning, my good lords,” Salarino said.

“Good signiors both, when shall we meet together and have fun? Say, when?” Bassanio said. “You grow exceedingly strange and distant. Must you be so?”

“We will arrange our leisures to attend on yours,” Salarino

said. "We will find time to get together with you."

Salarino and Solanio departed.

Lorenzo said, "My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio, we two will leave you, but please remember that we will meet at dinnertime."

"I will remember," Bassanio said.

"You do not look well, Signior Antonio," Gratiano said. "You think too seriously about worldly affairs. If you worry too much, you will lose the ability to enjoy yourself. Believe me, you are marvelously changed."

"I regard the world as only the world, Gratiano," Antonio replied. "It is a stage on which every man must play a part, and my part is a melancholy one."

"Let me play the fool," Gratiano said. "With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles — laugh lines — come. I prefer for my body to be heated with wine rather than cooled with mortifying groans. Why should a man, whose blood is warm inside his veins, sit like his dead grandsire's alabaster statue? Why should a man seem to be asleep when he is awake? Why should a man cause himself to become ill by being peevish? Let me tell you, Antonio, I respect you, and it is out of my friendship that I say this: There is a sort of men whose pale faces are like a pond covered with algae. Such men cultivate an obstinate silence because they want to win a reputation for being possessed of wisdom, gravity, and profound thought. It is as if they want to be able to say, 'I am Sir Oracle, and when I open my lips let no dog bark!' They are aware that oracles are supposed to speak for a god and that dogs are thought to bark at people who are in disgrace. Antonio, I know men who are thought to be wise only because they say nothing, but I am very sure that if these men would ever speak, other people would dam their ears by putting their fingers in them to stop them from

hearing nonsense. They would also damn their ears because when they heard such nonsense they would call these brothers fools and so run afoul of Matthew 5:22: *‘But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [an insulting term], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.’* I will tell you more about this another time. So do not fish for a reputation for wisdom by using as bait your melancholy. Reputation can be worthless and not based on reality.”

Gratiano then said, “Come, good Lorenzo. It is time for us to go.”

He said to Antonio, “Farewell for a while. I’ll end my exhortation after dinner. I am like a preacher who goes on far too long to finish his sermon before dinner and so must resume his sermon after dinner.”

Lorenzo said to Antonio, “We will leave you then until dinner-time. Apparently, I must be one of these same dumb and never-speaking wise men because Gratiano speaks so much that he never lets me speak.”

“Keep me company for two more years,” Gratiano joked, “and you shall forget the sound of your own tongue.”

“Farewell,” Antonio said. “I will take your advice and become more talkative.”

“Thank you,” Gratiano said. “Truly, silence is only commendable in a dried beef tongue — or should I say an impotent old man — or in an adult virgin who is not marriageable — or should I say an old maid.”

Gratiano and Lorenzo departed.

Antonio asked, “What was that all about?”

“Gratiano speaks an infinite deal about nothing, more than any man in all Venice,” Bassanio said. “His ideas are like two grains of wheat hidden in two bushels of chaff: You shall seek all day before you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.”

“Well, tell me now which lady is it for whom you swore to make a secret pilgrimage,” Antonio said. “You promised to tell me that today.”

“It is not unknown to you, Antonio, how much I have squandered my estate by enjoying more prodigal and lavish living than my small means would allow me to continue. Nor do I now make moan and complain about being forced to stop such lavish living; instead, my chief concern is to extricate myself — honorably — from the great debts I have incurred by living so lavishly. To you, Antonio, I owe the most, both in money and in friendship. Because of your friendship to me, I feel able to tell you my plan for getting clear of the debts I owe.”

“Please, good Bassanio, let me know your plan. If your plan is, as you yourself always are, honorable, be assured that my wallet, my person, and my resources will help you in your plan.”

“During my schooldays,” Bassanio said, “when I had shot and lost one arrow, I would shoot a similar arrow — one of the same weight and with the same pattern of feathers — in the same direction and with the same force that I had shot the first arrow. By risking the second arrow, I often found both it and the first arrow because I watched the second arrow more carefully than I had watched the first arrow. I am telling you about this childhood experience because it is relevant to what I am going to propose to you — my proposal is guileless like the proposal of a child. The money that I owe you is spent (by an impetuous youth) and gone, but if you please to shoot another arrow the same

way that you shot the first arrow I do not doubt that I will be more careful and closely watch the second arrow and so find both arrows, or if not, I will find the second arrow and bring back to you the second amount of money I borrowed and thank you and continue to owe you the first amount of money I borrowed.”

“You ought to know me well,” Antonio said. “Right now you are wasting time by not speaking plainly; instead, you are circling around what you want to ask me to do. You doubt that I will help you, and by so doubting my friendship and my willingness to help you, you do more wrong than if you had wasted everything I have. Therefore, tell me plainly what you want me to do and what you know I am able to do. If you do so, I will do what you want me to do. Therefore, speak to me plainly.”

“In the town of Belmont is a lady who has been made rich by inheritance. She is beautiful, and what is more beautiful than that beauty, she has wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes I have received encouraging but speechless messages: She likes me. Her name is Portia, and she is in no way of lesser value than the Portia who was Cato’s daughter and Brutus’ wife — the Portia who was renowned for her devotion to her husband. Nor is the wide world ignorant of the worth of Portia of Belmont; the four winds blow in from every coast renowned suitors who wish to marry her. She has sunny locks of hair that hang on her temples like a golden fleece — that fleece that Jason sailed to Colchis in quest of. Now many Jasons come in quest of Portia. Antonio, if I had the means to be one of the men who travel to and seek to marry Portia, I truly believe — and my mind prophesies — that I would without question be the one who wins her! Therefore, I ask you to lend me money that will enable me to travel to Belmont and woo Portia.”

“You know that all my fortune is invested in ships at sea,” Antonio said. “I have neither the money you need nor merchandise that I can sell to raise the money you need. Therefore, go forth; see what my credit is worth in Venice. I will use all of my credit to raise the money you need — I will stretch my credit as far as it will stretch to get you the money you need to sail to Belmont and court beautiful Portia. Go, immediately inquire, and so will I, where money can be borrowed, and I believe without question that I can raise the money either from business loans or from loans from friends.”

— 1.2 —

Portia and her waiting-gentlewoman, Nerissa, who was her companion and confidante, talked together in a room of Portia’s house in Belmont.

“Truly, Nerissa, my little body is weary of this great world.”

“You would be weary of this great world, sweet madam, if your miseries were as abundant as your good fortunes are. However, as far as I can see, people who stuff themselves with too much food are as sick as people who starve because they have no food. It is no mean — small — happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean — middle. Those in the middle achieve Aristotle’s golden mean and so do not eat too much or too little food and so avoid sickness. People who eat too much grow white hair and age quickly; people who eat the right amount of food live longer. People should try to achieve the golden mean and so be virtuous.”

“Those are good moral maxims, and you have well delivered them,” Portia said.

“They would be better moral maxims if people actually followed them.”

“If to do the right thing were as easy as to know what the right thing to do is, small chapels would be large churches and the cottages of poor men would be the palaces of Princes. It is a good preacher who follows the instructions he gives in his own sermons. I can easier teach twenty people what things were good to be done, than be one of the twenty who would follow my own teaching. The brain may devise rules for controlling one’s temper, but a hot temper leaps over a cold rule. Mad, passionate youth skips over the good counsel given by wisdom, that old cripple. A youth is like a hare that jumps over the nets that are supposed to ensnare it. But this kind of talk and this kind of reasoning is not going to help me choose a husband. But I should not use the word ‘choose.’ I may neither choose whom I wish to marry nor refuse whom I do not wish to marry. And so the psychological will of a living daughter is curbed by the legal will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose a man to be a husband nor refuse a man who wins me to be his wife?”

“Your father was always virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations. It is said that dying virtuous men have special insight and can foretell the future. Therefore, the lottery that your father devised on his deathbed is the right way to choose your future husband. Here before us lie three caskets or boxes. The first casket is made of gold, the second of silver, and the third of lead. Whichever suitor chooses the casket your father wants your future husband to choose will, no doubt, be exactly the man whom you ought to marry. But do you like any of these Princely suitors who have already come to court you?”

“Name them one by one, and as you name them, I will describe them. By listening to my description of each of them, you can determine which of them, if any, I like.”

“First, there is the Neapolitan Prince — this Prince comes

from Naples.”

“Yes, and he is a colt indeed — he is an uncouth young man. He does nothing but talk about his horse, and he thinks that it is a great accomplishment and a credit to himself that he can shoe his own horse. I am very much afraid that his mother committed adultery with a blacksmith.”

“Then there is the Count Palatine. This nobleman has supreme jurisdiction over his own county.”

“He does nothing but frown, as if he were saying, ‘If you will not have me, so be it — do as you please.’ He hears merry tales and yet he does not smile, I fear he will prove to be a weeping philosopher when he grows old because he is so full of impolite and inappropriate seriousness in his youth. In his old age, he will be like Heraclitus, the philosopher who wept when he saw human stupidity. In his old age, he will not be like Democritus, the laughing philosopher who valued cheerfulness. I had rather be married to a death’s-head — a skull — with a bone in his mouth than to either of these men. May God keep me away from these two men!”

“What do you think about Monsieur Le Bon, the French lord?”

“God made him, and therefore let us assume that he is a man,” Portia replied. “Truly, I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but this man — why, he has a horse better than the Neapolitan’s and a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine! He imitates every man and therefore he is no man — he does not have an identity of his own. If a thrush begins to sing, he immediately begins to dance. He fences with his own shadow. If I were to marry him, it would be like marrying twenty husbands because he has no identity of his own. If he would despise me, I would

forgive him because if he were to love me to madness, I would never be able to return his love.”

“What do you say about Falconbridge, the young Baron from England?”

“You know I say nothing to him because he cannot understand me and I cannot understand him. He does not know Latin, French, or Italian, and you could come into a law court and accurately swear that I have a poor pennyworth’s worth of knowledge of English. He is the picture of a proper man, but, alas, who can have a conversation with a picture or with a mime? And how oddly he dresses! I think he bought his jacket in Italy, his stockings in France, and his hat in Germany. His manners seem to come from everywhere.”

“What do you think of the Scottish lord, his neighbor?”

“The Scottish lord must have a neighborly charity. The Englishman lent him a box on the ear, and the Scottish lord swore he would pay him again when he was able. I think that the Englishman must have also lent the Frenchman a box on the ear and that the Scottish lord and the Frenchman joined forces and swore to someday pay the Englishman back.”

“How do you like the young German, the Duke of Saxony’s nephew?”

“I like him very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk. When the German is at his best, he is little worse than a man, and when he is at his worst, he is little better than a beast. If the worst that could happen ever happened — I married him and he died — I’m pretty sure that I could manage to live my life without him.”

“If he were to make the trial of the three caskets, and if he

were to choose the right casket, you ought to refuse to perform your father's will — you ought to refuse to marry the young German.”

“Therefore, for fear of the worst, please set a deep glass of white wine from the Rhineland on one of the wrong caskets because even if the Devil is within the casket he will choose the casket that has the alcoholic temptation on it — I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, before I'll be married to a sponge who sops up alcohol.”

“You need not fear, lady, marrying any of these lords. They have told me what they have decided: They will return to their homes and not bother you by courting you unless they can do so without having to choose one of the three caskets.”

“Whoever marries me must choose the right casket,” Portia said. “If I live to be as old as the Sibyl, whom the god Apollo granted as many years of life as she was able to hold grains of sand in her hands, I will die as chaste as the virgin goddess Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner ordered in my father's will. I am glad that this parcel of wooers is so reasonable because there is not one among them whose absence I do not greatly desire, and I pray that God grants them a fair departure.”

“Do you remember a Venetian who is a scholar and a soldier and who came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat while your father was still alive?” Nerissa asked.

“Yes, yes, he was Bassanio,” Portia said. “I think that was his name.”

She thought, *Bassanio was definitely his name, but I don't want Nerissa to know that I am interested in him.*

“Truly, madam, he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes

looked upon, was the man who best deserved a fair and beautiful lady to be his wife.”

Pleased, Portia said, “I remember him well, and I remember him as being worthy of your praise.”

An attendant entered the room.

Portia said to him, “How are you? What is the news you bring?”

The attendant replied, “The strangers who came here to court you, madam, have come here to say goodbye to you. In addition, a herald has come to announce that his master, the Prince of Morocco, will arrive here tonight to court you.”

Portia replied, “If I could bid this new suitor welcome with as good a heart as I can bid my other suitors farewell, I would be glad that he is coming. But if the Prince of Morocco has the character of a saint and the black complexion of a Devil, I had rather that he shrive me than wive me — I had rather that he hear me confess than see me in a wedding dress. I confess that the skin color of my future husband is important to me, as is his character.”

She added, “Come, Nerissa.”

Then she said to the attendant, “Walk in front of us.”

Finally, she joked, “While we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.”

— 1.3 —

In a public place in Venice, Bassanio was meeting with Shylock to ask the Jew of Venice to lend him money with Antonio as the guarantor. In all, he wanted three thousand ducats, aka Venetian gold coins.

Shylock said, “Three thousand ducats. Well.”

“Yes, sir, for three months.”

“For three months. Well.”

“For which, as I told you, Antonio shall be the guarantor. Antonio shall legally bind himself to pay back that money I borrow from you if I cannot pay it back.”

“Antonio shall be the guarantor. Well.”

“Will you supply me with the money? Will you oblige me? Can you tell me now either yes or no?”

Shylock said, “Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio legally bound as guarantor.”

“Yes. What is your answer: yes or no?”

“Antonio is a good man.”

“Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?”

“Oh, no, no, no, no,” Shylock said. “You mistake my meaning. When I said that he is a good man, I meant that he should be adequate security for the loan. Yet his wealth is at risk. He has one merchant ship bound for Tripolis and another bound for the Indies. I understand, moreover, from talking to people at the Rialto, the mercantile exchange here in Venice, that he has a third merchant ship bound for Mexico and a fourth one bound for England, and he has other business ventures scattered — and perhaps squandered — abroad. We must realize that ships are only boards and that sailors are only men. There exist land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves — I mean that pirates exist — and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. This man, Antonio, is, notwithstanding, good security for this loan. Three thousand ducats: I think I may make this loan with him as guarantor.”

“You may be sure that you can.”

“I will be assured that I can, and to ensure that I am sure, I will carefully think about making this loan. May I speak with Antonio?”

“If it will please you to dine with us.”

“Dine with you? And to smell pork and to eat of the habitation that your prophet the Nazarite conjured the Devil into? In Mark 5:1-13 of your holy book, we read of the man who was possessed by demons. Jesus ordered the demons to leave the possessed man and to enter the bodies of some pigs that rushed down a steep bank and entered a lake and were drowned. Such food is not kosher, and I am an observant Jew. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so on, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, or pray with you. What news comes from the Rialto?”

Shylock looked up and added, “Who is that man who is coming here?”

Bassanio said, “He is Signior Antonio.”

Shylock thought, *Antonio looks like a fawning publican. When I say “fawning,” I am being sarcastic because he is proud and does not fawn, but despite his pride he will ask me to lend his friend money. But he is very much like a publican — a Roman tax collector. Like a publican, he will take from the Jews their profit and give it to his gentile masters. I hate Antonio because he is a Christian. But I hate him even more because in his humble foolishness he lends money without charging interest and so brings down the rate of interest we moneylenders can charge in Venice. If I get the advantage of him — if I were a wrestler, I would say, if I can catch him once upon the hip so that I can throw him to the ground — I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him and get a great revenge. Antonio hates our sacred nation, he hates us Jews, and he rails — even in*

the place where merchants most often do congregate — against me and against my business deals and well-won profit, which he calls undeserved interest. Cursed be my tribe of Jews if I forgive him!

“Shylock, are you listening?” Bassanio asked.

“I am reckoning up how much ready money I have, and I think that I cannot immediately raise the full amount of three thousand ducats. But that does not matter. Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe, will lend me the additional amount you need to borrow. But wait! For how many months do you need to borrow the money?”

Shylock said to Antonio, “I hope that you are well, good signior. We were just talking about you. Your name was the last name in our mouths.”

Antonio replied, “Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow with interest — paying it when I borrow or collecting it when I lend — yet, to help my friend get the money he urgently needs, I will break my custom.”

He said to Bassanio, “Does Shylock know how much money you need?”

Shylock replied for Bassanio, “Yes, yes, three thousand ducats.”

Antonio added, “And he needs it for three months.”

Shylock said, “I had forgotten. Three months.”

He said to Bassanio, “You did tell me that.”

He added, “Well, then, we need a legal contract. Let me see. Antonio, I think that you said that you neither charge or pay interest.”

“That is true.”

Shylock said, “Jacob used to be the shepherd to his uncle Laban’s sheep. This Jacob was descended from our holy Abraham. First came Abraham, then his son Isaac, and then his grandson Jacob in the line of Jewish patriarchs. Jacob’s wise mother, Rebecca, helped him deceive Isaac so that Jacob and not his elder brother, Esau, would become Isaac’s heir. This story is told in Genesis 27. Yes, Jacob was the third Jewish patriarch.”

“What about him?” Antonio asked. “Did he charge interest?”

“He did not charge interest,” Shylock said. “That is, he did not charge interest *directly*, as you would say. Listen as I tell you what he did. Laban and Jacob made an agreement that all the lambs that would be born with fleeces of two colors — for example, black and white — would be Jacob’s payment for services rendered as shepherd. In the autumn, the ewes, being in heat, turned to the rams to be bred. Jacob, the skillful shepherd, took some branches and peeled away some of the bark so that the branches were dark where the bark was and light where the bark had been peeled away. These he set before the ewes as they were being bred because he believed that the ewes that saw the branches of two colors would give birth to lambs of two colors. And so it happened: The ewes gave birth to many lambs of two colors in the spring, and those lambs became the property of Jacob. Jacob thrived, and he was blest. Such thriving is a blessing, as long as men do not steal in order to thrive.”

Antonio said, “Jacob had to work as a shepherd in order to thrive, and he had the help of God, Who made the lambs of two colors. This was not a thing that Jacob had the power to bring to pass — simply looking at partly peeled branches will not make a ewe give birth to lambs of two colors. All of that was governed and shaped by the hand of Heaven.

Why did you tell us this story? Are you trying to justify charging interest on loans? That is a poor justification. Jacob worked hard for his profit, and one problem that people have with usury is that the usurer does no work. Also, sheep can breed, but metal coins cannot breed. Do you consider your gold and silver to be ewes and rams?"

"I don't know if my gold and silver can legitimately be compared to ewes and rams, but I do know that I make my gold and silver breed as fast as ewes and rams. But listen to me, Signior Antonio."

Antonio ignored Shylock and said, "Listen well, Bassanio. This is important. The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. An evil soul producing holy witness is like a villain who smiles from cheek to cheek. He is like an apple that appears to be good but is rotten at the heart. Falsehood can put on a good-seeming disguise."

Wanting to change the subject of conversation back to the loan, Shylock thought out loud, "Three thousand ducats: It is a good round sum. Three months from twelve; then, let me see, what will be the interest rate?"

Antonio asked, "Well, Shylock, will you lend us the money?"

Shylock replied, "Signior Antonio, many a time and often in the Rialto you have berated me about my moneylending and about my charging of interest. Always I have borne it with a patient shrug because patient forbearance is the mark of all our tribe of Jews. You call me a heretic and an unbeliever and a cutthroat dog, and you spit upon my Jewish garments, and you do that because I am making use of what I myself own. In your own holy book — Matthew 20:15 — is written, '*Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*' Well, it now appears you need my help. Ha! You come to me, and you say 'Shylock, I want to

borrow money.’ You say this — you, who spat upon my beard and kicked me as you would kick a strange dog to get it out of your house. You need to borrow money. What should I say to you? Should I not say, ‘Has a dog money? Is it possible a cur can lend three thousand ducats?’ Or should I bow low and with a slave’s voice anxiously and humbly whisper, ‘Fair sir, you spit on me last Wednesday. You kicked me on a different day. On another day you called me a dog. Because you have shown me these courtesies, should I answer, ‘Yes, I will lend you the money you need’?’”

“I am likely to call you those names again, to spit on you again, and to kick you again,” Antonio said. “If you will lend me this money, do not lend it as if you were lending it to a friend — when did a friend ever charge a friend interest? Instead, lend me this money as if you were lending it to an enemy — someone who, if he cannot repay the loan, you can happily require him to pay the penalty for breaking the contract.”

Shylock replied, “Why, look how you storm! I want to be friends with you and have your respect. I want to forget the shames that you have caused me. I want to lend you the money you need and charge you not even a penny of interest. I want to do all these things, and you rail at me and will not listen to me. I am offering you a kindness.”

“To lend us the money and not charge us interest is kindness indeed,” Bassanio said.

“That is the kindness I am offering to you,” Shylock said. “Go with me to a notary, and sign our contract there. I will not charge you interest. But as a merry joke, let us make the penalty for nonpayment of the money lent be exactly one pound of Antonio’s fair flesh, to be cut off and taken from whatever part of Antonio’s body it pleases me to take it.”

“Indeed, I am satisfied and pleased with such a contract,” Antonio said. “I will sign it, and I will say that you, Shylock, are kind.”

More cautious and suspicious than Antonio, Bassanio said, “You shall not sign your name to such a contract for me. I would rather do without the money.”

“Why, fear not, man,” Antonio said. “I will not break the contract. Within the next two months — that’s a whole month before this contract requires repayment — I expect my ships to return with nine times the amount of money I will borrow from Shylock.”

Shylock said, “Oh, father Abraham, what kind of people are these Christians, whose own tough negotiations and business dealings teach them to suspect the thoughts of others!”

He said to Bassanio, “Please, tell me this. If Antonio should be unable to repay the loan, what should I gain by taking one pound of his flesh? A pound of flesh taken from a man is not as valuable or profitable as is the flesh of sheep, cattle, or goats. I say that in order to buy Antonio’s favorable opinion of me I extend to him this friendship. If he will take it, well and good; if not, I commend him to God. And, if we are to be friends, I ask you to think that I do not have evil motives.”

“Shylock,” Antonio said, “I will sign the contract.”

“Then go to the notary’s and have him write up the contract. I will go and gather the ducats immediately, stop at my house to check on it because I left it in the unreliable hands of an unreliable servant, and very quickly I will go and meet you at the notary’s.”

“Hurry, gentle Jew,” Antonio said.

Shylock departed, and Antonio said to Bassanio, “This Jew will convert and become a Christian; he grows kind and gentle — he even grows gentle.”

“The terms of the contract seem to be fair, but I do not trust Shylock,” Bassanio said. “I do not like the pairing of fair terms and a villainous mind.”

“Come on,” Antonio said. “In this contract there can be no dismay; my ships come home a month before the day I must repay the money.”

CHAPTER 2 (The Merchant of Venice)

— 2.1 —

The Prince of Morocco entered a room of Portia's house in Belmont. The Prince was dark skinned and wore white clothing, as did the servants with him. Nerissa and a few servants were with Portia.

“Do not dislike me because of my dark complexion,” the Prince of Morocco said. “My dark skin is the dark uniform of those who live beneath the shining Sun. I am a neighbor of and closely related to the Sun-god. Bring to me the fairest and lightest-skinned man born in the north, where the fire of the Sun scarcely thaws the icicles, and let both of us cut ourselves in a competition for your love. We two competitors will prove who has the redder blood: him or me. Red blood is a sign of courage. I tell you, lady, my red blood has made valiant men tremble in fear, and by my love for you I swear that the most admired virgins of my climate have loved my red blood. I would not change my complexion except to win your love, my gentle Queen.”

“In deciding whom I shall love, I am not solely led by the over-particular criticism of a maiden's eyes,” Portia said. “Besides, the lottery of my destiny prevents me from voluntarily choosing whom I shall marry; I shall marry whoever wins the lottery. But if my father had not restricted me and hedged me by his intelligence and his will, making me to yield myself and marry whoever chooses correctly among the three caskets that I have told you about, you, yourself, renowned Prince, would have as fair a chance of winning my voluntary love as any of the wooers whom I have seen so far.”

“For that I thank you,” the Prince of Morocco said. “Therefore, I ask you to lead me to the caskets so that I can

try my luck. By this scimitar that slew the Shah of Persia and a Persian Prince who had defeated the Turkish Sultan Solyman the Magnificent in three battles, I would outstare the sternest eyes that look, outbrave the most daring heart on the Earth, pluck the young sucking cubs from the mother bear, yes, and mock the lion when he roars for prey, to win you, lady. But that is not how you must be won! If Hercules and his servant Lichas were to play at dice to determine which of the two is the better man, the best throw of the dice may — through sheer luck — come from the hand of the lesser man. In such a case, Hercules' servant would defeat Hercules. I, also, with blind fortune leading me, may miss that which a less worthy man may attain, and then I would die with grieving.”

“If you are to win me as your wife, you must take your chance at choosing the correct casket. You can do one of two actions: You can decide not to choose any casket and depart unmarried, or, if you decide to choose a casket, you must swear that if you choose the wrong casket that you will never marry any lady. Therefore, carefully choose which action you will do.”

“I will choose a casket, and if I choose the wrong casket, then I will never marry. Come, let me now make my choice among the three caskets.”

“Not yet,” Portia replied. “First, we must go to the temple where you can swear that if you choose the wrong casket then you will never marry. After we eat dinner, then you can choose one of the three caskets. That will be your hazardous choice.”

“May I have good fortune when I choose a casket!” the Prince of Morocco said. “My choice will make me be blessed or cursed among men.”

On a street in Venice, Launcelot Gobbo was talking to himself in front of Shylock's house. He was a rustic fellow from the country who had become a servant to Shylock, and he was a funny fellow who liked to play jokes and tease people and make them laugh or cry. Like his father, he sometimes misused words — often on purpose.

He said to himself, "Certainly my conscience will serve me to run away from this Jew who is my master. My conscience will tell me that running away is the right and ethical thing to do although ordinarily running away from one's master is the wrong and unethical thing to do.

"Let me put it to the test by imagining a conversation with my conscience and the Devil.

"The fiend — the Devil — is at my elbow and tempts me by saying to me, 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot, good Gobbo, good Launcelot Gobbo' — the Devil is a lawyer and wants to be sure to name me in such a way that I cannot pretend later that the Devil was talking to someone else.

"Anyway, the Devil says to me, 'Use your legs, take the start, run away.'

"But my conscience says, 'No; take heed,' honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo, or, as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo' — my conscience is also lawyer-like. It wants to name me in so many different ways so that later I cannot claim that my conscience was not speaking to me.

"Anyway, my conscience says, 'Do not run away, scorn running with your heels.'

"Well, the most courageous fiend — the Devil — advises me to pack in my job and run away. '*Fia!*' says the fiend. The Devil knows Italian, although he mispronounces it —

By '*fia*,' the Devil means '*via*' or 'away!' The fiend tells me, 'In Heaven's name' — ha! The Devil said the word 'Heaven'! The Devil tells me, 'In Heaven's name, have a brave mind and run away.'

"Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, 'My honest friend Launcelot, because you are an honest man's son' — but my conscience is wrong. I am not an honest man's son; rather, I am an honest woman's son. Indeed, my father did smack something — he kissed noisily with his lips something that may have been that area between a woman's legs. Then something else grew — something a little below his waist level. And then he had a kind of taste — his tongue and the thing that grew both tasted the same wetness. In short, my father cheated on his wife, and cheaters are not honest and so I am not an honest man's son.

"That reminds me. The Italian word '*fia*' can mean 'happening' or 'maybe' or, in northern Italy, 'vagina.'

"Well, my conscience says, 'Launcelot, budge not. Do not run away from your master.'

"The fiend, however, says, 'Budge. Run away from your master.'

"'Budge not,' says my conscience.

"'Conscience,' I say, 'you give good advice.'

"'Fiend,' I say, 'you also give good advice.'

"To be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, if I may say so, is a kind of Devil.

"In order to run away from the Jew, I would have to take the advice of the fiend, who, if you will excuse me, is the Devil himself.

“Certainly the Jew is the very Devil incarnation — is that the right word? Should I say ‘incarnate’?”

“To speak truly, my conscience is a kind of hard conscience because it tells me to stay with the Jew.

“The fiend gives me the more friendly counsel — the advice that I want to hear.

“I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run. My conscience did not help me after all. The Devil is much friendlier to me than my conscience.”

Launcelot was talking merely to amuse himself. He had already let Shylock know that he wanted to work for Bassanio, and Shylock had told him that he would talk to Bassanio and give him a good recommendation.

Before Launcelot Gobbo could run away, his father, Old Gobbo, who was nearly completely blind and was carrying a basket, arrived on the scene.

Old Gobbo asked Launcelot, “Master young man, please tell me which is the way to the house of master Shylock the Jew?”

Launcelot thought, *Heavens, this is my true-begotten father! To be stone-blind is to be completely blind. My father’s eyesight is not as bad as that, but he is more blind than sand-blind, which is to be a little blind. It is better to call him gravel-blind and best to call him very gravel-blind because he is almost stone-blind. My father does not recognize me because his eyesight is so bad. I will try confusions with him — that should be funnier than to try conclusions with him. To try conclusions with someone means to argue with someone.*

Old Gobbo repeated, “Master young gentleman, please tell me which is the way to master Jew’s house.”

Launcelot and his father were standing in front of Shylock's house, but Launcelot turned his father in all directions as he said, "Turn to your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning, turn to your left. At the turning after that, do not turn at all, but instead move at an angle to the Jew's house."

When Launcelot had finished turning his father in all directions, his father was facing the door of Shylock's house.

"By God's saints, it will be difficult for me to find the Jew's house," Old Gobbo said. "Can you tell me whether a certain man named Launcelot, who works for him, dwells with him or not?"

"Are you speaking of young Master Launcelot?" Launcelot asked.

He thought, *This is an opportunity for me to raise the waters and bring tears to my father's eyes.*

"Launcelot is no master, sir. A master is a man of a higher status than Launcelot has ever achieved; he is only a poor man's son. His father, even if it is I who say it, is an honest and exceedingly poor man and, God be thanked, well to live. He is so poor that he does well even to live, being unable to live well."

"Well, let his father be what his father will," Launcelot said. "Instead, let us talk about young Master Launcelot."

"Let us talk about Launcelot. We have no reason to bring 'master' into our conversation."

"Please, old man, ergo, old man, ergo, I ask you, are you talking about young Master Launcelot?"

He thought, *One of these days I need to find out what "ergo" means. I have heard many learned men use it —*

and use it and use it.

Old Gobbo said, "I am talking about Launcelot, not Master Launcelot, if it pleases your mastership."

"Ergo, Master Launcelot is the subject of our conversation. Don't talk about Master Launcelot, father — you don't mind if I call you 'father,' do you? An old man such as yourself must be a father. As I was saying, don't talk about Master Launcelot because the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings and prophecies, and according to the Sisters Three who are the Three Fates who control the destinies of men, and according to such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, he has gone to Heaven."

"God forbid!" Old Gobbo said. "The boy was the very staff of my old age, my very prop, the person who supported me."

Launcelot, who was fat, not thin, said, "Do I look like a long, thin cudgel or a long, thin hovel-post or a long, thin staff or a long, thin prop? Do you know me, father? And by 'father,' I mean 'father' as in 'biological father.'"

"I do not know you, young gentleman, but, please tell me for real about my boy, God rest his soul. Is he alive or dead?"

"Seriously, don't you know me, father?"

"Alas, sir, I am sand-blind; I do not know you."

"Indeed, even if you had good eyes, you might fail to recognize me: It is a wise father who knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news about your son."

Launcelot knelt and added, "Give me your blessing. Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son

may be unrecognized for a while, but sooner or later the truth will come out. So, father, give me your blessing. You can safely bless me. I am no Jacob.”

Genesis 27 tells how Jacob deceived Isaac, the father of Esau and him, into giving him a blessing intended for Esau.

“Please, sir, stand up,” Old Gobbo said. “I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.”

“Please, father,” Launcelot said, “let’s have no more fooling about it — quickly give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy who was, your son who is, your child who shall be.”

“I cannot believe you are my son.”

“I don’t know what I shall think about that, but I am Launcelot, Shylock the Jew’s servant, and I am sure Margery, your wife, is my mother.”

“My wife’s name is Margery, indeed,” Old Gobbo said. “I’ll be sworn, if you really are Launcelot, you are my own flesh and blood. The Lord be praised if you are!”

Old Gobbo reached out his hand and felt the long hair on the back of Launcelot’s head and said, “What a beard you have got! You have more hair on your chin than Dobbin my carthorse has on his tail.”

“It should seem, then, that Dobbin’s tail grows backward,” Launcelot said. “It grows shorter, not longer. I am sure Dobbin had more hair on his tail than I have on my face when I last saw him.”

“Lord, how you have changed! But you are my son. How do you and your master get along? I have brought him a present. Do you and your master get along well?”

“We get along well — yes, well. But, so far as I am

concerned, as I have set up my rest to run away — that is, I have made up my mind to run away — so I will not rest until I have run some distance and put some ground between my master and me. My master is a stereotypical Jew. You want to give him a present! Instead, give him a halter with which he can hang himself. I am famished in his service; he starves me,” Launcelot said, bouncing on his toes and jiggling his fat belly.

He added, “Most people use their fingers to help them count. I use my ribs to count my fingers! Father, I am glad you have come. Give your present to a certain Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives very nice new uniforms to his servants. If I do not become one of his servants, I will run away as far as God has any ground.”

He looked around and said, “Here is some good luck! Here comes Master Bassanio walking toward us. Speak to him, father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer.”

Bassanio, his servant Leonardo, and some other servants walked close to Launcelot Gobbo and Old Gobbo.

Bassanio said to a servant, “You may do so, but let it be done so hastily that supper will be ready no later than five o’clock. See to it that these letters are delivered, get the uniforms made, and tell Gratiano to come at once to my lodging.”

Launcelot said, “Talk to him, father.”

“God bless your worship!” Old Gobbo said.

“God bless you!” Bassanio replied. “How may I help you?”

“This is my son, sir, a poor boy — ”

Launcelot interrupted, “I am not a poor boy, sir. Instead, I am the rich Jew’s man, or servant. I would, sir, as my father will tell you — ”

Old Gobbo said, “He has a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve — ”

Bassanio thought, *A great infection? He means “ambition.”*

Launcelot interrupted, “Indeed, the short and the long of it is, I serve the Jew, and I have a desire, as my father will tell you — ”

Old Gobbo said, “His master and he, if you don’t mind my saying so, are scarcely cater-cousins — they are hardly close friends who eat together — ”

Launcelot interrupted, “To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, does cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you — ”

Bassanio thought, *Frutify? He means “notify,” I think. To fructify is to bear fruit.*

Old Gobbo said, “I have here a dish of doves prepared for eating that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit or request is — ”

Launcelot interrupted, “To be very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, I must say it, this old man, this poor man, is my father.”

Bassanio thought, *Impertinent? I can guess that he means “pertinent.”*

Bassanio said, “Just one of you do all the speaking for both of you. What do you want?”

Launcelot said, “I want to work for you, sir.”

Old Gobbo said, “That is the very defect of the matter, sir.”

Bassanio thought, *Defect? I can guess that he means*

“effect” or “purport.”

“I know who you are now,” Bassanio said. “Yes, you can work for me. Shylock, your master, spoke with me today, and he gave you a good recommendation. But I wonder whether you are doing the right thing: Is it wise to stop working for a rich Jew and start working for so impoverished a gentleman as me?”

Launcelot replied, “Let us remember this old proverb: He who has the grace of God has enough. We can split the proverb in two and apply it to the Jew and you. As a Christian, you have the grace of God; as a rich Jew, Shylock has enough when it comes to money.”

“You speak well,” Bassanio said to Launcelot. “You have a mastery of words and can use — or willfully misuse — them well.”

He said to Old Gobbo, “Go, father, with your son.”

He said to Launcelot, “Say goodbye to your old master and then go to my lodging.”

He said to one of his other servants, “Give Launcelot a uniform different from that of the other servants. Give him the uniform of a jester. He shall be my fool.”

Launcelot smiled. This was a promotion. He would no longer be an ordinary servant but would instead use his brain and wit to entertain Bassanio and make him laugh.

Launcelot said to his father, “Father, we will go inside the Jew’s house.”

He then started in on his new job: “I am a failure. I cannot get a job as an ordinary servant because I cannot speak correctly. Well, let me read my palm. I hold it flat like a table, and I do not think that any other man in Italy has a better table to place a Bible on — or to place on a Bible —

and swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If any man does have a better table, well, I shall have good luck anyway. Ah, yes, the table line in palmistry is the line of fortune. Let me look at the lines on my palm. Ah, here is an unremarkable lifeline, but I see leading to it long, deep lines from the thumb's ball, aka the Mount of Venus. Those lines indicate how many wives I will have. Nothing remarkable, I see. Here is a small trifling number of wives — alas, fifteen wives is nothing! Eleven widows and nine maidens is a simple coming-in for one man. If I collect dowries, I will have money coming-in, and I will also have wives for cumming-in. I see that I will escape being drowned twice and so escape the peril of water, but I will be in peril of losing my life while I am on the edge of a featherbed. I see sexcapades and marital escapades in my life, but these are unremarkable sex adventures. Well, if Fortune is a woman, she's a good wench for having given me this palm. Father, let us go. I will take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.”

Launcelot Gobbo and his father went into Shylock's house.

Bassanio returned to business, saying, “Good Leonardo, look at this list. Buy these things and stow them neatly on board ship, but return quickly, for I am hosting a feast tonight for my best friends. Go now, and hurry.”

“I will do my best,” Leonardo said and then departed.

Gratiano now came walking toward Leonardo and asked, “Where is your master, Bassanio?”

“There he is, sir,” Leonardo said, pointing.

Gratiano called, “Signior Bassanio!”

Bassanio replied, “Hello, Gratiano.”

Gratiano walked over to Bassanio and said, “I have a favor

to ask of you.”

“Whatever it is, I will grant it.”

“You must not say no to me; I must go with you to Belmont.”

“Why, then you must,” Bassanio said. “But listen to me, Gratiano, you are too wild and too rude and too bold of voice. These are qualities that become you happily enough, and in such eyes as mine and those of your other friends, these qualities do not appear to be faults. But in places where you are not known, why, there they seem to be too free and open and unrestrained and liberal. Please, be careful to use some cold drops of modesty to lessen your thoughtless and boisterous and skipping spirit, lest through your wild behavior people will think badly of me in the place I go to, thus making me lose all my hopes of marrying a deceased rich man’s daughter.”

“Signior Bassanio, listen to me,” Gratiano said. “If I do not put on a sober covering, both of clothing and behavior, talk with respect and swear only now and then, carry prayer-books in my pockets, appear to be demure and modest, and while prayers are being said at the dinner table, if I do not take off my hat and use it to cover my eyes, and if I do not sigh and say, ‘Amen,’ and if I do not always observe good etiquette, like a person who customarily assumes a serious expression in order to please his grandmother, then never trust me more.”

“Well, we shall see how you act when the time for good behavior comes.”

“No problem, but tonight does not count. Do not judge me by how I act tonight in your presence.”

“OK,” Bassanio said. “It would be a pity if you were sober and serious tonight. Instead, I urge you to put on your

boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends who wish to be merry with us. But goodbye for now — I have some business to take care of.”

“And I must go to Lorenzo and the others,” Gratiano said, “but we will visit you at suppertime.”

— 2.3 —

Launcelot Gobbo, who was now working as the fool of Bassanio, and Jessica, who was the daughter of Shylock, were talking in front of Shylock’s house.

Jessica said, “I am sorry that you are no longer going to work for my father and will instead work for a new master: Bassanio. Our house is Hell, and you, who are a merry Devil, did rob it of some of its tedium and boredom. But farewell, and here is a ducat for you. One more thing. Launcelot, soon at supper you shall see Lorenzo, who is your new master’s guest. Give him this letter; do it secretly, and so farewell. I do not want my father to see me talking with you. He might suspect something.”

“*Adieu!*” Launcelot said. “Tears exhibit my tongue. My tongue need not express my sorrow because my tears are already doing that. You are a very beautiful pagan and a very sweet Jew! If a Christian does not play the knave and steal you away from your father to be his wife, I am much deceived. But, *adieu*. These foolish drops on my cheeks do somewhat drown my manly spirit. *Adieu.*”

“Farewell, good Launcelot.”

Carrying the letter that Jessica had given to him, Launcelot departed to go to Bassanio, his new employer.

Jessica said, “I am committing a heinous sin by being ashamed of Shylock, my father! I am ashamed to be my father’s child! But although I am his daughter and therefore

I share his blood, I do not share his manners. I inherited his blood, but not his behavior. Oh, Lorenzo, if you keep the promise you made to me, I shall end this strife by becoming a Christian and your loving wife. If I become your wife, two will become one, and I will share your blood and not my father's."

She went inside her father's house.

— 2.4 —

Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Solanio now walked near Shylock's house and then stopped to talk.

Lorenzo was making plans for them that night to attend Bassanio's masquerade ball: "At suppertime, we will sneak away, go to my lodging, disguise ourselves with masks, and return and make a grand entrance with torchbearers and musicians, all within one hour."

Gratiano objected, "We have not made good preparation."

Salarino brought up an example: "We have not yet hired torchbearers to accompany us as we go to the masquerade ball."

Solanio said, "It would be bad to do as you suggest unless we can do it properly and with style; if we cannot, then it is better not to do it."

Lorenzo pointed out, "It is now only four o'clock: we have two hours to get everything ready."

Launcelot now arrived, carrying the letter that Jessica had given to him to give to Lorenzo.

Lorenzo asked, "Launcelot, what news do you have for us?"

"If it will please you to break the seal on this letter, you may read for yourself what's the news."

Launcelot gave Lorenzo the letter, and Lorenzo looked at it and said, "I know the handwriting. Truly, the hand that wrote it is a pretty hand and whiter than the paper it wrote on."

"It must be a love letter," Gratiano said.

Launcelot said, "Please excuse me, sir. I must leave."

"Where are you going?" Lorenzo asked.

"I am ordered to invite my old master the Jew to eat tonight with my new master the Christian."

"Wait a moment," Lorenzo said. "Here is a tip for you. Tell gentle Jessica that I will not fail to see her. Tell my message to her privately."

Launcelot departed.

Lorenzo said, "Gentlemen, will you prepare yourselves to wear masks for this masquerade ball tonight? I will have a torchbearer."

He had read the letter and knew that Jessica, disguised as a young male, would be their torchbearer.

Salarino said, "Yes, indeed, I will start my preparations now."

Solanio said, "And so will I."

Lorenzo said, "Meet Gratiano and me at Gratiano's lodging one hour from now."

Salarino said. "Good. We will do so."

Salarino and Solanio departed.

Gratiano asked, "Wasn't that letter from beautiful Jessica?"

"I will tell you everything," Lorenzo said. "She has given

me instructions for how I can take her from her father's house. In the letter she has also told me how much gold and how many jewels she has. She also wrote that she intends to disguise herself by wearing the clothing of a page: a young male servant.

“If ever the Jew her father goes to Heaven, it will be for his gentle daughter's sake. Misfortune would never dare to cross her path unless it should do so because she is the daughter of a Jew: one who does not have Christian faith.”

“Come, go with me; read Jessica's letter as we walk. Fair Jessica shall be my torchbearer tonight.”

They departed.

— 2.5 —

Launcelot and Shylock were talking in front of Shylock's house.

“Well, you shall see — your own eyes will show you — the difference between old Shylock and Bassanio,” Shylock said to Launcelot.

Shylock called for his daughter, who was inside his house: “Jessica!”

He said to Launcelot, “With Bassanio, you shall not be able to gourmandize and eat like a glutton the way that you have been doing here.”

He shouted, “Jessica!”

He said to Launcelot, “With Bassanio, you shall not be able to sleep and snore and wear out your clothing.”

He shouted, “Jessica!”

Launcelot now shouted, “Jessica!”

Shylock asked, “Who asked you to call for her? I did not ask you to call for her.”

“Your worship was accustomed to tell me that I could do nothing without first being ordered to do it.”

Jessica came out of the house and asked her father, “Were you calling for me? What can I do for you?”

“I have been invited to supper, Jessica,” Shylock said. “Here are my keys. But why should I eat supper with Bassanio and Antonio? They have not invited me out of friendship. This is a form of flattering me. But yet I’ll go in hate, and not in friendship, to feed upon the food of Bassanio, the prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl, look after my house. I am very loath to leave here and go to the supper. There is some ill brewing that will disturb my rest. I know that because I dreamed of moneybags last night — an ill omen!”

“Please, let us leave,” Launcelot said. “Bassanio, my young master, expects your reproach.”

“You probably meant to say that Bassanio expects my approach,” Shylock said, “But your words, even when wrongly chosen, are often apt. He expects my reproach, and I expect his. Each of us expects the displeasure of the other’s company.”

Launcelot said, “I believe that they have conspired together. I will not say that you shall see a masquerade, but if you do, then it was not for nothing that I have experienced bad omens.”

He then began to parody such ill omens as dreaming of moneybags: “My nose bled on the most recent Black Monday at six o’clock in the morning, and just four years ago I got a nosebleed on Ash Wednesday in the afternoon. Black Monday is especially ominous. It is the day after

Easter, and the Black Monday of 1360 was so cold that many men died as they rode on horseback. Dreams are especially prescient on feast days, and Black Monday is the day after a feast day and so it is maybe possibly sort of prescient.”

“What, is there going to be a masquerade ball?” Shylock said. “I hate such frivolity. Listen to me, Jessica. Lock up the doors of the house, and when you hear the drum and the vile squealing of the fife by musicians who must twist their necks awry to play the instrument, do not climb up to the upper story’s windows or thrust your head out of the window to gaze on Christian fools with masked faces. Instead, stop my house’s ears — I mean close the shutters — to keep out the noises and noisome music. Do not allow the sound of shallow frivolity to enter my sober house. By Jacob’s staff — the staff that was his main possession when he crossed the river Jordan and then made himself a wealthy man — I swear that I do not wish to leave my house and feast away from home tonight. However, I will go. Launcelot, you go now and tell your master that I will come to his feast.”

“I will, sir,” Launcelot said.

To Jessica, Launcelot said quietly, “Mistress, look out the window, despite what your father said. There will come a Christian who will be worth a look from you, a Jew.”

Launcelot departed.

Shylock asked his daughter, “What did that fool, that offspring of Hagar, say to you? Abraham rejected Hagar and her offspring — her son, Ishmael — and sent them away, I am as contemptuous of Launcelot right now as Abraham was of Hagar and her son.”

Jessica said, “He said, ‘Farewell, mistress,’ and nothing more.”

Shylock said, “Launcelot is a patch — a fool. He is kind enough, but he is a huge eater, he is as slow as a snail when it comes to learning how to do his job, and he sleeps by day more than a nocturnal wildcat that stays awake all night. He is like a drone: a male bee that does no work. Well, I do not allow drones to hive — to live — with me, and therefore I part with him, and I part with him to one who will let him help to waste the money he has borrowed from me.

“Well, Jessica, go inside. Perhaps I will return very quickly. Do as I told you. Lock the doors after you are inside. Remember this proverb that thrifty minds ought always to remember: Fast bind, fast find. Keep your things locked up, and thieves will steal them not. Lock everything up tight, and everything will be all right. Keep safe what you’ve got, and you shall lack for naught.”

Shylock departed.

Jessica said quietly, “Farewell. Unless my fortune is crossed with bad luck, I will lose a father and you will lose a daughter.”

She went inside the house.

— 2.6 —

Gratiano and Salarino, both of them wearing masks, walked up to Shylock’s house.

Gratiano said, “This is the slanting and overhanging roof under which Lorenzo wanted us to stand and wait for him.”

Salarino said, “He ought to be here by now. He is late.”

“It is a marvel that he is late. Lovers are usually early when they are meeting the one they love.”

“The doves that draw the chariot of Venus, goddess of love, fly ten times faster when they carry new lovers than when

they carry long-married faithful couples!”

“That has always been the case,” Gratiano said. “Who stands up after feasting with the same appetite that he had when he sat down to feast? Where is the horse that runs back with the same energy that it had when it started its race? Everything is better when it is anticipated than when it is enjoyed. A ship hung with sails and banners sets forth from its home bay like a young prodigal son who sets out from home. Both are hugged and embraced by wantons — the ship’s sails are hugged by wanton winds, and the young men are hugged by wanton women. But the ship returns like the prodigal son — its wooden ribs are now weather-beaten timbers and its proud sails are now ragged. The sails and the prodigal son are lean and torn, and they have been beggared by wantons.”

“Here comes Lorenzo,” Salarino said. “We will talk more about this later.”

Lorenzo said, “Sweet friends, thank you for your patience as you waited for me. I know that I am late. Not I, but some business that came up, have made you wait. When you shall want to play the thieves to acquire wives, I’ll wait as long for you then as you have waited for me now. Let us go to this door. This is where my soon-to-be father-in-law the Jew lives.”

He said loudly, “Who is inside this house?”

Jessica, dressed in male clothing, appeared on a second-floor balcony.

She said, “Who are you? Tell me so that I can know for certain, although I would swear that I recognize your voice.”

“I am Lorenzo, and I am the man you love.”

“You are Lorenzo for certain, and you are indeed the man I love. Who do I love as much as I love you? No one. And who knows better than you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?”

“Heaven and your own thoughts are witnesses that you are mine,” Lorenzo replied.

“Here, catch this box,” Jessica said. “It is worth the trouble of catching it. I am glad it is night so that you cannot see me because I am very ashamed of the clothing I am wearing — I have exchanged my woman’s clothing for a man’s clothing. But love is blind and lovers cannot see the pretty follies that they themselves commit; if they could, Cupid himself would blush to see me thus transformed to a boy.”

“Come down because you must be my torchbearer,” Lorenzo said.

“What, must I hold a candle to illuminate my shame? My shame in itself, truly, is too apparent and too immodest. Lorenzo, my love, you know that torches shed a light on things, and I really ought to be hidden by darkness.”

“You are sweet and lovely even when you are disguised and clothed like a boy, but come at once because the secretive night is acting like a runaway as it quickly steals away. People are waiting for us at the feast of Bassanio.”

“I will lock the doors and gild myself with gold by taking some more gold ducats and be with you quickly,” Jessica said.

Gratiano said, “I give my word that she is a gentle and well-born gentile and not a Jew. Her behavior shows that.”

“I am lying if I do not say I love her heartily,” Lorenzo said. “She is wise, if I can judge her fairly, and she is beautiful, if my eyes tell me the truth, and she is faithful to

me, as she has proven herself to be by her actions, and therefore, she, who is wise, beautiful, and faithful, shall have a place in my heart and in my soul. Our masked friends are at the masquerade ball waiting for us.”

Jessica came out of her father’s house.

Lorenzo said, “Good, you are here. Gentlemen, let us leave.”

Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salarino departed. Gratiano started to leave with them, but he saw Antonio coming and instead walked to meet him.

“Who’s there?” Antonio said.

“Antonio, it is I!”

“Gratiano! Where are all the others? It is nine o’clock: Our friends are all waiting for you. There will be no masque for you tonight. The wind has changed and is favorable for sailing. Bassanio will go on board very quickly. I have sent twenty men out to look for you.”

“I am glad that the wind has changed,” Gratiano said. “I desire no more delight than to set sail and be gone tonight.”

— 2.7 —

In a room in her home, Portia was standing with the Prince of Morocco and several servants, both hers and his.

Portia said to one of her servants, “Draw the curtains and show this noble Prince the three caskets.”

She then said to the Prince of Morocco, “Now make your choice.”

He said, “The first casket, which is made of gold, has this inscription: *‘Whoever chooses me shall gain what many men desire.’*”

“The second casket, which is made of silver, is inscribed with this promise: *‘Whoever chooses me shall get as much as he deserves.’*”

“The third casket, which is made of dull lead, is inscribed with this warning that is as unpolished and plain as the lead of the casket: *‘Whoever chooses me must give and hazard all he has.’*”

“How shall I know if I have chosen the right casket?”

Portia replied, “One of the caskets contains my picture, Prince. If you choose that casket, then I am yours and we shall be married.”

“May some god help me to choose the right casket!” the Prince of Morocco said. “Let me see; I will read the inscriptions again.

“What does this lead casket say? *‘Whoever chooses me must give and hazard all he has.’* Give all he has? For what? For lead? Hazard all he has? For lead? The inscription of this casket is threatening. Men who hazard all they have do so in hope of good returns. A golden mind does not lower itself for displays of worthless dross; therefore, I will neither give nor hazard anything for lead.

“What says the silver casket with her virgin hue? Silver is the color of the Moon, whose goddess is the virgin Diana. *‘Whoever chooses me shall get as much as he deserves.’* As much as he deserves! Pause there, Prince of Morocco, and weigh your value with an impartial hand. If you should be judged by your self-esteem, you certainly are deserving enough, and yet ‘enough’ may not extend so far as to this lady, Portia. And yet to be unsure of what I deserve is a weak belittling of myself. As much as I deserve! Why, I deserve the lady! I do deserve her because of my birth, because of my fortunes, because of my graces, and because of my qualities of breeding. But more than any of these, I

do deserve her because of my love. What if I looked no further, but simply chose the silver casket?

“Let’s see once more this saying that is engraved on the gold casket: ‘*Whoever chooses me shall gain what many men desire.*’ Why, many men desire the lady; all the world desires her; from the four corners of the Earth, they come to kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint: The wild Hyrcanian deserts and the vast wildernesses of wide Arabia are like thoroughfares now for Princes to come to view fair Portia. The watery kingdom that is the ocean, whose ambitious head — the tall waves — spits in the face of Heaven, is no bar to stop the foreign spirited men of courage, for they come as if they were traveling over a mere brook to see fair Portia.

“One of these three caskets contains her Heavenly picture.

“Is it likely that the lead casket contains her picture? It would be a damnable offense to think so base a thought: it would be too gross to think that. Should her picture be wrapped in a lead casket as if for burial? Is she to be wrapped in lead for burial in a dark grave?

“Or shall I think she would be wrapped in silver for burial? But silver is worth only one-tenth as much as gold. It is sinful to think that her picture would be in a silver casket. Portia is a rich gem, and such a rich gem would be set only in gold. They have in England a coin that bears the figure of an angel stamped in gold, but that is only an engraving. But here the picture of an angel lies in a golden bed — the gold casket.

“Give me the key to the gold casket. That is the casket I choose. Let us see whether I will be successful.”

“Here is the key,” Portia said. “If my picture is inside the gold casket, then I am yours.”

The Prince of Morocco unlocked the gold casket and opened it.

“Oh, Hell!” he said. “What have we here? A carrion Death’s head, a skull, within whose empty eye socket there is a written scroll! I’ll read the writing out loud:

“All that glitters is not gold;

“Often have you heard that told:

“Many a man his life has sold

“Only my outside to behold.

“Gilded tombs do worms enfold.

“Had you been as wise as bold,

“Young in limbs, in judgment old,

“Your answer had not been inscrolled.

“Instead, you would have seen a picture.

“Farewell; your hopes are dead and cold.

“My hopes are dead and cold indeed, and my labor is lost. Farewell, heat, and welcome, frost! Portia, *adieu*. I have too grieved a heart to take a long and tedious leave; losers leave quickly.”

The Prince of Morocco departed with his servants.

Portia said, “Good riddance. Draw the curtains closed. I hope that everyone with his complexion and character will choose a casket with the same success that he did. He has too great an opinion of himself and suffers from excessive self-esteem.”

On a street in Venice, Salarino and Solanio were talking.

Salarino said, "Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail. Gratiano set sail with him, but I am sure that Lorenzo did not set sail with them."

Solanio said, "The villain Jew with his outcries got the Duke out of bed. They went together to search Bassanio's ship for Jessica and the money and jewels she took with her."

"They came too late to search the ship," Salarino said. "The ship had already set sail. But there the Duke was told that Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica were seen together in a gondola. In addition, Antonio swore to the Duke that Lorenzo and Jessica were not on board that ship."

"I never heard passionate cries so confused, so strange, so outrageous, and so variable as those the dog Jew did shout in the streets: 'My daughter! Oh, my ducats! Oh, my daughter! Fled with a Christian! Oh, my Christian ducats! Justice! The law! My ducats, and my daughter! A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats, of double ducats worth twice as much as ordinary ducats, stolen from me by my daughter! And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones, stolen by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl. She has the stones with her, and she has the ducats.'"

"Why, all the boys in Venice followed him," Salarino said. "They were shouting, 'His stones, his daughter, and his ducats.' They were laughing, knowing as they did that the word 'stones' can mean testicles."

Solanio said, "Antonio must be very careful and be very sure to pay back his loan to Shylock on the day it is due, or Shylock will use the breach of contract to get revenge on Antonio for this. The Jew's daughter ran away with Antonio's friend."

"That is true," Salarino said. "I just remembered something. I talked with a Frenchman yesterday, who told

me that in the narrow sea that parts the French and the English — the English Channel — there miscarried a richly loaded vessel of our country. It wrecked and all its cargo was lost. I thought about Antonio when the Frenchman told me this, and I silently hoped that the wrecked ship was not one of his.”

“It is best for you to tell Antonio what you heard, but do not tell him suddenly because the bad news may make him grieve.”

“No kinder gentleman than Antonio treads the Earth,” Salarino said. “I saw Bassanio and Antonio part. Bassanio told him he would hurry and return home again, but Antonio replied, ‘Do not hurry. Do not rush things for my sake, Bassanio. Instead, take your time and do things the right way at the right time. And as for the contract that I made with the Jew to borrow money, do not let it bother you. Instead, think about wooing Portia and being in love. Be merry, and chiefly think about courtship and such fair demonstrations of love as shall conveniently become you there.’ Antonio’s eyes were big with tears. Turning his face away, he put his arm around Bassanio, and with touching affection he shook Bassanio’s hand; and so they parted.”

“I think that Bassanio is the reason Antonio stays alive,” Solanio said. “And now, let us go and find Antonio so that we can cheer him up. He is indulging too much in sadness.”

“Good idea,” Salarino said. “Let’s do that.”

— 2.9 —

Nerissa and a servant entered the room with the three caskets.

She said, “Quick, quick, please draw the curtain immediately. The Prince of Arragon has taken his oath, and he is coming here to make his choice of caskets.”

Portia, the Prince of Arragon, and some servants, both hers and his, entered the room.

“Look, here are the three caskets, noble Prince,” Portia said. “If you chose the casket that contains my picture, you and I shall be immediately married, but if you fail to choose the right casket, then you must leave immediately with no arguing.”

“I have sworn an oath to do three things if I fail to choose the right casket,” the Prince of Arragon said. “I must never tell anyone which casket I chose, I must never get married, and I must leave you immediately.”

“Those are the three things that everyone must swear if they come here and attempt to win my worthless self.”

“And those are the three things that I have sworn. May Fortune lead me now to what my heart hopes for!

“The three caskets are made of gold, silver, and base lead.

“The lead casket says, ‘*Whoever chooses me must give and hazard all he has.*’ Well, lead casket, you must be more beautiful before I give and hazard all I have for you.

“What does the gold casket say? Let me see. ‘*Whoever chooses me shall gain what many men desire.*’ What many men desire! That phrase ‘many men’ may refer to the multitude of fools, who choose according to a showy exterior and do not seek to learn more than their foolish eyes show them. But eyes see only the exterior and not the interior. They do not see everything and so cannot always help a person make the best decision. People who choose on the basis of a flashy exterior are like those birds called swifts that build their nests on the sides of buildings and so expose their nestlings to bad weather. I will not choose what many men desire because I will not go along with common spirits and will not classify myself as one of the

barbarous multitudes.

“Why, then let me look at you, you silver treasure house. Tell me once more what is engraved on you. *‘Whoever chooses me shall get as much as he deserves.’* That is well said because who shall go about to try to cheat fortune and be honorable without the stamp of merit? Let no one presume to wear an undeserved dignity. I wish that estates of the realm such as nobility, ranks such as Earls and Barons, and offices that are official appointments such as the Chancellorship were not obtained corruptly. I wish that the merit of the man is what would get the man magnificent and glorious honor. If that were so, many men who now wear hats in the presence of other, better men would remove their hats and stand bareheaded to show respect to the other, better men! Many men who now give orders would instead be obeying orders! Many men who are now nobles would instead be peasants! And many men who are now the lowest of the low and ruined by bad times would be among the highest of the high!

“Well, which casket shall I choose? *‘Whoever chooses me shall get as much as he deserves.’* I will assume that I am deserving of this lady. Give me the key to the silver casket, and I will immediately unlock it and find my fortune.”

The Prince of Arragon opened the silver casket and stood silently.

Portia said, “You are pausing for a long time. I assume that you do not like what you see.”

“What’s this?” the Prince of Arragon said. “Here is the portrait of a goggle-eyed idiot presenting to me a scroll! I will read it. This portrait is much unlike Portia. It is much unlike what I hoped to find here and much unlike what I deserved to find here! *‘Whoever chooses me shall have as much as he deserves.’* Do I deserve to have no more than a

fool's head? Is that my prize? Do I deserve to have no better?"

"The guilty person on trial and the fair judge are two separate people. They ought not to do each other's jobs," Portia said.

The Prince of Arragon said, "What is here on the scroll? I will read it out loud:

"The fire has seven times tested

"And purified this silver casket.

"Seven times tested that judgment is,

"That did never choose amiss.

"Some there be that shadows kiss.

"Such have but a shadow's bliss.

"There be fools alive, certainly,

"Whose foolishness is hidden by silver,

"Whether by silver hair or a wealth of silver coins.

"This casket's interior was hidden by silver.

"Take what wife you will to bed,

"Fools do not keep their oaths,

"I will ever be your fool's head:

"So be gone: you have been well dealt with.

"I shall appear to be even more of a fool if I longer linger here. With one fool's head I came to woo, but I go away with two. Sweet, *adieu*. I'll keep my oath, and I will patiently bear my sorrow."

The Prince of Arragon and his attendants departed.

Portia said, "The Prince of Arragon was a fool, and thus has the candle singed the moth. Oh, these deliberating fools! When they choose, they chose wrongly. The fools' reasoning gives them the wisdom to choose the wrong casket."

Nerissa said, "This ancient saying is no heresy: Hanging and wiving go by destiny. Whether or not we are hung is destined, and whom we marry or not marry is also destined."

Portia said, "Draw the curtain shut, Nerissa."

A servant entered and asked, "Where is my lady?"

Portia replied, "Here I am," then she joked, referring to the servant, "What does my lord want?"

"Madam, there has alighted at your gate a young Venetian man, one who comes before to let us know that his lord is coming. From his lord he has brought greetings: compliments, polite speeches, and gifts of rich value. I have never seen so promising and handsome an ambassador of love. This young Venetian man is like a sweet day in April. The April day foretells a summer that is rich in flowers, and this young Venetian man foretells a lord who promises to be a worthy husband."

"Say no more, please," Portia said to the servant. "I am half afraid that you will say soon that he is a relative of yours because you are using such elegant language to praise him."

She added, "Come, Nerissa; I long to see quick Cupid's messenger who comes so courteously."

"I hope that he is the messenger of Bassanio," Nerissa said. "Cupid, god of love, so let it be so, if you will it so."

CHAPTER 3 (The Merchant of Venice)

— 3.1 —

On a street in Venice, Solanio and Salarino were talking.

Solanio said, “What is the news that you have heard at the merchants’ exchange?”

“The rumor persists — with no one contradicting it — that one of Antonio’s merchant ships has wrecked on the narrow seas,” Salarino said. “People say that it wrecked on the Goodwin Sands in the English Channel. The Goodwin Sands is a very dangerous and fatal sandbank where the carcasses of many gallant ships lie buried. If my old friend and gossip Dame Rumor is an honest woman of her word, Antonio has suffered a grievous loss.”

“I would say that Dame Rumor were as lying a gossip in saying that as any old woman who ever munched ginger cookies or made her neighbors believe she wept for the death of a third husband,” Solanio said. “But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk or taking way too many words to say a simple thing, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio — oh, I wish that I had a title that was good enough to put in front of his name! — ”

“Please,” Salarino said. “Finish your sentence. Take your words from a gallop to a full stop.”

“Ha! Funny!” Solanio said. “But the end of my sentence is that Antonio has lost one of his merchant ships.”

“I hope that one ship is all that he will lose.”

“Let me say ‘Amen!’ quickly,” Solanio said, “lest the Devil frustrate my prayer, for here the Devil comes in the

likeness of a Jew.”

Shylock walked up to them, and Solanio said, “How are you, Shylock! What news do you hear among the merchants?”

“You know — no one knows as well as you — of my daughter’s flight,” Shylock replied.

“That’s the truth,” Salarino said. “I, for my part, knew the tailor who made the wings your daughter used to fly away with.”

“And Shylock, for his own part, knew that the bird was fledged and ready to fly, and when a bird is fledged it is eager to leave home,” Solanio said.

“My daughter is damned for what she did,” Shylock said.

“That’s the truth,” Salarino said, “if the Devil is judging her.”

“My own flesh and blood rebelled against me!” Shylock said.

“You don’t say, old, old man!” Solanio said. “Your own flesh and blood rebelled against you! At your advanced age, how was your penis able to rise up against you!”

“I say,” Shylock said, “that my daughter is my flesh and blood.”

“There is more difference between your flesh and hers than there is between jet black and ivory white,” Salarino said. “There is more difference between your bloods than there is between bad red wine and good Rhenish white wine. But tell us, have you heard whether Antonio has had any losses at sea or not?”

“There I have made another bad bargain,” Shylock said. “Antonio is a bankrupt, a prodigal, a man who scarcely

dares to show his head at the merchants' exchange. He is a beggar, he who used to come so smugly and self-satisfied to the marketplace. Let him remember that he has a contract with me and that he must not renege on it! Antonio has been accustomed to call me a usurer. Let him remember that he has a contract with me and that he must not renege on it! He was accustomed to lend money at no interest as an act of Christian charity. Let him remember that he has a contract with me and that he must not renege on it!"

"Why, I am sure, if he reneges on his contract," Salarino said, "you will not take a pound of his flesh. What would that be good for?"

"I could use it as bait for fish," Shylock replied. "If Antonio's flesh will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He has acted badly toward me, and he has cost me half a million ducats in my business. He has laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my Jewish nation, thwarted my business deals, cooled and alienated my friends, and heated my enemies to be even more against me. What is his reason for so treating me? His reason is that I am a Jew. Has not a Jew eyes? Has not a Jew hands, organs, limbs, senses, affections, passions? Are not Jews fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not seek revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew should wrong a Christian, what does the Christian do? Practice Christian humility? No. Get revenge? Yes. If a Christian should wrong a Jew, what should the Jew do according to the examples set by the Christians? Exercise forbearance? No. According to Christian examples, the Jew

should seek revenge. The villany that you Christians teach me, I will practice, and I will do my best to improve on the examples and be more villainous than you Christians.”

One of Antonio’s servants arrived and said to Solanio and Salarino, “Gentlemen, my master, Antonio, is at his house and desires to speak with you both.”

Salarino replied, “We have been up and down and all around seeking him.”

Tubal, one of Shylock’s Jewish friends, arrived.

Solanio said, “Here comes another of the tribe of Jews; a third Jew cannot be found who would match these two unless the Devil converts and becomes a Jew.”

Solanio, Salarino, and Antonio’s servant departed.

Shylock said, “How are you, Tubal! What news do you bring me from Genoa? Did you find my daughter?”

“I often heard news about her, but I could not find her,” Tubal said.

“This is bad news indeed!” Shylock said. “I have lost so much wealth. One of the diamonds my daughter stole from me cost me two thousand ducats at the great annual jewel fair in Frankfort, Germany! The curse never fell upon our Jewish nation until now — at least, I never felt it until now. Daniel 9:11 says, ‘*Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.*’ I lost two thousand ducats with the loss of that jewel, and my daughter also stole other precious, precious jewels. I wish that my daughter were dead and lying at my feet, and the jewels were in her earrings! I wish that she were lying at my feet in a coffin,

and that my ducats were in the coffin! No news of them? Why, that's the way it is. I do not know how much I have spent in the search for my jewels and my ducats. I have suffered loss upon loss! The thief fled with so much of my wealth, and I have spent so much of my wealth to find the thief, and I have found no satisfaction, no revenge. The only ill luck I have seen is what falls upon my own shoulders. I hear no sighs except those that are formed by own breath. I see no tears but those that I have shed."

"Other men have ill luck, too," Tubal replied. "Antonio, as I heard in Genoa —"

"What? Antonio has had ill luck? What ill luck?"

"One of his merchant ships, one coming from Tripolis, wrecked."

"I thank God, I thank God. Is it true, is it true?"

Tubal replied, "I spoke with some of the sailors who escaped the shipwreck."

"I thank you, good Tubal. This is good news, good news! Where did you hear this news? In Genoa?"

"Your daughter spent in Genoa, so I heard, eighty ducats in one night."

"It is as if you have stuck a dagger in me," Shylock said. "I shall never see my gold again. My daughter spent fourscore ducats on a single occasion! Fourscore ducats!"

"Several of Antonio's creditors came with me as I traveled back to Venice. They swear that Antonio cannot avoid bankruptcy."

"I am very glad to hear it," Shylock said. "I'll plague him; I'll torture him. I am glad to hear that he will go bankrupt."

"One of Antonio's creditors showed me a ring that he had

received from your daughter in a trade for a monkey.”

“Damn!” Shylock said. “You are torturing me! That was my turquoise ring. Leah gave it to me when I was a bachelor. I would not have traded it for a wilderness of monkeys.”

“But Antonio is certainly undone. He has no choice but to go bankrupt.”

“That’s true, that’s very true,” Shylock said. “Go, Tubal, find a police officer for me and give him the amount of money that he requires to arrest someone for nonpayment of debts. Engage the police officer a fortnight before Antonio is required to repay the money he borrowed from me. I will cut the heart out of him, if he forfeits. If Antonio is not around any longer, I can make whatever business deals I want to make and make whatever profit I want to make. Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue. I need to make an oath. Go, good Tubal; meet me at our synagogue, Tubal.”

— 3.2 —

Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and some attendants entered the room that contained the three caskets.

Portia was in love with Bassanio, but she wished to hide it and deny it.

She said to him, “Please, wait. Tarry a day or two before you guess which casket holds my picture because if you choose the wrong casket I will lose your company and will no longer see you. Therefore, wait a while before you choose a casket. There is something that tells me, but it is not love, that I do not want to lose your company. Take my advice. Hatred does not give this kind of advice; if I hated you, I would not give you this advice. But in case you should not understand me well — and yet a virgin has no

tongue but thought, for it is said that maidens should be seen and not heard — I would detain you here one month or two before you choose a casket and try to win me as your wife. I could tell you which is the casket that contains my picture, but I have sworn not to do that and so I will not tell you. Because of that, you may choose the wrong casket and not marry me. If you do choose the wrong casket, you will make me wish a sin — you will make me wish that I had broken my oath and told you which casket to choose. Shame on your eyes because they have bewitched me and divided me. One half of me is yours, and the other half is also yours. I should say that the other half of me is mine, but what is mine is yours, and so it is also yours. These evil times put bars between the owners and their rights — they keep owners from claiming what is theirs! If it should happen that you choose the wrong casket and I am lost to you, let Fortune — not I — go to Hell for depriving you of what belongs to you. I speak too long, but I speak to drag out the time, to stretch it and to draw it out at length, in order to keep you from choosing a casket.”

“Let me choose,” Bassanio said. “The way I feel now, it is as if I am being tortured on the rack because I do not know whether you will be mine.”

“Tortured on the rack, Bassanio!” Portia cried. “Traitors are tortured on the rack to force them to confess. Confess to me what treason is mingled with your love.”

“The only treason is the ugly treason of mistrust,” Bassanio said. “I am not certain that I will choose the right casket, and therefore I fear that I may not be able to marry you and enjoy having you as my wife. Snow and fire are as likely to be friends and live together as I am to be treasonous to you, my love.”

“I am afraid of your words — afraid that you say them only because you are being tortured on the rack. Men who are

being tortured on the rack will say anything.”

“Promise me my life, and I’ll confess the truth,” Bassanio said.

“Well, then, confess and live,” Portia said.

“To live is to love. ‘Confess’ and ‘love’ would have been my entire confession,” Bassanio said. “I confess that I love you. This is a happy torment, when my torturer teaches me the answers that will set me free. But now allow me to choose a casket and see my fortune.”

“Choose, then!” Portia said. “My picture is locked in one of the caskets. If you really love me, you will choose the casket with my picture. Such was the intention of my dying father when he designed this test, and good men have the gift of prophecy when they die.

“Nerissa and all the rest of you, stand a little distance away. Let music play while Bassanio makes his choice. Then, if he chooses the wrong casket, he will make a swan-like end — the swan sings its beautiful song only when it is dying — and vanish away with the music. That the comparison of the swan song and this music may be more proper, my eyes shall be the stream and the watery deathbed for him. If he chooses wrongly, I will cry and he shall drown in my tears.

“But he may choose the right casket, and what is the music then? Then the music is like the flourish of trumpets when true subjects bow before a new-crowned Monarch.

“The music will be like those dulcet sounds at break of day that creep into the dreaming bridegroom’s ears, and summon him to go to church to be married. Now the bridegroom goes, with no less presence, but with much more love, than young Hercules, when he redeemed the virgin tribute paid by weeping Trojans to the sea-monster. Hesione, the sister of Priam, the future King of Troy, was

chained to a rock on the shore so she would be sacrificed to the sea-monster, but Hercules killed the sea-monster and saved her life.

“I will stand here and represent Hesione, the sacrifice. The other women here can represent the Trojan wives, who, with tear-stained faces, came forth to witness the outcome of Hercules’ intended rescue. Go, Hercules! If you continue to live and are not killed by the sea-monster, then I will continue to live. With much, much more dismay do I view the battle than you who are fighting in it.”

Music played, and Portia sang this song:

“Tell me where is fancy bred,

“In the heart, or in the head?

“How begot, how nourished?”

The women in the room sang, *“Reply, reply.”*

Portia continued to sing:

“It is engendered in the eyes,

“With gazing fed; and fancy dies

“In the cradle where it lies.

“Let us all ring fancy’s knell

“I’ll begin it — ding, dong, bell. ”

The women in the room sang, *“Ding, dong, bell.”*

The song was about “love” and love. “Love” — a superficial fancy — is foolish affection brought about only by the eyes. A man can see a pretty woman and fall in “love.” A woman can see a handsome man and fall in “love.” The song warned that this “love” dies quickly and that this “love” ought to die quickly. A deeper love is

needed that will not quickly die. One can conclude that the deeper love is risky and that whoever wants true love must give and hazard all he — or she — has. Whoever wants it must go deeper than surface appearances.

Having listened to the song, Bassanio knew which casket to choose. His “torturer” had taught him the answer that would set him free.

Bassanio said quietly to himself, “Surface appearances may be much different from the truth that is within. The world is continually deceived by ornament and appearance.

“In law, what plea is so tainted and corrupt that it cannot, being seasoned with a gracious and eloquent voice, hide evil? It is like rotten food whose foulness is masked with spices.

“In religion, what damned error — heresy — exists that some sober brow will not bless it and approve it with a text quoted from the Bible and hide its grossness with a fair ornament?

“There is no vice so simple and uncomplicated that it cannot assume some mark of virtue on his outward parts.

“How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false as stairs or ropes made of sand, wear yet upon their chins the manly beards of Hercules and frowning Mars? Yet, these cowards lack the red blood of courage that Hercules and Mars have in abundance. They grow beards to look manly but lack manliness.

“Look on beauty, and you shall see that it is purchased by the ounce — both cosmetics and hair are bought by the ounce. These things work a miracle in nature — people who wear the most cosmetics and wear the most hair that did not grow on their head are the most morally dissolute. Those curled snaky golden locks that make such wanton

and promiscuous gambols with the wind, those golden locks that appear to be so beautiful, are actually a gift from someone else's head, a head that is now in a sepulcher, a head whose hair was harvested to be sold.

“Therefore, ornament is the treacherous shore of a most dangerous sea. Ornament is the beautiful scarf that veils a ‘beauty’ who is not beautiful. Ornament is the appearance of ‘truth’ which cunning times display to entrap the wisest.

“Therefore, thou gaudy gold, I will have nothing to do with you. You are hard food for Midas, whom Apollo granted the wish that everything that he touched would turn to gold. After this wish was granted, Midas was no longer able to eat or drink.

“And I want nothing to do with you, silver, you pale and common drudge that is made into coins that pass from man to man.

“But you, you poor lead that threaten rather than promise anything, your paleness moves me more than eloquence. I choose the lead casket, and may joy be the consequence!”

Portia thought, *All my other emotions fly into the air and disappear. Gone are my doubtful thoughts, and rashly embraced despair, and shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! Only love remains, and it is not moderate. Love, be moderate; lessen your ecstasy. Rein in your joy and make it moderate; reduce this excess. I feel too much your blessing: Make it less. I am afraid that I will grow ill and die from feeling too much happiness.*

Bassanio asked, “What will I find in here?”

He opened the lead casket and said, “I find Portia's picture! What artist — a demi-god! — has created a portrait so like the living person! Are the eyes in this portrait moving? Do they reflect the movement of my own eyes? Here are two

lips that are parted with sugar breath. So sweet a barrier — her breath — has parted the sweet friends that are her lips. Here in her hair the painter has played the spider and has woven a golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men faster and more securely than gnats are caught in cobwebs. Her eyes — how could the artist see to paint them? After the artist had painted one of her eyes, I would think its beauty would have dazzled and blinded him and made him unable to paint her other eye. Still, as much as my praise falls short of what this portrait deserves, just as much does this painting fall short of capturing the beauty of the living woman depicted in it.

“Here is a scroll that will tell me my fortune. I will read it out loud:

“You who choose not by looks and view,

“Choose fairly and choose truly!

“Since this fortune falls to you,

“Be content and seek no new fortune,

“If you are well pleased with this

“And accept this fortune as your bliss,

“Turn to where your lady is

“And claim her with a loving kiss.

“This is a kind scroll. Fair lady, if I have your permission I come by the authority of the scroll to give and receive a kiss. I am like one of two people contending for a prize, one who thinks he has done well in people’s eyes, one who hears applause and general shouting, one who is giddy in spirit, but who is still gazing in doubt whether these pearls of praise be for him or not. Thus stand I, three times beautiful lady. I am as doubtful whether what I see is true,

until it is confirmed, signed, and ratified by you.”

“You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand — such as I am,” Portia replied. “Though for myself alone, I would not be ambitious in my wish, to wish myself much better; yet, for you I would be trebled twenty times myself. For you, I would be a thousand times more beautiful, ten thousand times richer. Only so that you would value me highly, I wish that I could exceed all calculations in virtue, beauty, possessions, and friends. However, the full sum of me is a sum that can be calculated. What gross sum is that? I am an unlessoned girl; I am unschooled, unpracticed. It is fortunate that I am not so old that I cannot learn. Even more fortunate, I am not so dull but that I can learn. Most fortunate of all is that my gentle spirit commits itself to your spirit to be directed and educated; you will be my lord, my governor, my King. Because we are engaged to be married, I am now part of you, and what is mine is now yours. Just now I was the lord of this fair mansion, I was master of my servants, I was Queen over myself. But right now, this house, these servants and I myself are yours, my lord. I give them to you, and I give you this ring; if you ever part from, lose, or give away this ring, let it foretell the ruin and decay of your love and be my opportunity to denounce you.”

Bassanio replied, “Madam, you have taken away all my words; I do not know what to say. Only my blood — my passion — speaks to you in my veins, and my mind suffers such confusion. It is like after a Prince has beautifully given a speech, and the multitude of hearers, all buzzing with pleasure, speak separately but their sentences and sounds all blend together in a hurrah of joy. When this ring that you have given me parts from this finger, then life will part from me. When I no longer wear this ring, then you may say boldly that I, Bassanio, am dead.”

Nerissa said, "My lord and lady, it is now time for us, who have stood by and seen our wishes for your happiness be granted, to say to you, 'Good joy. Good joy, my lord and lady!'"

Bassanio's being engaged to marry a very rich woman greatly elevated his social status, something that Gratiano acknowledged in the way he referred to him: "My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady, Portia, I wish you all the joy that you can wish because I am sure that you will not wish any of my joy away from me. When you two are married, I ask you, please, that at that time I may be married, too."

"I grant that with all my heart," Bassanio said, "provided that you can find someone to marry you."

"I thank you, your lordship, because you yourself have gotten me a woman who will marry me," Gratiano said. "My eyes, my lord, can look as swiftly as yours. You saw the mistress, Portia. I beheld the waiting-gentlewoman, Nerissa. You loved, and I loved. I wasted no time wooing Nerissa, just as you wasted no time wooing Portia. Your fortune stood upon the casket there, and so did mine, too, as it happened. I wooed Nerissa so hard that I was sweating, and I sweat so much that the roof of my mouth was dry because of the oaths of love I swore. At last, if her promise lasts and Nerissa keeps her promise to marry me, I will marry beautiful Nerissa, who said that she would give me her love and marry me, provided that you won and married her mistress, Portia."

Portia asked, "Is this true, Nerissa?"

"Madam, it is, as long as you approve."

"And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?" Bassanio asked.

"Do you have good intentions toward Nerissa?"

"Yes," Gratiano replied. "I swear it by my Christian faith,

my lord.”

“Our wedding feast shall be much honored by your marriage,” Bassanio said.

Gratiano said to Nerissa, “Let’s bet them a thousand ducats that we shall have a son before they do.”

“Do you want to gather the stake of money now and put it down?” Nerissa asked.

“If my ‘stake’ always stays down and is never erect, we shall never win the bet,” Gratiano said. “But, look, some people are coming here. Who are they? Lorenzo and his infidel, Jessica the Jew? What, and my old Venetian friend Salario?”

Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salario entered the room.

Bassanio said, “Lorenzo and Salario, you are welcome here, if I, in the newness of my household authority, have the power to welcome you. Sweet Portia, with your permission, I bid my true friends and countrymen welcome.”

“So do I, my lord,” Portia said. “They are entirely welcome here.”

“I thank your honor,” Lorenzo said. “I had not intended to have seen you here, but I met Salario along the way, and he entreated me, not allowing me to decline, to come here with him.”

“That is true, my lord,” Salario said. “And I have a good reason for it. Signior Antonio commends him to you. Signior Antonio praises Lorenzo highly.”

Salario gave Bassanio a letter.

Bassanio said, “Before I open this letter, please tell me how my good friend Antonio is doing.”

“He is not sick, my lord,” Salario said, “unless it is mentally. He is not well, either, unless it is mentally. His letter there will tell you how he is doing.”

Gratiano said, “Nerissa, welcome yonder stranger, Jessica the Jew.” This was considerate of Gratiano.

He added, “Let’s shake hands, Salario.”

They shook hands, and Gratiano said to him, “How is that royal merchant, good Antonio, doing? I know he will be glad of the success of Bassanio and me. We are Jasons; each of us has won the golden fleece.”

“You may have won the golden fleece, but I wish that you won a fleet of golden ships — the ships that Antonio has lost,” Salario replied.

Portia said, “The content of the letter that you gave to Bassanio is bitter and cursed. The color is draining from Bassanio’s cheeks. A dear friend of his must have died; nothing else in the world could so change the complexion of a normal and healthy and steadfast man. Bassanio grows worse and worse! Please, Bassanio, because we are almost married, I am already one with you. I am half yourself, and I must have half of anything that this letter brings you.”

“Sweet Portia, in this letter I have read some of the most unpleasant words that ever appeared on paper! Gentle lady, when I first told you that I loved you, I freely and openly told you that all the wealth I had was in the gentlemanly blood that runs in my veins — my social class is that of a gentleman. What I said then is true, and yet, dear lady, you shall see that when I told you that my wealth was nothing, I was then bragging. I should then have told you that I was worth less than nothing; for, indeed, I have borrowed money from a dear friend, who borrowed money from his worst enemy in order to lend me the money I needed. Here is a letter, my lady. If the paper the words are written on is

like the body of my friend, every word in it would be a gaping wound from which pours the blood that is needed to keep my friend alive.

“But is it true, Salario? Have all of Antonio’s business ventures failed? What, was not even one of them successful? Antonio had ships sailing home from Tripolis, from Mexico and England, and from Lisbon, Barbary, and India. Didn’t even one merchant ship escape the dreadful touch of rocks that sink merchant ships and ruin merchants?”

“Not even one, my lord,” Salario replied. “Besides, it appears that even if Antonio had the money he needs to pay back the Jew, the Jew would not take it. Never did I know a creature that bears the shape of man be so keen and greedy to destroy a man. Shylock appeals to the Duke morning and night for what he calls justice, and he says that if the Venetian government fails to give him justice that it will not be safe for merchants to do business there. Twenty merchants, the Duke himself, and the most important Venetian nobles have all argued with him, but none can keep him from insisting on his malicious desire to get what Antonio promised to give — a pound of Antonio’s flesh — if he did not pay back on the due date the money that he had borrowed.”

Jessica, Shylock’s estranged daughter, said, “When I was with him, I heard him swear to Tubal and to Chus, his Jewish countrymen, that he would rather have Antonio’s flesh than twenty times the value of the sum that Antonio owes him. I know, my lord, that if law, authority, and power do not stop my father, that it will go hard with poor Antonio.”

Portia asked, “Is Antonio your dear friend who is thus in trouble?”

“Antonio is the dearest friend to me, the kindest man, the best-dispositioned and unwearied spirit in doing courtesies, and one in whom the ancient Roman virtue of honor more appears than in any man who draws breath in Italy,” Bassanio replied.

“How much money does he owe the Jew?” Portia asked.

“He borrowed for me from the Jew three thousand ducats,” Bassanio said.

“What, no more?” Portia, a very wealthy woman, said. “Pay him six thousand, and cancel the contract. If you have to, pay him double six thousand, or pay him triple that. Do that before a friend of this description shall lose a single hair through Bassanio’s fault.

“Bassanio, first go with me to church and make me your wife, and then you shall sail away to Venice and go to your friend. Never shall you lie by my side with an unquiet soul. You shall have gold to pay this petty debt twenty times over: When it is paid, bring your true friend back here with you. My waiting-gentlewoman Nerissa and I will in the meantime live the way that virgins and widows do. Come, let’s hurry to the church! You must go away from here on your wedding day. Bid your friends welcome, and show them a merry face. Since you are dearly bought, I will love you dearly. But let me now hear the letter of your friend.”

Bassanio read the letter out loud:

“Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried and sunk, my creditors are growing cruel, my assets are very low, and I have been unable to repay the Jew the money I owe him. Because of that, I now owe him a pound of my flesh. Since it is impossible that I continue to live after I pay him what I owe him, all debts are cleared and forgiven between you and me if I can see you when I die. Notwithstanding, do what it pleases you to do. If your friendship for me does

not persuade you to come to see me die, don't let my letter persuade you."

"Bassanio, my love, finish your business here quickly and go to Venice!" Portia said.

"Since I have your permission to go away, I will leave quickly," Bassanio said, "but, until I come back again, no bed shall ever be guilty of my stay. I will not sleep until I return to you. No bed will hold me back, and no rest will separate us."

— 3.3 —

On a street in Venice stood Shylock, Salarino, Antonio, and a jailer.

Shylock said, "Jailer, keep a close watch on Antonio. Do not talk to me about mercy. This is the fool who lent out money free of interest. Jailer, watch him closely."

"Listen to me, good Shylock," Antonio said.

"We have a contract," Shylock said to Antonio. "It is a legal contract, and I have sworn an oath that I will enforce it. You called me a dog before you had a reason to call me that. Therefore, since I am a dog, beware my fangs: The Duke shall grant me justice."

Shylock then said, "I do wonder, you wicked jailer, why you are so foolish that you appear outside the jail with Antonio just because he asked you to."

"Please, listen to me," Antonio said to Shylock.

"I will enforce the contract that you signed," Shylock said to Antonio. "I will not listen to you speak. We have a legal contract, so therefore stop your begging. I will not be made a soft and dull-eyed, easily manipulated fool. I will not nod in agreement with what you plead, will not relent, and will

not sigh, and I will not yield to Christian pleaders on your behalf. Do not follow me. I want to hear no pleading. I do want the enforcement of our contract.”

Shylock angrily exited.

Salarino said, “He is the most hard-hearted cur that has ever lived among men.”

“Let him alone,” Antonio said. “I will follow him no more and plead for a mercy that he will not grant me. He seeks my life, and I well know the reason why. I have often helped people who complained to me that they could not repay money they owed to him, and so Shylock did not profit by the forfeiture of their contracts. That is why Shylock hates me.”

“I am sure that the Duke will never allow Shylock to take a pound of your flesh,” Salarino said.

“The Duke cannot deny the course of law,” Antonio said. “Merchants who trade here but are not citizens of Venice rely on the law to protect their interests. If the Duke does not enforce the law in my case, it will affect negatively the business interests and prosperity of Venice because people of all nations do so much trade and business here. Therefore, let us go. These griefs and losses of mine have made me lose so much weight that I shall hardly spare the pound of flesh I must give tomorrow to my bloodthirsty creditor.

“Well, jailer, let us go on. I pray to God that Bassanio shall come to see me pay his debt. If that happens, then I do not care what else happens!”

— 3.4 —

In a room in Portia’s house in Belmont, she, Nerissa, Lorenzo, and Jessica were talking. Balthasar, who was one

of her servants, was also present.

Lorenzo said to Portia, “Madam, although I say it in your presence, you have a noble and true conception of godlike friendship, as you have shown very strongly in bearing thus the absence of Bassanio, your lord and husband. But if you knew Antonio, to whom you show this honor and send relief, and how true a gentleman he is and how dear a friend to my lord your husband, I know you would be prouder of this good deed than of ordinary acts of goodness.”

Portia replied, “I have never repented the doing of good deeds, and I shall not repent this good deed I do now. Bassanio and Antonio are two companions who talk together and spend time together. They are souls who equally share friendship for each other, and in such cases the two friends equally share features, character, and spirit. That makes me think that this Antonio, because he is the bosom friend of my lord, must be like my lord. If that is true, how little is the money I have given to Bassanio to save the life of a person who is the likeness of my soul. A genuine friend is like a second self. Antonio is the genuine friend of Bassanio, and so Antonio is the second self of Bassanio. I am one with Bassanio, and so Antonio is the second self of me and therefore he is the likeness of my soul. I have given money to save the semblance of my soul from a state of Hellish misery! By saving Antonio, I am saving myself, and therefore I do not want to hear praise of my ‘good deed’ — a ‘good deed’ in which I save myself. Therefore, speak no more about it.

“Lorenzo, I now commit into your hands the care and management of my house until my lord and husband’s return. As for me, I have made a secret vow toward Heaven to live in prayer and contemplation, attended only by Nerissa here, until her husband and my husband return. A

monastery is located two miles away from here, and there we will reside until our husbands return. I ask you not to deny my request that necessity and my friendship for you require me to ask of you.”

“Madam, with all my heart I shall obey you and your fair commands.”

“I have already informed my servants that you will take over for a while, and they will obey the orders of you and Jessica until Lord Bassanio and I return. And so farewell, until we shall meet again.”

“May fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!”
Lorenzo said.

“I wish your ladyship all your heart’s content,” Jessica said.

“I thank you for your wish, and I wish you the same thing,”
Portia said. “May you fare well, Jessica.”

Jessica and Lorenzo left the room.

Portia said, “Now, Balthasar, I have always found you to be honest and trustworthy, and I hope that now I may find that you have not changed. Take this letter and go as fast as a man can go to Padua, at whose university civil law is studied. Give my letter to my kinsman, Doctor Bellario, who is a doctor of law. Take whatever legal notes and lawyer’s garments he gives to you as quickly as you can to the public ferry that travels to and from Venice. Waste no time in words, but leave immediately. I will be at the ferry before you get there.”

“Madam, I go with all appropriate speed,” Balthasar said.

He departed to perform his task.

Portia said, “Come, Nerissa, I have work in hand that you do not yet know about. We’ll see our husbands before they

shall even miss us.”

“Shall our husbands see us?” Nerissa asked.

“They shall see us, Nerissa, but we will be wearing male clothing and so they shall think that we possess the male appendage that we lack. I will bet you that when we are both wearing male clothing that I will be the more masculine. I will carry my dagger with the finer grace, and speak between the change of man and boy with a high-pitched voice, and I will turn two of my usual small steps into one manly stride, and I will speak about fights like a fine bragging youth, and I will tell quaint lies about what ladies have between their legs and about how honorable ladies have sought my love, which I denied them, and so they fell sick and died. I could not keep them from dying — because I lack the necessary equipment to requite their love. I will feel sorry that they died because of their love for me, and I will wish that I had not killed them. I will tell twenty of these puny and feeble lies, and men will think that I have been out of school for a year and so I am a real man. I have memorized a thousand crude tricks and lies used by these bragging Jacks, and I will use them when I am disguised as a young man.”

“Why, shall we turn to men?” Nerissa said.

“Good Heavens, what kind of a question is that?” Portia said. “If you were overheard by a lewd interpreter, he would think that you are talking about turning over in bed so that you are facing a man! But come, I’ll tell you all about my plan while we are travelling in my coach, which is waiting for us at the park gate. Therefore, let us make haste and go away because we must travel twenty miles today.”

— 3.5 —

In a corner of the garden of Portia’s house, Launcelet the

jester and Jessica the Jew were talking.

“Yes, I truly believe that you are damned,” Launcelet said, “because, you see, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise you that I am afraid that you are damned. I have always plainly spoken my mind to you, and so now I speak to you my agitated cogitation of the matter. Therefore, be of good cheer because truly I think you are damned. There is only one hope in this situation that can do you any good; and that is only a kind of bastard hope.”

“Please tell me what hope is that.”

“You may hope that your father did not beget you, that you are not Shylock the Jew’s daughter.”

“That is a kind of bastard hope, indeed,” Jessica said. “I would be a bastard indeed, but in that case, the sins of my mother would be visited upon me. The child of a Jewish woman is a Jew.”

“In that case,” Launcelet said, “truly I fear you are damned both by father and mother. When I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother. Scylla was a monster, and Charybdis was a whirlpool. In Homer’s *Odyssey*, Odysseus had to sail between them.”

Launcelot thought, *I fall into Charybdis, your mother. That can mean, I fall into your mother’s hole. Yes, I just made an I-slept-with-yo’-momma joke.*

Launcelot concluded, “Well, you are damned and gone to Hell either way.”

Jessica said, “I shall be saved by my husband; he has made me a Christian. Remember 1 Corinthians 7:14: “*For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were*

your children unclean; but now are they holy.”

“In that case, your husband is the more to blame,” Launcelot said. “We Christians were numerous enough before. Fortunately, we were not so numerous that we could not live peacefully next to each other. But this making of more Christians will make the price of hogs rise. Jews do not eat pork and bacon. If they convert and begin to eat meat from pigs, soon bacon will be so expensive that no one will be able to buy it.”

“Launcelot, I will tell my husband, Lorenzo, what you said. Here he comes.”

Lorenzo said, “I shall grow jealous of you soon, Launcelot, if you keep getting my wife into corners.”

Jessica said, “No, you need not fear us doing anything immoral, Lorenzo. Launcelot and I are arguing. He tells me flatly that there is no mercy for me in Heaven because I am a Jew’s daughter, and he says that you are not a good member of society because by converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.”

“I can defend myself from the charge you make against me, Launcelot, better than you can defend yourself from the charge of making the belly of Portia’s black servant swell up,” Lorenzo said. “The Moor is with child by you, Launcelot.”

“It is much that the Moor should be more — bigger — than reasonable,” Launcelot said, “but even if she is less than a chaste woman, she is still more than I took her to be.”

Launcelot thought, *Yes, she is more than when I took her. I took her sexually, and now her womb is populated.*

Lorenzo said, “How every fool can play upon words and commit wordplay! Puns, puns, and more puns! I think the

best wit will soon be silence, and only parrots will be praised for talking. Go inside, Launcelot, and tell the servants to prepare for dinner.”

“The servants are prepared for dinner,” Launcelot said. “All of them are hungry and have good appetites.”

“Good God!” Lorenzo said. “What a wit-cracker you are! Then tell the servants to prepare dinner.”

“That is done, too, sir,” Launcelot replied, “but ‘cover’ is the right word. The table must be covered with a tablecloth for dinner, and the food must be put in covered dishes so it can be brought to the table.”

“In that case, then ‘cover’ is the word I use, Launcelet.”

“Cover my head with a hat, sir!” Launcelot said. “Not I. I know that servants are supposed to be bareheaded when with their superiors, sir!”

“Still more punning no matter what the topic of conversation is!” Lorenzo complained. “Are you going to show off the whole wealth of your wit on one occasion? Won’t you save some of your wit for later? Please, understand a plain man who is speaking plainly. Go to your fellow servants, tell them to get the table ready so that we can eat and to put the food on the table, and then we will come in to dinner.”

“The table shall be gotten ready, the food will be served in covered dishes, and as for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, do whatever your own inclinations and whims would have you do.”

Launcelot exited. Jessica had been much more amused by Launcelot’s jesting than Lorenzo had been.

“Such sagacity!” Lorenzo said, sarcastically. “Launcelot’s words suit him — he is a fool and he talks like a fool.

Launcelot the fool has planted in his memory an army of good words that he can use to pun with. I know many fools who have better positions than his and wear the same kind of jester's costume, who constantly play tricks with words and make nonsense of whatever sense the person they talk to tries to make.

"But how are you, Jessica? And, good and sweet Jessica, tell me what you think about Portia. Do you like the Lord Bassanio's wife?"

"I like her more than I can say," Jessica said. "The Lord Bassanio really needs to live a morally upright life because, having such a blessing in his wife, he finds the joys of Heaven here on Earth. If he does not act here on Earth to merit such a blessing, then it stands to reason that he should never get to Heaven. Why, if two gods were to play some Heavenly game and each bet an Earthly woman on the outcome, and Portia were one of those women, then the other god must wager a woman and something more in order to make the prizes fair and equal because no woman here in this poor rude world is the equal of Portia. She is better than any other woman."

"As worthy a wife she is to Bassanio, just as worthy am I a husband to you," Lorenzo said in a gentle, joking tone of voice.

"You need to ask me for my opinion about that," Jessica replied, also in a gentle, joking tone of voice.

"I will, and soon," Lorenzo said. "First, let us go in to dinner."

"Not yet," Jessica said, "let me praise you while I have a stomach — both an appetite and the inclination — to praise you."

"Please, let this serve for table conversation as we eat,"

Lorenzo said. “Whatever you say, I will digest your words — among other things.”

“Well, I’ll set you forth,” Jessica said. “I will set you at the table, and I will give you large servings of praise.”

CHAPTER 4 (The Merchant of Venice)

— 4.1 —

The Duke and the Magnificoes — the Magnates — of Venice — entered the courtroom, and then, using a different door, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salario, and others entered the courtroom.

The Duke asked, “Is Antonio here?”

Antonio replied, “I am present, so please your grace.”

“I am sorry for you,” the Duke said to him. “You have come to answer a stony adversary, an inhuman wretch who is incapable of pity and who is void and empty of even a tiny quantity of mercy.”

Antonio replied, “I have heard that your grace has taken great pains to moderate Shylock’s rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate, firm, and resolute and since no lawful means can carry me out of the reach of his envy, I do match my patience and endurance of pain against his fury, and I am prepared to endure, with a quietness of spirit, the great cruelty and rage of his spirit.”

The Duke, “One of you, go and call the Jew into the court.”

Salario answered, “He is ready and waiting at the door; here he comes, my Lord.”

Carrying a sharp knife and a pair of scales, Shylock entered the courtroom, and the Duke said to the others present, “Make room, and let him stand before me.”

The Duke then said, “Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so, too, that you are intending to put on an act of malice and evil until the last moment, and then it is thought that you shall show your mercy and pity — a mercy and pity

that are stranger and more extraordinary than is your strange and extraordinary pretense of cruelty. We think that although now you insist on collecting the penalty for the forfeiture of poor Antonio's debt, which is one pound of his flesh, that you will not only not insist on collecting the pound of flesh but that you, touched with human gentleness and love, will also forgive a part of the principal that was borrowed so that it need not be paid back. We think that you will do these things because you will look with an eye of pity on Antonio's losses that have recently and heavily piled on his back. His losses have been large enough to bankrupt a merchant who has had very substantial wealth. His losses have also been large enough to make merciful the stony and flinty and hard hearts of stubborn, cruel, and bloodthirsty Turks and Tartars, who have not been educated to show tender courtesy to others. We all expect a gentle and merciful answer befitting a gentleman from you, Jew."

Shylock replied, "I have informed your grace about what I want, and I have sworn by our holy Sabbath to have the pound of Antonio's flesh that is called for, according to my contract with him. If you deny me that pound of flesh, then Jewish and foreign merchants who, like me, are not citizens of Venice, will doubt whether the laws of Venice will protect their rights and freedom. If that happens, then Venice will suffer financially. Therefore, you must enforce the legal contract that Antonio and I have made.

"You must want to ask me why I rather choose to have a pound of carrion flesh than to receive the three thousand ducats that Antonio owes me. I will not answer that except to say that it is my whim to take a pound of Antonio's flesh — I simply feel like taking a pound of his flesh instead of three thousand ducats. Does that answer your question? Suppose that a rat troubles my house, and I am willing to pay ten thousand ducats to have it poisoned. Does that

answer your question? Some men do not like seeing a roast pig with its mouth open on the banquet table. Some men become insane when they see a cat. Other men, when they hear the nasal tone of a bagpipe, hate it so much that they pee themselves. People like or dislike things according to desires that they have by nature and that affect how strongly they feel about their likes and dislikes. Now, as for the answer to your question, just as there is no obviously right answer to the questions of why one man hates a roast pig with an apple in its mouth, why a second man hates a harmless and useful cat, and why a third man hates a bagpipe wrapped in cloth, but are forced involuntarily by their nature to act on their hatred although doing so offends other people, I can give you no reason for why I want a pound of Antonio's flesh other than to say that I deeply hate and loathe Antonio so much that I prefer to take a pound of his flesh rather than the three thousand ducats he owes me. Does that answer your question?"

"This is not an answer, you unfeeling man, that will excuse the outpouring of your cruelty," Bassanio said, although Shylock had been addressing the Duke.

"I am not obligated to please you with my answers," Shylock said to Bassanio.

"Do all men kill the living things they do not love?" Bassanio asked.

Shylock replied, "Does any man hate a living thing that he would not kill?"

"Not every displeasure is a hate at first," Bassanio said.

Shylock replied, "Would you allow a snake to bite you twice?"

"Please, remember that you are arguing with Shylock the Jew," Antonio said. "You may as well go stand upon the

beach and tell the ocean not to have a high tide. You may as well argue with a wolf about why the wolf made a ewe bleat for her lamb. You may as well forbid the mountain pines to wag their high tops and to make noise when the gusts of the skies blow against them. You may as well do anything that is the most difficult rather than try to soften Shylock's Jewish heart — is anything harder than that? Therefore, I ask you to try to make no more bargains with and arguments opposing Shylock. Instead, quickly and plainly let me know the judgment of the court — the Jew will have what he wants.”

Bassanio ignored Antonio's request and said to Shylock, “Antonio owes you three thousand ducats, but I will pay you six thousand ducats.”

Shylock replied, “If each of the six thousand ducats were divided into six parts and each part became a full ducat, I would not take them. I insist on taking a pound of Antonio's flesh.”

The Duke asked Shylock, “How can you ever hope for mercy since you yourself show no mercy? Don't you fear a merciless judgment being made against you?”

“What judgment shall I fear, since I am doing no wrong?” Shylock replied. “You Christians have among you many slaves whom you have purchased. You treat these slaves like you treat your asses and your dogs and your mules; you treat them abjectly and work them hard — you own them. Shall I say to you, ‘Let your slaves be free, and let them marry your children and inherit your wealth. Why should your slaves sweat as they work for you? Let your slaves' beds be as soft as your beds and let their food be the same kind of food that you eat’? You will answer, ‘The slaves are ours to treat as we wish.’ I answer you the way that you will answer me: The pound of flesh that I am demanding from Antonio is dearly bought. I paid for it, it is

mine, and I will have it. If you deny me, then your laws mean nothing! If you break the laws of Venice, then the law will have no force. I want my legal contract with Antonio to be enforced by the laws of Venice. I want justice. Tell me, shall I receive it?"

The Duke replied, "I have the power to dismiss this court for a while unless Bellario, a learned doctor of civil law in Padua, whom I have asked to come here to judge this case, comes here today."

Salario said, "My lord, outside this courtroom is a messenger with a letter from the doctor; the messenger has just now come from Padua."

The Duke ordered, "Bring us the letter; tell the messenger to come and stand here in front of me."

Bassanio said, "Be of good cheer, Antonio! What, man, have courage! Shylock the Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and everything else before you shall lose for me even one drop of blood."

"I am a sick and contaminated wether — a castrated ram," Antonio said. "I am most suitable for death. The weakest kind of fruit drops earliest to the ground, and so let me die. You can best employ your time, Bassanio, in staying alive and writing my epitaph."

Nerissa, dressed like a lawyer's young clerk, entered the courtroom, carrying a letter.

"Have you come from Padua, from Bellario?" the Duke asked.

"I have come from both, my lord," Nerissa said. "Bellario greets your grace."

She gave the Duke the letter.

As the Duke read the letter, Shylock began to whet — to sharpen — his knife on the leather sole of one of his shoes.

Bassanio asked him, “Why are you sharpening your knife so eagerly?”

“I am getting ready to cut off a pound of flesh from that bankrupt there,” Shylock replied.

“Not on your sole, but on your soul, harsh Jew,” Gratiano said, “are you sharpening your knife, but no metal — not even the metal of the executioner’s axe — can possess half the keenness of your sharp malice. Can no prayers penetrate your heart and persuade you to be merciful?”

“No, none,” Shylock said. “None that you are able to make.”

Gratiano said, “Be damned, you dog! It is impossible to hate you as much as you deserve to be hated. People must wonder whether justice exists when they see that you are alive. You almost make me waver in my Christian faith and believe in Pythagoras’ heretical theory of the transmigration of souls. He believed that the soul of an animal could appear in the body of a man. Your spirit is doglike; your spirit may have been that of a wolf that killed a man, was found guilty, and therefore was hung and killed. In our society, we sometimes put on trial and punish animals. From the gallows the wolf’s murderous spirit flew and while you were in the womb of your unholy and non-Christian mother, it infused itself in you. Your desires are those of wolves — your desires are bloody, starved, and ravenous.”

“Unless you can shout the seal off the legal contract that Antonio and I signed,” Shylock said, “you are hurting only your own lungs by speaking so loudly. Start using your brain, good youth, or it will be completely and permanently ruined through lack of use. I am here in this court to get

justice, not to listen to you.”

Having finished reading the letter, the Duke said, “This letter from Bellario praises a young and learned doctor and recommends that he appear as judge in our court. Where is he?”

Nerissa said, “He is waiting outside, near here, to find out whether or not you will allow him to enter the courtroom.”

“He can enter here with all my heart,” the Duke said. “Some three or four of you go and give him courteous conduct to this place. Meanwhile, the court shall hear Bellario’s letter.”

Three or four attendants departed.

The Duke read out loud,

“Your grace should know that when I received your letter to me that I was very sick, but when your messenger came with your letter, a young doctor of Rome, whose name is Balthazar, was visiting me as a friend. I informed him about the case between Shylock the Jew and Antonio the merchant. We consulted many books together. I have told Balthazar my opinion of the case. My opinion, which has been supplemented by and bettered by Balthazar’s own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough praise, comes with him, at my request, to fulfill your grace’s request for legal expertise since I am too ill to travel. Please, do not think lowly of Balthazar because of his youth, for I never knew so young a body to have so old — that is, so wise — a head. I trust that you will graciously accept his help. His performance at the trial will be so impressive and expert that it will greatly increase his reputation.”

The Duke said, “You have heard what the learned Bellario wrote to me.”

He looked up, saw Portia, dressed like a lawyer, entering the courtroom, and said, “And here, I take it, is Balthazar, the young doctor of civil law.”

The Duke said, “Shake hands with me.”

They shook hands. The Duke asked, “Have you come from old Bellario?”

“I have, my lord.”

“You are welcome. Prepare to judge this case. Are you acquainted with the dispute that is being judged in this courtroom?”

“I am thoroughly informed about the dispute,” Portia said. “Who is the merchant here, and who is the Jew?”

“Antonio and old Shylock, both of you step forward,” the Duke said.

They did.

Portia asked, “Is your name Shylock?”

“Shylock is my name.”

Portia said to him, “This lawsuit of yours is unusual, yet the law of Venice cannot stop you from pursuing it.”

She then said to Antonio, “You are in debt to Shylock, and so he has power over you — is that right?”

“Yes, I am in debt to him, and he says that he has power over me.”

“Do you confess that you owe him money?”

“I do.”

“Then the Jew must be merciful and not take a pound of your flesh,” Portia said.

“Are you forcing me to be merciful?” Shylock said. “How do you justify that? Why should I be constrained to be merciful?”

“The quality of mercy cannot be constrained — mercy cannot be forced,” Portia said. “Mercy drops as the gentle rain drops from Heaven upon the place beneath it. Mercy blesses twice: It blesses the person who gives mercy, and it blesses the person who receives mercy. Mercy is mightiest in the mightiest: mercy is the most powerful quality of the most powerful people. Mercy becomes the Monarch on his throne more than his crown becomes him. The Monarch’s scepter shows the force of temporal power, the visible symbol of awe and majesty. Because of Kings’ temporal power, people dread and fear them. But mercy is above this temporal power; mercy is enthroned in the hearts of Kings. Mercy is an attribute of God Himself. Earthly power shows itself to be like God’s power when Earthly justice is tempered with mercy. Therefore, Jew, although you plead for justice, consider this: If justice were strictly enforced, none of us would ever see Heaven. None of us would ever be saved from damnation. All of us are guilty of sin. Therefore, we pray that God will show mercy to us. Remember the Lord’s Prayer: In Matthew 6:12, Jesus prayed to God, his Father, ‘*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*’ The Lord’s Prayer teaches all of us be merciful — to engage in deeds of mercy. I have spoken all of this in hopes that you will show mercy and not insist on strict justice. But if you do insist on strict justice, this strict Venetian court of law must pronounce a sentence against Antonio, this merchant here.”

Shylock replied, “May my deeds fall upon my head. I will be responsible for what I am doing. I insist on a strict justice. I want the contract to be strictly enforced. I want a pound of Antonio’s flesh.”

“Isn’t Antonio able to pay back the money he owes to you?” Portia asked.

Bassanio said, “Yes, here in this court I have the money that Antonio owes Shylock. I have twice the amount of money that Antonio owes Shylock, and I am willing to give Shylock that amount to repay the debt owed to him. If twice the amount owed is not enough, then I will legally bind myself to pay back ten times as much money as is owed him. I will bind myself to do that with the penalty for forfeiture being my hands, my head, and my heart. If ten times the amount owed is still not sufficient, then it must be the case that evil conquers righteousness. I beg you, Balthazar, use your authority to twist the law on this occasion: To do a great right, do a little wrong, and thwart the will of this cruel Devil.”

“Twisting and misinterpreting the law must not happen,” Portia replied. “No power in Venice can alter an established and decreed law. Twisting and misinterpreting the law will set a precedent, and that precedent will result in much evil in the future. Therefore, twisting and misinterpreting the law must not happen.”

Shylock said, “This is a Daniel come to judge this case! Yes, a Daniel! Wise young judge, I honor you!”

In the very short Book of Susanna (considered part of the Apocrypha by some religious traditions; other religious traditions include it as chapter 13 of the Book of Daniel), two old men spied on a young woman named Susanna as she bathed alone in her garden. Afterward, they told her that unless she slept with them they would lie and say that she had been having sex with a young man. She refused to sleep with them, and they spread the lie. She was put on trial for promiscuity; if found guilty, she would be executed. Daniel talked to the two old men separately. Their stories were inconsistent, and Daniel was able to

show that they were lying. Susanna went free, and the two old men were executed.

“Please let me see the contract,” Portia requested.

Shylock gave it to her, saying, “Here it is, most reverend doctor, here it is.”

Portia looked at Bassanio, who had offered Shylock twice the amount that he was owed. Of course, it was Portia’s money, and she was willing to give three times the amount owed — or more — to save the life of Antonio, her husband’s best friend.

She said, “Shylock, you have been offered three times the amount of money you are owed if you will stop this lawsuit and stop insisting on receiving a pound of Antonio’s flesh.”

Shylock replied, “An oath! An oath! I have made an oath to Heaven that I will have a pound of Antonio’s flesh. Shall my soul be found guilty of perjury? No, I will not allow that to happen, not even if I were to receive as payment all of Venice.”

“Truly, this contract has been breached by Antonio,” Portia said. “According to the law, Shylock may claim a pound of flesh, to be by him cut off nearest Antonio the merchant’s heart. But, Shylock, I urge you to be merciful. Take three times the amount of money that is owed to you, and let me tear up this contract.”

“You may tear it up after I have received my pound of flesh,” Shylock replied. “The debt must be paid according to the tenor of the law — according to the wording that is in the contract. It appears that you are a worthy judge. You know the law; your exposition of the law has been very sound. I charge you by the law, whereof you are a well-deserving pillar, to proceed and make your judgment. By my soul, I swear that the tongue of no man has the power to

persuade me to change my mind. I will have a pound of Antonio's flesh because he forfeited on his contract."

Antonio said, "Most heartily do I ask the court to give its judgment in this case."

"Why, then, this is the court's judgment," Portia said. "You must prepare your chest to be cut into by his knife."

Happy, Shylock said, "You are a noble judge! You are an excellent young man!"

"The intent and purpose of the law is to uphold legal contracts, including the penalties that appear in those legal contracts, including the penalty in this one," Portia said.

"That is very true," Shylock said. "You are a wise and upright judge! You are much more mature than your youthful appearance suggests!"

Portia said to Antonio, "Open your shirt and lay bare your chest."

"Yes, his chest," Shylock said. "That is what the contract says, isn't that so, noble judge? The contract includes these words: 'nearest his heart.'"

"That is true," Portia said. "Is there a set of scales here to weigh the flesh?"

"I have them ready," Shylock replied.

"Have a surgeon stand by, Shylock, at your expense," Portia requested, "to stop the bleeding from his wounds, lest he bleed to death."

"Does the contract state that?" Shylock asked, knowing that it did not.

"The contract does not state that," Portia said, "but so what? It would be good if you did that much out of

charity.”

Shylock glanced at a copy of the contract and said, “I do not see that the presence of a surgeon is specified in the contract.”

Portia asked Antonio, “You, merchant, have you anything to say?”

“Just a little,” Antonio replied. “I am fortified in spirit and well prepared. Let us shake hands, Bassanio. Fare you well! Don’t grieve because I am suffering this for you because in this Fortune shows herself to be kinder than is her custom. Fortune usually allows a man to outlive his wealth, to view with hollow eyes and a wrinkled brow a wretched old age of poverty. From that lingering punishment of much misery, Fortune has cut me off; I die before I can endure it. Commend me to your honorable wife. Tell her how I, Antonio, died. Say how I respected you and regarded you as a friend; speak well of me after I die. And, when the tale is told, ask her to judge whether or not Bassanio once had a true friend. Regret only that you shall lose your friend. If you do so, I will not regret paying your debt. Indeed, if the Jew cuts me deeply enough, I will repay the debt immediately with all my heart.”

Bassanio replied, “Antonio, I am married to a wife who is as dear to me as life itself, but life itself, my wife, and all the world are not by me esteemed above your life. I would lose all — yes, I would sacrifice my life, my wife, and all the world — to this Devil, to deliver you from him and so save your life.”

Hiding her mouth briefly with her hand, Portia smiled and thought, *Your wife would give you little thanks for that, if she were nearby and heard you say this to your friend.*

Gratiano said, “I have a wife, whom I love, but I wish that she were dead and in Heaven, so she could entreat some

Heavenly power to change the mind of this currish Jew.”

Hiding her mouth briefly with her hand, Nerissa smiled and thought, *It is well that you say this behind your wife's back, otherwise your wife would make your house unquiet.*

Shylock did not smile and thought, *These husbands are Christians. I have a daughter. I wish that any of the descendants of the Jew Barrabas, the thief who was saved from execution rather than Jesus, were her husband rather than a Christian!*

Shylock said out loud, “We are wasting time with trivialities. Please, let us get on with the sentence.”

Portia said, “A pound of Antonio the merchant's flesh belongs to you. The court awards it, and the law requires that it be given to you.”

“Most rightful judge!” Shylock said.

“And you must cut this flesh from off his chest,” Portia said. “The law allows it, and the court awards it.”

“Most learned judge!” Shylock said. “This is the sentence I wanted! Come, Antonio, prepare your chest!”

“Wait a minute,” Portia said. “There is something else.”

She had given Shylock ample opportunity to be merciful and still make a large profit. He could have received three times the money owed him if only he had agreed not to take a pound of Antonio's flesh. Shylock had even refused to pay a surgeon to stop Antonio's bleeding and so perhaps save his life.

Now Portia gave Shylock the sentence he deserved, not the sentence he wanted: “This contract entitles you to not even one drop of blood. The words expressly are ‘a pound of flesh.’ Go, and take your pound of flesh, but as you cut it

from Antonio's body, if you shed even one drop of Christian blood, your lands and possessions, by the laws of Venice, become the property of the government of Venice."

Gratiano now praised Portia, using Shylock's language: "You are an upright judge! Look at him, Jew, and you will see a learned judge!"

Shylock asked, "Is that the law?"

"Yes, it is," Portia said. "You yourself shall see the act in writing. You wanted strict justice, and you shall have strict justice, although you will not now want it."

Gratiano said, "This is a learned judge! Look at him, Jew! He is a learned judge!"

"I accept this offer, then," Shylock said. "Pay me three times the amount of money owed to me, and I shall let the Christian go free."

Bassanio said, "Here is the money."

"Wait!" Portia said. "The Jew shall have all justice and all strict justice. Do not be hasty here. The Jew shall have nothing but the penalty that is stated in the contract."

Gratiano said, "Oh, Jew! Look at this upright judge, this learned judge!"

Portia said to Shylock, "Therefore prepare to cut off a pound of his flesh. Do not shed any blood, and do not cut off less or more than exactly a pound of flesh. If you cut off more or less than an exact pound, be it but only so much as a twentieth of a gram too much or too little — or even so much as makes the scales differ as much as the width of a hair — then you will be executed and all your wealth and possessions will become the property of the government of Venice."

Gratiano exclaimed, “A second Daniel! He is a Daniel, Jew! Now, infidel, I have you on the hip like a wrestler and I am ready to throw you.”

“Jew, why are you pausing?” Portia asked. “Take your pound of flesh.”

“Give me my principal, and let me go. Return to me the amount of money that was borrowed. No interest. No more than the principal only.”

Bassanio said, “I have it ready for you; here it is.”

“No,” Portia said. “Shylock has refused the money here in the open court. He shall have strict justice according to what is stated in his contract.”

“A Daniel — still I say it, a second Daniel!” Gratiano said. “I thank you, Jew, for teaching me that word.”

“Shall I not even have my principal back?” Shylock said.

Portia replied, “You shall have nothing but the forfeiture that is described in the contract, and that to be taken by you at your peril, Jew.”

“Why, then let the Devil allow Antonio to enjoy the money,” Shylock said. “I’ll stay here no longer to argue the case.”

“Stay, Jew,” Portia said. “The law has another hold on you. It is enacted in the laws of Venice, that if it be proved against an alien — and Jews are aliens and outsiders; they are not citizens of Venice — that by direct or indirect attempts he seeks the life of any citizen, the party against whom he plots shall seize one half of his wealth and property; the other half will be seized and go into the personal treasury of the Duke of Venice. In addition, the offender’s life lies at the mercy of the Duke of Venice and no one else. I say that his law applies to you because it

appears, by what has happened here in this court, that indirectly — and directly, too — you have contrived to take the life of the defendant; therefore, you have incurred the punishments that I have mentioned. And so, Shylock, get down on your knees and beg the Duke to be merciful.”

Gratiano said to Shylock, “Beg for permission to hang yourself. However, since your wealth has been forfeited to the Venetian government, you do not have enough money left to buy a rope. Therefore, you will have to be hanged at the government’s expense.”

“Shylock, so that you shall see the difference of our spirits,” the Duke said, “I pardon your life before you ask me for permission to continue to live. Half of your wealth now belongs to Antonio; the other half goes to the government of Venice, but if you show humility I can reduce that to a fine.”

Portia said, “Yes, you can accept a fine rather than the half of the Jew’s wealth that goes to the government of Venice, but what is Antonio’s is Antonio’s.”

“No,” Shylock said. “Don’t pardon me. Take my life since you are taking everything else. You take my house when you take what props up and sustains my house; you take my life when you take away the means by which I live. I make my living through the lending of money at interest; if I have no money, I have no way of making a living.”

Portia asked, “What mercy can you render to Shylock, Antonio?”

Gratiano said, “Give him a noose for free so that he can hang himself. Don’t give him anything else, for God’s sake.”

Antonio replied to Portia, “If it pleases my lord the Duke and all the members of this court of law to levy the fine

instead of taking one half of Shylock's wealth, I am content, as long as he will let me have the other half of his wealth to invest during his life, and then to give it, upon his death, to Lorenzo, the gentleman who recently stole away with and married his daughter. I do have two conditions that Shylock must meet for these kindnesses. First, he must immediately convert and become a Christian. Second, he must sign a deed of gift here in this court, leaving all he possesses at the time of his death to his son-in-law, Lorenzo, and his daughter."

The Duke replied, "Shylock shall do these things, or else I will recant the pardon of his life that I just pronounced here."

"Does this satisfy you, Jew?" Portia asked. "What do you say?"

Shylock hesitated, thought, and then said, "I am satisfied."

Portia said, "Clerk, draw up a deed of gift."

"Please, give me permission to go from here," Shylock requested of the Duke. "I am not well. Send the deed of gift to me after it has been drawn up, and I will sign it."

"You may leave," the Duke said, "but be sure to sign the deed of gift."

Gratiano said, "You will become a Christian. In your christening, you will have two godfathers. Had I been judge, you would have had ten more. Twelve people make up a jury, and they would have found you guilty and sent you to the gallows, not to the christening font."

His heart heavy, Shylock departed. At home, he may have realized that he was morally wrong to insist on receiving a pound of Antonio's flesh.

The Duke said to Portia, "Sir, I ask you to come home with

me and eat dinner.”

“I humbly ask your grace to pardon me,” Portia replied, “because I cannot. I must return to Padua this night, and I need to immediately set forth.”

“I am sorry that you do not have the leisure to stay here for a while,” the Duke said to her.

He added, “Antonio, reward this gentleman, for, in my opinion, you are much bound to him.”

The Duke and the Magnificoes left the courtroom.

Bassanio said to Portia, “Most worthy gentleman, because of your wisdom my friend and I have been this day relieved from paying some grievous penalties. Because of that, these three thousand ducats, which were owed to the Jew, we freely give to you for your courteous pains on our behalf.”

Antonio said, “We stand indebted to you, over and above this gift of three thousand ducats. We owe you our respect and friendship and service for evermore.”

“He is well paid who is well satisfied,” Portia said. “And I, having delivered you from grievous penalties, am well satisfied and on that account I consider myself to be well paid. My mind has so far never been interested in money. Please, know me when we meet again. I wish you well, and so I take my leave.”

Portia thought, *I certainly hope that Bassanio will recognize me when we meet again — and that he will know me in the Biblical sense.*

Bassanio said to Portia, “Dear sir, it is necessary that I try harder to thank you. Take some remembrance from us — Antonio and me — as a tribute, not as a fee. Please grant me two things. First, do not deny my request, and second, pardon me for pressing you to do this.”

“You are pressing me to accept remembrances from you two,” Portia said, “and therefore I will yield.”

To Antonio, she said, “Give me your gloves. I’ll wear them in remembrance of you.”

Antonio took off his gloves and gave them to Portia.

Portia thought, *I remember what Bassanio, my husband, said about me earlier: “Antonio, I am married to a wife who is as dear to me as life itself, but life itself, my wife, and all the world are not by me esteemed above your life. I would lose all — yes, I would sacrifice my life, my wife, and all the world — to this Devil, to deliver you from him and so save your life.” I will tease him later because of what he said just now.*

She said to Bassanio, “And, out of respect for you and your request of me, I’ll take this ring from you.”

Bassanio drew back his hand. He thought, *This is the ring that my wife gave to me. Portia told me, “I give you this ring; if you ever part from, lose, or give away this ring, let it foretell the ruin and decay of your love and be my opportunity to denounce you.” I told her, “When this ring that you have given me parts from this finger, then life will part from me. When I no longer wear this ring, then you may say boldly that I, Bassanio, am dead.”*

Portia said to him, “Do not draw back your hand; I’ll take no more than this ring. Out of respect for me, you shall not deny me this.”

Bassanio said, “This ring, good sir, it is a trifle! I will not shame myself by giving you this.”

“I will have nothing else except only this,” Portia said. “Now that I think about it, I like this ring and I really want it.”

“This ring has more value than merely monetary value,” Bassanio said. “Allow me to give you instead of it the most monetarily valuable ring in all of Venice. I will find the most monetarily valuable ring by having announcements made in public. Allow me to give you that ring rather than this ring, please.”

Portia told him, “I see, sir, that you are liberal in making offers of gifts, but not in actually giving gifts. You taught me first to beg, and now I think that you are teaching me how a beggar should be answered. Beggars cannot be choosers; they must take what they are given.”

“Good sir, this ring was given to me by my wife, and when she put it on me, she made me vow that I should not sell it or give it away or lose it,” Bassanio said.

“That excuse helps many men keep the ‘gifts’ that they have promised to give,” Portia said, “If your wife is not a madwoman, and if she knows how well I have deserved the ring, she would not be your enemy forever just because you gave it to me. Well, may peace be with you!”

Portia and Nerissa left the courtroom.

Antonio, who owed Portia his life and who did not know the marital and emotional value of the ring, said, “My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring. Let his deserving conduct and my friendship be valued against your wife’s commandment.”

Bassanio decided to give the young doctor of law his ring. He took it off and handed it to Gratiano and said, “Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him. Give him the ring, and bring him, if you can, to Antonio’s house: Go! Hurry!”

Gratiano departed, running.

Bassanio then said to Antonio, “Come, you and I will go to

your house now, and early in the morning we will both journey quickly to Belmont and see my wife, Portia. Let's go now, Antonio."

— 4.2 —

On a street outside the courtroom, Portia said to Nerissa, "Ask and find out where the Jew's house is. Give him this deed of gift and have him sign it. We will leave tonight and be home in Belmont a day before our husbands get home. This deed of gift will be very welcome to Lorenzo."

Gratiano came running up to them and said to Portia, "Fair sir, I am glad that I have caught up to you. My Lord Bassanio upon further consideration has sent me to give you this ring, and he invites you to eat with him at Antonio's house."

"I cannot eat dinner with him," Portia said, "but I do accept this ring with great thanks. Please tell him that. Also, please show my young clerk where old Shylock's house is."

"I will do that," Gratiano said.

Nerissa said to Portia, "Sir, I would like to speak with you for a moment privately."

Nerissa thought, *In the courtroom, my husband, Gratiano, said, "I have a wife, whom I love, but I wish that she were dead and in Heaven, so she could entreat some Heavenly power to change the mind of this currish Jew." I will tease him later because of what he said just now.*

Nerissa and Portia went a short distance from Gratiano, and Nerissa whispered, "I'll see if I can get my husband's ring, the one that I made him swear to keep forever."

Portia whispered, "I am sure that you can get it from him. Our husbands will later swear to us mightily that they gave the rings away to men, but we will boldly contradict them

and say that they gave the rings away to women — which will be true — and we will outswear them, too.”

Portia said out loud, “Go now! Make haste. You know where you can meet me later.”

Nerissa said to Gratiano, “Come, good sir, and show me the way to the Jew’s house.”

CHAPTER 5 (The Merchant of Venice)

— 5.1 —

On the avenue leading to Portia's house, Lorenzo and Jessica were playfully talking together. They were competing in a game in which they talked about love matches that ended badly. Although they seemed to be lighthearted, they were worried. Jessica had stolen much wealth from Shylock, her father, but she and Lorenzo had squandered much — or all — of it. Possibly, they were thinking that they would act more responsibly if they could replay their recent actions.

Lorenzo said, "The moon shines brightly. On such a night as this, when the sweet wind gently kissed the trees and they made no noise, on such a night as this I think that Troilus mounted the Trojan walls and sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents, where Cressida, the woman he loved, lay that night."

Cressida became unfaithful to Troilus.

"On such a night as this, did Thisbe fearfully walk on the dewy grass and saw the lion's shadow before she saw the lion and ran away, dismayed," Jessica said.

Thisbe dropped her mantle — her shawl — as she fled from the lion, which tore it. Her lover, Pyramus, found the mantle, thought that the lion had devoured Thisbe, and killed himself. Thisbe found his body, and she killed herself.

"On such a night as this, Dido stood with a willow branch — a symbol of unrequited love — in her hand upon the shore of the wild sea and beckoned her lover to return to Carthage," Lorenzo said.

Aeneas had left Dido, Queen of Carthage, in order to go to Italy and become an important ancestor of the Roman people, as was his destiny. Dido cursed Aeneas' descendants and then committed suicide.

“On such a night as this, Medea gathered the enchanted herbs that made old Aeson young again,” Jessica said.

Aeson was the father of Jason, whom Medea had married. Jason later was unfaithful to Medea, who murdered the children whom they had had together.

“On such a night as this, Jessica stole wealth from and stole away from her father the wealthy Jew and with a spendthrift lover ran away from Venice as far as Belmont,” Lorenzo said.

“On such a night as this, young Lorenzo swore that he loved Jessica. He stole her soul with many vows of faith, not one vow of which was true,” Jessica said.

“On such a night as this, pretty Jessica, like a little shrew, slandered her lover, and he forgave her,” Lorenzo said.

Jessica said, “I would outdo you in mentioning nights if no one would interrupt us, but I hear a man's footsteps coming toward us.”

Stephano, one of Portia's servants, walked up to them.

“Who is walking so fast in the silence of the night?” Lorenzo asked.

“A friend,” Stephano replied.

“A friend! What friend? What is your name, please, friend?” Lorenzo asked.

“Stephano is my name, and I bring you word that Portia, my mistress, will before the break of day arrive here at Belmont. She has been going to roadside shrines where by

holy crosses she kneels and prays for a happy marriage.”

“Who is coming with her?” Lorenzo asked.

“No one except a holy hermit and Nerissa, her waiting-gentlewoman. Please tell me, has my master, Bassanio, returned yet?”

“He has not, nor have we received any message from him,” Lorenzo replied.

He added, “Jessica, let us go inside, please, and prepare a ceremony of welcome for Portia, the mistress of the house.”

Launcelot the fool appeared. Pretending not to find Lorenzo, for whom he was searching, he called “Sola! Sola! Wo ha, ho! Sola! Sola!”

“Wo ha, ho!” is a hunting cry. “Sola!” is both a hunting cry and an imitation of the sound of a post horn. Launcelot was hunting for Lorenzo to tell him that a post — an express messenger — had arrived with news for him.

“Who is shouting?” Lorenzo shouted.

“Sola!” Launcelot shouted. “Have you seen Master Lorenzo? Master Lorenzo, sola! Sola!”

“Stop shouting,” Lorenzo ordered. “I am here.”

“Sola!” Launcelot shouted. “Where are you?”

“Here I am.”

Pretending that Lorenzo was not Lorenzo, Launcelot said, “Tell him that a post has come from my master, with his horn full of good news — a cornucopia of good news. That good news is that my master will be here before morning.”

Lorenzo said to Jessica, “Sweet soul, let’s go inside, and

there we will await their coming. And yet we need not go in. My friend Stephano, tell everyone in the house, please, that your mistress is at hand. Have Portia's musicians come outside so that they can welcome her with music."

Stephano went inside the house.

Lorenzo said to Jessica, "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank! Here will we sit and let the sounds of music creep into our ears. Soft stillness and the night well suit the touches of musicians' hands on instruments of sweet harmony.

"Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of Heaven is thickly inlaid with tiles of bright gold — planets and stars. There is not the smallest orb that you see but sings in his motion like an angel. The planets and stars produce the music of the spheres and always sing like a choir to the young-eyed angels known as the cherubim. Such harmony is in immortal souls, but while our souls are trapped in this muddy vesture of decay — this mortal human body that grossly encloses our immortal soul — we cannot hear it."

The musicians came out of Portia's house.

Lorenzo said to them, "Come, and wake Diana with a hymn! Diana the Moon goddess is sleeping behind clouds. With your sweetest touches on your musical instruments, wake Diana and draw her out from behind the clouds with music. And with your music, guide your mistress to her home."

Jessica said, "I am never merry when I hear sweet music. Music puts me in a contemplative and reflective mood."

Lorenzo replied, "The reason for that is your soul is attentive to the music. We have seen a wild and wanton herd of youthful and untrained colts racing around and making mad jumps, bellowing and neighing loudly. That is

the hot nature of their excited spirit; however, if they by chance hear the sound of a trumpet, or if any other air of music touches their ears, you shall see them standing still together. Their savage eyes adopt a modest gaze because of the sweet power of music. That is the basis of truth that the poet Ovid exaggerated when he wrote that the musician Orpheus was able to make trees, stones, and floods come to him when he played. There is nothing so stubborn, hard, and full of rage that music, while it plays, cannot change that thing's nature. The man who does not like music and is not moved by the concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treasons, plots and deeds of great violence, and destruction and acts of pillage. The impulses of his mind are as cheerless and gloomy as night and his affections are as dark as Erebus, that region of darkness in the afterlife. Let no such man be trusted. Listen to the music."

Portia and Nerissa arrived.

Portia said to Nerissa, "That light we see is burning in my hall. How far that little candle throws its beams! So shines a good deed in an evil world."

"When the Moon shone before it went behind a cloud, we did not see the candle," Nerissa replied.

"The greater glory dims the lesser glory," Portia said. "The representative of a King shines as brightly as the King until the King arrives, and then the representative of the King loses his glory. His glory vanishes the way that an inland brook flows into and vanishes into the ocean. Listen, I hear music!"

"The musicians of your house are playing," Nerissa said.

"Nothing is good, I see, without the right context. I think that their music sounds much sweeter now than it does in the daytime."

“The silence of the night makes the music sound much better, madam,” Nerissa said.

“The crow sings as sweetly as the lark, when no one is listening to their songs,” Portia said. “I think that the nightingale, which sings at night, if she should sing by day, when every goose is cackling, would be thought to be no better a singer than the wren. How many things are well seasoned when they occur at the proper season! When they occur at exactly the right time, their flavor is so much better and they enjoy rightful praise because they are true perfection!”

The Moon was still behind the clouds, and Portia called to the musicians, “Quiet! The Moon goddess Diana is sleeping beside her loved one, Endymion, and would not be awakened.”

The music stopped, and Lorenzo said, “That is the voice, unless I am much deceived, of Portia.”

Portia said, “He knows that it is I the same way that the blind man knows the presence of the cuckoo — by the bad voice.”

“Dear lady, welcome home,” Lorenzo said.

Portia said to him, “Nerissa and I have been praying for our husbands’ welfare. We hope that our husbands will prosper all the better for our words.

“Have they returned?”

“Madam, they are not yet here,” Lorenzo replied, “but a messenger arrived not long ago to tell us that they are coming soon.”

“Go inside, Nerissa,” Portia said. “Tell my servants that they are not to mention to our husbands that we have been absent from home. Lorenzo, and you, too, Jessica, do not

tell our husbands that we have been away.”

Nerissa went inside.

A distinctive trumpet call sounded to announce that Bassanio was coming.

Lorenzo said, “Your husband is near at hand. I hear his trumpet call. We are no tattletales, madam; don’t be afraid that we will let your husbands know that you have been absent.”

Portia started to talk about the weather so that her husband would not suspect that she had just been talking about him — and about keeping something secret from him.

“This night, I think, is like ill daylight. It looks a little paler. It is like a very cloudy day during which the Sun remains hidden.”

Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their servants arrived.

Bassanio, who had overheard Portia’s last comment, said to her, “If you would walk outside at night when the Sun is hidden, we would enjoy sunlight at the same time as do the people who live on the other side of the Earth.”

“Let me give light, but let me not be light,” Portia said. “A wife with light heels raises them high in the air and parts them so she can be promiscuous. Such a light wife makes a husband heavy-hearted and full of sorrow, and I never want Bassanio to feel that way because of me. But let everything be as God wishes it to be! You are welcome home, my lord.”

Gratiano went inside the house to look for his wife.

“I thank you, madam,” Bassanio replied. “Welcome my friend. This is the man — this is Antonio — to whom I am so infinitely bound.”

“You should in all senses be much bound to him,” Portia said, “because I hear that he was much bound — in the chains of a prisoner — for you.”

Antonio said, “I have been freed from those chains and amply repaid for my distress by the friendship of your husband.”

Portia replied, “Sir, you are very welcome to our house. I intend to show you that by my actions, and therefore I will not waste time with pretty words.”

Gratiano and Jessica came out from inside the house. They were talking about Jessica’s ring, the one that Gratiano had given to the clerk of the young lawyer who had served as the judge in the trial of Antonio.

Gratiano said to Jessica, “By yonder Moon, I swear that you do me wrong. Truly, I gave your ring to the lawyer’s clerk. I wish that the clerk would be castrated since you, my love, are taking the loss of your ring so much to heart.”

“A quarrel?” Portia said. “Already! You haven’t even celebrated your wedding night! What’s the matter?”

“We are talking about a hoop of gold,” Gratiano said, “a little ring that she gave me that had a motto inscribed inside that was like one of the verses that are inscribed on the handles of knives. It said, *‘Love me, and leave me not.’*”

Nerissa said, “Why are you talking about the motto and the littleness of the ring? You swore to me, when I gave the ring to you, that you would wear it until the hour you died and that it should lie with you in your grave. Even if you did not keep the ring out of respect for me, yet because of your vehement oaths you ought to have been careful and kept it. You said that you gave my ring to a judge’s clerk! As God is my judge, the clerk you gave the ring to will never grow hair on his face!”

Gratiano said, “He will, if he lives long enough to become a man.”

Nerissa replied, “That is true — if a woman lives long enough to become a man.”

Gratiano said, “Now, I swear by my hand that I gave it to a youth, a boy, a diminutive and very clean boy, no taller than yourself, the judge’s clerk, a chattering boy who begged it as a fee. I could not in my heart deny giving it to him.”

“You are to blame,” Portia said. “I must be plain with you. You parted very lightly and easily with your wife’s first gift to you: a ring that you, with oaths, put on your finger. Therefore, the ring became riveted to your body by your oaths. I gave my love, Bassanio, a ring and made him swear never to part with it; and here he stands. I dare be sworn for him that he would not part from the ring or pluck it from his finger for all the wealth that is the world. Now, truly, Gratiano, you have unkindly given your wife a reason to grieve. If that had happened to me, I would be very angry because of it.”

Bassanio, who had also given away his ring, thought, *The best thing for me to do is to cut off my left hand and swear that I lost my hand as I fought to keep the ring.*

Gratiano was no help to him: “My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away to the young judge who begged for it and indeed deserved it, too, and then the boy, his clerk, who took some pains in writing, begged for my ring, and neither the young judge nor his boy would accept anything other than the rings.”

“Which ring did you give to the judge, Bassanio?” Portia asked. “Not that ring, I hope, that I gave to you.”

“If a lie could help me out here, I would lie,” Bassanio

replied, “but you can see that my finger does not have your ring on it. The ring is gone.”

“And truth has departed from your false heart,” Portia said. “By Heaven, I will never sleep with you until I see the ring I gave you.”

Nerissa said to Gratiano, “And I will never sleep with you until I see the ring I gave you.”

“Sweet Portia,” Bassanio said, “if you knew to whom I gave the ring, if you knew for whom I gave the ring, if you knew why I gave the ring and if you knew how unwillingly I left behind the ring, when nothing would be accepted except the ring, you would not be so displeased.”

Portia replied, using the same form of language as her husband, “If you had known the special quality of the ring, if you had known half the worthiness of the woman who gave you the ring, and if you had known how much your own honor depended on keeping the ring, you would never have parted with the ring. What man exists who is so unreasonable — if you had been willing to have defended the ring with any zeal — that he would have lacked the courtesy to allow you to keep the ring because of its marital, emotional value? Nerissa teaches me what I should believe: She believes that Gratiano gave her ring to a woman, and I believe the same thing about you and my ring. I bet my life that you gave my ring to a woman.”

“No, by my honor, Portia, and by my soul,” Bassanio said, “no woman got your ring. I gave it to a doctor of civil law who refused to accept three thousand ducats from me and instead begged for the ring, which I would not give to him. I allowed him to go away displeased although he had saved the life of my very dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady? I had to send the ring to him; I was overcome by shame, and my courtesy and honor would not allow

ingratitude to so besmear my name. Pardon me, good lady, for, by these blessed candles of the night — the stars — had you been there, I think you would have begged from me your ring so that you could give it to the worthy doctor.”

Bassanio was courteous. He did not mention Antonio, who had urged him to give the ring to the young doctor of civil law.

“Allow that doctor to never come near my house,” Portia said. “Since he has gotten the ring that I loved, and which you swore to keep, I will become as liberal — licentious, in fact — as you. I will not deny him anything I have — no, I will not deny the possession of my body or my husband’s bed. Know him I shall, I am sure of it. Do not sleep even one night away from home; watch me like Argus, the monster with the hundred eyes. If you do not watch me continually, if I am left alone, I swear, by my honor, which is still my own, I will have that doctor as my bedfellow.”

Nerissa said, “And I will have that doctor’s clerk as my bedfellow. Therefore, think carefully about whether you ever want to leave me alone.”

“Well, if you do take him as your bedfellow,” Gratiano said, “never let me catch him because if I do I will break his pen — and I will break his male appendage that can be compared to a pen.”

“I am the unhappy cause of these quarrels,” Antonio said.

“Sir, do not grieve,” Portia said to him. “You are welcome nevertheless.”

“Portia, forgive me this wrong I was forced to do,” Bassanio said, “and with these my many friends as witnesses, I swear to you by your own beautiful eyes, in which I see myself — ”

Portia interrupted, “Did everyone hear that! In my eyes he doubly sees himself. In each of my eyes, he sees a reflection of his face. Swear by your double self, my two-faced husband — that is an oath that will do you credit.”

“Please hear me out,” Bassanio said. “Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear that I never more will break an oath that I have made to you.”

Antonio said, “I once did lend my body as surety for him to be able to gain wealth. This would have gone badly wrong except for the young doctor who now has the ring that you gave to your husband. I dare to lend myself again as surety. This time, I will lend my immortal soul, which is much more valuable than my mortal body. I will lend my immortal soul as surety that your lord will never again knowingly break an oath that he has made to you.”

“Then you shall be his surety,” Portia said.

She gave him her ring and said to Antonio, “Give this ring to my husband and tell him to take better care of it than he did the other ring.”

“Here, Lord Bassanio,” Antonio said. “Swear to keep this ring safe.”

“By Heaven,” Bassanio said, “this is the same ring that I gave to the doctor of civil law!”

“I got this ring from him,” Portia said. “Pardon me, Bassanio, for I swear by this ring that the doctor lay with me.”

Nerissa said, “And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano, because that same diminutive, very clean boy, the doctor’s clerk, did lie with me last night and gave me this ring.”

She handed him the ring that he had given away.

Gratiano said, “Why, this is similar to the mending of roads in the summer, when they do not need to be mended. You women have no need to seek lovers because your husbands are still young and vigorous. What, have we been made cuckolds before we have deserved it?”

“Don’t be gross,” Portia said. “You are all amazed and bewildered, but we can explain everything. Here is a letter; read it at your leisure. It comes from Padua, from Bellario. In this letter, you will learn that I, Portia, was the doctor of civil law and that Nerissa was my clerk: Lorenzo here will testify that we set forth as soon as you left and have just now returned — I have not yet entered my house. Antonio, you are welcome here, and I have better news in store for you than you expect. Unseal and read this letter; you shall find in it the news that three of your merchant ships, richly loaded, have come into harbor safely and suddenly. I will not tell you how I happen to have this letter.”

“I am astonished; I cannot speak,” Antonio said. He opened and began to read the letter.

“Were you really the doctor of civil law?” Bassanio asked. Did I really not recognize you?”

Gratiano asked Nerissa, “Were you really the clerk who is going to make me a cuckold?”

“Yes, but I can say that the clerk will never make you a cuckold unless he lives long enough to become a man.”

“Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow,” Bassanio said to Portia. “Whenever I am absent, then I give you permission to sleep with my wife.”

Having finished reading the letter, Antonio said, “Sweet lady, you saved my life and now you have given me the news that I will have the money that I need to live. In this letter, I read for certain that my ships have safely come into

harbor.”

“And now, Lorenzo,” Portia said, “my clerk has some good news for you, too.”

“That is true,” Nerissa said, “and I will freely give him the good news. Here I give to you and Jessica, from the rich Jew, a special deed of gift. After his death, all that he dies possessed of, Shylock leaves to you.”

“Fair ladies, you drop manna in front of starved people,” said Lorenzo, the spendthrift — or, perhaps, former spendthrift.

“It is almost morning,” Portia said, “and yet I am sure you are not fully satisfied with our accounts of these events. You still have questions to ask Nerissa and me. Let us go inside, and there you can interrogate us on oath. And we will faithfully and truthfully answer all questions.”

“Let us do that,” Gratiano said, “and the first question that I will ask my wife, Nerissa, is whether she would rather wait until the coming night to go to bed and consummate our marriage, or go to bed now, with two hours remaining until the break of day. But if she wants to wait, throughout the coming day I will wish that it were dark so that I could go to bed and sleep with the doctor’s clerk. Well, as long as I live I’ll worry about nothing as much as keeping safe Nerissa’s ring.”

He thought, *Wedding rings are symbols. A finger goes into the ring. The finger is a phallic symbol, and the ring is a symbol of a feminine circle. I plan on taking care of Nerissa’s ring — and of her circle.*

NOTA BENE (The Merchant of Venice)

1) The merchant of Venice is Antonio; the Jew of Venice is Shylock.

2) In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Jews were often moneylenders because Christians believed that lending money at interest was a sin. Usury then meant lending money at interest; it now means lending money at an excessively high rate of interest. Christians no longer believe that lending money and charging interest is necessarily a sin. Indeed, it is an important part of modern economies.

Lending at interest may be permissible in certain instances; certainly we capitalist Americans believe that. I personally see lots of good reasons for lending at interest. Bonds raise money for investments. However, at times lending at interest is not ethical. For example, the lending could be done at excessively high rates of interest. Here I think of the check-cashing places that prey on the poor. The people who own the check-cashing places can end up in Hell.

However, although we Americans may believe in lending at interest, the Bible may prohibit it — at least in certain cases. For example, thou shalt not lend money at interest to your brother, especially if your brother is poor, although you may lend money at interest to strangers. Here are a few Bible passages about lending at interest:

Deuteronomy 23:19: *Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:*

Exodus 22:25: *If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.*

Leviticus 25:35-37: *And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.*

Deuteronomy 23:20: *Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.*

Has Shylock violated any of these commandments?

3) We really do see a lot of prejudice in this play. Portia prefers to marry someone with a light skin, and Antonio hates Jews. Portia happily marries Bassanio, and Bassanio happily marries her, but an impartial observer could very well say that Bassanio is marrying Portia for her money. The Prince of Morocco, although he is proud, has many more accomplishments than Bassanio. However, mercy is a theme of the play. We can ask why Portia would not want to marry the Prince of Morocco. If she were to marry him, she would have to move to his home in his country. By marrying Bassanio, she can probably stay in her home in Belmont. A person with a dark skin who has status high enough to marry Portia is most likely someone who lives in a country other than her own.

4) One theme of the play is the harmful effects that prejudice can have on people. It can make someone want to cut a pound of flesh from a living person. It can make someone spit on the clothing and the beard of an old man and kick him.

5) We sympathize with Shylock because he is the victim of

prejudice, but he also is guilty of prejudice. He hates Antonio in part because he is a Christian, although he has some other very good reasons for hating Antonio. We ought not to sympathize with Shylock when he wants Antonio to pay the penalty that is in the contract that Antonio signed. Being the victim of prejudice can help cause someone to be prejudiced; prejudice creates more prejudice.

6) Many Christians of the time that the play is set believed that the only way to get to Heaven was through believing in Jesus Christ and therefore Jews would be damned to Hell. Because of this belief, they would regard the conversion of a Jew to Christianity — even a forced conversion — to be a good thing. Here is an important Bible verse for understanding this belief:

John 14:6: *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

If we were to be merciful when judging Antonio, we might think that he wants to save Shylock's soul. Of course, most people today think that a forced confession is contemptible and worthless.

Antonio does show concern for Lorenzo and Jessica's financial security. He wants to make sure that Shylock provides for them after Shylock's death; thus, he forces Shylock to sign the deed of gift.

Is it possible that Antonio is also concerned about Shylock's financial security? Near the end of the play, he wishes to take half of Shylock's wealth and invest it. No doubt that money would be invested in Antonio's trade with other countries. Does Antonio intend to give the profit made by Shylock's money to Shylock? Possibly. Shylock cannot make money by lending at interest since he will convert to Christianity, and so he has no way to make a

living. Antonio may intend to make sure that Shylock has money on which to live. Certainly, at the end of the play, three of Antonio's ships, richly loaded, have returned safely to the harbor of Venice, and so Antonio now has enough money to live on. Of course, we need to remember that Antonio has called Shylock names and spit on him and kicked him. Also, of course, Shylock was prepared to cut off a pound of flesh from Antonio's living body. Antonio may have wanted half of Shylock's wealth simply because at the time Antonio desperately needed money.

Chapter VII: THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*)

Male Characters

SIR JOHN FALSTAFF.

MR. FENTON, a young Gentleman, in love with Anne Page.

ROBERT SHALLOW, a Country Justice.

ABRAHAM SLENDER, Nephew to Justice Shallow.

FRANK FORD: a Gentleman dwelling at Windsor.

GEORGE PAGE: a Gentleman dwelling at Windsor.

WILLIAM PAGE, a Boy, Son to Page.

SIR HUGH EVANS, a heavily accented Welsh Parson.

DOCTOR CAIUS, a heavily accented French Physician.

HOST of the Garter Inn.

BARDOLPH, PISTOL, and NYM: Followers (attendants) of Falstaff.

ROBIN, Page to Falstaff.

PETER SIMPLE, Servant to Slender.

JOHN RUGBY, Servant to Doctor Caius.

Female Characters

MRS. ALICE FORD, a merry wife.

MRS. MEG PAGE, a merry wife.

ANNE PAGE, her Daughter, in love with Fenton.

MISTRESS QUICKLY, Servant to Doctor Caius.

Minor Characters

Servants to Page, Ford, etc.

Scene

Windsor; and the Neighborhood. This play is set entirely in England.

Nota Bene

• The comic Welsh accent of Sir Hugh Evans has these characteristics:

1) Sir Hugh often pronounces an initial *p* instead of *b*. E.g. *py* = *by*, *putter* = *butter*.

2) Sir Hugh often pronounces *f* instead of *v*. E.g. *fery* = *very*.

3) Sir Hugh often pronounces *t* instead of *d*. E.g. *goot* = *good*, *Got* = *God*, *worts* = *words*.

4) Sir Hugh often does not pronounce an initial *w*. E.g. *'oman* = *woman*, *'orld* = *world*, *'ork* = *work*.

5) Sir Hugh often misuses words; for example, he often uses a noun where an adjective ought to be used.

6) Sir Hugh often makes words plural when they should be singular.

• The comic French accent of Doctor Caius has these characteristics:

1) Doctor Caius often pronounces *d* or *t* instead of *th*. E.g. *dat* = *that*, *de* = *the*, *troat* = *throat*.

2) Doctor Caius often pronounces *v* instead of *w*, *wh*, or *f*.

E.g. *world* = *world*, *vat* = *what*, *vetch* = *fetch*.

3) Doctor Caius often pronounces *p* instead of *b*. E.g. *Pible* = *Bible*.

4) Doctor Caius often does not pronounce an initial *g*. E.g. *'od's* – *God's*.

5) Doctor Caius often adds *a* to the end of a word. E.g. *Peace-a*, *speak-a*.

CHAPTER 1 (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*)

— 1.1 —

In front of George Page's house in Windsor, three men were speaking: Robert Shallow, a Justice of the Peace; Abraham Slender, his nephew; and Sir Hugh Evans, a heavily accented Welsh parson. Sir Hugh was not a knight. He was entitled to use "Sir" in front of his name because he had received a university degree.

Justice Shallow said, "Sir Hugh, don't try to change my mind; I will make a Star Chamber matter of it: Even if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire."

Justice Shallow felt wronged by Sir John Falstaff and wanted to take him before the Star Chamber, a high court whose meeting place was in a chamber in the palace of Westminster. It was called the Star Chamber because the meeting room ceiling was decorated with stars. This court dealt with cases involving riotous behavior by men with titles.

Sir John Falstaff was a man with a title; he was a knight. Justice Shallow was an esquire, which is the rank immediately beneath the rank of knight.

Slender added more information about Justice Shallow's titles: "You are Robert Shallow, esquire in the county of Gloucester, justice of peace, and 'Coram.'"

By "Coram," Slender meant the Latin *quorum*, which was part of the formula for the installation of justices: *quorum vos ... unum esse volumus*, or "of whom we wish that you ... be one."

"Yes, cousin Slender," Justice Shallow said, "and

‘Custalorum.’”

By “Custalorum,” Justice Shallow meant the Latin *Custos Rotolurum*, which meant “Keeper of the Rolls,” aka the Chief Justice of the Peace of the County.

Slender, who knew very little Latin, said, “Yes, and ‘Ratolorum,’ too.”

He did not know that “Custalorum” and “Ratolorum” meant the same thing.

He said to Sir Hugh, “And Justice Shallow is a gentleman born, Master Parson; he writes ‘Armigero’ to describe himself in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation — ‘Armigero.’”

By “Armigero,” Slender meant *armiger*, which means “esquire” in Latin. Esquires were entitled to have a coat of arms.

“Yes, I do write myself ‘esquire,’” Justice Shallow said, “and I have done that anytime these three hundred years.”

He meant that he came from a long line of ancestors who were esquires.

“All his successors who have gone before him have done that, and all his ancestors who come after him will also do that,” Slender said. “They may display the dozen white luses in their coat.”

Slender referred to a coat of arms with a dozen white luses — the freshwater fish named pikes — on it. Often, he made mistakes; here, he had mixed up “ancestors” and “successors.”

Justice Shallow said about his family’s coat of arms, “It is an old coat.”

Sir Hugh Evans, misunderstanding their conversation, said,

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

At the time, lice often infested old clothing, and at the time, lice were familiar to man. By “well, passant,” Sir Hugh meant “passing well” or “very well,” but *passant* is an Old French heraldic term meaning “walking.” Anyone listening to Sir Hugh could think that he was talking about walking fish. Lice can signify love: Lice cling to men and never willingly separate themselves from men. Fish can also signify love; a fish was a symbol of Christianity, whose followers are supposed to be identified by their love.

Justice Shallow said, “The luce is the fresh fish.”

He was letting Sir Hugh know that they were talking about freshwater fish, not about lice.

He added, “The salt fish is suitable for an old coat.”

Salted fish are preserved fish that are meant to last for a long time; old coats of arms have lasted for a long time.

Slender said to his uncle, Justice Shallow, “I may quarter, kinsman.”

By “quarter,” he meant that it was possible for him to combine two coats of arms.

Justice Shallow replied, “You may, by marrying.”

If Slender were to marry a woman from a family who had a coat of arms, he could combine the two coats of arms. The coat of arms would have four quarters, and in two quarters would appear his coat of arms while in the other two quarters would appear his wife’s coat of arms.

Sir Hugh Evans misunderstood again and said, “It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.”

He thought that they were talking about the garment of winter clothing known as a coat.

“Not at all,” Justice Shallow said.

With his heavy Welsh accent, Sir Hugh said, “Yes, py’r [by our] lady; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures, but that is all one.”

If a coat were torn into quarters, it would mar the coat. Some coats have four skirts, or sections: two in back, and two in front. If someone were to take a quarter of the coat, aka one skirt, only three skirts would be left in the marred coat.

Sir Hugh added, “If Sir John Falstaff has committed disparagements unto you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence to make atonements and compromises [compromises] between you.”

Sir Hugh was a good man who wanted to make peace between Justice Shallow and Sir John Falstaff, if possible.

“The council shall hear it,” Justice Shallow said. “It is a case involving riotous behavior by a knight.”

Sir Hugh misunderstood Justice Shallow. He thought that the word “council” referred to a church council, not to the Star Chamber.

Sir Hugh said, “It is not meet [fitting that] the council hear a riot; there is no fear of Got [God] in a riot; the council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments [advisements] in that.”

He wanted Justice Shallow to think carefully about his — Sir Hugh’s — words.

“I swear on my life, if I were young again, the sword

should end this disagreement,” Justice Shallow said. “Sir John and I would fight.”

“It is petter [better] that friends is the sword, and end it,” Sir Hugh said.

This was good advice from a clergyman. Let friends — such as Sir Hugh — not swords, bring about peace.

Sir Hugh added, “There is also another device in my prain [brain], which peradventure prings goot [perhaps brings good] discretions with it: There is Anne Page, who is the daughter to Mr. George Page, who is pretty virginity.”

By “goot discretions,” Sir Hugh meant “a good suggestion” — he often used the plural when he should have used the singular. Unfortunately, through misplacing words, he had made “pretty virginity” refer to George Page, not to Anne Page. Sir Hugh should have placed the related words close together.

“Anne Page?” Slender asked. “Is she the one who has brown hair, and speaks in a low, delicate voice like a woman?”

“It is that fery [very] person for all the ’orld [world], as just as you will desire,” Sir Hugh said, “Seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold and silver, is her grandsire upon his death’s-bed — may Got [God] deliver him to a joyful resurrections! — give to her when she is able to overtake seventeen years old.”

In other words, when Anne Page is seventeen years old, she will inherit a considerable amount of money from her grandfather, who is now on his deathbed.

Sir Hugh continued, “It were a goot motion [good thing to do] if we leave our pribbles and prabbles [bribbles, aka quibbles, and brabbles, aka trivial disputes], and desire a

marriage between Mr. Abraham Slender and Miss Anne Page.”

“Did her grandfather leave her seven hundred pounds?” Slender, who was not in love with Anne Page, asked.

“Yes,” Sir Hugh said, “and her father is make her a petter [better] penny.”

Not only was Anne Page going to inherit much wealth from her grandfather, but her father would also give her a pretty penny.

“I know the young gentlewoman,” Slender said. “She has good gifts.”

By “good gifts,” he meant “good characteristics and virtues.”

Sir Hugh said, “Seven hundred pounds and possibilities [and possibly more money] is goot [good] gifts.”

“Well, let us go and see good Mr. Page,” Slender said. “Is Falstaff there at Mr. Page’s house?”

“Shall I tell you a lie?” Sir Hugh said. “I do despise a liar as I do despise one who is false, or as I despise one who is not true. The knight, Sir John, is there; and, I beg you to be ruled by your well-willers [well-wishers]. I will peat [beat, aka knock on] the door for Mr. Page.”

He knocked on the door and called, “Hello! Got pless [God bless] your house here!”

From inside his house, Mr. Page called, “Who’s there?”

He opened his door.

Sir Hugh said, “Here is Got’s plessing [God’s blessing], and your friend, and Justice Shallow; and here is young Mr. Slender, that peradventures shall tell you another tale

[perhaps will have something to tell you], if matters grow to your likings [if you are willing].”

Mr. Page said, “I am glad to see that all of you are well.”

He added, “I thank you for the gift of venison you sent to me, Justice Shallow.”

“Mr. Page, I am glad to see you,” Justice Shallow said. “I wish you good health. I wish that the venison I sent to you were better; it was not killed in the best way for the meat to be at its tastiest. How is good Miss Page? I thank you always with my heart — with all my heart.”

“Sir, I thank you,” Mr. Page said.

“Sir, I thank you,” Justice Shallow said. “By yea and no, I do.”

Mr. Page said, “I am glad to see you, good Mr. Slender.”

“How is your fawn-colored greyhound, sir?” Slender asked. “I heard it said that he was outrun in a race held at Cotsall.”

Cotsall was a way of referring to the Cotswold Hills in Gloucestershire.

“It was too close to call, sir,” Mr. Page said.

Slender teased him: “You won’t admit that your dog was outrun.”

“And he should not,” Justice Shallow said. “You are at fault for teasing Mr. Page.”

He added, “Mr. Page’s dog is a good dog.”

“My dog is a cur — an ordinary dog — sir,” Mr. Page said.

“Sir, he’s a good dog, and he is a fair dog,” Justice Shallow said. “Can there be anymore said? He is both good and fair.”

Justice Shallow added, "Is Sir John Falstaff here?"

"Sir, he is inside," Mr. Page said, "and I wish I could do a good turn for the two of you."

Sir Hugh said, "That is spoken as a Christians ought to speak."

"He has wronged me, Mr. Page," Justice Slender said.

"Sir, he does somewhat confess it," Mr. Page replied.

"Even if it is confessed, it is still not yet redressed," Justice Shallow said. "Is not that so, Master Page? He has wronged me; indeed he has, in a word — he has, believe me. I, Robert Shallow, esquire, say that I have been wronged."

"Here comes Sir John," Mr. Page said.

Sir John Falstaff and his followers Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol exited Mr. Page's house. Bardolph's face was red from his alcoholism, Nym's favorite word was "humor," and Pistol loved extravagant language of the type he heard in action-filled plays.

Falstaff, who knew that Justice Shallow was upset at him, said, "Justice Shallow, do you plan to complain about me to the King?"

Justice Shallow laid out the charges against Falstaff: "Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broken open my lodge."

His lodge was his gamekeeper's dwelling in his park.

Falstaff asked, "Have I kissed your gamekeeper's daughter?"

"Tut, I don't care a pin about that trifling thing," Justice Shallow said. "These charges shall be answered."

He meant “answered in a court of law.”

Falstaff, deliberately misunderstanding “answered” as “replied to,” said, “I will answer it immediately; I have done everything that you have accused me of doing. That is now answered.”

“The council shall know about this,” Justice Shallow said.

“It would be better for you if it were known in counsel — that is privately,” Falstaff replied. “If it is known publicly, you’ll be laughed at.”

“*Pauca verba*, Sir John,” Sir Hugh said.

Pauca verba is Latin for “few words.”

Sir Hugh added, “Goot worts [Good words].”

Worts are cabbage-like plants.

Pretending that Sir Hugh had meant to say “worts” instead of “words,” Falstaff replied, “Good worts! Good cabbage.”

He then said to Justice Shallow’s nephew, “Slender, I broke your head and made it bleed. What matter have you against me?”

Falstaff meant “legal matter.”

“Sir, I have matter in my head against you,” Mr. Slender said, referring to his brain matter.

He added, “And I have matter against your cony-catching rascals: Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol.”

Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol were all lowlife thieves and conmen. A cony is a rabbit, and “cony” is also a word for the victim of a con.

Slender continued, “They carried me to the tavern and made me drunk, and afterward they picked my pocket.”

Drawing his sword, Bardolph called Slender a name: “You Banbury cheese!”

Banbury cheeses are made in thin rounds, and so they are a byword — an outstanding embodiment or example — for anything very thin.

Intimidated by Bardolph, Slender said, “Never mind. It does not matter.”

“What is the meaning of this, Mephostophilus?” Pistol shouted as he drew his sword.

By “Mephostophilus,” Pistol meant “Mephistophilis,” a Devil who tempted Doctor Faustus in Christopher Marlowe’s play *Doctor Faustus*.

Intimidated by Pistol, Slender said, “Never mind. It does not matter.”

“Slice, I say!” Nym shouted as he drew his sword and made slicing motions with it. “*Pauca, pauca!* Slice! That’s my humor. That’s what I think.”

Pauca is Latin for “few,” and Pistol probably meant *Pauca verba*, aka “Few words.” In other words, Pistol was saying, “Let’s stop talking and instead start fighting!”

Intimidated by Nym, Slender asked, “Where is Peter Simple, my manservant? Can you tell me, uncle?”

He wanted someone to protect him from Falstaff’s followers.

“Be quiet, please,” Sir Hugh said. “Now let us understand this matter. There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand; that is, Master Page, *fidelicet* [*videlicet*, Latin for “namely”] Master Page; and there is myself, *fidelicet* myself; and the three [third] party is, lastly and finally, my Host of the Garter Inn.”

“We three, then, are to hear it and end it between them,” Mr. Page said. “We will hear about and judge the quarrel concerning Slender.”

“Fery goot [Very good],” Sir Hugh said. “I will make a prief [brief] of it in my notebook; and we will afterwards ’ork [work] upon the cause with as great discreetly [discretion] as we can.”

Falstaff acted as a lawyer in this mock trial. He called, “Pistol!”

“He hears with ears,” Pistol replied.

“The tevil [Devil] and his tam [dam, aka mother]!” Sir Hugh said. “What phrase is this, ‘He hears with ears’? Why, it is affectations [affected]!”

Falstaff asked, “Pistol, did you pick Mr. Slender’s pocket?”

Slender said, “Yes, by these gloves, did he, or I wish that I might never come in my own great chamber — the largest room in my house — again otherwise. He robbed me of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two Edward shovelboards that cost me two shilling and two pence apiece when I bought them from Ed Miller, by these gloves.”

A groat is a coin worth fourpence. A mill-sixpence is a sixpence that is made by a machine rather than made by hand. Because it is made by a machine, its edges are smoother and more regular than a sixpence made by hand. An Edward shovelboard is a shilling from the reign of King Edward VI; it was used as a counter in the game of shovelboard.

Falstaff asked, “Is this true, Pistol?”

Sir Hugh misunderstood Falstaff’s words. He thought that Falstaff was referring to “true Pistol,” aka “honest Pistol.”

Sir Hugh said, “No; he is false Pistol, if he is a pickpocket.”

“Ha, you mountain-foreigner!” Pistol said, referring to Sir Hugh’s Welsh ancestry — Wales is known for its mountains. “Sir John and Justice Shallow, I combat challenge of this latten bilbo.”

Pistol was saying that he wanted to fight Slender in a trial by combat. He insultingly called Slender a latten Bilbo — a brass sword. Iron swords are better than brass swords because iron is harder than brass. He was also comparing Slender’s thinness to a skinny sword.

Pistol continued, “Word of denial in thy labras here! Word of denial: froth and scum, you lie!”

By “labras,” Pistol meant “lips.” He was saying that Slender was lying through his lips, and that he, Pistol, was forcing those lying words back into Slender’s mouth. However, Pistol’s Latin was poor. *Labrum* is Latin for lip; *labra* is the plural form. Both “froth and scum” refer to beer; the “scum” is the dregs of the beer, while froth is air bubbles mixed with beer. Pistol was insulting Slender by calling him froth and scum.

Intimidated by Pistol, Slender said, “By these gloves, if Pistol did not rob me, then it was he.” He pointed at Nym.

Nym said, “Be advised, sir, and pass good humors — think carefully, and say good things about me.”

He added, “I will say ‘marry trap’ with you, if you run the nuthook’s humor on me; that is the very note of it.”

Even at the best of times, Nym’s language was difficult to understand. Possibly, he was using “trap” in its slang sense of “fraud” and was threatening to find out something bad about Slender and reveal it publicly. That is, he would marry, or join, the word “fraud” to Slender’s name so that

“Slender” would become synonymous with “fraud.” A nutfork is a forked stick used to hook the branches of nut trees and pull them closer to the ground so that the nuts could be harvested. Police officers were called “nuthooks” because they would “hook” and arrest criminals.

Therefore, this is probably what Nym was saying: “If you try to get me arrested, I will dig up dirt on you and make your name synonymous with the word ‘fraud’ — I mean it.”

Intimidated by Nym, Slender said, “By this hat, then, he in the red face — Bardolph — robbed me; for though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.”

Falstaff asked Bardolph, “What do you say, Scarlet and John?”

Slender had referred to Bardolph as “he in the red face” — cosmetics were regarded as a kind of mask, and Bardolph’s face, which was red because of his alcoholism, looked as if a red color had been applied with a liberal use of cosmetics. Falstaff called Bardolph “Scarlet and John” as a reference to two of Robin Hood’s companions: Will Scarlet and Little John. “Scarlet” was a reference to Bardolph’s red face, or mask, and “John” was perhaps a reference to the person wearing the “mask.” In folklore, Little John was a giant of a man, and so perhaps Bardolph has a beer belly — although not nearly as big as Falstaff’s.

“Why, sir,” Bardolph said, “for my part I say the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.”

Sir Hugh said, “It is his five senses, not ‘five sentences’ — what the ignorance is!”

“And being fap, aka drunk, sir,” Bardolph continued, “he was, as they say, cashiered — thrown out of the tavern —

and so conclusions passed the careiers.”

A careier, aka career, in horsemanship is a short run at full speed. Bardolph was saying that things swiftly came to their conclusions. He did not say what those conclusions were; he was hoping that the “umpires” would decide that the drunken Slender had lost his money instead of being robbed of it.

If you have trouble understanding Bardolph’s words, you are not the only one. Slender actually thought that Bardolph was speaking a language other than English!

Slender said, “Yes, you spoke in Latin in the inn, too, as well as now, but it does not matter: I’ll never be drunk again as long as I live, except in the company of honest, civil, godly people, as a result of this trick. If I am ever again drunk, I’ll be drunk with those who have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.”

“So Got ’udge [God judge] me,” Sir Hugh said, “That is a virtuous mind.”

Falstaff said, “You have heard all these matters denied, gentlemen; you have heard it.”

Anne Page now arrived, carrying wine. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page followed her.

Mr. Page said, “No, daughter, carry the wine inside; we’ll drink it inside the house.”

Anne Page carried the wine back inside the house.

Slender said to himself, “Heaven! This is Miss Anne Page!”

“How are you, Mrs. Ford?” Mr. Page said.

“Mrs. Ford,” Falstaff said, “truly it is good to see you again.”

He added, "With your permission, good woman," and kissed her politely in greeting.

Mr. Page said to his wife, "Make these gentlemen welcome."

He said to the others, "Come, we are having a hot venison meat pie for dinner."

He wanted everyone to make peace with each other: Justice Shallow to make peace with Falstaff, and Slender to make peace with Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph. Therefore, he added, "Come, gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness with our wine. Let all of us be at peace with each other."

Everyone went inside the Pages' house except for Justice Shallow, Slender, and Sir Hugh Evans.

Slender said, "I wish that I had my *Book of Songs and Sonnets* here. I would rather have that than forty shillings."

Simple, Slender's manservant, arrived.

Slender said, "How are you, Simple! Where have you been? I must wait on myself, must I? Do you have the *Book of Riddles* with you?"

"*Book of Riddles!*" Simple said. "Why, didn't you lend it to Alice Shortcake last Allhallowmas, a fortnight before Michaelmas?"

Allhallowmas is All Saints' Day: November 1. Michaelmas is Saint Michael's Day: September 29. Simple had made a mistake. He meant "Martlemas," not Michaelmas. Martlemas is November 11.

Justice Shallow said to Slender, "Come, let's go inside. We are waiting for you. But first let us have a word with you. Pay attention. There is, as it were, a tender, a kind of

tender, made afar off — indirectly — by Sir Hugh here. Do you understand me?”

Slender said, “Yes, sir, you shall find me reasonable; if it be so, I shall do what is reasonable.”

Slender thought he understood what tender had been made, but he did not. Justice Shallow was saying that Sir Hugh had indirectly stated that Slender was interested in marrying Anne Page; however, Slender thought that the tender referred to a reconciliation between himself and Falstaff’s men: Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph.

“You don’t understand me,” Justice Shallow said.

“I do understand you, sir,” Shallow replied.

“Give ear [Listen] to his motions [suggestions], Mr. Slender,” Sir Hugh said. “I will description [describe] the matter to you, if you be capacity of it [are capable of understanding it].”

“No, I will do as my kinsman Justice Shallow says,” Slender said, still thinking that they were talking about his dispute with Falstaff’s men. “Please, pardon me; I will listen to him because he’s a justice of peace in his country. I may be a simple man, but I know enough to listen to his advice about legal matters.”

Sir Hugh said, “But that is not what we are talking about: We are not talking about legal matters. The matter we are talking about concerns your marriage.”

“I see,” Slender said.

“Yes,” Sir Hugh said. “We are talking about you marrying Miss Anne Page.”

“Why, if it must be so,” Slender said, “I will marry her upon any reasonable demands.”

“But can you affection [feel affection for; that is, love] the woman [woman]?” Sir Hugh asked. “Let us command [demand] to know that from your mouth or from your lips; for divers [several, diverse] philosophers hold that the lips is parcel [part] of the mouth. Therefore, precisely [concisely], can you carry your good will to the maiden?”

At the time, “will” could mean sexual desire; it could also mean genitals.

Justice Shallow asked, “Abraham Slender, can you love her?”

“I hope, sir,” Slender replied, “that I will do as it shall become one who would do what is reasonable.”

“Got’s lords and His ladies!” Sir Hugh said. “You must speak possitable [positively and more passionately], if you can carry her your desires towards her [if you want to convince her that you love her].”

“Yes, you must do that,” Justice Shallow said. “Will you, if she has a good dowry, marry her?”

“I will do a greater thing than that,” Slender said, “upon your request, Justice Shallow, in any reasonable thing.”

“Listen to me. Listen to me, sweet kinsman,” Justice Shallow said. “What I am doing is meant to make you happy, Slender. Can you love the maiden?”

“I will marry her, sir, at your request,” Slender replied, “but if there is no great love in the beginning, yet Heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another; I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt. But if you say, ‘Marry her,’ I will marry her; to do that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.”

Slender lacked facility with language — Bardolph may

have been correct when he said that Slender had drunk himself out of his five sentences. Slender had meant to say “increase,” not “decrease”; “content,” not “contempt”; “resolved,” not “dissolved”; and “resolutely,” not “dissolutely.”

Sir Hugh said, “It is a fery discretion [very discrete, by which Sir Hugh meant “very good”] answer, except for the mistake in the ’ort [word] ‘dissolutely’: The ’ort is, according to our meaning, ‘resolutely,’ but Slender’s meaning — his content — is good.”

“Yes, I think my nephew Slender meant well,” Justice Shallow said.

“Yes, or else I wish that I might be hanged!” Slender said.

“Here comes fair — beautiful — Miss Anne,” Justice Shallow said.

He said to her, “I wish that I were young again because of you, Miss Anne!”

Anne Page replied politely, “The dinner is on the table; my father desires your company.”

Justice Shallow said, “I will go in and eat with him, beautiful Miss Anne.”

“’od’s plessed [God’s blessed] will!” Sir Hugh said. “I will not be absence [absent] at the grace.”

Justice Shallow and Sir Hugh went inside.

Anne Page asked Slender, “Will you please come in and eat, sir?”

“No, thank you,” Slender replied. “I thank you, heartily. I am very well.”

“The people inside are waiting for you, sir,” Anne Page

said.

“I am not hungry, thank you,” Slender said.

He said to his manservant Simple, “Go inside. Although you are my manservant, you can wait upon my uncle, Justice Shallow.”

Simple went inside.

Slender said, “A justice of peace sometimes may be beholden to his friend for the use of a manservant. I have only three men and a boy as my servants, until my mother dies and leaves me an inheritance, but so what? It does not matter that I am living as if I were born a poor gentleman.”

“I may not go in without you,” Anne Page said. “They will not sit at the table and eat until you come.”

If Slender were intelligent, he would know that he ought to go inside immediately. He was not intelligent.

“Truly, I’ll eat nothing,” he said. “I thank you as much as though I did eat.”

“Please, sir, go inside.”

“I had rather walk here, outside, I thank you,” Slender said. “I bruised my shin the other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; we fought three bouts for a dish of stewed prunes; and, truly, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since.”

Slender had no idea how to court a woman — or how to fence. He must have stumbled and bruised his shin while fencing, and he ought to have known that “stewed prunes” was a way of referring to a prostitute — stewed prunes were served in brothels. He was giving Anne Page the impression that he had injured himself while fighting over a whore. He also should have known that the phrase “hot

meat” had a secondary meaning of “prostitute.”

Dogs had been barking, and Slender asked Anne Page, “Why do your dogs bark so? Are there bears in the town?”

Bears were used in the “sport” of bearbaiting. A bear would be tied to a stake, and then dogs would be let loose to attack the bear.

“I think there are, sir,” Anne Page said. “I heard them being talked about.”

“I love the sport well, but I shall as quickly quarrel with another spectator at a bearbaiting as any man in England,” Slender said. “You would be afraid, if you were to see a bear loose, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, indeed, sir,” she replied.

“That’s meat and drink to me, now. I have seen the famous bear Sackerson loose twenty times, and I have taken him by the chain,” Slender said, “but, I promise you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it, that it surpassed all belief, but women, indeed, cannot abide bears; they are very ill-favored — ugly — and rough things.”

Presumably, Slender was calling the bears — not the women — ill-favored.

A page — a young male servant — came from inside the house and said, “Come inside, gentle Mr. Slender, come inside; we are waiting for you.”

“I’ll eat nothing,” Slender said. “I thank you, sir.”

“By cock and pie, you shall not choose, sir!” the page said. “You must accept this invitation! Come inside, come inside.”

“Please, lead the way,” Slender said to Anne Page.

“Come on, sir,” the page said.

“Miss Anne, you shall go in first,” Slender said.

“Not I, sir,” Anne Page said. “Please, go in first.”

“I’ll rather be unmannerly than troublesome,” Slender said.
“You do yourself wrong, indeed!”

He went inside. Unseen by him, Anne Page followed him with her apron spread wide in her hands. She was acting as if she were driving a goose before her. The page, amused, followed her.

— 1.2 —

Sir Hugh Evans and Simple, Slender’s manservant, came out of the Pages’ house. Sir Hugh had instructions to give to Simple.

“Go your ways, and ask of the French Doctor Caius’ house which is the way,” Sir Hugh said.

He meant for Simple to ask for directions to Doctor Caius’ house, but his English was so poor that it seemed that he was asking the page to ask Doctor Caius’ house for directions.

He continued, “In Doctor Caius’ house there dwells one Mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of [who is] his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry [laundress], his washer, and his wringer.”

Clothing was wrung to remove excess water after being washed.

Sir Hugh was unintentionally funny when he said that Mistress Quickly was Doctor Caius’ “nurse.” A nurse is a housekeeper, which is what Mistress Quickly was, but the juxtaposition with “dry nurse” called to mind a wet nurse and the image of Doctor Caius paying Mistress Quickly to

breastfeed him.

“Yes, sir,” Simple said.

“Nay, it is petter [better] yet [I have more to tell you],” Sir Hugh said. “Give her this letter; for it [she] is a ’oman that altogether’s acquaintance [a woman who is thoroughly acquainted] with Miss Anne Page: and the letter is to desire and require [ask] her to solicit your master’s desires to Miss Anne Page.”

The purpose of the letter was to ask Mistress Quickly to say nice things about Slender to Anne Page in the hope that Anne Page would agree to marry him.

“Please, be gone,” Sir Hugh said. “I will go back and make an end of my dinner; there’s pippins and cheese to come. Apples and cheese make the perfect finish to a meal.”

— 1.3 —

In a room at the Garter Inn, Falstaff, the Host of the Garter Inn, and Falstaff’s followers Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol were talking. Also present was Falstaff’s page, who was named Robin.

“My Host of the Garter!” Falstaff said.

“What says my bully-rook?” the Host replied. “What do you want, jolly fellow? Speak scholarly and wisely.”

At the time, “bully” was not an insult. It meant “fine fellow” or “good friend.”

“Truly, my Host, I must turn away and fire some of my followers,” Falstaff said.

The Host thought that was a good idea: “Discard them, fire them, bully Hercules; cashier them. Let them depart; let them trot, trot away.”

“The bill here for my followers and me is ten pounds a week.”

“You are an Emperor — Caesar, Kaiser, and Vizier,” the Host said. “I will hire Bardolph; he shall draw draughts of beer, and he shall tap barrels of beer and wine. Do I speak well, bully Hector?”

“Good idea,” Falstaff said. “Hire Bardolph, my good Host.”

“I have decided to do that,” the Host said. “Let him follow me and obey my orders.”

The Host said to Bardolph, “Let me see you froth and lime.”

The Host wanted to begin training Bardolph to be a bartender immediately. To froth meant to pour beer in such a way that it had a large head; that way the customer would be paying for froth as well as beer. To lime meant to put lime in bad wine to mask the bad taste. Both frothing and liming were ways to cheat customers.

The Host said to Bardolph, “I have nothing more to say. Follow me.”

The Host left the room.

“Bardolph, follow him,” Falstaff said. “A tapster — being a bartender — is a good trade. An old cloak will provide material for a new jacket; a withered manservant can become a fresh and new tapster. Go; *adieu*.”

“It is a life that I have desired,” the alcoholic Bardolph said. “This is my dream job. I will thrive.”

Pistol declaimed, “Oh, base Hungarian wight! Will you the spigot wield? Oh, base and hungry beggar fellow! Will the spigot now be your weapon?”

Nym joked, “Bardolph was begotten by drunken parents,

and so this is his dream job. Isn't that a humorous conceit?"

"I am glad I am so rid of this tinderbox," Falstaff said. "A tinderbox contains materials to start a fire, and Bardolph's red nose is burning. His thefts were too open; his filching was like an unskillful singer — he kept not time. There is a right time to steal — a time when you won't likely be caught. There is also a wrong time to steal — a time when you will likely be caught."

Nym said, "The good humor is to steal at a minute's rest — the best time to steal is to commit a theft in the shortest possible time."

Pistol said, "The wise don't call it stealing; they use the euphemism of 'conveying,' as in conveying money from someone else's pocket to your pocket. 'Steal'! This is what I think of that word!"

He made a rude gesture with his middle finger.

"Well, sirs," Falstaff said, "I am almost out at heels."

He meant that he was almost broke, but Pistol took the expression "out at heels" literally — he pretended that Falstaff had holes in the heels of his stockings and that his shoes were almost worn out.

"Why, then, let blisters ensue," Pistol said.

"There is no remedy; I must cony-catch; I must shift," Falstaff said. "I must use my wits to come up with a way to get money."

"Young ravens must have food," Pistol said. Falstaff had been paying for the rooms and meals of his followers.

"Which of you know of Mr. Ford here in this town?" Falstaff asked.

Pistol replied, "I have heard of the fellow. He is rich."

“My honest lads,” Falstaff said, “I will tell you what I am about.”

Pistol pretended that Falstaff meant “round about” — his circumference.

He said, “Two yards, and more.”

“No quips now, Pistol!” Falstaff said. “Indeed, I am in the waist two yards round about, but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift. Briefly, I intend to pursue Ford’s wife. I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she is always as affable as if she is carving meat for guests, she gives the leer of invitation. I can interpret the action of her familiar style, and I can translate it so that it can be easily understood. When I make the least favorable interpretation of her behavior and translate it into plain English, her behavior clearly says, ‘I am Sir John Falstaff’s.’”

By “least favorable,” Falstaff meant “least favorable” to him. That is, he thought that if you looked at Mrs. Ford’s behavior and noted what was least favorable to Falstaff, you would still have to conclude that Mrs. Ford was sexually attracted to him.

But “least favorable” could be interpreted as least favorable to Mrs. Ford. That is, if you looked at Mrs. Ford’s behavior and interpreted it in the way that made Mrs. Ford look worst, you would conclude that Mrs. Ford was sexually attracted to Falstaff.

Pistol said, “He has studied her will, and he has translated her will out of honesty into English.”

Pistol’s words stated that Falstaff had studied Mrs. Ford’s will — that is, her desires — and he was honestly translating, or interpreting, her hidden desires into plain English — that is, something that could easily be understood.

According to Falstaff, Mrs. Ford was sexually attracted to him. Falstaff thought that his interpretation of Mrs. Ford's desires was correct.

Pistol's words, however, had a secondary meaning. Pistol was also saying that Falstaff had studied Mrs. Ford's will — that is, her desires — and he was translating, or interpreting, her desires, which were honest, aka chaste, aka faithful to her husband, as being ingle-ish toward Falstaff. Now obsolete, the phrase "to ingle" meant "to fondle or caress." An ingle was a paramour — a lover who was married to someone else.

According to Pistol, Mrs. Ford was faithful to her husband, and Falstaff was wrong when he thought that Mrs. Ford was sexually attracted to him. Pistol thought that Falstaff's interpretation of Mrs. Ford's desires was incorrect. So did Nym.

"The anchor is deep," Nym said. "Will that humor pass? Does that expression make sense?"

Does the expression "the anchor is deep" make sense in this context? You decide.

An anchor that has been dropped into the sea keeps the ship from moving very far. Perhaps Nym meant that Falstaff's plans for Mrs. Ford would not go very far.

Falstaff said, "I have heard gossip that Mrs. Ford controls her husband's purse. Mr. Ford has a legion of angels; he has many angels — coins imprinted with a depiction of the archangel Michael."

"As many Devils entertain; and 'To her, boy,' say I," Pistol said.

He meant that Falstaff should seek the assistance of as many Devils as Mrs. Ford had angels.

“The humor rises — this conversation grows more interesting,” Nym said. “It is good. Humor me the angels — find a way to get the money and give me some of it.”

Even if Falstaff’s plot were poor, Nym would not mind benefitting from it if — against the odds — it should work.

“I have here a letter that I have written to her,” Falstaff said, “and here I have another letter that I have written to Mr. Page’s wife, who just now also eyed me thoroughly. She examined my parts with most judicious ogles and amorous glances; sometimes she shot beams of eyesight at my foot, and sometimes at my portly belly.”

“Then did the Sun on a dunghill shine,” Pistol said.

“I thank you for that humor,” Nym said to Pistol. “That was an appropriate expression for this occasion.”

Neither Nym nor Pistol objected to getting money from the Fords; neither Nym nor Pistol thought that Falstaff had much of a chance of seducing either Mrs. Ford or Mrs. Page.

“Oh, Mrs. Page did so run her amorous glances over my exterior parts with such a greedy and intent observation that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me and burn me up like light falling on me after leaving a magnifying glass!” Falstaff said. “Here’s another letter. This one is for Mrs. Page. She also controls her husband’s money; she is a rich region in rich Guiana — she is all gold and bounty.

“I will be escheator to them both; I will be their treasury officer, and I will cheat them both. They shall be exchequers to me; they will be my treasuries. They shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade with them and profit from them both.

“Go. One of you take this letter to Mrs. Page; and one of

you take this letter to Mrs. Ford. We will thrive, lads; we will thrive.”

Both Nym and Pistol objected to Falstaff’s scheme. They thought that he had little or no chance of succeeding in seducing either Mrs. Ford or Mrs. Page.

Pistol said, “Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become, and by my side wear steel? Then, Lucifer take all! If I become a pander like that fellow who was the go-between of Troilus and Cressida, then I will lose honor as a soldier. No, I won’t do it! I would rather go to Hell!”

“I will run no base humor,” Nym said. “Here, take back the humor-letter: I will keep the ’havior of good reputation. I will act in such a way that I will not get a bad reputation as a pander.”

Falstaff said to Robin, his page, “Deliver these letters quickly, and sail like my pinnace — my small ship — to these golden shores. You can be the small ship that accompanies me, the big ship.”

He then said to Nym and Pistol, “Rogues, get you hence, avaunt! Vanish like hailstones, go. Trudge, plod away on the hoof; seek shelter, pack off! You are fired!

“I, Falstaff, will learn the humor of the age,” Falstaff said, “and the custom of the age is French thrift, you rogues. From now on, my household will consist of myself and my uniformed page.”

Pistol and Nym now had to fend for themselves — Falstaff would no longer pay for their room and board.

Falstaff left the room.

Pistol shouted after Falstaff, “Let vultures gripe your guts! Gourd and fullam — two kinds of loaded dice — rule, and high and low numbers beguile rich and poor men.

“I’ll have money in my wallet when you are broke, you base Phrygian Turk!”

Nym said to Pistol, “I have operations that are humors of revenge. I want to get revenge on Falstaff.”

“Will you really get revenge?” Pistol asked.

“Yes, by welkin — the sky — and her stars!”

“Will you get revenge with wit — intelligence — or with steel swords?”

“With both the humors, I will,” Nym said. “I will discuss the humor of this love with Mr. Page. I will tell him what Falstaff plans to do with his wife.”

“And I to Mr. Ford shall eke — also — unfold,” Pistol said, “how Falstaff, that varlet vile, his dove will prove, his gold will hold, and his soft couch defile. I will tell Mr. Ford what Falstaff plans to do with his wife.”

“I will do more,” Nym said. “My humor shall not cool. I will incense Page to deal with poison. I will possess him with the color of jealousy. I will make him want to attack Falstaff. This revolt of mine is dangerous — that is my true humor and that is truly the way I feel about it.”

“You are the Mars of malcontents,” Pistol said. “You are the most warlike of malcontents, and you make a dangerous enemy. I will follow you. Lead on.”

They left to find Mr. Ford and Mr. Page.

— 1.4 —

In a room of the house of the French Doctor Caius, Mistress Quickly was talking with Slender’s manservant Peter Simple. Also present was Doctor Caius’ manservant John Rugby.

Mistress Quickly did not want Doctor Caius to know that Simple was in his house. She said, “John Rugby, please go to the window, and see if you can see our master, Doctor Caius, coming. If he comes in and finds anybody in the house, truly there will be plenty of abusing of God’s patience and the King’s English.”

“I’ll go and watch for him,” Rugby said.

“Go; and we’ll have a posset — hot milk curdled with ale or wine — as a reward for the troubles we take now. We will drink a posset very soon tonight, truly, at the latter end — the embers — of a sea-coal fire.”

Doctor Caius was wealthy. He could afford to burn high-quality coal shipped in by sea.

Rugby went to the window.

Mistress Quickly said, “Rugby is an honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever any servant who shall be in a house, and, I promise you, he is no tell-tale, aka tattle-tale, nor no breed-bate, aka trouble-maker. Rugby’s worst fault is that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish — perverse and headstrong — that way. But everyone has a fault, so let us allow this fault to pass.”

She added, “Peter Simple, did you say your name is?”

“Yes, for fault of a better,” Simple said.

“And Mr. Slender is your master?”

“Yes, indeed.”

“Doesn’t he wear a great round beard, like a glover’s paring-knife?”

A glover’s paring-knife was flat and round and was used for smoothing leather. Glovers worked with leather to make gloves and other items.

“No, he does not,” Simple said. “He has only a little wee face, with a little yellow beard, a Cain-colored beard. His beard is the color of the beard of Cain, the first murderer, as recounted in the Bible.”

“He is a softly spirited — gentle — man, isn’t he?” Mistress Quickly asked.

“Yes, he is,” Simple said, “but he is as tall a man of his hands as any is between this and his head — he is as valiant a man as any in this region. He has fought with a warrener.”

A warrener was a gamekeeper who kept rabbits. Apparently, Slender had gotten into a fight after being caught poaching rabbits.

“Do you say! Oh, I should remember him! Doesn’t he hold up his head, like this, and strut in his gait?”

Mistress Quickly imitated him well enough that Simple knew that she was imitating Slender.

“Yes, indeed, he does those things,” Simple said.

“Well, may Heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune! Tell Master Parson Evans I will do what I can for your master: Slender. I will help him court her. Anne is a good girl, and I wish —”

Rugby said, “Here comes Doctor Caius!”

“We shall be caught and scolded!” Mistress Quickly said.

She pointed to Doctor Caius’ study and said to Simple, “Run in here, good young man. Go into this study; he — Doctor Caius — will not stay long.”

Simple went into the study and Mistress Quickly shut the door.

Mistress Quickly said loudly so that Doctor Caius would hear her, “John Rugby! Go, John, go and look for our master; I think that he must not be well because he has not come home.”

She began to sing, “And down, down, adown-a”

The heavily accented French Doctor Caius entered his house and said, “Vat [What] is you sing? I do not like des [these] toys [things that are foolish nonsense]. Please, go and vetch [fetch] me in [from] my study *un boitier vert* [a green box], a box, a green-a box. Do intend [you understand] vat I speak? A green-a box.”

“Yes, I’ll fetch it for you,” Mistress Quickly said.

She thought, *I am glad he did not look in the study himself; if he had found the young man, he would have been horn-mad.*

A person who is horn-mad is a person who is as mad as a horned animal during mating season — or as mad as a husband who has just discovered that he has been cuckolded.

“*Ja foi, il fait fort chaud. Je m’en vais a la cour — la grande affaire!*” Doctor Caius said.

This meant, “In faith, it is very hot. I am going to the court — a grand affair!”

“Is this the box you want, sir?” Mistress Quickly asked.

“*Oui; mette le au mon pocket.* [Yes; put it in my pocket.] *Depeche* [Be quick], quickly. Vere [Where] is dat [that] knave Rugby?”

Mistress Quickly called, “John Rugby! John!”

Rugby said, “Here I am, sir!”

Doctor Caius said, “You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby. Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to the court.”

A Jack is a knave or rascal; Jack, of course, is also a nickname for a person named John.

Rugby said, “The rapier is ready, sir; it is here on the porch.”

“By my trot [troth, aka faith or truth], I tarry too long,” Doctor Caius said. “’od’s me! [God’s me! = God saves me!] *Qu’ai-j’oublie?* [What have I forgotten?] Dere [There] is some simples in my study, dat [that] I vill [will] not for the varld [world] I shall leave behind.”

One meaning of “trot” is “old woman.” Simples are medicines made from one plant or herb.

Doctor Caius went into his study.

Mistress Quickly, “Ah, me, he’ll find the young man there, and he’ll be mad!”

“Oh, *diable, diable!* [Oh, Devil, Devil!] Vat [What] is in my study? Villain! *Larron!* [Thief!]”

He pulled Simple out of his study and called, “Rugby, bring me my rapier!”

“Good master, be calm and peaceful,” Mistress Quickly said.

“Wherefore shall I be calm-a and peaceful-a?”

“The young man is an honest man,” Mistress Quickly said.

“What shall de [the] honest man do in my study? Dere [There] is no honest man dat [that] shall come in my study.”

“Please, don’t be so phlegmatic. Hear the truth: He came to me on an errand from Parson Hugh.”

Mistress Quickly was misusing a word. Instead of the word “phlegmatic,” which means “unemotional and calm,” she should have used the word “choleric,” which means “angry.”

“Vell [Well],” Doctor Caius said.

“Yes, truly,” Simple said. “My master wants Mistress Quickly to —”

“Be quiet, please,” Mistress Quickly said. Doctor Caius wanted to marry Anne Page, and he would be even angrier if he learned about a rival for her.

“Peace-a your tongue,” Doctor Caius said to Mistress Quickly.

He said to Simple, “Speak-a your tale.”

“My master wants this honest gentlewoman, your maid, Mistress Quickly, to speak a good word to Miss Anne Page about my master in the way of marriage.”

“This is all he wants, indeed,” Mistress Quickly said. She added, “But I’ll never put my finger in the fire, without need.”

She was saying to Doctor Caius that she would not say good things about Slender to Anne Page, although she had told Simple that she would.

“Sir Hugh send-a you?” Doctor Caius said to Simple.

He added, “Rugby, *baille* [bring] me some paper.”

He said to Simple, “Tarry you a little-a while.”

Doctor Caius began to write a note.

Mistress Quickly whispered to Simple, “I am glad he is so quiet. If he had been thoroughly moved, you should have heard him yelling so loud and so melancholy [Mistress Quickly meant ‘choleric,’ aka angry, rather than ‘melancholy,’ which she used instead of ‘melancholic’]. But notwithstanding, man, I’ll do you your master what good I can: and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master — I may call him my master, you see, for I keep his house; and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat [prepare food] and drink, make the beds and do everything by myself —”

Simple whispered to Mistress Quickly, “It is a great charge — burden or responsibility — to come under one body’s hand.”

Mistress Quickly whispered to Simple, “Do you know that? I can tell you that it is true. I am up early and down late; but notwithstanding — to tell you in your ear; I would have no words spoken aloud about it — my master himself is in love with Miss Anne Page, but notwithstanding that, I know Anne’s mind — that’s neither here nor there.”

Doctor Caius said to Simple, “You jack’nape [jackanapes, aka ape], give-a this letter to Sir Hugh; by gar [God], it is a shallenge [challenge]. I will cut his troat [throat] in dee [the] park; and I will teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make. You may be gone; it is not good that you tarry here. By gar, I will cut [off] all his two stones [testicles]; by gar, he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog.”

Carrying Doctor Caius’ note, Simple left.

Mistress Quickly said to Doctor Caius, “Sir Hugh was simply trying to help his friend Slender.”

“It is no matter-a ver dat [for that],” Doctor Caius said. “Do not you tell-a me dat [that] I shall have Anne Page for

myself? By gar, I vill [will] kill de [the] Jack [rascal] priest; and I have appointed mine [the] Host of de Jarteer [Garter Inn] to measure our weapons. By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.”

Doctor Caius wanted the Host of the Garter Inn to officiate at the duel of Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius. Among other things, the Host of the Garter Inn would measure their swords to make sure that they are equal in length. If one person’s sword were longer than the other person’s, the person with the longer sword would have an advantage in the duel.

“Sir, the maiden — Anne Page — loves you,” Mistress Quickly said, “and all shall be well. We must give folks leave to prate and gossip. Heavens!”

Doctor Caius said, “Rugby, come to the court with me.”

He said to Mistress Quickly, “By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door. “

He added, “Follow my heels, Rugby.”

He and Rugby walked out the door.

Mistress Quickly shouted after him, “You shall have Anne —” and then in a lower voice she said, “— an ass’ head of your own. No, I know Anne’s mind for all that. Never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne’s mind than I do; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank Heaven.”

Fenton arrived and called, “Is anyone at home?”

“Who’s there, I wonder?” Mistress Quickly said. “Come inside the house, please.”

Fenton entered the room and asked, “How are you now, good woman? How are you doing?”

“I am doing better than before because it pleases your good

worship to ask,” Mistress Quickly replied. “I am glad that you are courteous enough to ask me how I am doing.”

“What is the news?” Fenton asked. “How is pretty Miss Anne doing?”

“Truly, sir, she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one who is your friend, I can tell you that by the way,” Mistress Quickly said. “I praise Heaven for it.”

“Shall I do any good if I woo her, do you think?” Fenton asked. “Won’t she refuse my offer to marry her?”

“Truly, sir, all is in His hands above,” Mistress Quickly replied. “But notwithstanding, Mr. Fenton, I’ll be sworn on a book, she loves you. Don’t you have a wart above your eye?”

Fenton was wearing a hat, and so Mistress Quickly could not see if he had a wart.

“Yes, I have, but what of that?”

“Well, thereby hangs a tale,” Mistress Quickly said. “Truly, Anne is a remarkably charming girl. I detest [Mistress Quickly meant ‘confess’] that she is as virtuous a maiden as ever broke bread. We talked for an hour about that wart. I shall never laugh but in that maiden’s company! But indeed she is given too much to allicholy [Mistress Quickly meant ‘melancholy’] and musing. But when it comes to you — well, never mind.”

The word “melancholy” does not seem to accurately describe Anne.

“Well, I shall see her today,” Fenton said. “Wait, here’s some money for you; let me have your voice speaking in my behalf. If you see her before I see her, tell her good things about me.”

“Will I do that?” Mistress Quickly said. “Truly, you and I both will; and I will tell you more about what we said about the wart the next time you and I have confidence [a private conversation]; and I will tell you about Anne’s other wooers.”

“Farewell,” Fenton said. “I am in a great hurry now.”

“Farewell to you,” Mistress Quickly said.

Fenton departed, and Mistress Quickly said to herself, “Truly, he is an honest and virtuous gentleman, but Anne does not love him. I know that because I know Anne’s mind as well as another person does.”

So Mistress Quickly thought, but the person who knew whom Anne Page loved was Anne Page herself.

Mistress Quickly said, “Darn! I have forgotten something!”

She departed.

CHAPTER 2 (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*)

— 2.1 —

On a street in Windsor, Mrs. Page stood looking at Falstaff's love letter to her.

She said to herself, "Have I escaped love letters in the holiday-time of my beauty — when I was young — and am I now a subject for them? Let me see."

She read Falstaff's letter to her out loud:

"Ask me for no reason why I love you; for although Love may use Reason for his physician, he admits him not for his counselor. Yes, Love can consult Reason, yet Love need not accept Reason's advice. You are not young, and I am young no more. In this, we have something in common. You are merry, and so am I: Ha, ha! In this, we have something else in common. You love wine, and so do I. Can you wish to have anything else in common with a man?"

"Let it suffice you, Mrs. Page — at the least, if the love of a soldier can suffice — that I love you. I will not say, 'Pity me'; it is not a soldier-like phrase to say: 'Pity me.' But I do say, 'Love me.' By me,

"Thine own true knight,

"By day or night,

"Or any kind of light,

"With all his might

"For you to fight.

"Signed, JOHN FALSTAFF."

"For you to fight" was ambiguous. It could mean that

Falstaff was ready to fight for Mrs. Page, or it could mean that Mrs. Page would fight with Falstaff.

She looked up from the letter and said, "What a Herod of Jewry is this! The character Herod rants and raves on the stage, and Falstaff makes as much sense in this letter as Herod does in the theater. Oh, wicked world! Falstaff is well-nigh worn to pieces with age, and he is attempting to act like a young gallant!

"Falstaff resembles the Flemish — they are potbellied drunkards! And somehow this Flemish drunkard has looked at my behavior while I was around and picked out something that he considers unweighed — imprudent. When he picked out that unweighed something, he was picking out the Devil's name! And now because of that unweighed something — whatever it was — he dares in this manner to proposition me! What should I say to him? Whenever I was around him, I was frugal with my mirth. I did nothing wrong, and Heaven forgive me for what I am now thinking! Why, I am tempted to push for a bill in the Parliament for the putting down of men! How shall I be revenged on this Falstaff? I will be revenged on him as surely as his guts are stuffed with sausages."

Mrs. Ford arrived, seeking Mrs. Page for advice.

"Mrs. Page!" she called. "Believe me, I was just going to your house."

"And, believe me, I was coming to visit you," Mrs. Page said. "You look very ill."

"No, I will never believe that I look ill in the sense of being ugly," Mrs. Ford said. The letter she had received from Falstaff had upset her, but she was still able to make jokes. "I have evidence to show the contrary." She meant that the love letter was evidence that she was not ugly.

“Truly, you do look ill, in my opinion,” Mrs. Page said.

“Well, I do then,” Mrs. Ford said, “yet I say I could show you evidence to the contrary. Oh, Mrs. Page, give me some advice!”

“What’s the matter, woman?”

“If it were not for one trifling thing, I could come to quite a lot of ‘honor’!”

“If it is only a trifling thing, forget about it, and take the honor,” Mrs. Page replied. “What is the matter? Dispense with trifles. What is the matter?”

“If I would only be willing to go to Hell for an eternal moment or so, I could be knighted,” Mrs. Ford said.

She meant — and believed — that if she committed adultery with Falstaff, she would go to Hell eternally. Each moment would last an eternity. As for being knighted by Falstaff, she would be benighted — she would be doing night-work during the night with a knight on top of her. This was not an ‘honor’ she desired.

“What? You must be joking!” Mrs. Page said. “You say that you would be Sir Alice Ford!”

She was able to guess what had happened: Mrs. Page had received a letter similar to the letter that she had received and written by the same knight who had written her letter.

Mrs. Page said, “These knights will hack; and so you should not alter the article of your gentry.”

Knights can hack with their swords, and they can also use their “swords” to do other things — say, to a woman in bed. At the time, “hackney” was slang for a prostitute as well as a word that referred to horses. Horses and prostitutes are both ridden. Mrs. Page was telling Mrs. Ford

that knights can be promiscuous and therefore she ought not to seek any change in her gentry — her social status.

“We burn daylight,” Mrs. Ford said. “We are wasting time. Here, take this letter and read it; you will perceive how I might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye to see distinctions such as fat and thin in the bodies of men.

“Yet Falstaff did not swear and curse. He praised women’s modesty, and he gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all manner of uncomeliness, to all unethical actions, that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words. He talks like a gentleman, but when you read this letter, you will see that he does not write like one.

“The way he talks and the way he writes go together no more or better than Psalm One Hundred — a hymn of praise of God — goes together with the secular heartbreak song ‘Greensleeves’!

“These are two lyrics of ‘Greensleeves’: *‘Alas, my love, you do me wrong / To cast me off discourteously!’* Psalm One Hundred states, in part, *‘For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting.’*

“What tempest, what storm, I wonder, threw this whale, with so many barrels of oil in his big belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I get revenge on him? I think the best way would be to fill him with hope that he could sleep with me. I could tease him until the wicked fire of his lust has melted him in his own grease. Did you ever see the like of that letter?”

“Indeed, I have,” Mrs. Page said. “Letter for letter the same, except that the name of Page and Ford differs! I can provide you great comfort in this mystery of how Falstaff conceived an ill opinion of you — and me. Here’s the twin

brother of your letter. It is exactly the same as your letter except that it has my name in it.

“I am willing to let your letter receive the inheritance the way that the eldest brother inherits the property in primogeniture. I swear that my letter will inherit nothing that belongs to Falstaff.

“I would be willing to bet that he has a thousand of these letters, all written with blank spaces left where he can write different names. In addition, I am willing to bet that the letters we received are from the second edition — he has already used up all the letters printed in the first edition. I don’t doubt that he has printed so many ‘love’ letters that he needs a second edition. He does not care what he puts into the printing press or another kind of press — he wants to put us two in bed so that he can press us with his weight. I would prefer to be a giantess, and lie under Mount Pelion with the giants Otus and Ephialtes, who tried to reach Mount Olympus and make war against the gods. Their plan was to pile mountains on top of Mount Olympus; however, the Olympian gods defeated them and piled the mountains on top of Otus and Ephialtes. Our being under Falstaff’s belly in bed would be worse than being buried under mountains.

“Well, I can find twenty promiscuous turtledoves before I can find one chaste man. Turtledoves are known for being faithful to their mates, so I will never find twenty promiscuous turtledoves.”

Mrs. Ford, who had been comparing the two letters, said, “Why, your letter is the same as my letter; it has the very same handwriting and the very same words. What does he think about us that makes him send these letters to us?”

“I don’t know, but it must be bad,” Mrs. Page said. “It makes me almost ready to act contrary to my own honesty

and chasteness. I am almost tempted to regard myself as someone with whom I am not acquainted. Surely, unless he knows about some evil strain in me that I myself do not know, he would never have tried to board me in this violent way. It is as if he were a pirate trying to violently board a ship.”

“Boarding, you call it?” Mrs. Ford said. “I’ll be sure to keep him above deck.”

“So will I,” Mrs. Page said. “If he ever comes under my hatches, I’ll never go to sea again.

“Let’s be revenged on him. Let’s appoint a time for a meeting with him. We will pretend that we are interested in him and we will lead him on with bait, but we will delay and delay what he wants. We will lead him on until he has pawned his horses to the Host of the Garter Inn in order to pay for his sexual pursuit of us. We will hurt him in his wallet and perhaps in other places.”

“I will be willing to act in any villainous way against Falstaff,” Mrs. Ford said, “as long as it does not sully our carefully guarded honesty and chasteness. If my husband were to see this letter, it would give him eternal grounds for his jealousy.”

“Look, your husband is coming here, and my husband, too,” Mrs. Page said. “My good husband is as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause to be jealous, and that I hope is an immeasurable distance.”

“You are the happier woman because your husband is not jealous,” Mrs. Ford said.

“Let’s make plans together against this greasy knight,” Mrs. Page said. “Come over here and let’s talk.”

They went to a shady place and talked, and Mr. Ford

arrived, accompanied by Pistol, and Mr. Page arrived, accompanied by Nym. Pistol and Nym had been telling the two husbands about Falstaff's plans to seduce their wives.

Mr. Ford said to Pistol, "Well, I hope that it is not so."

"Hope is a curtal dog in some affairs," Pistol replied. "Sir John is after your wife."

A curtal dog is a dog with a docked — cut-off — tail. A curtal dog lacks something, and hope can be lacking in some affairs — sometimes, hope is not enough. Mr. Ford was hoping that his wife was faithful to him. She was, but Mr. Ford was jealous and Pistol's words were increasing Mr. Ford's jealousy.

"Why, sir, my wife is not young," Mr. Ford replied.

"Falstaff woos both highly born and lowly born, both rich and poor, both young and old, one with another, Mr. Ford," Pistol replied. "He loves the gallimaufry — he loves a stew made with every ingredient. Ford, perpend — pay attention."

"Falstaff loves my wife!"

"Yes," Pistol said, "with his passion burning hot. Prevent Falstaff's seduction of her, or you will find yourself like Actaeon with Ringwood, his dog, at his heels! Actaeon earned an odious name."

Actaeon was an ancient Greek hunter who saw the goddess Artemis bathing naked in a stream while he was hunting deer. Artemis is a militant virgin. Not pleased that Actaeon had seen her naked, she turned him into a horned stag and his own dogs chased him down and killed him. Because of the horns on Actaeon's head, he was later associated with cuckoldry and earned the name of cuckold. Cuckolds have unfaithful wives, and depictions of cuckolds show them

with horns on their head.

“What name, sir?” Mr. Ford asked.

Pistol replied, “The name of the horn, I say. Farewell. Take heed and keep your eyes open because thieves do set foot by night. Take heed, before summer comes or cuckoo-birds sing.”

Cuckoo-birds lay their eggs in other birds’ nests, and so their young are taken care of by other birds’ parents — a cuckold can end up raising another man’s child. From the cry of the cuckoo came the word “cuckold.”

Pistol said, “Let’s go now, Sir Corporal Nym!”

He added, “Believe what Corporal Nym told you, Mr. Page; he speaks sense.”

Mr. Ford thought, *I will patiently investigate this; I will find out whether this information is true.*

Nym said to Mr. Page, “And this is true; I like not the humor of lying. Falstaff has wronged me in some humors: I should have borne the humored letter to her; but I have a sword and it shall bite upon my necessity — it shall wound if I need to fight someone. Falstaff loves your wife; there’s the short and the long of it. My name is Corporal Nym; I speak and I avouch that what I have said is true: My name is Nym, and Falstaff loves your wife. *Adieu.* I love not the humor of bread and cheese, and there’s the humor of it. *Adieu.*”

Bread and cheese were meager rations — the absolute necessities. Nym was saying that he had gotten only bread and cheese while serving Falstaff, and now he meant to search for something better.

Pistol and Nym departed.

Mr. Page, who was amused by Nym's overuse of the word "humor," said to himself, "'The humor of it,' he said! Here's a fellow who frightens English out of its wits."

A short distance away from Mr. Page, Mr. Ford said to himself, "I will seek out Falstaff."

Mr. Page said to himself about Nym, "I never heard such a drawling, affected rogue. He drawls out his speeches by using repetitious and pretentious language."

Mr. Ford said to himself, "If I find that my wife is cheating on me, so be it."

Mr. Page said to himself, "I will not believe such a liar even if the priest of the town were to tell me that he is a true and honest man."

Mr. Ford said to himself, "He was a good sensible fellow."

Mr. Page said to his wife, "How are you, Meg?"

Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford walked toward their husbands.

"Where are you going, George?" Mrs. Page asked her husband. "I need to know whether you will be home for the noon meal."

Mrs. Ford asked her husband, "How are you, sweet Frank! Why are you melancholy?"

"I melancholy!" Mr. Ford said. He lied, "I am not melancholy! Go home."

"Truly, you have some ideas in your head that make you melancholy," Mrs. Ford replied.

She asked, "Will you go with me, Mrs. Page?"

"Yes, I will," Mrs. Page replied.

Mrs. Page said to her husband, "Be sure to come to dinner,

George.”

She then whispered to Mrs. Ford, “Look who is coming yonder: Mistress Quickly. She shall be our messenger to this paltry knight: Falstaff.”

Mrs. Ford whispered back, “Believe me, I was thinking about her. She will do the job.”

Mrs. Page asked Mistress Quickly, “Have you come to see my daughter, Anne?”

“Yes, I have,” Mistress Quickly replied. “How is she?”

“Come with us and see,” Mrs. Page said. “We want to talk with you for an hour.”

Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, and Mistress Quickly departed.

“How are you doing, Mr. Ford?” Mr. Page asked.

“You heard what this knave told me, didn’t you?”

“Yes, and you heard what the other knave told me?”

“Do you think they were telling the truth?” Mr. Ford asked.

“Hang them both!” Mr. Page said. “They are low-lives. I do not think that Falstaff the knight would do this. These men who are accusing him of trying to seduce our wives are two of his discarded men; they are rogues now they do not have jobs.”

“Were they his men?” Mr. Ford asked.

“Yes, they were.”

“I don’t like what I heard any better for that. Is Falstaff staying at the Garter Inn?”

“Yes, he is,” Mr. Page said. “If he really does intend this voyage of seduction towards my wife, I will turn her loose

on him; and if he gets anything more from her than sharp words, let it lie on my head.”

“I do not mistrust my wife,” Mr. Ford said, “but I would be loath to allow her and Falstaff to be together. A man may be too confident. I would have nothing — and certainly not horns! — lie on my head: I cannot be as satisfied as you are.”

The Host of the Garter Inn came walking toward them.

Mr. Page said, “Here comes the ranting Host of the Garter Inn. He has either liquor in his brain or money in his pocket when he looks so merry.”

He said, “How are you, Host!”

“How are you, bully-rook!” the Host said. “You are a gentleman.”

He called, “*Cavaleiro*-Justice, I say!”

The Host was bringing news of a duel, so he used the word *cavaleiro* to refer to Justice Shallow. *Cavaleiro* is a Spanish word referring to a knight on horseback or a courtly gentleman.

Justice Shallow, who had been walking behind the Host, walked up to the group of men and said, “I am coming, Host, I am coming.”

He added, “Good day and twenty, good Mr. Page! Twenty-one good-days to you! Mr. Page, will you go with us? We have an entertainment at hand.”

The Host said, “Tell him, *cavaleiro*-Justice; tell him, bully-rook.”

Justice Shallow said to Mr. Page, “Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh the Welsh priest and Caius the French doctor.”

Mr. Ford said, “Good Host of the Garter, may I speak to you?”

He and the Host went a short distance from the other men, and the Host asked, “What do you have to say to me, my bully-rook?”

Justice Shallow said to Mr. Page, “Will you go with us to watch the entertainment? My merry Host has had the measuring of their weapons; and, I think, he has sent them to different places so that they will not meet and fight each other. Believe me, I hear the parson is no jester. Listen, I will tell you what our entertainment shall be.”

They talked together.

The Host asked, “Have you any suit against the knight Falstaff, my guest-*cavaleire*?”

“None, I say,” Mr. Ford said, “but I’ll give you a pottle — a half-gallon of mulled sack sweetened with burnt sugar if you give me access to him and tell him that my name is Brook; this is only for a jest.”

Brook was a good name for Mr. Ford to choose; a brook is a small stream that is easily forded (crossed without a bridge).

“Let’s shake hands,” the Host said.

They shook hands.

The Host then said, “You shall have egress and regress; these are legal terms meaning the freedom to come and to go — did I use the right terms? And your name shall be Brook. Falstaff is a merry knight.”

The Host then asked, “Will you go, gentlemen?”

Justice Shallow said, “I will go with you, Host.”

Mr. Page said, "I have heard that the Frenchman has good skill with his rapier."

Justice Shallow said, "Tut, sir, I could have told you more about that. In these times fencers stand on distance, passes, stoccadoes, and I know not what. They pay attention to fancy stuff such as the space between fencers, lunges at each other, and thrusts at each other, but what is really important is in the heart, Mr. Page — that is what is important. In my day, back when I was young, I would have made all four of you stout-hearted fellows skip away like rats."

"Here, boys, here, here!" the Host said. "Shall we go?"

"I will go with you," Mr. Page said. "I would rather hear them scold each other than fight each other."

The Host, Justice Shallow, and Mr. Page departed.

Mr. Ford said to himself, "Although Page is so steadfastly and foolishly confident despite his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my suspicion so easily. Earlier, my wife was in Falstaff's company at Mr. Page's house; and what they did there, I don't know. Well, I will look further into this matter, and I have a disguise that I can use to talk to Falstaff and find out what is going on. If I find out that my wife is honest and faithful to me, I have not wasted my time. And if I find out that my wife is not honest and faithful to me, I have not wasted my time."

— 2.2 —

Falstaff and Pistol talked together in a room at the Garter Inn.

"I will not lend you a penny," Falstaff said.

"Why, then the world's my oyster, which I with sword will open," Pistol said. "I will have to make my living with my

sword.”

“Not a penny,” Falstaff said. “I have allowed you, sir, to use your companionship with me to borrow money. I have begged my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow Nym. If I had not, you two would have looking through prison bars, like two twin baboons. I am damned in Hell for swearing to gentlemen who are my friends that you two are good soldiers and brave fellows; and when Miss Bridget lost the valuable handle of her fan, I swore upon my honor that you did not have it.”

“Didn’t you get your fair share of the profit from the theft?” Pistol asked. “Didn’t you get fifteen pence?”

“Use your reason, you rogue, use your reason,” Falstaff replied. “Do you think that I would endanger my soul gratis — for free? Because I lied for you, my soul is in danger of spending eternity in Hell. In a word, hang no more around me — I am no gibbet for you. Go. A short knife and a throng of people is what you need! Be a cutpurse and a pickpocket! Cut the strings of a person’s purse and put their money in your pocket! Go to your manor of Pickt-hatch, an unsavory part of London! Go.

“You told me that you will not bear a letter for me, you rogue! You told me that you insist upon your honor! Why, you unconfinable baseness — you boundless lowness — it is as much as I can do to keep the reputation of my own honor unstained.

“I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand so that it is out of my way and able to be ignored and hiding my honor in my necessity, am happy to shuffle, aka cheat; to hedge, aka deceive; and to lurch, aka dissemble; and yet you, you rogue, will hide your rags, your cat-a-mountain — wild — looks, your red-lattice, aka alehouse, speech and phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the

shelter of your honor! You will not do it, you tell me!”

“I do relent,” Pistol said. “I admit that you are right and I was wrong. What more do you want from a man?”

Falstaff’s page, Robin, entered the room and said to Falstaff, “Sir, here is a woman who wants to speak with you.”

“Let her in,” Falstaff replied.

Mistress Quickly entered the room and said, “I wish you good morning.”

Falstaff replied, “Good morning, good wife.”

“That is not so, if it please your worship,” Mistress Quickly said.

Falstaff knew that she was saying that she was not a wife, so he said, “Good maiden, then.”

A maiden is an unmarried woman — a virgin.

“Yes, I swear that I am a maiden,” Mistress Quickly said, “just as my mother was, the first hour I was born.”

Mistress Quickly’s speech frequently was mixed up. With the exception of Mother Mary, aka the Virgin Mary, a mother cannot be a virgin. Here, she was conflating two expressions: “a maiden as good as her mother” and “as innocent as a new-born babe.”

“I do believe the swearer.”

Falstaff was saying that he believed that Mistress Quickly was not a virgin.

He asked, “What do you want with me?”

“Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?”

Again, Mistress Quickly's speech was mixed up. "To vouchsafe" means to grant, but she was not granting Falstaff a few words of conversation. She was requesting that he talk with her.

"You may speak two thousand words, fair woman," Falstaff said, "and I will vouchsafe you the hearing."

Falstaff knew the correct meaning of "vouchsafe."

"There is one Mrs. Ford, sir," Mistress Quickly said.

Worried that Pistol and Robin would overhear the conversation, she requested, "Please, come a little closer to me," and then she continued, "I myself dwell with master Doctor Caius —"

Still worried about Pistol and Robin overhearing the conversation, she hesitated, and Falstaff said, "Well, go on. Mrs. Ford, you say—"

"Yes," Mistress Quickly said. "Please, come a little closer to me."

"I promise you," Falstaff said, "that nobody hears us except people who are loyal to me."

"Are they?" Mistress Quickly asked. "May God bless them and make them His servants!"

"Well, what about Mrs. Ford?"

"Why, sir, she's a good creature. Lord! Lord! Your worship is a wanton — you are filled with lust! Well, may Heaven forgive you and all of us, I pray!"

"Come, what have you to tell me about Mrs. Ford?"

"Well, this is the short and the long of it," Mistress Quickly said. "You have brought her into such a canaries [Mistress Quickly meant 'quandary'] as is wonderful. The best

courtier of them all, when the court was staying at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary [quandary]. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches, I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift; smelling so sweetly, all perfumed with musk, and so rushling [Mistress Quickly meant ‘rustling’], I promise you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant [Mistress Quickly meant “eloquent and elegant”] terms; and in such wine and sugar of the best and the fairest, that would have won any woman’s heart; and, I promise you, they could never get an eye-wink from her. I myself had twenty angels — coins — given to me as a bribe this morning; but I defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, except those I get by way of honesty, and, I promise you, they could never get her to so much as sip on a cup of wine with the proudest of them all: and yet there has been Earls, nay, which is more, there has been pensioners; but, I promise you, all is one with her.”

Mistress Quickly had said that pensioners were better than high-ranking Earls, something few, if any, people would agree with. Pensioners were old knights who received a pension, in return for which they attended chapel twice daily and prayed for the King.

Falstaff was an old knight to whom King Henry V had granted — or would grant — a pension.

Falstaff asked, “But what message is Mrs. Ford sending to me? Be brief, my good she-Mercury. Be brief, my good she-messenger.”

Mercury is the main male messenger of the gods.

“She has received your letter, for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify [she wants you to know] that her husband will be absence [absent] from his house between ten and eleven.”

“Ten and eleven?”

“Yes, truly,” Mistress Quickly said, and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you know about.”

One plausible reason for Falstaff to visit the Fords’ home would be to see a noteworthy object such as a painting.

Mistress Quickly continued, “Mr. Ford, her husband, will be away from home then. Alas! The sweet woman leads an ill life with him. Mr. Ford is a very jealousy [jealous] man: She leads a very frampold, aka disagreeable, life with him, good heart.”

“Between ten and eleven,” Falstaff said. “Woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her — I will show up at that time.”

“Why, you say well,” Mistress Quickly said. “But I have another messenger to [message for] your worship. Mrs. Page has sent her hearty commendations to you, too, and let me tell you in your ear, she’s as fartuous [Mistress Quickly meant ‘virtuous’] a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, who will not miss neither morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoever be the other civil modest wife here, and she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom away from home; but she hopes that there will come a time that he is absent. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man. I truly think you have magical charms, in truth.”

These words by Mistress Quickly were ambiguous: “I never knew a woman so dote upon a man.” Was Mrs. Page doting upon Falstaff — or her husband?

“Not I, I assure you,” Falstaff said. “Setting the attractions of my good qualities — and looks — aside, I have no other charms.”

“May God bless your heart for it!” Mistress Quickly said.

“But please tell me this,” Falstaff said. “Has Ford’s wife and Page’s wife acquainted each other with how they love me?”

“That would be a jest indeed!” Mistress Quickly said. “They have not so little grace, I hope. That is a trick indeed! But Mrs. Page desires you to send to her your little page, of all loves. Her husband has a marvelous infection [Mistress Quickly meant ‘affection’] for the little page; and truly Mr. Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does: She does what she wants, says what she wants, buys what she wants with ready money, goes to bed when she wants, and rises when she wants — all is as she wants it to be, and truly she deserves it; because if there is a kind woman in Windsor, she is the one. You must send her your page; you must.”

“Why, I will,” Falstaff said.

“Be sure to do so,” Mistress Quickly said. “Your page, look you, may come and go between you and Mrs. Page, and in any case have a password and other secret words so that you may know one another’s mind, and the boy never needs to understand anything because it is not good that children should know any wickedness. Old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.”

“Fare you well,” Falstaff said. “Commend me to both Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. Here’s some money for you, but it is not enough — I am still in your debt.”

He said to Robin, his page, “Boy, go with this woman.”

Mistress Quickly and Robin departed.

Falstaff said, “This news makes me distracted!”

Pistol said to himself about Mistress Quickly, “This punk,

aka bawd or prostitute, is one of Cupid's carriers: She carries messages between people who want to be lovers. Clap on more sails, Pistol; pursue her; put your protective covering on, and fire at her. She will be my prize, or may the ocean overwhelm and drown us both!"

Pistol exited and went after Mistress Quickly.

Falstaff said to himself, referring to himself as Jack, "What do you think, old Jack? Continue on the path you are on. I'll make more of your old body than I have done. Will they — Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page — yet look after you? Will you, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? I have spent so much money on food and drink to maintain you; now let Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page provide money to maintain you — it is time that you brought me a profit. Good body, I thank you. Let anyone say that what I have done is grossly done; as long as it is in fact done, I don't care how it is done."

Bardolph, who was now working as a tapster at the Garter Inn, entered the room while carrying a cup of wine and said to Falstaff, "Sir John, there's a Master Brook below who would like to speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and he has sent your worship a morning's pick-me-up of wine."

"You said that Brook is his name?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring him here."

Bardolph gave Falstaff the cup of wine and then departed.

Falstaff said to himself, "Such Brooks are welcome to me as long as they overflow with such liquor. Ha! Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, have I gotten you? Charge!"

Bardolph entered the room, leading Mr. Ford, who had

disguised himself with a beard and who was carrying a bag of money. Falstaff had never seen Mr. Ford before, but Mr. Ford thought that later Falstaff might see him on a street and be introduced to him.

The disguised Mr. Ford said, "Bless you, sir!"

"And you, sir!" Falstaff replied, "Do you want to speak with me?"

"I make bold to press with so little preparation — advance warning — upon you."

"You're welcome here. What do you want?" Falstaff replied.

He said to Bardolph, "Leave us alone, drawer."

Bardolph exited.

Mr. Ford said, "Sir, I am a gentleman who has spent much money; my name is Brook."

"Good Mr. Brook, I hope to know you better."

"Good Sir John, I sue for your acquaintanceship. I do not want to put a load or any expense on you. I want you to know that I think myself more able to be a lender than you are. Knowing that to be true has somewhat emboldened me to this unseasonable intrusion; for they say, if money goes before, all ways do lie open."

"Money is a good soldier, sir, and it gets things done."

"That is true," Mr. Ford said, "and I have a bag of money here that burdens me. If you will help to bear it, Sir John, take half of it, or all of it. That will ease my burden of carrying it."

"Sir, I do not know what I have done to deserve to be your porter," Falstaff replied.

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

“Speak, good Mr. Brook,” Falstaff said. “I shall be glad to be your servant and listen to you.”

“Sir, I hear you are a scholar — I will be brief with you — and you have been a man long known to me, although I had never as good an opportunity as I wanted to make myself acquainted with you. I shall reveal a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open my own imperfection. But, good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn your other eye upon the list of your own imperfections so that I may get by with a mild reproof, since you yourself know how easy it is to be such an offender.”

“Very well, sir,” Falstaff said. “Proceed.”

“There is a gentlewoman in this town; her husband’s name is Ford.”

“Yes, that is true, sir.”

“I have long loved her, and, I tell you sincerely, I have given her much; I have followed her with a doting observance; I have sought opportunities to meet her; I have taken advantage of every slight occasion that could even give me a glimpse of her; and I have not only bought many presents to give her, but also I have given much to many people in order to know what she would like to be given. In brief, I have pursued her as love has pursued me, which has been on the wing of all occasions.

“But whatever I have merited, either in my mind or through the use of my money and resources, I know that I have received no reward, unless experience is a jewel that I have purchased for an infinite amount, and that has taught me to say this: ‘Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues; pursuing that which flies, and flying what

pursues.’ In other words, ‘Love, like a shadow, flies one pursuing and pursues one fleeing.’”

“Have you received any promise of satisfaction at her hands?” Falstaff asked.

“No. None. Never,” Mr. Ford replied.

“Have you importuned her to such a purpose? Have you asked her for what you want?”

“Never.”

“Of what quality is your love, then?”

“It is like a beautiful house that was built on another man’s ground; I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it,” Mr. Ford said. “A house built on another man’s ground belongs to the man who owns the land, not to the man who built the house.”

“Why are you telling me all this?” Falstaff said.

“When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say that although Mrs. Ford appears to me to be honest and faithful to her husband, yet in other places she displays her mirth so much and so openly that malicious gossip is said about her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: You are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of admittance into the company of the great, entitled to respect in your place and person, and universally approved of for your many war-like, court-like, and learned accomplishments.”

“Oh, sir!” Falstaff said.

“Believe it, for you know it to be true,” Mr. Ford said.

He gestured to the bag of money and said, “There is money; spend it, spend it; spend more; spend all I have. I ask only that you give me some of your time in exchange

for the money. Give me as much time as it takes to lay an amiable siege to the honesty, aka virtue, of Mr. Ford's wife. Use your art of wooing and persuade her to consent to sleep with you. If any man can do that, you can as quickly as any other man."

"Would it apply well to the vehemence of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? I think that you prescribe to yourself very preposterously," Falstaff said. "Does it make sense for you to pay me to sleep with the woman whom you want to sleep with? Isn't that preposterous?"

"Oh, understand my meaning," Mr. Ford said. "She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honor, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself: She is too bright to be looked at. She claims to be so virtuous that I cannot approach her with my proposition.

"Now, if I could come to her with any evidence of her lack of virtue in my hand, my desires would have evidence and arguments to commend themselves. I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and her thousand other defenses, which now are very strongly embattled against me. She could no longer use her claims of virtue against me.

"What do you say to my proposition, Sir John?"

"Mr. Brook," Falstaff replied, "first, I will make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you wish, enjoy Ford's wife in bed."

"Oh, good sir!"

"I say you shall."

"You will not lack for money, Sir John; you will not lack

for money.”

“You will get Mrs. Ford, Mr. Brook,” Falstaff said. “You will get her. You will not lack her.

“I shall be with her soon, I may tell you, by her own arrangement. Just before you came in to me, her assistant or go-between parted from me. I say that I shall be with Mrs. Ford between ten and eleven in the morning, for at that time the jealous rascally knave who is her husband will be away from home. Come to me later that night and you shall know how I succeed.”

“I am blessed to know you,” the disguised Mr. Ford said.

He added, “Do you know Mr. Ford, sir?”

“Hang him, that poor cuckoldly knave! I do not know him, yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous cuckoldly knave has masses of money; because of Mr. Ford’s money, his wife seems to me especially good-looking. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue’s coffer; and there’s my harvest-home. Through his wife, I will get access to his money, and that will be the harvest of my seeding.”

“I wish that you knew Mr. Ford, sir, so that you could avoid him if you saw him,” the disguised Mr. Ford said.

“Hang him, the mechanical salt-butter rogue!” Falstaff said.

He had insulted Mr. Ford twice in that sentence. One, he called Mr. Ford a mechanical — a workingman. In their culture, a person who did not need to work to support himself had a higher social status than a person who had to work. Two, a person who ate inexpensive salted butter imported from Flanders had a lower social status than someone who could afford to eat English butter.

Falstaff continued, “I will flare at him and scare him out of

his wits. I will awe him with my cudgel: it shall hang like a meteor over the cuckold's horns. It shall be over him, ready to fall, and it will be a sign of misfortune to come. Mr. Brook, you should know that I will predominate over the peasant, and you will sleep with his wife. Come to me at night after I have visited her in the morning. Mr. Ford is a knave, and I will add other disgraceful titles to that title. You, Mr. Brook, shall know that Mr. Ford is a knave and a cuckold. Come to me at night after I have visited her."

Falstaff took the money and departed.

Mr. Ford said to himself, "What a damned Epicurean — devoted to pleasure — rascal this Falstaff is! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says my jealousy is unjustified? My wife sent a message to him; the hour for their meeting has been set; the match is made between them. Would any man have thought this? See the Hell of having a false — an unfaithful — woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but I will also be called abominable names by the man who does me this wrong. Abominable names! Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well — these are the names of Devils, the names of fiends of Hell. But what about the name of Cuckold! Or the name of Wittol — which is given to a contented cuckold! Cuckold! The Devil himself has not as bad a name as Cuckold! Page is an ass, an over-confident ass: He trusts his wife, and he is not jealous. I would rather trust a Flemish man with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my bottle of whiskey, or a thief with walking my gentle gelding, than I would trust my wife with herself. If I were to trust her, then she would plot, then she would ruminare, then she would devise — and what wives think in their hearts they can do, they will break their hearts if they have to, but they will do it.

“May God be praised for my jealousy! Eleven o’clock is the hour that they will meet. I will prevent their adultery, get evidence of my wife planning to commit adultery, be revenged on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will start getting ready to do this; it is better to be three hours too soon than a minute too late.

“Damn! Damn! Damn! Cuckold! Cuckold! Cuckold!”

— 2.3 —

The following morning, the French Doctor Caius and his servant John Rugby stood in a field near Windsor. Duels were illegal, and so they were often fought in the morning. If they were fought later, they would attract more attention.

Doctor Caius called, “Jack Rugby!”

Rugby replied, “Sir?”

“Vat is de clock, Jack? [What is the time, Jack?]”

“It is past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promised to meet you and fight you in a duel.”

“By gar [God], he has save his soul, dat [that] he is no come; he has pray his Pible [Bible] well, dat he is no come: by gar, Jack Rugby, he is [would be] dead already, if he be [had] come.”

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

“By gar, de herring is no dead so as I vill kill him. [By God, the herring is not as dead as I will kill him.] Take out your rapier, Jack; I vill [will] tell [Doctor Caius meant ‘show’] you how I vill kill him.”

“Alas, sir, I cannot fence.”

“Villainy [Villain], take out your rapier.”

“Stop! Here comes company.”

The Host of the Garter Inn, Justice Shallow, Slender, and Mr. Page arrived.

The Host said to Doctor Caius, “Bless you, bully doctor!”

Justice Shallow said, “May God save you, Doctor Caius!”

Mr. Page said, “How are you now, good Doctor Caius!”

Slender said, “I wish you a good morning, sir.”

“Vat be all you — one, two, tree [three], four — come for?”

The Host replied, “To see you fight, to see you foin, to see you traverse; to see you here, to see you there; to see you pass your punto, your stock, your reverse, your distance, your montant.”

The Host was using a lot of fencing terms. To foin is to thrust. Traverse is a sideways thrust. Punto and stock are kinds of direct thrusts. Reverse is a backward thrust. Distance refers to keeping the proper amount of space between the two duelists. A montant is an upward thrust.

The Host added, “Is he dead, my Ethiopian? Is he dead, my François? Ha, bully! What says my Aesculapius? My Galen? My heart of elder? Is he dead, bully stale? Is he dead?”

The Host was referring to the duel that Doctor Caius was supposed to be having with Sir Hugh. Of course, the Host knew that Sir Hugh was not dead — the Host had sent him to a different field so that Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius would not hurt each other. In addition, the Host was calling Doctor Caius an Ethiopian because of his dark skin. Aesculapius and Galen were famous doctors of antiquity. The reference to the heart of elder was an insult. A heart of

oak is a valiant heart — the oak is a hard wood. Wood from an elder tree is much softer than wood from an oak. Basically, the Host was having fun at the expense of Doctor Caius. He was deliberately using — and misusing — words that the Frenchman would not understand.

The word “stale” refers to urine. Doctors examined a patient’s urine when determining the patient’s state of health.

Doctor Caius replied, “By gar, he is de [the] coward Jack priest of de worlde; he is not [does not dare to] show his face.”

A Jack is a knave.

The Host said, “You are a Castalion-King-Urinal. You are Hector of Greece, my boy!”

Again, the Host was insulting Doctor Caius. He called him a Castalion, aka Castilian, aka a native of Spanish descent. The English were very proud of their then-recent victory over the Spanish Armada. The Host also called Doctor Caius the King of the Urinals, again a reference to the doctor’s use of analysis of urine in his medical practice. Finally, Hector of Greece was a joke by the Host. Hector was a Trojan, not a Greek. The Host was speaking quickly and piling on words that the French doctor was unlikely to understand.

Doctor Caius said to his four visitors, “Please, bear witness [witness] that me [I] have stay [stayed] six or seven — two, tree [three] — hours waiting for him, and he is no come.”

Doctor Caius was referring to waiting for Sir Hugh so that they could fight their duel. At first, he said that he had been waiting for six or seven hours, but seeing the looks of incredulity on his visitors’ faces, he amended that to two or three hours.

Justice Shallow said, "He is the wiser man, Doctor Caius. He is a curer of souls, and you are a curer of bodies; if you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions."

To go against the hair meant to go against the grain. The expression referred to currying a horse: You should brush the horse's hair in the direction that the hair is growing.

Justice Shallow asked, "Isn't that true, Mr. Page?"

"Justice Shallow," Mr. Page replied, "you have yourself been a great fighter, although now you are a man of peace."

Justice Shallow replied, "Bodykins [By God's body], Mr. Page, though I now be old and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to take part in the fight. Though we are justices and doctors and churchmen, Mr. Page, we have some salt — liveliness — of our youth in us; we are the sons of women, Mr. Page."

"That is true, Justice Shallow," Mr. Page said.

"It will be found so, Mr. Page," Justice Shallow said. "Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn to uphold the peace. You have showed yourself to be a wise physician, and Sir Hugh has shown himself a wise and patient churchman. You must go with me, Doctor Caius."

The Host said, "Pardon us, guest-Justice."

Justice Shallow, who was from Gloustershire, was visiting Windsor; he was staying at the Garter Inn.

The Host said to Doctor Caius, "A word, Monsieur Mock-water." They went a little distance away so that Justice Shallow could not hear them.

The Host had created the word "Mock-water" in mockery of Doctor Caius, who analyzed urine, which is sometimes called water.

“Mock-vater! Vat is dat?” Doctor Caius asked.

The Host replied, “Mock-water, in our English tongue, means valor or courage, bully.”

“By gar, den, I have as mush [much] mock-vater as de [the, aka any] Englishman. Scurvy jack-dog priest! By gar, me vill [I will] cut [off] his ears.”

“He will clapper-claw you tightly, bully.”

“Clapper-de-claw! Vat is dat?”

The real meaning of “clapper-claw” was “beat” or “thrash” or “scratch” or “claw.”

The Host said, “That is, he will make you amends.”

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

“And I will provoke him to clapper-claw you,” the Host said, “or let him wag — let him go to the Devil.”

“Me tank [I thank] you for dat.”

“And, moreover, bully — but first, Mr. guest-Justice, and Mr. Page, and eke [also] Cavaleiro Slender, go you through the town — Windsor — to Frogmore.”

Frogmore was a small village on the other side of Windsor.

Mr. Page whispered to the Host, “Sir Hugh is there, isn’t he?”

The Host whispered back, “He is there: see what humor — mood — he is in; and I will bring the doctor to him by way of the fields. You will arrive first. Is this OK?”

Justice Shallow whispered, “We will do it.”

Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, and Slender all said out loud,

“*Adieu*, good Doctor Caius.”

They exited.

Doctor Caius said, “By gar, me vill [I will] kill de priest; for he speak for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.”

Doctor Caius was angry at Sir Hugh the priest because Sir Hugh was trying to convince Anne Page to marry Slender, whom Doctor Caius considered to be the equivalent of an ape.

“Let him die,” the Host said. “Sheathe your impatience, throw cold water on your anger. Go through the fields with me beyond Frogmore. I will take you to where Miss Anne Page is; she is feasting at a farmhouse — and you shall woo her. The game you are hunting will then be in sight. Isn’t that right?”

“By gar, me dank [I thank] you for dat,” Doctor Caius said. “By gar, I respect you, and I shall procure-a you de good guest [guests]: de Earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.”

“For the which I will be your adversary toward Anne Page. Isn’t that a good thing to say?”

Of course, the Host expected Doctor Caius to think that the Host would be his *advocate* — not adversary — with Anne Page.

“By gar, it is good; vell [well] said.”

“Let us go, then,” the Host said.

“Follow at my heels, Jack Rugby,” Doctor Caius said.

They departed.

CHAPTER 3 (The Merry Wives of Windsor)

— 3.1 —

The Welsh priest Sir Hugh Evans and Simple, who was Slender's servant, were in a field near Frogmore. They had been waiting for Doctor Caius to show up to fight a duel. Sir Hugh had a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other. Simple was holding Sir Hugh's cloak — a loose flowing upper garment.

Sir Hugh said, "I ask you now, good Mr. Slender's serving-man, and friend Simple by your name, which way have you looked for Master Caius, who calls himself doctor of physic [medicine]?"

"Sir, I have looked in the direction of Windsor Little Park, in the direction of Windsor Great Park, and in almost every direction, including in the direction of the village named Old Windsor. In fact, I have looked in every direction except in the direction of Windsor itself," Simple replied.

"I most feheemently [vehemently] desire you to also look that way."

"I will, sir."

Simple exited.

Sir Hugh's feelings were mixed up. He did not know whether to feel sad because he was about to fight a duel although he was a priest or to feel angry because he had reason to feel anger toward Doctor Caius.

He said to himself, "Pless [Bless] my soul, how full of chollors [cholers, aka angry feelings] I am, and trempling [trembling] of mind! I shall be glad if he have deceived me. How melancholies I am! I will knog his urinals about his

knave's costard when I have good opportunities for the 'ork [work]. Pless my soul!"

By "I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard," Sir Hugh meant that he would knock the doctor's urinals — glass bottles in which urine was collected in order to be inspected — about his head.

Sir Hugh sang this:

"To shallow rivers, to whose falls

"Melodious birds sings madrigals;

"There will we make our peds [beds] of roses,

"And a thousand fragrant posies.

"To shallow —"

Then he stopped singing and said, "Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry."

Then he sang this:

"Melodious birds sing madrigals —

"When as I sat in Pabylon [Babylon] —

"And a thousand vagram [vagrant, but Sir Hugh meant "fragrant"] posies.

"To shallow ..."

Simple returned and said, "Yonder he is coming this way, Sir Hugh."

"He's welcome," Sir Hugh replied.

Sir Hugh sang this:

"To shallow rivers, to whose falls —"

He then said, "Heaven prosper the right! What weapons is

he carrying?”

“No weapons, sir, that I could see,” Simple said.

He added, “There are also coming my master, Justice Shallow, and another gentleman, from a slightly different direction — from Frogmore, over the stile, this way. They are close by.”

“Please, give me my cloak,” Sir Hugh said.

Realizing that his arms were occupied with holding a Bible and a sword, he added, “Or else keep it in your arms.”

Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, and Slender arrived. Mr. Page and Justice Shallow were going to pretend that they did not know that Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius were supposed to fight a duel.

Justice Shallow said to Sir Hugh, “How are you now, Mr. Parson? Good morning, good Sir Hugh.”

He saw the Bible in Sir Hugh’s hand and said, “Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.”

Mr. Slender heard the reference to a book and thought, *Ah, sweet Anne Page!* He was imagining that he was in love with Anne Page.

Mr. Page said, “May God save you, good Sir Hugh!”

“God pless you from His mercy sake, all of you!” Sir Hugh replied.

Justice Shallow, noticing the sword that Sir Hugh was holding, said, “What, the sword and the word! Do you study them both, Mr. Parson?”

Mr. Page said, “And you are still youthful! You must be still youthful because you are not wearing a cloak on this

raw, cold, rheumatism-causing day!”

“There is reasons and causes for it,” Sir Hugh replied.

Mr. Page said, “We have come to you to do a good deed, Mr. Parson.”

“Fery [Very] well,” Sir Hugh replied. “What is it?”

“Yonder is a most reverend gentleman,” Mr. Page said, “who, most likely having received wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience that ever you saw.”

Justice Shallow added, “I have lived fourscore years and upward; I never heard a man of his position, gravity, and learning be so wide of his own respect — he has completely lost control of himself.”

“Who is he?” Sir Hugh asked.

“I think you know him: Doctor Caius, the renowned French physician,” Mr. Page said.

“Got’s [God’s] will, and His passion of my heart! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge — I would just as soon hear about a mess of porridge as hear about him!”

“Why?” Mr. Page asked.

Sir Hugh replied, “He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates [Hippocrates] and Galen than a mess of porridge — and he is a knave besides; he is as cowardly a knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal.”

Hippocrates, like Galen, was an ancient doctor of medicine. From Hippocrates, we get the Hippocratic Oath.

Mr. Page said to Justice Shallow, “I promise you, he’s the man who should fight with him.”

In other words, Mr. Page was pretending to just now realize that Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius intended to fight each other. He was saying to the other people that Sir Hugh is the man who should — and intends to — fight Doctor Caius.

Hearing the reference to his rival, Doctor Caius, Justice Slender thought, *Oh, sweet Anne Page!*

Justice Shallow said, “It appears so by his weapons. Keep Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius apart — here comes Doctor Caius.”

The Host of the Garter Inn, Doctor Caius, and John Rugby walked up to the group of men.

Mr. Page said to Sir Hugh, “Good Mr. Parson, put away your weapon.”

Justice Shallow said to Doctor Caius, “You do the same, good Doctor.”

Simple had not noticed that Doctor Caius was carrying a sword.

The Host said, “Disarm both men, and let them talk to each other. Let them keep their limbs whole and hack our English.”

“Please,” Doctor Caius said to Sir Hugh, “I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear. Wherefore vill you not [Why won’t you] meet-a me in a duel?”

Sir Hugh whispered to Doctor Caius, “Please, be patient. We will meet soon at a good time.”

“By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape!”

Doctor Caius was varying the insult of calling someone a jackanape.

Sir Hugh whispered to Doctor Caius, “Please let us not be laughing-stocks for other men’s entertainments; I want to be friends with you, and I will one way or other make you amends.”

He then said loudly, “I will knog [knock] your urinals about your knave’s cockscomb [head] for missing your meetings and appointments.”

Doctor Caius said, “*Diable!* [The Devil!] Jack Rugby — mine Host de Jarteer [Garter] — have I not stay [wait] for him to kill him? Have I not, at de place I did appoint?”

Sir Hugh said, “As I am a Christians soul now, look you, this is the place appointed: I’ll be judgment [judged] by mine Host of the Garter.”

Both men had been misled by the Host of the Garter Inn, who had sent them to different places so that they would not fight each other but could be laughed at.

The Host said, “Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaul, French and Welsh, soul-curer and body-curer!”

Gallia and Gaul both refer to France, but the Host meant for the terms to refer to Wales and France. He should have used “Galles” instead of “Gallia” — “Galles” is the French name for Wales.

Doctor Caius said, “Ay, dat is very good; excellent.”

The Host said, “Peace, I say! Be quiet! Listen to the Host of the Garter. Am I politic? Am I subtle? Am I a Machiavel?”

The Host was asking, *Am I sneaky?* The answer could very well rightly be, *Yes*. Machiavelli was the author of *The Prince*, a treatise about political intrigue and how to get power.

The Host did not want either Sir Hugh or Doctor Caius to

be hurt in a duel; both provided useful services to the community.

The Host continued, “Shall I lose my doctor? No; he gives me the potions and the motions.”

The potions were laxatives, and the motions were the result of the laxatives.

The Host continued, “Shall I lose my parson, my priest, my Sir Hugh? No; he gives me the pro-verbs and the no-verbs.”

Pro-verbs, aka proverbs, taught wisdom and what we ought to do; “pro” means “in favor of.” No-verbs taught us what not to do: “Thou shalt not....”

The Host said to Doctor Caius, “Give me your hand, terrestrial; good.” He then said to Sir Hugh, “Give me your hand, celestial; good.”

Then he said to both of them, “Boys of learning, I have deceived you both; I have directed you to different places: Your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let draughts of heated wine sweetened with burnt sugar be the conclusion of your quarrel.”

The Host continued, “No one has any need to use these swords. Follow me, lads of peace; follow, follow, follow. Let us go to the Garter Inn.”

Justice Shallow said, “Believe me, he is a madcap Host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.”

Slender thought, *Oh, sweet Anne Page!*

Justice Shallow, Slender, Mr. Page, and the Host departed, leaving Sir Hugh and Doctor Caius behind. The two men no longer wanted to fight each other, but they were angry about being made laughingstocks.

Doctor Caius said, “Ha, do I perceive dat? Have you — the Host — make-a de sot [fool] of us, ha, ha?”

“This is rich,” Sir Hugh said sarcastically. “He has made us his vlouting-stog [flouting-stock, aka laughing-stock]. I desire you that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains together [knock our brains together, aka put our heads together] to be revenge [revenged] on this same scall, scurvy, cogging companion: the Host of the Garter.”

Both “scall” and “scurvy” referred to skin diseases. By “cogging companion,” Sir Hugh meant “cheating rascal.”

Doctor Caius said, “By gar, with all my heart. He promise to bring me [to] where is Anne Page; by gar, he deceive me, too.”

“Well, I will smite his noddles [head]. Please, follow me.”

— 3.2 —

Mrs. Page and Robin, Falstaff’s page, talked together on a Windsor street. Robin had been walking ahead of Mrs. Page.

“Keep on going, little gallant,” Mrs. Page said. “You used to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Which do you prefer? To lead my eyes, or to eye your master’s heels?”

Robin replied, “I had rather, truly, to go before you like a man than to follow him like a dwarf.”

“You are a flattering boy,” Mrs. Page said. “Now I see you’ll be a courtier.”

Mr. Ford walked up to them and said, “It is good to see you, Mrs. Page. Where are you going?”

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

“Yes, and she is as idle as she can be without going to

pieces because she lacks company. I think that if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.”

“You can sure of that — we would marry two other husbands.”

Looking at Robin, who was gaily dressed in eccentric clothing provided to him by Falstaff, Mr. Ford asked, “Where did you get this pretty weather-cock?”

“I cannot remember what the dickens his name is from whom my husband got him,” Mrs. Page replied.

She asked Robin, “What do you call your knight’s name?”

“Sir John Falstaff,” Robin replied.

“Sir John Falstaff!” Mr. Ford exclaimed.

“That is the man,” Mrs. Page said. “I can never remember his name. There is such a friendship between my good husband and him!”

She asked, “Is your wife really at home?”

“Indeed she is.”

“If you don’t mind, I will leave now,” Mrs. Page said. “I am sick until I see her.”

Mrs. Page and Robin departed.

Mr. Ford said to himself, “Has Mr. Page any brains? Has he any eyes? Has he any thinking? Sure, he does, but they sleep; he has no use of them.

“Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty miles as easily as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score — two hundred and forty — paces. He indulges his wife’s inclination; he gives her folly encouragement and opportunity. And now she’s going to my wife, and

Falstaff's page is with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind — it is obvious what bad thing is going to happen. And Falstaff's page is with her! Good plots, they are laid; and our wives who revolt against their marital vows share damnation together.

“Well, I will catch Falstaff with my wife, then I will torment my wife. I will pluck the borrowed veil of virtue from the only-appears-to-be-virtuous Mrs. Page, I will reveal that Mr. Page himself is an overly confident and perverse Actaeon, aka cuckold; and to these violent proceedings all my neighbors shall be spectators.”

A clock struck the hour.

Mr. Ford said to himself, “The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search my house. There I shall find Falstaff: I shall be rather praised for this than mocked; it is as positive as the earth is firm that Falstaff is there in my house. I will go.”

Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, Slender, the Host, Sir Hugh Evans, Doctor Caius, and John Rugby walked up to Mr. Ford and greeted him: “It is good to see you.”

“Believe me, this is a good knot — group — of people,” Mr. Ford said.

He wanted them to be witnesses to his wife's infidelity, so he said, “I have good cheer — food, drink, and entertainment — at home; and I invite you all to go with me.”

Justice Shallow said, “I must excuse myself, Mr. Ford.”

Slender added, “And so must I, sir. We have arranged to dine with Miss Anne, and I would not break my promise to her for more money than I'll speak of.”

“We have lingered about a match between Anne Page and

my cousin Slender, and this day we shall have our answer,” Justice Shallow said.

Justice Shallow and Slender lived in Gloustershire, but they had lingered at Windsor because of hope for a marriage between Slender and Anne Page.

“I hope I have your good will, father Page,” Slender said. He hoped that Mr. Page would soon be his father-in-law.

“You have, Mr. Slender,” Mr. Page said. “I am entirely for you and I hope that you marry my daughter.”

He added, “Doctor Caius, my wife is entirely for you and wants our daughter to marry you.”

Doctor Caius replied, “Yes, by gar [God]; and de maid [the maiden] is love-a me: my nursh-a [nurse, aka housekeeper] Quickly tell me so mush [much].”

The Host asked Mr. Page, “What do you think about young Mr. Fenton? He capers, he dances, he has the eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holiday words in a pleasing manner, and he smells pleasant like April and May. He will succeed in marrying Anne! He will succeed! It is in his buttons! Underneath those buttons is a male body a young maiden will like! He will succeed!”

“He will not succeed in obtaining my consent to the match, I promise you,” Mr. Page said. “The gentleman has no property or income, he kept company with the wild Prince Hal of Wales and with Poins, he is of too high a social status for we middle-class folk, and he knows too much of upper-class people and behavior to fit in with us. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance — he will not repair his broken finances with the bandage of my money.”

Mr. Page had used an interesting image when he said that

“he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance.” The image was that of a person tying a knot with the help of another person’s finger. The first person would tie part of a knot, the second person would place a finger in the right spot to keep the knot from becoming undone, and the first person would tie the rest of the knot.

Mr. Page continued, “If he marries my daughter, then let him marry her without obtaining a dowry. The wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not Fenton’s way.”

Mr. Ford said, “I ask you heartily — some of you go home with me to dinner. Besides your food and drink, you shall have entertainment: I will show you a monster.”

This got their attention.

He then said, “Doctor Caius, you shall go with me; so shall you, Mr. Page; and so shall you, Sir Hugh.”

Justice Shallow said, “Well, fare you well.”

He whispered to Slender, “We shall have the freer wooing at Mr. Page’s.”

Justice Shallow and Slender exited.

Doctor Caius said, “Go home, John Rugby; I will go home soon.”

Rugby departed.

The Host said, “Farewell, my hearts. I will go to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary wine with him.”

Mr. Ford thought, *I think I shall drink some pipe-wine first with him; I’ll make him dance.*

Mr. Ford was capable of wit. He was punning on “pipe,” a word that could mean a musical instrument or a cask for

wine. The Host's reference to canary wine had made that pun occur to Mr. Ford. A "canary" was a type of dance as well as a type of wine. And by making Falstaff dance, Mr. Ford meant that he would beat him — that would make Falstaff dance around to escape the beating.

He said out loud, "Will you come with me, friends?"

They replied, "We will go with you to see this monster."

— 3.3 —

In a room in the Fords' house, Mrs. Ford called for two servants: "John! Robert!"

Mrs. Page said, "Quickly, quickly! Is the buck-basket —"

A buck-basket was a laundry basket. Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford had plans for it, and Mrs. Page wanted it to be ready.

Mrs. Ford knew what Mrs. Page wanted to know, and so she interrupted, "— it's ready."

She called, "Robert!"

John and Robert entered the room; they were carrying the buck-basket.

Mrs. Page said, "Come, come, come!"

Mrs. Ford said, "Here, set it down."

"Give your men their instructions," Mrs. Page said. "We must be brief. Falstaff is coming soon."

"As I told you before, John and Robert," Mrs. Ford said, "be ready here close by in the brew-house, and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and without any pause or staggering take this buck-basket on your shoulders. Then trudge with it quickly, and carry it among the whitsters — the people who whiten the laundry — in Datchet Meadow,

and there empty it in the muddy ditch by the Thames River.”

Mrs. Page asked them, “You will do it?”

Mrs. Ford replied for her servants, “I have told them over and over; they lack no orders. They know what to do.”

She said to John and Robert, “Go now, and come when you are called.”

John and Robert exited.

Mrs. Page said, “Here comes little Robin.”

Robin, Falstaff’s page, entered the room.

Mrs. Ford said to him, “How are you, my young sparrowhawk! What news do you bring with you?”

“My master, Sir John, has come in at your back door, Mrs. Ford, and he requests your company.”

“You little Jack-a-Lent,” Mrs. Page said. “Have you been true to us? You haven’t told Falstaff anything, have you?”

A Jack-a-Lent was a gaily dressed puppet that was popular during Lent. Falstaff had dressed his young page in gaily colored clothing.

“I have been true to you,” Robin said to Mrs. Page. “My master does not know that you are here, and he has threatened to put me into everlasting liberty if I tell you — Mrs. Page — that he is here, for he swears he’ll turn me away and not employ me.”

“You are a good boy,” Mrs. Page said. “This secrecy of yours shall be a tailor to you and shall make you a new jacket and stockings. I will make you a present of them.”

She added, “Now I’ll go and hide.”

“Do so,” Mrs. Ford replied.

She said to Robin, “Go tell your master that I am alone.”

Robin departed to carry out his errand.

She then said, “Mrs. Page, remember your cue to come out of your hiding place.”

“I will,” Mrs. Page said. “If I do not, hiss at me.”

She hid.

Mrs. Ford said, “That’s done. We will treat this unwholesome humidity — this gross watery pumpkin — the way he ought to be treated; we’ll teach him to know the difference between turtledoves and jays.”

Turtledoves were famed for their faithfulness to their mates. Jays were brightly colored and so were associated with painted, loose women. Painted women were women who used cosmetics.

Falstaff entered the room and said, “Have I caught you, my heavenly jewel? Why, now let me die because I have lived long enough. This is the achievement of my ambition. Oh, blessed hour!”

Mrs. Ford replied, “Oh, sweet Sir John!”

“Mrs. Ford, I cannot fawn,” Falstaff said. “I cannot prate, Mrs. Ford. Now I shall sin by making this wish: I wish that your husband were dead. I’ll swear it before the best lord; if your husband were dead, I would make you my lady.”

“I your lady, Sir John!” Mrs. Ford said. “Alas, I should be a pitiful lady!”

“Let the court of France show me such another lady as you,” Falstaff said. “I see how your eye would emulate the diamond; you have the right arched beauty of the brow that

becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance. You can look good wearing any headdress: a headdress that is shaped like a ship, a headdress that is fanciful, or any headdress that comes from the city of fashion: Venice.”

“I wear a plain kerchief, Sir John,” Mrs. Ford said. “My brows become nothing else, nor do they look that well on their own.”

“By the Lord, you are a traitor to yourself to say so,” Falstaff said. “You would make a perfect courtier; and the firm placing of your foot would give an excellent motion to your turning and walking in a half-hooped petticoat. I see what you would be, if Fortune (your foe) were — not Nature — your friend. Nature is your friend and has made you beautiful, but Fortune is your foe and has made you a middle-class wife rather than a great lady. Come, you cannot deny it.”

“Believe me, there are no such qualities in me,” Mrs. Ford said.

“What made me love you?” Falstaff said. “Those qualities that you deny having. Let that persuade you there’s something extraordinary in you. Come, I cannot fawn and say you are this and that, like a many of these lipping hawthorn-buds, who come like women in men’s apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury Street in London when it is filled with sweet-smelling herbs for sale. I cannot fawn, but I love you; I love no one but you; and you deserve my love.”

“Do not betray me, sir,” Mrs. Ford said. “I am afraid that you love Mrs. Page.”

“You might as well say that I love to walk by the gate of the Counter, a prison for debtors. The Counter is famous for its reeking stink, and it is as hateful to me as the reek of

a lime-kiln.”

“Well, Heaven knows how I love you,” Mrs. Ford said, “and you shall one day find out how much I love you.”

“Keep in that mind,” Falstaff said. “I’ll deserve it.”

“I must tell you that you deserve to find out how much I love you, or else I could not be in that particular frame of mind.”

Robin entered the room and said, “Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Ford! Mrs. Page is at the door, sweating and puffing and looking wildly, and she wants to speak with you right away.”

“She must not see me,” Falstaff said. “I will hide behind this wall hanging.”

“Please, do that,” Mrs. Ford said. “She is a very tattling woman. If she sees you, she will tell everyone that she saw you here.”

Falstaff hid.

Mrs. Page came into the room.

Mrs. Ford said, “What’s the matter?”

“Oh, Mrs. Ford, what have you done? You’re shamed!” Mrs. Page replied. “You’re overthrown! You’re undone for ever! You’re ruined!”

“What’s the matter, good Mrs. Page?”

“How could you, Mrs. Ford! You have an honest man as your husband, and you are giving him such cause to suspect you!”

“What cause is that?”

“What cause to suspect you! You know what cause! I have been much mistaken about you!”

“Why, what’s the matter?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“Your husband is coming here, woman, with all the officers in Windsor,” Mrs. Page said, “to search for a gentleman who he says is here now in the house by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence. Your reputation will be ruined.”

“You are wrong, I hope,” Mrs. Ford replied.

“I pray to Heaven that it is not true that you have such a man here! But it is very certain that your husband is coming here with half of the citizens of Windsor at his heels to search for such a man,” Mrs. Page said. “I have come ahead of him to warn you. If you know that you are innocent, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a lover here, get him out — and quickly. Be not so amazed that it paralyzes you so that you can do nothing; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.”

“What shall I do?” Mrs. Ford said. “There is a gentleman here. He is my dear friend; and I fear not my own shame as much as I fear his peril. I would rather have him out of the house than for me to possess a thousand pounds.”

“For shame!” Mrs. Page said. “Don’t waste time engaging in wishful thinking. Your husband is almost here, so think of some way to get your gentleman friend out of your house. You cannot hide him inside. Oh, how you have deceived me! Look, here is a buck-basket. If your gentleman friend is of any reasonable size, he may hide in the buck-basket, and we can throw dirty linen over him to hide him. Then you can send your two male servants to take the buck-basket to Datchet Meadow as if the linen were going to be washed or whitened.”

“He’s too big to hide in the buck-basket,” Mrs. Ford said. “What shall I do?”

Falstaff came out from his hiding place and said, "Let me see it! Let me see it! Oh, let me see it! I'll fit! I'll fit! Follow your friend's advice! I'll fit!"

Mrs. Page took Falstaff's love letter to her out of her pocket and said, "Sir John Falstaff! Is this your letter, knight?"

She was pretending to wonder why Falstaff was with Mrs. Ford; after all, he had sent a love letter to her: Mrs. Page.

Falstaff whispered to her, "I love you. Help me get away. Let me hide in the buck-basket. I'll never —"

He got in the buck-basket, and the two women started to cover him with dirty linen.

Mrs. Page said to Robin, "Help to cover your master, boy."

She then said, "Call your male servants, Mrs. Ford."

Finally, she said to Falstaff, "You lying knight!"

Mrs. Ford called, "John! Robert!"

The servants entered the room.

She told them, "Go and pick up these clothes here quickly. Where's the cowl-staff — the pole you use to carry the buck-basket?"

One of the servants found the cowl-staff, but he was working too slowly for Mrs. Ford, who told him, "How you dawdle! Carry the clothes to the laundress in Datchet Meadow. Quickly! Quickly!"

Mr. Ford, Mr. Page, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh entered the room.

Robin took the opportunity to exit, unnoticed.

Mr. Ford said to his wife, "Please, come near to me. If I suspect you without cause, why then you can make fun of

me. Then I will be your laughingstock; I will deserve it.”

He said to the servants, “What are you doing? Where are you carrying this buck-basket?”

A servant replied, “To the laundress.”

Mrs. Ford said, “Why, what have you to do with where they carry it? Are you now in charge of laundry in this house? Are you now in charge of the buck-basket?”

“Buck! I would I could wash myself of the buck!” Mr. Ford said. He was thinking of a horned deer and the horns of a cuckold. He said, “Buck! Buck! Buck! Yes, buck; I promise you, buck; and of the season, too, it shall appear.”

By season, he meant the rutting season, when a buck’s antlers were at their largest.

The servants left, carrying Falstaff away in the buck-basket.

Mr. Ford said, “Gentlemen, I dreamed last night; I’ll tell you my dream. Here, here, here are my keys. Ascend to my chambers; search, seek, find out. I’ll bet that we’ll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this exit first.”

He locked the door and said, “That’s done. Let’s see an escape now.”

Mr. Page said, “Good Mr. Ford, stay calm. You are growing overexcited. You wrong yourself too much.”

“It is true that I am perturbed, Mr. Page,” Mr. Ford said. “Up, gentlemen. You shall see some entertainment soon. Follow me, gentlemen.”

He left the room.

Sir Hugh said, “This is fery [very] fantastical humors [moods] and jealousies.”

“By gar, this is no [not] the fashion of France; it is not jealous [no jealousy is] in France,” Doctor Caius said.

“Let us follow Mr. Ford, gentlemen,” Mr. Page said. “We will see the result of his search.”

Mr. Page, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh exited to follow Mr. Ford.

Mrs. Page said, “Is there not a double excellency in this?”

Mrs. Ford replied, “I don’t know which pleases me better, that my husband is deceived, or Sir John. My husband is wrong to be jealous, and Falstaff is wrong to think that I love him.”

“What a fright Falstaff was in when your husband asked who was in the basket!” Mrs. Page said.

“I am half afraid that Falstaff will have need of washing; I think that he soiled himself,” Mrs. Ford said. “Therefore, throwing him into the water will do him a benefit.”

“Hang him, dishonest rascal! I wish that all men who do the same thing as Falstaff could suffer the same distress.”

“I think my husband has some special reason to suspect that Falstaff was here,” Mrs. Ford said, “because I never saw him so gross in his jealousy until now.”

“I will lay a plot to see if that is true,” Mrs. Page said, “and we will still be able to play more tricks on Falstaff. His dissolute disease will scarcely be cured by this medicine: His being dunked in the water will not stop him from pursuing us.”

Mrs. Ford asked, “Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mistress Quickly, to him, and make an excuse for his being thrown into the water; and give him more hope so that we can punish him a second time?”

“We will do it,” Mrs. Page said. “Let us send a message to him to meet us tomorrow at eight o’clock in the morning. We will tell him that we want to make amends for what has happened to him.”

Mr. Ford, Mr. Page, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh entered the room.

Mr. Ford said, “I cannot find him. Maybe the knave bragged about doing something that he could not actually do.”

Mrs. Page whispered to Mrs. Ford, “Did you hear that?”

Mrs. Ford said, “You think you are treating me well, Mr. Ford, do you?”

“Yes, I do,” he replied. He was still half-suspicious that his wife was unfaithful.

“May Heaven make you better than your thoughts!”

“Amen!” he said.

Mrs. Page said, “You do yourself mighty wrong, Mr. Ford.”

“Yes, yes, I must bear it,” he replied. He was quickly beginning to realize that he was most likely wrong to suspect his wife of being unfaithful and therefore he had acted badly.

Sir Hugh said, “If there be anypody [anybody] in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the cupboards, may Heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!”

“By gar, nor I, too; there is no bodies,” Doctor Caius said.

Mr. Page said, “Shame! Shame! Shame on you, Mr. Ford! Are you not ashamed? What spirit, what Devil suggests this

delusion? I would not have your distemper of jealousy for the wealth of Windsor Castle. You are acting as if you were mentally unstable.”

“This is my fault, Mr. Page. I suffer for it,” Mr. Ford replied.

“You suffer for a pad [bad] conscience,” Sir Hugh said. “Your wife is as honest a ’omans as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred, too.”

Sir Hugh’s lack of facility in English betrayed him here. It sounded as he were desiring Mrs. Ford.

“By gar, I see it is an honest woman,” Doctor Caius said.

“Well, I promised you a dinner,” Mr. Ford said. “Come, come, walk in the Park with me until dinner is ready.”

He added to his wife, “Please, pardon me. Later I will tell you why I have done this.”

He then said, “Wife and Mrs. Page, please pardon me; I beg you heartily to pardon me.”

Mr. Page said, “Let’s walk in the Park and then go in to dinner, but believe me, we’ll mock Mr. Ford. I invite you men tomorrow morning to my house to eat breakfast; afterward, we’ll go birding together. I have a fine hawk that will scare birds from the bushes. Shall we go birding together?”

“Yes,” Mr. Ford said. “I accept your invitation.”

“If there is one, I shall make two in the company,” Sir Hugh said.

“If dere be one or two, I shall make-a the turd [third],” Doctor Caius said.

“Please, let’s all walk in the Park, Mr. Page,” Mr. Ford

said.

Sir Hugh whispered to Doctor Caius, "Please now, remembrance tomorrow on that lousy knave, the Host."

The two had a plot to wreak on the Host of the Garter Inn the following day.

"Dat is good; by gar, with all my heart!" Doctor Caius said.

"He is a lousy knave, to have his gibes and his mockeries!" Sir Hugh said.

They left to walk in the Park.

— 3.4 —

Fenton and Anne Page were talking together in front of the Pages' house.

"I see I cannot get your father's respect and friendship," Fenton said. "Therefore send me no more to talk to him, sweet Nan."

"What shall we do then?" Anne Page replied.

"Why, you must be yourself and act independently of him. He objects that I am too great of birth and my social status is too high to marry you — and he objects that my estate has been devastated by my expenses and so I am seeking to heal my lack of fortune by marrying you and getting access to his wealth through your dowry. Besides these objections to our being married, he lays other objections before me: my past riotous behavior and my wild friends. And he tells me that it is impossible that I should love you except as a way to gain wealth from him."

"Maybe he is telling you the truth."

"No," Fenton said. "May Heaven favor me in the future only if I am speaking the truth to you. I will, however,

confess that your father's wealth was the first motive for my wooing you, Anne. Yet, by wooing you, I found you to be of more value than gold coins or wealth in sealed bags, and now I woo you for the wonderful riches of yourself."

"Gentle Mr. Fenton, still seek my father's respect and approval; continue to seek it, sir. If the most humble suit made at the most favorable opportunity cannot get you my father's approval, why then —"

She saw Justice Shallow, Slender, and Mistress Quickly coming and said, "Let's go over here!"

They went a short distance away and talked together quietly.

Justice Shallow said, "Break up the conversation between Fenton and Anne Page, Mistress Quickly. My kinsman Slender shall speak for himself to Anne Page."

"I'll make a shaft or a bolt on it," Slender said. "By God's eyelid, it is worth a try."

Slender was saying that one way or another he would propose to Anne Page. A shaft and a bolt were references to different kinds of arrows. A shaft was a long, thin arrow, while a bolt was shorter and thicker and shot by crossbows.

Justice Shallow said, "Be not dismayed."

Slender replied, "No, she shall not dismay me. That will not happen, but I am afraid."

Mistress Quickly said to Anne Page, "Mr. Slender would like to speak a word with you."

"I will go to him," she replied.

She whispered to Fenton, "Slender is my father's choice for my future husband. Oh, what a world of vile ill-favored faults looks handsome when it comes with an income of

three hundred pounds a year!”

Mistress Quickly asked, “How are you, good Mr. Fenton? Please, may I speak a word with you?”

Justice Shallow said, “Anne Page is coming; go after her, kinsman. Oh, boy, you had a father! If you succeed in catching her, you will be a father!”

“I had a father, Miss Anne,” Slender said. “My uncle can tell you good jests about him.”

He said to Justice Swallow, “Please, uncle, tell Miss Anne the jest of how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle.”

Slender was botching his wooing of Anne.

Justice Shallow said, “Miss Anne, my cousin loves you.”

Slender said, “Yes, I do; I love you as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire.”

Slender’s comment could be phrased better.

“He will maintain you like a gentlewoman,” Justice Shallow said.

“Yes, that I will,” Slender said, “come cut and long-tail, under the degree of a squire.”

Slender was saying that he would provide for Anne as well as any squire, no matter who, could provide for her. The phrase “cut and long-tail” meant “anyone.” The literal meaning was dogs with cut, aka docked, tails and dogs with long tails; in other words, all dogs.

Justice Shallow said, “He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.”

This meant that if Slender were to die, Anne, his widow,

would receive an income of a hundred and fifty pounds per year.

Anne Page said, "Good Mr. Shallow, let him woo for himself."

Justice Shallow said, "Good idea. I thank you for it; I thank you for that good comfort."

Justice Shallow was pleased that Anne wanted Slender to woo for himself; he regarded that as evidence that Anne was interested in Slender.

Justice Shallow said to Slender, who had stepped away a few paces, "She wants to speak to you, kinsman. I'll leave you two alone."

Anne said, "Hello, Mr. Slender."

Slender replied, "Hello, good Miss Anne."

"What is your will?"

"My will?" Slender said. "By God's heart, that's a pretty jest indeed! I have not made my will yet, I thank Heaven. I am not such a sickly creature as to need to do that. I give Heaven praise."

"I mean, Mr. Slender, what do you want of me?"

Slender replied, "Truly, for my own part, I want little or nothing of you. Your father and my uncle have made motions."

Slender meant that a marriage proposal had been made, but "motions" was a word that also referred to bowel movements.

Slender continued, "If it be my luck to marry you, good; if not, happy be the man who wins you! Your father and my uncle can tell you how things go better than I can; you may

ask your father because here he comes.”

Mr. and Mrs. Page walked over to the others.

Mr. Page said, “Hello, Mr. Slender. Love him, daughter Anne. Why, look here! What is Mr. Fenton doing here? You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house. I told you, sir, my daughter is disposed of. She is engaged.”

“Mr. Page, don’t be impatient with me,” Fenton replied.

Mrs. Page said, “Good Mr. Fenton, do not visit my daughter.”

“She is not a match for you,” Mr. Page said. “She will not marry you.”

Mr. Page wanted Slender to be his son-in-law.

Fenton said to Mr. Page, “Sir, will you listen to me?”

“No, good Mr. Fenton,” he replied.

He then said, “Come, Mr. Shallow; come, son Slender, come in. Knowing my mind and knowing that I do not want you to marry my daughter, you wrong me by coming here, Mr. Fenton.”

Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, and Slender went inside the Pages’ house.

Mistress Quickly advised Fenton, “Speak to Mrs. Page.”

Fenton said, “Good Mrs. Page, because I love your daughter in such a righteous fashion as I do, I must — against all barriers and rebukes, and contrary to good manners — advance the colors of my love as if I were an army mounting an attack. I must not retire; therefore, let me have your good will.”

“Good mother,” Anne Page said, “do not marry me to

yonder fool.”

“I do not intend to,” Mrs. Page said. “I seek you a better husband than Slender.”

Mistress Quickly said, “She wants you to marry my master, Doctor Caius.”

“Alas, I would prefer to be buried alive up to my neck in the earth and bowled to death with turnips used as bowling balls!” Anne cried.

“Come, do not make yourself feel bad,” Mrs. Page said.

She added, “Good Mr. Fenton, I will not be your friend or your enemy. I will question my daughter about her love for you, and I will take her answers into consideration. Until then, farewell, sir. She must go inside, or her father will be angry.”

“Farewell, gentle Mrs. Page; farewell, Nan,” Fenton said.

Mrs. Page and Anne went inside the house.

Mistress Quickly said to Fenton, “This — Mrs. Page taking the feelings of her daughter into consideration — is my doing. Said I, ‘Will you cast away your child on a fool, and a physician? Look at Mr. Fenton instead.’ This change in Mrs. Page is my doing.”

“I thank you,” Fenton said, “and I ask you, please, to give my sweet Nan this ring sometime tonight. Here’s some money for your pains.”

“May Heaven send you good fortune!” Mistress Quickly said.

Fenton departed.

Mistress Quickly said to herself, “He has a kind heart. A woman would run through fire and water for such a man

with such a kind heart. But yet I wish that my master, Doctor Caius, had Miss Anne to marry; or I wish that Slender had her to marry; or, truly, I wish that Mr. Fenton had her to marry. I will do what I can for all three of them; for so I have promised, and I'll be as good as my word; but speciously [especially] I will do what I can for Mr. Fenton. Well, I must go on another errand to Sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses: Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. What a beast am I to slack on doing my errand!"

— 3.5 —

The following morning, Falstaff was in a room in the Garter Inn. He was still recovering from having been dumped into the cold water of the Thames River. With him was Bardolph, now a bartender at the Garter.

Falstaff said, "Bardolph, I say —"

"Here I am, sir."

"Go fetch me a quart of wine; put a piece of toast in it."

Bardolph departed to get the wine and toast.

Falstaff said to himself, "Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrowful of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the Thames? Well, if I am served such another trick, I'll have my brains taken out and buttered, and I will give them to a dog for a new-year's gift. Buttered brains are foolish brains. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned the blind puppies of a bitch, fifteen in the litter, and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as Hell, I should go all the way down. I would have been drowned, except that the shore was shelvy and shallow. Drowning is a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of

mummy — of dead, swollen flesh.”

Bardolph returned with the wine and toast.

He said, “Mistress Quickly, sir, is here to speak with you.”

“Let me pour in some wine to mix with the Thames water I swallowed last night; for my belly’s as cold as if I had swallowed snowballs for pills to cool the reins of my lust. Call her in.”

Bardolph called, “Come in, woman!”

As Bardolph was calling for Mistress Quickly, Falstaff drank the quart of wine.

Mistress Quickly entered the room and said, “By your leave, sir. I beg your pardon. I wish your worship a good morning.”

“Take away these chalices,” Falstaff said to Bardolph. “Go brew me a pottle of sack finely.”

The chalices were not used in religious services; they were simply small glasses. Falstaff, a big drinker of wine, wanted Bardolph to bring him a pottle — a half-gallon — of wine.

“With eggs in it, sir?” Bardolph asked.

“Just the wine itself,” Falstaff said. “I’ll have no pullet-sperm in my brewage.”

A pullet is a chicken.

Bardolph exited, and Falstaff said to Mistress Quickly, “Hello!”

“Sir, I come to your worship from Mrs. Ford.”

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

“Alas the day!” Mistress Quickly said. “Good heart, that was not her fault. She does so scold her men-servants; they mistook their erection.”

Mistress Quickly meant directions or instructions, not erection, but Falstaff replied, “So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman’s promise. I never should have believed a foolish woman.”

“Well, she laments, sir, for what happened. It would yearn [Mistress Quickly meant ‘grieve’] your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning a-birding away from home; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine. I must carry a message from you to her quickly. She will make you amends, I promise you.”

“Well, I will come and visit her,” Falstaff said. “Tell her so; and tell her to think about what a man is: Let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.”

Falstaff meant that he was showing merit by being persistent: He was not easily giving up his attempt to commit adultery with Mrs. Ford.

“I will tell her,” Mistress Quickly said.

“Do so. Between nine and ten, did you say?”

“Eight and nine, sir.”

“Well, go to her,” Falstaff said. “I will not miss my meeting with her.”

“Peace be with you, sir.”

Mistress Quickly exited.

Falstaff said to himself, “I marvel that I have not heard from Mr. Brook; he sent me word to stay within the inn until he came. I like his money well. Oh, here he comes.”

Mr. Ford, disguised as Mr. Brook, entered the room.

“Bless you, sir!” Mr. Ford said.

“Hello, Mr. Brook, have you come to know what has happened between me and Ford’s wife?”

“That, indeed, Sir John, is my business here.”

“Mr. Brook, I will not lie to you. I was at her house the hour she asked me to come.”

“How did you do, sir?”

“Very badly, Mr. Brook.”

“Why? Did she change her mind?”

“No, Mr. Brook; but the prying cuckold who is her husband, Mr. Brook, dwelling in a continual alarm of jealousy, came in during our encounter, after we had embraced, kissed, confessed our love for each other, and, as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy. Indeed, at the heels of Mr. Brook came a rabble of his companions, thither provoked and instigated by his ill temper to search his house for his wife’s love.”

“What, while you were there?” the disguised Mr. Ford said.

“Yes, while I was there.”

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

“You shall hear the story,” Falstaff said. “As good luck would have it, Mrs. Page came in and told us that Ford was coming, and as a result of her cunning and Ford’s wife’s distraction, they put me in a buck-basket and Mrs. Ford’s servants carried me away from the house.”

“A buck-basket!”

“By the Lord, a buck-basket! They rammed me in with foul

and dirty shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, and greasy handkerchiefs; Mr. Brook, there was the rankest collection of dirty clothing with the most villainous smell that ever offended nostril.”

“And how long did you lie there?”

“I will tell you, Mr. Brook, what I have suffered in my attempt to bring this woman to do evil for your benefit. After I was thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford’s knaves, aka his hinds and his servants, were ordered by Mrs. Ford to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet Lane, the lane that leads to Datchet Meadow. They took me on their shoulders and met the jealous knave their master in the doorway. He asked them once or twice what they had in their basket. I quaked for fear that the lunatic knave would have searched the basket; but fate, ordaining that Ford should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well, he continued on into the house to search it, and away went I with the foul clothes.

“But consider what happened next, Mr. Brook. I suffered the pangs of three different possible deaths. First, I could have died from an intolerable fright; I was afraid that I would be detected by a jealous rotten bellwether ram with a bell around its neck that leads the flock.

“Second, I had to bend, like a good bilbo sword, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head, in order to fit into the basket.”

Good swords could be bent without breaking. A sword from Bilbao, Spain, was tested for excellence by bending it from tip to hilt. If it did not break, it was a good sword. A peck is a quarter of a bushel; Sir Falstaff was complaining about his bulk being squeezed into a very small space.

Falstaff continued, “Third, I was stuffed in that basket like a strongly smelling distilled liquid in a glass container. And

in that basket were stinking clothes that fermented in their own grease. Think of that — a man of my nature — think of that — who is as subject to heat as butter; I am a man of continual dissolving and thaw. I melt in heat like butter. It was a miracle that I escaped suffocation.

“And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish cooked with too much butter, I was then thrown into the Thames River, and glowing hot, I was cooled in that surge of cold water like a glowing-hot horseshoe thrown into water. Think of that — I was hissing hot — think of that, Mr. Brook.”

“In all seriousness,” Mr. Ford said, “I am sorry that for my sake you have suffered all this. My suit then is desperate; I assume that you will no longer try to seduce Mrs. Ford?”

“Mr. Brook, I will be thrown into the volcano Etna, as I have been into the Thames River, before I will stop trying to seduce her. Her husband is this morning gone hunting birds, and I have received from her another time to meet her. Between eight and nine is the hour, Mr. Brook.”

“It is already past eight, sir,” Mr. Ford said.

“Is it? I will then go to my appointment,” Falstaff said. “Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I succeed; and the conclusion shall be crowned with your enjoying her. *Adieu*. You shall have her, Mr. Brook; Mr. Brook, you shall cuckold Ford.”

Falstaff exited.

“Hmm!” Mr. Ford said to himself, “Is this a vision? Is this a dream? Do I sleep? Mr. Ford, wake up! Wake up, Mr. Ford! There’s a hole made in your best coat, Mr. Ford. Mr. Ford, you have a fault. This is what it is to be married! This is what it is to have linen and buck-baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am.”

Mr. Ford meant that he was a cuckold.

He continued, "I will now surprise Falstaff, the lecher. He is at my house. He cannot escape me; it is impossible for him to escape from me this time. He cannot creep into a purse that holds small coins, nor into a pepper shaker. However, in case the Devil who guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not shall not make me tame. If I have horns to make me mad, then let the proverb go with me: I'll be horn-mad."

Mr. Ford thought that he was a cuckold, but he did not want to say the word, and so he said phrases such as "Though what I am I cannot avoid" and "yet to be what I would not."

CHAPTER 4 (The Merry Wives of Windsor)

— 4.1 —

On a public street stood Mrs. Page, Mistress Quickly, and William Page, the Pages' young son, who was studying Latin, as even very young pupils did at that time.

Speaking about Falstaff, Mrs. Page asked Mistress Quickly, "Do you think that he is already at Mrs. Ford's house?"

"I am sure that he is by this time, or will be immediately, but, truly, he is very outrageously angry about being thrown into the water. Mrs. Ford wants you to go to her right away."

Mrs. Page replied, "I'll be with her very soon; first I need to take my young man here to school."

She looked up and said, "Look, his schoolmaster — Sir Hugh — is coming; I see that today is a playing day — a holiday from school."

Because Sir Hugh was a university-educated priest, he was the schoolmaster in Windsor.

She said, "How are you, Sir Hugh? Is there no school today?"

"No, there is no school," Sir Hugh replied. "Mr. Slender has requested that I allow the boys to play today."

"God bless him," Mistress Quickly said.

Mrs. Page said, "Sir Hugh, my husband says my son is not learning anything at all in school. Please, ask him some questions about his knowledge of Latin."

"Come here, William," Sir Hugh said. "Hold up your head;

come here.”

“Come on, son,” Mrs. Page said. “Hold up your head; answer your teacher, and don’t be afraid.”

With his Welsh accent, Sir Hugh asked, “William, how many numbers is in nouns?”

“Two.”

William was correct: the two numbers were singular and plural.

Latin is a language that has inflections according to number and case. The inflections are changes in the form of the word that reveal information such as whether the noun is singular or plural. The inflections also reveal whether a noun is in the nominative, genitive, accusative, ablative, or vocative case.

Mistress Quickly, who knew no Latin, said, “Truly, I thought there had been one number more because they say, ‘God’s nouns.’”

She was mistaken. People sometimes referred to God’s ’ounds, or wounds, not God’s nouns. Also, Jesus suffered five wounds on the cross, not three. He was wounded in his side, his hands, and his feet.

“Peace your tattlings!” Sir Hugh said to Mistress Quickly; he meant, “Be quiet!”

He then asked, “What is ‘fair,’ William?”

William gave the Latin word for “fair,” aka “beautiful”: “*Pulcher*.”

Mistress Quickly misunderstood: “Polecats! There are fairer things than polecats, surely.”

Polecats were regarded as vermin; in addition, the word

“polecat” was a slang term for a prostitute.

“You are a very simplicity ’oman [simple-minded woman],” Sir Hugh said to her. “Please, be quiet.”

He then asked, “What is *lapis*, William?”

William correctly translated the Latin word ‘*lapis*’: “A stone.”

“And what is ‘a stone,’ William?”

“A pebble.”

Here, William answered incorrectly. Sir Hugh had wanted William to translate the English word “stone” into Latin.

Sir Hugh said, “No, it is *lapis*. Please, remember in your prain [brain].”

William said, “*Lapis*.”

“That is a good William,” Sir Hugh said. “What is he, William, who does lend articles?”

Articles are words such as “this” and “that.”

William had memorized the answer from his Latin book and quoted it word for word: “Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus declined, *Singulariter, nominativo, hic, haec, hoc*.”

Singulariter means “in the singular,” *nominativo* means “in the nominative case.”

Hic, haec, hoc are all Latin words meaning “this.” *Hic* is masculine; *haec* is feminine; and *hoc* is neuter.

Sir Hugh said in his Welsh accent, “*Nominativo, hig, hag, hog*. Please, listen: *genitivo, hujus*. Well, what is your accusative case?”

Genitivo means “in the genitive case; *hujus* means “of this.”

William replied, “*Accusativo, hinc.*”

Accusativo means “in the accusative case.” However, William erred when he answered *hinc*; he should have answered *hunc*.

Sir Hugh corrected him: “Please, have your remembrance, child, accusative, *hung, hang, hog* [*hunc, hanc, hoc*].”

Mistress Quickly said, “‘Hang-hog’ is Latin for bacon, I bet.”

Bacon is hung and then smoked and preserved. A story was told about a prisoner named Hog who once tried to get out of being hung by saying that he was related to a VIP named Sir Nicholas Bacon, who replied that the prisoner and he could not be related unless the prisoner was hanged because Hog does not become Bacon until it is hanged.

Sir Hugh said, “Leave your prabbles [prattling brabbles, aka trivial words], ’oman.”

He then asked, “What is the *focative* case, William?”

By “the *focative* case,” Sir Hugh meant “the vocative case.”

“O — *vocativo, O,*” William replied. In a way, William was correct. When you address someone by name in Latin, you are using the vocative case.

This is a translation of a name in the vocative case from Latin to English: “Oh, William.”

Sir Hugh said, “Remember, William; *focative* is *caret.*”

“*Caret*” is Latin for “It is lacking.” Sir Hugh meant that although names can be in the vocative case, the articles *hic, haec, hoc* lack a vocative case.

Mistress Quickly, who heard the Latin word ‘*caret*’ but understood it to be the English word “carrot,” said, “And that’s a good root.”

Anyone with a bawdy sense of humor who heard the conversation could have had a good laugh. Sir Hugh’s pronunciation of *focative* called to mind a four-letter English word that began with *f* and ended with *k*. An “O” was a letter that was then used to refer to a vagina. And “carrot” was a word then used to refer to a penis.

Sir Hugh said to Mistress Quickly, “Stop speaking, ’oman.”

Mrs. Page added, “Quiet!”

Sir Hugh asked, “What is your genitive case plural, William?”

“Genitive case?” William asked.

“Yes.”

William answered, “Genitive — *horum, harum, horum.*”

He had answered correctly, but Mistress Quickly, who knew no Latin, was shocked. She understood “genitive case” to mean “Jenny’s case.” Prostitutes were called by diminutive names such as Jenny, and the word “case” was then used to refer to a vagina. In addition, she heard the Latin word ‘*horum*’ and thought that she was hearing the English word “whore.”

Mistress Quickly said, “God’s vengeance on Jenny’s case! Darn her! Never say her name, child, if she is a whore.”

Sir Hugh said, “For shame, ’oman.”

Mistress Quickly defended herself: “You do ill to teach the child such words.”

She said to Mrs. Page, “He teaches him to hick and to hack,

which they'll do fast enough by themselves.”

To “hick” is to hiccup after drinking excessively, and to “hack” is to fornicate.

Mistress Quickly said to Sir Hugh, “And to say the word *horum!* Shame on you!”

Sir Hugh replied, “Are you lunatics, ’oman? Have you no understandings for your cases and the numbers of the genders? You are as foolish Christian creatures as I would desires.”

“Please, be quiet,” Mrs. Page said to Mistress Quickly.

Sir Hugh said, “Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.”

“I have forgotten that,” William said.

“It is *qui, quae, quod,*” Sir Hugh said. “If you forget your *quies,* your *quaes,* and your *quods,* you must be preeches.”

By “preeches,” Sir Hugh meant “breeched” — William would be spanked after his britches were pulled down.

Sir Hugh then said to William, “Go your ways, and play; go.”

“He is a better scholar than I thought he was,” Mrs. Page said.

“He is a good sprag [alert, clever] memory,” Sir Hugh said. “Farewell, Mrs. Page.”

“*Adieu,* good Sir Hugh.”

Sir Hugh departed.

Mrs. Page said to her son, “Let’s go home, boy. Come, we stay here too long.”

Falstaff and Mrs. Ford were speaking in a room in the Fords' house.

Falstaff said, "Mrs. Ford, your sorrow has eaten up and taken away my suffering. I see that you return my love, and I declare to you that I match your love exactly — not only, Mrs. Ford, in the simple act and office of love, but in everything that accompanies it — the proper apparel, accompaniment, and ceremony. But are you sure that your husband is away now?"

"He's hunting birds, sweet Sir John," Mrs. Ford said.

Outside the house, Mrs. Page called, "Hello, friend! Are you home?"

Mrs. Ford said, "Step into this room and stay out of sight, Sir John."

Falstaff went into the other room.

Mrs. Page entered the house and said, "How are you now, sweetheart? Who's at home besides yourself?"

"Why, no one but my own servants."

"Indeed!"

"I have told you the truth," Mrs. Ford said.

She whispered to Mrs. Page, "Speak louder so that Falstaff can hear you."

"Truly," Mrs. Page replied, speaking loudly, "I am so glad you have nobody else here."

"Why?"

"Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunatic mind again," Mrs. Page replied. "He so takes on yonder with my

husband; he so rails against all married mankind, he so curses all Eve's daughters of whatsoever temperament, and he so hits himself on the forehead, crying, 'Show yourself! Show yourself!' that any madness I have ever before beheld in him now seems only tameness, civility, and patience compared to this distemper he is in now."

When Mr. Ford hit his forehead and yelled, "Show yourself! Show yourself!" he was referring to the metaphorical cuckold's horns that he felt that his wife had given to him.

Mrs. Page said, "I am glad the fat knight is not here."

"Why, does my husband talk about Falstaff?" Mrs. Ford asked.

"He talks about no one but him; and he swears that Falstaff was carried out of your house in a basket the last time he searched for him. He protests to my husband that Falstaff is now here, and he has drawn my husband and the rest of their company from their hunting of birds to see whether his suspicion is correct. I am glad that the knight is not here; now your husband shall see how foolish his suspicions are."

"How near is my husband, Mrs. Page?"

"Very near. He is at the end of the street. He will be here almost immediately."

"I am ruined!" Mrs. Ford said. "The knight is here."

"Why, then you are utterly shamed, and he will soon be a dead man. What a woman are you! Send him away! Send him away! Better shame than murder! You will be shamed, but if he escapes, he will avoid being murdered!"

"How can he get out of here? How can I hide him? Shall I put him into the buck-basket again?"

Falstaff came out of hiding and said, “No, I will not hide again in the basket. Can’t I leave before he arrives here?”

Mrs. Page said, “No. Alas, three of Mr. Ford’s brothers are watching the door. They are carrying pistols so that no one can go out the door; otherwise, you might slip away before he came. But what are you doing here?”

Ignoring that question, Falstaff said, “What shall I do? I know. I’ll creep up into the chimney.”

Mrs. Ford said, “Mr. Ford and his hunting partners always fire their birding guns up the chimney. It is a safe way to ensure that they are not loaded. I know where you can hide: Creep into the kiln.”

The kiln was where the cooking took place.

“Where is it?” Falstaff asked.

“My husband will look there, I swear,” Mrs. Ford said. “He will look everywhere: cupboards, coffers, chests, trunks, wells, vaults. He knows all the places where a man can hide, and he will search all of them. Falstaff, you cannot hide in this house.”

“I’ll go out of the house then.”

“If you go out of this house, you die, Sir John,” Mrs. Page said. “Unless you go out disguised —”

“How can we disguise him?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“I don’t know!” Mrs. Page said. “There is no woman’s gown big enough for him to put on as a disguise; otherwise, he might put on a hat, a muffler around his throat, and a kerchief on his head under his hat, and so escape.”

“Good hearts, devise some kind of disguise,” Falstaff said. “Better an inconvenience rather than a calamity.”

“My maid’s aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a dress upstairs,” Mrs. Ford said.

“I give my word that the dress will fit him,” Mrs. Page said. “She’s as big as he is: and there’s her fringed hat and her muffler, too. Run upstairs and put on her dress, Sir John.”

“Go, go, sweet Sir John. Mrs. Page and I will look for a kerchief you can put on your head.”

“Quickly, quickly!” Mrs. Page said. “We’ll come and help disguise you very soon. In the meanwhile, put on the dress.”

Falstaff went upstairs to put on the dress.

“I wish that my husband would see Falstaff in this disguise,” Mrs. Ford said. “He cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears that she’s a witch and he has forbidden her to enter my house and has threatened to beat her.”

“May Heaven guide Falstaff to your husband’s cudgel, and may the Devil guide his cudgel afterwards!”

“But is my husband really coming?”

“In all seriousness, yes,” Mrs. Page said, “and he talks about the buck-basket, too, but I do not know how he learned about that.”

“We’ll make use of the buck-basket again,” Mrs. Ford said. “I’ll tell my manservants to carry the buck-basket again so that they will meet my husband at the door with it, as they did last time.”

“Your husband will be here very soon,” Mrs. Page said. “Let’s go dress Falstaff like the witch of Brentford.”

“I’ll first give my manservants orders about what they shall do with the buck-basket. Go up to Falstaff; I’ll bring him a

kerchief for his head very quickly.”

Mrs. Ford departed.

Mrs. Page said to herself, “Hang Falstaff, that dishonest varlet! We cannot treat him badly enough. We’ll leave a proof, by that which we will do, that wives may be merry, and yet be honest, too. We do not commit adultery although we often jest and laugh. Remember the old, but true, proverb: Quiet swine eat all the pigswill. The pig that is quiet is the one that is actually feeding.”

She went upstairs.

Mrs. Ford came back with two manservants.

“Go, sirs, take the buck-basket again on your shoulders. Your master is almost at the door; if he orders you to set it down, obey him. Quickly, do it.”

She went upstairs.

The first manservant said, “Come, come, lift it up.”

The second manservant said, “Pray to Heaven that it is not full of knight again.”

“I hope that it is not,” the first manservant said. “I would rather carry a buck-basket filled with lead.”

Mr. Ford, Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh entered the room.

Mr. Ford said, “If my suspicions prove to be wrong, I will look like a fool, true. But if my suspicions prove to be true and I allow my wife to commit adultery through my negligence, do you have any way to make me not a fool again?”

Mr. Ford ordered the manservants, “Set down the basket, villains! Somebody call my wife. Is there a youth — a

fortunate lover — in this buck-basket? Oh, you panderly rascals — you act like panders! There's a knot of men, a gang, a pack, a conspiracy against me. Now shall the truth be revealed and the Devil shamed. Remember this proverb: Tell the truth and shame the Devil!"

No one had called his wife, so Mr. Ford did it: "Hello, wife, I say! Come, come here! Look at these honest clothes you sent forth to be bleached!"

Mr. Page said, "Why, this surpasses belief, Mr. Ford; this is incredible. You ought not to be allowed loose any longer; you ought to be tied up like a madman."

"Why, this is lunatics!" Sir Hugh said. "This is as mad as a mad dog!"

Justice Shallow said, "Indeed, Mr. Ford, this is not well, indeed."

"I agree, sir," Mr. Ford replied.

Mrs. Ford entered the room.

Mr. Ford said, "Come here, Mrs. Ford: Mrs. Ford the honest and faithful woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, who has a jealous fool for her husband! I suspect without cause, Mrs. Ford, do I?"

"Heaven be my witness that you do," Mrs. Ford said, "if you suspect me in any dishonesty and if you suspect that I have been unfaithful to you in any way."

"Well said, brazen-face!" Mr. Ford said. "Keep it up."

He then started pulling clothing out of the buck-bucket as he said, "Come out of there, damn you!"

"This surpasses everything!" Mr. Page said.

"Are you not ashamed?" Mrs. Ford said. "Let the clothes

alone!”

“I shall find you,” Mr. Ford said as he searched the basket.

“It is unreasonable!” Sir Hugh said. “Will you take up your wife’s clothes? Come away.”

Sir Hugh was being unintentionally bawdy. Someone with an indelicate sense of humor could interpret Sir Hugh’s words as asking, “Will you take up your wife’s dress so you can have sex with her?”

“Empty the basket, I say!” Mr. Ford ordered.

“Why, man, why?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“Mr. Page, as I am a man, I swear that a man was conveyed out of my house yesterday in this buck-basket. Why may he not be there again? I am sure that he is somewhere in my house. My source of information is true; my jealousy is reasonable.”

He ordered again, “Pull all the clothing out of the buck-basket.”

“If you find a man there, he shall die a flea’s death,” Mrs. Ford said. “He will have to be as small as a flea to hide there, and I shall squish him between my forefinger and my thumb.”

“No man is hiding in that basket,” Mr. Page said.

“By my fidelity [faith], this is not well, Mr. Ford,” Justice Shallow said. “This disgraces you.”

Sir Hugh said, “Mr. Ford, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of your own heart: This is jealousies.”

“Well, the man I am looking for is not here in the buck-basket,” Mr. Ford said.

“No, nor anywhere else but in your brain,” Mr. Page said.

“Help me to search my house one more time,” Mr. Ford said. “If I do not find what I am seeking, suggest no excuse for my extreme behavior, but instead joke about me at your dinner-table. Let everyone use me in comparisons: ‘As jealous as Ford, who searched inside a hollow walnut for his wife’s lover.’ Help me once more; once more search my house with me.”

Mrs. Ford called upstairs, “Mrs. Page! You and the old woman come downstairs; my husband will come into the bedchamber.”

“Old woman!” Mr. Ford said. “What old woman is that?”

“She is my maid’s aunt of Brentford.”

“She is a witch, a hussy, an old and cheating hussy! Haven’t I forbid her to enter my house? She comes on errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what’s brought to pass in the name of fortune telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure — wax effigies, pentagrams, and astrological horoscopes — and other such pretenses that are beyond our understanding and about which we know nothing!”

He called, “Come down, you witch, you hag, you; come down here, I say!”

“No, please, good, sweet husband!” Mrs. Ford said.

She added, “Good gentlemen, don’t allow him to strike the old woman.”

Falstaff, now dressed in women’s clothing, and Mrs. Page entered the room.

Mrs. Page said, “Come, Mother Prat; come, give me your hand.”

“I’ll prat her,” Mrs. Ford said.

He hit Falstaff several times and yelled, “Out of my door, you witch, you hag, you baggage, you polecat, you bad woman! Out, out! I’ll conjure you, I’ll fortune-tell you.”

Falstaff ran out the door.

“Are you not ashamed?” Mrs. Page said. “I think you have killed the poor woman.”

Mrs. Ford said, “He is willing to kill her.”

She said sarcastically to her husband, “You ought to be proud of yourself.”

“Hang her, the witch!” Mr. Ford said.

“By the yea and no, I think the ’oman is a witch indeed,” Sir Hugh said. “I like not when a ’oman has a great peard [beard]; I spy a great peard [beard] under his muffler. Witches have peards.”

“Will you follow me, gentlemen?” Mr. Ford asked. “I ask you to please follow me. See if my jealousy has a cause. If I am crying ‘Wolf’ falsely now, then do not listen to me if I ever cry ‘Wolf’ again.”

“Let’s humor him a little further,” Mr. Page said. “Come, gentlemen.”

Mr. Ford, Mr. Page, Justice Shallow, Doctor Caius, and Sir Hugh went upstairs.

Mrs. Page said, “Believe me, your husband beat Falstaff most pitifully.”

Mrs. Ford replied, “No, I swear by the Mass that he did not — he beat him most unpitifully, I believe.”

“I’ll have the cudgel he used hallowed — sanctified — and

hung over the altar,” Mrs. Page said. “It has done meritorious service.”

“What do you think?” Mrs. Ford asked. “May we, with the warrant of womanhood and the witness of a good conscience, pursue Falstaff with any further revenge? Are we justified in punishing him further?”

“The spirit of wantonness is, I am sure, scared out of him,” Mrs. Page said. “Unless the Devil completely owns him with no possibility of redemption, Falstaff will never again, I think, seek to sully us by attempting to commit adultery with us.”

“Shall we tell our husbands how we have tricked and punished Falstaff?” Mrs. Ford asked.

“Yes, by all means; if for no other reason than to scrape the jealous imaginings out of your husband’s brains. If they can find in their hearts that the poor unvirtuous fat knight should be any further afflicted, the two of us will continue to administer justice to him.”

“I’ll bet that they will have him publicly shamed,” Mrs. Ford said. “I think that would be the best and most fitting conclusion to the jest. Falstaff deserves to be publicly shamed.”

“Come, let us go to the forge then and shape our next plan for revenge,” Mrs. Page said. “I would not have things cool.”

— 4.3 —

In a room of the Garter Inn, Bardolph said to the Host, “Sir, the Germans desire to have the use of three of your horses: The Duke himself will be tomorrow at the court, and they are going to meet him.”

“What Duke is he who is coming so secretly?” the Host

said. "I have heard nothing about a Duke being at the court tomorrow. Let me speak with the gentlemen. Do they speak English?"

"Yes, sir," Bardolph said. "I'll call them to come and speak to you."

"They shall use my horses," the Host said, "but I'll make them pay; I'll sauce them and charge them a lot. They reserved rooms at my inn for a week, and I have turned away other guests. They must pay a lot; I'll overcharge them. Come with me."

— 4.4 —

Mr. and Mrs. Page, Mr. and Mrs. Ford, and Sir Hugh were talking together in a room in the Fords' house. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page had shown their husbands the letters that Falstaff had written to them.

"It is one of the best discretions of a 'oman as ever I did look upon," Sir Hugh said.

He meant that Mrs. Ford was one of the most sensible and discreet women that he had ever seen.

Mr. Page asked, "And did he send you both these letters at the same time?"

Mrs. Page replied, "Within a quarter of an hour."

"Pardon me, wife," Mr. Ford said. "Henceforth do what you will; I will suspect the Sun of being cold before I will suspect you of being wanton and unfaithful. Now my honor stands in me as firm as faith, although recently I was a heretic."

"This is good," Mr. Page said. "This is good, but no more, please. Be not as extreme in apologizing for an offense as you were in committing the offense."

“But let our plot go forward. Let our wives once more, to make public entertainment for us, appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow at a place where we may find him and disgrace him for what he has wanted to do.”

“There is no better way or plan than the one they spoke of,” Mr. Ford said.

“I don’t know,” Mr. Page said. “They will send him word that they’ll meet him in the park at midnight? Nonsense! He’ll never come.”

“You say he has been thrown in the rivers and has been grievously peaten [beaten] as an old ’oman,” Sir Hugh said. “I think there should be terrors in him that he should not come; methinks that since his flesh is punished, he shall have no desires to come.”

“I think so, too,” Mr. Page said.

“Plan how you’ll treat Falstaff when he comes,” Mrs. Ford said, “and let us two devise how to bring him there.”

Mrs. Page said, “There is an old tale that Herne the Hunter, who was once a forester here in Windsor Forest, all throughout the winter, at midnight, walks round about an oak while wearing great jagged horns, and there he blights the tree and takes the cattle and makes milk cows yield blood and shakes a chain in a most hideous and dreadful manner.

“You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know the superstitious idle-headed elders of long ago learned and passed down to our times this tale of Herne the Hunter as a true tale.”

“Why, even now many people are afraid in the deep of night to walk by Herne’s Oak,” Mr. Page said. “But what about this?”

“We have a plan,” Mrs. Ford said. “We want to entice Falstaff to meet us at that oak. He will be disguised as Herne and have huge horns on his head.”

“Well, let us suppose that he shows up,” Mr. Page said. “Let us also suppose that he is disguised as Herne the Hunter with horns on his head. Once he is there, what shall be done with and to him? What is your plot?”

“We have thought about that, too,” Mrs. Page said. “Nan Page my daughter and my little son and three or four more of their age and size we’ll dress like elves, the children of elves, and fairies with rounds of waxen candles on their heads, and rattles in their hands. Suddenly, as Falstaff, Mrs. Ford, and I are newly met, let them come out of a sawpit where timber is sawed and rush at us as they sing some wild and confused song. When we see them, Mrs. Ford and I in great amazedness will run away. Then they will all encircle him round about and, fairy-like, pinch the unclean knight, and ask him why, at that hour of fairy revel, in their so sacred paths he dares to tread in such a profane shape.”

“And until he tells the truth,” Mrs. Ford said, “the pretend fairies will pinch him without stopping and burn him with their candles.”

“Once the truth is known,” Mrs. Page said, “we’ll all present ourselves, take off his horns, and laugh at him all the way back home to Windsor.”

Mr. Ford said, “The children must be taught well how to do this, and they must practice, or they won’t be able to do it.”

“I will teach the children their behaviors,” Sir Hugh said, “and I will be like a jack-an-apes — an evil spirit — also, to burn the knight with my candle.”

“That will be excellent,” Mr. Ford said. “I’ll go and buy them masks.”

Mrs. Page said, "My Nan shall be the Fairy Queen, and she will be finely attired in a robe of white."

"I will go and buy white silk," Mr. Page said.

He thought, *I also have formed a plan. During the night, Mr. Slender will steal away with Nan, my daughter, and take her to the nearby village of Eton and marry her.*

He said out loud, "Send a message to Falstaff right away."

Mr. Ford said, "I will disguise myself again as Brook and go to him. He will tell me what he intends to do. I am sure that he will come."

"Don't you worry about that," Mrs. Page said. "Go and get us everything we need for our fairies."

"Let us get going," Sir Hugh said. "It is admirable pleasures and fery [very] honest knaveries."

Mr. Page, Mr. Ford, and Sir Hugh exited.

Mrs. Page said, "Go, Mrs. Ford. Send a message quickly to Sir John, so that we know what he plans to do."

Mrs. Ford exited.

Mrs. Page said to herself, "I'll go to Doctor Caius. He has my good will, and I want no one but him to marry my daughter, Nan Page. That Slender, although he owns lots of land, is an idiot; my husband likes Slender best of all my daughter's suitors.

"Doctor Caius is well moneyed, and his friends are powerful at court. He, none but he, shall marry my daughter even though twenty thousand men worthier than him should want to marry her."

In a room in the Garter Inn, the Host was talking with Simple, Slender's servant. The Host was in a good mood and using extravagant language. He was also willing to have fun at the expense of Simple.

"What would you have, boor?" the Host asked. "What, thick-skin! Speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap."

"Sir, I have come to speak with Sir John Falstaff," Simple said. "Master Slender has sent me to speak to Sir John."

The Host pointed upstairs and said, "There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing-bed and the truckle-bed that can be stored under it. Falstaff's room has been freshly and newly painted with the story of the Prodigal Son. Go knock and call him. May Hell speak like an Anthropophaginian to you. Knock, I say."

An Anthropophaginian is a cannibal, aka man-eater. The Host was joking that Falstaff, if he were irritated by being interrupted, might bite Simple's head off.

"There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into Falstaff's bedchamber," Simple said. "I'll be so bold as to stay, sir, until she come down; indeed, I come to speak with her, not him."

"Ha! A fat woman!" the Host said. "The knight may be robbed — I'll call for him."

He shouted, "Bully knight! Bully Sir John! Speak from your lungs military. Are you there? It is your Host, your Ephesian, who is calling for you."

By "Ephesian," the Host meant "jolly companion."

"How are you, my Host?" Falstaff called from upstairs.

"Here's a Bohemian-Tartar who is waiting until the fat

woman with you comes down,” the Host replied. “Let her descend, bully, let her descend; my chambers are honorable. Do not expect privacy in which to do immoral acts here.”

A Bohemian-Tartar is a Tartar from Bohemia — the Host’s humorous way of referring to Simple.

Falstaff walked down the stairs and said, “There was, my Host, an old fat woman just now with me; but she’s gone.”

“Please, sir,” Simple said, “wasn’t she the wise woman of Brentford?”

A wise woman is a woman who is skilled in occult matters.

“Suppose it was, mussel shell,” Falstaff said.

Simple’s mouth was habitually open, and his mind was habitually empty; these two characteristics also apply to one mussel shell.

Falstaff continued, “What do you want with her?”

“My master, sir, Master Slender, seeing her walking through the streets, sent me to her to learn, sir, whether one Nym, sir, who cheated him out of a necklace, still had the necklace or not.”

“I spoke with the old woman about it,” Falstaff said.

“And what did she say, please, sir?”

“She says that the very same man who cheated Master Slender of his chain cozened him of it.”

“Cozened” is a word that means “cheated.”

“I wish that I could have spoken with the woman herself,” Simple said. “I had other things that my master, Master Slender, wanted me to speak to her about.”

“What are they?” Falstaff asked. “Let us know.”

“Yes,” the Host said. “Answer quickly.”

“I may not conceal them, sir,” Simple replied. He meant “reveal,” not “conceal,” but the Host joked, “Conceal them, or you die.”

“Why, sir, they were only about Miss Anne Page,” Simple said. “My master wanted to know if it is his fortune to have her or not.”

“It is,” Falstaff said. “It is his fortune.”

“To what, sir?” Simple asked.

“To have her, or not,” Falstaff replied. “Go; tell Slender the fat woman told me that.”

“May I be so bold as to say so, sir?” Simple asked.

“Yes, sir,” Falstaff said, “as if anyone could be more bold.”

“I thank your worship,” Simple replied. “I shall make my master glad with these tidings.”

Simple exited.

“You are clerkly, you are clerkly, Sir John,” the Host replied. “You are a scholar. Was there a wise woman with you?”

“Yes, there was, my Host,” Falstaff replied. “She was one who taught me more wit than ever I learned before in my life, and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.”

Falstaff was saying that he had learned something from the recent escapade in which he had dressed as a woman. Mr. Ford had paid Falstaff to learn — blows were Falstaff’s payment.

Bardolph entered the room and said, "Out, alas, sir! Cozenage, mere cozenage! Cheating, and nothing but cheating!"

Bardolph had ridden with the three Germans who were supposed to be using the Host's horses to ride to the court. He had been riding on a pillion: a cushion behind a saddle for an additional rider.

"Where are my horses?" the Host asked. "Speak well of them, *varletto*."

Varletto was the Host's Italianized word for "varlet." The Host did not want Bardolph to say that the thieves, aka cozeners, had run off with the horses.

"The horses have run away with the cozeners," Bardolph replied. "As soon as we arrived beyond Eton, they threw me off from behind one of them, in a slough of mire; and they used their spurs and rode quickly away, like three German Devils, three Doctor Faustuses."

"They have gone only to meet the Duke, villain," the Host said. "Do not say that they have fled; Germans are honest men."

Sir Hugh entered the room and asked, "Where is the Host?"

"What is the matter, sir?" the Host asked.

"Have a care of your entertainments," Sir Hugh said.

By "entertainments," he meant "those whom you entertain, aka guests in the inn.

Sir Hugh continued, "There is a friend of mine come to town tells me there is three cozen-Germans that has cozened all the hosts of Reading, of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you: You are wise and full of gibes and vlouting-

stocks [flouting-stocks, aka laughing-stocks], and it is not convenient you should be cozened. Fare you well.”

“Cozen” meant both “cousin, aka kinsmen or relatives” and “cozening, aka cheating.”

Sir Hugh exited the room, and Doctor Caius entered it.

He asked, “Vere [Where] is mine [my] Host de Jarteer [Garter]?”

“Here, Mister Doctor,” the Host replied, “in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.”

“I cannot tell vat is dat,” Doctor Caius said, “but it is tell-a me dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamany [from Germany]. By my trot [Truly], dere is no duke dat the court is know to come. I tell you for good vill [will]. *Adieu.*”

He exited.

The Host ordered Bardolph, “Raise the hue and cry, villain, and we will go after the thieves! Assist me, knight. I am undone! Fly, run, hue and cry, villain! I am undone!”

The Host and Bardolph exited.

Falstaff said to himself, “I wish that all the world might be cheated because I have been cheated — and beaten, too. If it should come to the ear of the court how I have been transformed and how my transformation has been washed when I hid in the buck-basket and cudgeled when I disguised myself as a fat woman, they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop and liquor fishermen’s boots with me so that the boots would be waterproof. I bet that they would whip me with their fine wits until I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear. I have not prospered ever since I cheated at the card game primero, got caught, and lied about cheating. Well, if my wind were but long enough to

say my prayers, I would repent.”

Mistress Quickly entered the room.

Falstaff asked, “From where have you come?”

“From the two parties, truly,” Mistress Quickly replied.

Of course, she meant that Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford had sent her to Falstaff.

“The Devil take one party and his dam — his mother — the other!” Falstaff said, “and so they shall be both bestowed. I have suffered more for their sakes, more than the villainous inconstancy of man’s disposition — the weakness of man — is able to bear.”

“And haven’t they suffered?” Mistress Quickly said. “Yes, indeed they have — speciously [Mistress Quickly meant “especially”] one of them. Mrs. Ford, good heart, has been beaten black and blue — you cannot see a white spot on her skin.”

“Why are telling you me about black and blue?” Falstaff asked. “I was beaten myself into all the colors of the rainbow; and I was almost arrested as the witch of Brentford. If my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the movements of an old woman, had not saved me, the knave constable would have set me in the stocks — in the common stocks — as a witch.”

“Sir, let me speak with you in your bedchamber,” Mistress Quickly said. “You shall hear how things go; and, I promise you, you will be content. Here is a letter that will help explain things. Good hearts, what trouble it is to bring you together! Surely, one of you has not served Heaven well, or else you would not be so crossed.”

“Come up into my bedchamber,” Falstaff said.

Fenton and the Host talked together in a room of the Garter Inn.

The Host, who was normally a jovial fellow, was depressed. He said, “Mr. Fenton, don’t talk to me; my mind is heavy. I will give up trying to help you marry Anne Page.”

“Listen to me for a moment,” Fenton said. “Assist me and help me marry Anne Page, and I will give you a hundred pounds in gold more than you lost when the three Germans stole your horses.”

“I will listen to you, Mr. Fenton,” the Host said, “and I will at the least keep secret what you tell me.”

“From time to time I have acquainted you with the dear love I have for fair Anne Page, who has returned my affection as much as she has been allowed to. Her love for me makes me happy. I have a letter from her with such content as will make you wonder. It has mirth that is so intermixed with my desire to marry her that mirth and important matter cannot be separated. Fat Falstaff will take a big role in a great scene: I will reveal to you what that role and scene are — it will be a great jest.

“Listen, my good Host. Tonight at Herne’s Oak, between twelve and one o’clock, my sweet Nan is supposed to play the role of the Fairy Queen. The reason why is here in this letter. While she is in this disguise, and while other jests are abundantly going on, her father has commanded her to slip away with Slender and go with him to Eton where they shall be immediately married. She has told her father that she will obey him.

“But, sir, her mother, ever strongly against Slender marrying Miss Anne, and always strongly for Doctor Caius

marrying Miss Anne, has arranged that Doctor Caius will spirit her away while other entertainments are keeping everyone busy. There at the deanery, where a priest attends, Doctor Caius is supposed to immediately marry her. Anne has pretended to consent to her mother's plot and has told Doctor Caius that she will marry him.

“This is the way things stand now. Anne's father intends for her to be the only one dressed in white, and at the appropriate time Slender will take her by the hand and tell her to go with him, and they shall leave to be married.

“Anne's mother intends for her to be the only one dressed in green. The colors are important because everyone will be wearing masks and costumes. Doctor Caius will recognize her by the green gown she is wearing. She will also have ribbons hanging from her head and blowing in the wind. At the appropriate time Doctor Caius will pinch her on the hand and tell her to go with him, and they shall leave to be married. Anne has told him that she will go with him.”

The Host asked, “Whom does Anne intend to deceive: her father or her mother?”

Fenton replied, “Both, my good Host. She intends to go with me and marry me. And here is what is needed: You will talk to the vicar and have him wait for us at the church between twelve and one. There he shall marry Anne and me to give our hearts united ceremony.”

“Well, do your part in the plot properly and husband your resources,” the Host said. “I'll go and talk to the vicar. You bring the maiden; you shall not lack a priest.”

“I shall evermore be bound to you,” Fenton said. “Right now, I will give you some monetary compensation.”

CHAPTER 5 (The Merry Wives of Windsor)

— 5.1 —

Falstaff and Mistress Quickly were finishing their conversation.

Falstaff said, “Please, no more prattling; go. I’ll keep my promise. This is the third time I have arranged an assignation; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers. Away I go. They say there is divinity in odd numbers, whether in nativity, chance, or death. Away!”

Some people thought that odd numbers were lucky. It was supposed to be good luck to be born or to die or to undertake a venture on an odd-numbered day.

“I will get a chain for you, and I’ll do what I can to get you a pair of horns,” Mistress Quickly said.

“Away, I say; time is passing,” Falstaff said. “Hold up your head, and mince.”

He meant for Mistress Quickly to walk away like a lady, with her head held high as she took little steps.

Mistress Quickly exited.

Mr. Ford, in disguise as Mr. Brook, entered Falstaff’s room.

Falstaff said, “How are you, Mr. Brook! Mr. Brook, the result of what we have planned will be known tonight, or never. We shall know whether Mr. Ford’s wife will commit adultery. Be in the Park about midnight, at Herne’s Oak, and you shall see wonders.”

“Didn’t you visit her yesterday, sir, as you told me you had arranged?”

“I went to her and visited her, Mr. Brook, as you see me, like a poor old man, but I came from her, Mr. Brook, like a poor old woman. Mr. Brook, that same knave Ford, her husband, had the finest mad Devil fit of jealousy in him that ever governed frenzy. I will tell you what happened: He beat me grievously, when I was in the shape of a woman; for when I am in the shape of man, Mr. Brook, I do not even fear Goliath whose spear shaft was as big as a weaver’s beam; because I also know that life is a shuttle.”

Falstaff had a good knowledge of the Bible.

1 Samuel 17:7 stated, *“And the shaft of his [Goliath’s] spear was like a weaver’s beam: and his spear head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.”*

Job 7.6 stated, *“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and they are spent without hope.”*

Falstaff continued, “I am in haste; go along with me. I’ll tell you everything, Mr. Brook. Since I plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top, I never knew what it was to be beaten until lately.”

Falstaff was saying that he had not been beaten since he was a boy. As a boy, he had done such things as play with tops and pull a feather from a living goose. At school, he had played truant and been whipped for it.

Falstaff continued, “Come with me, and I’ll tell you strange things about this knave Ford, on whom tonight I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hands. Come with me. Strange things are at hand, Mr. Brook! Come with me.”

— 5.2 —

At Herne’s Oak in Windsor Park, Mr. Page, Justice

Shallow, and Slender were talking.

Mr. Page said, "Come, come; we'll lie hidden in the ditch running alongside Windsor Castle until we see the light of our fairies. Remember, son Slender, my daughter —"

Slender interrupted, "Yes, truly. I have spoken with her and we have a password so we can know one another. She will wear white, I will come to her and cry 'mum,' she will reply 'budget,' and so we shall know each other."

A mumbudget is the opposite of a fussbudget. A mumbudget is quiet, while a fussbudget constantly complains.

"That's good, too," Justice Shallow said, "but why do you need either your 'mum' or her 'budget?' She will be the only one wearing white, and so that is enough to know her."

A clock tolled, and Justice Shallow said, "It is ten o'clock."

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

— 5.3 —

Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, and Doctor Caius talked on a street in Windsor.

Mrs. Page said, "Doctor Caius, my daughter is dressed in green. At the appropriate time, take her by the hand, lead her away to the deanery, and marry her quickly. Go now into the Park. Mrs. Ford and I will go there later, together."

"I know vat [what] I have to do. *Adieu*," Doctor Caius said.

"Fare you well, sir," Mrs. Page said.

Doctor Caius exited.

Mrs. Page continued, “My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will chafe at the doctor’s marrying my daughter, but it does not matter; better a little chiding than a great deal of heartbreak.”

Mrs. Ford asked, “Where is Nan now and her troop of fairies, and where is Sir Hugh, who is in costume as a Welsh Devil or evil spirit?”

“They are all lying hidden in a pit near Herne’s Oak, with obscured lights. At the moment when Falstaff and we meet, they will immediately uncover their lights.”

“That will amaze and frighten him,” Mrs. Ford said.

“If he is not frightened, he will be mocked; if he is frightened, he will be mocked even more.”

“We’ll definitely deceive him,” Mrs. Ford said.

“Against such lewdsters and their lechery, those who betray them do no treachery,” Mrs. Page said.

“The hour draws on,” Mrs. Ford said. “It is almost time! To the oak, to the oak!”

— 5.4 —

Sir Hugh Evans and some others entered. Sir Hugh was disguised as a Devil, and the others were disguised as fairies.

“Trib, trib, fairies,” Sir Hugh said. “Come; and remember your parts: be pold [bold], please; follow me into the pit; and when I give the watch-’ords [watch-words], do as I pid [bid] you. Come, come; trib, trib.”

By “trib,” Sir Hugh meant “trip.” To move trippingly is to move lightly and quickly.

Falstaff, disguised as Herne the Hunter, stood by himself at Herne's Oak.

He said to himself, "The Windsor bell has struck twelve o'clock; the moment of my meeting with the Windsor wives draws near. Now, may the hot-blooded gods assist me! Remember, Jove, you turned yourself into a bull so you could sleep with Europa; love made you put on your horns. Oh, powerful love! Love, in some respects, makes a beast a man; in some other respects, love makes a man a beast. You also, Jupiter, turned yourself into a swan because of your love of Leda. Oh, omnipotent Love! A swan is not all that different from a goose. How nearly the god acquired the temperament of a silly goose! Jove's fault was done first in the form of a beast. Oh, Jove, a beastly fault! And then another fault in the semblance of a fowl; think about it, Jove; it was a foul — or fowl — fault! When gods have hot backs and lusty loins, what shall poor men do? As for me, I am here in this forest in the form of a horned Windsor stag; and I am the fattest stag, I think, in the forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can blame me if I piss my tallow?"

As a fat man, Falstaff sweat a lot. He was hoping for a cool night in which to perform his lovemaking; that way, he would not excessively sweat. Stags, during rutting time, lose weight as they pursue does with which to mate. People said that the stags lost weight because fat departed their bodies with their urine. Falstaff was worried that he would lose weight through the uncomfortable process of excess sweating and through peeing fat as well as urine.

He heard a noise and said, "Who comes here? My doe?"

Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page arrived.

Mrs. Ford said, "Sir John! Are you there, my deer? My

male deer? My dear?"

"My doe with the black scut!" Falstaff said.

He was being bawdy. A scut is the tail of a deer. Applied to Mrs. Ford, a scut was pubic hair.

Falstaff continued, "Let the sky rain sweet potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of 'Greensleeves,' let it hail kissing-comfits and snow eryngoes — let there come a tempest of provocation and lustful stimulation; I will take shelter here."

Sweet potatoes were thought to be aphrodisiacal, "Greensleeves" was a song about a man whose lady friend was unfaithful to him, kissing-comfits were candies eaten to sweeten the breath, and eryngoes were candied sea holly (also thought to be aphrodisiacal).

The night was dark, so Mrs. Ford said, "Mrs. Page has come with me, sweetheart."

Falstaff, wearing horns like a stag, said, "Divide me like a bribed buck."

He was referring to a stag that had been hunted and killed and now was being cut into pieces and distributed. The buck was a bribed buck because the hunters had bribed a gamekeeper to allow them to hunt the buck.

Falstaff said, "Each of you women will get a haunch."

A haunch is a buttock, useful in the thrusting motion of lovemaking.

He continued, "I will keep my sides for myself, my shoulders for the forester who was bribed, and my horns I bequeath to your husbands. Am I a woodman, ha? Do I speak like Herne the Hunter?"

A woodman was a hunter; what he hunted could be game

or women.

Falstaff continued, “Why, Cupid is now a child of conscience; he makes restitution. Twice before I was unsuccessful in my attempts at seduction, but now Cupid will help me succeed! As I am a true spirit, welcome!”

Noises were heard — the “fairies” were shaking their rattles.

Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford pretended to be frightened.

Mrs. Page said, “What was that?”

Mrs. Ford said, “May Heaven forgive us our sins!”

“What’s going on?” Falstaff asked.

Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford screamed and ran away.

“The Devil must be preventing me from committing adultery and being damned to Hell,” Falstaff said. “I think the Devil will not allow me to be damned, lest the oily fat that’s in me should set Hell on fire; otherwise, he would not oppose my desire to sin.”

Sir Hugh Evans, who was disguised as an evil spirit, and some others disguised as fairies — including one person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies — came out of the pit, carrying lit candles.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies said, “Fairies black, grey, green, and white, you moonshine revelers and shades of night, you orphan heirs of fixed destiny, attend to your duties and your professions.

“Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy eyes.”

Fairies are called orphans because according to tradition they do not have fathers, and they have a fixed destiny because they have duties to perform. The fairy known as

Hobgoblin, for example, brings news to the fairies and cries “oyes,” which means “Hear ye” or “Listen up.”

The person disguised as Hobgoblin said, “Elves, listen for your names; silence, you airy toys. To Windsor chimneys shall leap the fairy named Cricket. If you find fires uncared for and hearths unswept, then pinch the maids as blue as blueberries. Our radiant queen hates bad housekeepers and bad housekeeping.”

Falstaff said to himself, “They are fairies; anyone who speaks to them shall die. I’ll close my eyes and lie down; no man their works must eye.”

He lay down upon his face.

The disguised Sir Hugh said, “Where’s Bede? Go you, and where you find a maid who, before she sleeps, has three times her prayers said, cause her to have pleasant dreams; she shall sleep as soundly as a carefree infant. But anyone who sleeps without having prayed for forgiveness of their sins, pinch them — pinch their arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and shins.”

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies said, “Go about your business. Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out. Strew good luck, elves, on every sacred room so that it may stand until the Judgment Day, in a state as wholesome as in state it is fit, worthy the owner, and the owner it.

“The several chairs of order look you scour with juice of balm and every precious flower. Each fair installment, coat, and different crest, with loyal blazon, evermore be blest!”

In the choir of St. George’s Chapel in Windsor Castle were 24 stalls, aka places of installment, each devoted to one of the 24 Knights of the Garter. Fixed to the back of each stall was a coat of arms, and on top of each stall was the

knight's helmet and the particular heraldic device that decorated that particular knight's helmet.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies continued, "And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing, similar to the Garter's circle, in a ring."

The emblem of the Order of the Garter is a blue ribbon that forms a circle as it is worn above the knee. A garter is a narrow band of clothing that is fastened on the leg and used to keep up stockings.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies continued, "The appearance of the fairy ring pressed on the ground, green let it be, more fertile-fresh than all the field to see."

Fairy rings are circles on the ground that are a darker green than the other grass.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies continued, "And *Honi soit qui mal y pense* write in emerald branches and flowers purple, blue, and white. Let sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery be buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee. Fairies use flowers for their writing."

Honi soit qui mal y pense is French for "Shame to him who thinks evil." This is the motto of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, which was founded in 1348 by King Edward III. He picked up a lady's garter that had accidentally fallen on the floor. Other people saw him and laughed, and he said the French words that became the motto of the order.

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies continued, "Away; disperse — but until one o'clock we must dance our dance of custom round about the Oak of Herne the Hunter. Let us not forget."

The disguised Sir Hugh said, "Please, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set and twenty glow-worms shall our

lanterns be, to guide our measure — our dance — round about the tree. But, wait! I smell a man of middle-earth.”

A man of middle-earth is a mortal male human being. Middle-earth is located between Heaven and Hell.

The “fairies” discovered Falstaff, who said to himself, “Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he transform me to a piece of cheese!”

Sir Hugh retained some of his Welsh accent despite making an effort to speak without it. Falstaff, despite being frightened by the fairies, was joking about the stereotype of cheese-loving Welsh people.

The person disguised as Hobgoblin said to Falstaff, “Vile worm, you were looked over and bewitched by the evil eye even during your birth.”

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies said, “With trial-fire touch his finger’s end. If he be chaste, the flame will back descend and cause no pain; but if he reacts with pain, his is the flesh of a corrupted heart.”

The person disguised as Hobgoblin said, “Let us have a trial by fire.”

The disguised Sir Hugh said, “Let us see if this wood will catch fire.”

Sir Hugh burned Falstaff’s fingers with his candle.

Falstaff said, “Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!”

The person disguised as the Queen of the Fairies said, “He is corrupt — corrupt, and tainted in desire! Go around him, fairies; sing a scornful rhyme; and, as you trip, pinch him in time with your song.”

The “fairies” sang this song:

“Down with sinful fantasy!

“Down with lust and lechery!

“Lust is but a fire in the blood,

“Kindled with unchaste desire,

“Fed in heart, whose flames aspire

“As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.

“Pinch him, all you fairies, painfully;

“Pinch him for his villainy;

“Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,

“Until candles and starlight and moonshine be out.”

As the “fairies” danced around Falstaff and pinched him, Doctor Caius arrived and led away a “fairy” wearing green, and Slender arrived and led away a “fairy” wearing white. Then Fenton arrived. Anne Page — who was also disguised as a fairy — went to him, and they ran away together. In the midst of all this activity, hunting horns sounded and the other “fairies” ran away a short distance. Falstaff stood up.

Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, pursued by Mr. Ford and Mr. Page, ran over to Falstaff.

Feigning anger, Mr. Page said to his wife, “No, do not run away from me. I have watched you and caught you in the act. Will no one but Herne the Hunter do for you?”

Mrs. Page replied, “Please, let’s end this jest now.”

She then said, “Now, good Sir John, how do you like the wives of Windsor?”

She added, “Do you see these horns on his head, husband? Aren’t these fair yokes better in the forest than in the

town?”

Mr. Ford asked Falstaff, “Now, sir, who’s a cuckold now?”

He showed Falstaff the beard that he had used to disguise himself as Mr. Brook, and then he mimicked Falstaff’s overuse of the two words “Mr. Brook”: “Mr. Brook, Falstaff’s a knave, a cuckoldly knave. Here are his horns, Mr. Brook: and, Mr. Brook, he has enjoyed nothing of Ford’s but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid back to Mr. Brook. His horses have been legally seized until the money is paid back, Mr. Brook.”

Mrs. Ford said, “Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet and do anything naughty. I will never take you for my love again, but I will always regard you as my deer.”

“I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass,” Falstaff said.

“True, and an ox too,” Mr. Ford said. “Both the proofs are evident.”

Falstaff had been made an ass — a fool. He had also — in a way — been made an ox, aka cuckold, as shown by the horns he was wearing. The women he wanted to sleep with were sleeping with other men — their husbands.

“These are not fairies,” Falstaff said, looking at some of the children who had pretended to be fairies. “Three or four times I thought they were not fairies, and yet the guiltiness of my mind and the sudden ambush of my wits drove the obviousness of the trickery into a genuine belief — in the teeth of all rhyme and reason — that they were fairies. See now how intelligence may be made a Jack-a-Lent — a puppet for children to throw things at during Lent — when intelligence is used for ill purposes!”

Sir Hugh, who had resumed his heavy Welsh accent now that he was no longer playing a role, said, “Sir John Falstaff, serve Got [God], and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse [pinch] you.”

“Well said, fairy Hugh,” Falstaff replied.

Sir Hugh said to Mr. Ford, “And leave your jealousies, too, please.”

Mr. Ford replied, “I will never mistrust my wife again until you are able to woo her while using good English.”

Falstaff said, “Have I laid my brain in the Sun and dried it, so that it lacks intelligence to prevent so gross overreaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat, too? Shall I have a coxcomb of frieze — a fool’s hat made from Welsh woolen fabric? It is time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.”

Sir Hugh said, “Seese [Cheese] is not good to give putter [butter]; your belly is all putter.”

He meant that it was not healthy for Falstaff to put cheese in his belly because his belly was made of butter — butter creates a fat belly — and it is not healthy to eat too much butter and too much cheese.

“‘Seese’ and ‘putter’!” Falstaff said. “Have I lived to stand and be taunted by one who makes fritters of English?”

Fritters are fried pieces of dough. Inside the dough are pieces of chopped-up foods such as meat or fruit.

Falstaff continued, “This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking for immoral purposes through the realm.”

“Why, Sir John,” Mrs. Page asked, “do you think that even if we would have thrust the virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders and have given ourselves without

scruple to Hell, that the Devil ever could have made *you* our delight?"

Mr. Ford asked, "Could *you* be their delight? Could they delight in a sausage made out of numerous ingredients? Could they delight in a bulky bag of flax?"

Mrs. Page asked, "Could we delight in a puffed-up fat man?"

Mr. Page asked, "Could they delight in an old, cold, withered man who is made of intolerable fat guts."

Mr. Ford asked, "Could they delight in a man who is as slanderous as Satan?"

Mr. Page asked, "Could they delight in a man who is as poor as Job?"

Mr. Ford asked, "Could they delight in a man who is as wicked as Job's wife?"

Sir Hugh asked, "Could they delight in a man who is given to fornications, and to taverns and sack and wine and metheglins [spiced Welsh mead], and to drinkings and swearings and starings, pribbles and prabbles [bribbles, aka quibbles, and brabbles, aka trivial disputes]?"

"Well, I am the theme of your mockery," Falstaff said. "You have the better of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welsh flannel who is Sir Hugh. Ignorance itself is a plummet over me. I have been so ignorant that ignorance itself is less ignorant than I am. Therefore, treat me as you will."

Mr. Ford said, "Indeed, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one Mr. Brook, whom you have cheated of money, to whom you would have been a pander. Over and above what you have already suffered, I think to repay that money will be a biting affliction to you."

Mr. Page added, "Yet be cheerful, knight. You shall eat a posset tonight at my house."

A posset is a drink to be drunk and is not normally regarded as a food to be eaten; however, a posset can be regarded as a food for invalids.

Mr. Page added, "In my home I will want you to laugh at my wife, who now is laughing at you. Tell her that Mr. Slender has married her daughter."

Mrs. Page thought, *Doctors doubt that. If Anne Page is my daughter, she is, by this time, Doctor Caius' wife.*

"Doctors doubt that" meant "scholars disagree." Of course, Mrs. Page thought that Doctor Caius would doubt that Anne Page had married Slender since by this time he — Doctor Caius — should have married Anne Page.

Slender walked up to the group and said, "Hey, father Page!"

By "father," he meant "father-in-law," but that was not an accurate title.

My. Page said, "Son, hello! Hello, son! Have you completed the business you wanted to complete tonight?"

By "son," he meant "son-in-law," but that was not an accurate title.

Slender said, "Completed the business! I'll make the best people in Gloucestershire know what has happened about that business. I wish that I would be hanged if I do not."

"What has happened about that business, son?" Mr. Page asked. He was referring to the business of Slender marrying Mr. Page's daughter, Anne Page.

Slender replied, "I went yonder to the village of Eton to marry Miss Anne Page, and I found out that the person I

thought was Miss Anne Page was actually a big clumsy boy. If we had not been in the church, I would have beaten him, or he would have beaten me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, I wish I would go to sleep and never wake up again! I thought it was Anne Page, and here it was a postmaster's boy!"

The postmaster was in charge of post horses — horses that could be ridden from one town to another for a fee. The postmaster's boy — servant — helped take care of the horses.

"Upon my life, then, you took the wrong fairy," Mr. Page said.

"You don't need to tell me that," Slender said. "I do in fact think that I took the wrong fairy; after all, I took a boy and not a girl. I swear that if I had been married to him, I would not have had him even though he was wearing women's apparel."

Mr. Page said, "Why, this is your own folly. Didn't I tell you how you should know my daughter — by the color of her garments?"

Slender replied, "I went to the 'fairy' wearing white, and I said, 'Mum,' and 'she' said, 'Budget,' as Anne and I had arranged; and yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy."

Mrs. Page said, "Good George, do not be angry. I knew about your plan to have Slender marry Anne, and so I had my daughter dress in green; and, indeed, she is now with Doctor Caius at the deanery, and there they have been married."

Doctors doubt that.

Doctor Caius now arrived and said, "Vere [Where] is Miss Page? By gar [God], I am cozened [cheated]! I ha' [have]

married *un garcon*, a boy; *un paysan* [peasant], by gar, a boy! It is not Anne Page! By gar, I am cozened!”

Mrs. Page asked, “Didn’t you run away with the ‘fairy’ wearing green?”

“Yes, by gar, and it is a boy,” Doctor Caius said. “By gar, I’ll wake up everybody in Windsor.”

He exited.

“This is strange,” Mr. Ford said. “Who has gotten the right Anne?”

“My heart troubles me,” Mr. Page said. “Look. Here comes Mr. Fenton.”

Fenton and Anne Page walked up to the group.

Mr. Page said, “Hello, Mr. Fenton.”

“Pardon me, good father!” Anne Page said. “My good mother, pardon me!”

Mr. Page asked, “How did it happen that you did not go with Mr. Slender?”

Mrs. Page asked, “How did it happen that you did not go with Doctor Caius?”

Fenton replied for Anne Page: “You are overwhelming her. Hear the truth about what happened. You would have married her most shamefully; in the marriages you proposed for her there was no love. The truth is that she and I have been in love for a long time and have been engaged to marry each other. We are now entirely sure that nothing can dissolve the union between us because we are legally married. The offence that she has committed is holy. Her deceit cannot be called crafty, disobedient, or unduteous because by marrying me she has avoided and shunned the thousand irreligious cursed hours that a forced

and loveless marriage would have brought upon her.”

Mr. Ford said to the Pages, “Do not stand here shocked. What’s done is done. When it comes to love, the Heavens themselves do rule. Money buys land, but not wives, who are acquired through the workings of fate.”

Falstaff said, “I am glad that although you took a special stand to strike at me, your arrow has glanced off me. I am not the only one wounded tonight.”

Mr. Page said, “Well, what can I do? Fenton, may Heaven give you joy! What cannot be avoided must be embraced.”

Falstaff observed, “When dogs run at night, all sorts of deer are chased.”

Mrs. Page said, “Well, I will grumble no further. Mr. Fenton, may Heaven give you many, many merry days!”

She added, “Good husband, let all of us — including Sir John — go to our home, and laugh at tonight’s doings over a country fire.”

“Good idea,” Mr. Ford said.

He added, “Sir John, to Mr. Brook you yet shall keep your word for he tonight shall lie with Mrs. Ford.”

Chapter VIII: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

PREFACE (A Midsummer Night's Dream)

- Shakespeare's comic target in this play is love and the crazy things it makes us do. For example, when you are confronted with two individuals who are alike in almost every way, love can make you hate one individual while you fall in love with the other. Love can also make you fall in love with an ass — someone who is unsuited to you in every way. Theseus falls in love with Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, a society of women who completely rejected men and were believed to mate with men and then kill them and who were thought to kill any male babies born to them.
- Shakespeare deals with the nonrational in this play. Some things are rational, such as mathematics and logic. Other things are irrational, such as putting your hand in a blender and turning it on just to see what it feels like. The realm of the nonrational is the realm of beauty, poetry, laughter, dance, sex, and love. Comedy is nonrational. The arts connect the world of the rational and the nonrational. Much intelligence goes into producing art, but much art explores the world of the nonrational.
- Love is nonrational. Suppose you are confronted with two individuals who are basically alike in beauty, form, character, and personality, but one individual is rich and the other individual is poor. Reason would tell you to fall in love with the rich individual, but you may fall in love with the poor individual.
- The world of the nonrational appears to be more powerful than the world of the rational. Theseus is a very rational

man, but despite his best intentions, he cannot help breaking out into laughter at the bad acting and bad play of the craftsmen. And, of course, he falls in love with an Amazon.

- The fairies inhabit the world of the nonrational. They speak a dazzling variety of poetry, and they sing and dance. Puck likes to play jokes on people.

- The word “irrational” means completely opposed to reason. An insane person who believes that two plus three equals four is irrational. Irrationality plays no part in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is about the rational, the nonrational, and some of the places they intersect.

Cast of Characters (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.

EGEUS, father to Hermia.

LYSANDER, in love with Hermia.

DEMETRIUS, in love with Hermia.

PHILOSTRATE, Master of the Revels to Theseus.

QUINCE, a carpenter.

SNUG, a joiner, aka furniture-maker.

BOTTOM, a weaver.

FLUTE, a bellows-mender.

SNOUT, a tinker.

STARVELING, a tailor.

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.

HELENA, in love with Demetrius.

OBERON, King of the Fairies.

TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies.

PUCK, or ROBIN GOODFELLOW, fairy.

PEASEBLOSSOM, fairy.

COBWEB, fairy.

MOTH, fairy.

MUSTARDSEED, fairy.

PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBY, WALL,
MOONSHINE, LION are presented by QUINCE,
BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, STARVELING, AND
SNUG.

Other Fairies attending their King and Queen.

Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

CHAPTER 1 (A Midsummer Night's Dream)

— 1.1 —

In his palace, Duke Theseus of Athens was talking with Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, whom he had defeated in battle, fallen in love with, and was soon to marry.

Theseus said to Hippolyta, “Our wedding day is drawing near. Four happy days will bring in the new Moon, but how slowly the old Moon wanes! She prevents what I want most. She is like a stepmother or a widow who lives on a young man’s inheritance when the young man wants to spend, spend, spend.”

“Four days will quickly become four nights,” Hippolyta replied. “We will quickly dream away the four nights. And then the Moon, resembling a silver bow newly bent in heaven, shall behold the night of our wedding.”

Theseus said to Philostrate, his Master of the Revels, aka Director of Entertainments, “Go, Philostrate, encourage the Athenian youth to be merry. Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth. Let melancholy be reserved only for funerals. Melancholy, a pale companion, must not be present at our celebration.”

Philostrate left to carry out Theseus’ orders.

Theseus said, “Hippolyta, I wooed you with my sword, and I won your love, despite my doing you injuries, but I will wed you in another key, with pomp, with triumph, and with revelry.”

But Theseus was the Duke of Athens, and he had duties to attend to. Egeus, the father of Hermia, walked into the room with his daughter and the two young men who loved her.

Egeus started well with a greeting to Theseus: “Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!”

Theseus, who knew Egeus, a respected citizen of Athens and a member of its aristocracy, well, replied, “Thanks, good Egeus. What is new with you?”

“I have a problem,” Egeus replied. “Full of vexation come I, with a complaint about my child, my daughter Hermia.”

Egeus said, “Stand forth, Demetrius.”

Demetrius came forward.

Egeus said to Theseus, “My noble lord, this man has my consent to marry my daughter, Hermia.”

Egeus said, “Stand forth, Lysander.”

Lysander came forward.

Egeus said to Theseus, “My gracious duke, this man has bewitched the bosom of my child.”

To Lysander, Egeus angrily said, “You, you, Lysander, you have given Hermia rhymes and love poetry, and you have exchanged love-tokens with my daughter. You have by Moonlight at her window sung, with your feigning voice singing verses of feigning love. You have made her fancy you with locks of your hair, rings, gaudy toys, trinkets, knickknacks, trifles, nosegays, and sweetmeats. All of these things can strongly influence an impressionable and inexperienced young woman. With cunning you have stolen my daughter’s heart. You have turned her obedience, which is due to me, into stubborn harshness. Because of you, Lysander, Hermia will not consent to marry Demetrius.”

To Theseus, Egeus said, “Therefore, my gracious Duke, I want you to enforce the ancient privilege of fathers in

Athens. That privilege is my right to dispose of my daughter as I wish. And that will be either to this gentleman, Demetrius, or to her death. This is in accordance with our Athenian law.”

Theseus wanted daughters to obey their fathers. He said, “What do you say, Hermia? Fair maid, to you your father should be as a god. He is your parent and so gave you your life. It is as if you are his figure that he sculpted in wax. He can either leave the figure alone or disfigure it as he wishes.”

Theseus paused, and then he said, “Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.”

“So is Lysander,” Hermia replied, hotly.

“In himself he is,” Theseus said, “but he lacks your father’s approval, and therefore Demetrius must be considered the worthier of the two young men.”

Hermia said, “I wish that my father looked at Demetrius and Lysander with my eyes.”

“No,” Theseus said. “Instead, you must look at Demetrius and Lysander with your father’s eyes.”

Despite being angry, Hermia was polite. She said to Theseus, “Please pardon me. I know not by what power I am made bold, and I worry that I may compromise my reputation for modesty when I plead my thoughts in your presence. But please tell me what is the worst that can happen to me if I refuse to wed Demetrius.”

Theseus thought, *The law of Athens says that Hermia must die if she disobeys her father and refuses to wed Demetrius, but the law is too harsh.*

He told Hermia, “You must either be executed or become a nun and remain a virgin forever. Therefore, fair Hermia,

think carefully. You are young. You feel passion. Think whether, if you do not obey your father and do not marry Demetrius, you can endure wearing the habit of a nun and be caged forever in a shady cloister. Can you live as a barren, virgin sister all your life and chant hymns to the cold, fruitless Moon? Nuns are three times blessed because they master their passion, and their maiden pilgrimage is rewarded in Heaven. But a married woman is happier on Earth and does not lack a man. She is like a rose whose essence is distilled into perfume and brings happiness. She is unlike a rose that grows, lives, and dies alone on a branch and is never enjoyed.”

“I prefer to grow, live, and die alone on a branch rather than marry someone whom I do not love,” Hermia said. “I prefer to remain single rather than give my virginity to someone whom I do not love.”

“Take some time to think this matter over, Hermia,” Theseus said. “By the next new Moon — when Hippolyta and I shall wed and be one forever — you will give me your final answer. At that time, you will either die because of your disobedience to the will of your father, or you will marry Demetrius, or you will become a nun and remain a virgin forever.”

Demetrius said, “Yield to your father’s will, Hermia, and marry me. And, Lysander, stop pursuing Hermia and allow her to marry me.”

Lysander replied, “You have her father’s love, Demetrius, so let me have Hermia’s. If you want to marry someone, marry Hermia’s father.”

“Scornful Lysander!” Egeus said. “True, Demetrius does have my love. And whatever is mine my love shall give to him. Hermia is my daughter, and I do give her to Demetrius.”

Lysander replied, “Egeus, my family is as good as the family of Demetrius. I have as much wealth as Demetrius. I love Hermia more than he does. My prospects are as good as those of Demetrius, if not better. And what is more important than anything that I have said so far is that Hermia loves me, not Demetrius. So why shouldn’t Hermia and I marry?”

He added, “What’s more — and I say this to Demetrius’ face — he pursued Helena, the daughter of Nedar, and he won her heart. Helena loves him. She loves him, devoutly loves him, loves him to the point of idolatry. She loves Demetrius, this morally stained man who is unfaithful to those who love him.”

Theseus said, “I must confess that I have heard that Demetrius pursued Helena and that she loves him. I have been busy with my own personal affairs and forgot about it; otherwise, I would have spoken to him about it. Still, that does not change the law. Demetrius and Egeus, both of you come with me. I want to talk to both of you. In the meantime, Hermia, make up your mind to obey your father and marry Demetrius, or else the law of Athens — which I can by no means extenuate — will either sentence you to death or to a single life in perpetuity.”

Theseus then said, “Come, my Hippolyta.”

Hippolyta had listened to the young lovers and did not look happy about Theseus’ ruling. Theseus noticed this and asked her, “Is something wrong?” She turned her back on him and did not answer him.

Theseus turned to Demetrius and Egeus and said, “Come with me. I must employ you in some business related to our wedding and also talk to you about some business of your own.”

“With duty and desire, we follow you,” Egeus replied.

All except Lysander and Hermia left the room.

“How are you, my love?” Lysander said, “Why is your cheek so pale? Why do the roses there fade so fast?”

“Perhaps because of lack of rain,” Hermia replied. “But I can well water the roses in my cheeks with my tears.”

“From everything that I have ever read or heard from tale or history, the course of true love never did run smooth,” Lysander said. “Either the lovers were different in family...”

“Too high a class to be in love with someone from a lower class.”

“Or else the lovers were mismatched in age.”

“Too old to be engaged to young.”

“Or else the marriage match was to be arranged by relatives.”

“Oh, Hell! To choose a lover by another’s eyes.”

“Or,” Lysander said, “if there were a sympathy in choice, then war, death, or sickness did lay siege to it, making it as momentary as a sound, as swift as a shadow, as short as a dream, as brief as the lightning in the blackened night, that, in a flash, reveals both Heaven and Earth, and before a man has time to say ‘Behold!’ the jaws of darkness do devour it. So quickly do bright things that are full of life come to ruin.”

“Since true lovers have always been opposed in their love, such opposition must be a rule of fate and destiny — and therefore, since our love is opposed, our love must be true. Let us then be perseverant and enduring as we confront our trial because the trial we face is customary for true lovers. Opposition is as necessary to true love as are thoughts and

dreams and sighs and wishes and tears. All of these things accompany true love.”

“You speak truly,” Lysander said. “Therefore, listen to me, Hermia. I have a widowed aunt. She is a dowager of great fortune, and she has no children. Her house is twenty or so miles away from Athens, and she considers me her only son. If we go to her, Hermia, we can be married — the sharp Athenian law does not reach as far as her house. So if you love me, sneak out of your father’s house tomorrow night, and go into the forest outside Athens, where once I met you and Helena to celebrate the first of May. I will wait there for you.”

“My good Lysander!” Hermia said. “I swear to you, by Cupid’s strongest bow, by his best arrow with the love-causing golden arrowhead, by the simplicity of Venus’ sacred doves, by that which unites souls and prospers loves, and by that fire that burned Dido, the Queen of Carthage, when the unfaithful Trojan Aeneas sailed away from her, by all the vows that ever men have broken, in number more than women have ever spoken, in that same place that you have mentioned, tomorrow truly will I meet with you.”

“Keep your promise, love,” Lysander said. He looked up and said, “Look, here comes Helena.

Hermia said, “God bless you, fair Helena! Where are you going?”

“Call you me fair?” Helena said. “That fair again unsay. Demetrius loves your beauty, not my beauty. Oh, happy fair! Your eyes are as bright as the stars that guide sailors at night. The sweet sound of your voice is more beautiful than that of a morning lark to a shepherd’s ear. When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear in the spring, lovesickness is contagious. I wish that appearance and attributes were also contagious. If they were so, I would do

my best to catch your appearance and attributes, Hermia, before I leave. My ear would catch your voice, my eye would catch your eye, my tongue would catch your tongue's sweet melody. If I owned all the world, I would give it all to you if only I could be transformed into you and so be loved by Demetrius. Please, teach me how you look, and with what art you sway the motion of Demetrius' heart."

"I frown upon Demetrius, yet he loves me still," Hermia said.

"I wish that your frowns would teach my smiles how to make Demetrius love me!"

"I give him curses, yet he gives me love."

"I wish that my prayers could cause such affection for me in Demetrius!"

"The more I hate him, the more he follows me.

"The more I love him, the more he hates me."

"His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine."

"No fault, but your beauty — I wish that fault were mine!"

"Take comfort," Hermia said. "Demetrius no more shall see my face; Lysander and myself will flee from this place. Before I did Lysander see, Athens did seem a paradise to me, but such graces in my love do dwell, that Lysander has turned a Heaven into a Hell! If I can't marry Lysander in Athens, then Athens is a Hell to me."

Lysander said, "Helena, to you our minds we will unfold. Tomorrow night, when the Moon beholds her silver visage in the watery mirrors of pools and lakes, and dews with liquid pearl the bladed grass, a time that conceals the flights of lovers, we plan to pass through Athens' gates."

“And in the wood,” Hermia said, “where often you and I upon pale primrose-beds were accustomed to lie, emptying our bosoms of their sweet secrets to each other, there my Lysander and I shall meet, and thence from Athens turn away our eyes, to seek new friends and the company of strangers. Farewell, sweet playmate. Pray for us, and may good luck give you your Demetrius! Keep your word to me, Lysander. We must now separate and starve our sight of lovers’ food until we meet in the forest tomorrow at deep midnight.”

“I will keep my word to you, my Hermia.”

Hermia departed.

Lysander said, “Helena, *adieu*. As you on him, may Demetrius dote on you!”

Lysander departed.

Helena said to herself, “How much happier than other people can some people be! For example, Hermia is much happier than me. Throughout Athens I am thought to be as beautiful as she. But so what? Demetrius does not think it so. He will not know what all but he do know. He wanders around, infatuated with Hermia’s eyes. I also wander around, admiring Demetrius’ qualities. Things base and vile, having no good quality, love can make appear to have form and dignity. Love looks not with the eyes, but with the heart, and that is why in art blindfolds make winged Cupid blind. Love has nothing to do with reason — the wings and blind eyes of Cupid symbolize the unheedy haste of lovers. That is why Cupid is said to be a child — because in choice he is so often beguiled. Many waggish boys in their games lie and falsely swear, and likewise male lovers perjure themselves everywhere. For before Demetrius looked at and loved Hermia’s eyes, he swore many oaths that he loved only mine. His protestations of

his love for me rained down like hail, but when this hail felt some heat from Hermia, his protestations of love dissolved, and showers of his oaths did melt. I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight, and then to the forest will he pursue her tomorrow night. If for this information he tells me thanks, it is a dear expense for me, but herein mean I to enrich my pain: to have his sight thither and back again — if all goes well tomorrow night, Demetrius will stop looking at Hermia and instead will look again at me.”

— 1.2 —

A number of craftsmen of Athens were meeting in the house of Peter Quince the carpenter: Nick Bottom the weaver, Francis Flute the bellows-mender, Tom Snout the tinker, Robin Starveling the tailor, and Snug the joiner, aka furniture-maker.

Quince asked, “Is all our company here?”

Bottom replied, “You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the written list.”

Generally? Quince thought. *Bottom means individually. He is a good man and a good friend, but he sometimes mixes up his words.*

“Here is a list of every man's name,” Quince said, “who is thought fit, through all of Athens, to play in our interlude, or brief play, before the Duke and the Duchess, on the night of their wedding day.”

“First, good Peter Quince,” Bottom said, “say what the play is about, and then read the names of the actors, and so come to a conclusion.”

Quince said, “That's a good idea. Our play is titled ‘The Most Lamentable Comedy, and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.’”

“I am sure that it is a very good piece of work, and a merry piece of work,” Bottom said, “Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Fellow actors, gather around him.”

“Answer as I call your name,” Quince said. “Nick Bottom, the weaver.”

“Present,” Bottom said. “Name the part that I will play, Quince, and proceed.”

“You, Nick Bottom, will play Pyramus.”

“What is the part of Pyramus, Quince? Is he a lover, or a tyrant?”

“He is a lover who kills himself most gallantly for love.”

“That will require an actor who is capable of crying and of making the audience cry tears of sorrow,” Bottom said. “If I perform the part, let the audience be careful not to injure their eyes with their crying because I will move storms — I will arouse pity in the audience.”

He paused, and then he said, “And yet I would prefer to play a tyrant. I could play the role of Ercles exceptionally well.”

Ercles? Quince thought. *Oh, Bottom means Hercules.*

“I could rant admirably,” Bottom continued. “I could bring the house down and make the audience applaud. I will show you — listen:

“The raging rocks

“And shivering shocks

“Shall break the locks

“Of prison gates;

“And Phibbus’ car

“Shall shine from afar

“And make and mar

“The foolish Fates.”

That was excellent, Quince thought. I wish I could write that well. I also wish that Bottom would say Phoebus’ car, so that any listeners would understand that he is talking about the Sun-chariot of Phoebus Apollo.

Bottom a man of enthusiasm, enthusiastically approved of his ham acting: “That was lofty!”

He continued, “Now name the rest of the players, but that is how I would play a role like Ercles. Of course, the role of a lover is more condoling — it requires expressions of grief.”

Quince resumed the roll call and role call of names:

“Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.”

“Here, Peter Quince,” Flute responded.

“Flute, you must play the role of Thisby.”

“Who is Thisby? A wandering knight?”

“She is the lady whom Pyramus loves.”

“Please, no,” Flute said. “Let me not play a woman: I am growing a beard.”

“That doesn’t matter,” Quince said. “You shall play it in a mask, and you will speak as softly and lady-like as you can.”

“Since Thisby’s face is hidden,” Bottom said, “let me play Thisby, too. I’ll speak in a monstrous little voice when I play her so people will know that I am not still playing

Pyramus. Listen.”

In a deep voice, Bottom declaimed, “Thisne! Thisne!”

Then in a falsetto voice, he declaimed, “Ah, Pyramus, lover dear. I am your Thisby, dear. I am your dear Thisby.”

Quince said, sternly, “No, no. You must play Pyramus, and Flute must play Thisby.”

Disappointed, Bottom said, “Well, proceed.”

Quince read the next name on his list: “Robin Starveling, the tailor.”

“Here I am, Peter Quince.”

“Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby’s mother.”

Quince read the next name on his list: “Tom Snout, the tinker.”

“Here I am, Peter Quince.”

“You must play Pyramus’ father, and I will play Thisby’s father. One role is left. Snug the furniture-maker, you must take the part of the lion. Here, I hope, is a well-cast play.”

“Have you written down the lion’s part?” Snug asked. “If you have, please give it to me because I am slow of study.”

“There is no need to write down the lion’s part,” Quince said, “because it consists of nothing but roaring.”

Bottom sensed an opportunity: “Let me play the part of the lion, too. I will roar in such a way that I will do any man’s heart good to hear me; I will roar in such a way that I will make the Duke say, ‘Let him roar again! Let him roar again!’”

“But if you roar too ferociously,” Quince objected, “you would frighten the Duchess and the ladies. They would

scream, and the Duke would hang us all.”

All the craftsmen agreed: “That would be enough to hang us, every mother’s son.”

“I grant you, friends,” Bottom said, “that if any of us should frighten the ladies out of their wits, we would all be hanged, but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar as gently as any sucking dove or nightingale roars.”

There Bottom goes again, Quince thought. He is still trying to magnify his time on stage, and still mixing up his words — he said “aggravate” when he meant to say “moderate.” And “sucking” — or “suckling” — is not a word that describes a dove.

Quince said to Bottom, “You can play no part but the part of Pyramus because Pyramus is a sweet-faced man. He is a proper man, as proper and handsome a man as anyone can see on a summer’s day. He is a most lovely gentleman-like man. Therefore, you are the man who must play the role of Pyramus.”

Flattered, Bottom said, “Well, I will undertake it. What beard will be best for me to play the role in?”

“You may play the role in whichever beard you prefer,” Quince replied.

“I will wear either a straw-colored beard, an orange-tawny beard, a red beard, or a yellow beard that is the color of a French crown — a gold coin.”

Quince joked, “Some of your French crowns have no hair at all because of the French disease: syphilis. In that case, you will have to play the part bald.”

He gave each actor a sheet of paper and said, “Here are written copies of your parts for all of you to study. I entreat you, request you, and desire you to have memorized them

by tomorrow night. At that time, we will meet in the forest outside of Athens. By Moonlight, we will rehearse our play. It is best to rehearse in the forest because if we rehearse in town, people will gather around and bother us, and everyone will know what we are doing. In the meantime, I will make up a list of the props that we will need for our play. Please be sure to show up tomorrow night.”

Bottom replied, “We will meet you then at wherever you want; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains and study your parts carefully, everyone. We want the play to be perfect. *Adieu.*”

“Then it is settled,” Quince said. “We will meet at the Duke’s oak tomorrow night.”

“Hold, or cut bow-strings,” Bottom said. “Fish, or cut bait. Poop, or get off the pot. Be there, or be square. You know what I mean. See you tomorrow night.”

CHAPTER 2 (A Midsummer Night's Dream)

— 2.1 —

In the forest near Athens, a fairy met Puck.

“How now, spirit! Whither wander you?” Puck inquired.

The fairy replied, “Over hill, over dale, through bush, through brier, over park, in light so pale, through flood, through fire, I do wander everywhere, swifter than the Moon’s sphere; and I serve Titania, the fairy Queen — I dance for her upon the green. The cowslips tall her bodyguards be. In their gold coats, spots you see — those be rubies, fairy favors, and in those spots live their savors. I must go and seek some dewdrops here and hang a pearl in every cowslip’s ear. Farewell, rustic spirit. I must go — and how! Our Queen and all her elves will come here now.”

Puck replied, “Oberon our King does keep his revels here tonight: Take heed our Queen come not within his sight. For Oberon is very fierce and angry because Titania has a new attendant: a lovely boy, stolen from an Indian King. She has never had so sweet a changeling. Jealous Oberon would make the child a knight of his train of followers, so the child can walk through the forests wild. But Titania withholds the beloved boy, crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy. Now Oberon and Titania never meet in grove or green, by fountain clear, or in spangled starlight sheen. Instead, they quarrel, and all their elves do fear and creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.”

The fairy recognized Puck, a celebrity in Fairyland: “Either I mistake your shape and form quite, or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite called Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he who frightens the maidens of the villagery,

skims the cream from milk, and sometimes makes the breathless housewife grind and churn but make no flour and butter that will for her money earn? Are not you he who sometimes makes the beer to bear no froth and misleads night-wanderers, laughing at them when they are lost? Some call you Hobgoblin, and others call you Puck, and those you befriend will have good luck. Are not you that Puck?"

"You speak aright," Puck replied. "I am that merry wanderer of the night. I jest to Oberon and make him smile, and sometimes I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile when I neigh as if I were a filly foal. Sometimes I hide in a gossip's bowl as if I were a roasted crabapple, and when she drinks, against her lips I bob and on her withered dewlap pour the ale. The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale, sometimes for a three-foot stool mistakes me. When she tries to sit on me, then slip I from her bum, and down topples she, and she falls on the floor roughly and after she falls she coughs. Then her friends hold their hips and laugh and sneeze and swear — a merrier hour was never spent there. But make room, fairy — here comes Oberon!"

"And here comes Titania, my mistress. Would that Oberon were gone!"

The Fairy King and Queen appeared with many attendants.

"Ill met by Moonlight, proud Titania," Oberon said.

"What, jealous Oberon, are you here? Fairies, let us leave at once. I have sworn never again to be in Oberon's bed or in his presence."

"Stay here, rash wanton," Oberon said. "Am not I your husband?"

"Then I must be your wife," Titania replied, "but I know of your affairs. I know when you have stolen away from

Fairyland, and in the shape of a mortal lover sat all day, playing on a homemade flute and singing verses of love to an amorous mortal lover. Why are you here, recently returned from the farthest mountain range of India? You must be here because Hippolyta, the swaggering Amazon, your boot-wearing mistress and your warrior love, to Theseus is going to be married, and you have come to give their bed joy and prosperity.”

“For shame, Titania,” Oberon replied. “How can you criticize my love for Hippolyta when I know about your love for Theseus? Haven’t you protected him from the consequences of his affairs? Did not you lead him through the glimmering night when he abandoned Perigenia, whom he had kidnapped and seduced? And didn’t you help him when he seduced and abandoned Aegles, Ariadne, and Antiopa? Theseus has been quite the lover boy, and without fairy help, he would have paid for his seductions and not felt joy!”

“These are the lies of jealousy,” Titania replied. “Ever since the beginning of midsummer, each time we have met, whether on hill or in dale, forest, or meadow, by paved fountain or by brook banked with growing rushes, or on the beaches of the sea, to dance our ringlets to the whistling winds, you have disturbed our dances with your quarrels.”

Titania added, “Because you and I, the King and Queen of Fairyland, are quarreling, the winds, tired of singing to us in vain, in revenge have sucked up from the sea noxious waters, which have fallen as rain in the land and have made every petty river so grand and so proud that they have overflowed their banks. Because of our quarrel, crops will not grow — the ox has pulled in vain the plow, the farmer has nothing for his sweat to show, and the green corn dies before the cob grows a silky beard. In the flooded fields stand pens empty of sheep, and crows grow fat from

feasting on the dead flock's meat. Covered with mud are football fields, and paths grow faint with disuse that were by lovers formerly filled."

Titania continued, "Because of our quarrel, the natural seasons are confused. Human mortals lack their winters, a season that has its pleasures. No night is blessed with hymn or carol, and the Moon, the governess of floods, pale in her anger, washes all the air, causing colds and rheumatic diseases. The disturbance in the natural order caused by our quarrel has altered the seasons. Hoary-headed frost coats the crimson roses, and the mocking crown of Old Man Winter is a sweet-smelling wreath of summer buds. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter are all mixed up, and the amazed world no longer knows which is when. All of these evils come from our quarrel — we are their parents and origin."

"You can easily fix everything," Oberon replied, "Why should you argue with me? I do but beg a little changeling boy, my servant to be. Give him to me."

"That won't happen," Titania said. "Not all of Fairyland would I take for the boy. His mother was a priestess of my order, and, in the spiced Indian air, by night, very often has given me joy as she talked with me and sat with me on the sea's yellow sands, watching the traders sailing on the ocean. We have laughed as we watched the ships' sails conceive and grow pregnant by the wanton wind. She — pregnant with the child, and walking with a pretty swimming gait — imitated the big-bellied sails. She sailed upon the land, got for me small gifts, and returned again, as if she had returned from a voyage, rich with merchandise. Unfortunately, she, being mortal, died giving birth to that boy; for her sake I will bring up her boy, and for her sake I will not part from him."

"How long within this forest do you intend to stay?"

Oberon asked.

“Probably until after Theseus’ wedding day,” Titania replied. If you will peacefully dance in our circles and see our Moonlit revels, you are welcome to come with us. If you are not willing to be peaceful, then shun me, and I will shun your haunts.”

“Give me that boy, and I will happily go with you.”

“I will not give you the boy even if you give me your fairy kingdom,” Titania replied. “He stays with me and my followers. Fairies, away! Oberon and I will loudly quarrel, if I longer stay.”

Titania and her fairies departed.

Oberon said to himself, “Well, go your way, but you shall not depart from this forest until after I torment you for not giving me that boy.”

He said louder, “My dear Puck, come here. Do you remember when once I sat upon a promontory, and heard a mermaid on a dolphin’s back singing such a sweet and harmonious song that the high waves of the sea calmed and stars fell out of the sky to come closer to hear the sea-maiden sing?”

“I remember.”

“That was the time I — but not you — saw Cupid, armed with arrows, flying between the cold Moon and the Earth. He took aim at a virgin sitting in a throne in the West, and he shot his love-arrow smartly from his bow and it seemed as if it could pierce a hundred thousand hearts. But the Moon is ruled by the virgin goddess Diana, and the chaste beams of the silvery Moon put out the flames of young Cupid’s fiery shaft, and the virgin continued to think the thoughts of a maiden and neglected to think the thoughts of

a lover. I remember where the arrow of Cupid fell. It fell upon a little flower in the West. The flower used to be milky white, but now it is purple — it changed colors when hit by Cupid's arrow just as love's wound causes maidens to change colors when their beloved's name is mentioned. Maidens call that flower love-in-idleness. Fetch me that flower — I once showed it to you. The juice of that flower when squeezed onto sleeping eyelids will make a man or woman madly love the next live creature it sees. Fetch me that flower quickly — before a whale can swim three miles.”

“I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes,” Puck replied, and then he flew away.

Oberon said to himself, “Once I have this juice, I will wait until Titania is asleep, and then I will drip its juice onto her eyelids. The next thing she waking looks upon, be it a lion, bear, wolf, or bull, or a meddling monkey or ape, she shall pursue with the soul of love. And before I take this charm from off her sight, as I can with another herb, I will make her give up the Indian boy to me.”

Oberon heard a noise, and he said to himself, “But who are coming here? I will make myself invisible, and I will overhear their conversation.”

Demetrius and Helena came close to Oberon, whom they did not see.

Exasperated, Demetrius said to Helena, “I do not love you, so stop following me. Where are Lysander and fair Hermia? The one I will slay, the other has already slain me with her lack of love. You told me they had stolen away from Athens and come to this forest, and I am going nutty among these nut trees and batty among these homes for bats and wild in this wilderness, all because I cannot find Hermia. Go away, leave me, and follow me no more.”

“Your attractiveness attracts me toward you,” Helena replied. “The kind of love you draw from my heart is not base iron but a finer metal, for my heart is as true as steel. Only if your attractiveness stops attracting me toward you will I stop following you.”

“Do I entice you?” Demetrius said. “Do I speak fair words to you? No! Instead, I in plain truth and in plain language tell you that I do not and I cannot love you.”

“And even for that do I love you the more,” Helena replied. “I am your cocker spaniel, I am your pet dog, and, Demetrius, the more you beat me, the more I will love you. Treat me as you treat your cocker spaniel, spurn me, strike me, neglect me, lose me. Do whatever you want to me as long as you allow me, unworthy as I am, to follow you. What worser place can I beg in your love — and yet for me it is a place of high respect — than to be treated by you as you treat your dog?”

“Be careful not to put to the test my hatred of you because I am sick when I look at you.”

“And I am sick when I do not look at you,” Helena replied.

“You do risk your reputation and your virginity too much, to leave the city and commit yourself into the hands of me, a man who does not love you. It is dark, we are in a deserted place, and if I were a different kind of man, I could force myself on you.”

“Your goodness will protect me and prevent you from taking advantage of me,” Helena said. “When I look at you, I see no night, and therefore I see no darkness. This forest is not deserted. Why? Because you are my entire world. How can anyone say that I am alone, when all the world is standing in front of me?”

“I’ll run from you and hide in the thickets and leave you to

the mercy of wild beasts,” Demetrius said.

“The wildest of wild animals has not such a heart as you. Run whenever and wherever you will; the story of Apollo and Daphne shall be changed. In the old tale, the mortal Daphne ran from the god Apollo, who pursued her. But with you as Apollo and with me as Daphne, Apollo will flee, and Daphne will chase. The dove will pursue the eagle; the mild doe will speed to catch the tiger. A coward will pursue a fleeing brave man!”

“I will not stay around to listen to you. Either let me leave you, or be afraid that if you follow me I will do some harm to you in these woods.”

Fortunately, despite making the threat, Demetrius was not the kind of man who would carry out the threat.

“You have already done harm to me in the temple, in the town, and in the field, Demetrius! You have wronged me by making me do the wooing, and you have wronged all women! Women cannot fight for love, as men may do; women should be wooed and were not made to woo. You, Demetrius, should be wooing me.”

Demetrius made a motion as if to kick her and then fled.

Helena said, “I will follow you and make a Heaven of Hell, by dying at the hand of the man I love so well.”

She ran after Demetrius.

Oberon had watched and heard everything, and his own marital woes made him empathize with Helena.

He said, “Fare thee well, nymph. You are of an age to be married to this young man, and before he leaves this grove, you shall flee from him and he shall seek your love.”

Puck, having returned from his journey, went to Oberon,

who said, "Welcome, wanderer. Do you have the flower?"

"Yes, here it is."

"Please give it to me," Oberon said. "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows, where oxlips and the nodding violet grows. It is quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine, with sweet musk-roses and with eglantine. There sleeps Titania sometimes during the night, and among all those flowers she is lulled by dances and delight. There the snake sheds its enameled skin, which is wide enough to make a garment to wrap a fairy in. With the juice of this flower, I will streak Titania's eyes, and make her mind full of lovesick fantasies."

He added, "Puck, take part of this flower and look throughout this grove for a sweet young Athenian lady who is in love with a youth who disdains her. Anoint his eyes with the juice of this flower, but do it when the next thing he sees will be the Athenian lady. You shall know the man by the Athenian clothing he is wearing. Do what I tell you to do with care, so that he will be more in love with her than she is in love with him, and know that you must meet me before the first cock crows."

"Fear not, my King, your servant shall do so."

— 2.2 —

In another part of the forest, Titania and her fairy attendants were settling in for the night.

Titania ordered, "Come and dance in a fairy ring and sing a fairy song. Then leave and attend to your duties. Some of you will kill cankerworms in the musk-rose buds, and some of you will war with bats and take their leathern wings to make my small elves coats, and some of you will keep back the clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders at our dainty spirits. Sing me now asleep, then attend to your

work and let me rest.”

The fairies sang this song:

“You spotted snakes with forked tongue,

“and thorny hedgehogs, be not seen.

“Newts and small snakes, do no wrong,

“come not near our fairy Queen.

“Nightingale, with melody,

“sing in our sweet lullaby.

“Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.

“May no harm,

“or spell or charm,

“come near our lovely lady here.

“Say good night with a lullaby.

“Weaving spiders, come not here.

“Go away, you long-legged spinners, go hence!

“Beetles black, approach not near.

“Snake and snail, do no offence.

“Nightingale, with melody,

“sing in our sweet lullaby.

“Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.

“May no harm,

“or spell or charm,

“come near our lovely lady here.

“Say good night with a lullaby.”

A fairy said, “Away we go! All is well! One alone stand sentinel.”

Most of the fairies departed, and the lone sentinel made a poor guard. The sentinel did not dare interfere with Oberon, King of the Fairies, and flew away when Oberon appeared.

Oberon walked to the sleeping Titania and squeezed the juice of the flower onto her eyelids and said, “Whatever you see when you wake, do it for your true love take. Love and languish for his sake. Whether it be lynx, or wildcat, or bear, or panther, or boar with bristled hair, whatever shall appear before your eyes when you do awake, you shall love it for its own sake. Whatever you see when you do wake, dear Titania, you will hold it dear, so wake when some vile thing is near.”

As soon as Oberon flew away, Lysander and Hermia walked close to Titania, the sleeping fairy Queen, but they did not see her.

Lysander said to Hermia, “Fair love, you are faint from much wandering in the wood; and to say the truth, I have forgotten our way: We are lost. Let us rest here, Hermia, if you think it a good idea, and we will wait for the comfort of morning and daylight.”

“Let it be done,” Hermia said. “Lysander, find a place for you to make your bed, for I upon this bank will rest my head.”

“One piece of ground shall serve as bed for us both,” Lysander said. “We need no ground between us to waste. We will have one bed and one heart, and we will pledge to each other our lover’s faith.”

“No, good Lysander, Hermia replied. “For my sake, my

dear, lie further away, do not lie by me so near.”

“Understand what is behind my words, my sweet, and know that it is innocence!” Lysander said. “Lovers understand each other’s meaning in each sentence. I mean that my heart unto yours is so knit that only one heart we can make of it, and both of us know we do love each other. So by your side let me tonight lie, for when I tell you I love you, you know I do not lie.”

“Lysander, you speak very prettily, and please forgive me if you thought that I think you lied, but gentle friend, for love and courtesy lie further away. Be courteous and let there be such separation between us as may well be said becomes a virtuous bachelor and a modest maiden. So make your bed at a distance from me, and good night, sweet friend. May your love for me never alter until your life ends.”

Lysander was disappointed, but he was a man who took no for an answer, so he said, “Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I; and may my life end when I end my love for you! Over here will I make my bed. May you sleep well where you rest your sweet head.”

“May you sleep as well as I, while I take my rest in my sweet nest,” Hermia replied.

Hermia and Lysander were asleep when Puck arrived and complained, “Throughout the forest have I gone, but Athenian found I none on whose eyes I might test this flower’s force in causing love. All is night and silence.”

Puck then caught sight of Lysander: “Who is here? Clothing of Athens he does wear. This is he, my master said, who despised the Athenian maiden.”

Puck then looked at Hermia and said, “And here is the maiden, sleeping sound, on the dank and dirty ground.

Pretty soul! She dares not lie near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.”

Puck went to Lysander and squeezed the juice of the flower onto his sleeping eyelids.

He then said, “Chump, upon your eyes have I thrown all the power this charm does own. When you wake, you pest, may love forbid you any more rest. So awake when I am gone, for I must go to Oberon.”

Puck flew away, and immediately Demetrius and Helena ran near Lysander and Hermia and stopped.

“Stay here and run no more, even though you kill me, sweet Demetrius,” Helena pleaded.

“I order you to leave and to leave me alone,” Demetrius replied.

“Will you leave me in the dark? Do not so.”

“Stay here, or face my anger. I alone will go,” Demetrius said before crashing through the forest again.

“Oh, I am out of breath in this fond chase!” Helena said. “The more I pray, the less is my grace. Happy is Hermia, wherever she lies, for she has blessed and attractive eyes. Why are her eyes so bright? Salt tears did not make them bright. My eyes are oftener washed with salt tears than hers, and my eyes are not so bright as hers. No, no, I am as ugly as a bear. Beasts that meet me run away in fear. Therefore, I should not marvel that Demetrius runs away from me as if he were from a monster fleeing. What wicked and lying mirror made me seek to compare my eyes with Hermia’s eyes that are as bright as the stars in the sky at night?”

Helena, seeing Lysander lying on the ground, said, “But who is here? Lysander! On the ground! Is he dead? Or

asleep? I see no blood, no wound. Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.”

Lysander awoke and said, “And run through fire I will for your sweet sake. Radiant Helena! Now that I have awakened, I can see into your heart. Where is Demetrius? Oh, how fit a word is that vile name to perish on my sword!”

“Do not say that, Lysander; do not say that,” Helena said. “So what if he loves your Hermia? It doesn’t matter because Hermia still loves you. Be content with that, and leave Demetrius alone.”

“Content with Hermia!” Lysander said. “No! I do repent the tedious minutes I with her have spent. Not Hermia but Helena I love. Who will not change a raven for a dove? The love a man feels is by his reason swayed, and reason says you are the worthier maiden. Things growing are not ripe until their season, so I, being young, was not until now ripe to reason. Now that I have grown up, reason becomes the leader of my will and leads me to your eyes, where I look and see love’s stories written in love’s richest book.”

Helena was certain that Lysander was cruelly mocking her by pretending to be in love with her. She complained, “Why was I to this keen mockery born? When at your hands did I deserve this scorn? Is it not enough, young man, that I did never, no, nor never can, despite how I try, deserve a sweet look from Demetrius’ eyes? Why then must you mock my insufficiency? You do me wrong, you do, by pretending to love me and me to woo. But fare you well, although I must confess I thought you were a man of true gentleness. Oh, that a lady, by one man refused, should by another therefore be ill used!”

Helena ran away from Lysander.

Lysander said, “She did not see Hermia. Hermia, sleep you

here, and may you never come Lysander near! Just like a surfeit of the sweetest things, the deepest loathing to the stomach brings, or as the heresies that men do leave are hated most by those whom the heresies did deceive, so you, my surfeit and my heresy, by all be hated, but most of all by me! And, all my talents, address your love and might to honor Helen and to be her knight!”

Lysander ran after Helena.

A nightmare woke Hermia: “Help me, Lysander, help me! Do your best to pluck this crawling serpent from my breast! What a nightmare I had here! Lysander, look how I do shake with fear. I thought that a serpent was eating my heart, and you sat smiling as the serpent played his part. Lysander! Gone?”

She shouted, “Lysander! Can you hear me?”

She listened, and then she said, “You must be out of range of hearing me. Lysander, where are you? Speak, if you can hear me! Speak, my love! I almost faint with fear!”

No reply came, and Hermia said, “I know you are not near. I will go and seek you because you are my dear. I will find either my dear or my death.”

CHAPTER 3 (A Midsummer Night's Dream)

— 3.1 —

Titania, Queen of the Fairies, lay asleep near the place in the forest where the craftsmen of Athens — Bottom, Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling — had come to practice their play.

Bottom asked, “Are we all here?”

“Yes, we are,” Quince said, “and here is a marvelous and convenient place for our rehearsal. This green patch of grass shall be our stage, and this hawthorn thicket shall be our backstage. We will rehearse our play as we will do it before the Duke.”

“Peter Quince,” Bottom said.

“What do you want, good friend Bottom?”

“There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please the audience. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself, which the ladies will not stand. What do you say to that?”

Snout said, “Bottom is right. The ladies will be frightened.”

Starveling said, “I believe we must leave the killing out.”

“No, we can leave the killing in the play,” Bottom said. “I have a device that will make all well. Quince, write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say that we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver. This will keep the ladies from being afraid.”

“That’s a good idea,” Quince said. “We will have such a

prologue; and it shall be written in alternating eight- and six-syllable lines.”

“No,” Bottom objected, “make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.”

Snout asked, “Will not the ladies be afraid of the lion?”

“I am afraid of it, I promise you,” Starveling said.

“We need to think carefully about bringing a lion onstage,” Bottom said. “To bring in — Heaven help us! — a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing because there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living.”

“Therefore another prologue must say that he is not a lion,” Snout suggested.

Bottom considered that idea — he might be able to have more lines to recite — but he wanted his friends to get recognition, too. Therefore, he said, “No, the actor playing the lion must say his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion’s neck, and he himself must speak through, saying this, or to the same defect — ‘Ladies,’ or ‘Fair ladies’ — ‘I would wish you,’ or ‘I would request you,’ or ‘I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble. I pledge my life to protect yours. If you think I am come hither as a lion, it could mean the end of my life. No, I am not a lion; I am a man as other men are.’ Then let the lion tell the ladies plainly that he is Snug the joiner.”

“It shall be done,” Quince said. “But there are two hard things that remain. First, how can we bring the Moonlight into a chamber? According to the story, Pyramus and Thisby meet by Moonlight.”

“Does the Moon shine the night that we play our play?” Snout asked.

“A calendar, a calendar!” Bottom said. “Look in the

almanac and see whether the Moon shines that night.”

Quince took a book out of his pocket, turned some pages, and said, “Yes, the Moon shines that night.”

“Good,” Bottom said. “We can open a window, and the Moon will shine through the window.”

“Yes, that will work,” Quince said, “or one of us actors could come in with a bushel of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine.”

Flute thought, That would work. The man could be the Man in the Moon. According to an old story, a man gathered thorns for firewood on Sunday and as punishment, he was placed on the Moon to live thereafter. And interestingly, Bottom — who said “defect” when he meant “effect”— is not the only one here who sometimes misuses words. Quince talked about how one of us actors could “disfigure” the Moon when he meant that one of us could be the figure — the symbol — of the Moon. Quince also said that that actor could “present” the person of Moonshine, but he should have said, “represent.” So be it. We all make mistakes.

Quince added, “There is a second problem that we must solve. We must have a wall in the great chamber because Pyramus and Thisby, according to the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.”

“We cannot bring a wall into the Duke’s great chamber,” Snout said. “Do you have any ideas about what we can do, Bottom?”

“Some man or other must present Wall,” Bottom said, “and let him have some plaster, or some clay, or some cement to signify a wall; and let him hold his fingers like this” — Bottom made an OK sign with the fingers of his right hand

— “and through that O shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.”

“If we do that, then all is well,” Quince said. “Come, sit down, every mother’s son, and we will rehearse our parts. Pyramus, you begin. When you have spoken your speech, enter into that thicket. That is where you should be unless you are onstage.”

Puck flew near and noticed the craftsmen. He made himself invisible and walked among them, saying, “Here are Athenian craftsmen who are wearing homespun cloth of hemp. What hempen homespuns are these swaggering here, so near the bed of the fairy Queen? I see! They are rehearsing a play. I will be their audience. I will also be an actor, if I see fit.”

Quince, the director as well as the author of the play, said, “Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, come forward.”

Bottom, as Pyramus, said to Flute, who was playing Thisby, “Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet —”

Quince corrected him, “Odors, odors.”

“Odors savors sweet,” Bottom said, “So has your breath, my dearest Thisby dear. But hark, a voice! Stay thou but here awhile, and by and by I will to thee appear.”

Bottom exited, and Puck said to himself, “He is the strangest Pyramus that I have ever seen!” Then Puck followed Bottom.

“Must I speak now?” Flute asked.

“Yes,” Quince said. “Pyramus has left to see about a voice that he heard, and he is to come back again soon.”

Flute recited, “Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,

“Of color like the red rose on triumphant brier,

“Most lively juvenile and eke most lovely Jew,

“As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,

“I’ll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny’s tomb.”

“Say ‘Ninus’ tomb.’ Ninus was the founder of the ancient city Nineveh,” Quince said, “but don’t say that line yet. Pyramus will come back and speak, and then you will say that line to him.”

Quince complained, “Why, you are speaking all your lines at once, cues and all.”

Quince then called to Bottom, “Pyramus, enter. Your cue for coming onstage has been spoken — it is ‘never tire.’”

Flute said, “Oh!” and then recited, “As true as truest horse that yet would never tire.”

Bottom and Puck came out of the thicket. Puck had worked some magic, and Bottom now had the head of an ass, or donkey.

Bottom declaimed, “If I were handsome, Thisby, I would still be only yours.”

Quince saw Bottom’s ass’ head and shouted, “Oh, monstrous! Oh, strange! We are haunted! Flee from here, friends! Help!”

The craftsmen, with the exception of Bottom, ran away.

Puck was happy to add to the excitement of the fleeing craftsmen, especially since it involved shape-shifting: “I’ll follow you, I’ll lead you roundabout, through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier. Sometimes a horse I’ll be, sometimes a hound, a hog, or a headless bear, sometimes a fire; and I will neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn, like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.”

Bottom asked himself, “Why do they run away? They are playing a joke on me and trying to make me afraid and trying to make an ass of me.”

Snout, trying to escape from one of Puck’s transformations, almost ran over Bottom. He stopped long enough to say, “Oh, Bottom, you have changed! What do I see on you?”

“What do you see?” Bottom said, “You see an ass’ head of your own, do you?”

Snout ran away, but Quince took his place and said, “Heaven help you, Bottom! You are translated.”

Had Flute been present and unpanicked, he would have thought, *Quince meant to say “transformed.”*

Bottom said to himself, “I see their knavery. They are playing a joke on me to make an ass of me. They are trying to frighten me if they can. But I will not move from this place — let them do whatever they can. I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, so that they shall hear that I am not afraid.”

He sang, “*The blackbird so black of hue,*

“*With its orange-tawny bill,*

“*The song thrush with his note so true,*

“*The wren with its little trill —*”

Hearing Bottom sing, the fairy Queen Titania woke up, looked at him, and said, “What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?”

Bottom continued to sing:

“*The finch, the sparrow and the lark,*

“*The plain-song cuckoo gray,*

“Whose note full many a man does note,

“And dares not answer nay —”

Bottom thought a moment, and then he said to himself, “Why would anyone be so foolish as to answer a foolish cuckoo? The cuckoo calls a man a cuckold. A cuckold is a man whose wife cheats on him. By answering the cuckoo, the man would show that he was paying attention to what the cuckoo called out. It is as if the cuckoo were talking to him and letting him know that he is a cuckold. It is best to ignore the cuckoo so that other people think that the cuckoo is talking to some other man.”

Titania said, “I beg you, gentle mortal, please sing again. My ears are much enamored of your notes, and my eyes are much enthralled by your shape. The power of your beauty moves me at first sight to say — no, to swear — that I love you.”

Titania tossed her hair, pulled her shoulders back, and pushed her chest forward. She twisted her torso from right to left and back to show off her breasts from different angles, and she giggled. Suddenly, the fairy Queen was acting like a fourteen-year-old — or older — mortal girl who had found “true love.”

Bottom, the most foolish of men, now said the most wise of words: “I think, lady, you have little reason to say that, and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together nowadays.”

He thought, *Occasionally, I can say exactly the right words.*

Then he said, “It’s a pity that some respectable neighbors will not make them friends.”

He thought, *Occasionally, I can make a good jest.*

Titania said, "You are as wise as you are beautiful."

"I deny that," Bottom said, "but if I had wit enough to get out of this forest, I would have wit enough for me."

"Out of this forest, do not desire to go," Titania said. "You shall remain here, whether you want to stay or go. I am a spirit of no common rate — the summer serves me and my estate — and I do love you. Therefore, go with me. I will give you fairies to be your servants, and they shall fetch you jewels from the deep, and sing while you on pressed flowers do sleep, and I will purge your mortal body so that you shall like an airy spirit go."

Titania called some elves: "Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Mote! Mustardseed!"

Peaseblossom said, "I am ready to do your will."

Cobweb said, "So am I."

Mote said, "So am I."

Mustardseed said, "So am I."

All asked, "What do you want us to do?"

Titania replied, "Elves, be kind and courteous to this gentleman. Go with him wherever he walks, and dance for him. Feed him with apricots and dewberries, with purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries. Steal the honey bags from the bumblebees. Steal beeswax from them and use glowworms to light the wax and make candles so that my love can see to go to bed and to arise. Pluck the wings from beautiful butterflies to fan the Moonbeams from his sleeping eyes. Bow to him, and curtsy, my elves."

Peaseblossom said, "Welcome, mortal!"

Cobweb said, "Welcome!"

Mote said, “Welcome!”

Mustardseed said, “Welcome!”

“I beg your pardon, elves,” Bottom said. He asked one elf, “What is your name?”

“Cobweb.”

Bottom joked, “Cobwebs are used to stop the bleeding from small cuts, so if I cut my finger, I shall become better acquainted with you.”

He asked another elf, “Your name, honest gentleman?”

“Peaseblossom.”

Bottom joked, “Please give my regards to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall also become better acquainted with you.”

He asked another elf, “What is your name, please, sir?”

“Mustardseed.”

Bottom joked, “Beef is often eaten with mustard. I promise you that your relatives have many times made my eyes water. I shall also become better acquainted with you, good Master Mustardseed.”

“Be my love’s servants,” Titania said to the fairies. “Lead him to my bed. The Moon, I think, looks sad and tearful. And when the Moon weeps, every little flower weeps. The flowers lament chastity — either the chastity of those who want to lose it but cannot or the chastity of those who want to keep it but cannot. Tie up my love’s tongue — cover his mouth — and bring him to my bed silently.”

In another part of the forest, Oberon said to himself, “I wonder whether Titania has awakened, and I wonder what living thing it was that first she saw — that is the thing that she must love fiercely.”

Puck flew to Oberon, who said, “Welcome back, Puck. How now, mad spirit! What night sports are going on now about this much-populated forest?”

Puck replied, “Titania with a monster is in love. Near to her secret and consecrated bower, while she was in her dull and sleeping hour, a crew of fools, ignorant craftsmen, who work in Athens, met together to rehearse a play intended for great Theseus’ wedding day. The most foolish of all those actors, who played the part of Pyramus, exited the ‘stage’ and entered a thicket, and there I played a joke on his thick head, on which I placed an ass’ head. He returned to Thisby to talk, and when his fellow actors did him spy, they scattered as do geese whom hunters stalk. At the sound of a gun, geese and jackdaws rise in the sky, and in the forest the actors did fly as they scattered and fled. Over a stump an actor fell and rolled and cried ‘Murder’ and called for help from Athens. Their strong fears conquered their weak minds, and they became afraid of bushes and vines, for briars and thorns at their clothing snatched, and from some actors hats and from other actors sleeves caught. I led the actors on in this distracted fear, and left foolish Pyramus transformed there. At that moment, so it came to pass, Titania woke up and loved an ass.”

“This has turned out better than I could have planned,” Oberon said. “But have you yet put the juice of the flower upon the Athenian’s eyelids as I ordered you to do?”

“I did that while he was sleeping,” Puck replied, “so that is done, too. The Athenian woman was by his side, and so, when he wakes up, by him she must be eyed.”

Hermia and Demetrius ran onto the scene, and Oberon and Puck made themselves invisible.

“Here comes the Athenian man,” Oberon said.

“This is the woman I saw, but I have never seen this man,” Puck said.

Demetrius said, “Why do you rebuke me when I love you so? You should be this bitter to your bitter foe.”

Hermia replied, “My rebuke of you is now gentle, but it can become much worse. I am afraid that you may have given me reason enough you to curse. If you have slain Lysander in his sleep, you are up to your ankles in blood, and you might as well wade into a deep ocean of blood and kill me, too.”

She added, “Lysander is more faithful to me than the Sun is to the day. Would Lysander from his sleeping Hermia have stolen away? I will sooner believe that the Earth has a hole bored through it and the Moon has passed through the hole and has come out on the other side of the Earth to disrupt the tides and annoy her brother, the Sun. You must have murdered Lysander. You even look like a murderer: deadly and grim.”

“The murdered should look dead and grim,” Demetrius said, “and that is how I should look. Your stern cruelty has pierced me through the heart, yet you, my murderer, look as bright, as clear, as yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.”

“What do your words have to do with Lysander?” Hermia said. “What have you done with him? Where is he? Demetrius, will you give him back to me?”

“I prefer to give his carcass to my hounds.”

“Go away, dog! Go away, cur! You have driven me past

the bounds of a maiden's patience! Have you murdered Lysander? If so, then from here on never be thought to be a man! Just for once, tell me the truth. Do it for my sake! Would you have been capable of even looking at him when he was awake? Did you kill him while he was asleep? How brave! Could not a poisonous snake that way behave? You are the snake who murdered Lysander. You, Demetrius, have a tongue that is more forked than that of any biting snake."

"You are angry at the wrong person," Demetrius said. "I am not guilty of killing Lysander. He is still alive, for all that I can tell."

"Please tell me then that he is well."

"And if I could, what should I get therefore?"

"The privilege never to see me more. From your hated presence I now part. See me no more, whether Lysander is dead or not."

Hermia ran away from Demetrius.

"There is no use following her when she is in this fierce vein," Demetrius said. "Here therefore for a while I will remain. The heaviness of my sorrow grows even heavier because I have lost sleep due to my woe. Because of my sorrow, I am owed a debt by sleep. Here for a while I will stay, and some of that debt sleep shall repay."

Demetrius lay on the ground and slept.

"What have you done!" Oberon said to Puck. "You were mistaken quite, and you laid the love-juice on some true love's sight. Because of your mistake, that which ensued is a true love turned false and not a false love turned true."

"Fate is at fault, not I," Puck said. "In this world, for every man who is faithful to his lover, a million fail, breaking

oath on oath.”

“Throughout the forest, go swifter than the wind, no matter how much your path may wind, and Helena of Athens make sure you find,” Oberon ordered. “All lovesick she is and lacks good cheer; she makes sighs of love that cost her dear. By some illusion, bring her here. I’ll charm Demetrius’ eyes in preparation for when she does appear.”

“I go! I go! Look how I go, swifter than an arrow from a Tartar’s bow.”

Puck flew swiftly away.

Oberon squeezed the flower, and let the juice drip onto Demetrius’ sleeping eyelids, saying, “Flower of this purple dye, hit with Cupid’s arrow, make Helena the apple of his eye. When his love he do espy, let her shine as gloriously as does Venus in the sky.”

Oberon then said to Demetrius, “When you awake, may Helena be by. Sincerely beg her to love you — do not lie.”

Puck returned and said, “Captain of our fairy band, Helena is here at hand, and the youth, mistook by me, pleading for a lover’s fee. Shall we their foolish pageant see? Lord, what fools these mortals be!”

“Stand back,” Oberon said. “The noise that Helena and Lysander make will awaken Demetrius.”

Delighted, Puck said, “Then will two at the same time woo one, and that will make good fun. All the things that best please me are those that happen preposterously.”

Lysander and Helena walked near Demetrius.

Lysander pleaded, “Why should you think that I woo you in scorn? Tears never accompany scorn and derision. Look, when I vow that I love you, I weep; and vows so born and

accompanied with tears are known to be true. How can my tears seem like scorn to you, when they are evidence that shows that I am true?"

"Your words grow trickier and trickier," Helena said. "When someone misuses the truth and uses one truth to kill another truth, then there is a battle between a devil and an angel. These vows you make to me belong to Hermia. Have you forgotten her? If you weigh the oaths you now make to me and the oaths you have made to her, they will weigh exactly the same. Neither scale will outweigh the other, and both scales will be full of lies."

"I lacked sound judgment when I swore to Hermia that I loved her," Lysander said.

"And I think that you lack good judgment now that you have forgotten her," Helena replied.

"Demetrius loves her, and he does not love you," Lysander said loudly.

Demetrius awoke, saw Helena, and said, "Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine! To what, my love, shall I compare your eyes? Crystal is muddy compared to them. How ripe in show do your lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow! That newly fallen white, high mountain snow, fanned by the Eastern wind, turns the color of a crow when compared to the color of your hand. Let me your hand kiss, which is that of a princess of pure white and a promise of bliss!"

Helena said, "Oh, spite! Oh, Hell! I see you all are bent to join against me for your merriment. If you were civilized and understood courtesy, you would not do to me all this injury. I know that you hate me, indeed I do, but why must you join together to mock me, too? If you were men, as men you are in show, you would not treat a gentle lady so. You vow and swear that you do love me, and you superpraise my parts, but I know that you two hate me with

all your hearts. You men both are rivals, and both of you love Hermia. And you are both rivals in mocking me. This is a ‘splendid’ exploit, a ‘manly’ enterprise, done to conjure tears up in a poor maiden’s eyes so at her you can laugh! No one of a noble sort would so offend a virgin, and extort the patience of a maiden, all to make you laugh.”

“You are unkind, Demetrius,” Lysander said. “Be not so. You love Hermia; this you know I know. And here, with all good will, with all my heart, all of Hermia’s love for me I yield up to you. So give to me all of Helena’s love for you — grant me my request. Helena is the woman whom I love and will love until my death.”

Disgusted, Helena said, “Never did mockers waste more idle breath.”

Demetrius said, “Lysander, keep your Hermia. I do not want her. If ever I was of her fond, all of that love is gone. When I gave my heart to her, my heart was like a guest travelling away from its domain. But now my heart has returned home to Helena, and there it shall remain.”

“Helena, he lies,” Lysander said. “Do not believe him.”

“Do not disparage a love to which you cannot come near, or you will regret it,” Demetrius said. “But, look, here comes your dear.”

Hermia arrived on the scene, saw Lysander, and said to him, “Dark night, that from the eyes sight away takes, the ears more keen of hearing makes. Although night does impair the seeing sense, it pays the hearing sense a double recompense. Not by my eyes have I you, Lysander, found; instead, my ears brought to me your voice’s sound, but why did you unkindly leave me so?”

“Why should I stay, when love did press me to go?”

“What love could take Lysander from my side?”

“Lysander’s love would not let him stay by your side. I love beautiful Helena, who more enlightens the night than the Moon and the stars that are the eyes of light in the night. Why did you try to find me? Didn’t my leaving you let you know that I hate you?”

“You cannot be saying the truth! You cannot mean what you say!”

Helena was certain that Hermia was mocking her: “Lo, Hermia is one of this confederacy! Now I see that they have planned all three to fashion this false trick to spite me! Insulting Hermia! Most ungrateful maiden! Why have you conspired, why have you with these two men contrived to mock me with this foul derision? Is all the talk that we two have shared, the vows to be like sisters, the hours that we have spent together never wishing to be parted — have you forgotten all of that? Have you forgotten all our school days of friendship and of childhood innocence? We, Hermia, like two artists working together, have with our needles created both one flower as we both worked on one sampler, sitting on one cushion, singing one song, both in one key, as if our hands, our sides, our voices, and our minds had been those of one person. So we grew together, like a double cherry, two cherries on one stem, seeming to be parted, but yet united. Likewise, in appearance we had two bodies, but yet we had only one heart. We were like a coat of arms that represented two people. Are you willing to tear apart our long-time friendship by joining with these two men in mocking me? Doing that is not friendly, and it is not maidenly. The entire female sex, as well as me, may rebuke you for it, even though I alone do feel the injury.”

“I am amazed at your passionate words,” Hermia replied. “I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.”

“Have you not persuaded Lysander to mock me, to follow me, and to praise my eyes and face?” Helena asked. “And have you not persuaded your other love, Demetrius, who recently threatened to kick me, to call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare, precious and celestial? Who would speak these things to a woman he hates? And why does Lysander deny his love of you, so rich within his soul, and tender me affection, unless you made him do it? I am not as much in favor as you, or as loved, or as fortunate; instead, I am miserable because I, who love, am unloved. You should pity me, not despise me.”

“I don’t understand what you mean by this,” Hermia replied.

“Go on, continue to counterfeit serious looks, make faces at me when I turn my back, wink at each other, and keep up this joke. If you carry it out well, this joke will be talked about for years. If you have any pity, grace, or manners, you would not make me such a butt of your joke. But farewell. I am the butt of your joke partly because I followed all of you here, but my death or my absence shall soon remedy that.”

“Stay, gentle Helena; hear my plea to you,” Lysander said. “You are my love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!”

“Don’t you ever stop?” Helena said.

Hermia said to Lysander, “Dear, do not mock her so.”

Demetrius said to Lysander, “If she cannot persuade you to stop mocking Helena, I can force you to stop mocking her.”

“Neither you nor she can stop me from worshipping Helena,” Lysander said to Demetrius. “Your threats have no more strength than Hermia’s weak requests.”

Lysander then said, “Helena, I love you. I swear it by my

life. I swear by that which I will lose for you, to prove him false who says that I do not love you.”

Demetrius said to Helena, “I say that I love you more than he can do.”

“If you say you do,” Lysander said, “come and fight me and prove your words are true.”

“Let’s do it!” Demetrius said.

Hermia asked, “Lysander, what is going on?”

She grabbed Lysander and held on to him, preventing him from leaving to fight Demetrius.

Lysander shouted at her, “Away, you addict to tanning beds!”

“Lysander is not serious about fighting me,” Demetrius said. “He will put on an act, storm and shout, pretend to want to leave to fight me, but find an excuse the fight to back out.”

He said to Lysander, “You’re only half a man.”

Lysander yelled at Hermia, “Let go of me, you cat, you burr! You vile thing, let loose, or I will shake you from me like a serpent!”

“Why are you grown so violent?” Hermia asked him. “Why have you changed, darling —”

“Don’t ‘darling’ me!” Lysander raged. “Get away from me, tawny tabby! Get away from me, loathed medicine! Hated potion, get away from me!”

“You must be joking!” Hermia said to Lysander.

“He is,” Helena said, “and you are also joking.”

“Demetrius, I will keep my word and fight you,” Lysander

said.

“Would you like to bet?” Demetrius said. “Hermia has her arms around you and is preventing you from leaving with me and fighting me. It looks to me as if you aren’t fighting very hard to get away from Hermia.”

“Should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?” Lysander replied. “Although I hate her, I’ll not harm a hair of her head.”

“Can you do me any greater harm than to hate me?” Hermia asked Lysander. “Why should you hate me? Why? Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander? I am as pretty now as I was a while ago. When the night began, you loved me, but since the night began you left me. Why did you leave me? Did you really mean to leave me?”

“Yes, I did,” Lysander said, “and I hoped to never see you again. Therefore, be out of hope, of question, of doubt; instead, be certain that nothing is truer than that it is no joke that I do hate you and I do love Helena.”

Hermia turned her attention to Helena: “You trickster! You thief of love! You boyfriend-stealer! You have come to this forest this night and stolen the man I love!”

“Have you no modesty, no maidenly shame, no touch of bashfulness?” Helena asked. “Will you tear answers from my throat before I have a chance to speak? You are not a real woman! You are a counterfeit! You are a puppet!”

“A puppet!” Hermia shouted. “Now I understand what is going on. Helena has used her height to steal my boyfriend. Helena has compared her height, her tall height, to my shortness, and now my Lysander belongs to her.”

She shouted at Helena, “And are you grown so high in Lysander’s esteem because I am so dwarfish and so low?”

How low am I, you tall painted maypole? Tell me: How low am I? I may be short, but my fingernails can still reach your eyes!”

Helena was afraid: “Please, although you are mocking me, gentlemen, let her not hurt me. I was never assertive. I have no gift for standing up for myself. My reputation for cowardice is well deserved. Don’t let her hit me. You perhaps may think that because she is somewhat shorter than myself, that I am a match for her, but I am not.”

“Shorter!” Hermia shouted. “Do you have to keep saying that I am short?”

Helena replied, “Good Hermia, do not be so angry at me. I always did love you, Hermia. I always kept your secrets, and I have never wronged you, except that, because I love Demetrius, I told him of your flight into this forest. He followed you, and because I love him I followed him. But he has been angry at me and threatened me. He has threatened to strike me, spurn me, and even to kill me. And now, if you will let me, a fool, quietly go, I will return to Athens and follow you no further. Please, let me go. I am a simple and foolish woman.”

Still angry, Hermia said, “Why, get you gone! What is stopping you?”

“A foolish heart,” Helena said, “but I will leave it here.”

“What, with Lysander?” Hermia shouted.

“No, with Demetrius.”

“Helena, be not afraid,” Lysander said, “Hermia shall not harm you.”

“No, she won’t,” Demetrius said, “not even if Lysander here is on Hermia’s side.”

Still afraid, Helena said, “When she’s angry, she is keen and sharp-tongued! She was sometimes a mean girl when she was in school, and though she be but little, she is fierce.”

“‘Little’ again!” Hermia complained. “She keeps calling me ‘low’ and ‘little.’ Why do you men allow her to say such things about me? You won’t do anything about it, but I will!”

Hermia let go of Lysander and started toward Helena, but Lysander and Demetrius quickly blocked her way.

Lysander said to her, “Go away, you dwarf, you minimus, you user of growth-stunting tobacco, you bead, you acorn.”

“You are too ready to rise to the defense of a woman who scorns your service,” Demetrius said to Lysander. “Let Helena alone. Don’t talk about her. Don’t try to ‘help’ her. If you continue to pretend to show even a little interest in her, you shall regret it.”

“Hermia has let go of me and is not preventing me from leaving,” Lysander said. “Follow me, if you dare, and fight me to see who gets Helena.”

“Follow you!” Demetrius said. “No, I will walk beside you, cheek by jowl.”

The two men departed, leaving Helena and Hermia alone.

“You are the cause of all this turmoil,” Hermia said, walking toward Helena, who backed away from her. “Don’t back away from me.”

“I will not trust you enough to let you close to me,” Helena said, “and I will no longer stay in your cursed company. Your hands are quicker than mine for a fray. My legs are longer, though, to run away.”

Helena ran away.

Confused by recent events, Hermia said, “I am amazed and know not what to say.”

Hermia then ran after Helena.

“All of this is your fault,” Oberon said to Puck. “You keep making accidental mistakes, or perhaps, you make your mistakes accidentally on purpose.”

“Believe me, King of shadows, these mistakes are accidental,” Puck said. “Did not you tell me I should know the man by the Athenian clothing he had on? And so far blameless proves my enterprise, that I have anointed an Athenian’s eyes. Still, I am glad events did so pass because this their arguing I think is worth a laugh.”

“Let’s make things right,” Oberon said. “The two male lovers are seeking a place to fight. Therefore, Robin Goodfellow, make overcast the night. Make fog dim the starry sky and lead these testy rivals so astray that one comes not within the other’s way. Similar to Lysander’s sometimes make your tongue, then make Demetrius angry — for you that should be fun. Sometimes shout in the voice of Demetrius and use these lovers’ voices to lead each lover away from the other. Keep them seeking each other until over their brows death-like sleep with leaden legs and bat-like wings does creep. When they are asleep, then squeeze the juice of this herbal antidote onto Lysander’s eyelids. The juice will make everything all right. It has the power to take from him all error with his sight, and make him love again Hermia, thus ending his and her plight. When the lovers — male and female — next awake, all this night’s derision shall seem like a dream and fruitless vision, and back to Athens shall the lovers wend, matched correctly with a love that shall never end.”

He added, “While I in this affair do you employ, I will go

to my Queen and ask for her boy who comes from the East, and then I will release her charmed eyes from loving a monster, and reigning again shall be peace.”

“My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,” Puck said. “The dragons that draw the chariot of night are nearing their home, and in the East I see the morning star, at whose approach ghosts, wandering here and far, go home to their churchyards. Other damned spirits, those of suicides who were buried at crossroads and those of people who drowned in floods and whose bodies were never recovered, already to their wormy beds have gone for fear that day should look upon them — they willfully exile themselves from light and must forever consort with black-browed night.”

“But we are spirits of another sort,” Oberon said, “I in the morning’s light have often made sport. Far from being driven away by the coming of day, we fairy spirits are able to enjoy it and stay, although we prefer the Moonlit night to the morning light. Like the keeper of a royal forest, I often tread the groves until the full morning Sunlight, all fiery red, shines down on the ocean with fair blessed beams, and turns into yellow gold the ocean’s salty green streams. Nevertheless, Puck, act quickly and make no delay. We may be able to set everything to rights before day.”

Oberon flew away to go to Titania.

“Up and down, up and down, I will lead them up and down. I am feared in field and town,” Puck said. “Robin Hobgoblin, lead them up and down. Here comes one.”

Lysander came near and shouted, “Where are you, proud Demetrius? Speak up now!”

In Demetrius’ voice, Puck shouted, “Here I am, villain. My sword is drawn and ready. Where are you?”

“I will be with you immediately.”

In Demetrius' voice, Puck replied, "Follow me, then, to leveler ground so we can fight."

Lysander left, following — he thought — Demetrius' voice.

Demetrius came near and shouted, "Lysander, speak again! You runaway, you coward, have you fled? Speak! Are you cowering in some bush? Where are you hiding your head?"

Puck shouted in Lysander's voice, "You coward, you are bragging to the stars and telling the bushes that you are looking for me near and far, yet you will not come and fight me. Come, coward! Come, child! I'll whip you with a rod. Anyone who draws a sword on you is defiled."

Demetrius shouted, "Where are you?"

Puck shouted in Lysander's voice, "Follow my voice. This is not a good place to fight."

They left, but soon Lysander returned, stumbled in the darkness, and complained, "He goes before me and continuously dares me to come on, but when I come to where he called, then he is gone. The villain is much lighter-heeled than me. I followed fast, but faster he did flee. I am fallen into a dark uneven way, and here will I rest myself and stay."

He lay down and said, "Come, gentle day! Once you show me your light, I will find Demetrius and get revenge for this spite."

He slept.

Soon, Puck led Demetrius near Lysander.

Puck shouted in Lysander's voice, "Coward, why are you avoiding me?"

"Wait for me, if you dare," Demetrius shouted. "I know

well that you are running away from me. You keep changing your position, and you dare not stay in one place and look me in the face. Where are you now?"

"Come here," Puck shouted in Lysander's voice. "Here I am."

"Not for long," Demetrius said. "You will be gone by the time I get there and so you do me wrong. You shall dearly pay for mocking me this night if ever I see your face in daylight. Now, go your way. I am tired, and on this cold ground I will make my bed. When morning arrives, expect me to break your head."

He lay on the ground and slept.

Helena arrived and complained, "Oh, weary night! Oh, long and tedious night, make your hours shorter! May dawn soon shine in the East so that I may go back to Athens by daylight and escape my former friends who now detest me. Sleep, who for a time stops sorrow, keep me from my misery."

Helena lay on the ground and slept.

Puck said, "Yet but three? I need one more — two of both kinds make up four. Here she comes, cursed and sad. Cupid is a knavish lad, thus to make poor females mad."

Hermia arrived and complained, "I have been never so weary, never so in woe. Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers, I can no further crawl, no further go. My legs cannot keep pace with my desires. Here will I rest until the break of light. May Heaven protect Lysander if there is a fight!"

Hermia lay on the ground and slept.

Puck said to all four lovers, "On the ground, sleep sound."

To Lysander, he said, "I'll apply to your eyes, gentle lover, something that will make you truly love the one you should love when her you spy."

Puck squeezed the juice of the herbal antidote onto Lysander's sleeping eyelids, and then he said, "When you wake, you will take true delight in the sight of your former lady's eyes. And the country proverb by all men known, that every man should have his own, in your waking shall be shown. Jack shall have Jill; nothing shall go ill, and each man and woman shall be matched well."

CHAPTER 4 (A Midsummer Night's Dream)

— 4.1 —

In another part of the forest, Titania entertained Bottom. Many other fairies, including Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mote, and Mustardseed, were also present. Oberon watched from a position where he was unseen.

Titania said to Bottom, who was enjoying himself, “Come, sit down upon this flowery bed, while I your lovely cheeks caress, and stick musk-roses in the hair of your sleek, smooth head, and kiss your beautiful, large ears, my gentle joy and boy-toy.”

Bottom asked, “Where’s Peaseblossom?”

“Here I am.”

“Scratch my head, please, Peaseblossom. Where’s Monsieur Cobweb?”

“Here I am.”

“Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, please get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped bumblebee on the top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honeybag. Do not tire yourself too much doing this, monsieur; and, good monsieur, be careful not to break the honeybag; I would hate for you to be covered with honey. Where’s Monsieur Mustardseed?”

“Here I am,” he said, bowing repeatedly.

“Shake hands with me, Monsieur Mustardseed, and please stop bowing, good monsieur.”

“What can I do for you?”

“Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalier Cobweb to scratch my head. I must go to the barber soon, monsieur; for I think that I am marvelously hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.”

“Would you like to hear some music, my sweet love?” Titania asked Bottom.

“I have a reasonably good ear in music,” Bottom replied. “Let’s have something with lots of clacking and clapping.”

“Or would you prefer something sweet to eat?”

“I could peck at a pound of provender. I could munch a bunch of good dry oats. I have a great desire to eat a bundle of hay — good hay, sweet hay, has no equal.”

“I will have a venturesome fairy seek a squirrel’s hoard, and he will fetch you new nuts.”

“I prefer to eat a handful or two of dried peas,” Bottom said, “but, please, let none of your people disturb me, for now an exposition for sleep has come upon me.”

“You mean a disposition for sleep, dear,” Titania said. “You sleep, and I will hold you in my arms. Fairies, go now, and stay away for a while.”

The fairies departed, and Titania said to Bottom, who was now asleep. “I will hold you in my arms the way that sweet honeysuckle gently twists itself around the strong trunk of an elm. How I love you!”

Titania fell asleep beside the sleeping Bottom.

Puck arrived, and Oberon said, “Welcome, Robin Goodfellow. Do you see this sweet sight? I begin to pity her lovesickness now. I recently met with her as she was seeking treats for this silly fool, and I scolded her because

of the silly way she was acting. She had placed on this ass' head a coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers. Drops of dew, which sometimes appear on buds and swell like round and lustrous pearls, were on the coronet, standing in the pretty flowerets' eyes like tears that did their own disgrace bewail. After I had scolded her, Titania with mild words spoke to me. I then did ask her to give me the changeling child, and immediately she gave him to me and sent a fairy to bear him to my bower in Fairyland."

Oberon added, "Now that I have the boy, I will undo this hateful imperfection of Titania's eyes. And, gentle Puck, take this ass' head off this Athenian fool, so that, when he awakens when the other Athenians do, they may all go back to Athens and think that this night's incidents are only a disconcerting dream. But first I will release the fairy Queen."

He squeezed the juice of the herbal antidote onto Titania's sleeping eyelids and said, "Be as you used to be; see as you used to see. Blessed be Diana, the Moon-goddess. Diana's herb over Cupid's flower has such force and blessed power. Now, my Titania, wake up, my sweet Queen."

Titania, who thought that she had been dreaming, was happy to see Oberon, her husband: "My Oberon! What visions have I seen! I dreamed that I loved an ass!"

Oberon gestured toward the sleeping Bottom and said, "There lies your love."

Titania looked down and beside her, saw Bottom, and was shocked: "How came this thing to pass? Oh, how I hate now to look at this ass!"

Like many, many other adult females in similar positions, Titania thought, *What was I thinking!*

Oberon said to Titania, "We will talk about this later."

To Puck, he said, “Robin, take off this ass’ head.”

To Titania, he said, “Call for magical music that will make these five sleeping mortals sleep the deepest sleep.”

Titania ordered, “Music! Music that will charm mortals and make them sleep so deep!”

Music began to play.

Puck removed the ass’ head from Bottom and said to him, “When you wake up, you will not see with this ass’ eyes — you will see with your own ass’ eyes.”

Oberon said, “Come, my Queen, hold hands with me, and we will dance on the ground where these sleepers be.”

They danced and then Oberon said to Titania, “Now you and I newly enjoy amity, and we will tomorrow at midnight ceremoniously dance in Duke Theseus’ house joyfully. We shall bless his house with prosperity and there shall these four lovers wedded be, along with Theseus and Hippolyta, happily.”

Puck said, “Fairy King, hark — I do hear the morning lark.”

Oberon said to Titania, “My Queen, you who sit quietly thinking, we can run toward and rejoin the night soon. We can fly around the globe quickly, swifter than the wandering Moon.”

Titania replied, “During our flight, tell me how it came this night that I sleeping here was found with these mortals on the ground.”

The fairies flew away.

Hunting horns sounded in the distance. Theseus was taking Hippolyta hunting, a good entertainment for an Amazon. Egeus and others also participated in the hunt.

Theseus said, “Go, one of you, find the forester. We have finished our ceremony of the rites of May, and since we are still in the morning of this day, Hippolyta, whom I love, shall hear the music of my hounds. Tell him to unleash the hounds in the western valley and let them bound.”

An attendant left to find the forester.

Theseus said to Hippolyta, “We will, fair Queen, go up to the mountain’s top, and listen to the music of my hounds and the mountain’s echoes.”

Hippolyta enjoyed this kind of entertainment: “I was with Hercules and Cadmus once, when in a forest of Crete their hounds of Sparta brought to bay a bear. Never did I hear such gallant music — the groves, the skies, the waterfalls, and the echoes of every region nearby seemed to be all filled with one mutual cry. I never heard so musical a sound — it was such sweet thunder.”

Theseus said, “My hounds have been bred from Spartan dams and sires. They have the Spartan hounds’ hanging cheeks and sandy color. From their heads hang ears that sweep away the morning dew. They are crooked-kneed and dew-lapped like Thessalian bulls. Slow in pursuit they may be, but they are matched in mouth like bells of harmonious tones to create a tuneful melody of the hunt. The hunting pack creates a cry more melodious and beautiful than any ever created with human voice or with hunting horn — not even in Crete, in Sparta, or in Thessaly. You may judge for yourself when you hear their cries.”

Theseus caught sight of some bodies lying together on the edge of the forest and asked, “What nymphs are these?”

Egeus rode over to Theseus and said, “My lord, this is my daughter here asleep, and this man is Lysander. This man is Demetrius, and here is Helena, the daughter of old Nedar. I wonder how they came to be here together.”

“No doubt they rose up early to observe the rite of May,” Theseus said. “Knowing that we would be hunting here, they came here to watch. But, Egeus, isn’t this the day that Hermia should tell us whether or not she will marry Demetrius?”

“Yes, it is, my lord.”

Theseus ordered an attendant, “Go and tell the huntsmen to wake them with their horns.”

The attendant left to tell the huntsmen, and soon the huntsmen blew their horns loudly. Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia all woke up.

Theseus joked, “Good morning, friends. Lovebirds are said to begin to mate on Saint Valentine’s Day, but Saint Valentine’s Day has passed. Do you lovebirds begin to couple only now?”

“I beg your pardon, my lord,” Lysander said.

“Please, young lovers, stand up,” Theseus said. “Lysander and Demetrius, I know that you are — or have been — enemies. How did your gentle concord — and concord it must be because you sleep by each other so peacefully — come into the world? How can two enemies sleep side by side with no fear of harm?”

“My lord, I shall reply perplexedly, half asleep and half awake,” Lysander replied. “I swear that I cannot truly say how I came here, but as I think — and truly would I speak — I believe that I came with Hermia so we could flee from out of the range of the harsh Athenian law.”

Egeus said, “Enough, enough. My lord, you have heard enough. I beg the law, the law, upon his head. Lysander and my daughter would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius, thereby have stolen from you and me. They

would have stolen away your future wife and my right to choose the man whom my daughter will marry.”

Demetrius spoke up: “My lord, beautiful Helena told me of their plan and of their purpose in coming to this forest. Out of fury, I followed them, and out of love, Helena followed me. But, my good lord, I know not by what power — but by some power it has happened — my love for Hermia has melted like the snow. My love for Hermia seems to me now like the memory of a worthless trinket that I loved when I was a child. Now, I love only Helena. Only she is the object and the pleasure of my eye. All the faith and all the virtue of my heart are for Helena alone. I was engaged to marry her, my lord, before I ever saw Hermia. But somehow, as if I were ill, this food I had loved I came to hate. But now I am like a person restored to health and his natural taste, and I long for that food. Now I do wish for Helena, love Helena, long for Helena, and will for evermore be true to Helena.”

“Lovers, this is a fortunate meeting,” Theseus said. “We will hear more about your experiences later.”

To Egeus, Theseus said, “Earlier, I said that I can by no means extenuate the law of Athens, but I do exactly that now. Egeus, I do overrule your will. Your daughter shall marry Lysander, and Helena shall marry Demetrius. In the temple later this day, these couples shall eternally be knit, as shall be Hippolyta and me.”

Pleased at Theseus’ ruling, Hippolyta smiled.

Theseus said, “Now that the morning is nearly over, let’s stop our hunt. Let all of us, including the couples who will be married later, return to Athens. There, we will enjoy a festive feast.”

He turned to his betrothed and said, “Come, Hippolyta.”

Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, and others departed, leaving behind Lysander and Hermia, and Demetrius and Helena.

“What happened last night?” Demetrius asked. “The events of last night seem far away and murky, like a distant mountain whose top is hidden by clouds.”

“I remember the events of last night as if I were seeing them with eyes unfocused and seeing double,” Hermia said.

“I remember the events the same way,” Helena said. “I have found Demetrius, but I have found him like I could find a jewel. The jewel is in my possession for now, but someone could come along and claim it as hers.”

“Are you sure that we are awake?” Demetrius asked. “It seems to me that yet we sleep and dream. Was the Duke really here, and did he tell us to follow him?”

“Yes,” Hermia said, “and my father was also here.”

“And Hippolyta,” Helena said.

“And the Duke really did tell us to follow him to the temple,” Lysander said.

“Why, then, we are awake,” Demetrius said. “Let’s follow the Duke, and as we walk let us tell each other our dreams.”

The four young lovers walked away, and Bottom, who had been sleeping at some distance from the lovers, woke up, saying, “When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My next cue is ‘Most fair Pyramus.’”

Bottom looked around, saw no one, and called, “Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! Snug! My word, they have gone home and left me here asleep!”

He paused, thought, and said, “I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what

dream it was — man is but an ass, if he would try to explain this dream. I thought I was — no man can tell what. I thought I was, and I thought I had — but a man would have to be a motley-wearing fool if he would try to say what I thought I had.”

Bottom felt the top of his head above both ears, and then he said, “The eye of man has not heard, the ear of man has not seen, man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue able to conceive, nor his heart able to report, what my dream was.”

Bottom thought, and then he said, “I will get Peter Quince to write a ballet of this dream. It shall be called ‘Bottom’s Dream,’ because it has no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of our play, before the Duke. Perhaps, to show the ballet to better advantage, I shall sing it when Thisby dies.”

— 4.2 —

Quince, Flute, Snout, and Starveling were meeting in Peter Quince’s house in Athens.

Quince asked Starveling, “Have you sent anyone to Bottom’s house to ask about him? Has he come home yet?”

“No one has seen him,” Starveling replied. “No doubt, the fairies have carried him away.”

“If he cannot be found, then the play is ruined, isn’t it?” Flute said. “We cannot perform it, can we?”

“That would be impossible,” Quince replied. “In all of Athens, no one but Bottom can play the part of Pyramus.”

“That’s true,” Flute said. “Bottom has simply the best wit of all the craftsmen in Athens.”

“Yes, and he is the most handsome, too,” Quince said. “And he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.”

“You must say ‘paragon,’” Flute said. “A paramour is, God bless us, a wicked thing.”

Snug knocked on Quince’s door and entered the house and said, “Friends, the Duke is coming from the temple. He and Hippolyta have been married, and so have two other couples. If we had been able to put on our play, we would all have been made men — we would have received a pension for life.”

“Sweet friend Bottom!” Flute said. “I wish you were here! You would be able to earn for yourself a pension of sixpence a day for the rest of your life. I’ll be hanged if you would not have earned a pension of sixpence a day for playing Pyramus. Bottom would have deserved it, too. For playing Pyramus, he would have gotten sixpence a day — or nothing.”

Bottom now knocked on Quince’s door and entered the house, saying, “Where are these lads! Where are these good fellows! Hello, friends!”

“Bottom!” Quince said happily. “Oh, most courageous day! Oh, most happy hour!”

“Friends, I have wonders to recount,” Bottom said, “but do not ask me about them, for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian.”

He paused and then said, “I will tell you everything, exactly as it happened.”

“Let us hear, sweet Bottom,” Quince requested.

“I won’t say a word,” Bottom said, “but I will tell you that the Duke has dined. Get your costumes together. Get good strings to use to attach your false beards, and new ribbons to use to tie your shoes. Let us go to the palace right away. Every actor, look over your part. The long and the short of

it is that our play is on a list of the entertainments that Theseus shall choose from to see. Let Thisby have clean linen, and let not him who plays the lion pare his fingernails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions or garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath, and I have no doubt but that we shall hear the audience say, 'It is a sweet comedy.' Most important of all, adjust your testicles. No actor can perform competently unless the two stones in his pants are sitting comfortably. No more words, friends! Let's go!"

CHAPTER 5 (A Midsummer Night's Dream)

— 5.1 —

In the palace, Theseus and Hippolyta were talking. Philostrate, Theseus' Master of the Revels, aka Director of Entertainments, and other people were also present.

Hippolyta said, "Theseus, these four lovers have talked of strange things."

"I think that they have talked of things that are more strange than they are true," Theseus replied. "I never believe old fables or fairy tales. Lovers and madmen have such frenzied brains, such fertile imaginations, that they see — or imagine that they see — much more than cool reason ever comprehends. The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are all made by imagination. The lunatic sees more devils than vast Hell can hold. The lover, just as frantic as the lunatic, sees the beauty of Helen of Troy in the dark face of a gypsy. The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, glances from Heaven to Earth, and from Earth to Heaven. As imagination gives birth to things unknown, the poet's pen writes them down as if they were real and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name. A strong imagination tricks us. If a strong imagination senses some joy, it creates some bringer — perhaps a god — of that joy. At night, when someone senses some fear, how easy is a bush imagined to be a bear!"

"But the four lovers all told the same story of the night," Hippolyta said. "Their stories agreed with each other, and that consistency to me is evidence that whatever happened — no matter how strange and to be wondered at — is more than imaginary fantasies."

Lysander, Hermia, Demetrius, and Helena all walked into

the great chamber.

Theseus said to Hippolyta, “Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.”

To the four lovers, he said, “Joy, gentle friends! May joy and the fresh days of love always accompany your hearts!”

“May more joy and more love always be found in your royal estates, at your table, and in your bed,” Lysander replied.

“Now, what entertainments — perhaps dancers, masked or unmasked — shall we enjoy?” Theseus said. “We have a long age of three hours to pass between now and our bedtime. Where is our usual manager of mirth? What revels are at hand? Is there no play to ease the anguish of a torturing hour? Call Philostrate.”

“Here I am, mighty Theseus,” Philostrate said.

“What entertainments to pass the time have you for this evening?” Theseus asked. “What masked dance? What music? How shall we quickly pass this slow-moving time, if not with some delightful entertainment?”

Philostrate handed Theseus a piece of paper and said, “Here is a list of the entertainments offered. Please choose which your highness will see first.”

Theseus read out loud, “‘*The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung by an Athenian eunuch accompanied by the harp.*’ We will have none of that, for the obvious reason. Beside, I have told my lovely Hippolyta that story in honor of my kinsman Hercules.

“‘*The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals, tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.*’ No, this will not do. This is an old entertainment. It was played when I from Thebes came most recently a conqueror.

“*‘The thrice three Muses mourning for the death of Learning, late deceased in beggary.’* We will have none of that because it is some satire, keen and critical, hardly the thing to hear after a wedding ceremony.

“*‘A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisby; very tragical mirth.’* Merry and tragical! Tedious and brief! You may as well talk about hot ice and similarly strange snow.”

Theseus asked Philostrate, “How shall we find the concord of this discord?”

Philostrate said, “A play there is, my lord, some ten words long, which is as brief as I have known a play; but by ten words, my lord, it is too long, which makes it tedious; for in all the play there is not one word apt or one player well cast. And tragical, my noble lord, it is, because Pyramus in the play does kill himself, which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess, made my eyes cry; but more merry tears the passion of loud laughter never shed.”

“Who are they who do play it?” Theseus asked.

“Men with calloused hands who work here in Athens,” Philostrate said. “They have never labored in their minds until now. They have taxed their unexercised brains to create this play to celebrate your wedding.”

“And we will hear it,” Theseus said.

“No, my noble lord,” Philostrate said. “It is not for you. I have seen the play, and it is nothing, nothing in the world. There is nothing in it to bring you pleasure, except perhaps that you may take pleasure in their good intentions and in how hard they have worked — and it has been hard work for them — to make this play and to learn their lines. All of this they have done to do you service.”

“I will hear that play,” Theseus said. “Nothing can be amiss when it is presented with sincerity and a sense of duty. Go, bring them in.”

Philostrate left, and Theseus said, “Please sit down, ladies.”

All sat down, but Hippolyta said, “Should we see this play? I don’t want to see working-class people attempt to do something that they are incapable of doing and embarrassing themselves when they are trying their best to serve you.”

“Why, gentle, sweet Hippolyta, you shall see no such thing,” Theseus said.

“But Philostrate says that they can do nothing right in this play.”

“Then the kinder we will be, to give them thanks for nothing,” Theseus said. “Our entertainment shall be to take as correctly done that in which they make mistakes. Whatever they cannot correctly do, we can generously judge their performance in accordance with their good intentions, not in accordance with their bad performance. In places where I have come, people have intended to greet me with premeditated welcomes. But I have seen them shiver and look pale, make periods in the midst of sentences, and throttle their practiced speeches because of their stage fright. I have seen them completely break down and be able to say nothing. Objectively, they have not paid me a welcome. Trust me, sweet, out of this silence I have subjectively found a welcome. In their stage fright and modest and dutiful attempt to do what they could not but wished that they could, I have found as much welcome as I would from the rattling tongue of confident and bold eloquence. Love and tongue-tied innocence say much, I believe, although not in words.”

Philostrate returned and said, “So please your grace, the

Prologue is ready.”

“Let him approach,” Theseus said.

Trumpets sounded, and Quince came on stage to say the prologue:

“If we offend, it is with our good will.

“That you should think, we come not to offend

“but with good will. To show our simple skill,

“that is the true beginning of our end.

“Consider then we come but in despite.

“We do not come as intending to content you,

“our true intent is. All for your delight

“we are not here. That you should here repent you,

“the actors are at hand and by their show

“you shall know all that you are likely to know.”

Theseus had said to Hippolyta that often people who intended to greet him would make periods in the midst of their sentences. Such was the case here. Quince had badly recited his prologue, and it had come out in a way that was insulting to the audience.

This is what Quince had meant to say:

“If we offend, it is with our good will

“that you should think we come, not to offend,

“but with good will to show our simple skill:

“That is the true beginning of our end.

“Consider then we come — but in despite

“we do not come — as intending to content you.

“Our true intent is all for your delight:

“We are not here that you should here repent you.

“The actors are at hand and by their show

“you shall know all that you are likely to know.”

Amused, Theseus laughed and said, “This speaker does not understand how to use periods at the ends of sentences.”

As he had said to Hippolyta, Theseus was able to find a subjective welcome where no objective welcome existed. If he were a different kind of ruler, he could have had Quince executed.

The other noble members of the audience followed Theseus’ lead: They were amused and not angry when they talked about Quince.

Lysander said, “He has ridden his prologue like a colt that is being broken. The colt does not know how to stop, and this speaker does not know to stop briefly at the ends of sentences. One can learn from this, my lord. It is not enough just to speak — one must also speak correctly.”

Even Hippolyta was amused: “Indeed he has played on his prologue like a child plays a flute that he is attempting to learn. The flute makes sounds, but it does not make music.”

“His speech was like a tangled chain,” Theseus said. “No link or word was broken, but the chain of links or words is all disordered.”

Theseus laughed and said, “Who is up next?”

While the royal members of the audience had been talking, Pyramus and Thisby, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion had come onstage. While Quince recited the next part of his prologue,

the actors pantomimed their parts.

Quince recited, "Gentlepeople, perhaps you wonder at this show;

"but wonder on, until truth makes all things plain.

"This man is Pyramus, if you would like to know;

"this beauteous lady Thisby is not plain.

"This man, with limestone and cement, doth present

"Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;

"and through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content

"to whisper. At this let no man wonder.

"This man, with lantern, dog, and bushel of thorn,

"presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,

"by Moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

"to meet at Ninus' tomb, where their love would grow.

"This grisly beast, whom Lion we do call,

"did scare away, or rather did affright;

"the trusty Thisby, coming first by night,

"and, as she fled, her mantle she let fall,

"which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.

"Then comes Pyramus, a sweet youth and tall,

"and finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:

"Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,

"he bravely broached his boiling bloody breast;

“and Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
“his dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
“let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
“at large discourse, while here they do remain.”

Theseus was amused by the bad poetry, and by Quince’s belief that the audience needed to be told the well-known plot of the play in advance.

In a good mood brought about by a wedding that was making him happy and by a bad play that was making him laugh, Theseus said, “I wonder if the lion will speak.”

Demetrius joked, “It will be no surprise if it does, my lord. One lion may speak, when many asses do.”

Once Quince, Thisby, Lion, and Moonshine had exited the stage, Wall said, “In this same interlude it doth befall

“that I, one Snout by name, present a Wall;
“and such a Wall, as I would have you all think,
“that had in it a crannied hole or chink,
“through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
“did whisper often very secretly.

“This clay, this cement, and this stone do show
“that I am that same Wall; the truth is so:
“and this the cranny is, right and sinister,
“through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.”

Theseus joked, “Would you desire cement, plaster, and stone to speak better?”

Demetrius replied, “It is the wittiest partition that ever I

heard speak, my lord.”

Bottom, playing Pyramus, strode onstage.

“Pyramus draws near the wall,” Theseus said. “Silence!”

Pyramus recited, “Oh, grim-looking night! Oh, night with hue so black!

“Oh, night, which ever art when day is not!

“Oh, night! Oh, night! Alack, alack, alack,

“I fear my Thisby’s promise is forgot!

“And thou, oh, Wall! Oh, sweet, oh, lovely Wall,

“That stands between her father’s ground and mine!

“Thou, Wall! Oh, Wall! Oh, sweet and lovely Wall,

“show me thy chink, to blink through with my eyne!”

Wall held up his fingers in an OK sign.

Pyramus continued, “Thanks, courteous Wall! Jove shield thee well for this!

“But what see I? No Thisby do I see.

“Oh, wicked Wall, through whom I see no bliss!

“Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!”

Theseus joked, “The Wall, I think, since it can talk, should curse Pyramus.”

Theseus had spoken too loudly.

Bottom overheard Theseus, and breaking character as well as taking an enormous liberty, he said to him, “No, in truth, sir, he should not. ‘Deceiving me’ is Thisby’s cue: She is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the Wall. You shall see; it will happen exactly as I have told you.”

Theseus nodded and then laughed at Bottom's thinking that he needed to be told the story of Pyramus and Thisby. He also ignored the great liberty that a craftsman had taken in speaking to him, the ruler of Athens, without being spoken to first.

Bottom then said as Thisby walked onstage, "Yonder she comes."

Flute, who was playing Thisby, had remembered Bottom's earlier advice and had adjusted his two stones before coming onstage.

Thisby recited, "Oh, Wall, very often hast you heard my moans,

"for parting my fair Pyramus and me!

"My cherry lips have often kissed your stones,

"your stones with cement and hair knit up in thee."

The males in the audience especially laughed at Thisby's lines.

Helena understood the meaning of what was said a little later than the others, and she thought in shock, *Oh!*

Pyramus said, "I see a voice: now will I to the chink,

"to spy if I can hear my Thisby's face. Thisby!"

Thisby replied, "My love thou art, my love, I think."

Pyramus replied, "Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;

"and, like Limander, am I trusty still."

Theseus thought, *The mistakes multiply. 'Thy lover's grace' means 'thy gracious lover.'* Also, *Pyramus means Leander, the lover of the woman named Hero, a priestess*

of Venus. Leander swam across the Hellespont each night to visit her. She lit a lamp each night to guide his way across the narrow sea. One night, the winds blew out Hero's light, and Leander drowned. When Hero saw her lover's dead body, she committed suicide.

Thisby replied, "And I am faithful like Helen, until the Fates me kill."

Theseus thought, *Thisby means 'Hero,' I hope. Helen of Troy will run away with Paris — she will be unfaithful to her husband, Menelaus. Of course, the Trojan War has not yet occurred, but I and many others in Athens have studied prophecies.*

Pyramus recited, "Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true."

Theseus thought, *He means Cephalus and Procris, two ancient lovers whose love ended tragically.*

Thisby replied, "As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you."

Theseus thought, *Cephalus ended up killing Procris, albeit accidentally. It's also odd that Thisby would say this sentence because Cephalus was the man and Procris was the woman.*

Pyramus said, "Oh, kiss me through the hole of this vile Wall!"

They kissed — or attempted to.

Thisby said, "I kiss the Wall's hole, not your lips at all."

The males in the audience who had laughed at Thisby's kissing the Wall's stones laughed again.

Pyramus said, "Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?"

Thisby replied, "Come life, or come death, I come without

delay.”

Pyramus and Thisby exited.

Wall said, “Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;

“and, being done, thus Wall away doth go.”

Wall exited.

“The lovers should have waited,” Theseus said. “The Wall that separated them is now down.”

“Waiting would not have helped,” Demetrius said. “The Wall would have stayed around to eavesdrop.”

“This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard,” Hippolyta said.

“Even the best plays and actors are but shadows,” Theseus said, “and the worst plays and actors are no worse than shadows, if we use our imaginations to improve them.”

“It must be your imagination that does the improving,” Hippolyta said. “The imaginations of this playwright and these actors have done little to make a good play.”

“If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men,” Theseus said.

Meanwhile, Moonshine and Lion had come onstage. Moonshine carried a lantern and a bushel of thorns, and he led a dog by a leash.

Theseus said, “Here come two noble beasts in: a man and a lion.”

Lion recited, “You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear

“the smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,

“may now perchance both quake and tremble here,

“when Lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.

“Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
“a Lion fierce, and not any Lion’s Mam;
“for, if I should as Lion come in strife
“into this place, at risk would be my life.”

Theseus said, “I think the actor playing the Lion has mixed up his words. I think he meant to tell us that he is not a lion; instead, he has told us that he is not the mother of a lion. Still, this Lion is a very polite beast, and he acts morally and with a good conscience.”

“This is the most moral Lion that I have ever seen, my lord,” Demetrius said.

“This Lion is a very fox when it comes to courage,” Lysander said. “He is more sly than he is brave.”

“Yes, he is,” Theseus said, “and he is as discreet as a goose. He is more foolish than he is discreet.”

“I disagree, my lord,” Demetrius said. “His courage cannot carry away his discretion, and we all know that the fox carries away the goose.”

“I am sure that his discretion cannot carry away his courage,” Theseus said, “because we all know that the goose does not carry away the fox. But so be it. Let us leave the Lion to his discretion, and let us listen to the Moon.”

Moonshine, who had waited patiently for the nobles to stop talking, started to speak, “This lantern doth the horned Moon present —”

But the nobles were in a mood for making jokes, and they interrupted Moonshine. People who laugh often want to create more laughter.

“He should have worn the horns on his head,” Demetrius said. “Cuckolds have horns.”

“A horned Moon has crescents,” Theseus said, “but this Moon has no visible crescents. Therefore, his horns must be invisible inside the circle that is the Moon.”

Moonshine again attempted to say his lines:

“This lantern doth the horned Moon present;

“Myself the Man in the Moon do seem to be.”

Theseus interrupted again, “This is the greatest error of all — the man should be inside the lantern. How else could he be the Man in the Moon?”

“He dares not go in the lantern because of the candle,” Demetrius said. “The candle is ready to be snuffed out, and he does not want to be snuffed out with it.”

Hippolyta joked, “I am weary of this Moon — I wish he would change!”

“The Moon appears to have but little light and so is waning,” Theseus said, “but we should be courteous and reasonable, and wait and see.”

Moonshine waited patiently.

“Proceed, Moon,” Lysander said.

Moonshine abandoned his poetic lines and said in prose, “All that I have to say is to tell you that the lantern is the Moon, I am the Man in the Moon, this thorn bush is my thorn bush, and this dog is my dog.”

“Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the Moon,” Demetrius said. “But silence! Here comes Thisby.”

Thisby came on onstage and said, “This is old Ninny’s tomb. Where is my love?”

The Lion roared, and Thisby screamed and ran offstage, dropping her mantle as she exited.

The Lion then got stage fright and froze. Neither the Lion nor Moonshine did or said anything.

Theseus thought, *This is the other thing that I told Hippolyta that people do when they speak to me. Some put periods in the middle of sentences, as happened during the Prologue of this play. Other people get stage fright and freeze, as is happening now.*

Theseus remembered that he ought to be courteous, as he had promised Hippolyta that he would be. The nobles felt bad that their humorous comments were having this effect on the actors. Knowing that one good reason for the Lion to get stage fright was the humorous comments that they had made to the Man in the Moon, which the Lion had heard while waiting for his cue, Theseus wanted to put the Lion at ease and to make some amends to Moonshine and the other actors.

Theseus whispered to the other nobles, “Our jokes have given the Lion stage fright. Let’s say some things to encourage these actors.”

“Well roared, Lion,” Demetrius said loudly.

“Well run, Thisby,” Theseus said.

“Well shone, Moon,” Hippolyta said. “Truly, the Moon shines with a good grace.”

Heartened by the praise, the Lion, recovering from stage fright, picked up Thisby’s mantle in his mouth and shook it as if it were a mouse that a cat had caught.

“Well moused, Lion,” Theseus said as the Lion exited.

The nobles applauded.

Lysander whispered, “And so the Lion vanished.”

“And then came Pyramus,” Demetrius whispered.

Bottom came onstage as Pyramus and recited, “Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy Sunny beams;

“I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;

“for, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,

“I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

“But stay! Oh, spite!

“But mark, poor knight,

“what dreadful dole is here!

“Eyes, do you see?

“How can it be?

“Oh, dainty duck! Oh, dear!

“Thy mantle good,

“What, stained with blud!”

Bottom thought, *Good, I remembered to say “blud.”*
“Good” and “blood” are supposed to rhyme, but they can’t rhyme unless their ends sound alike.

Bottom continued, “Approach, ye Furies fell!

“Oh, Fates, come, come,

“Cut thread and thrum;

“Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!”

Theseus whispered, “Pyramus’ passion — and the death of a dear friend — would go a long way in making a man feel sad.”

Hippolyta joked, “Curse my heart, but I pity the man.”

Pyramus recited, “Oh, why, Nature, didst thou lions frame?

“Since lion vile hath here deflowered my dear —”

Backstage, Quince thought, *Devoured — not deflowered.*

Bottom continued, “— who is — no, no — who was the fairest dame

“who lived, who loved, who liked, who looked with cheer.

“Come, tears, confound;

“out, sword, and wound”

(Bottom made sure that “confound” and “wound” rhymed.)

“the pap of Pyramus —

“aye, that left pap,

“where heart doth hop.”

Pyramus stabbed himself, then said, “Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

“Now am I dead,

“now am I fled;

“my soul is in the sky.

“Tongue, lose thy light;

“Moon, take thy flight.”

No, no, no, Quince thought. Bottom should have said, “Tongue, take thy flight / Moon, lose thy light.” “Tongue,

take thy flight” means to be made silent by death.

Moonshine exited.

Pyramus waited until Moonshine’s exit was complete, and then he continued, “Now die, die, die, die, die.”

He died.

Demetrius whispered, “If Pyramus were throwing a die, he would throw an ace or a snake eye — one dot on top — because now he is alone.”

“He would have to throw less than an ace,” Lysander whispered, “because he is dead — he is nothing.”

“With the help of a surgeon, he might yet recover, and show himself to be an ass again,” Theseus whispered.

Hippolyta whispered, “Now that Moonshine is gone, how will Thisby see her lover when she comes back?”

Thisby had come onstage and was skipping around, not seeing Pyramus.

“She will find him by starlight,” Theseus whispered back, and then he added, “Here she comes, and her passion ends the play.”

Hippolyta whispered, “I think that Thisby’s passionate speech and death should not last long — not for this Pyramus, anyway.”

She also thought, *I already know that Thisby’s passion will end the play. To show off his knowledge, Theseus insists on telling me things I already know. How like a man!*

“It’s difficult to tell whether Pyramus or Thisby is the better actor,” Demetrius whispered. “Either way — Pyramus as an actor in male roles, or Thisby as an actor in female roles — God help us!”

“Look,” Lysander whispered, “Thisby has used her sweet eyes to see Pyramus.”

“And now we will hear Thisby start moaning,” Lysander whispered.

Thisby recited, “Asleep, my love?

“What, dead, my dove?

“Oh, Pyramus, arise!

“Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

“Dead, dead? A tomb

“must cover thy sweet eyes.

“These my lips,

“this cherry nose,

“these yellow cowslip cheeks,

“are gone, are gone!

“Lovers, make moan.

“His eyes were green as leeks.

“Oh, Sisters Three,

“goddesses of fate, you be,

“come, come to me,

“with hands as pale as milk.

“Lay them in gore,

“since you have shore

“with shears his thread of silk.

“Tongue, not a word.

“Come, trusty sword.

“Come, blade, my breast imbrue.”

Thisby stabbed herself.

She continued, “And, farewell, friends.

“Thus Thisby ends.

“*Adieu, adieu, adieu.*”

She died.

“Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead,” Theseus said.

“Yes, and Wall, too,” Demetrius added.

The nobles’ voices had gotten loud again.

Bottom heard the comments, came to life, and said, “No, I assure you; the Wall is down that separated their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?”

“No epilogue, please, for your play needs no excuse,” Theseus replied. “Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there needs none to be blamed. Indeed, if he who wrote it had played Pyramus and hanged himself using Thisby’s garter, it would have been a fine tragedy.”

Hearing that there would be no epilogue, Quince and the remaining actors came onstage to rejoin Bottom and Thisby.

Theseus’ jokes were funny, but cruel, and he stood for a moment and remembered that he had laughed hard during the play and that the play had done an excellent job of making the time pass quickly. Therefore, he added, “Your play is truly a fine tragedy, and all of you have *very*

notably discharged it.”

Theseus looked at Philostrate, and the look and his words were enough to communicate that these Athenian craftsmen would be rewarded monetarily for their intellectual and aesthetic labors.

Theseus then said, “No epilogue, please, but yes, most definitely we want to see your Bergomask dance.”

The craftsmen danced, and then exited.

Afterwards, the craftsmen received the news of their monetary reward and made plans to meet together after work the following day to celebrate. At home, Quince thought about the audience reaction to his tragedy and reflected, *If the audience laughs at what is meant to be a deadly serious tragedy, wise actors — and a disappointed playwright — should say that they meant to make a comedy, not a tragedy. But wait! I did write a comedy — the word “comedy” even appears in the title: “The Most Lamentable Comedy, and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby.” The word “tragedy” does not appear in the title at all. The audience’s laughter means that I am a successful writer of comedy, and all my friends are successful comedians. I can’t wait to tell them tomorrow night!*

During the Bergomask dance, Theseus reflected that the craftsmen had done too well their job of helping to pass the time. Before the craftsmen’s play, he had been eager for time to pass so that he could take Hippolyta to bed, but now — although he was still eager to take Hippolyta to bed — he discovered that everyone had stayed up past the time for the joys of bed to begin.

Theseus said, “The iron tongue of midnight has tolled twelve times on the clock. Lovers, all of us must go to bed — it is almost fairy time. I fear we shall sleep throughout

the coming morning as much as we this night have stayed up too late. This obviously bad — but very funny — play has well helped us pass the slow hours until bedtime. Sweet friends, let us go to bed. Throughout the next two weeks, we will celebrate with nightly revelry and with new joys.”

The humans exited.

Puck flew into the great chamber and said, “Now the hungry lion roars,

“and the wolf howls at the Moon,

“while the sleepy plowman snores,

“worn out by weary tasks too soon.

“Now the burned firebrands do glow,

“while the screech-owl, screeching loud,

“puts the wretch who lies in woe

“in remembrance of a shroud.

“Now it is the time of night

“when all the graves gape wide.

“Each one lets forth his sprite,

“in the churchway paths to glide.

“And we fairies, who do run

“by the Moon’s dragon-team

“from the presence of the Sun,

“following darkness like a dream,

“now are merry. Not a mouse

“shall disturb this blessed house.

“I am sent with broom before,
“to sweep the dust behind the door.”

As Puck spoke, he performed the job he traditionally did for good people: housework. (For lazy people, he made more work.)

Oberon and Titania flew into the great chamber with their attendant fairies.

Oberon said, “Through the house give gathering light,
“by the dead and drowsy fire.

“Every elf and fairy sprite
“hop as light as bird from brier;
“and this ditty, after me,
“sing, and dance it trippingly.”

Titania said, “First, rehearse your song by rote
“to each word a warbling note.
“Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
“will we sing, and bless this place.”

Oberon, Titania, and the other fairies sang and danced.

Oberon said, “Now, until the break of day,
“through this house each fairy stray.
“To the best bride-beds go we,
“which by us shall blessed be;
“and the babies there created
“ever shall be fortunate.

“So shall all the couples three
“ever true in loving be;
“and the blots of Nature’s hand
“shall not in their babies stand.
“No mole, hare lip, or scar,
“or mark monstrous, such as are
“despised in nativity,
“shall upon their children be.
“With this field-dew consecrated,
“every fairy take his gait;
“and each separate chamber bless,
“through this palace, with sweet peace,
“so that the owner of it blest
“ever shall in safety rest.
“Trip away; make no stay.
“Meet me all by break of day.”

Oberon, Titania, and the other fairies flew away, leaving only Puck. He knew that the bedsprings in various bedrooms were squeaking, and he wanted to have the last words in speaking:

“If we shadows have offended,
“think but this, and all is mended,
“that you have but slumbered here
“while these visions did appear.

“And this weak and idle theme
“has yielded nothing but a dream.
“Gentle people, do not reprehend.
“If you pardon, we will mend.
“And, as I am an honest Puck,
“if we have unearned luck
“now to escape the serpent’s tongue
“that hisses thespians who lack pluck,
“we will make amends ere long,
“else the Puck a liar call.
“So, good night unto you all.
“Give me your hands, if we be friends.
“Applaud us during our curtain call,
“and Robin shall make amends.”

AFTERWORD (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)

The major theme of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is love and the silly things it makes us do:

- Love can make us see a distinction where no real distinction exists. Lysander and Demetrius are virtually alike, and Hermia and Helena are very much alike.
- Love can make us desire someone who is totally unsuitable for us. For a while, the fairy Queen, Titania, loves the ass-headed Bottom.
- Love can make us blind to the loved one's faults.
- Love can make us jealous.
- Love (and jealousy) can make friends enemies.
- Love can make us quarrelsome.
- Love can make us fickle.
- We can fall in and out of love very quickly, and we can love, then not love, and then love again the same person.
- If we are rejected, love can make us have low self-esteem. Helena has very low self-esteem for much of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- Love can make us chase after someone who hates us.
- Love can make us attempt to use reason to explain love although love is a nonrational emotion. Lysander does this.
- Love is not irrational, although it can make people act in silly ways. Love is nonrational.
- If a tall woman steals your boyfriend, you may think that she was able to steal him because she is tall and you are

short.

- One of the best comments on the nonrationality of love is made by Bottom: “And yet, to say the truth, reason / and love keep little company together nowadays.”

Chapter IX: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Much Ado About Nothing*)

The Males

DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon.

DON JOHN, his bastard Brother.

CLAUDIO, a young Lord of Florence.

BENEDICK, a young Lord of Padua.

LEONATO, Governor of Messina.

ANTONIO, his Brother.

BALTHAZAR, Servant to Don Pedro.

BORACHIO, CONRADE, followers of Don John.

DOGBERRY, a Constable.

VERGES, a Headborough.

FRIAR FRANCIS.

A Sexton.

A Boy.

The Females

HERO, Daughter to Leonato.

BEATRICE, Niece to Leonato.

MARGARET, URSULA, Waiting-gentlewomen attending on Hero.

Others

Messengers, Watch, Attendants, etc.

Nota Bene

The title *Much Ado About Nothing* contains wordplay. A thing is what a man has between his legs. A woman has no thing between her legs, so the title can be interpreted as *Much Ado About Pussy*. Given that this play is a romantic comedy, that title is correct.

In addition, in Elizabethan England “nothing” and “noting” were pronounced the same way. In the play, a lot of noting occurs — people note what other people say and do. Frequently, they misinterpret what they note, and this leads to complications in the play.

CHAPTER 1 (Much Ado About Nothing)

— 1.1 —

Standing in the garden in front of the house of Leonato, the Governor of Messina, were Leonato himself, his daughter, whose name was Hero, and his niece, whose name was Beatrice. Also present was a messenger sent to Leonato by Don Pedro, the Prince of Aragon. The messenger had just given Leonato a letter about a battle fought between the forces of Don Pedro and his illegitimate half-brother, Don John. Don Pedro's soldiers had won the battle, and afterward, Don Pedro and Don John were reconciled.

"I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Aragon is coming tonight to Messina," Leonato said.

The messenger replied, "By this time, he is very near. When I left him, he was not nine miles away from Messina."

"He has just fought a battle," Leonato said. "How many gentlemen — men of the upper classes — did he lose in the battle?"

"Few of any rank," the messenger replied, "and none of any great importance."

"A victory is won twice when the victor brings home alive nearly all of his soldiers," Leonato said. "I read in this letter that Don Pedro has bestowed much honor on a young Florentine named Claudio."

"Claudio much deserved the honor, and Don Pedro has properly rewarded him for his actions in the battle. Claudio performed deeds in battle that no one would expect such a young man to do. Despite having the figure of a lamb, he performed the feats of a lion. Claudio indeed exceeded all

expectations of him so much that I cannot tell you all that he did.”

“Claudio has an uncle here in Messina who will be very happy to hear of his heroism.”

“I have already carried to Claudio’s uncle letters that made him very happy,” the messenger said. “The uncle felt so much joy that he broke out in emblems of what sometimes expresses bitterness.”

“Did he break out into tears?” Leonato asked.

“In great measure. He cried much.”

“That was a kind overflow of kindness as expressed by kindred. No faces are truer than those that are so washed by tears. How much better it is to weep at joy than to joy at weeping! It is much better to cry with happiness than to rejoice at someone’s unhappiness.”

Beatrice asked, “Please tell me whether Signior Mountanto has returned from the wars or not.”

Beatrice thought, *The messenger will not understand my joke, but Hero will. I am referring to Benedick. A montanto is an upward thrust in fencing — it starts low and goes upward — and a stallion mounts a mare. Benedick is a ladies’ man, and he and I have a history.*

The messenger replied, “I know none of that name, lady. No one of any rank in the army bears that name.”

“Who is he whom you are asking about, niece?” Leonato asked.

“My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua,” Hero replied for Beatrice.

“Oh,” the messenger said. “He has returned, and he is as pleasant and amusing as he ever was.”

“Benedick once set up public notices here in Messina to announce that he was challenging Cupid to an archery contest,” Beatrice said. “He claimed to be a better lady killer than Cupid. Cupid is blindfolded, but his golden arrows have a great impact when they hit someone — that person instantly falls in love. By claiming to be superior to Cupid in archery, Benedick was claiming that he would never fall in love — and that he would make more women fall in love than Cupid could.

“My uncle’s fool, reading Benedick’s challenge, responded on behalf of Cupid, and competed against him in the archery contest. My uncle’s jester used bird-bolts in the contest — blunt arrows used to stun birds. Bird-bolts are given to children and to fools. My uncle’s fool mocked Benedick.”

She added, “Please tell me how many soldiers has Benedick killed and eaten in these wars? Better, just tell me how many he has killed. Benedick is a braggart who boasts about his prowess in many kinds of hunting, and so I promised to eat all of his killing. I do not think that he is enough of a soldier to kill anyone.”

“Truly, niece,” Leonato said, “you criticize Benedick too much, but he will find a way to get even with you, I am sure. Benedick can give as good as he gets.”

“Benedick has done good service, lady, in these wars,” the messenger said.

“You had stale food, and Benedick has helped to eat it. He is a very hearty eater; he has an excellent stomach.”

“He has an excellent stomach for battle,” the messenger said. “He is a good soldier, too, lady.”

“He is a good soldier compared to a lady, but what is he compared to a lord?” Beatrice asked.

“He is a lord compared to a lord, and a man compared to a man. He is stuffed with all the honorable virtues,” the messenger replied.

“You speak truly, indeed,” Beatrice said. “Benedick is no less than a stuffed man — he is a dummy — but what is he stuffed with? He is full of — shh, I ought not to finish that sentence. We are all mortal.”

“You must not, sir, mistake my niece,” Leonato said to the messenger. “Signior Benedick and she wage a kind of merry war. They never meet without engaging in a skirmish of wit between them.”

“Benedick performs poorly in those skirmishes,” Beatrice said. “People have five wits: memory, fantasy, judgment, imagination, and common sense. In our last skirmish, four of his five wits went limping off, and now the whole man is governed by one wit. If he has enough wit to keep himself warm in cold weather, let him know that it is what differentiates him from his horse. Human beings are the only rational creatures, and Benedick’s one wit is what allows him to be known as a reasonable creature.”

She added, “Who is his male friend and companion now? He has every month a new sworn brother for life.”

“Is that possible? You must be exaggerating,” the messenger said.

“No, it is very possible,” Beatrice said. “He pledges his faith to each new friend just like he changes the fashion of the hat he wears. With each change in fashion, he wears a new hat.”

“I see, lady, that the gentleman is not in your good books — he is not in your favor,” the messenger said.

“No, he is not,” Beatrice replied. “If he were, I would burn

my library. But please tell me who is his new male friend? Is there no young hooligan now who will make a voyage with him to the devil?"

"He is most often in the company of the right noble Claudio."

"Benedick will hang upon Claudio like a disease. Benedick is more contagious than the plague, and the catcher of the Benedick illness becomes immediately insane. God help the noble Claudio! If he has caught the Benedick illness, it will cost him a thousand pounds before he can be cured."

The messenger thought, *This lady really is clever. The Benedictine priests are exorcists and attempt to cure madness. She made a good pun on "Benedick."*

"Lady, I will take pains to always be friends with you and so avoid becoming the victim of your tongue," the messenger said.

"Do so, good friend," Beatrice replied.

"You will never catch the Benedick disease and run insane, niece," Leonato said.

"No, not until there is a hot January in Italy," Beatrice replied.

The messenger heard a noise and looked around. He said, "Don Pedro is coming here now along with some other people."

Don Pedro and Don John, his illegitimate half-brother, with whom he had recently quarreled but then been reconciled, approached, along with Claudio, Benedick, and Balthasar, a singer and attendant who worked for Don Pedro.

Don Pedro said, "Good Signior Leonato, you are meeting your trouble. The fashion of the world is to avoid expense,

but by hosting us you are encountering it.”

“You are never a trouble to me,” Leonato said. “Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace. Trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow stays and happiness leaves.”

“You embrace the burden of my visit too eagerly,” Don Pedro said. He nodded at Hero and said, “I think this is your daughter.”

“Her mother has many times told me so,” Leonato said.

“Were you in doubt, sir, that you needed to ask her?” Benedick joked.

Leonato joked back, “Signior Benedick, no. I knew that I was the father of my daughter because when she was born you were only a child. If you had been an adult, I might have had my doubts.”

“Your joke has been answered, Benedick,” Don Pedro said. “All of us know that you are a ladies’ man. But truly the lady fathers herself. All we need to do is to look at Hero to know that Leonato is her father. Be happy, lady, because you resemble your honorable father.”

Don Pedro and Leonato then went aside and spoke privately.

Benedick joked, “Even if Signior Leonato is her father, she would not want to have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is. Signior Leonato is bearded and has grey hair.”

“I wonder that you are always talking, Signior Benedick,” Beatrice said. “No one is paying attention to you.”

“What, my dear Lady Disdain!” Benedick replied, “Are you still alive? I would have thought that you had died by

now.”

“It is impossible for Lady Disdain to die while she has such suitable food to feed it as Signior Benedick,” Beatrice replied. “Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come within her presence.”

“Then courtesy is a traitor,” Benedick said. “But it is certain that I am loved by all ladies, with the exception of only you, and I wish that I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart because, truly, I love no one of the opposite sex.”

“That is a precious piece of good fortune to women; otherwise, they would have been troubled with a pernicious and harmful suitor. I thank God and my cold blood that I am like you in loving no one of the opposite sex. In fact, I prefer to hear my dog bark at a crow than to hear a man swear that he loves me.”

“May God keep your ladyship always like that!” Benedick said. “That way, some gentleman or other shall escape an otherwise predestined scratched face. Anyone who marries you can expect to be scratched.”

“Scratching could not make the gentleman’s face worse, if it were a face such as yours.”

“You are an excellent parrot-teacher,” Benedick said. “You would do well at teaching a parrot because you say the same kind of things over and over.”

“My talking bird is better than your dumb beast,” Beatrice replied. “A bird can say something, but a beast cannot.”

“I wish that my horse had the speed of your tongue, and could gallop as long as you can talk. But keep on talking — I have finished talking.”

“I have known you a long time. You are like a jade — an

ill-conditioned horse. You always end with a jade's trick — you fade and cannot go the distance.”

Having finished their private conversation, Don Pedro said to Leonato, “That is all I have to say,” and they rejoined the others.

Don Pedro said, “Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato has invited both of you to stay with him. I told him that we shall stay here at least a month, and he heartily hopes that some occasion may detain us here longer. I dare to swear that he is no hypocrite, but speaks from his heart.”

“If you swear, my lord, you shall not commit perjury,” Leonato said.

He then said to Don John, “Let me bid you welcome, my lord. Now that you have been reconciled with the Prince your brother, I owe you all my allegiance.”

“I thank you,” Don John said. “I am not a man of many words, but I thank you.”

Leonato said to Don Pedro, “Will it please your grace to lead everyone into my house?”

“Let me have your hand, Leonato,” Don Pedro said. “We will go inside together.”

Everyone went inside except for Benedick and Claudio.

“Benedick, did you notice Hero, the daughter of Signior Leonato?”

“I saw her, but I did not take any special notice of her.”

“Is she not a modest young lady of good conduct?”

“Are you asking me, as an honest man should, for my real and simple and true judgment?” Benedick asked. “Or are

you asking for the answer that I, in my persona of a self-confessed enemy to and critic at every opportunity of the female sex, would give?”

“I am asking you for your real and simple and true judgment. Speak seriously and give me your true opinion.”

“Why, I think that she is too low — too short — for a high praise. I think that she is too brown and suntanned for a fair praise of her beauty. I think that she is too little — too small — for a great praise. I can give her only this praise: If she looked different from the way she looks, she would be ugly. Still, because she is a she, I do not like her.”

“You think that I am joking,” Claudio said. “Please tell me truly whether you like her.”

“You are asking a lot of questions about her. Are you thinking of buying her?”

“Can the world buy such a jewel?”

“Yes, and a case to put it into,” Benedick said. He smiled, knowing that a case could mean a jewel-box or a suit of clothing. It also meant a sheath, such as a sword fits into. The word “vagina” means sheath, and Benedick knew that if Claudio were to “buy” Hero by marrying her he would gain a sheath to put his “sword” into.

Benedick asked, “Are you asking me these questions seriously? Or are you being a flouting Jack — a scornful fellow — and trying to tell people that Cupid — who is blind — is good at finding hares and that the blacksmith god Vulcan is an excellent carpenter? Are you serious or satiric? I need to know what key you are in before I can sing in harmony with you.”

“In my eyes, Hero is the sweetest lady whom I have ever seen.”

“I can still see without spectacles, but I cannot see what you see,” Benedick replied. “I look at Hero and at Beatrice, who is possessed by an ancient Greek avenging spirit known as a Fury, and I see that Beatrice is more beautiful than Hero just like the first day of a spring May is more beautiful than the last day of a winter December. But I hope that you have no intention of becoming a husband. Are you thinking of marriage?”

“Even if I had sworn never to marry, I do not think that I would keep that promise if Hero were to agree to become my wife.”

“Has it come to this?” Benedick complained. “In all the world does not even one man exist who need not wear a cap out of suspicion that his wife has been unfaithful and made him sprout horns to provide evidence to the world that he is a cuckold? Shall I never see a 60-year-old bachelor again? But since you want to be married, go ahead and thrust your neck into a yoke and wear its imprint as you sigh on Sundays because you cannot get away from your wife and enjoy bachelor games.”

Benedick looked around and said, “Look, Don Pedro has returned to seek you.”

Don Pedro walked up to them and said, “What secret conversation have you been holding here that has kept you from joining us in Leonato’s house?”

“I wish that your grace would force me to tell you,” Benedick said.

“I order you — who have allegiance to me — to tell me.”

“You heard Don Pedro, Count Claudio,” Benedick said. “I can keep a secret as well as a man who cannot speak — I hope that you know that — but I have pledged my allegiance to Don Pedro and that outweighs other

considerations. So, Don Pedro, listen well. Claudio is in love. With whom? I am sure that is the next question you would ask me. The answer is short: He is in love with Hero, Leonato's short daughter."

"What Benedick says is correct — assuming it is true," Claudio said.

"This is like an old tale in which a statement is denied, and is denied again, and is finally revealed to be true," Benedick said.

"Unless I change the object of my love very quickly," Claudio said. "I hope that God will forbid me to love someone else."

"Amen, if you love Hero," Don Pedro said, "The lady is very well worthy and ought to be loved."

"You are trying to trick me into admitting that I love her," Claudio said.

"I am saying only what I truly believe," Don Pedro said.

"I also said only what I truly believe," Claudio said.

"By my dual loyalties to you, Don Pedro, and to you, Claudio, I also said only what I truly believe," Benedick said.

Finally, Claudio admitted the truth: "I feel that I love Hero."

Don Pedro replied, "I know that she is worthy of your love."

Benedick said, "In my opinion, I neither feel how Hero should be loved nor know that she is worthy of being loved. That is an opinion that fire cannot melt out of me. If I were to be burned at the stake like a heretic, I would die still holding this opinion."

“You were always an obstinate heretic when it comes to beauty,” Don Pedro said. “Courtly love is not a religion you follow.”

“You believe what you believe through stubborn determination,” Claudio said.

“That a woman conceived me, I thank her, and that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks,” Benedick said. “However, I intend to avoid having a cuckold’s horns on my forehead — I want to neither display them openly nor try to hide them. Therefore, women will have to pardon me for not wanting to be married. I will not do any women wrong by mistrusting them, but I will do myself right by not trusting any women. The fine for the life I chose is that I must live as a lifelong bachelor, but since I need not spend money to support a wife, I may spend more money on my clothing and so dress finer.”

“I shall see you, before I die, look pale with love,” Don Pedro said.

“I may look pale, but it will be with anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love,” Benedick said. “If I ever cease to be a red-blooded man and instead become a pale lover, then use a ballad-writer’s pen to put out my eyes and make me blind and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house in place of the sign showing blind Cupid.”

“Well, if you ever stop your belief in bachelorhood and get married, you will prove to be a notable subject of gossip,” Don Pedro said.

“If that ever happens, then hang me in a wicker basket like a cat and shoot arrows at me,” Benedick said. “Let whoever hits me be clapped on the shoulder, and called Adam after the famous archer Adam Bell.”

“Remember this old saying: ‘In time the savage bull will bear the yoke,’” Don Pedro said.

“The savage bull may bear the yoke of a farmer; but if ever the sensible Benedick bears the yoke of marriage, then pluck off the bull’s horns and set them in my forehead,” Benedick said. “The horns will show everyone that I have an unfaithful wife. And let a sign be hung around my neck, and in such large letters as they write ‘Here is a good horse for hire,’ let the words on my sign say ‘Here you may see Benedick the married man.’”

“If that should ever happen,” Claudio said, “you would become as mad as a charging bull — you would be horn-mad.”

“If Cupid has not already shot all the arrows in his quiver at the licentious ladies in Venice, he will shoot one at you soon and make you quake with love for a woman,” Don Pedro said.

“I look for an earthquake too, then,” Benedick said. “An earthquake is just as likely.”

“Your resolve not to be married will weaken and become more temperate as time goes on,” Don Pedro said. “In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, go to Leonato, give him my compliments, and tell him I will not fail to show up for supper; for indeed he has gone to great lengths to prepare a feast.”

“I have almost wit enough in me for such a courteous mission,” Benedick said. He then started to use the conclusion of an old-fashioned, conventional, fancy, formal letter: “And so I commit you —”

“To the safe-keeping of God,” Claudio continued the conclusion. “From my house, if I had one —”

Don Pedro finished the conclusion: “The sixth of July. Your loving friend, Benedick.”

“Mock me not, mock me not,” Benedick said, a little peeved that they had taken his joke and had teased him about his lack of courtesy toward women. “Quit fooling around. Your conversation is like a garment that is decorated with odds and ends of cloth, and your decorations are but lightly sewn on. Before you mock the conclusions of old letters — and mock me — examine your conscience. You will see that I am right, and so I leave you.”

He exited.

Now that Claudio was alone with Don Pedro, he spoke seriously to him: “My liege, your highness now may do me good.”

“My friendship for you is such that I am eager to learn how I may do you good,” Don Pedro said. “Even if the lesson will take effort, I am eager to learn it as long as it will help you.”

“Does Leonato have a son, my lord?” Claudio asked. Even though he loved Hero, he was practical and wanted to know if Leonato had a male heir who would inherit Leonato’s property. If Leonato had no male heir, more property would come to Hero.

“He has no child but Hero; she’s his only heir,” Don Pedro said. “Do you love her, Claudio?”

“My lord, when we went onward to fight this war that has just ended in victory for you, I looked upon Hero with the eyes of a soldier. I liked her, but I had a rougher task at hand — I needed to fight rebels, not to turn *like* into *love*. But now I have returned from war, and now that war-thoughts have departed from my mind, I have room for

love-thoughts of soft and delicate desires. These thoughts are all about how beautiful young Hero is and how I liked her before I went to war.”

“You will act like a lover soon and bore your hearers by reciting love poems to them,” Don Pedro said. “If you love fair Hero, enjoy your love-thoughts. I will speak first with her and then with her father, and I shall get her for you — you and she will be married. Isn’t this what you had in mind when you began to speak to me after Benedick left us?”

“You know what I wanted, and you could tell just by looking at me that I am in love,” Claudio said, “but I was worried that you might think that my love for Hero arose too suddenly. I was going to explain my love by telling you a long story.”

“The bridge does not need to be much wider than the river,” Don Pedro said. “You need say no more words than are necessary. In addition, the best gift is whatever is most needed. You want and need to marry Hero, and I will help make that happen. I know that we shall have some entertainment — a dance at which we will wear masks — tonight. I will disguise myself as you, and I will tell fair Hero that I am Claudio. I will tell her privately that I love her and want to marry her. She will agree — she will be taken prisoner because of the force and strong encounter of my amorous words. Then I will go to her father and get his permission for you to marry her. In short, and finally, she will be your wife. Let us put this plan into action immediately.”

They exited in order to get dressed for the masked dance.

— 1.2 —

Leonato and Antonio, his older brother, talked together in a room in Leonato’s house.

“Hi, brother,” Leonato said. “Where is my nephew, your son? Did he make the arrangements for the musicians for tonight’s dance?”

“He is working on it,” Antonio said, “But, brother, I can tell you strange news that you do not dream of.”

“Is it good news?”

“Time will tell, but the news appears to be good — very good. Don Pedro and Count Claudio, while walking in a path through thickly branched trees in my garden, were overheard by a servant of mine. Don Pedro revealed to Claudio that he loves my niece — Hero, your daughter — and meant to tell her tonight at the dance, and if he found her willing to marry him, he meant to seize the quickest opportunity to talk with you and get your permission to marry her.”

Leonato was cautious; all too often conversations are misheard or misinterpreted. He asked, “Is the fellow who told you this intelligent and reliable?”

“He is a good sharp fellow,” Antonio said. “I will send for him, and you can question him yourself.”

“No, that will not be necessary,” Leonato said, “but let us regard this as a daydream instead of reality until the marriage proposal has actually been made. Still, we should let Hero know about this so that she will be better prepared to answer if in fact she is asked to consent to marry. Go and tell her.”

Antonio exited.

Antonio’s son entered with musicians, and Leonato spoke to them:

“All of you know what you have to do.

“Pardon me, friend; come with me and help me.

“Good nephew, please work hard and with enthusiasm during this busy time.”

— 1.3 —

In a room in Leonato’s house, Don John, who was Don Pedro’s illegitimate brother and who had been defeated in battle and then forgiven by him, was speaking with his loyal attendant Conrade.

“My lord, why are you so excessively sad?”

“The things that cause my sadness are excessive and therefore my sadness is excessive,” Don John said. “I am illegitimate — a fact that limited how much I could inherit. I have recently been defeated. I have been forgiven — and not killed — by my victor, but he is keeping a close eye on me.”

“You should listen to reason.”

“And when I have heard it, what blessing will it bring to me?”

“If it will not bring you an immediate remedy for your sadness, then it can at least help you bear your suffering patiently.”

“You and I were both born under the astrological planet Saturn, and so both you and I are moody and melancholy and saturnine,” Don John said. “Therefore, I am surprised that you would attempt to cure my serious sadness with moralizing platitudes. I cannot hide what I am. I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man’s jests. I must eat when I am hungry and wait for no man’s permission. I must sleep when I am drowsy and be a servant to no man. I must laugh when I am merry and flatter no man. In short, I must do what I want to do when I want to do it without

regard for anybody else.”

“True,” Conrade said, “but you must not do all these things just yet. You need to restrain yourself until you can do these things without taking into account your brother, who now has power over you and is watching you. You have recently rebelled against your brother, and he has just now taken you newly into his grace and favor. To stay in his good graces, you need to behave yourself. Now is not the time for you to be your true self.”

“I would prefer to be a noxious weed in a hedge than a cultivated rose in a flower garden,” Don John said. “It better suits my mood to be heartily hated by all than to assume a fake behavior that will gain me unearned affection from anyone. I speak truly. Although I cannot be said to be a flattering, honest man, it must not be denied that I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted — as long as I wear a muzzle — and I am allowed my freedom — as long as I am hobbled with a heavy weight. My brother has forgiven me enough not to kill me, but he has placed restrictions on me. I have decided not to sing in my cage. If I had the freedom to use my mouth, I would bite. If I had my liberty, I would do whatever I liked. In the meantime, I want you to let me be what I truly am and seek not to change me.”

“Can you make any use of your discontent?”

“I use it all the time because I am always discontented,” Don John said, and then he looked up and added, “Who is coming toward us?”

Borachio, another of Don John’s loyal attendants, came toward them.

Recognizing him, Don John said, “Do you have any news, Borachio?”

“I have come from a great supper yonder. Leonato is royally entertaining Don Pedro, your brother. I can give you news of an intended marriage.”

“Is there anyway that I can use this information to create trouble?” Don John asked. “Only a fool would get married and so make his life unquiet. Who is this fool?”

“He is your brother’s right hand.”

Speaking with hatred, Don John said, “Who? The most exquisite Claudio?”

“Yes.”

Again speaking with hatred, Don John said, “He is a handsome fellow! And to whom does he wish to be married? Which way does he look to find a wife?”

“His look has fallen on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.”

“She is a very precocious March-chick! This chick is very young. How did you come to learn this?”

“I was being employed as a perfumer,” Borachio said. “To sweeten the air, I was burning sweet-smelling herbs in a musty room when Don Pedro and Claudio came in and talked seriously. I hid behind a wall hanging, and I heard that Don Pedro would woo Hero so that Hero and Claudio could wed.”

“Let us go now,” Don John said. “That may prove to be food for me and my discontent. That young upstart mightily helped defeat me in battle and so won much glory. If I can cross him in any way, I will bless myself in every way. Are you both loyal to me and will you both assist me?”

“To the death, my lord,” Conrade said.

“Let us go to the great feast,” Don John said. “Their

happiness is all the greater because I have been defeated. I wish that the cook were of my mind and would poison all of them! Shall we go and find out what we need to do for me to get revenge on Claudio?"

"Lead the way, sir," Borachio said. "We will follow you."

CHAPTER 2 (*Much Ado About Nothing*)

— 2.1 —

In the ballroom of Leonato's house, Leonato, Antonio, Hero, and Beatrice talked. Other people were also present.

"Was Don John at the feast?" Leonato asked.

"I did not see him there," Antonio replied.

"How sour that gentleman looks!" Beatrice said. "Each time I see him I am heartburned for an hour afterward."

Hero said, "Don John is of a very melancholy and ill-tempered disposition."

"An excellent man would be he who was made halfway between Don John and Benedick," Beatrice said. "Don John is too much like a portrait and says nothing, and Benedick is too much like the eldest son of a lady; he is spoiled rotten and always chattering due to his expectation of a rich inheritance. The eldest son always inherits the bulk of the estate."

"In that case," Leonato said, "half of Signior Benedick's speech would be in Don John's mouth, and half of Don John's melancholy would appear in Signior Benedick's face —"

"With a good leg for appearance's sake and with a good foot for dancing, uncle, or with two of each," Beatrice said, "and with enough money in his wallet, such a man would win any woman in the world, if he could get her good will."

She thought, *The French use "foutre" to refer to sex, and slang uses "money" to refer to semen. In addition, "will" is used in this culture to refer to "sexual passion." If a handsome man were capable of giving good foutre to a*

woman and had enough semen in his scrotum, such a man could win any woman in the world, if he could arouse her sexual passion.

“Truly, niece,” Leonato said, “you will never get yourself a husband because you are so shrewish with your tongue.”

“Truly,” Antonio said, “she is too curst — too ill-tempered.”

“Too curst is more than merely curst,” Beatrice said. “I shall lessen God’s sending of gifts by being too curst. It is said, ‘God sends a curst cow short horns,’ but to a cow too curst he sends no horns. God punishes a curst woman by sending her a husband with a short penis.”

“Therefore,” Leonato said, “because you are too curst, God will send you no horn.”

“No horn means no husband because a husband is capable of being horny and producing a horn,” Beatrice said. “I am blessed and thank God every morning and evening on my knees because I have no husband. I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face. I had rather lie in bed between woolen blankets. Both beards and woolen blankets are scratchy.”

“Perhaps you can find a husband who has no beard,” Leonato said. He thought, *Benedick has a beard, and Beatrice is unlikely to ever marry him.*

“What should I do with a husband who has no beard?” Beatrice replied. “Dress him in my woman’s clothing and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He who has a beard is more than a youth, and he who has no beard is less than a man. He who is more than a youth is not for me, and he who is less than a man, I am not for him. Therefore, I will take pay from an animal trainer and lead his apes to Hell, as is supposed to be the punishment for a woman who dies

unwed and without bearing the children whom she ought to lead to Heaven.”

“Well, then,” Leonato said, “will you go into Hell?”

“No, not into Hell, but to the gate of Hell,” Beatrice said. “The devil will meet me there, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say, ‘Go to Heaven, Beatrice, go to Heaven. This is no place for you maidens.’ So I will hand over my apes to the devil and go away to Saint Peter to be admitted into Heaven. Saint Peter will show me where the unmarried people sit, and there we will live as merrily as the day is long.”

Antonio said to Hero, “Well, niece, I trust that you will listen to your father when it comes time to make the important decision about marriage.”

Beatrice replied, “Yes, indeed; it is my cousin’s duty to make a curtsy and say, ‘Father, I will do whatever you wish.’ But cousin, let your father choose for you a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy and say, ‘Father, I will do whatever I wish.’”

“Beatrice,” Leonato said, “I hope to see you one day married to a husband.”

“That will not happen until God makes men of some other material than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to have to obey a piece of valiant dust? Or to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward, crumbly dirt? No, uncle, I want nothing to do with marriage. Adam and Eve’s descendants populate the world; Adam’s sons are my brethren, and I believe that it is a sin to commit incest.”

Leonato said to Hero, “Daughter, remember what I told you. If Don Pedro asks you to marry him, you know what to say.”

“The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you are not wooed in good time,” Beatrice said. “He must woo you properly — at the appropriate time and in the proper rhythm. If Don Pedro is too importunate, tell him that measure, proportion, and rhythm are desired in everything, and so dance out the answer. For — listen to me, Hero — wooing, wedding, and repenting are like a Scotch jig, a slow and stately dance measure, and a cinquepace. The wooing of a woman is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and quite fantastic. The wedding is like a slow and stately dance measure, full of state and tradition, and modest in manner and moderate in tempo. Then comes repentance, and the husband with his legs gone bad due to old age dances the cinquepace faster and faster as the time remaining to him passes faster and faster until he sinks apace — quickly — into his grave.”

“Beatrice, you are very perceptive — your understanding is very sharp,” Leonato said.

“I have a good eye, uncle,” Beatrice said. “I can see a church by daylight — I can see what is obvious.”

“The revelers are entering, Antonio,” Leonato said. “Let’s move aside and make room for them to dance.”

Leonato, Antonio, Hero, and Beatrice all put on their masks as the masked revelers — Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, the singer Balthasar, Borachio, Margaret (a gentlewoman who served Hero and who loved Borachio), Ursula (another gentlewoman who served Hero), and others arrived. Each mask was elegant and did a good job of hiding the wearer’s face.

Don Pedro asked Hero, “Lady, will you dance with me — a man who loves you?”

“Yes,” Hero replied. “As long as you dance gently — without stepping on my toes — and look handsome and say

nothing, I am yours for as long as we dance around the room and especially when I walk away in the steps of this formal dance.”

“When you walk away after the dance, will you ask me to accompany you?” Don Pedro asked.

“I may very well do so, if it pleases me to do so.”

“And when would it please you to ask me to accompany you?”

“When I know that I like your face,” Hero said. “A lute is a beautiful instrument, but it is often hidden by the ugly case it is kept in. I would hate for your face to be as ugly as the mask that covers it.”

“My mask is like the humble thatched cottage roof that kept the rain off humble Philemon, whose character was made of gold. When the god Jupiter traveled the earth in disguise to test the hospitality of the people he met, Philemon and his wife, Baucis, gave the disguised god the best hospitality that they were capable of giving.”

“If what you say is true, then your mask should be thatched with hair,” Hero replied.

“Speak quietly, and let us speak about love,” Don Pedro said.

They danced.

In another part of the ballroom, Balthasar said to Margaret, “Well, I wish that you would like me.”

“For your sake, I do not wish that,” Margaret said. She loved Borachio, but she also loved to tease other men. “I have many bad qualities.”

“Name one.”

“I say my prayers out loud.”

“I love you all the more because of it. Those who hear your prayers can cry, ‘Amen!’”

“I hope that God matches me with a good dancer!”

“Amen!”

“And I hope that God keeps him out of my sight when the dance is done. Answer me the way the congregation answers a good preacher. Say ‘Amen!’”

“No more words. I have finished,” Balthasar said.

They danced.

In another part of the ballroom, Ursula, who had recognized the masked Antonio, said to him, “I know who you are; you are Signior Antonio.”

Antonio denied it: “No, I am not Antonio.”

“I know that you are Antonio by the way you move your head. Due to your old age, it trembles.”

“No,” Antonio said, like many people at masked dances who deny that they are who they are. “I am imitating Antonio.”

“You could never imitate him so well, including his old age, unless you were Antonio,” Ursula said. “Antonio is an old man, and you are exactly like an old man from top to bottom. Your hands are his hands. You are Antonio, and Antonio is you.”

“I am not Antonio,” Antonio said.

“Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent sense of humor? Can such an excellent quality hide itself? Stop denying it. Your good qualities have

revealed that you are Antonio, and there is nothing more to be said about it.”

In another part of the ballroom, Beatrice talked with Benedick, who had earlier recognized her by her voice.

Beatrice asked, “Won’t you tell me who told you what you just said to me?”

Still disguising his voice, Benedick replied, “Please pardon me, but no.”

“And you won’t tell me who you are?”

“Not now,” Benedick replied.

“Someone told you that I was disdainful, and that I stole my witty comments out of an old joke book titled *A Hundred Merry Tales*. Well, I know who told you that — it was Signior Benedick who said so.”

“Who is Signior Benedick?” Signior Benedick asked Beatrice.

“I am sure you know him well enough.”

“No, I don’t — believe me.”

“Hasn’t he ever made you laugh?”

“Please, who is he?”

“He is Don Pedro’s jester. He is a very dull and stupid fool. His only talent is inventing incredible slanders. No one but libertines who laugh at any joke delight in him, and they like him not because of his wit, but because of his villainies. He pleases some men by telling outrageous and villainous lies about other men, and then some men laugh at him and other men beat him. I am sure he is somewhere in this fleet of masked dancers. I wish that he had tried to board me with his wit — I know how to defend myself

against his wit with my wit.”

“When I become acquainted with the gentleman, I will tell him what you are saying,” Benedick said.

“Do so,” Beatrice said. “He will make a joke about me and scornfully compare me to something nasty. If no one hears him or laughs, then he will sink into melancholy, and not eat, thereby saving his host a partridge wing.”

She listened to the music that started a new dance and said, “We must follow the leaders of the dance.”

“In every good thing,” Benedick said.

“If the leaders try to lead us to any bad thing, I will leave the dance floor at the first opportunity I get.”

Benedick and Beatrice danced.

A little later, in another part of the ballroom, Don John and Borachio talked. Claudio was nearby, but out of hearing distance.

Don John said, “I have been watching my half-brother, Don Pedro. I know that he is wooing Hero for Claudio but anyone who did not already know that would think that he was wooing her for himself. I think I can cause some trouble now. Don Pedro has left the dance floor to talk to Hero’s father and tell him that Claudio wishes to marry Hero. Actually, everyone except for we two and this one masked man has left the dance floor. The musicians are taking a break, and almost everyone is getting refreshments.”

“I know who the masked man over there is,” Borachio said. “He is Claudio. I can tell by his posture and the way he carries himself.”

Don John and Borachio walked over to Claudio.

Eager to cause trouble, Don John asked, "Aren't you Signior Benedick?"

Often, people at masked dances lie to keep their identities hidden and have fun. Claudio did so now.

"You know who I am," Claudio said. "I am Signior Benedick."

"Signior Benedick, you are very close to my brother; he greatly respects you. Don Pedro is in love with Hero. Please, try to convince him not to marry her. Don Pedro is a Prince, and her birth is not equal to his birth. If you convince Don Pedro not to marry Hero, you will do a good deed."

"How do you know that Don Pedro loves Hero?" Claudio asked.

"I heard him swear his affection to her," Don Pedro lied.

"I did, too," Borachio said. "Don Pedro swore tonight that he would marry Hero."

"Come, let us get some refreshments," Don John said.

He and Borachio left, but Claudio remained behind and said to himself, "I pretended to be Benedick when I spoke, but *my* ears are the ears that have heard this bad news. I believe what I heard. I am certain that Don Pedro, who greatly outranks me and to whom I have sworn my allegiance, loves Hero and has wooed her for himself so that he can marry her. Friendship is enduring in everything except when it comes to love. Therefore, all hearts in love ought to use their own tongues and do their own wooing. Let every eye negotiate for itself and trust no agent to negotiate a wedding. Beauty is a witch that charms the eye and turns friendship into rivalry. Such things as this happen every hour of every day, and I ought not to have trusted

Don Pedro. Farewell, therefore, Hero! You shall be married to Don Pedro and not to me.”

Benedick, who had heard Don Pedro’s gossip, now entered the ballroom and, seeing the masked Claudio, asked him, “Are you Count Claudio?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Come, will you go with me?”

“Where?”

“We should seek a weeping willow — that symbol of unrequited love — because I have bad news for you. In what fashion will you wear your weeping-willow garland? Will you wear it about your neck, like a usurer’s gold chain? Or over your right shoulder and under your left arm, like a lieutenant’s scarf? You must wear it one way or another because Don Pedro has won your Hero. You may wish to continue to be his friend and grow rich from his bounty, or you may wish to challenge him to a duel.”

“I wish him joy of her,” Claudio said bitterly.

“You sound like an honorable seller of cattle — that is how they talk when selling a young castrated bull,” Benedick said. Even now, he was unable to stop making unappreciated jokes. “But seriously, did you think that Don Pedro would treat you like this?”

“Please, leave me and let me be alone,” Claudio said.

“Now you are acting like a blind man,” Benedick said. “You are striking out and hitting everything close to you. A boy stole your meat, but in your blindness you are hitting a post.”

“If you will not leave me, then I will leave you,” Claudio said.

He exited.

“Alas, poor hurt fowl!” Benedick said. “Now he will creep into a bush and use it as a hiding place.”

He paused and then added, “I am surprised that my Lady Beatrice should know me very well, and yet not know me when I was wearing a mask! She called me Don Pedro’s fool! Really! It may be that I am called that because I am merry. Perhaps, but I think that I am doing wrong to believe her when she said that. I am not so reputed; no one but Beatrice would call me Don Pedro’s fool. Beatrice has a base and bitter disposition that makes her believe that the entire world has the same opinion of me that she does. Well, I will be revenged on her as soon as I find an opportunity.”

Don Pedro now entered the room and asked Benedick, “Where is Claudio? Have you seen him?”

“Indeed, my lord, I have played the role of Lady Gossip. I found him here as melancholy as a lonely gamekeeper’s lonely lodge in a lonely warren. I told Claudio — and I think I told him the truth — that you had gotten the good will of this young lady and her agreement to marry, and so I offered to accompany Claudio on a visit to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland of weeping willow because he is forsaken by love, or to make him a rod because he deserves to be whipped.”

“To be whipped! What is he guilty of?” Don Pedro said, puzzled. He had done what he had said he would do and had courted Hero for Claudio and had gotten her good will and her father’s permission for Claudio to marry her. Now he wanted to share the good news with Claudio.

“He is guilty of the undeniable transgression of a schoolboy, who, being overjoyed with finding a bird’s nest, shows it to his companion, who steals it,” Benedick said.

“The schoolboy is guilty of nothing. Having trust in someone is a virtue, not a vice. The companion who stole the bird’s nest is the guilty one.”

“Nevertheless, it would have been appropriate for a rod to be made from a weeping willow, and for the garland to be made as well. Claudio could wear the garland himself, and use the rod to beat you because — as I understand it — you have stolen his bird’s nest.”

Understanding dawned on Don Pedro. Gossip is often wrong, and great men are often the subjects of gossip. He said, “My intention is only to teach the nestlings how to sing and then I will return them to their owner. Soon enough, people will be talking about Hero’s marriage to Claudio.”

“If what the nestlings say agrees with what you are saying, then I will know that you are telling the truth.”

Don Pedro could have been insulted by this comment, but he knew and liked Benedick, who had recently fought bravely in battle for him, and one of the things that Don Pedro knew and liked about Benedick was his willingness to say plainly what he was thinking. Right now, Benedick was thinking that Don Pedro really wanted Hero for himself. No matter. Soon the truth would be known.

Right now, Don Pedro changed the subject: “The Lady Beatrice has a quarrel with you. The gentleman who danced with her told her that she is much wronged by you. The gentleman said that you insulted her.”

“I am the masked gentleman who danced with her,” Benedick replied. “She did not recognize me. I told her that someone said to me that she was disdainful and that she stole her witty comments out of an old joke book titled *A Hundred Merry Tales*. Of course, Beatrice being Beatrice, she immediately concluded that the insulting gentleman

was me. Beatrice so abused me in words that even a block of wood would not endure it. An oak with only one green leaf on it would have revived and responded to her abuse. My mask seemed to come to life and answer her. She told me, not knowing that I was Benedick, that I was your jester. She told me that I was duller than a great thaw during which the roads are so muddy that no one can leave home and so is forced to remain at home and be bored. She kept firing jest upon jest with such incredible skill at me — whom she did not think to be me — that I felt that I was standing next to an archery target with a whole army shooting at it. Beatrice's words are daggers, and every word stabs. If her breath were as terrible as her insulting sentences, no one could live near her; she would infect the air from here to the North Star and the outer limits of the universe. I would not marry her even if she were endowed with all that Adam had before he sinned and was thrown out of the Garden of Eden. She would have forced Hercules to dress in women's clothing and turn the spit on which meat roasted and do other work in the kitchen — yes, and she would broken his club and made firewood out of it, too. But let us not talk about her — she is a well-dressed but infernal Ate — the goddess of delusion and folly. I wish to God that some scholar would exorcise whatever demon possesses her. It is certain that while she is alive here on Earth, a man may live as quietly in Hell as he could in a sanctuary, and it is certain that people sin on purpose because they prefer to go to Hell for the peace and quiet rather than stay on Earth with Beatrice. Indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow that woman.”

Don Pedro said to Benedick, “Look, here comes Beatrice now.”

Claudio, Beatrice, Hero, and Leonato walked over to Don Pedro and Benedick. Claudio was unhappy because he thought that Don Pedro and Hero were going to marry each

other.

Benedick said to Don Pedro, “Will your grace command me to perform any service at the end of the world? I will go on any errand now to the opposite side of the Earth that you can think of to send me on. I will fetch you a toothpick from the furthest part of Asia. I will find the Christian emperor Prester John and measure the size of his feet and bring you the measurement. I will bring you a hair from the beard of Kubla Khan. I will embark on any embassy to the Pygmies. I will do any or all of these things rather than exchange three words with this Harpy named Beatrice. Do you have any such far-traveling task that you want me to perform?”

“No,” Don Pedro said. “All I want is your friendship and company.”

“Sir, here before me is a dish I do not love,” Benedick said. “I cannot endure Lady Tongue.”

Benedick exited.

“Beatrice,” Don Pedro said, “you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.”

“Indeed, my lord, he once lent me his heart for a while,” Beatrice said, “and I gave him interest for it. I gave him my heart, and so he received a double heart: my heart, which I gave him, and his own heart, which he lent to me and then took back. In fact, he won my heart and took it from me by using loaded dice, and so you may truthfully say I have lost it.”

“You have put him down, lady. You have put him down with words.”

“I hope that he will not put me down on my back, my lord, lest I should thereafter give birth to fools,” Beatrice said,

then added, "I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek."

Don Pedro looked at Claudio and noticed that he did not look happy. Don Pedro said to him, "How are you, Claudio? Why do you look sad?"

"I am not sad, my lord."

"Are you sick?" Don Pedro asked.

"I am neither sad nor sick, my lord."

Beatrice said, "Claudio is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well. Instead, he is as civil as an orange, and we all know that oranges from Seville, Spain, are bitter. If orange is the color of jealousy, then Claudio is jealous."

"Beatrice, I think your description of Claudio is correct, but if he is jealous, I swear that he has no reason to be jealous," Don Pedro said.

He then said to Claudio, "As I promised you, I wooed Hero in your name, and I have won her for you. I have spoken with her father and have obtained his good will. He approves of the match, so name the day that you will marry Hero, and may God give you joy!"

Leonato said, "Claudio, take my daughter and marry her, and with her take my fortune. Don Pedro has set up the match of you and my daughter, and may God bless this wedding."

Claudio was so surprised that he could not speak.

Beatrice said, "Speak, Count Claudio. It is your cue."

"Complete silence most perfectly announces complete joy," Claudio said. "I would be only a little happy, if I could say how much I am happy. Hero, as you are mine, I am yours: I give myself to you, and this exchange makes me ecstatic."

Beatrice said, "Speak, Hero, or, if you cannot, stop his talking with a kiss, and do not let him speak."

Claudio and Hero kissed.

Don Pedro said to Beatrice, "Lady, you have a merry heart."

"Yes, I do, my lord," Beatrice said. "I thank it, poor fool that it is, because it keeps me upwind of and safe from trouble. Look, Hero is whispering in Claudio's ear that he is in her heart."

"You are correct, and you are now my relative," Claudio said.

"Why, so I am," Beatrice said. "I am now your in-law. With marriage come new relatives and alliances. To the wedding altar goes everyone in the world but I — men must think that I am unattractive and sunburnt like a peasant woman who has to work outside all day. I may as well sit in a corner and sigh for a husband!"

"Lady Beatrice, I can get you a husband," Don Pedro said.

"I would like to have a husband who is of your father's begetting. Does your grace have any brothers like you? Your father must have sired excellent husbands, if a maiden could find them."

"Will you have me, lady?" Don Pedro asked.

Unsure whether this was a real proposal — her birth was not equal to Don Pedro's birth — and unsure how to act if in fact it were a real proposal, Beatrice took refuge in a joke: "No, my lord, unless I might have another husband for working days. You are too fancy to be my husband except on Sundays. But please pardon me: I was born to speak all mirth and no matter. From me, you get jokes, not serious conversation."

“Your silence most offends me, and your merriness best becomes you because, no doubt, you were born in a merry hour,” Don Pedro said.

“On the day that I was born, my mother cried during labor,” Beatrice replied, “but a star danced in the sky, and I was born with a horoscope that indicated merriness. May God give all of you joy!”

Leonato said, “Beatrice, will you do those errands I told you about earlier?”

“Yes, uncle,” Beatrice said, understanding that he was a little embarrassed by the joking between Don Pedro and her and so wanted her to leave. She said politely to Don Pedro, “Please excuse me,” and left.

Don Pedro said, “She is a pleasant-spirited lady.”

“There is little of melancholy in her, my lord,” Leonato said. “Beatrice is never sad except when she sleeps, and she is not always sad then, for I have heard my daughter say that Beatrice has often dreamed of unhappiness and then woken herself up with laughing.”

“She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband,” Don Pedro said.

“No, not at all,” Leonato said. “She laughs at all who try to woo her and so they woo someone else.”

“She would be an excellent wife for Benedick,” Don Pedro said.

Surprised, Leonato replied, “My lord, if they were married, they would make each other insane within a week.”

Don Pedro asked Claudio, “On what day do you want to go to church and be married?”

“Tomorrow, my lord. Time travels slowly — like an old

man on crutches — until the love of Hero and me is properly recognized in a wedding ceremony.”

“That is too soon,” Leonato said. “Wait until Monday, my dear son, which is just a week away, and a time too brief, too, to properly plan a wedding.”

Don Pedro said to Claudio, “You are shaking your head with disappointment at having to wait so long, but I promise you that this upcoming week will not be boring. I will during this week undertake a new labor of Hercules. He did such things as bring the three-headed guard dog Cerberus out of Hell, but I plan to make Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice fall in love with each other. When I am finished, they will feel a mountain of love for each other. I want them to be married, and I believe that I can accomplish it, if you three will only give me such assistance as I shall ask you for.”

Leonato said, “My lord, I will do so even if it keeps me awake for ten nights in a row.”

“So will, I, my lord,” Claudio said.

“How about you, gentle Hero?” Don Pedro said.

“I will do anything that is respectable, my lord, to help Beatrice to get a good husband.”

“Benedick is not the worst candidate for a husband that I know,” Don Pedro said. “I can and do praise him. He is from a noble family, and he has proven that he is courageous in battle and has established that he has a good character. Hero, I will teach you how to influence your cousin so that she will fall in love with Benedick. In addition, I, with the help of Leonato and Claudio, will so work on Benedick that, despite his quick wit and his queasy stomach for marriage, he will fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid will be out of a job because we will

take his glory and his job and become the gods of love. I will tell you my plan.”

— 2.2 —

Meanwhile, Don John and Borachio talked and plotted together.

“The engagement has been made,” Don John said. “Count Claudio shall marry Hero, the daughter of Leonato.”

“The engagement has been made,” Borachio said, “but I can stop the wedding.”

“Anything that we can do to hurt Claudio will be like good medicine for me,” Don John said. “I hate him, and whatever will make him unhappy will make me happy. How can you stop this marriage?”

“I cannot stop it by using honest means,” Borachio said, “but I can stop it by using dishonest means. I can do this secretly so that no one will suspect me.”

“Tell me how, briefly.”

“I believe that I told you about a year ago that Margaret, one of Hero’s waiting gentlewomen, loves me.”

“Yes, I remember.”

“I can, at any indecent hour of the night, have her look out of Hero’s bedchamber window.”

“What life is in that, that would be the death of this marriage?”

“You yourself can mix the metaphorical poison that will kill the wedding,” Borachio said. “Go to Don Pedro, your brother, and tell him that he has wrongly and dishonorably behaved by arranging the marriage of the renowned Claudio — whom you will say that you greatly admire —

to Hero, who you will say is a contaminated whore.”

“He will not believe that Hero is a whore without some evidence,” Don John said. “Can we manufacture any evidence that will seem to show that?”

“We can manufacture enough evidence to deceive Don Pedro, torment and vex Claudio, ruin the reputation of Hero, and metaphorically kill Leonato. What more can you want?”

“I will do anything to hurt those people.”

“Here is what we can do,” Borachio said. “Find a good time to talk in private to Don Pedro and Claudio. Tell them that you know that Hero loves me. Pretend to be very concerned about both men because you have learned this. Pretend to be worried about Don Pedro, who will lose honor because he arranged the wedding of Claudio to a ‘whore,’ and pretend to be worried about Claudio, who will lose his good reputation if he marries this woman who is, you will say, only pretending to be a virgin. They will not believe this without evidence. Take them outside Hero’s bedroom window at a time we will set, and they will see me outside the bedroom window. They will also see ‘Hero’ — that is, Margaret — and me together. I will call her ‘Hero,’ since she and I sometimes pretend to be aristocrats — she sometimes calls me ‘Claudio.’ All of this will happen the night before the wedding. That will give me time to arrange a reason for Hero to sleep somewhere else that night. We will give them enough ‘evidence’ of Hero’s disloyalty to Claudio that they will conclude that the ‘evidence’ is proof of Hero’s disloyalty and whoredom. In that way, the wedding will be stopped.”

“This plan will result in much evil, and I support it with all my heart,” Don John said. “Be clever in carrying out this plot, and I will reward you with a thousand coins.”

“As long as you play your part in the plot well, I will do likewise,” Borachio said. “This plot will succeed.”

“I will go immediately and find out on what day they intend to be married,” Don John said.

— 2.3 —

Benedick stood alone in Leonato’s garden. He called, “Boy!”

A young servant entered the garden and said, “Yes, sir?”

“On the sill of my bedroom window lies a book. Bring it here to me in this garden.”

“I am here already, sir,” the boy said, meaning that he would be back so quickly that it would be as if he had never left — a boast that he would not live up to.

“I know you are,” Benedick said, “but I wish that you had left already, so that you could the more quickly return.”

The young servant left to carry out the errand, and Benedick said to himself, “I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he falls in love, will, after he has laughed at such shallow follies in others, become what he has laughed at by himself falling in love. Such a man is Claudio. I have known when he would listen to no music but the drum and the fife of military music, but now he prefers the tabor and pipe music that is played at home. I have known when Claudio would have walked ten miles on foot to see a specimen of excellent armor. Now he will lie awake for ten nights planning which fashion a tailor should follow when making a new jacket for him. Claudio used to speak plainly and to the purpose, like an honest man. Now he has become a collector of pretty-sounding words. The words he uses are a fantastic banquet with many strange dishes. Is it possible that I will

become so converted by falling in love and see things with eyes such as his? I cannot tell, but I think not. I will not swear to it, but love may possibly transform me into an oyster — the lowest form of animal life. But I will swear an oath that until love has made an oyster out of me, love will never make me such a fool as love has made Claudio.”

He paused and then said, “One woman is beautiful, yet I am well. Another woman is wise, yet I am well. Another woman is virtuous, yet I am well. Until all these graces can be found in one woman, I will not fall in love with one woman. The woman I fall in love with shall be rich — that is certain. She must be wise, or I want nothing to do with her. She must be virtuous, or I will not make a bid for her. She must be mild, or I will not let her come near me. She must be noble if I am to be an angel to her. She must be able to hold an intelligent conversation and to play music excellently, and her hair shall be of whatever color it pleased God to make it — it shall not be dyed or a wig.”

He heard a noise, looked up, and said, “Ha! Don Pedro and Monsieur Love! I am not in the mood to hear about a wedding. I will hide in the arbor.”

Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato entered the garden.

“So shall we hear Balthasar sing this song?” Don Pedro asked.

“Yes, my good lord,” Claudio replied. “How still the evening is, as if it were quiet on purpose to honor harmony!”

Don Pedro whispered, “Did you see where Benedick has hidden himself?”

“Yes,” Claudio whispered. “Once the song is over, we will give that hidden fox value for his money.”

Balthasar arrived with a small band of musicians.

“Balthasar, sing that song again,” Don Pedro said.

“My good lord, please do not tax so bad a voice to slander music any more than once.”

“It is evidence of excellency to pretend not to know one’s own perfection. Please, sing, and don’t make me woo you any more.”

“Because you talk of wooing, I will sing,” Balthasar said. “Many wooers woo a woman he thinks is not worthy, and yet he woos her and swears that he loves her.”

“Please, sing,” Don Pedro said. “If you want to continue to make sounds, do so with musical notes.”

“Note this before I sing my notes: Not a note of mine is worth the noting.”

Peeved, Don Pedro said, “Why, these are very crotchety words that he speaks: note, notes, noting, and nothing else — I hear nothing of the song I requested.”

Not wanting Prince Don Pedro to be upset, the musicians began to play.

Benedick, who was hiding, said to himself, “Now, divine music! Now is Don Pedro’s soul ravished! Isn’t it strange that lute strings made from the guts of sheep should draw souls out of the bodies of men and take them to a kind of paradise? Well, I prefer to listen to a hunting horn, when all is said and done.”

Balthasar sang this song:

“Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,

“Men were deceivers ever,

*“One foot in sea and one on shore,
“To one thing constant never:
“Then sigh not so, but let them go,
“And be you blithe and bonny,
“Converting all your sounds of woe
“Into ‘Hey nonny, nonny.’
“Sing no more ditties, sing no more,
“Of sad songs so dull and heavy;
“The fraud of men was ever so,
“Since summer first was leafy:
“Then sigh not so, but let them go,
“And be you blithe and bonny,
“Converting all your sounds of woe
“Into ‘Hey nonny, nonny.’”*

Don Pedro said, “Indeed, that is a good song.”

“And a bad singer, my lord,” Balthasar said.

“Ha, no, no — you sing well enough for a makeshift.”

Benedick disagreed with Don Pedro’s opinion of the song and its singer. He said to himself, “If a dog had howled like Balthasar, people would have hanged it. I hope to God that Balthasar’s bad voice is not a predictor of bad things to come. I would rather have heard the night-raven, predictor of ominous events, no matter whatever plague would follow its croaking.”

The song had reminded Benedick of his relationship with Beatrice. He had not been faithful to her.

“Listen, Balthasar,” Don Pedro said. “Please, get us some excellent music because tomorrow night we will have it played at the Lady Hero’s bedroom window.”

“I will get the best I can, my lord.”

“Do so. Farewell.”

Balthasar exited.

Don Pedro said, “Come here, Leonato. What was it you told me earlier — did you say that your niece Beatrice is in love with Signior Benedick?”

Claudio whispered, “Let us keep stalking our prey. Benedick is listening.”

Claudio said loudly, “I never thought that Beatrice would love any man.”

“Neither did I,” Leonato said. “It is especially to be wondered at that she should so love Signior Benedick, whom she has always seemed to hate in public.”

Benedick thought, *Is this possible? Is this the way the wind is blowing? Can Beatrice possibly love me?*

“Truly, my lord,” Leonato said. “I don’t know what to think about it, but I do know that she violently loves him. Her love for Benedick is past all understanding.”

“Do you think that she is faking her love?” Don Pedro said.

“That seems plausible,” Claudio said.

“Faking her love for Benedick?” Leonato said. “If so, never has anyone faked love as well as Beatrice.”

“What signs of love does she show?” Don Pedro asked.

Claudio whispered, “Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.”

“What signs, my lord?” Leonato said. “She cannot sleep and sits up at night — you heard my daughter tell you that.”

“She did say that, indeed,” Claudio said.

“How could she fall in love with Benedick?” Don Pedro said. “Your story of her falling in love amazes me. I would have thought that she would be invincible against all assaults of affection. I would have thought that she would never fall in love.”

“I thought the same thing, my lord,” Leonato said. “I especially thought that she would never fall in love with Benedick.”

Benedick thought, *I would think that this is a trick, but the white-bearded Leonato is saying that Beatrice loves me. He is a revered old man; surely such an old man would not play a knavish trick.*

Claudio whispered, “Benedick has been infected by our lie. Let’s keep up the trick.”

“Has Beatrice told Benedick that she loves him?” Don Pedro said.

“No,” Leonato replied, “and she swears she never will. This torments her.”

“You speak truly,” Claudio said. “Hero told you that. Hero said that Beatrice said, ‘Can I, who have so often treated Benedick with scorn, write to him that I love him?’”

Leonato said, “According to Hero, Beatrice says those words whenever she tries to write to Benedick. She is up twenty times a night, and she sits in her slip until she has covered a piece of paper with writing, my daughter says.”

“Now that you have mentioned a sheet of paper, I

remember something funny your daughter told us,” Claudio said.

Leonato said, “You mean when Hero saw a piece of paper that Beatrice had written on and saw that she had written ‘Benedick and Beatrice’ over and over on it until she had covered the paper.”

“Yes,” Claudio said.

“Oh, Beatrice tears her letters into a thousand pieces,” Leonato said, “and criticizes herself for being so immodest to write to someone who she knows would mock her. She says, ‘I predict what he would do by knowing what I would do. If he were to write to me that he loves me, I would mock him even though I love him.’”

“Then she falls down upon her knees,” Claudio said, “and weeps, sobs, beats her chest, tears her hair, prays, and curses. She says, ‘Oh, sweet Benedick! I love you! God give me patience!’”

“She does that, indeed,” Leonato said. “Hero said so. Beatrice is so overwrought with love that my daughter is sometimes afraid that Beatrice will do a desperate outrage to herself: This is the truth.”

“It would be good if Benedick were to learn of Beatrice’s love for him by some other means, if Beatrice will not herself tell him,” Don Pedro said.

“Why?” Claudio said. “Benedick would only make a sport of it and torment the poor lady.”

“If he would treat her that way, the world would be a better place if we hanged him,” Don Pedro said. “Beatrice is an excellent and sweet lady, and everyone knows that she is virtuous.”

Claudio said, “She is also intelligent.”

“In everything except for loving Benedick,” Don Pedro said.

“My lord, when intelligence and love combat in one body for supremacy, ten times out of eleven love will win. I am sorry for Beatrice. I am her uncle and her guardian, and I care for her.”

“I wish that Beatrice loved me so passionately,” Don Pedro said. “Despite the difference in our births and social ranks, I would make her my wife. Let us tell Benedick that Beatrice loves him, and let us hear what he will say.”

“Is that a good idea?” Leonato asked.

“Hero thinks that Beatrice will die,” Claudio said. “Beatrice said that she will die if Benedick does not love her. And she said that she would rather die than tell him that she loves him. And she said that she would rather die than stop her accustomed crossness toward him even if he woos her.”

“Beatrice may well be right,” Don Pedro said. “If she tells Benedick that she loves him, it is very probable that he will scorn and mock her love. As we all know, Benedick can be contemptuous.”

“He is a very handsome man,” Claudio said.

“He has indeed a fortunate appearance,” Don Pedro said.

“Yes,” Claudio said, “and I think that he is very intelligent.”

“He does indeed show some sparks that are both witty and sensible,” Don Pedro said.

“I know that he is courageous,” Claudio said.

“He is as brave as Hector, leader of the Trojan army,” Don Pedro said. “He shows wisdom in the managing of quarrels. He either avoids them with great discretion, or he

undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear that makes him want to do the right thing.”

“If he fears God,” Leonato said, “he must necessarily keep the peace: If he breaks the peace and enters into a quarrel, he ought to do so only with Christian fear and trembling and a desire to act ethically.”

“So he does,” Don Pedro said. “In reality, Benedick fears his God. Fearing God is a good thing because it keeps us from doing sin. However, when Benedick makes some of his most notable and critical jests, he does not seem to fear God. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him that Beatrice loves him?”

“Let us never tell him, my lord,” Claudio said. “Let her get over her love with the help of good counsel.”

“No, that is impossible,” Leonato said. “Her heart will break first.”

“We will hear more from Hero,” Don Pedro said. “For now, let us not tell Benedick. I respect Benedick, and I wish that he would look at and evaluate himself — he would see how much he is unworthy to have the love of so good a lady.”

“My lord, shall we go?” Leonato asked. “Dinner is ready.”

Claudio whispered, “If Benedick does not fall in love with Beatrice after hearing this, I will never again trust my innermost beliefs.”

Don Pedro whispered, “Let’s trick Beatrice the same way we tricked Benedick. We will spread the same net for her and trap her. Hero and her gentlewomen attendants will have to do that. We will have good entertainment when Benedick and Beatrice each think that the other is in love, when that is not true — yet. I really want to see them meet.

It will be a dumb show — a pantomime — because both will be too embarrassed to speak to each other. Also, their conversation together has consisted entirely of insulting one another, and they will no longer do that and so they will not speak to each other. Let us send Beatrice to call Benedick to dinner.”

Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato exited, leaving the hidden Benedick alone.

Benedick came out from his hiding place and said to himself, “This is no trick. They were talking seriously, and they learned from Hero that Beatrice loves me. They seem to pity the lady: It seems that her love for me is like a bow that has been fully bent — it is stretched to the limit. Beatrice loves me! I must return her love. I hear how I am censured and criticized. They say that I will be haughty if I learn that Beatrice loves me; they also say that she would rather die than show me any sign of affection. I never thought that I would marry. I must not seem haughty — happy are those people who hear about their faults and work to mend them. They say that Beatrice is beautiful; that is true — I can see that for myself. They say that Beatrice is virtuous; that is also true — I know of no evidence against it. They say that Beatrice is intelligent except for loving me. Her loving me may not be good evidence of her intelligence, but I swear that it will not be good evidence of any stupidity — I intend to be horribly in love with her. I may perhaps have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me; people will tease me because I have railed for so long against marriage, but don’t tastes change? A man may love certain foods in his youth that he cannot endure in his old age. Shall quips and sentences and written criticisms — paper bullets that come from the brain — keep a man from following his heart? No, the world must be populated with people. When I said that I would die a bachelor, I did not think that I would live to see

the day during which I would marry.

“Look, here comes Beatrice! By God, she is a beautiful woman! I see some signs of lovesickness in her.”

“Against my will, I have been sent to tell you to come in to dinner,” Beatrice said.

“Beautiful Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.”

“I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me. If telling you to come in and eat had been too painful to me, I would not have come.”

“You take pleasure then in delivering the message?”

“Yes, just as much pleasure as you can hold on the point of a knife — it is not even enough to choke a chattering crow.”

Beatrice paused, expecting a witty though insulting reply. Not getting one, she said, “You have no stomach, either for food or invective, Signior Benedick? Then fare you well.”

She exited.

“Ha!” Benedick said to himself. “She said, ‘Against my will, I have been sent to tell you to come in to dinner.’ What she said has a double meaning. ‘I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me.’ That means the same thing as ‘Any pains that I take for you are as easy as thanks.’ If I do not take pity on her and love her in return, then I am a villain. If I do not love her, then I am not a Christian. I will commission a miniature portrait of Beatrice to be made and set in a locket.”

CHAPTER 3 (Much Ado About Nothing)

— 3.1 —

After dinner, Hero and her two gentlewomen attendants, Margaret and Ursula, were walking in Leonato's garden.

Hero said, "Good Margaret, go to the parlor. There you will find my cousin Beatrice talking with Don Pedro and Claudio. Whisper in her ear and tell her that Ursula and I are walking in the garden and you overheard us gossiping about her. Beatrice will be curious about what we are saying about her. Tell her that she can eavesdrop on us if she sneaks into the latticework bower that is shaded by the intertwining, sun-ripened honeysuckle overhead. The honeysuckle grew because of the sun, but now like an ungrateful courtier it plots against its benefactor and keeps the sunshine from reaching the ground. Tell her that if she hides herself there, she can hear all that we say about her. That is what I want you to do. Do it well, and then leave the rest to us."

"I will make Beatrice come here and hide, I promise you, immediately," Margaret said before exiting.

Hero said, "Now, Ursula, when Beatrice does come, as we walk up and down here in this arbor, we will talk only about Benedick. Each time I mention him, praise him more than any man has merited. I will say to you that Benedick is madly in love with Beatrice. In this way, we can make one of Cupid's crafty arrows: It will be the kind that wounds — that is, makes someone fall in love — as a result of gossip that people hear."

Beatrice appeared and tried — unsuccessfully — to keep herself out of sight.

“Let’s begin,” Hero whispered. “I can see Beatrice now. She is like a bird that runs along the ground as she tries to get close enough to us to listen to what we say.”

Ursula whispered, “The best part of fishing is seeing the fish with its golden oars — the fins — cut through the silver stream and greedily devour the treacherous bait. Now we are fishing for Beatrice, who I can now see has hidden herself in this arbor. Don’t worry about me; I will do my part in our conversation.”

Hero whispered, “Let’s go near her. We want to be sure that Beatrice can hear the false sweet bait that we are casting toward her.”

Hero said loudly, “No, truly, Ursula, Beatrice is too disdainful and scornful. I know that her personality is as defiant and wild as the hawks on the rocky cliffs.”

“Are you sure that Benedick loves Beatrice so strongly?”

“So say Don Pedro and Claudio.”

“Did they tell you to tell Beatrice that Benedick loves her?”

“They wanted me to tell her,” Hero replied, “but I told them that if they wanted what was best for Benedick to advise him to wrestle with his love for Beatrice, and to never let her know about it.”

“Why did you do that?” Ursula asked. “Doesn’t Benedick deserve as good a bed as Beatrice lies on? Doesn’t he deserve as good a wife as Beatrice would be?”

“By the god of love, I know that Benedick deserves as much as may be given to a man, but Nature has never made a woman’s heart of prouder stuff than the heart of Beatrice. Disdain and scorn sparkle in her eyes, which undervalue what they look at, and she values her cutting wit much more than she values anything else — in comparison to her

wit, everything else seems weak and unworthy to her. She is not capable of feeling love or affection for anyone else; she loves only herself.”

“I think that you are right,” Ursula said. “It is best that Beatrice does not know that Benedick loves her — if she did, she would make fun of him.”

“That is true,” Hero said. “I have never yet seen a man — no matter how wise, how noble, how young, how handsomely featured — whom she would not totally misconstrue and say that his virtues are faults. She would spell the man’s name backwards the way that witches recite the Lord’s Prayer backwards. If he had a light complexion, she would swear that the gentleman should be her sister. If he had a dark skin, she would swear that Nature, while attempting to draw him, let some ink drip and made a foul and ugly blot. If he were tall, she would swear that a lance had an ugly head. If he were short, she would swear that a miniature portrait made from an agate had been very badly cut. If he were talkative, she would swear that he is a weathervane blown by all winds. If he were quiet, she would swear that he is a block of wood or stone that is moved by no wind. Thus she turns every man the wrong side out, and she never acknowledges the truth and virtue that a man of integrity and merit has deserved.”

“Such carping is not commendable,” Ursula said.

“Indeed not,” Hero said. “To be as odd and eccentric as Beatrice is cannot be commendable. But who dares to tell her that? If I were to speak to her and tell her that, she would mock me until I disintegrated into air and were reduced to nothing. Or she would laugh at me until my soul departed from my body. Or she would load me with her heavy wit until the weight crushed me. Therefore, let Benedick, like glowing coals that have been covered with ashes to preserve the fire during the night, consume himself

with sighs and waste away inwardly. That would be a better death than to be mocked to death, which is as bad as to die by being tickled to death.”

“Nevertheless, tell Beatrice that Benedick loves her, and hear what she will say,” Ursula said.

“No,” Hero replied. “Instead, I will go to Benedick and advise him to fight against his passion for Beatrice. Indeed, I will devise some honest slanders — some harmless lies — to stain Beatrice with. Perhaps some ill words will make Benedick stop loving Beatrice, although everyone knows that she is virtuous.”

“Do not do Beatrice such a wrong as to make up lies about her, even if they seem to be harmless,” Ursula said. “She cannot so entirely lack true judgment — not if she has so swift and excellent a wit as she is reputed to have — that she would refuse to marry so exceptional a gentleman as Signior Benedick.”

“He is the best man in Italy with the exception of my own dear Claudio,” Hero said.

“Please, do not be angry with me, madam, but I have to say that Signior Benedick is the best man in Italy when it comes to judging his attractiveness, bearing, intelligence, and courage.”

“Indeed, he has an excellent reputation,” Hero replied.

“His excellence earned his excellent reputation,” Ursula said, and then she asked, “When will you be married, madam?”

“Tomorrow, and every day afterward,” Hero replied. “Come, let us go inside. I will show you some of my clothing, and you can advise me what to wear at my wedding.”

Ursula whispered, “We have trapped Beatrice the way that hunters trap birds. We have caught her, madam.”

Hero whispered back, “If that is true, then love can happen by chance, as well as by other ways. Cupid makes some people lovers through the use of an arrow, and others through the use of a trap.”

Hero and Ursula exited.

Beatrice came out from her hiding place and said to herself, “My ears are burning. Can this be true? Do people really criticize me so much for being proud and scornful? In that case, I say farewell to contempt and *adieu* to maidenly pride. People do not say good things behind the back of a person who is proud and scornful. But, Benedick, continue to love me because I will return your love. I will tame my wild heart and return your love. If you really do love me, my kindness shall convince you to bind our loves in the holy bond of marriage. Other people say that you deserve my love, and I believe it on better evidence than the gossip I have overheard.”

— 3.2 —

In a room in Leonato’s house, Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, and Leonato were talking. Benedick had shaved off his beard. Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato expected Benedick to be in love with Beatrice as a result of their trick, and they were looking forward to teasing him.

Don Pedro said to Claudio, “I will stay only until your marriage is official, and then I will go to Aragon.”

“I will accompany you there, my lord, if you will allow me to,” Claudio said.

“No, not so soon after your marriage,” Don Pedro said. “You have pleasures to enjoy, and taking you away from

your marriage so soon would be like showing a child his new coat and forbidding him to wear it. I will be bold enough to have Benedick accompany me because I enjoy his company. From the top of his head to the bottom of his foot, he is all mirth and laughter. Two or three times Cupid attempted to shoot him with an arrow and make him fall in love, but Benedick cut the string of Cupid's bow and so Cupid no longer dares to shoot at him. Benedick has a heart as sound as a bell and his tongue is the clapper — whatever his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.”

“Gallants, I am not as I have been,” Benedick said. “I have changed.”

Leonato said, “I think that is true. You seem to be more serious now.”

“I hope that Benedick is in love,” Claudio said.

“That is not possible,” Don Pedro said. “Not one drop of his blood is capable of being truly touched with love. If Benedick is more serious now, he must be broke and need money.”

“I suffer from toothache,” Benedick said, but he thought, *It is more accurate to say that I suffer from lovesickness. I am saying that I have a toothache to explain why I am different from the way I usually am.*

“Draw it out,” Don Pedro advised. “Pull it out.”

Hearing the word “draw,” Benedick punned on “hanged, drawn, and quartered” by exclaiming, “Hang it!”

“You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards,” Claudio joked. He thought, *Drawing is disemboweling, and quartering is being cut into four pieces — being hanged, drawn, and quartered is the punishment given to traitors. Benedick has been a traitor to love by refusing to fall in*

love.

“Are you sad because of your toothache?” Don Pedro asked Benedick.

“The pain is caused by a little tooth decay,” Leonato said.

“No one feels the pain except the person who has it,” Benedick said. “People think that it is easy to solve someone else’s problems.”

Claudio said, “I think that Benedick is in love.”

“I do not see any sign of love in Benedick,” Don Pedro said, “except for his love of foreign fashions. He dresses like a Dutchman today, a Frenchman tomorrow, or in the dress of two countries at once. He can dress like a German from the waist downward and wear baggy pants while he dresses like a Spaniard from the hip upward and does not wear a jacket. Unless he has a love for this kind of fashion foolery, as he appears to have, he is no fool for love, as you say he is.”

“If Benedick is not in love with some woman, then we ought to no longer trust the signs that traditionally show that a man is in love,” Claudio said. “Benedick brushes his hat and cleans it each morning. What do you suppose that means?”

Don Pedro decided to tease Benedick, who he knew had recently shaved off his beard. He said, “Another sign of a man’s being in love is that he pays special attention to his appearance. Has anyone seen Benedick visit a barber?”

“No, but the barber’s assistant has visited Benedick,” Claudio said. “You can see that his beard has disappeared — the old ornament of his cheeks has been used to stuff old-fashioned, homemade tennis balls.”

Leonato said, “Indeed, Benedick looks younger than he did.

The loss of his beard has been a fountain of youth for him.”

“Not only that,” Don Pedro said, “but Benedick has been rubbing his body with cologne. Is it possible to tell anything about him by smelling him?”

“Yes, indeed,” Claudio said. “We can smell that sweet Benedick is in love.”

“The best evidence that Benedick is in love is his seriousness,” Don Pedro said. “Benedick used to always be a mirthful man.”

“And when has Benedick been known to take such care in washing his face?” Claudio said. “Now he uses a cosmetic lotion.”

“Yes, indeed,” Don Pedro said. “When has Benedick been known to use any kind of cosmetics? I know what people say about him because he does that.”

“Benedick’s jesting spirit has turned into a string for a lute, a musical instrument used for playing love songs,” Claudio said. “Strings are tuned with frets, and now Benedick frets. That is why he listens to melancholy music that is heavy on the soul.”

“All of the evidence points to one conclusion,” Don Pedro said. “Benedick is seriously in love.”

“I know who loves him,” Claudio said.

“I would like to know who she is,” Don Pedro said. “I’m guessing she does not know him well.”

“Yes, she does,” Claudio said. “She knows his faults, and yet she is dying of love for him. She would love to die in his arms.”

“If she dies in that position, she will be dying while lying flat on her back with her knees apart,” Don Pedro said.

In this culture, “to die” was slang for “to have an orgasm.”

“All of this talk is not curing my toothache,” Benedick said. “Leonato, will you take a walk with me? I need to tell you eight or nine wise and serious words that these buffoons must not hear.”

Benedick and Leonato exited.

“I swear on my life that Benedick is going to talk to Leonato about Beatrice,” Don Pedro said.

“I think you are right,” Claudio said. “Hero and Margaret have by this time played their trick on Beatrice, who has probably fallen in love with Benedick. When Benedick and Beatrice — two bears — meet, they will not bite one another as used to be their custom.”

Don John walked up to the two men and said to Don Pedro, “My lord and brother, God save you!”

“Good day, brother,” Don Pedro said.

“If you have time, I would like to speak with you.”

“In private?”

“If it pleases you,” Don John said, “yet Count Claudio may hear because what I want to speak about concerns him.”

“What’s the matter?” Don Pedro asked.

Don John said to Claudio, “Do you intend to get married tomorrow?”

Don Pedro said, “You know he does.”

“He may change his mind after he hears what I have to say and knows what I know.”

“If there is any reason why I should not be married, please tell me what it is,” Claudio said.

“You may think that I don’t like you,” Don John said. “Judge whether I do after you have heard what I have to say — I think that your opinion of me will be better than it is now. I believe that my brother greatly respects you, and because of his respect for you he has helped you to become engaged to Hero — but his effort to help you has failed and he has wasted his time and labor.”

“Why, what’s the matter?” Don Pedro asked.

“I came here to tell you what is the matter,” Don John said. “Briefly, and without unnecessary details, since the lady is not worthy of being long spoken about, Hero has been unfaithful to you.”

“Hero?” Claudio said.

“Yes,” Don John said. “Leonato’s Hero, your Hero, every man’s Hero.”

“Unfaithful?” Claudio said.

“The word is too good to point out all the extent of her wickedness,” Don John said. “I could say she has been worse than unfaithful. If you can think of a worse word, I can show you that the worse word also ought to be used to describe her. Restrain your disbelief and let me provide proof. Go with me tonight, and you shall see a man enter her bedroom window the night before her wedding day. If you still love her after seeing that, marry her tomorrow, but if you want to keep your honor, it would be better for you to remain single.”

“Can this be true?” Claudio asked.

“No,” Don Pedro said. “I don’t believe it.”

“If you dare not trust what you see with your own eyes, then do not say that you know anything. Go with me tonight, and I will show you both something that you can

see with your own eyes. You will see enough to change your minds. When you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.”

“If I see tonight any reason why I should not marry Hero tomorrow in the church,” Claudio said, “I will disgrace her in front of the congregation.”

“And since I helped you become engaged to her,” Don Pedro said, “I will join with you in disgracing her.”

“I will disparage Hero no farther until you are witnesses that she is unfaithful,” Don John said. “Bear this bad news calmly until midnight, and then believe what you see with your own eyes.”

“The happiness of this time has been perversely altered,” Don Pedro said.

“The happiness of this time has been unexpectedly ruined by evil,” Claudio said.

“It is better to say that a plague of evil has been happily prevented,” Don John said. “You will feel that way after you see what I have to show you tonight.”

— 3.3 —

On a public street, Dogberry, who was the city’s head constable, and Verges, an old man who was Dogberry’s assistant, were talking to some newly recruited night watchmen whose job it was to maintain the peace of the city. Dogberry and Verges were paid to do their jobs, while the new recruits were unpaid: Acting occasionally as night watchmen was part of their duty as citizens. Also present was this book’s author, who thought, *I am a magician, and I have turned myself invisible. I will take no part in the events of this book, except for one thing. Dogberry, Verges, and the other watchmen often make malapropisms — they*

humorously misuse words and often say the opposite of what they mean to say. I will use the magic of my right hand and of my left index finger (which mainly presses as needed the shift key) to sometimes make appear [in brackets] the right words after the wrong words that Dogberry, Verges, and the other watchmen use.

Dogberry asked the newly recruited watchmen, “Are you good men and true?”

“Yes, they are,” Verges replied for them. “If they were not good men and true, it would be a pity if they did not suffer salvation [damnation] of both their body and soul.”

“That would be a punishment too good for them,” Dogberry said, “if they should have any allegiance [alleged defiance or disloyalty] in them, since they have been chosen to be night watchmen of the Prince’s city.”

“Well, give them their orders, neighbor Dogberry,” Verges said. “Tell them their duties.”

“First, who do you think is the man most desertless [deserving] to be a constable?” Dogberry asked.

“Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacole, because they can write and read,” the first watchman said.

“Come here, neighbor Seacole. God has blessed you with a good reputation: To be a handsome man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature [nurture].”

The second watchman said, “Both which, master constable —”

“— you have,” Dogberry finished, adding, “I know what you were going to say; I knew this would be your answer. Well, give God thanks for your good looks and don’t boast about them. As for your writing and reading, use those when you have no need [have need] to use such vain

[worthy and useful] accomplishments. You are thought here to be the most senseless [sensible (he meant to say “sensible,” but “senseless” is accurate)] and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore, you shall carry the lantern. This is your duty: You shall comprehend [apprehend] all vagrom [vagrant] men; you are to order any such man to halt, in the Prince’s name.”

“What do we do if a man will not halt?” the second watchman asked.

“Why, then, take no note of him,” Dogberry said. “Ignore him and let him go, and immediately call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave.”

“If he will not halt when he is ordered to halt, he is not one of the Prince’s subjects,” Verges said.

“True, and we watchmen are to meddle with no one except the Prince’s subjects,” Dogberry said. “You shall also make no noise in the streets; for the watchmen to babble and to talk while on duty is most tolerable [intolerable] and not to be endured.”

“We will sleep instead of talk,” a watchman said. “We know what watchmen do.”

“Why, you speak like an experienced and very quiet watchman,” Dogberry said. “I cannot see how sleeping would offend anyone; however, take care that your weapons are not stolen. As watchmen, your weapons will be bills, aka pikes. Well, another duty is that you are to call at all the ale-houses, and tell those who are drunk to go home and sleep.”

“What do we do if they will not follow orders?”

“Why, then, let them alone until they are sober,” Dogberry said. “If when they are sober they still do not follow orders,

then you may say that they are not the drunk men you took them for.”

“OK, sir,” the watchman said.

“If you meet a thief, you may suspect by virtue of your office that he is no true man. The less you meddle with or interact with such men, the better it is for you because you will avoid becoming corrupted by contact with such evil men.”

“If we know that a man is a thief, shall we not lay hands on him and arrest him?” a watchman asked.

“Truly, by your office, you may,” Dogberry said, “but I think people who touch tar will be defiled; therefore, the most peaceable [peaceful] way for you to behave, if you do see a thief, is to let him show what he is and steal out of your presence.”

“You have been always called a merciful man, partner,” Verges said.

“Truly, I would not willingly hang a dog, much more [less] an even partially honest man.”

Verges said to the watchmen, “If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the child’s nurse and tell her to quiet the child.”

“What do we do if the nurse is asleep and does not hear us?” a watchman asked.

“Why, then, depart quietly,” Dogberry said, “and let the child wake the nurse with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baas will never answer a calf when he bleats [moos]. If the nurse does not hear her own child, she will certainly not hear you.”

“That is very true,” Verges said.

“You have one more duty,” Dogberry said. “You, constable, are to present [represent] the Prince’s own person. That makes you the boss. If you meet the Prince in the night, you may order him to stop.”

“No,” Verges said. “I don’t think he is allowed to do that.”

“I bet you five shillings to one that he can: Any man who has studied the statutes [statutes / laws] knows that he can order the Prince to halt. That is, of course, as long as the Prince is willing to halt. Indeed, the watchmen ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to order a man to halt against his will.”

“Yes,” Verges said. “That is right.”

“Ha! I am right!” Dogberry said. “Well, watchmen, good night. If anything important happens, call me. Keep your fellows’ secrets as well as you keep your own. Good night!”

He added to Verges, “Let’s go, neighbor.”

A watchman said to the other watchmen, “Well, watchmen, we know our duty: Let us sit here on the church bench until two o’clock, and then go home to bed.”

Dogberry remembered one more thing to tell the watchmen: “One word more, honest neighbors. Please keep watch around the house of Signior Leonato. Because of the wedding being held there tomorrow, a great deal of bustle is going on there tonight. *Adieu*. Be vigilant [vigilant], please.”

Dogberry and Verges exited.

Almost immediately, Borachio and Conrade appeared on the street. The watchmen, unnoticed by Borachio and Conrade, stayed in the shadows.

“Conrade!” Borachio said.

A watchman whispered, “Let’s be quiet and listen to these people who are out so late at night.”

“Conrade, I say!”

“Here I am, Borachio. I am standing by your elbow.”

“My elbow was itching. I thought I had a scab there.”

“Don’t call me a scab. I will get you back for calling me that. What do you want?”

“Stand here with me under this overhanging part of a roof because rain is drizzling. I will, like a true drunkard — for there is truth in wine — tell you all of a tale.”

A watchman whispered, “I suspect foul play. Let’s listen carefully.”

“Know that tonight I have earned from Don John a thousand coins,” Borachio said.

“You must have done something evil to get it, but is it possible that any villainy should cost so much?” Conrade said.

“You should ask instead if it is possible that any villain should be so rich,” Borachio said. “But when rich villains have need of poor villains, poor villains may ask for as much money as they wish.”

“Still, I wonder how you could make so much money.”

“You are showing that you are uninformed. You know, don’t you, that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.”

Borachio thought, *By that I mean that a man is not identical to his clothing. Dress an evil man in a preacher’s*

clothing and people will likely think that the evil man is a good man. Dress a woman in someone else's clothing and on a dark night other people may think that the imposter is the woman whom the imposter is impersonating.

“It is just clothing.”

“I mean, the fashion,” Borachio said.

“Yes, the fashion is the fashion.”

“I may as well say that the fool is the fool,” Borachio said. “But don’t you see what a deformed thief fashion is and how it robs young men of their money?”

A watchman whispered, “They are talking about a thief named De Formed. I have heard about him for the past seven years. He is fashionable and dresses like a gentleman. I remember his name well.”

“Did you hear somebody?” Borachio asked.

“The noise was caused by the movement of the weathervane on this house,” Conrade replied.

“As I was saying, do you see what a deforming thief fashion is? Fashion makes all the hot-blooded young men between age fourteen and thirty-five giddily change their clothes. Sometimes they wear the fashion of the Pharaoh’s soldiers in a grimy painting. Sometimes they wear the fashion of the god Bel’s priests in the old church-window — you remember that the King of Persia had these priests killed after Daniel denounced them because they worshipped a false god. Sometimes they wear the fashion of the shaven Hercules in the filthy, worm-eaten tapestry in which his codpiece seems as big as his club.”

“I see,” Conrade said. “I understand that a man can wear out clothing by wearing it and so make it unwearable, but that changing fashions render much more clothing

unwearable. Fashion makes young men giddy, but hasn't fashion made you giddy, too? You have been distracted by talk about fashion and so have not told me what you wanted to tell me."

"That is not true," Borachio said. "The point that I wanted to make about fashion is that a person is not identical to the clothing the person wears. Tonight, I wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman attendant. Margaret wore some of Hero's clothing, and I called her by the name 'Hero.' She leaned out of Hero's bedroom window as she bid me a thousand times good night. I am telling this tale badly — I should have told you first that Don Pedro, Claudio, and Don John witnessed me wooing Margaret — she and I had quite the friendly encounter! — from their positions in the garden. Don John arranged the whole thing."

"And they thought Margaret was Hero?" Conrade said.

"Two of them did," Borachio said. "Don Pedro and Claudio thought that, but Don John, who is a devil, knew that the woman I wooed is Margaret. Don John deliberately convinced Don Pedro and Claudio that Hero is unfaithful. He did that partly by the lies he told them. Those lies made them suspicious. Don Pedro and Claudio were also deceived by the darkness of the night, which helped them to believe that Hero was being unfaithful. Most of all, however, they were deceived by my villainy. My actions confirmed the slander that Don John had cast against Hero. Enraged, Claudio departed. He swore that he would meet Hero, as he had promised, the next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, he would disgrace her by telling everyone what he had seen during the night. He swore that he would not marry her but would instead send her without a husband back to her father."

The first watchman had heard enough; he shouted, "We arrest you in the Prince's name!"

The second watchman said, "Someone, go and get Dogberry, the right master constable. We have here recovered [uncovered] the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth."

Borachio thought, *This watchman probably meant to say "treachery" instead of "lechery," but considering the way I was wooing Margaret, "lechery" is quite accurate.*

"A thief named De Formed should be arrested, too," the first watchman said. "I will know him because he wears one lock of his hair long."

Conrade started to attempt to talk himself out of trouble: "Sirs, sirs —"

The second watchman said, "You will be forced to reveal the whereabouts of De Formed, I bet you."

Conrade said, "Sirs —"

"Do not speak," the second watchman said. "We order you to let us obey [order] you to go with us."

Both Borachio and Conrade knew that the watchmen who had arrested them were fools when it came to using language, but they also knew that they were legally arrested.

Borachio said to Conrade, "We are likely to prove to be a goodly commodity, being taken up by these men with their bills."

Borachio thought, *Conrade will appreciate the joke, although these watchmen will not. My sentence has two meanings, one legal and one commercial: 1) "We are likely to prove to be a valuable catch, now that we have been arrested by these watchmen with their weapons." 2) "We are likely to prove to be a valuable parcel of goods, now that we have been bought by these men with their bills*

of credit.”

Conrade appreciated the puns and replied with puns of his own: “We are a commodity in question, I warrant you.”

Conrade thought, *Borachio will appreciate the joke, although these watchmen will not. My sentence has two meanings, one legal and one commercial: 1) “We are a catch that is subject to judicial examination now that we are under warranted and legal arrest.” 2) “We are a purchase of doubtful value, I promise you.”*

Conrade knew that the watchmen had the legal authority to arrest Borachio and him, so he did not fight them but instead said, “We will obey you.”

The watchmen set off with Borachio and Conrade to find Dogberry.

— 3.4 —

Hero was talking with her gentlewomen attendants, Margaret and Ursula, in her bedroom.

“Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and ask her to get up,” Hero said.

“I will, lady,” Ursula replied.

“And ask her to come here,” Hero said.

“I will,” Ursula said as she exited.

“Truly, I think that your other rabato — your ornamented collar — is better than this one,” Margaret said.

Margaret had worn this rabato the previous night when Borachio had wooed her.

“No, good Margaret,” Hero said. “I will wear this one.”

“Really, I don’t think that this one is as good as the other

one, and I think that Beatrice will agree with me,” Margaret said.

“If she does, then she is a fool, and so are you,” Hero said, not unkindly. “I will wear no rabato except this one.”

“I exceedingly like your new decorative head-dress in the other room,” Margaret said, “but I wish that the hair that is part of the head-dress were a trifle browner. In addition, your gown is unusually fashionable, truly, and I believe that although I have seen the Duchess of Milan’s gown that is so well praised.”

“Her gown is more fashionable than all the others,” Hero said.

“Compared to your gown, hers is a fancy dressing gown,” Margaret said. “Her gown has cloth of gold and cuts in the sleeves to reveal the even richer material underneath, and it is laced with silver and set with pearls. It has tight sleeves that go down to the wrist and loose sleeves that are draped from the shoulders. The skirts are trimmed at the hem with blue silk. Her gown is extremely fancy, but your fine, dainty, elegant, graceful, and excellent gown is worth ten of hers.”

“May God give me joy when I wear it because my heart is exceedingly heavy!” Hero said.

“Tonight it will be heavier by the weight of a man as he lies on you,” Margaret said.

“I am shocked!” Hero said. “Aren’t you ashamed to speak like that?”

“Like what, lady?” Margaret asked. “I am not speaking of anything dishonorable. Marriage is honorable, and so is the wedding night. Marriage is so honorable that it is honorable even for a beggar. Your betrothed, Claudio, is honorable

even before he is married. I think you would have preferred that I say that your heart will be heavier by the weight of your husband — not just any man — as he lies on you. And if all goes well, you will be heavier because you will become pregnant. But you know what I meant; you know I meant no offense. I was talking about the weight of your soon-to-be husband, and there is no harm in that — as long as it is the right husband and the right wife. Let the weight be heavy and not light because a wife ought to feel weight on her on her wedding night, and a light woman is a frivolous woman — a wanton, unchaste woman. Ask Beatrice what she thinks about this — here she comes.”

Hero said, “Good morning, Beatrice.”

“Good morning, sweet Hero.”

“How are you feeling?” Hero said. “You sound as if you were out of tune.”

“The only tune I am in is ill,” Beatrice said. “I am sick.”

“If you want a tune that is not ill, I recommend ‘Light of Love,’” Margaret said. “That is a light, not heavy, tune, and it has no part for a man. It begins with clapping. If you will sing the song, I will dance it.”

“‘Light of love’ means wanton,” Beatrice said. “If you dance to that tune, you will have light heels — feet that are raised high in the air and wide apart. If your husband has lots of stables, he will also have lots of barns and because you and he will roll in the hay the result will be lots of bairns.”

“That is an illegitimate argument,” Margaret said. “I have no husband, and so I kick your argument away with my light heels.”

“It is almost five o’clock, Hero,” Beatrice said. “It is time

you were ready. But truly, I am exceedingly ill!” She sighed, “Ho-hum.”

“Are you sighing because you want a hawk, a horse, or a husband?” Margaret asked.

“If the word ‘ache’ began with and sounded like the letter that begins ‘hawk,’ ‘horse,’ and ‘husband,’ I would be sighing because I have an aitch,” Beatrice said.

“Well, unless you have completely renounced your old views, there will be no more sailing by the North Star,” Margaret said.

Beatrice was mystified: “What does the fool mean, I wonder.”

Margaret thought, I think that Beatrice is sighing because of a different reason than illness. I think that she is sighing because she is in love with and wants to marry Benedick. Unless she has renounced her view that she wants never to be married, then there is no more trusting in signs of love such as sighs — or in anything we used to believe in, such as that the Pole Star, aka the North Star, indicates where the North lies.

“What means the fool?” Margaret said. “I mean nothing, but I hope that God sends all people their heart’s desire!”

Hero knew that Margaret was talking — not explicitly — about Beatrice’s being in love, so she decided to change the subject lest Beatrice grow suspicious: “These are the gloves that Claudio sent me; they have been excellently perfumed.”

Beatrice said, “I am stuffed up, Hero. I cannot smell.”

Margaret knew that Beatrice meant that her nose was stuffed up, but she made a joke out of “stuffed”: “You are supposed to be a virgin, and yet you are stuffed. Has a man

stuffed your womb with a baby? Something good can come from catching a cold!”

“God help me!” Beatrice said. “God help me! For how long have you made being a wit your profession?”

“Ever since you stopped using your wit,” Margaret said, thinking, *You still don't know that we have tricked you into thinking that Benedick loves you.*

Margaret added, “Don't you think that my wit becomes me rarely?”

Beatrice knew that Margaret meant ‘rarely’ to mean ‘splendidly,’ but she decided to joke that ‘rarely’ meant ‘seldomly’: “Your wit is not seen enough; you should wear it in your cap so that everyone can see it. After all, fools wear coxcombs on their heads.”

She added, “Truly, I am sick.”

Margaret said, “Get some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and apply it over your heart: It is the only thing that will help you to get over a sudden nausea.”

Carduus Benedictus was a medicine composed of Holy Thistle. Thistles have prickles, and Hero punned, “Margaret, you are pricking her with a thistle.”

Margaret thought, *Wholly thistle is nothing but pricks, and I am thinking a lot about pricks today although not the ones on thistles. I have also been thinking about holes.*

Beatrice, of course, had been thinking about Benedick quite a lot recently, and she was suspicious because of the mention of Carduus Benedictus: “Benedictus! Why did you mention Benedictus? Does your mention of this Benedictus have some hidden meaning?”

“Some hidden meaning? No, there is no hidden meaning.

All I meant is plain Holy Thistle,” Margaret lied. “You may think perhaps that I think you are in love. No, I am not such a fool as to think what I wish, nor am I such a fool as to wish not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love or that you will be in love or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was just like you in his opinion of marriage, and yet he has become a man who is like other men: He swore he would never marry, and yet now, despite what he swore, he metaphorically eats his meat without complaining. I do not know how you are changing and being converted the way that he was converted to a new way of thinking, but I think that you are beginning to look with your eyes as other women do. You are becoming like other women.”

Margaret thought, *Benedick swore that he would never marry, and yet he has fallen in love. The same is becoming true of Beatrice.*

“What pace is this that your tongue keeps?” Beatrice asked. “Your tongue moves rapidly. What are you trying to say?”

“The pace my tongue keeps is not a false gallop,” Margaret said. “It is a real gallop and not a mere cantor. The pace of my tongue is true, and all I say is true.”

Ursula entered the room and said, “Hero, get dressed. Don Pedro, Count Claudio, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town have come to escort you to church.”

“Help me dress, good Beatrice, good Margaret, and good Ursula,” Hero said.

— 3.5 —

In another room in Leonato’s house, Leonato was talking to Dogberry and Verges, who had come on official business. Leonato, who was the Governor of Messina, greatly

outranked and was much wealthier than Dogberry and Verges.

“What do you want, honest neighbor?” Leonato asked Dogberry.

“Sir, I would have some confidence [confidential conference / confidential conversation] with you that decerns [concerns] you greatly.”

“Keep it brief, please,” Leonato said. “You can see that it is a busy time for me.”

“Truly, it is, sir,” Dogberry replied.

“Yes, in truth it is, sir,” Verges said.

“What do we need to talk about, my good friends?” Leonato asked.

“Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the subject,” Dogberry said. “He tends to ramble because he is an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt [sharp] as, God help us, I would desire they were; but, truly, he is as honest as the skin between his brows. His eyebrows do not meet, and so we can see that he is trustworthy. Also, he has not been marked on his forehead as punishment for a horrible crime.”

“That is true,” Verges said. “I thank God that I am as honest as any man living who is an old man and no more honest than I am.”

“Comparisons are odorous [odious],” Dogberry said to Verges. “*Palabras*, neighbor Verges.”

Leonato thought, *Pocas palabras means “few words” in Spanish, and that is probably what Dogberry meant, but Dogberry said palabras — words — and he has been saying word after word without saying anything of*

significance.

“Neighbors, you are tedious,” Leonato said. He was eager to leave and go to the church for his daughter’s wedding.

Dogberry did not know what “tedious” meant, but he was willing to guess its meaning: “It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke’s officers.”

Leonato thought, *Dogberry meant to say that Verges and he are the Duke’s poor — that is, impoverished — officers. These men are the Duke’s officers — that is, they are Don Pedro’s officers — and people really ought to feel sorry for the poor — unlucky — Duke because he has such sorry officers.*

Dogberry continued, “But truly, for my own part, if I were as tedious [wealthy and generous] as a King, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all on your worship.”

“You would bestow all your tediousness on me?” Leonato asked.

“Yes, and I would do the same thing even if the tediousness were a thousand pounds more than it is; for I hear as good exclamation [acclamation] of your worship as of any man in the city; and although I am only a poor man, I am glad to hear it.”

“And so am I,” Verges said.

They said that they are glad to hear it, Leonato thought. Grammatically speaking, they said that they are glad to hear that they are poor men. Both of them are poor men in more ways than one. Of course, Dogberry and Verges meant to say that they are happy to hear that I am acclaimed, and I am glad to hear that.

“Please let me know what you have to say to me,” Leonato said.

“Sir,” Verges said, “our watchmen last night, excepting [respecting] your worship’s presence, have arrested a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.”

Leonato thought, *Verges said that the watchmen have arrested a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina, excepting your worship’s presence — that is, the watchmen have arrested a couple of knaves who are as arrant as anyone in Messina with the exception of me, Leonato.*

Dogberry interrupted although Verges was telling Leonato what he wanted and needed to know: “Verges is a good old man, sir. He will be talking. As they say, when old age is in, wit is out. God help us! It is a world to see.”

Leonato thought, *Dogberry is mixing up his proverbs. The proverb he is thinking of is this: When ale is in, wit is out. Unfortunately, his mangled proverb — when old age is in, wit is out — is often true.*

Dogberry complimented his friend, “Well said, neighbor Verges,” then he said to Leonato, “Well, God is a good man; God must have a plan for Verges despite Verges’ loss of his wits. If two men ride on a horse, one man must ride behind — no two men are equal in ability. Verges is an honest soul, sir. Truly, he is as honest as any man who ever broke bread; but just as we know that God is to be worshipped, we know that we must thank God for all things. All men are not alike — it is a pity!”

Leonato said, “Verges is not your equal.” He thought, *That is true. As much of a fool as Verges is, he is not Dogberry’s equal.*

“God gives us our gifts,” Dogberry replied.

“I must leave you now and go to the church,” Leonato said.

“One more word, sir,” Dogberry said. “Our watchmen, sir,

have indeed comprehended [apprehended] two auspicious [suspicious] persons, and we would like to have them this morning examined before your worship.”

“Examine these men yourself, and then come and tell me later what you find out,” Leonato said. “As you should be able to see, I am in a hurry.”

“It shall be suffigance [sufficient],” Dogberry said.

“Drink some wine before you go,” Leonato said. “Fare you well.”

A messenger entered the room and said to Leonato, “My lord, they are waiting for you to give your daughter away to her husband.”

“I will come immediately,” Leonato said. “I am ready.”

Leonato and the messenger departed.

“Verges, good partner, go and get the sexton Francis Seacole,” Dogberry said. “Tell him to bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail. We will now examination [examine] these two auspicious [suspicious] men.”

“We must do so wisely.”

“We will not lack wit, I promise you,” Dogberry said. He pointed to his head and said, “Here is something that shall drive some of them to a non-come.”

If Leonato had been present, he would have thought, *Dogberry meant that he would make the two men non-plussed — so confused that they won't know what to think. Actually, I think that is the effect that Dogberry has on many people. Dogberry's word — “non-comp” — also brings to mind the Latin phrase non compos mentis, which means out of one's mind. A few minutes' conversation with Dogberry can have that effect on the hearer.*

Dogberry continued, “We need the learned writer to set down our excommunication [examination / conversation / communication] with the prisoners. Meet me at the jail.”

CHAPTER 4 (Much Ado About Nothing)

— 4.1 —

Don Pedro, Don John, Leonato, Friar Francis, Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, and some attendants were in the church, ready for the wedding.

Leonato said, “Be brief, Friar Francis. Use only the short and simple form of the marriage ceremony, and afterwards you can say your homily and tell the new husband and wife their particular duties to each other.”

Friar Francis asked Claudio, “Do you come here, my lord, to marry this lady?”

Claudio replied, “No.”

Leonato said, “Claudio has come here to *be married to* Hero. You, friar, have come here to marry Hero to Claudio.”

“Lady, do you come here to be married to this count?” Friar Francis asked.

Hero replied, “I do.”

“If either of you know of any secret reason why you should not be lawfully joined together in marriage, I order you on your souls to say so.”

“Do you know of any reason why we should not be married, Hero?” Claudio asked.

“I know of none,” Hero replied.

“Do you know of any, Count Claudio?” Friar Francis asked.

“I dare to answer for him,” Leonato said confidently. “He

knows of none.”

“Oh, what men dare do!” Claudio exclaimed. “What men may do! What men daily do, not knowing what they do!”

Benedick idly thought, *Claudio is making interjections. I remember learning from my study of William Lyly's Latin grammar that some injections are those of laughter — for example, ah, ha, he.*

“Stand aside, Friar Francis,” Claudio said. “Pardon me.”

He then said to Leonato, “Will you freely and without restrictions give me this maiden, your daughter?”

“As freely, son, as God gave her to me.”

“And what have I to give you in return, whose worth is the equal of this rich and precious gift?”

Don Pedro answered for Leonato, “Nothing, unless you render her again.”

Leonato thought that Don Pedro meant that the gift that Claudio could render would be a grandchild, but Claudio knew that Don Pedro meant for him to give Hero literally back to her father.

Claudio said, “Sweet Don Pedro, you teach me noble thankfulness and true gratitude.”

He then said, “There, Leonato, take Hero back again. I will not marry her. Do not give this rotten orange to your friend. She is like an orange that looks good on the outside but is rotten inside. Hero has only the outward signs and appearance of honor.”

Tears trickled from Claudio’s eyes.

He said, “Look how she is blushing now like a virgin! With what false assurance and false display of truth can cunning

sin disguise itself! Doesn't the blood that is rushing to Hero's face in a blush seem to be believable evidence of a virgin's simple virtue? Would you not swear, all you who see her, that she were a maiden, a virgin, after you witness this blush? But she is not a virgin. She knows the heat of a lecherous bed; she blushes because she knows that she is guilty, not because she is modest."

"What do you mean, my lord?" Leonato asked.

"I mean not to be married and not to knit my soul to a woman who has been proven to be a slut."

"Claudio," Leonato said, "if you, to test Hero, have overcome the resistance of her youth and have taken her virginity from her —"

Claudio interrupted, "I know what you are going to say. You will say that if I have slept with her that she embraced me as if I were already her husband, and that our formal engagement will help excuse the sin of premarital sex. No, Leonato, I never tempted her with improper suggestions. I always treated her the way a brother treats a sister; I always showed her only modest sincerity and appropriate love."

"Have I ever seemed other than modest or appropriate to you?" Hero asked.

"That is enough acting from you!" Claudio said. "I will denounce your false appearance. You seemed to me to resemble the virgin Diana, goddess of the Moon. You seemed to be as chaste as is the flower bud before its petals are fully opened. But you are more intemperate in your sexual passion than Venus, goddess of love, or those pampered horses that are known to rage in savage sensuality."

"Are you ill?" Hero said. "Is that what is making you say things that are so far from being the truth?"

Leonato said to Don Pedro, “Sweet Prince, why aren’t you saying something?”

“What should I say?” Don Pedro replied. “I am dishonored because I have helped my dear friend to become engaged to a common prostitute.”

“Do I really hear these words, or am I dreaming?” Leonato asked.

Don John replied, “Sir, these words have really been spoken, and these things are true.”

Benedick thought, *This does not look like a wedding.*

“You say that these things are true!” Hero said. “Oh, God!”

“Leonato, do you see me standing here?” Claudio asked. “Do you see Don Pedro standing here? Is this Don Pedro’s brother standing here? Is this face Hero’s face? Are our eyes our own? The answer to all these questions is yes. You are awake; you are not dreaming.”

“I agree that I am awake, but what is going on here, Count Claudio?”

“Let me but ask your daughter one question, and, by that fatherly and kindly power that you have over her, tell her to answer truly,” Claudio said.

“I order you to answer his question truthfully, Hero, my daughter,” Leonato said.

“May God defend me!” Hero said. “I am attacked from all sides! What kind of catechising do you call this?”

“The first question of the Church of England Catechism is this: ‘What is your name?’” Claudio said. “I will ask you one question that will reveal what your real name is.”

He thought, *Your real name is a common one: Whore.*

Hero replied, "Isn't my name Hero? Who can blot that name with any just reproach?"

"I know the answer to that question," Claudio said. "Hero can blot her own name. Hero can blot out the virtue of Hero. Here is my question: What man did you talk with last night between the hours of midnight and one a.m. at your bedroom window? If you are a virgin, answer this question."

"I talked with no man at that hour," Hero replied.

"Why, then you are no virgin," Don Pedro said. "Leonato, I am sorry you must hear this bad news: Upon my honor, I, Don John, and this grieving Count Claudio saw Hero and heard Hero at that hour last night talk with a ruffian at her bedroom window. That man, a lecherous villain, stated that he and Hero had enjoyed a thousand vile encounters in secret."

"Those thousand vile encounters are not to be spoken of," Don John said. "The language that must be used to speak about those encounters would offend everyone who heard it. Pretty lady, I am sorry that you have been so lewd and unchaste."

"Hero, if you were only half as beautiful inside as you are outside, you would have been like the mythical Hero, who committed suicide after her loved one, Leander, died while attempting to swim the Hellespont to visit her," Claudio said. "But farewell, most foul and most fair Hero. Farewell, you woman of pure impiety and impious purity! Because of you, I will stay away from love. My eyes shall be suspicious. Every time I look at a beautiful woman I will think of impurity. Never again will I be gracious to a beautiful woman."

"Does any man here have a dagger that will stab me?" Leonato asked.

Hero fainted.

“How are you, Hero?” Beatrice said. “Why have you fainted?”

Don John said, “Come, let us go. These evil things that have been revealed to the light of day have overwhelmed her.”

Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio exited.

Benedick normally would have left with Don Pedro and Claudio, but he loved Beatrice, and Beatrice was here, so he stayed.

Benedick asked Beatrice, “How is Hero?”

“Dead, I think,” Beatrice replied. “Help, uncle! Hero! Wake up, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!”

“Fate, let her die!” Leonato said. “Death is the fairest cover for her shame that I can now ask for.”

“Hero, wake up!” Beatrice said.

“Take comfort in being alive, lady,” Friar Francis said to Hero as she slowly regained consciousness.

Leonato said to Hero as she lay on the floor of the church, “Are you looking up?”

“Yes,” Friar Francis said. “That is good.”

“Good?” Leonato said. “It is hardly good. Why, doesn’t every earthly thing cry shame upon her? Can she deny the guilt that her blushes reveal? Do not live, Hero. Do not open your eyes. If I did not think that you would not quickly die, if I thought that your spirit could bear your shame, I myself would kill you. If the army of your shames is not enough to kill you, I would act as the rearguard of the army and kill you.

“I used to grieve because I had only one child. I used to be angry at Nature because I had only one child. But when that child is Hero, one child is too many! Why did I have a child? Why did I ever think you were lovely? It would have been better if instead of having you, I had been charitable and adopted the child of a beggar who came to my gates. That way, when the child sinned and ruined her reputation, I might have said, ‘No part of this child is mine; this shameful child has come from unknown loins.’ But you were my own child and I loved you and I praised you and I was proud of you. For you I had such great love that I had little love for myself. But now Hero has fallen into a pit of ink and the wide sea has too little water to wash her clean again and not enough salt to preserve her and keep her from stinking.”

“Sir, sir, be patient,” Benedick said. “Calm down. As for me, I am so amazed that I do not know what to say.”

“I swear on my soul that Hero has been slandered,” Beatrice said.

Benedick said to Beatrice, “In our culture, it is normal for two unmarried adults of the same sex to sleep in the same bed. Did you and Hero sleep in the same bed last night?”

“No, we did not,” Beatrice replied, “but for the entire year before last night we slept in the same bed.”

“This confirms Count Claudio’s story!” Leonato said. “Before, the story was so strong that it was as if it were made with ribs of iron! But now it is even stronger! Would the two Princes — Don Pedro and Don John — lie, and Claudio lie, a man who so loved Hero that he cried while speaking of her foulness? Let us leave Hero! Let her die!”

Friar Francis said, “Listen to me for a minute. I have kept quiet too long about these events. I have been looking at Hero, and I have seen a thousand blushes begin to appear in

her cheeks only to be swept away by innocent and angelic paleness. And in her eyes has appeared a fire that burns against the lies that these Princes told against the truth of her virginity.

“Call me a fool and do not trust either my education or my observations, which combined with my years of experience have given me knowledge. Do not trust my age, reputation, position, or holiness. You can do all of these things to me if I am wrong and Hero turns out to be guilty.

“I believe completely that Hero is innocent.”

Leonato said, “Friar, she cannot be innocent. The only good quality that she has left is that she will not add the sin of perjury to her damnation. Hero has not denied that she is unchaste. Why are you trying to cover up her guilt when she has been proven to be guilty?”

Friar Francis said to Hero, who had fully regained consciousness, “With which man are you accused of sinning?”

“I don’t know,” Hero replied. “You will have to ask those who accuse me. If I know more of any man alive than that which a virgin’s modesty allows, let all my sins be unforgiven and let me be damned!”

She said to Leonato, “Father, if you can prove that any man has ever talked with me at an indecent hour or that I talked to any man last night, then disown me, hate me, and torture me to death!”

“Don Pedro and Don John have made some kind of mistake,” Friar Francis said. “They have made a strange misunderstanding.”

Benedick said, “Two of the three men who have accused Hero of unchasteness are completely honorable. If they

have been misled, they have been misled by Don John the bastard, who enjoys creating conflicts.”

“I don’t know what to believe,” Leonato said. “If these three men have spoken the truth about my daughter, I will tear her to pieces with my own hands, but if they have wronged her with slander, even the highest ranking of them will hear from me. Time has not yet dried up my blood, age has not yet eaten my intelligence, fortune has not been my enemy, and my faults have not bereft me of all my friends. These three men will find that I, awakened in such a matter, have enough strength of limb and policy of mind, as well as ability in means and choice of friends, that I will be able to thoroughly get revenge on them.”

“Wait a while before you act to get revenge,” Friar Francis said. “Listen to my advice now. Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio left your daughter when she seemed to be dead. Let her for a while be secretly kept indoors in your house, and tell everyone that she is dead. Ostentatiously mourn her, and on your family’s old tomb hang mournful epitaphs and do all the rites that are proper for a burial.”

“Why?” Leonato asked. “What is the purpose of doing this?”

“If this plan works well,” Friar Francis said, “slander will change to remorse. That will be good, but it is not the main thing that we will be hoping for. We hope for a better result. Because Hero died — we will say — at the same moment in which she was accused, she shall be lamented, pitied, and excused by every hearer. It commonly happens that what we have we do not properly prize while we have and enjoy it. But once it is lost and we lack it, then we greatly value it and recognize the good qualities that it has that we did not previously recognize. This will happen to Claudio. When he hears that Hero died because of his words of accusation, he will remember her and think about

her. He will remember all of Hero's good qualities and even exaggerate them. It will be as if they appear before him in new and rich clothing. She will appear in his mind more moving, more delicate, and fuller of life than she was when she was alive. Then Claudio will mourn, if love for Hero was ever in his heart, and he will wish that he had not accused her of being unchaste, not even if he thinks that the accusation is true. Let us follow this plan. Chances are, things will turn out even better than I hope. If nothing else, people will talk about Hero's death rather than her supposed unchasteness. And if things do not work out, then you, Claudio, can keep her hidden, as would be best because of her ruined reputation, in some reclusive and religious convent, away from all eyes, gossip, thoughts, and insults."

Benedick said, "Signior Leonato, take the friar's advice. Though you know how much I respect Don Pedro and Claudio, I swear that I will participate in this plan as secretly and justly as your own soul and body."

"I am drowning in grief, and I will grasp at even the thinnest string I can find and hope to be drawn to safety," Leonato said.

"It is good that you agree to participate in this plan," Friar Francis said to Leonato. "Let us leave immediately. Strange illnesses require strange cures. Come, Hero, you must die in order to live. Your wedding perhaps is only postponed. Have patience, be calm, and endure these present ills."

Everyone except for Benedick and Beatrice left.

Benedick said gently, "Lady Beatrice, have you been crying all this time?"

"Yes, and I will cry a while longer."

"I do not want you to cry."

“What you want does not matter,” Beatrice replied. “I am crying because I want to cry.”

“I truly believe that Hero has been wronged.”

“A man who could make things right would deserve much from me,” Beatrice said.

“Is there any way I can deserve such a reward?”

“The way to earn such a reward is very straightforward and direct, but it is not for you,” Beatrice said.

“May a man do it?”

“It is the duty of a man, but it is not your duty.”

“I love nothing in the world as much I love you,” Benedick said. “Isn’t that strange?”

“It is as strange as another thing that I don’t understand: It is as possible for me to say that I love nothing as much as I love you — but do not believe what I just said. I confess nothing, and I deny nothing. I feel sorry for my cousin.”

“I swear by my sword, Beatrice, that you love me.”

“Do not swear. You may have to eat your words.”

“I swear by my sword, Beatrice, that you love me, and I will make anyone who says that I do not love you eat my sword.”

“Won’t you go back on your vow that you love me and eat your words?”

“I will not eat my words with any sauce that can be prepared to season them,” Benedick said. “I swear again that I love you.”

“Why, then God forgive me!”

“For what offence, Beatrice?”

“Your swearing that you love me came in a happy hour. I was about to go against our societal conventions and say to you ‘I love you’ before you — the man — confessed to me that you love me.”

“Say to me now what you were going to say to me before, and swear to it with all of your heart,” Benedick said.

“I love you with so much of my heart that none of my heart is left to swear with.”

“Tell me to do anything for you.”

“Kill Claudio,” Beatrice replied.

“Not for all the whole wide world.”

“You kill me by saying no,” Beatrice said. “Farewell.”

“Stay for a while, sweet Beatrice.”

“I am gone, though I am physically here. There is no love in you for me. Therefore, please let me go.”

“Beatrice —”

“I am leaving.”

“Let us part as friends.”

“You must think that it is easier to be friends with me than to fight Claudio, who is now my enemy.”

“Is Claudio your enemy?”

“Why shouldn’t he be?” Beatrice asked. “Hasn’t he proved himself to be a thorough villain, one who has slandered, scorned, and dishonored my cousin Hero? I wish that I were a man! Look at what Claudio has done! He held Hero’s hands until they were in church to join hands in

marriage, and then with barefaced slander and unmitigated rancor he publicly accused her of unchasteness. I wish I were a man! If I were, I would eat Claudio's heart in the public marketplace."

"Listen to me, Beatrice —"

"Talk with a man outside her bedroom window! A likely story!"

"But Beatrice —"

"Sweet Hero! She has been wronged, she has been slandered, she has been undone."

"Bea —"

"The three men who accused her are two Princes and a Count! Surely, we heard a Princely testimony and testimony from a goodly Count — Count Candy! He is a sweet gallant, surely! Oh, I wish that I were a man for his sake! Or that I had any friend who would be a man for my sake! But manhood has melted into curtsies, valor has melted into compliment, and men are composed only of talk and not deeds — and such pretty talk, too. A man is now considered to be as valiant as Hercules even if he only tells a lie and swears that it is true. I cannot become a man by wishing I were a man; therefore, I will die a woman by grieving."

"Wait, good Beatrice. I swear by this hand that I love you."

"If you want to show that you love me, you will have to do more with your hand than swear by it."

"Do you truly believe in your soul that Count Claudio has wronged Hero?"

"I am as sure of that as I am sure that I have a thought or a soul."

“That is enough,” Benedick said. “I will do what you want me to do: I will challenge Claudio to a duel. Let me kiss your hand, and so I leave you. I swear by this hand that he shall pay dearly for his sin. As you hear of me, so think of me. Judge me by my actions, not by my words. Go and comfort Hero. I must tell other people that she is dead, and so, farewell.”

He kissed her hand and exited. Beatrice left to go and comfort Hero.

— 4.2 —

In a prison, Dogberry, Verges, and the sexton were wearing their official black gowns. Some watchmen were also present, as were Conrade and Borachio.

Dogberry asked, “Is our whole dissembly [assembly] present?”

“We need a stool and a cushion for the sexton,” Verges said.

A stool and a cushion were brought for the sexton.

The sexton asked, “Who are the malefactors?”

“That would be my partner and me,” Dogberry said.

“That is true,” Verges said. “We have been exhibitioned [commissioned] to examine these men.”

The sexton smiled, realizing that neither Dogberry nor Verges understood the meaning of the word “malefactors.”

The sexton said, “But who are the offenders who are to be examined? Let them come before Dogberry, the master constable.”

“Yes, let them come before me,” Dogberry said.

Conrade and Borachio stood up, and Dogberry asked Borachio, "What is your name, friend?"

"Borachio."

Dogberry said to the sexton, "Please, write down 'Borachio.'" Then he asked Conrade, "And what is your name?"

"I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade."

"Write down 'master gentleman Conrade.' Men, do you serve God and obey His laws?"

Conrade and Borachio replied, "Yes, sir, we hope we do."

Dogberry said to the sexton, "Write down that they hope they serve God, and write God first; for God defend [forbid] that such villains should be named before God."

He then said to Conrade and Borachio, "Masters, it has been proven already that you are little better than lying criminals; and soon people will think that you are lying criminals. How do you defend yourselves?"

Conrade replied, "Sir, we say that we are not lying criminals."

Dogberry said to Verges and the sexton, "He is a marvelously intelligent fellow, I assure you, but I will outwit him."

He said to Borachio, "Come here and let me speak to you away from Conrade. I say to you, it is thought that you are lying criminals."

"Sir, I say to you that we are not lying criminals."

"Well, stand aside," Dogberry said. "By God, they are both telling the same story!"

He said to the sexton, “Have you written down that they are not lying criminals?”

The sexton replied, “Master constable Dogberry, you are not carrying out the investigation in the right way. You need to talk to the watchmen who are accusing these two men.”

“Yes, that is the efastest [deftest / quickest] way,” Dogberry said. “Let the watchmen come forth. Masters, I order you, in the name of the Prince, to accuse these men.”

The first watchmen said, “This man — Borachio — said, sir, that Don John, Don Pedro’s brother, is a villain.”

“Write down that Don John is a villain,” Dogberry said.

He thought a moment, reflected that Don John had a high rank, and then he said, “Why, this is obvious perjury [slander], to call a Prince’s brother a villain.”

If Don John had been present, he would have thought, *No, it is not slander. I really am a villain.*

Borachio said, “Master constable —”

“Please be quiet,” Dogberry said. “I do not like the way you look, I promise you.”

The sexton, who had decided that he ought to take over the investigation, asked the second watchman, “Did you hear this accused man say anything else?”

“He said that he had received a thousand coins from Don John in return for falsely accusing the Lady Hero.”

“Being paid for falsely accusing the Lady Hero is as obvious burglary [fraud / being paid to slander someone] as was ever committed,” Dogberry said.

“Yes, it is,” Verges agreed.

“What else did you two learn?” the sexton asked the two watchmen.

“We learned that Count Claudio, who believed the slander, intended to disgrace Hero before the whole congregation in the church and not marry her,” the first watchman said.

Dogberry said to Borachio, “Villain! You will be condemned to everlasting redemption [damnation] for this.”

“Did you two learn anything else?”

“That is everything we learned,” a watchman said.

The sexton said to Conrade and Borachio, “And here is more, masters, than you can deny. This morning Don John secretly fled from the city. Apparently, he was aware that you two had been arrested and that his evil plot would be revealed. Hero was accused in the manner you described, and as you described, Count Claudio refused to marry her. Because of the grief she suffered, Hero died.”

The sexton said to Dogberry, “Master constable, let these men be bound and be brought quickly to Leonato’s house. I will go there now ahead of you and tell him the result of our investigation.”

The sexton exited.

Dogberry said, “Let the prisoners be opinioned [pinioned / bound].”

“Let’s bind their hands,” Verges said.

Dogberry moved toward Conrade, who had not taken part in Don John’s evil plot and so was innocent. Conrade objected to being bound and shouted, “Back off, coxcomb! Get away from me, fool!”

Dogberry asked, “Where’s the sexton? He should write

down that the law-enforcement officer is a coxcomb. Well, let us bind their hands.”

He said to Conrade, “You are resisting arrest.”

Conrade shouted, “Get away from me! You are an ass! An ass!”

Dogberry replied, “Do you not suspect [respect] my job as a law-enforcement officer? Do you not suspect [respect] my age? I wish that the sexton were here so he could write down that I am an ass! But, people, remember that I am an ass. Although it is not written down, do not forget that I am an ass.”

Dogberry wanted Conrade to be punished for calling him an ass, and so he wanted an official record of the name-calling.

He said to Conrade, “You villain, you are full of piety [impiety], as shall be proved upon you by good witnesses. I am a wise [foolish] fellow, and, which is more, I am a law-enforcement officer, and, which is more, I am the head of a household, and, which is more, I am as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and I am one who knows the law [does not know the law], damn you. And I am a rich enough fellow, damn you; and I am a fellow who has suffered financial losses, and I am one who owns two gowns and has many handsome things around him. Bring him away. Oh, I wish that the sexton had written down that I am an ass!”

CHAPTER 5 (Much Ado About Nothing)

— 5.1 —

Leonato and Antonio, his older brother, were on the street in front of Leonato's house.

"If you go on ranting and raging like this, you will kill yourself," Antonio said. "It is not wise to add to your own grief."

"Please, do not give me advice," Leonato replied. "Advice falls on my ears the way that water pours into a sieve. Neither accomplishes anything, so do not give me advice. Let no one try to comfort me except someone who has suffered what I have suffered. Bring me a father who has loved his child as much as I loved Hero. Let his joy in his child be overwhelmed by sorrow like my joy has been, and let him speak to me about patiently enduring my sorrow. Measure that father's sorrow by the length and breadth of my sorrow, and see whether his sorrow equals my sorrow and his grief equals my grief in every way — in every lineament, branch, shape, and form. If it does, then if that father will smile and stroke his beard, tell sorrow to get lost, cry 'Keep going!' instead of groaning, cure grief with proverbs, make misfortune forget itself with advice from scholars who read philosophical books, then bring that father to me. From him I will learn how to patiently endure my sorrow. But no such father exists.

"Antonio, men can give advice and speak comforting words to a man who suffers a grief that they themselves do not feel; but if they themselves feel that same grief, then their advice turns into suffering. When men do not feel grief, then they think that they can conquer rage with precepts and little life lessons. When men do not feel grief, then they think that they can tie up strong madness with a

silken thread. When men do not feel grief, then they think that they can charm away aches with mere breath and charm away agony with mere words. So they think.

“All men think that it is their duty to speak about patiently enduring sorrow to those who writhe under a heavy load of sorrow. However, no man has the ability or power to be so moral when he himself is enduring the same heavy load of sorrow. Therefore, do not give me advice. My griefs cry louder than words of advice.”

“Men who think and feel as you do cannot be distinguished from children,” Antonio replied.

“Be quiet, please,” Leonato said. “I will be flesh and blood. No philosopher has ever been able to patiently endure a toothache, even if the philosopher has written in the style of gods who do not suffer as humans do and even if the philosopher has scoffed at bad luck and suffering.”

“You are suffering, but you ought not to bear all the suffering by yourself,” Antonio said. “Make those men who have offended you suffer, too.”

“Now you are speaking intelligently,” Leonato said. “I will do that. My soul tells me now that Hero has been slandered, and I intend that Claudio shall know that, as shall Don Pedro and everyone else who thus dishonors her.”

Antonio looked up and said, “Here come Don Pedro and Claudio hurrying this way.”

Don Pedro and Claudio walked over to Leonato and Antonio.

Don Pedro said, “Good day.”

Claudio said, “Good day to both of you.”

“We are in a hurry, Leonato,” Don Pedro said.

“A hurry!” Leonato said. “Well, fare you well, my lord. Are you so hasty now that my daughter is dead? Don’t you want to speak to me?”

He added, sarcastically, “It doesn’t matter, I suppose — to you.”

Don Pedro said, “Do not quarrel with us, good old man.”

Antonio said, “If Leonato could make things right by quarreling, some of the men here would lie low in their graves.”

Claudio asked, “Who has done wrong to Leonato?”

“You have wronged me, Claudio,” Leonato replied. “You are a liar.”

Claudio’s hand rested on the hilt of his sword.

Leonato pointed to Claudio’s hand and said, “If you want me to be afraid, you will not accomplish that by putting your hand on your sword. I am not afraid.”

“Curse my hand if it should give an old man a reason to be afraid,” Claudio said. “I swear that I had no intention of drawing my sword.”

“Tut, man,” Leonato said. “Do not scorn or make jokes about me. I do not speak like a dotard or a fool. I do not brag about what I did when I was young, and I do not brag about what I would do if I were not old. I am telling you to your face, Claudio, that you have so wronged my innocent child and me that I am forced to put aside my old man’s respectability and, with the grey hairs and the bruises that result from living so many days, I challenge you to a duel. I say to you that you have lied about my innocent child. Your slander has gone through and through her heart, and she lies buried with her ancestors. She lies in a tomb where never scandal has slept, except this scandal of hers —

scandal that is the result of your villainy and lies!”

“My villainy?” Claudio said.

“Your villainy, Claudio,” Leonato said. “It is your villainy.”

Don Pedro said, “You are wrong, old man.”

Leonato replied, “My lord, I will prove the truth of what I say on his body, if he dares to fight me, despite his elegant fencing and his recent battle experience, his youth, and his manliness.”

“No,” Claudio said. “I will not fight you!”

“Do you think that you can ignore me?” Leonato said. “You have killed my daughter. If you kill me, boy, you shall kill a man.”

“He shall kill two of us, and we are men indeed,” Antonio said. “But that does not matter. Let Claudio kill one of us first, and then he can boast about it. Win me and wear me: Let him conquer me, and then he can boast. Let Claudio answer my challenge to him.”

He said to Claudio, “Come, follow me, boy. Come, Sir Boy, and follow me. Sir Boy, I will whip you despite your fancy fencing. I am a gentleman, and I swear that I will kill you.”

Leonato began, “Brother —”

“Be quiet,” Antonio said. “God knows that I loved my niece, and she is dead. She was slandered to death by villains who are as eager to fight a man in a duel as I am to pick up a poisonous snake by its tongue. Who are these slanderers? Boys, mimics, braggarts, knaves, milksops!”

“Brother Antonio —”

“Be quiet. What, man! I know these slanderers. I know what kind of men they are. I know what they are made of and what they weigh down to the last gram. They are scuffling, insolent and bullying, fashion-mongering boys. They lie and cheat and insult, and they deprave and slander. They dress and behave like buffoons and look repulsive. They speak half a dozen dangerous words about how they might hurt their enemies if they dared to, and they don’t dare to.”

“But, brother Antonio —”

“Brother, be quiet. I know what I am doing. Do not meddle in this. Let me deal with it.”

Don Pedro said, “Gentlemen, we will not stay here and disturb your peace of mind any longer. I am sorry that your daughter died, but, on my honor, I swear that she was charged with nothing but what was fully proven to be true.”

Leonato began, “My lord —”

Don Pedro, who had more power than Leonato, said sharply, “I will not listen to you.”

Leonato said, “No? Come, Antonio; let us leave.”

Leonato then said to Don Pedro, “I will be heard!”

“And he shall,” Antonio said, “or some of us here will hurt because of it.”

Leonato and Antonio exited.

Benedick walked toward Don Pedro and Claudio.

Don Pedro said to Claudio, “Look, here comes the man we were looking for.”

Claudio said to Benedick, “What’s up?”

Benedick ignored Claudio and said to Don Pedro, "Good day, my lord."

"Welcome, Benedick," Don Pedro said. "You have almost come in time to stop what was almost a fight."

Claudio said, "Two old men without teeth wanted to bite off our noses."

"They were Leonato and his brother," Don Pedro said. "What do you think about that? Had we fought, I think that we would have been too young and strong for them."

"An unfair fight has no true valor," Benedick said. "I came looking for both of you."

"We have been everywhere looking for you," Claudio said. "We are very sad and would like to have our sadness beaten away. Will you use your wit to make us happy?"

"It is in my scabbard," Benedick said. "Shall I draw it?"

"Do you wear your wit by your side?" Don Pedro said.

"No one wears their wit by their side," Claudio said, "although some people have been out of their wits. Please draw your wit, just as minstrels draw their bows across their musical instruments, and entertain us."

"To be honest, Benedick looks pale," Don Pedro said. "Are you ill, Benedick, or are you angry?"

"Care may have killed the cat," Claudio said, "but you are strong enough to kill care."

"Sir, I shall defeat you in a battle of wits even if you charge against me at full gallop," Benedick said. "Please choose a subject to talk about other than wit."

"You need another lance to joust with," Claudio said. "Your lance has been broken across the middle. You have

not directly hit your opponent.”

“Benedick is growing paler and paler,” Don Pedro said. “I think that he is indeed angry.”

“If he is, he knows what he can do about it,” Claudio said. “His anger is his problem.”

“Can I talk to you privately?” Benedick asked Claudio.

“God forbid that you want to challenge me to a duel!” Claudio said.

Benedick said quietly to Claudio, “You are a villain. I am not joking, and I will prove in a duel that you are a villain. I challenge you however you like. We can use whatever weapons you like, and we will duel whenever you like. Accept my challenge, or I will make it known that you are a coward. You have killed a sweet lady, and you shall pay for her death. What is your answer to my challenge?”

“I accept your challenge,” Claudio said, “and I plan to enjoy myself.”

Don Pedro did not quite hear what Benedick and Claudio had said.

Don Pedro said, “Enjoy yourself? At what? A feast?”

Claudio said, “Benedick has invited me to a feast of a calf’s head and a capon: a castrated cock. I have every intention of carving the capon — if I don’t carve it, say that my knife is worthless. I think that I will see a woodcock at the feast, too.”

Claudio thought, *Calves, capons, and woodcocks are all notorious for their stupidity.*

Benedick replied, “Sir, your wit ambles; it goes very slowly.”

Don Pedro said, "Let me tell you how Beatrice praised your wit the other day, Benedick.

"I said that you had a fine wit.

"Beatrice said, 'True, a fine little wit.'

"'No,' I said. 'He has a great wit.'

"'Right,' Beatrice said. 'A great big coarse wit.'

"'No,' I said. 'A good wit.'

"'That is exactly right,' Beatrice said. 'It is so weak that it hurts nobody.'

"'No,' I said. 'The gentleman is wise.'

"'That is certain,' Beatrice said. 'He is a wiseass.'

"'No,' I said. 'He can speak in foreign tongues.'

"'I can believe that,' Beatrice said. 'Benedick swore one thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning. He has a double tongue; he has two tongues.'

"For an entire hour, she criticized you and turned all your virtues into vices, yet at last she concluded, with a sigh, that you are the handsomest man in Italy."

"And then she cried a lot and said that she did not care," Claudio said.

"Yes, she did," Don Pedro said, "but yet, for all that, she said that if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly. Hero, the old man's daughter, told us all this."

"She did say all this," Claudio said, "and God saw Benedick when he was hiding in the garden the way that he saw Adam after Adam had hidden himself after sinning."

“When shall we set the savage bull’s horns on the sensible Benedick’s head?” Don Pedro asked.

“Yes, and when shall we put a sign on him that says, ‘Here is Benedick the married man?’” Claudio said.

Don Pedro and Claudio were making inappropriate jokes about an angry man. They were now angry at Benedick, whom they had recently considered to be their friend.

Benedick said to Claudio, “Fare you well, boy. You know what I think about you. I will leave you now to your old woman’s chattering: You break jests as braggarts do their blades, which God be thanked, hurt not. Braggarts will hack their own swords in private, and then say in public that their swords were damaged in battle.”

Benedick said to Don Pedro, “My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you, but I must discontinue your company and leave your service. Your brother Don John the bastard has fled from Messina. You, Claudio, and Don John have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. As for my Lord Lackbeard — Claudio — there, he and I shall meet in a duel, and until then, peace be with him.”

Benedick left the two men, his former friends.

Don Pedro said to Claudio, “He is in earnest. He wants to fight you.”

“He is in most profound earnest, and, I promise you, he wants to fight me because he loves Beatrice.”

“And he has challenged you,” Don Pedro said.

“Most sincerely.”

“What a pretty thing a man is when he goes about in his jacket and pants, but wears no cloak so that he can duel, and leaves behind at home his intelligence!” Don Pedro

said.

“A man who makes a challenge seems to be a hero to a fool, but actually the fool is the wiser man,” Claudio said.

“But wait a minute,” Don Pedro said. “Let me be serious. Didn’t Benedick say that Don John, my bastard brother, has fled? He must have fled for a reason that is sure to be bad news for me.”

Dogberry, Verges, and the watchmen arrived. With them were Borachio and Conrade — the prisoners’ hands were bound.

Dogberry said to Borachio, “Come along. If justice cannot tame and punish you, she shall never weigh more reasons in her balance. You have been a cursing hypocrite at least once, and you must be dealt with.”

“What is going on?” Don Pedro said. “Two of my brother’s men have been bound by this city’s law-enforcement officers. Borachio is one of my brother’s men who have been bound.”

“Ask what is their offense, my lord,” Claudio said.

“Officers, what offence have these men done?” Don Pedro asked.

Dogberry answered, “Indeed, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanderers; sixth and lastly, they have lied about a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.”

Amused by Dogberry’s answer, Don Pedro replied, “First, I ask you what they have done; thirdly, I ask you what is their offence; sixth and lastly, I ask you why they are committed; and, to conclude, I ask you what you lay to their charge.”

“That is a good reply, and it is in his own style,” Claudio said to Don Pedro. “Truly, he has said one thing in six different ways.”

Don Pedro asked the prisoners, “Who have you offended, masters, that your hands are thus bound and you must answer to these law-enforcement officers? This learned constable is too cunning for me to understand. What is your offence?”

Borachio had repented his sin. He had been willing to be somewhat evil, but he had not intended to help cause the death of a lady. That was too evil for him.

Borachio said to Don Pedro, “Sweet Prince, let me answer you immediately. Hear my confession, and then let Count Claudio kill me. I have deceived your own eyes. What wise men could not uncover, these shallow fools have brought to light. The watchmen during the night overheard me confessing to this man, Conrade, how Don John your brother instigated me to slander the Lady Hero. They overheard me tell how you were brought to Leonato’s garden and saw me court Margaret, who was wearing some of Hero’s clothing. Count Claudio disgraced Hero when he was supposed to marry her. My confession of my villainy they have upon record. I would rather pay for my villainy with my death than recount again what I have done. The lady Hero is dead because of the false accusation of unchasteness that Don John and I have engineered, and to be short, I want nothing but the reward of a villain — I want to be justly punished for my crime.”

“Doesn’t this speech make your blood run cold?” Don Pedro said to Claudio.

“This speech is like poison to me,” Claudio said.

“Did Don John tempt you to do all this?” Don Pedro asked Borachio.

“Yes, and he paid me richly for doing it.”

“Don John delights in treachery,” Don Pedro said, “and he has fled to escape being punished for this villainy.”

“Sweet Hero!” Claudio said. “Now when I think of you, I remember you the way you appeared when I first loved you.”

Dogberry said, “Come, bring away the plaintiffs [defendants]. By this time, the sexton has reformed [informed] Signior Leonato about what we have learned, and, masters, do not forget to specify, when you have time and are in the right place, that I am an ass.”

Verges said, “Here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton, too.”

Leonato, Antonio, and the sexton walked over to the others.

Leonato said, “Which man is the villain? Let me see his eyes so that, when I see another man like him, I may avoid him. Which of these men is he?”

“If you want to see the man who wronged you,” Borachio said, “look at me.”

“Are you the slave and scoundrel who with your lying breath has killed my innocent child?”

“Yes, I alone did that,” Borachio said.

“That is not true, villain,” Leonato replied. “You did not kill my daughter by yourself. Here stand a pair of ‘honorable’ men who helped kill my daughter. A third guilty man has fled.”

He said sarcastically to Don Pedro and Claudio, “I thank you, sirs, for my daughter’s death. Record it with your other high and worthy deeds. It was brave of you to do so; think well of yourselves when you think of your deed.”

When someone does wrong, even unintentionally, it is often best to admit the fact and accept the punishment.

Claudio said to Leonato, “I do not know how to ask for your forgiveness, yet I must speak up and ask for it. Choose your revenge yourself; impose on me whatever penance you think is suitable to punish my sin, although I sinned not on purpose but by mistake.”

Don Pedro said, “I also sinned by mistake. And yet, to satisfy this good old man, Leonato, I am willing to bend under any heavy weight that he wishes to place on me.”

“I cannot order you to make my daughter live again,” Leonato said. “That is impossible, but I ask you both to inform the people in Messina here that she was innocent and a virgin when she died. Claudio, if your love can labor in creation despite your sadness, then write an epitaph for Hero and hang it on a wall in her tomb and sing it to her bones. Sing it tonight, and tomorrow morning come to my house. Because Hero is dead, you cannot be my son-in-law, but you can yet be my nephew. My brother has a daughter who is almost the twin — almost an exact copy — of my daughter who is dead. My brother’s daughter is the sole heir to both of us. Marry my brother’s daughter, and that will end the enmity between us.”

“Oh, noble sir, your great kindness wrings tears from me! I embrace your offer, and I put my future in your hands.”

“I will expect you to come to my house tomorrow morning to be married,” Leonato said. “For tonight I take my leave of you. This wicked man shall be brought face to face with Margaret, whom I believe was part of this evil plot and bribed to participate in it by Don John.”

“I swear on my soul that Margaret is innocent,” Borachio said. “She did not know about the plot when I spoke to her outside Hero’s bedroom window. Margaret has always

been just and virtuous in everything.”

Dogberry said, “Moreover, sir, here is something that has not been written down in white and black. This plaintiff [defendant] here, the offender, did call me an ass. I ask you to let that be remembered in his punishment. Also, the watchmen heard these men talk about a man named De Formed. They said that he wears a key in his ear and has a lock hanging by it, and he borrows money in God’s name, something that he has done for so long and never paid the money back that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God’s sake. Please, examine De Formed about that charge.”

“I thank you for your care and honest pains,” Leonato replied.

“Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth [old man], and I praise God for you,” Dogberry replied.

Handing Dogberry some money, Leonato said, “Here is something for your good work.”

“God save the foundation!” Dogberry said, using a sentence spoken by professional beggars.

“You may go now,” Leonato said. “I will take care of your prisoners. Thank you.”

“I leave an arrant knave with your worship,” Dogberry said, “and I beg your worship to correct yourself [punish Borachio] to serve as an example to others. God keep your worship! I wish your worship well! God restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart [I will now humbly depart]; and if a merry meeting may be wished, may God prohibit [permit] it! Let’s go, Verges.”

Dogberry and Verges exited.

Leonato said to Don Pedro and Count Claudio, “Until tomorrow morning, lords, farewell.”

“As we promised, we will see you tomorrow morning,” Don Pedro said.

“Tonight I will go to Hero’s tomb to mourn her,” Claudio said.

Leonato said to the watchmen, “Bring the prisoners. We will talk to Margaret and find out how she became acquainted with this scoundrel.”

— 5.2 —

In Leonato’s garden, Benedick and Margaret talked.

“Please, sweet Mistress Margaret, earn my thanks by asking Beatrice to come and talk to me.”

“If I do, will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?”

“Yes,” Benedick said. “I will write it in so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall exceed its eloquence. It will be like a high stile that no man can climb and come over it. Truly, Margaret, you deserve it.”

“I deserve to have no man come over me!” Margaret said. “In that case, I will always sleep downstairs in the servants’ quarters. I will never have a husband who will be over me in our bed in our own household and cum.”

“Your wit is as quick as a greyhound’s mouth; it catches everything and makes a joke out of it.”

“Your wit is as blunt as a fencer’s foils, which hit, but do not hurt.”

“I have a very manly wit, Margaret,” Benedick said. “It will not hurt a woman, and so please ask Beatrice to come

and talk to me. I give up in this battle of wits. To show that I give up, I will give you my fencing buckler — my small, round shield.”

“Give us women swords,” Margaret said. “We have bucklers to press against your swords.”

Benedick was familiar with Margaret’s bawdy sense of humor. When conversing with Margaret, Benedick understood that swords are phalluses and that bucklers are women’s crotches.

Benedick said, “Margaret, each buckler has a hole in which a pike is inserted — it is screwed in. Screwing is a dangerous pastime for virgins.”

“I will ask Beatrice to come to you,” Margaret said. “I think that she has legs.”

“And because she has legs, she will come,” Benedick said, thinking, *I am sure that Margaret will think that I said, “And because she has legs, she will cum.”*

Margaret exited.

Benedick began to sing to himself a song about a sad lover hoping for attention from the woman he loved:

“The god of love,

“Who sits above,

“And knows me, and knows me,

“How pitiful I deserve —

“I am a poor singer, but I am a good lover. Leander was a good swimmer who swam across the Hellespont to see the woman he loved. Troilus was the first employer of panders to help him to see the woman he loved. These two men and a whole book full of these old-time ladies’ men who were

familiar with the carpeted floor of women's quarters, all of whose names fit smoothly in the even sound of a poem of blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned topsyturvy in love as I am. But although that is true, I cannot show my love in rhyme, although I have tried. I can find no rhyme for 'lady' but 'baby.' That is an innocent and silly rhyme for an innocent and silly baby. I can find no rhyme for 'scorn' but 'horn.' That is a hard rhyme for a hard horn. I can find no rhyme for 'school' but 'fool.' That is a babbling rhyme. These are very ominous words to put at the end of lines of poetry: baby ... horn ... fool. They would fit, however, for a poem about a foolish cuckold whose wife gives birth to another man's baby. Well, I was not born under a rhyming planet and so I receive no help from astrology. I am no poet, and I cannot woo a lady with flowery language."

Beatrice appeared, and Benedick said to her, "Sweet Beatrice, have you come because I asked Margaret to ask you to come? If so, I am delighted."

"Yes, I have come because you bid me to come, and I will leave when you bid me to leave, but the word 'bid' also means order, and I will leave if you begin to order me around."

"Please stay until then!"

"Until ... then? You have said the word 'then,' and so I should say 'fare you well' and leave," Beatrice said. "However, before I go, tell me what I came here to learn: What has happened between you and Claudio?"

"So far, we have only exchanged foul words, and with that I will kiss you."

"Is that all? Foul words are only foul wind, and foul wind is only foul breath, and foul breath stinks. You have had foul words in your mouth, and so your breath must stink;

therefore, I will depart unknissed.”

“Your wit is strong — so strong that it can frighten my words and so change their meaning,” Benedick said. “But I must tell you plainly that I have challenged Claudio. Either I will shortly hear from him about where and when we shall fight, or I will announce publicly that he is a coward. But now let me ask you, please, this question: Because of which of my bad character traits did you first fall in love with me?”

“I fell in love with you because of all of your bad character traits,” Beatrice said. “Your bad character traits are so well maintained in a state of evil that they will not admit any good character traits to intermingle with them. But now let me ask you, please, this question: Because of which of my good character traits did you first fall in love with me? For which one did you first suffer love for me?”

“‘Suffer love!’ That is a good expression!” Benedick said. “I do suffer love indeed, because I love you against my will.”

“You love me in spite of your heart,” Beatrice said. “Alas, poor heart! If you spite your poor heart for my sake, I will spite it for yours; I will never love that which my friend hates.”

“You and I are too wise and witty to woo peacefully.”

“Your words cannot be correct,” Beatrice said. “You say that you are wise, but not one wise man out of twenty will praise himself by saying that he is wise.”

“The proverb ‘A wise man will not praise himself’ is very old, Beatrice. It comes from the good old days when neighbors spoke well of other people. These days are different. These days, if a man does not erect his own tomb before he dies, he shall live no longer in memory than the

time it takes the bell to ring and the widow to weep.”

“And how long is that, do you think?”

“That is an interesting question,” Benedick said. “The funeral bell will ring for an hour, and the widow will weep for fifteen minutes. Therefore, it is most expedient for a wise man, if his conscience, which can be like a gnawing worm, finds no reason against it, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. But that is enough of my praising myself, although I myself bear witness that I am praiseworthy. Now tell me, how is Hero, your cousin?”

“She is very ill.”

“And how are you?”

“Very ill, too.”

“Serve God, love me, and get better,” Benedick said. “Now I should leave you because I see someone running here.”

Ursula ran up to Beatrice and said, “Madam, you must go to your uncle. All kinds of exciting things are going on at home. It has been proven that my Lady Hero has been falsely accused of being unchaste, Don Pedro and Claudio have been greatly deceived, and Don John, who has fled, is the instigator of all this evil. Will you go home immediately?”

“Will you go with us to hear this news, Benedick?” Beatrice asked.

“I will live in your heart, die in your lap from an orgasm, and be buried in your eyes when I see reflected in them my O face,” Benedick said, “and moreover I will go with you to your uncle’s home.”

They went inside Leonato’s house.

That night, Don Pedro, Claudio, some musicians, and a few attendants carrying burning torches entered the tomb in which they thought Hero was buried.

Claudio asked, "Is this the tomb of the family of Leonato?"

An attendant replied, "It is, my lord."

Claudio began to read a scroll that contained a poem that he had written about Hero:

"Done to death by slanderous tongues

"Was the Hero who here lies:

"Death, in recompense of her wrongs,

"Gives her fame that never dies.

"So the life that died with shame

"Lives in death with glorious fame."

Claudio hung the scroll containing the poem on a wall of the tomb and said, "Hang here in the tomb and praise Hero when I am silent. Now, music, play, and let us sing a solemn hymn."

Music started, and the mourners sang this song as they circled clockwise what they thought was Hero's resting place:

"Pardon, Diana, goddess of the night,

"Those who slew Hero, your virgin knight;

"For which, with songs of woe,

"Round about her tomb they go.

"Midnight, assist our moan;

"Help us to sigh and groan,

“Heavily, heavily:

“Graves, yawn and yield your dead,

“Until all the dead have exited,

“Heavily, heavily.”

Claudio said to the resting place that he thought was Hero’s, “Now to your bones I say good night! Yearly I will do this rite.”

Don Pedro said, “Good morrow, masters; put out your torches. The wolves have hunted all night — look, the gentle day, brought to us by the wheels of Phoebus Apollo’s Sun-chariot, dapples the drowsy East with spots of grey. Thanks to you all, and leave us. Fare you well.”

Claudio said goodbye to the other mourners: “Good morning, masters. Each of you must go his separate way.”

“Come, Claudio, let us leave us here,” Don Pedro said. “We need to change out of our mourning clothing and put on clothing suitable for a wedding. Then we will go to Leonato’s house.”

“May Hymen, the god of marriage, now give us a luckier result than this one for which we have this night mourned.”

— 5.4 —

Leonato, Antonio, Benedick, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, Friar Francis, and Hero were together in a room in Leonato’s house.

Friar Francis said, “Didn’t I tell you that Hero was innocent?”

“Yes, you did,” Leonato admitted. “Don Pedro and Claudio are also innocent, although they mistakenly accused Hero of not being a virgin. But Margaret bears some little fault

for all this, although her fault was unintentional, as we have learned from our investigation.”

Antonio said, “I am glad that things have turned out so well.”

“And so am I,” Benedick said, “or else I would have to fight Claudio in a duel, as I promised Beatrice I would do.”

Leonato said, “Well, daughter, and all of you gentlewomen, go into a room by yourselves, and when I send for you, come here wearing masks.”

Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula left the room.

Leonato said, “Don Pedro and Claudio promised to visit me right about now. You know what to do, brother Antonio. You must pretend to be the father of your brother’s daughter, Hero, and give her to young Claudio.”

“I will do so with a straight face,” Antonio said.

Benedick said, “Friar Francis, I must ask for your help.”

“To do what, Signior Benedick?”

“To bind me, or to undo me: one of them,” Benedick said. “Either I will be married today to the woman I love, or I will be undone in the sense of being ruined, although I hope to be undone — released — from my pose of being a misogynist.”

He then said, “Good Signior Leonato, it is true that Beatrice, your niece, regards me with an eye of favor. She loves me.”

“My daughter, Hero, lent her that eye,” Leonato said, thinking of how Hero and Margaret had tricked Beatrice into believing that Benedick loved her.

“And I do with an eye of love requite her,” Benedick said.

“I love her.”

“And you received your eye from me, Don Pedro, and Claudio,” Leonato said, thinking of how the three men, including himself, had tricked Benedick into believing that Beatrice loved him. “But what do you want?”

Benedick, who was puzzled by Leonato’s comments about eyes, said, “Your answers to me, sir, are enigmatic. But what my will wants is your good will. I want to stand with Beatrice beside me today as we are joined in marriage. And, good friar, I need you to perform that marriage.”

“I like what you want,” Leonato said. “I give you my blessing. You may marry Beatrice.”

“And you will receive my help,” Friar Francis said. “I will perform the wedding.”

He added, “Here come Don Pedro and Count Claudio.”

A few people accompanied Don Pedro and Claudio.

Don Pedro said, “Good morning to all in this fair assembly.”

“Good morning, Don Pedro,” Leonato said. “Good morning, Claudio. We have been waiting for you. Claudio, are you still resolved to marry my brother’s daughter today?”

“I am still resolved,” Claudio said. “I will marry her even if she is darkly suntanned like a peasant woman.”

Leonato said, “Bring her here, brother Antonio. The friar is ready to perform the wedding.”

Antonio left to get Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula.

Don Pedro looked at Benedick, who was a little worried about being teased by Don Pedro and Claudio when they

discovered that he would marry Beatrice.

Don Pedro said to Benedick, with whom he wanted to be again on good — and joking — terms, “Good morning, Benedick. Why, what is the matter? You have a February face that is full of frost, storm, and cloudiness.”

Benedick was worried — he had not actually asked Beatrice to marry him. If she rejected his proposal in public

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Claudio, who also wanted to be again on good — and joking — terms with Benedick, said, “I think that Benedick is thinking about the savage bull that was tamed to bear the yoke. Tut, fear not, Benedick. If you are ever tamed, we will tip your horns with gold to glorify your cuckoldry. All of Europe shall rejoice, like Europa once rejoiced when the lusty god Jupiter turned himself into a bull and carried her away to make love to her.”

Worried about whether Beatrice would accept his proposal of marriage, Benedick replied, “When Jupiter was a bull, he had an amiable lowing sound. Another strange bull jumped on your father’s cow, and made a calf in that same noble deed that Jupiter performed on Europa. That calf was very similar to you — you have that calf’s bleat.”

Claudio joked, “I’ll get you for that insult, but later. Right now, I have something else I need to do.”

Antonio returned. With him were Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, and Ursula, all of whom were wearing masks.

Claudio asked, “Which lady shall be mine?”

Antonio took Hero by the hand and led her to Claudio, saying, “This lady is she, and I do give her to you.”

“Why, then she is mine,” Claudio said. “Sweet lady, let me see your face.”

“No, you shall not,” Leonato said, “not until you take her hand before this friar and swear to marry her.”

Claudio said to the masked Hero, whom he did not recognize, “Give me your hand. Before this holy friar, I swear that I will be your husband, if you are willing to take me.”

Hero replied, “When I lived, I was your other wife.”

She took off her mask and said, “And when you loved me, you were my other husband.”

Claudio was amazed: “Another Hero!”

“Nothing is more certain than that I am Hero,” she replied. “One Hero died, defiled and slandered, but I live, and as surely as I live, I am a virgin.”

“This is the former Hero!” Don Pedro said, “This is the Hero who was dead!”

“Hero died, my lord, only while her slander lived,” Leonato said. “This is the one and only Hero.”

“All this amazement I can explain,” Friar Francis said, “after the holy rites of marriage are over. Then I will tell you in detail of beautiful Hero’s ‘death.’ In the meantime, ignore your wonder, and let us go immediately to the chapel.”

“Just a minute, Friar Francis,” Benedick said. “Which masked lady is Beatrice?”

Beatrice took off her mask and said, “I answer to that name. What do you want?”

“Do you love me?” Benedick asked.

Declaring one’s love in private is much easier than declaring one’s love in public, especially when you are

surrounded by friends who will laugh at you because you have so often spoken against love and marriage. Besides, the guy is supposed to be the first one to say that he is in love — and the first one to say that he will take someone as a spouse.

Beatrice replied, “Why, no — no more than is reasonable.”

“Why, then your uncle and Don Pedro and Claudio have been deceived; they swore you loved me,” Benedick said.

Beatrice asked, “Do you love me?”

“Indeed, I love you — no more than is reasonable,” Benedick said.

“Why, then Hero, Margaret, and Ursula have been deceived; they swore you loved me,” Beatrice said.

“Leonato and Don Pedro and Claudio swore that you were almost sick because you loved me so much.”

“Hero and Margaret and Ursula swore that you were almost dead because you loved me so much.”

“They were mistaken,” Benedick said. “Then you do not love me?”

Beatrice said, “No, truly, but I love you as a friend.”

The two lovers needed help.

Leonato said, “Come, Beatrice, I am sure that you love Benedick.”

Claudio said, “I swear that Benedick loves Beatrice. I have in my hand a piece of paper on which he has written a poem of his own invention. It is a badly written love poem, and in it he says that he loves Beatrice.”

Hero said, “And I have in my hand a piece of paper that I

have stolen from Beatrice's pocket. I recognize her writing, and in this letter she says that she loves Benedick."

Benedick said, "We needed a miracle, and we have received one. Here is evidence from our hands that reveal what is our hearts. Beatrice, I will take you for my wife, but —" he smiled, then joked, "I want everyone to know that I am marrying you because I pity you for loving me so much."

Beatrice replied, "I accept your offer of marriage, but —" she smiled, then joked, "I want everyone to know that I am marrying you only after quite a lot of persuasion and in part because I want to save your life, for I was told that you were dying because of your love for me."

"Be silent!" Benedick said. "I will stop your mouth."

They kissed.

"How is Benedick the soon-to-be-married man doing?" Don Pedro asked.

"I will tell you what, Don Pedro," Benedick replied, relieved that his proposal of marriage had been accepted. "An entire company of jokers cannot mock me out of my happy state of mind. Do you think that I worry about being mocked in a satire or an epigram? No. If a man worries about being beaten by brains, he will do nothing that would make him a target, such as wearing fancy clothing. In brief, since I do intend to marry — today, in fact — I will think nothing about whatever the world can say against me. Don't bother to mock me because of what I have said against marriage. Mankind is a giddy and inconstant thing, and this is the way that I have changed, and I like it."

He added, "Claudio, I would have defeated you in our duel, but since we are going to be related by our marriages, I will let you live unbruised so that you can love one of my new

in-laws: Hero.”

“I wish that you would have refused to marry Beatrice,” Claudio said. “That way, I could have beaten you and forced you to marry her. Then you could be a double-dealer — an unfaithful husband. Come to think of it, you are likely to be a double-dealer unless Beatrice keeps a close eye on you.”

“Come, come, we are friends,” Benedick said. “Let us dance before we are married, so that we may lighten our own hearts — and our wives’ heels.”

Leonato said, “Light heels! Have the wedding first, and then you can do your dancing in bed afterwards with your wives’ heels high in the air.”

“We will do that kind of dancing later, just as you wish,” Benedick said. “But now let us have a public kind of dancing. Therefore, musicians, play music. Don Pedro, you seem sad. Get yourself a wife; get yourself a wife. No staff is more honorable than one tipped with horn.”

A messenger entered the room and said to Don Pedro, “My lord, your brother, Don John, has been captured as he fled. Armed men are bringing him back to Messina.”

“Don’t worry about Don John until tomorrow,” Benedick said to Don Pedro. “I will think up some suitable and notable punishments for him.”

He shouted, “Strike up some music, pipers.”

Everyone danced.

Chapter X: THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

A Lord.

CHRISTOPHER SLY, a Tinker.

Hostess, Page, Players, Huntsmen, and Servants: Persons in the Introduction.

BAPTISTA, a rich Gentleman of Padua.

VINCENTIO, an old Gentleman of Pisa.

LUCENTIO, son to Vincentio; in love with Bianca.
Lucentio pretends to be a tutor named Cambio.

PETRUCHIO, a Gentleman of Verona; Suitor to Katharina.

GREMIO, HORTENSIO, Suitors to Bianca. Hortensio pretends to be a tutor named Litio.

TRANIO, BIONDELLO, Servants to Lucentio. Tranio pretends to be Lucentio.

GRUMIO, CURTIS, Servants to Petruchio.

PEDANT, an old man, set up to impersonate Vincentio.

KATHARINA, the Shrew, and BIANCA, Daughters to Baptista.

Widow.

Tailor, Haberdasher, and Servants attending on Baptista and Petruchio.

SCENE: Padua, Italy, and Petruchio's country house.

INTRODUCTION: PART 1 (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Tinkers — repairers of pots and pans — have a reputation for drinking way too much, and Christopher Sly lived up to that reputation. Right now, he was drunk and being thrown out of an alehouse because he had broken so many glasses. The arguing between Christopher Sly and the hostess of the inn had carried them a little distance from the alehouse. They were now on a heath that belonged to a Lord — they were near the Lord’s house.

“I’ll get even with you,” Christopher Sly threatened the hostess of the inn.

“And I’ll get a pair of stocks for you,” the hostess threatened back.

A pair of stocks was used to punish criminals. Their feet would be put in holes in wooden beams. Once their feet were secured, the criminals could not run away. If a crowd of people were angry at the criminal, they would torment the criminal.

“You are a baggage — a loose and good-for-nothing woman,” Christopher Sly replied. “The Slys are no rogues; look in the historical chronicles; we came in with Richard the Conqueror.”

The Hostess thought, *He means William the Conqueror, but since he got the name wrong, he is probably lying about his family’s historical importance.*

Christopher Sly continued, “Therefore *paucas pallabris* — I know my Spanish for ‘few words’ — let the world pass. *Sessa!* — I know my Spanish for ‘cease!’ ‘scram!’ and ‘shut up!’”

“You will not pay for the glasses you have broken?” the

hostess asked him.

“No, not a denier — not a penny. Here’s a quotation from Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*: ‘Go by, Jeronimy.’ Beware, Jeronimy.”

The Hostess thought, *It is an inaccurate quote. The character’s name in the play is Hieronimo, but this drunken tinker has mixed the name up with the name of Saint Jerome, aka Hieronymus.*

Christopher Sly added an insult for the Hostess, “Go to your cold bed, and do something that will warm you.”

“I know the remedy for my problem,” the Hostess said. “I must go and fetch the third borough — the constable.”

The Hostess left to fetch a constable.

“The third, or fourth, or fifth borough, I’ll answer him according to the law,” Christopher Sly said. “I’ll not budge an inch, wretch. Let him come, and welcome.”

A hunting horn soon sounded, and a Lord and his men came over to Christopher Sly, who had fallen asleep.

The Lord said, “Huntsman, I order you to take good care of my hounds. Let Merriman breathe and recover his breath; the poor hunting dog is foaming at the mouth. And couple Clowder with the deep-mouthed bitch. Did you see how Silver picked up the scent at the corner of the hedge when it was faintest? I would not lose the dog for twenty pounds.”

The first huntsman said, “Why, Bellman is as good as he, my Lord. He discovered the scent and cried out twice when it seemed completely lost. Trust me, I take him for the better dog.”

“You are a fool,” the Lord said. “If Echo were as fast, I would esteem him worth a dozen dogs such as Bellman.

But feed them well and look after them all. Tomorrow I intend to hunt again.”

“I will, my Lord.”

Seeing Christopher Sly, the Lord said, “Who is here? One dead, or drunk? Look and see whether he breathes.”

The second huntsman said, “He breathes, my Lord. Were he not warmed with ale, this would be a cold bed in which to sleep so soundly.”

“Oh, monstrous beast! How like a swine he lies!” the Lord said. “Grim death, how foul and loathsome is your image! Sleep is the counterfeit of death. Sirs, I will play a joke on this drunken man. What do you think — if he were carried to a bed and wrapped in fine and scented clothes, rings put upon his fingers, a most delicious light meal placed by his bed, and finely dressed attendants located near him when he wakes, would not the beggar then forget who he is? Wouldn’t he think that he is a Lord and not a beggar?”

“Believe me, Lord,” the first huntsman said. “I think he could not believe anything other than that he is a Lord.”

“Everything would seem strange to him when he awoke,” the second huntsman said.

“It would seem to him like a flattering dream or flight of imagination,” the Lord said. “Pick him up and carry out the jest well. Carry him gently to my best bedchamber and hang in it all my tapestries depicting amorous scenes. Bathe his foul head in warm rosewater made from distilled rose petals, and burn sweet wood such as juniper or pinecones to make the lodging smell good. Make sure that music is ready to play when he wakes — let the music make a melodious and a Heavenly sound. If he happens to speak, be ready to immediately and with a low submissive bow say, ‘What is it your honor will command?’ Let a servant

attend him with a silver basin full of rosewater and bestrewed with flowers. Let another servant bear a ewer — a large jug with a wide mouth. Let yet another servant bring a towel and say, ‘Will it please your Lordship to cool your hands?’ Let a servant be ready with an expensive suit of clothing and ask him what apparel he will wear. Another servant will tell him of his hounds and horses, and that his lady mourns because of his disease. Persuade him that he has been insane, and when he says he is out of his mind now, say that he is mistaken, for he is in fact a mighty Lord. Do these things and do them convincingly, gentle sirs. It will be an extremely excellent practical joke if we do things properly and without overdoing them.”

“My Lord, I promise you that we will play our parts well,” the first huntsman said, “and because we will skillfully and diligently play our parts he shall think he is no less than what we tell him he is: a Lord.”

“Pick him up gently and take him to bed,” the Lord said. “Each one be ready to perform his part when he wakes up.”

Some huntsmen carried out Christopher Sly as a trumpet sounded.

The Lord said to a servant, “Go and see what trumpet it is that sounds.”

A servant exited to carry out the order.

The Lord said, “Probably, the trumpet announces that some traveling noble gentleman intends to stay here tonight.”

The servant came back, and the Lord asked, “Who is it?”

“Sir, it is a group of actors who are offering their services to your Lordship. If you are willing, they will perform a play for you.”

“Tell them to come here.”

The actors came over to the Lord, who said to them, "Fellows, you are welcome here."

"Thank you," the actors replied.

"Do you intend to lodge with me tonight?"

"If it pleases your Lordship," an actor replied.

"It does, with all my heart," the Lord said.

He looked at an actor and said, "This fellow I remember. I once saw him play a farmer's eldest son. It was where you wooed the gentlewoman so well. I have forgotten the name of the character, but I remember that you were well suited for that part and performed it well and realistically."

The player replied, "I think it was the role of Soto that your honor means."

"Yes, that was it," the Lord said. "You performed the role excellently."

The Lord said to all the actors, "Well, you have come to me at a good time because I require some entertainment and your talents can assist me much. A Lord will hear your play tonight. But you must be capable of self-control. This Lord has never seen a play and he may behave oddly. I am afraid that if you pay too much attention to his odd behavior that you will begin to laugh at him and thereby offend him. I must tell you that if you even smile at him he will grow irritable."

An actor replied, "Fear not, my Lord. We can control ourselves even if he is the most eccentric and oddest man in the world."

The Lord ordered a servant, "Take these actors to the buttery — the liquor pantry — and give all of them a friendly welcome. Let them lack nothing that my house can

offer.”

The servant and the actors exited.

The Lord ordered another servant, “You go to Bartholomew, my young page, and tell him to dress himself up like a lady. Once that is done, take him to the drunkard’s bedchamber, and call Bartholomew ‘madam’ and pay him respect. Tell him from me that if he wants to earn my gratitude, he will behave in a dignified manner such as he has observed that noble ladies behave toward their husbands. Let him pretend to be the drunkard’s wife and act that way toward him. Let Bartholomew speak softly to the drunkard with humble courtesy and say, ‘What is it your honor will command, wherein your lady and your humble wife may show her duty to you and make known her love for you?’ And then with kind hugs, tempting kisses, and with her — that is, his — head lying on the drunkard’s chest, tell Bartholomew to shed tears, overjoyed to see her noble Lord restored to health, who for the past seven years has thought himself to be no better than a poor and loathsome beggar. If the boy Bartholomew does not have not a woman’s gift to rain a shower of tears at will, an onion will do well to cause such tears. An onion in a handkerchief being secretly conveyed to his eyes will make his eyes water and overflow with tears. See that this is done as quickly as you can. Soon I will give you more instructions.”

The servant exited.

The Lord said to himself, “I know the boy Bartholomew will well assume the grace, voice, walk, and bodily movement of a gentlewoman. I long to hear him call the drunkard ‘husband.’ I long to see how my men will stop themselves from laughing when they show respect to this simple peasant. I will go inside to give them their instructions. Perhaps my presence will dampen their over-

merry spirits that could easily grow into extremes.”

INTRODUCTION: PART 2 (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

Christopher Sly was lying on a bed in the Lord’s bedchamber. Around him were many servants. Some servants held fine clothing. Other servants held such items as a basin and a ewer. The Lord was also present.

Christopher Sly yelled, “For God’s sake, bring me a pot of small — weak and diluted — ale.”

The first servant asked, “Will it please your Lordship to drink a cup of imported sack?”

The second servant asked, “Will it please your Honor to taste this fruit preserved in sugar?”

The third servant asked, “What clothing will your Honor wear today?”

“I am Christophero Sly,” he responded, using a Spanish version of his name. “Do not call me ‘Honor’ or ‘Lordship.’ I have never drunk sack in my life — imported wine is too expensive for the likes of me and if you give me anything preserved in something else, then give me beef preserved in salt. Never ask me what clothing I will wear; for I have no more jackets than I have backs, no more stockings than I have legs, and no more shoes than I have feet. In fact, sometimes I have more feet than I have shoes, and sometimes when I do have shoes, my toes can be seen even when I am wearing the shoes.”

The Lord said, “May Heaven stop this foolish, absurd mood of yours! It is a pity that a mighty man of such descent, with such great possessions and held in so high esteem, should be infected with so foul an illness!”

“What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly’s son of Burton-heath, which is near Stratford-

upon-Avon, by birth a peddler, by education a cardmaker who makes combs for working with wool? Have I not had a job as a keeper of a trained bear, and am I not now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat wife of a keeper of an alehouse in Wincot, which is also near Stratford-upon-Avon, about me — ask her whether she knows me. If she does not say that I owe her fourteen pence on my tab just for ale, call me the lyingest knave in Christendom. Listen to me! I am not out of my mind. Here's —”

The third servant interrupted, “This is what makes your wife mourn!”

The second servant said, “This is what makes your servants hang their heads and feel sorrow for you!”

The Lord said, “This is why your relatives shun your house — it is as if your strange lunacy beats them away from your door. Oh, noble Lord, remember your birth. Call your former reason and original sanity home from banishment and banish from yourself these abject lowly dreams. Look how your servants serve you — each servant is ready to do your bidding. Do you want to hear music? Listen. Apollo, the god of music, plays for you.”

Music began to play.

The Lord continued, “And twenty caged nightingales sing for you. Or do you prefer to sleep? We will have for you a couch made up that is softer and more perfumed than the bed made up for Semiramis, the Assyrian Queen who was famous for her sexual appetite. Do you wish to walk? We will spread rushes before you to walk on. Do you wish to ride on horseback? Your horses shall be draped in decorative coverings and their harnesses studded and decorated with gold and pearls. Do you wish to go hawking? You own hawks that will soar above the morning

larks. Or do you wish to hunt? Your hounds shall make the welkin — the sky — answer their cries. Shrill echoes will come from the depths of the earth.”

The first servant said, “If you wish to hunt hares, your greyhounds are as swift as rested stags — indeed, they are fleeter than the young deer.”

The second servant said, “Do you wish to look at pictures? We will immediately fetch for you a painting of Adonis by a running brook and Venus, who loved him, hidden among rushes that seem to play amorously as they are moved by her sighs as she spies on him. The rushes move with her breath just like they move when wind blows over them.”

The Lord said, “If you want us to, we will show you a painting of Io when she was a maiden and Jupiter tricked her and visited her to make love to her. Afterward, Jupiter’s wife, Juno, changed Io into a cow. This painting is very realistic.”

The third servant said, “Or we will show you a painting of Daphne fleeing from Apollo in a thorny wood — the thorns scratch her legs and she cries. This painting is done so realistically that you shall swear she bleeds. Even the god Apollo would weep at that sad sight because the blood and tears are painted so skillfully.”

“You are a Lord, and nothing but a Lord,” the Lord said to Christopher Sly. “You have a wife who is far more beautiful than any other woman in this corrupt and declining age.”

The first servant said, “Until the tears that she has shed for you flowed over her lovely face like malicious floods, she was the most beautiful woman in the world. Even now, she is inferior to none.”

The mention of a wife — a bed-partner — interested

Christopher Sly, who said, “Am I a Lord? And have I such a wife? Do I dream? Or have I dreamed until now? I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak; I smell sweet fragrances and I feel soft things. Upon my life, I am a Lord indeed. I am not a tinker, and I am not Christopher Sly. Well, bring my wife here before me. And, as I said before, bring me a pot of the smallest ale.”

The second servant said, “Will it please your mightiness to wash your hands? Oh, how we rejoice to see your sanity and wit restored! Oh, that once more you knew but what you are! These fifteen years you have been in a dream. Even when you were awake, it was as if you slept.”

“These fifteen years!” Christopher Sly said. “By God, that is quite a nap. But didn’t I ever speak in all that time?”

The first servant replied, “Oh, yes, my Lord, but you spoke very silly words. Although you lay here in this fine bedchamber, yet you would say that you were being beaten out of a tavern. And you would shout about the hostess of the tavern and say that you would take her to court because she brought stone jugs of watered-down ale instead of quarts with seals guaranteeing quality. Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hacket.”

“Yes, she is the landlady’s maiden daughter,” Christopher Sly said.

The third servant said, “Why, sir, you know no such tavern and no such maiden daughter. You also do not know these men whom you have referred to: Stephen Sly and John Naps of Greet, a village near Stratford-upon-Avon. You also do not know Peter Turph and Henry Pimpernell and twenty more such names and men as these who have never existed and whom no one has ever seen.”

“May God be thanked for my good improvement!” Christopher Sly said.

To that, everyone present said, "Amen."

"Thank you," Christopher Sly said. "You will be rewarded for your good wishes."

Dressed in women's clothing, Bartholomew, the Lord's page, entered the bedchamber, along with some servants.

"How fares my noble Lord?" Bartholomew asked.

"I fare well because here is lots of hospitable entertainment," Christopher Sly replied.

He added, "Where is my wife?"

"Here I am, my noble Lord," Bartholomew replied. "What do you want?"

"Are you my wife and will not call me husband?" Christopher Sly said. "My men should call me 'Lord.' I am your goodman: your husband."

"You are my husband and my Lord, my Lord and my husband," Bartholomew said. "I am your wife in all obedience. I have promised to love, honor, and obey you."

"I well know it," Christopher Sly replied.

He asked the others present, "What must I call her?"

The Lord replied, "Madam."

"Alice Madam, or Joan Madam?" Christopher Sly asked.

"Just 'Madam,' and nothing else," the Lord said. "That is the way that Lords call their wives."

"Madam Wife, they say that I have dreamed and slept some fifteen years or more," Christopher Sly said.

"That is true, and the time seems like thirty years to me," Bartholomew said. "All those years I have been banished

from your bed.”

“That is a very long time,” Christopher Sly said.

He added, “Servants, leave me and her alone.”

He then said to Bartholomew, “Madam, undress and come to bed now.”

Thinking quickly, Bartholomew said, “Three times noble Lord, let me beg of you to excuse me from fulfilling your request until a night or two have passed, or, if you will not, to wait until the Sun sets. Your physicians have strictly ordered me to stay out of your bed for a while because you are still at risk of becoming ill again. I hope that you accept this reason for my staying out of your bed at this time. I hope that you will let this reason stand.”

“This reason is not the only thing standing,” Christopher Sly, glancing at a bump in the bedding immediately over his crotch. “It will be difficult for me to wait a day or two or even until the Sun sets. However, I would hate to fall ill and vanish into my dreams again. I will therefore wait to bed you despite what my flesh and the blood in it urge me to do.”

A messenger entered the bedchamber and said, “Your honor’s actors, hearing about your improvement, have come to perform a pleasant comedy because your doctors believe it will be good for you. Your doctors believe that you are much too sad and that your sadness has slowed your blood. They also believe that melancholy leads to madness. Therefore, they thought it good that you watch a play that will fill your mind with mirth and merriment. Laughter prevents a thousand harms and lengthens life.”

“I will watch it; let the actors perform it,” Christopher Sly said. “But what is a comondy? Is it a Christmas game or dance, or is it a tumbling-trick and acrobatics?”

Bartholomew thought, *He is unfamiliar with the word "comedy."*

Bartholomew said, "No, my good Lord; a comedy is more pleasing stuff."

"What stuff — household stuff?" Christopher Sly said.
"Like a husband stuffing a wife with semen?"

"It is a kind of history," Bartholomew said.

"Well, we will see it," Christopher Sly said. "Come, Madam Wife, sit by my side and let the world slip by. Right now is the youngest that we will be for the rest of our lives."

CHAPTER 1 (The Taming of the Shrew)

— 1.1 —

Lucentio and Tranio, his servant, had just arrived in Padua, Italy. They were conversing in a public street.

Lucentio said, “Tranio, I have always wanted to see beautiful Padua, nursery of learning and home of a famous university founded in 1228. I have now arrived in Padua while on my way to fruitful Lombardy, which is the pleasant garden of great Italy. With my father’s love and permission, I have come here with his good will and your good company. My trusty servant, you have shown yourself to be good in every way. Here let us rest and perhaps begin a course of learning and ingenious studies.

“I was born in Pisa, which is renowned for grave and serious citizens, and my father, a merchant of great business throughout the world, was born there before me. My father is Vincentio, whose great and wealthy family is the Bentivolii. I, Vincentio’s son, was brought up in Florence. It is only right that I should fulfill the hopes conceived of me, and add virtuous deeds of my own to my father’s wealth and his own virtuous deeds.

“Therefore, Tranio, here I will study ethics and virtue and that part of philosophy that details how to achieve happiness by being virtuous — yes, I will study Aristotelian ethics. Aristotle taught that the way to become happy is through living a virtuous life.

“Tell me what you think. I have left Pisa and have come to Padua. I feel overwhelmed, like a man who leaves a shallow puddle and plunges into deep water and seeks to completely quench his thirst.”

“*Mi perdonato* — pardon me — my gentle master,” Tranio replied. “I am of the same mind as yourself; I think the same way that you think and feel the same way that you feel. I am glad that you thus continue your resolve to suck the sweets of sweet philosophy through its study.

“However, good master, while we do admire this virtue and this moral discipline, let us please not become Stoics or stocks. Stoics are philosophers who endure everything, and stocks are unfeeling blocks of wood that appreciate nothing. Let us take a middle path and appreciate the pleasures we have while enduring the pains we must. Let us not devote ourselves so completely to Aristotle’s disciplines that we neglect to read Ovid, a poet of love and seduction. Let us not make Ovid an outcast in our lives.

“This is what I advise: Engage in formal argument and logic with the friends that you have and practice rhetoric — the art of communication — in your common conversation. Allow music and poetry to quicken and entertain your senses and your spirits. Study mathematics and metaphysics for only as long as you are interested in them. No profit can be acquired where no pleasure is taken: You will not learn unless you take pleasure in the learning. In brief, sir, study what you most enjoy.”

“Many thanks, Tranio, you advise me well,” Lucentio said.

He added, “If Biondello, my other servant, had come ashore, we could at once get started and find a lodging fit to entertain the friends we will make here in Padua.”

He noticed some people coming out into the street and said, “But wait. Who are these people?”

“I’m guessing that they are here to welcome us,” Tranio said. He knew that was not true.

Several people arrived, including Baptista and his two

daughters, Katherina and Bianca. Katherina was the older of the two young and pretty daughters. Also present were Gremio and Hortensio, both of whom were courting Bianca. Gremio was an old man. From a short distance away, Lucentio and Tranio watched them.

Baptista said to Gremio and Hortensio, “Gentlemen, beg me no more. You know that I have made up my mind. I will not allow Bianca, my younger daughter, to marry until Katherina has married. I know you well and respect you well. If either of you wishes to court Katherina, you have my permission to do so.”

Gremio thought to himself, *Court Katherina? Cart her, more likely. Prostitutes and shrews are driven around in carts in public and humiliated. Of course, Katherina is not a prostitute — she is a shrew, an ill-mannered, disobedient, and rude woman. She is too rough for me.*

Gremio asked, “Hortensio, will you take a wife? Why not marry Katherina?”

Katherina said to her father, “Sir, are you trying to make a whore of me amongst these mates? Am I to be given to anyone who asks for me?”

Hortensio said, “Mates, young maiden! What do you mean by that? You will get no mate — no husband — until you are of a gentler and milder character.”

“Sir, you shall never need to fear marrying me,” Katherina said. “Indeed, marriage is not even halfway to my heart — I have no interest in marriage. But even if I did, I would prefer to hit you over your silly head with a three-legged stool and paint your face red with blood and treat you like a fool rather than marry you.”

Hortensio replied, “From all such devils may the good Lord deliver us!”

“And may the good Lord deliver me from all such devils!”
Gremio said.

Tranio said to Lucentio, “Master, here is some good entertainment. That wench is either stark raving mad or wonderfully ill mannered.”

“But in the other young woman, I see a maiden’s mild behavior and modesty,” Lucentio said, adding, “Now be quiet, Tranio.”

“Well said, master,” Tranio said. “I will be quiet as you gaze your fill at that modest young maiden.”

“Gentlemen, I hope that I may soon make good on what I have said — I hope to soon find a husband for Katherina,”
Baptista said.

He added, “Good Bianca, go inside now. We don’t need you to be outside so that men can see you and fall in love with you and want to marry you. At least not until your sister is married. And don’t be unhappy that you have to wait to get married until after your older sister is married. I will still love you, my girl.”

Katherina said, “Bianca is her father’s pet. She can make herself cry whenever she wants — she puts her finger in her eye.”

Bianca replied, “Sister, be content although I am discontent.”

She added to her father, “Sir, I will humbly obey you. My books and musical instruments shall be my company. I will read my books and practice my music in solitude.”

“Tranio, when she speaks it is as if we are hearing the voice of Minerva, goddess of wisdom,” Lucentio said.

“Signior Baptista, will you be so unnatural a father?”

Hortensio asked. "I am sorry that our good will has caused grief for Bianca."

"Why will you cage Bianca up, Signior Baptista, because of this fiend of hell, her older sister?" Gremio asked. "Why make Bianca bear the punishment of Katherina's sharp tongue?"

"Gentlemen, I have made my decision," Baptista said. "You will have to be content with it. I will not change my mind."

Baptista thought, *Women should be married. If I will not allow Bianca to marry until after Katherina is married, perhaps Bianca's suitors will help me to find a husband for Katherina.*

He added, "Go inside the house, Bianca."

She obeyed.

Baptista said to Gremio and Hortensio, "Because I know that Bianca takes much delight in listening to music, playing musical instruments, and reading poetry, I plan to hire tutors to stay in my house and teach her. If you, Hortensio, or you, Signior Gremio, know any such tutors capable of teaching my young daughter, send them to me. I will pay intelligent tutors well; I am willing to spend liberally to raise and educate my children well. And so to you I say farewell."

He said to his older daughter, "Katherina, you may stay outside for now because I have more to say to Bianca."

Baptista went inside his house.

Katherina said, "I trust I may go inside the house, too — why shouldn't I? What, shall I be appointed hours for when I can see my own father? Does he think that I am so stupid that I don't know what is valuable, that I don't know what

to take and what to leave behind?"

She went inside the house.

Gremio, the old man who was hoping to marry Bianca, said about Katherina, "You may go to the devil's dam — the devil's mother is even worse than the devil! The devil's mother is the archetypal shrew! Your character is such that no one will stop you from leaving!"

To Hortensio, Gremio said, "Our love of women is not so important that we cannot wait patiently and do without for a while. Neither of us has gotten Bianca for a wife, and our failure is as if we have gotten a badly baked cake — our cake is mostly dough. Farewell. Yet, because of the love I bear my sweet Bianca, if I can by any means find a fit man who can teach her that wherein she delights, I will recommend him to her father."

"So will I, Signior Gremio," Hortensio replied, "but listen to me, please. Though the nature of our competition for Bianca's hand in marriage has never allowed us to really talk to each other, we should realize that now we ought to work together so that we may yet again have access to our fair mistress and be happy rivals in Bianca's love. If we work together to effect one thing specially, we can return to wooing Bianca."

"What thing is that, I ask?"

"Sir, to get a husband for her sister, Katherina."

"A husband! You must mean a devil!"

"I say, a husband."

"And I say, a devil. Do you think, Hortensio, that although Katherina's father is very rich, any man would be so great a fool as to be married to a hellion?"

“Tush, Gremio, although it is beyond your patience and mine to endure her loud and startling cries, why, man, there are good fellows in the world, if a man could find them, who would take her with all her faults, and with quite a lot of money.”

“I don’t know about that, but I do know that I would just as soon take her dowry with the condition that I be publicly whipped at the center of town every morning as I would with the condition that I endure her shrewishness.”

“As you say, there is little choice when it comes to choosing between rotten apples,” Hortensio said. “But, this obstacle to a possible future happy married life with Bianca should make us temporary friends and allies, and so we ought to work together to help Baptista’s elder daughter, Katherina, to find a husband so that we can set his younger daughter, Bianca, free to find a husband. After we accomplish that, we can go back to being rivals and competitors.

“Sweet Bianca! May the winner’s prize make him happy! He who runs fastest gets the ring — the prize of a wedding ring. What do you say, Signior Gremio?”

“I am agreed, and I would give Katherina’s suitor the best horse in Padua to begin his wooing if he would thoroughly woo her, wed her and bed her, and rid the house of her! Let’s go.”

Gremio and Hortensio exited.

Tranio looked at Lucentio and realized that Lucentio was in love. He asked, “Is it possible that you can have fallen in love so quickly?”

“Tranio, until it happened to me, I never thought it was possible or likely, but while I idly stood and watched this scene, I found the effect of the flower named love-in-

idleness, which causes people to fall in love. And now I honestly do confess to you, who are to me as trustworthy and as dear as Anna was to her sister, Dido, the Queen of Carthage, that I burn and I long for this young maiden named Bianca. I will perish, Tranio, if I do not win this young modest girl as my wife. Give me good advice, Tranio, for I know that you can. Help me, Tranio, for I know that you will.”

“Master, it is not the right time to scold you. Scolding you will not drive love from your heart. If love has touched you, nothing remains but this: ‘*Redime te captum quam queas minimo*’ — ‘Ransom yourself from captivity as cheaply as you can.’”

“Many thanks, lad,” Lucentio said. “Continue. What you have said pleases me. The rest of what you have to say will also please me because you give me good advice.”

“Master, you looked so long and so longingly on the maiden that I am afraid that you did not notice what is the most important thing facing you.”

“I saw sweet beauty in her face,” Lucentio said. “Such beauty Europa, the daughter of Agenor, had. Jupiter fell in love with her, assumed the form of a bull, and carried her away to Crete. Jupiter knelt before her and kissed her hand. Europe was named after her.”

“Didn’t you notice anything else?” Tranio asked. “Didn’t you notice how her older sister, Katherina, began to scold and raise up such a storm that mortal ears could hardly endure the din?”

“Tranio, I saw Bianca’s coral lips move — with her breath she perfumed the air. Everything I saw in her was sacred and sweet.”

Tranio said to himself, “It is time for me to wake him from

his trance.”

To Lucentio, he said, “Please, wake up, sir. If you love the maiden, take thought and use your wits to win her. This is how it stands: Her older sister is so curst and ill tempered that until the father rids his hands of her, your loved one must live and stay at home. Her father has tightly caged her up so that no suitors can woo her.”

“Ah, Tranio, what a cruel father he is! But let us remember that he is taking some care to get knowledgeable schoolmasters to tutor her.”

“I know that, sir, and I have a plan.”

“So do I,” Lucentio said.

“I am guessing that we have both come up with the same plan.”

“Tell me your plan first,” Lucentio said.

“You will pretend to be a tutor and undertake to teach the maiden. Is that your plan, too?”

“It is. Can it be done?”

“It is not possible,” Tranio said, “for who shall play your part, and pretend to be you, Vincentio’s son, in Padua here. Who will stay in your house and study your books, welcome your friends, and visit your countrymen and entertain them?”

“*Basta* — enough. Don’t worry. I know what to do. We have not yet been seen by anyone, and so no one knows our faces. No one knows who is the master and who is the servant. Therefore, Tranio, you shall pretend to be me. You will live in my dwelling and live my lifestyle and hire servants to wait on you just as if you were me. I will pretend to be someone else — some Florentine, or some

Neapolitan, or a lower-class man of Pisa. That is our plan. Tranio, take off your servant's dark-colored hat and cloak and instead put on my brightly colored hat and cloak."

They exchanged hats and cloaks.

"When Biondello comes, he will pretend to be your servant and wait on you. I will talk to him first so that he will hold his tongue and keep our secret."

"It is a good idea to talk to Biondello and advise him what to do," Tranio said. "Sir, I am required to be obedient, for so your father ordered me to be at our parting — he said, 'Do your best to serve my son' — although I do not think that he had this in mind. Because of his order and because this is what you want me to do, I am happy to pretend to be Lucentio because I love and respect Lucentio."

"Tranio, be of good service to me because I am in love. I will pretend to be a tutor — a servant — in order to win Bianca as my wife — the young woman with whom at first sight I have fallen in love."

Lucentio looked up and said, "Here comes the rogue — my servant Biondello — now."

Biondello walked up to them.

"What have you been up to?" Lucentio asked him.

"What have I been up to!" Biondello said. "What have you two been up to? Master, has my fellow Tranio stolen your clothes? Or have you stolen his? Or have each of you stolen the other's clothes? Just what is going on?"

"Listen, this is no time to jest," Lucentio said. "Behave soberly because the situation demands it."

He then began to lie to convince Biondello to be quiet about the exchange of identities: "Your fellow Tranio here,

to save my life, has put on my apparel and is pretending to be me. I have put on his apparel and am pretending to be him in order to save my life. After I came ashore, I quarreled with and killed a man and I am afraid that I was seen. Pretend to be Tranio's servant — that's an order. I need you to do that while I run away from here to save my life. Do you understand?"

"Do I understand? Of course!" Biondello said, but he thought, *Do I understand? Of course not!*

"And be sure not to call Tranio by his real name. Tranio is now Lucentio."

"Good for him," Biondello said. "I wish that I could say the same thing about me."

Tranio said, "I would grant your wish if granting it meant that Lucentio indeed would win Baptista's younger daughter as his wife. But my promotion is not for my sake but for Lucentio's. Please be careful to address me as Lucentio in public and whenever other people are around. When we are alone, why, then I am Tranio. But when we are not alone, I am Lucentio, your master."

"Tranio, let's go," Lucentio said. "One thing more needs to be done, and you will have to do it. You will have to be one of the suitors wooing Bianca. If you ask me why, I will not tell you, except to say that I have very good reasons for why you should do it."

The actors exited, and the first servant said to Christopher Sly, "My Lord, you nod and are ready to fall asleep. You are not watching the play."

"Yes, I am," Christopher Sly said. "It is a good play, surely. Is there any more of it?"

Bartholomew said, "My Lord, it has barely begun."

“It is a very excellent piece of work, Madam Lady,” Christopher Sly said, but he thought, *I wish the play were over!*

— 1.2 —

Petruchio and his servant Grumio stood on a street in front of Hortensio’s house in Padua.

Petruchio said, “Verona, for a while I have taken my leave of you so that I could travel to see my friends in Padua. Of all my friends, my best beloved and approved friend is Hortensio, and I think that this is his house. Grumio, knock here, I say.”

“Knock, sir! Whom should I knock? Has a man rebused your worship?”

Petruchio thought, *Rebused? He means, abused and rebuked. Grumio plays games with me and deliberately pretends to misinterpret what I order him to do. I have never been able to tame him and make him stop his misbehavior.*

“Knock here, and knock hard. Pound here, and pound hard.”

“Pound you, sir! Who do you think I am! Why should I pound on you?”

“Knock here before this door. Knock hard, or I will knock your head.”

“My master has grown quarrelsome,” Grumio said. “If I follow your orders and knock hard on you before this door, I doubt very much that you will be pleased. I might hit you first, but you will hit me harder.”

“You won’t obey my orders!” Petruchio said. “If you won’t knock, I will ring — I will either ring the bell or wring your

ears. Since it is a servant's duty to ring the bell, I know what a master should do — I will make you sing *sol-fa* in pain.”

He grabbed Grumio's ears and wrung — twisted — them.

Grumio fell to the ground and shouted, “Help! My master is insane!”

“Now knock when I tell you to knock!”

Hortensio came to the door of his house and said, “What's going on? What's the matter? My old friend Grumio! And my good friend Petruchio! How is everyone in Verona?”

“Signior Hortensio, have you come to break up the fight?” Petruchio asked, “*Con tutto il cuore, ben trovato* — with all my heart I am glad to see you.”

Hortensio said, “Get up, Grumio, get up. We will settle this argument.”

He said to Petruchio, “*Alla nostra casa ben venuto, molto honorato signor mio Petruchio* — welcome to our house, much honored Petruchio.”

To Grumio, Hortensio said, “Get up. We will settle this quarrel.”

“It does not matter what he alleged to you in Latin,” Grumio replied.

There he goes again, Petruchio thought. He is Italian, and he knows that we are speaking Italian, not Latin. He willfully misunderstands me.

Grumio continued, “I now have a lawful reason to leave his service. Why, he ordered me to knock him and to pound on him! Is it fitting for a servant to obey such orders! He must be drunk or a card short of a full deck! Maybe I should have obeyed his orders. Maybe things would have worked

out better for me.”

“He is a foolish villain!” Petruchio said. “Good Hortensio, I ordered the rascal to knock on your door and for the life of me I could not get him to do it.”

“Knock on the door!” Grumio said. “Hardly! You spoke to me and clearly said, ‘Knock here, and knock hard. Pound here, and pound hard.’ I didn’t know that you were talking about the door! What else was I to think other than you were ordering me to hit you and to pound on you? And you tell me now that you were ordering me to knock on the door?”

“Either get out of here, or shut up,” Petruchio said to Grumio. “I am warning you.”

“Petruchio, have patience,” Hortensio said. “Grumio will behave now. Why, this is a bad business between you and him. Grumio is your old, trusty, amusing servant. And tell me now, sweet friend, what happy wind blows you here to Padua from old Verona?”

“It is such a wind as scatters young men throughout the world to seek their fortunes farther than at home where little experience can be found,” Petruchio said. “But in a few words, Signior Hortensio, this is how it stands with me: Antonio, my father, has died, and I have thrust myself into this maze of a world to — with any luck — happily to wive and thrive as best I may. I have money in my wallet and property at home, and so I have come abroad to see the world and to seek a wife.”

“Petruchio, should I speak frankly to you and tell you where to find a woman who would make a shrewish and ill-tempered and sharp-tongued wife? I am afraid that you would thank me but little for my information, yet I promise you she shall be rich — very rich. However, you are too good a friend of mine for me to wish that you would marry

her.”

“Signior Hortensio, between two such friends as we are, a few words are enough for us to understand each other,” Petruchio said. “Therefore, if you know a woman who is rich enough to be Petruchio’s wife — and I want to marry a rich woman — then tell me about her.

“I do not care if she is as foul as was the wife of Florentius, a knight who quested to find the answer to the question ‘What do all women most desire?’ An ugly hag gave him the right answer — ‘to be the ruler of a man’s love’ — but he had to marry her. In that case, all worked out because on their wedding night, the ugly hag turned into a beautiful young woman, She, the daughter of the King of Sicily, had been enchanted.

“I also do not care if she is as old as the Sibyl who was granted a wish by Apollo, god of light and music. She reached down and grabbed as much sand as she could and then asked to live as many years as she held grains of sand in her hand. In this case, things did not work out. She forgot to ask for eternal youth, and so she grows older and older and older and when she is asked what she wants, she replies that she wants to die.

“I also do not care if she is shrewish as — or worse than — Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates. She was so shrewish that Socrates turned to philosophy to acquire the patience to cope with her.

“This shrew whom you are talking about does not frighten or worry me or lessen my desire to marry a rich wife, and she would not even if she were as rough and violent as the swelling Adriatic seas. I come to wive it wealthily in Padua; and if I wive it wealthily in Padua, then I will wive it happily in Padua.

“I do not care if she is ugly, old, and ill tempered. I do care

that she is rich — if I am to marry her, she must bring money to me.”

Petruchio clearly stated that what he looked for in a wife was the money that she would bring him. He also implied that money was all he looked for in a wife. However, his future actions would show that he wanted much more than just the money that a wife with a very rich father could bring him.

Grumio said, “My master speaks frankly and clearly. If you give him enough gold, he will be happy to marry a puppet or a small figurine or an old hag with not even a single tooth in her head even if she has as many diseases as fifty-two horses. Why, he will marry anything and see nothing amiss provided that he receives money from the marriage.”

“Petruchio, since I have told you so much already, even though I was joking, I will continue to give you information about the shrew and her father,” Hortensio said. “I can, Petruchio, help you to get a wife who has much wealth, who is young and beautiful, and who was brought up as best becomes a gentlewoman. Her only fault, and it is a grievous fault, is that she is intolerably curst and ill tempered and shrewish and perverse, so beyond all measure and to such an extreme that, were my financial situation far worse than it is, I would not wed her even if I were to get a gold mine in recompense.”

“Hortensio, peace!” Petruchio said. “You don’t know the effect that gold has on me. Tell me her father’s name and it will be all I need; for I will board her as though I were a pirate attacking a merchant ship — even though she chide and grumble as loud as thunder when the clouds in autumn crack with lightning.”

“Her father is Baptista Minola. He is an affable and courteous gentleman. Her name is Katherina Minola. She is

famous in Padua for her sharp and scolding tongue.”

“I know her father, though I do not know her. Her father knew my late father well. I will not sleep, Hortensio, until I see her. So therefore let me be thus so rude to you as to leave you so quickly after we have met — unless you will accompany me as I visit her father and her.”

“Please, sir,” Grumio said, “let him go while the mood lasts. I swear that if she knew Petruchio as well as I do, she would think that scolding him would have little effect upon him. She may perhaps call him ‘knave’ half a score times or so, but that’s nothing to him. Why, once he begins to reply to her, he will scold her with his own rope-tricks.”

Petruchio thought, *Grumio means rhetoric or perhaps tricks that would best be punished by hanging — or perhaps both.*

Grumio continued, “I’ll tell you what, sir, if she withstands him even a little bit, he will throw an insulting figure of speech in her face and so disfigure her with it that she shall have no more eyes to see with than a cat that has been fighting with another cat that has scratched out its eyes.”

“Wait a moment, Petruchio,” Hortensio said. “I will go with you. For in Baptista’s keep — his inner sanctum — he keeps my treasure. There he hides away his younger daughter, beautiful Bianca, the jewel of my life. He is keeping her away from me and from all her other suitors — my rivals for her love. Baptista wants Katherina to be married. Knowing how difficult — or perhaps impossible — it is for such a marriage to take place because of her shrewish defects that I have told you about, Baptista has decreed that no suitor shall have access to Bianca until Katherina the curst — the ill tempered — has gotten a husband. Baptista is clever: He believes that by not allowing Bianca to be married until Katherina is married,

Bianca's suitors will help him find a husband for Katherina."

Grumio declared, "Katherina the curst! Katherina the ill tempered! Those are the worst titles for a maiden who is the worst!"

"Petruccio, my friend, I want you to do me a favor," Hortensio said. "I will disguise myself with a beard and sober academic clothing so that I look like a fully qualified tutor, and you, Petruccio, will introduce me to old Baptista and recommend that I become a music tutor to Bianca. With this trick, I will have the opportunity to see her. Unsuspected by Baptista, I can be alone with Bianca and woo her."

"Here's no knavery!" Grumio said sarcastically. "Look at how the young folks lay their heads together to find a way to fool the old folks!"

Gremio and Lucentio, who was disguised as a tutor, appeared on the street in front of Hortensio's house.

Grumio said to Hortensio, "Look! Who are those people?"

"Be quiet, Grumio," Hortensio replied. "The older man is my rival for the love of Bianca."

He added, "Petruccio, let us stand here, off to the side, for a while and spy on them."

Grumio said sarcastically about Gremio, an old man, "He is a fine young man and an amorous and romantic young man!"

Gremio said to the disguised Lucentio, "Very well. I have read over this list of books for when you tutor Bianca. Buy them unbound and have them very beautifully bound. Make sure that they are all books about love — do not give her any other kind of lessons because I want her to think about

love and marriage. You understand me. Signior Baptista will pay you to tutor Bianca; I will give you additional money to represent my interests. Take the paper that you will use in the lessons and let me have it very well perfumed because Bianca is sweeter than perfume itself. What will you read to her?”

“Whatever I read to her, I will plead your love for her as well and strongly as if you, my patron, were standing in front of her. I may even be able to plead your case better than you yourself could — unless you were a scholar, sir.”

“What a wonderful thing learning is!” Gremio said. “Scholars are so proficient with words that they must be very wise.”

“What a wonderful ass is this stupid woodcock!” Grumio said. “Woodcocks are so easily caught in traps that they must be very stupid.”

“Be quiet!” Petruchio said to Grumio.

“Grumio, be quiet,” Hortensio said.

He then said, “God bless you, Signior Gremio.”

“We are well met, Signior Hortensio,” Gremio replied. “Do you know where I am going? To visit Baptista Minola. I promised to inquire carefully about a tutor for the beautiful Bianca, and by good fortune I have found this young man, who is just the tutor she needs. He is learned and has good manners, and he is well read in poetry and other books — all of them good ones, I promise you.”

“That is good,” Hortensio replied. “I myself have met a gentleman who has promised to help me to find an additional tutor for Bianca: a fine musician. Therefore, I will also be able to serve beautiful Bianca, who is so beloved by me.”

“She is so beloved by me,” Gremio said. “My deeds will prove that.”

“So will his moneybags,” Grumio said.

“Gremio, this is not the time to express our love for Bianca,” Hortensio said. “Listen to me, and if you are polite, I will tell you news that is equally good for both of us. Here is a gentleman whom I met by chance. If you and I can come to a financial agreement that is acceptable to him, he will woo curst Katherina — and marry her, if her dowry pleases him.”

“If he actually does what he says he will do, it is good,” Gremio said. “Hortensio, have you told him all her faults?”

Petruchio said, “I know she is an irksome and brawling scold. If that be all, sirs, I hear no harm that can stop me from wooing and marrying her.”

“Are you sure?” Gremio asked. “Where are you from?”

“I was born in Verona, and I am old Antonio’s son,” Petruchio said. “My father is dead, and I inherited his fortune, and I hope to live a good and long life.”

“Sir, such a life, with such a wife, is unlikely!” Gremio said. “But if you have a stomach for it, and you want to woo and marry Katherina, then go to it, by God! You shall have my help in so doing. But do you really intend to woo this wildcat?”

“Do I really intend to continue to breathe and to live?” Petruchio replied.

“Will he woo her?” Grumio said. “Yes, or I’ll hang her. Why should she escape bad fortune? I am not sure which — Petruchio or the hanging — is the frying pan and which is the fire.”

“Why have I come here but for the purpose of wooing and marrying her?” Petruchio said. “Do you think that a little din and racket can hurt my ears? Have I not in my time heard lions roar? Have I not heard the sea — puffed up with winds — rage like an angry boar coated with sweat? Have I not heard great cannon in the battlefield, and Heaven’s artillery thunder in the skies? Have I not in a pitched battle heard loud calls to arms, neighing steeds, and the noise of trumpets? And you want me to be afraid of a woman’s tongue, that gives not half so great a blow to the ears as will a chestnut popping in a farmer’s fire? You would be better off trying to frighten boys with boogiemer.”

Actually, Petruchio was a young man who was seeing the world for the first time. He had made up this exciting past history.

“Petruchio fears no shrews and no boogiemer,” Grumio said.

“Hortensio, listen to me,” Gremio said. “This gentleman of yours — Petruchio — is fortunately arrived, I think, for his own good and ours.”

“I promised we would pay for his costs in wooing Katherina,” Hortensio said.

“And so we will, provided that he wins and marries her,” Gremio said.

“He will,” Grumio said. “I would bet a good dinner on it and so be sure that I will be well fed.”

Tranio, who was dressed in Lucentio’s fine clothing, and Biondello, who was dressed in his usual servant’s clothing, appeared on the street. They ignored the disguised Lucentio and pretended not to know him.

Tranio, Lucentio's servant who was disguised as Lucentio, said, "Gentlemen, God bless you. If I may be so bold, tell me, please, which is the readiest way to the house of Signior Baptista Minola?"

"The Signior Baptista Minola who has two daughters — is that the man you mean?" Biondello asked, making clear which man Tranio was asking about.

"Yes, that is the man, Biondello," Tranio said.

"Do you mean to see the daughter, sir?" Gremio asked.

"Perhaps I mean to see both him and her, sir," Tranio said, "but what business is it of yours?"

"I hope that you are not going to see the daughter who is the shrew," Petruchio said.

"I don't care for shrews," Tranio replied. "Biondello, let's go."

Quietly, Lucentio said to Tranio, "Your pretending to be me is off to a good start. Well done."

"Sir, a word before you go," Hortensio said. "Are you a suitor to the maiden you talked about — the one who is not a shrew. Yes or no?"

"And if I am a suitor to her, sir, is that a problem?" Tranio replied.

"No," Gremio said, "if without more words you will leave here."

"Why, sir, I ask you, are not the streets here as free to be used by me as to be used by you?"

"The streets are for both of us, but Bianca is not," Gremio said.

“For what reason?” Tranio asked.

“For this reason, if you want to know — she is the chosen and choice love of Signior Gremio,” Gremio said.

“She is the chosen and choice love of Signior Hortensio,” Hortensio said.

“Just a moment,” Tranio said. “If you are gentlemen, do this for me: Listen patiently to me. Baptista is a noble gentleman, to whom my father is not completely unknown. His daughter is beautiful, and she is entitled to many suitors, including me. This would be true even if she were more beautiful — or less beautiful — than she is. Fair Leda’s daughter Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, had a thousand wooers, and so fair Bianca may have one more suitor — and so she does. I, Lucentio, would woo her even if Paris, Prince of Troy, came here in hopes to woo her all alone and to make her Helen of Troy.”

“Wow! This gentleman will out-talk us all,” Gremio said.

“Sir, do not check him the way that you would a horse,” Lucentio said. “Let him run unchecked. He will show himself to be a jade — a weak horse that will quickly tire and quit.”

“Hortensio, what is going on here?” Petruchio said. “Why is everyone arguing?”

Hortensio ignored Petruchio and said to Tranio, “Let me ask you,” Hortensio replied, “have you ever seen Baptista’s daughter?”

“No, sir,” Tranio replied, “but I hear that he has two daughters. One daughter is as famous for her scolding tongue as the other is for beauteous modesty.”

“Sir, I will woo the daughter with the scolding tongue,” Petruchio said. “Do not attempt to woo her.”

“Good idea,” Gremio said. “Leave that labor to great Hercules. He is already known for his twelve labors — hereafter let him be known for a thirteenth labor.”

“Sir, understand this,” Petruchio said. “The younger daughter — the one whom you should woo — her father keeps away from all suitors. He will not allow her to be married to any man until her elder sister the shrew is first wed. Only then will the younger daughter be free to marry and not before.”

Tranio replied, “If it is true, sir, that you are the man who will help all of Bianca’s suitors, including me, to gain access to her after you break the ice and get married to the elder daughter and so set free the younger daughter, then whoever shall win and marry Bianca will not be so ill-bred as to be ungrateful to you. You will be rewarded.”

“Sir, you speak well and well do you understand what is in fact happening here,” Hortensio said. “Since you confess that you are a suitor to Bianca, you must do as we do and gratify this gentleman, Petruchio, with money to pay the cost of wooing Katherina, the shrewish elder daughter. All of us will benefit if he marries her — once he marries Katherina, we can woo Bianca.”

“Sir, I will pay my part of the expenses,” Tranio said. “To seal our pact, let us get together this afternoon and drink toasts to Bianca’s health. We will do what prosecuting lawyers and defense lawyers do — combat each other mightily in the arena but eat and drink as friends.”

Both Grumio and Biondello said, “Excellent idea. Let’s go.”

Hortensio agreed: “Good idea, indeed. Let’s do it. Petruchio, I will be your host and pay for your drinks.”

CHAPTER 2 (The Taming of the Shrew)

— 2.1 —

In a room in Baptista's house, Katherina was tormenting Bianca, whose hands Katherina had tied together.

Bianca pleaded, "Good sister, do not hurt me or your reputation by making a slave of me. That is something I hate and will not endure. But if you want, you can have my possessions. I am wearing jewelry. If you will untie my hands, I will take it all off myself and give it to you. You can even have my clothing — I will strip myself down to my petticoat. Or I will do whatever else you command me to do — I know my duty is to obey my elders."

"I order you to tell me which of your suitors you like the best," Katherina said. "Make sure that you do not lie to me."

"Believe me, sister, of all the men alive now I have never yet beheld a special face that I could fancy more than any other. I have no preference for any of my suitors."

Katherina was interested in marriage and suitors, but she had no suitors of her own.

She said to Bianca, "You are lying! Do you prefer Hortensio?"

"If you like him, sister, I swear here and now that I will plead to him to woo you ... if there is no other way for you to have him."

"Perhaps you fancy riches more than you do youth. You must want to marry Gremio so that he will buy you fine clothing."

"Is it because of him that you envy me so? No, you are

joking. Now I see that you have been joking with me all this time. Please, sister Kate, untie my hands.”

“If you think that I was just making a joke, then everything else was also a joke,” Katherina said.

Baptista had heard the commotion, and now he came into the room in time to see Katherina hit Bianca.

“What are you doing, Dame Insolence!” Baptista said. “From where has come this bad behavior?”

He added, “Bianca, stand beside me. Poor girl! You are crying. Go and ply your needle and sew; have nothing to do with your sister.”

As he untied Bianca’s hands, he said to Katherina, “You should be ashamed, you good-for-nothing with a devilish spirit. Why are you hurting her who never did anything to hurt you? When has she ever said to you a cross word?”

“Her silence mocks me, and I will get revenge on her because of her silence,” Katherina said.

She moved toward Bianca, but Baptista blocked her way and said, “You dare to try to hurt Bianca in my sight?”

He added, “Bianca, go to another room.”

“Why won’t you leave me alone?” Katherina said. “Now I see that Bianca is your treasure. She must have a husband, and as an unmarried older sister I must follow the custom of dancing barefoot on her wedding day — that is supposed to break my bad luck in being unmarried! And if I die unmarried, I am supposed to lead apes to Hell instead of leading children to Heaven. That is the fate of an old maid. Don’t talk to me. I will go and sit and cry until I can find an occasion to wreak my revenge on my sister.”

Katherina exited.

Baptista watched her go and then said, "Has any man ever been so beset by troubles as I am?"

Several people now entered the room. Gremio and Petruchio walked in. So did Lucentio, who was disguised as a tutor. So did Hortensio, who was disguised as a musician. So did Tranio, who was disguised as Lucentio. Bringing up the rear was Lucentio's servant Biondello, who was carrying books and the stringed musical instrument known as the lute.

"Good day, neighbor Baptista," Gremio said.

"Good day, neighbor Gremio," Baptista said, adding, "God bless you all, gentlemen!"

"And you, too, good sir!" Petruchio said. He added, "Don't you have a daughter named Katherina, who is beautiful and virtuous?"

The word "virtuous" bothered Baptista, who knew that his elder daughter was a shrew. He replied, "I have a daughter, sir, called Katherina."

Gremio wanted Petruchio to succeed in marrying Katherina. He advised him, "You are too blunt. First go slow and be sociable and then get down to business."

"You are mistaken, Signior Gremio," Petruchio said. "I know what I am doing."

He said to Baptista, "I am a gentleman of Verona, sir. Having heard of Katherina's beauty and her wit, her affability and bashful modesty, her wondrous qualities and mild behavior, I am now so bold as to make myself an eager guest in your house to make my eyes witnesses of that report which I so often have heard. To show my appreciation for your hospitality and to pay for my entrance into your house, I present you with a recommendation for a

servant of mine.”

He pointed to the disguised Hortensio and said, “This man here is knowledgeable in music and in mathematics. He is entirely capable of teaching your daughter those two sciences, of which I know that she is not ignorant. Accept my recommendation of him, or else you do me wrong: His name is Litio, and he was born in Mantua.”

“You are welcome here, sir,” Baptista said to Petruchio, “and Litio is also welcome here, for your sake. But as for my daughter Katherina, I know that she is not the girl you want, which is a pity for me.”

“I see that you do not mean to part with her,” Petruchio said, “or else you do not like my company.”

“Please don’t misunderstand me,” Baptista said. “I am saying only what I believe is the truth. But where are you from? And what is your name?”

“Petruchio is my name; I am Antonio’s son. He was a man well known throughout all Italy.”

“I have heard much about him,” Baptista said. “You are welcome here for his sake.”

Gremio said, “With all respect for your story, Petruchio, let us, who are humble suitors for Bianca, speak, too. *Backare!* Back off a little! You are too pushy!”

“Oh, pardon me, Signior Gremio; I am eager to be doing what needs to be done.”

He thought, *What needs to be done is my wooing of and marrying Katherina. Once I have married her and am sure of having a good wife, then she will need to be done and I will do her. I want a warm wife and a warm bed.*

“I doubt it not, sir,” Gremio said, “but you will curse your

wooing if you are too eager. Neighbor Petruchio, this recommendation of a tutor is a gift very grateful to Baptista — I am sure of it.”

He added to Baptista, “To express the same kindness, I myself, who have been more in your debt than any other man, freely recommend to you this young scholar.”

He pointed to the disguised Lucentio and said, “He has long studied at the renowned university in Rheims, France. He is as well educated in Greek, Latin, and other languages as the other tutor is well educated in music and mathematics. His name is Cambio; please accept his services.”

“A thousand thanks, Signior Gremio,” Baptista said.

He said to the disguised Lucentio, “Welcome, good Cambio.”

To Tranio, who was pretending to be Lucentio, he said, “Gentle sir, I think that you have the bearing of a stranger in town. May I be so bold as to ask you why you have come here?”

“Pardon me, sir,” Tranio said. “The boldness is my own. I am a stranger in this city, and I have come here to make myself a suitor to your daughter, the beautiful and virtuous Bianca. I know about your firm decision not to allow Bianca to be married until Katherina, her elder sister, is married. I request that once you know who my father is that you give me the same freedom as Bianca’s other suitors to see her and to woo her. To help you educate your two daughters, I have brought you gifts. Here I give you a simple instrument — a lute — as well as this small packet of Greek and Latin books. If you accept them, then their worth is great. You will add to their value by accepting them.”

Biondello handed Baptista the gifts.

“Lucentio is your name,” Baptista said, looking at an inscription in one of the books. “Where are you from?”

“I am from Pisa, sir. My father is Vincentio.”

“Vincentio of Pisa is a man of great power and influence. I have heard good reports of him, and you are very welcome here, sir.”

Baptista said to the disguised Hortensio, “You take the lute,” and then he said to the disguised Lucentio, “You take the set of books.”

He then said to both of them, “You shall see your pupils now.”

Baptista called for a servant and then said to him, “Take these gentlemen to my daughters and tell them both that these gentlemen are their tutors. Tell my daughters to be on their best behavior.”

Lucentio, Hortensio, and the servant exited.

Baptista then said to those remaining, “We will go and walk a little in the garden, and then we will eat dinner. You are all very welcome here, and I hope that you will feel comfortable and at home here.”

Petruchio was eager to start wooing Katherina, whom he still had not seen.

“Signior Baptista,” he said, “my business requires haste. I cannot come every day here to woo Katherina. You knew my father well, and he has left me — his only heir — all his lands and possessions, which by good management I have increased rather than decreased their value. I am a man of property, and I am competent. I also get down to business quickly. Tell me, if I get your daughter Katherina

to love me, what dowry will she bring to me when I marry her?”

“I have no sons. After my death, Katherina will get one half of my lands,” Baptista said. “As soon as she is married, she will bring you 20,000 crowns.”

“The dowry is acceptable,” Petruchio said. “Now for the dower. As her husband, I must provide for my wife if I should die first. If Katherina should survive me, she will receive all of my lands and all of my leases. My widow — should my wife outlive me — will receive a large income. Therefore, let us have legal contracts drawn up between us, so that each of us is legally obligated to do what we have promised to do.”

“We will do so,” Baptista said, “once you have gotten something that is very special: Katherina’s love. That is the most special thing of all — it is much more important than wealth, property, and income.”

Baptista thought, *Katherina is special. I want her to be happy, and she will be happily married only if she marries a man whom she can respect. Bianca, on the other hand, will — I am sure — marry whatever man I want her to. She will be happy with that man. In her case, I can have her marry her wealthiest suitor. After all, wealth is in fact important, although it is not the most important thing.*

“I will get her love. I promise you that, father — and you will be my father,” Petruchio said. “I am as fiercely determined as she is proud-minded. When and where two raging fires meet together, they consume the things that feed their fury. Although a small fire grows big with a little wind, extreme gusts of wind will blow out all the fire. That is the way that it will be with Katherina and me. I will be the great gust of wind that blows out her fire. She may be shrewish, but I am rough and I do not woo like a boy.”

Petruchio thought, *This metaphor, properly understood, states that both Katherina and I will change our behavior. Like the two fires, we will blow each other out. She will yield to me, and then I will yield to her. I will persuade her to change her behavior from a shrew to a wife who will love, honor, and obey me. "Persuade" is the right word; "force" is not the right word. The kind of change I want is the kind that cannot be forced, although a lot of persuasion is appropriate. To do that, I will assume a behavior that is different from my usual behavior, but I will cast off that behavior once I have the wife that she will promise before God — in the marriage ceremony — that she will be: a wife who loves, honors, and obeys her husband. And I will do what I will promise before God — in the marriage ceremony — that I will do: I will love and cherish my wife.*

Petruchio had impressed Baptista, who thought, *Petruchio may be exactly the right man to woo and marry Katherina. Make no mistake, Katherina needs to be tamed. Just a few minutes ago, she tied up and beat her sister. No one deserves to be so badly treated — especially a relative. I think that Katherina is intelligent. I would not be surprised if Katherina knows that she needs to be tamed. Neither I nor Katherina — I think — wants her to keep on acting the way she has been acting.*

Baptista said to Petruchio, "I hope that you woo Katherina well, and good luck to you! But be prepared for some unhappy words that she will call you."

"When it comes to harsh words, I am wearing tested steel armor," Petruchio said. "I can withstand harsh language the way that mountains withstand winds. Mountains do not shake no matter how hard the wind blows."

The disguised Hortensio now entered the room. The lute that Tranio had given to Baptista was now broken — and so was Hortensio's head.

“Hello, my friend,” Baptista said. “Why do you look so pale?”

“I am pale from fear,” Hortensio said. “You can be sure of that.”

“Will my daughter Katherina become a good musician?” Baptista asked.

“I think she will sooner become a good soldier,” Hortensio said. “Pistols and bullets may withstand her treatment, but never lutes.”

“So you are saying that you cannot teach her to play the lute? You cannot break down the steps of playing a lute?”

“No, I cannot,” Hortensio said, “because she has broken the lute on my head. All I did was to tell her that her hands were not placed correctly on the frets of the lute. She got angry and said, ‘Do you think that I am fretting? I will show you that I am fuming!’ With that word, she struck me on the head with the lute and both my head and the lute broke. There I stood amazed for a while with the lute around my neck like a wooden collar. She called me names — rascal fiddler and twangling Jack, and twenty more such vile terms. It was if she had memorized the names just to be prepared to insult me with them.”

“By God, Katherina is a spirited wench,” Petruchio said. “She is full of life, and now I love her ten times more than ever I did. How I long to talk to her!”

Baptista said to Hortensio, “Come with me and do not be so discouraged. Go and tutor my younger daughter. She is eager to learn and thankful for good tutoring.”

He added, “Signior Petruchio, will you go with us, or shall I send my daughter Kate to you?”

“Please send Kate to me,” Petruchio said.

Everyone left except for Petruchio.

Alone, Petruchio planned his course of action in dealing with the shrew whom he wanted to marry: "I will wait for her here and woo her with some spirit when she comes. If she shouts at me, why then I'll tell her plainly that she sings as sweetly as a nightingale. If she frowns, I'll say she looks as cheerful as morning roses newly washed with dew. If she is mute and will not speak a word, then I will compliment her talkativeness and say that she is speaking with moving eloquence. If she orders me to leave, I will give her thanks as though she asked me to stay by her for a week. If she refuses to wed me, I will ask her to name the day when our engagement will be announced and when we will be married. I will treat her as if she were already the good woman I want her to be. I will give her a good image of herself."

He saw Katherina enter the room and said to himself, "Here she comes now. Petruchio, speak to her."

To Katherina, he said, "Good day, Kate, for that is your name, I hear."

"You are somewhat hard of hearing. People who talk about me call me Katherina."

"Truly, you lie," Petruchio said. "You are called plain Kate, and you are called pretty Kate and sometimes Kate the curst, but you are Kate, the prettiest Kate in the Christian world. You are Kate of Kate Hall, and you are my super-dainty Kate. Dainty cakes are delicacies, and you are a delicacy. Therefore, Kate, listen to my comforting words. Hearing your mildness praised in every town, your virtues spoken of, and your beauty complimented, yet not to the degree you deserve, I am moved to woo you to be my wife."

"Moved, are you?" Katherina said. "Let whoever moved

you here now remove you from here. The moment I saw you I knew that you were a moveable.”

“Why, what’s a moveable?” Petruchio asked.

“A wooden stool — something that is hard like your head.”

“A stool has hard wood to be sat on, so come, Kate, and sit on me.”

“Asses are made to bear, and so are you. Bear a load, you ass.”

“Women are made to bear, and so are you. Women bear children, and in order to become pregnant, they bear the weight of a man in the missionary position.”

“I have no intention of bearing your children or your weight. You are a jade, a horse without stamina, and I doubt that you have stamina in bed.”

Petruchio thought, *I am not a rapist. I want to marry Kate, but I do not want to consummate the marriage with a meeting of bodies until after Kate and I have had a meeting of minds.*

“Not yet will I have you bear the burden of my weight,” Petruchio said, “because you are young and light —”

“I am too light for such a country bumpkin as you to catch, and yet I am as heavy as my weight should be. I am not like a gold coin whose edge has been shaved and so is worth less than it ought to be.”

“Be! Bee! Buzz! I hope that you can avoid the buzzing that would surround you if you became the subject of gossip,” Petruchio said. “Light women are often the subject of gossip because it is easy to move them into a position for sexual intercourse.”

Katherina said, “‘Buzz’ is what I would expect you to say

— you are like a buzzard.”

“You are like a slow-winged turtledove — the symbol of faithful love! Shall a buzzard take you?”

“If a buzzard should take me for a turtle-dove, the buzzard is mistaken.”

“Come, come, you wasp; truly, you are too angry.”

“If I am waspish, you had best beware my sting,” Katherina said.

“My remedy is to pluck your sting out. That way, I need not fear it.”

“That is a good remedy — if you, a fool, could find out where my sting is.”

“Who does not know where a wasp keeps its sting? In its tail.”

“No, the sting is in the tongue.”

“Whose tongue?”

“Yours, if you talk of tales, and so I say farewell to you.”

“What, with my tongue in your tail?” Petruchio said.

He said to Katherina, “Good Kate, I am a gentleman.”

“I will see whether you are a gentleman,” Katherina said, and she hit him.

Petruchio looked her in the eyes and said, seriously, “I swear that I will hit you, if you hit me again.”

Katherina decided not to hit him again.

She said, “If you do, you will lose your arms. If you hit me, you are no gentleman, and if you are no gentleman, why then, you will have no coat of arms.”

“Are you a herald, Kate? If you are, then put me in your heraldic book that lists gentlemen! Let me be on good terms with you.”

“If you are a gentleman, then what is your crest? What heraldic device do you have? What is on your heraldic badge? Is it the feathers on a bird’s head? Is it the crest of a cock? Is it a coxcomb? My guess is that it is a coxcomb — the hat worn by a court fool.”

“If you, Kate, will be my hen, then I will be a combless cock. A cock without a comb is nonthreatening and non-aggressive, and a husband should not threaten his wife.”

“You will never be a cock of mine — you have the crow of a craven, defeated fighting-cock.”

“Come, Kate, come; you must not look so sour.”

“I always look sour when I see a sour crabapple.”

“No crabapple is here, and so therefore do not look sour.”

“A crabapple is here!”

“Then show it to me.”

“If I had a mirror, I would.”

“Are you saying that my face looks crabby?”

“I am surprised that such a young and inexperienced person as yourself realized that,” Katherina said.

“By Saint George, I am too young and too strong for you.”

“Yet you are withered.”

“It is with cares.”

“I don’t care.”

“Kate, listen carefully. You will not escape me.”

“I will irritate you, if I stay here. Let me go.”

“You will not irritate me, Kate. I find you quite gentle. I was told that you are rough and withdrawn and sullen, but the people who told me that lied because you are pleasant, full of fun, very courteous, and slow in speech — you think before you speak. You are as sweet as springtime flowers. You are unable to frown, to glare, and to bite your lip, as angry women do. You do not take pleasure in arguments, but instead you entertain your wooers with gentle, quiet, and friendly conversation.”

He added, “Why does all the world say that you, Kate, metaphorically limp? The world is filled with slanderers! Kate, you are like the hazel tree. You are straight and slender and as brown in hue as hazel nuts, and you are sweeter than the nuts’ kernels. I know you. You do not limp.”

“Go away, fool, and give commands to your servants.”

“Did ever the beautiful Diana, goddess of chastity, so become a grove of trees as you, Kate, become this chamber with your princess-like gait? You be Diana, and let her be Kate. Then let Kate be chaste and Diana be playful and amorous!”

“Where did you study all this fancy speech?”

“It is extempore. I have made it up on the spur of the moment, using my mother-wit.”

“It is good that you had a witty mother! Otherwise, her son would have been witless.”

“Am I not wise?”

“You are barely wise enough to keep yourself warm in cold weather.”

“I have every intention of marrying you, Kate, and of keeping myself warm in your bed. Therefore, let us set all this chitchat aside, and I will speak plainly. Your father has consented that you shall be my wife; we have agreed upon your dowry. Whether you are willing to marry or not, I will marry you. Kate, I am the husband who is just right for you. I swear by this light, by means of which I see your beauty — your beauty that makes me love you — you must be married to no man but me. Because, Kate, I am the man — the husband — who was born to tame you, Kate, and bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate who is a loving, honoring, and obedient Christian wife like other housewife Kates.”

Seeing Baptista, Gremio, and Tranio coming toward them, Petruchio added, “Here comes your father. Do not deny me. I must and will have Katherina as my wife.”

Baptista said, “Signior Petruchio, how are you and my daughter getting along?”

“How should we get along but well, sir? How but well? It is impossible that I should not get along well with your daughter.”

“How are you, my daughter Katherina?” Baptista said. “You look in the dumps — miserable.”

“Are you calling me your daughter? Ha! You are showing quite a tender fatherly regard for me when you wish me to wed this one-half lunatic, this madcap ruffian, this swearing Jack, this man who thinks to get his own way by bluffing with words!”

“Father,” Petruchio said, “the truth is that you and everyone else in the world who have talked about Kate have misunderstood her. If she seems shrewish, it is only an act. Katherina is not obstinate; she is as gentle as a dove. She is not hot; she is as temperate as the morning. Griselda was a

medieval wife who was patient and submissive no matter how her husband provoked her; Kate will prove herself to be a second Griselda. The Roman wife Lucrece vowed — and meant that vow — to be faithful to her husband; Kate will prove herself to be a second Lucrece. Kate and I get along so well that we have agreed to be married on Sunday.”

“I will see you hanged on Sunday before I will marry you,” Katherina said.

Gremio said, “Did you hear that, Petruchio? She said that she will see you hanged on Sunday before she will marry you.”

Tranio said, “Do you call that getting along well with her? We can say goodbye to our hopes of marrying Bianca.”

Petruchio replied, “Relax, gentlemen. I choose her for myself. I am the one who is marrying her. As long as she and I are pleased with each other, you have nothing to worry about. She and I have decided, in private, when we were alone, that she will still be ill tempered and shrewish when she is around other people, although she is not when she and I are alone. I tell you, it is incredible to believe how much she loves me: She is the kindest and most darling Kate! She hugged and plied me with kiss after kiss and made promise after promise to love me forever. In the time it takes to blink an eye, she made me fall in love with her. You are newcomers to love! It is amazing to see, when a man and a woman are left alone and fall in love, how tame a timid man can make the most ill-tempered shrew.”

He added, “Give me your hand, Kate.”

He took her hand; she did not resist.

He said, “I will go to Venice to buy clothing for our wedding. Prepare and provide the feast, father, and invite

the guests. I will be sure my Katherina shall be finely dressed.”

Everyone except Katherina looked at Baptista, who was puzzled. What was going on? Did his daughter want to marry this man or not? Baptista looked at Katherina, who was looking at Petruchio. She had a small smile on her face.

Baptista thought, *Petruchio may be just the husband my daughter Katherina needs — and wants. He may be just the man to tame her bad behavior and make her a good Christian wife. If my daughter does not want to marry him, she will let me know. Petruchio is leaving to go to Venice, and so she and I will be able to be alone.*

He said, “I do not know what to say, Petruchio, but let us shake hands. God send you joy, Petruchio! You and Katherina will be married on Sunday.”

Katherina thought, *I am intrigued by Petruchio, but am I intrigued enough to marry him although we have just met and we have spent all our time together engaging in a verbal combat — a battle of wits? Hell, yes!*

Gremio and Tranio said, “Amen! We will be witnesses to the wedding.”

“Father, and wife, and gentlemen, *adieu*,” Petruchio said. I am going now to Venice; Sunday will come very soon. We will have rings and things and a fine array of clothing. And kiss me, Kate — we will be married on Sunday.”

Petruchio kissed Katherina, who did not kiss him back.

Petruchio and Katherina exited in different directions.

Gremio said, “Have two people ever decided to wed each other so quickly?”

“Indeed, gentlemen,” Baptista said, “this is a risky venture. I am like a businessman who is making a desperate gamble in hopes of thereby profiting.”

“Your daughter Katherina is like a commodity that was not being used,” Tranio said. “Now she will either bring you happiness by making a good and happy marriage, or she will metaphorically perish on the seas.”

“The profit that I seek is a quiet and peaceful marriage for Katherina,” Baptista said.

Not meaning it, Gremio said, “I have no doubt that Petruchio has gotten a quiet catch.”

He added, “But now, Baptista, let’s talk about your younger daughter, Bianca. Now is the day we long have looked for: the day that you will choose a husband for her. I am your neighbor, and I am the man who wooed her first.”

Tranio, who was still disguised as Lucentio and was trying to get Bianca as a wife for Lucentio, made his own pitch: “And I am one who loves Bianca more than words can witness, or your thoughts can guess.”

Gremio replied, “Youngster, you cannot love so dearly as I.”

“Graybeard, your love is ice cold,” Tranio said.

“And your love is too hot. Skipping boy, back off. It is age that nourishes.”

“But in ladies’ eyes it is youth that flourishes.”

“Calm down, gentlemen,” Baptista said. “I will settle this quarrel. I believe that Bianca will be happy with whomever of you two I chose for her to marry, and therefore it is deeds — action and legal deeds, not talk — that must win the prize. Whoever of you two can give my daughter the

greatest dower shall be her husband. So, Signior Gremio, what dower can you assure me she will get? If you die before she does, with what can she support herself?"

Baptista thought, *Hortensio was another of Bianca's suitors, but he has not been around for a while. Perhaps he has lost interest.*

Gremio replied, "First, as you know, my house within this city is richly furnished with silver and gold dishes and utensils. Bianca will have basins and ewers to wash her dainty hands. My wall hangings are all of expensive purple tapestry. I have stuffed my crowns in ivory strongboxes. My bedspreads are made of tapestry from Arras, France; these I store in chests made of cypress wood. I own expensive clothing, bed curtains and hangings and canopies, fine linen, cushions made in Turkey that are embroidered with pearls, valances made in Venice and decorated with gold needlework, pewter and brass and all things that belong to house or housekeeping. At my farm I have a hundred milk cows, sixty fat oxen standing in my stalls, and all things necessary for their maintenance. I myself am advanced in years, I confess, and if I die tomorrow, all of this is hers, provided that while I live Bianca will be only mine."

"That word 'only' is well chosen," Tranio said. "You have only a few possessions in comparison to me. Baptista, listen to me. I am my father's heir and only son; I need not share my father's estate with brothers when he dies. If I may have your daughter as my wife, I will leave her houses three or four as good — within the walls of rich Pisa — as the one house that Signior Gremio has in Padua. In addition, she will receive two thousand ducats each year in income from my fruitful land. All of this shall she receive as her dower."

Gremio looked shocked at such wealth.

Tranio said to him, “Are you shocked, Signior Gremio?”

Gremio said, “Two thousand ducats of annual income from the land!”

He thought, *The value of all my land does not reach two thousand ducats!*

Gremio said, “Bianca shall have everything that I mentioned previously, plus an argosy — a large merchant ship — that now is anchored in the harbor at Marseilles.”

Tranio said, “Gremio, it is well known that my father has no less than three great argosies. In addition, he has two galliases — ships that are larger than galleys, and that use both sails and oars. He also has twelve watertight galleys in good repair. I will give all of this to Bianca, and I will give twice as much as whatever you offer next.”

Gremio replied, “That is not necessary. I have already offered all that I have, and I have no more possessions to offer.”

He said to Baptista, “If you like me and my offer, Bianca shall have me and all that is mine.”

Tranio interrupted, “Why, then the maiden is mine. Out of all the men in the world, I have won her. You, Baptista, firmly promised that Bianca would be the wife of the man who offered her the most. Gremio has been outbid.”

Baptista replied, “I must confess that your offer is the best. Now, your father must make this offer a legal obligation. If he does so, Bianca will be your wife. But if your father does not make your offer a legal obligation, then — pardon me — if you should die before your father, then what would happen to her dower?”

“That is a small point,” Tranio said. “My father is old. I am young. I will outlive him.”

Gremio asked, "And may not young men die, as well as old?"

"Well, gentlemen, I have made up my mind," Baptista said. "On this coming Sunday you know that my daughter Katherina is to be married. On the Sunday following that, Bianca will become your bride, Lucentio, as long as your father takes on this legal obligation. If your father will not, then Bianca will become the bride of Signior Gremio. And so, I take my leave of you, and I thank you both."

"*Adieu*, good neighbor," Gremio said as Baptista left.

Alone with Tranio, whom he understood to be Lucentio, Gremio said, "I do not believe that Bianca will marry you because I do not believe that your father will make this legal obligation. You have gambled by promising so much as your dower, and you will lose your bet. Your father would be a fool to give you everything, and in his old age to set his feet under your table and be totally dependent on you. Your promised dower is ridiculous. Old Italian fathers are foxes, my boy, and they are not so kind as to give away everything they have and be penniless."

Gremio exited.

Tranio said, "May vengeance be wreaked on your crafty withered hide! You are right. I have promised more than I can deliver. I have bluffed with a card that is a ten-spot — a card of lesser value than a Jack! It is my intention to do my master Lucentio good. The only thing that can be done now is for the pretend Lucentio — me — to get a pretend father. I will have to find someone to pretend to be Lucentio's father, Vincentio. That will be a wonder. Fathers commonly do get — that is, beget — their children; but in this case of wooing, a child shall get a father, if my cunning helps me to succeed in this plan."

CHAPTER 3 (The Taming of the Shrew)

— 3.1 —

Lucentio, Hortensio, and Bianca were in a room of Baptista's house. Lucentio and Hortensio were acting as Bianca's tutors. Lucentio had disguised himself as Cambio, a tutor of languages and philosophy; Hortensio had disguised himself as Litio, a teacher of music and mathematics. Lucentio and Hortensio had told Bianca who they really were, but Lucentio and Hortensio still thought that each other was a real tutor.

Lucentio said to Hortensio, "Fiddler, stop. You are too pushy, sir. Have you so soon forgotten the way that Bianca's sister, Katherina, treated you? She broke a lute on your head."

"That was Katherina, the shrew," Hortensio said, "and this is Bianca, the patroness of heavenly harmony. Therefore, give me leave to have the prerogative of teaching Bianca first. After we have spent an hour studying music, you — you wrangling pedant — shall have an hour to tutor her."

"You are a preposterous ass," Lucentio said. "You have not read enough to know the reason why music was created! Music was created to refresh the mind of man after his studies or his usual toil. Therefore, give me time to teach Bianca literature and philosophy, and afterward, while I rest, you can teach her harmony."

"Your remarks are offensive! I will not stand for them!"

Bianca interrupted, "Why, gentlemen, you both do me wrong. It is not your decision which of you should teach me first. It is my decision — I am the one who gets to choose. I am no scholar in the schools; I am not a student

who can be whipped. I learn my lessons as and when it pleases me. Stop your arguing. All of us sit down. Licio, take your musical instrument and go over there and play it for a while. Cambio's lesson will be over before you have tuned your lute."

"You will leave his lesson when I am in tune?" Hortensio asked.

"That will be never," Lucentio said. "Go on and try to tune your instrument."

Bianca asked, "When did our last lesson end?"

"It ended here, madam," Lucentio said. "We were studying this:

"Hic ibat Simois; hic est Sigeia tellus;

"Hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis."

These lines mean, "Here ran the Simois River; here was the Sigeian land; / Here stood the lofty palace of old Priam."

Bianca requested, "Construe them."

Lucentio replied, speaking quietly so that Hortensio could not hear,

"Hic ibat means As I told you before.

"Simois means I am Lucentio.

"Hic est means The son of Vincentio of Pisa.

"Sigeia tellus means Disguised thus to get your love.

"Hic steterat means And that Lucentio who comes a-wooing.

"Priami means Is my servant Tranio.

"Regia means Who is pretending to be me.

“Celsa senis means So that that we might trick the pantaloon — the ridiculous old man — who is named Gremio.”

Hortensio said, “Madam, my instrument is in tune.”

“Let’s hear it,” Bianca said.

Hortensio strummed the strings.

Bianca said, “The treble is out of tune.”

“Spit in the hole, man,” Lucentio said, “and tune it again. The spit will make the peg tighter and keep the string in tune.”

Hortensio returned to tuning the lute.

Bianca said to Lucentio, “Now let me see if I can construe it:

“Hic ibat Simois means I do not know you.

“Hic est Sigeia tellus means I do not trust you.

“Hic steterat Priami means Be careful that my music tutor does not hear you.

“Regia means Do not presume too much.

“Celsa senis means Do not despair.”

Hortensio said, “Madam, it is now in tune.”

Lucentio replied, “All but the bass.”

Hortensio muttered, “The bass of the tune is in tune; it is that base knave Cambio who is out of tune. How fiery and forward this pedant Cambio is! I swear that he is courting Bianca, the woman I love. Little pedant! I will keep an eye on you!”

Bianca said to Lucentio, “In time I may believe you, yet

now I mistrust you.”

“Do not mistrust me,” Lucentio said.

He said loudly so that Litio — the disguised Hortensio — could hear, “Aeacides is another name for Ajax. It identifies him as the grandson of Aeacus.”

Lucentio was partially right. He was referring to the next line of the quotation from Ovid that they had been working on. However, “Aeacides” means “grandson of Aeacus” and Aeacus had more than one grandson. In fact, scholars translate the Aeacides of the line as Achilles, grandson of Aeacus.

Bianca, who knew more Latin and more mythology than her tutor, said, “I must believe my master, or else, I promise you, I would argue with you about this point. But let us let it go.”

She said loudly, “Now, Litio, it is your turn to tutor me. Good tutors, take it not unkindly, please, that I have been pleasant with you both and have not taken sides.”

Hortensio said to Lucentio, whom he thought was Cambio, “You may go and walk, and leave us for a while. My lessons have no music for three singers or three musicians.”

“Are you so formal, sir?” Lucentio replied. “Well, I must wait for my next turn to tutor.”

He thought, *And I must watch this tutor Litio because, unless I am deceived, our fine musician is falling in love with Bianca.*

Hortensio said quietly to Bianca, “Madam, before you touch the instrument, you must learn the correct fingering. To do that, I must begin by teaching you the fundamentals of this art. To teach you the scales more quickly, pleasantly, pithily, and effectually than any other music

tutors can do, I have written out the scales in my own way.”

“Why, I learned my scales long ago,” Bianca protested.

“Nevertheless, please read the scales as written by Hortensio.”

Bianca read, “I am the scales, the beginning of all harmony,

“*A re* means *Hortensio pleads his passion*.

“*B mi* means *Bianca, take him for your husband*.

“*C fa ut* means *He loves you with all his heart*.

“*D sol re* means *He has one clef and two notes. He has two identities — Hortensio and Litio — but only one is real*.

“*E la mi* means *Show pity to me, or I will die*.”

Bianca complained, “Do you call this musical scales? I do not like it. Old fashions please me best. I am not so fussy that I will change tried, tested, and true rules for odd inventions.”

A servant entered the room and said, “Mistress, your father asks you to leave your books and help to decorate your sister’s bedroom. You know that tomorrow is the wedding-day.”

Bianca said, “Farewell, sweet tutors. I must be gone.”

She and the servant exited.

Lucentio said, “Since Bianca is no longer here, I have no reason to stay.”

He exited.

Hortensio, suspicious, said to himself, “But I have reason to investigate this pedant Cambio. I think that he looks as though he were in love. Bianca, if you are the type of girl to

cast your wandering eyes on every low-born fellow who professes to love you, then I do not want you. If I ever catch you straying, then I will stray away from you and catch someone else.”

— 3.2 —

It was the Sunday during which Petruchio and Katherina were supposed to be married, but Petruchio had not shown up. Baptista, Gremio, Tranio, Katherina, Bianca, Lucentio, and others were waiting for Petruchio to show up, and they were beginning to think that he had jilted the bride on her wedding day.

Baptista said to the disguised Tranio, whom of course he thought was Lucentio, “Signior Lucentio, this is the appointed day during which Katherina and Petruchio should be married, and yet we have not heard from our supposed-to-be son-in-law. What will people say? What mockery and gossip will occur because no bridegroom is here although the priest is ready to ask him if he takes Katherina to be his lawfully wedded wife? Lucentio, do you have anything to say about this shame of ours?”

Katherina interrupted and said, “It is no shame of ours because it is nobody’s shame but mine. I have been, truly, forced to promise to marry — although my heart opposes it — a mad-brain rude lout who lacks all control. He deliberately wooed in haste and means to wed at leisure. I told you that he was a frantic fool, hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior. He wants a reputation as a merry fellow, and so he woos a thousand women, appoints the day of marriage, makes feasts, invites friends, and announces the engagement — and he does not intend ever to wed those women whom he has wooed. Now the world will point at poor Katherina, and say, ‘Look, there is mad Petruchio’s wife — if he ever comes and marries her!’”

Tranio tried to comfort them: “Be patient, good Katherina, and Baptista, too. I swear by my life that Petruchio means only the best for you, despite whatever ill fortune is keeping him from keeping his word. Although Petruchio is blunt, I know that he is very wise. Although Petruchio is fond of merry jokes, I know that he is honorable.”

Katherina said, “I wish that I had never seen him!”

Crying, she left. Bianca and some other women followed her.

Baptista said, “Go, girl. I cannot blame you for crying now for such an injury would vex even a saint, so no wonder it vexes a shrew of your hot temper.”

Biondello ran up to Baptista and the others, shouting, “Baptista, I have news. I have old news that you have never heard before!”

“If I have never heard it before, it is new news,” Baptista said. “How is it possible that you have new news and old news?”

“Why, is it not new news to hear of Petruchio’s coming?” Biondello replied.

“Has he come?”

“Why, no, sir.”

“What are you saying, then?”

“He is coming.”

“When will he be here?”

“When he stands where I am and sees you there.”

Tranio interrupted and said, “That is your new news. Now what is your old news?”

“Did I say *old* news? I meant to say *odd* news. Know that Petruchio is wearing lots of old and odd clothes, although he has a new hat. He is wearing an old jacket. He is wearing an old pair of pants that have been turned inside out because they have been worn so much. His boots are so old that they have been used to store pieces of candles — one boot is buckled, and the other boot is laced. He is carrying an old rusty sword taken out of the town-armory — the sword has a broken hilt and lacks a sheath. His garters are broken and do not hold up his stockings.

“His horse has an old moth-eaten saddle and stirrups that do not match. The horse’s bit is broken, and the halter is made out of low-quality sheepskin instead of leather — the sheepskin has often been broken and then repaired with knots. The horse’s girth strap has been repaired six times, and the horse’s crupper — the strap that goes under the horse’s tail and helps to steady the saddle — is made of velvet and bears studs that form the two initials of the woman who used to own it. Here and there packthread has been used to keep the whole setup from falling to pieces.

“As for Petruchio’s horse, it has a dislocated hip, a swollen jaw, and diseases of the mouth. It has a runny nose. It staggers and has tumors on its fetlocks. It has swollen leg-joints and is yellow with jaundice. It has swellings behind the ears and is food for parasites. Its back sags, and a shoulder is dislocated. Finally, it is knock-kneed.”

“Who is coming with Petruchio?” Baptista asked.

“Sir, his lackey, Grumio,” Biondello said. “He is dressed up like the horse. He has a linen stocking on one leg and a woolen stocking on the other. He is using red and blue strips of cloth as his garters. His hat is old, and he has a weird ornament pinned on it instead of the usual feather. He is a monster, a true monster, in his choice of apparel — he is not like a Christian footboy or a gentleman’s lackey.”

Tranio said, "Some odd mood is making Petruchio act and dress like this, although he often dresses badly."

Baptista said, "I am glad that he has come, howsoever he comes."

Biondello said, "Why, sir, he comes not."

"Didn't you say that he is coming?"

"What? That Petruchio has come?"

"Yes, that Petruchio has come."

"No, sir," Biondello said. "I said that his horse is coming, with him on his back."

"Isn't that the same thing?" Baptista said.

Biondello sang, "*Nay, by Saint Jamy,*

"I hold you a penny,

"A horse and a man

"Are more than one,

"And yet not many."

Petruchio and Grumio arrived, dressed as Biondello had described them.

"Come, where are these lads?" Petruchio shouted. "Who's at home?"

"You are welcome, sir," Baptista said.

"And yet I come not well," Petruchio replied.

"And yet you do not limp, so you have been well enough to come," Baptista said.

Tranio said to Petruchio, "If by come not well, you mean that you came here not well dressed, I agree with you. You

are not dressed as well as I wish you were.”

“Even if I were better dressed, I would still rush to be here,” Petruchio said. “But where is Kate? Where is my lovely bride? How is my father? Gentlemen, it seems to me that you frown and are displeased. Why is everyone in this worthy group staring at me as if they saw some wondrous omen, some comet bringing a warning of upcoming disaster, or some unusual portent?”

Baptista replied, “Why, sir, you know this is your wedding-day. You have arrived late for your wedding. At first we were sad, fearing you would not come. Now we are sadder because you have come so unprepared for your wedding. Change your clothing. What you are wearing is shameful and a disgrace to someone of your social class. What you are wearing is an eyesore, especially at a wedding!”

Tranio said, “Please tell us what important reason has made you arrive so late for your wedding and made you come here dressed like this? This is unlike yourself.”

“The important reason is tedious to tell and harsh to hear,” Petruchio said.

This is true, he thought. I am late and badly dressed in order to out-shrew the shrew who will be my wife. She has made others uncomfortable with her shrewishness, and I will make her uncomfortable with my shrewishness. I intend to teach her how she has made other people feel so that she will reform her behavior. Once she has thoroughly learned that lesson, I will cast off my assumed behavior and be a husband whom she can be proud of.

Petruchio added, “Let it be enough for now that I have come to keep my word to marry Kate even though I have been forced to change part of my plan — as you can see, I did not buy the new clothing I told you that I was planning to buy. When we have more leisure, I will explain myself

and excuse my actions so well that you will be happy and satisfied with my explanation. But where is Kate? I have been too long away from her. The morning is passing, and it is time we were at church.”

Tranio said, “Do not see your bride while you are wearing these disrespectful clothes. Go to my bedchamber, and put on some of my clothes.”

“No,” Petruchio said. “Believe me when I tell you that I will visit Kate while I am dressed like this.”

Baptista said, “I trust that you will not marry her while you are dressed in these clothes.”

“Indeed, I will marry her while I am dressed in these clothes,” Petruchio said, “so talk no more about my clothing. She will be married to me — not to my clothes. I can change my clothing easily and make it better. Kate will soon wear out a certain part of my body in bed and if I could soon revive that part of my body — as soon as I can revive your opinion of my clothes by putting on different clothing — it will be good for Kate and better for me. But I am a fool to chat with you when I should bid good morning to my bride, and seal the title with a loving kiss! Very soon, she will bear the title of my wife.”

Petruchio and Grumio exited.

Tranio said, “Petruchio has a reason to be dressed so madly. We will persuade him, if possible, to put on better clothing before he goes to church.”

“I will follow him and see what happens,” Baptista said.

Baptista, Gremio, and everyone except Tranio and Lucentio exited.

Tranio said, “You already have Bianca’s love, but now we need her father’s approval. To get her father’s approval, as

I explained previously to you, I must get a man — what kind of man does not matter because we can teach him to act the way he needs to act — to pretend to be your father, Vincentio of Pisa. He will promise Baptista that the dowry for Bianca will consist of even greater sums than I have already promised. That way, you will get your wish and marry sweet Bianca with her father's consent."

Lucentio replied, "If my fellow tutor, Litio, were not watching Bianca's steps so closely, it would be a good idea, I think, for she and I to steal our marriage by eloping. Once the marriage has been performed, let all the world say no. I will keep the wife who is mine, no matter what all the world says."

"I will look into the possibility of your eloping," Tranio said. "We will outwit the greybeard Gremio; Bianca's watchful father, Baptista; and the crafty and amorous musician Litio. All of this we will do for your sake."

Gremio walked over to Tranio and Lucentio.

Tranio asked, "Signior Gremio, have you come from the church?"

"Yes, and as willingly as I ever came from school."

"Are the bride and bridegroom returning soon?"

"A bridegroom, you say? He is a groom indeed — he is like the groom who cleans a stable. He is a grumbling groom, and that is something that Katherina is quickly learning. He is even more ill tempered than she is."

"Even more ill tempered than Katherina?" Tranio said. "That is impossible."

"Why, he's a devil, a devil, a very fiend."

"Why, she's a devil, a devil, the devil's dam. She is the

mother of the devil.”

“Ha! She’s a lamb, a dove, a harmless innocent compared to him!” Gremio said. “Let tell you, Sir Lucentio, about the wedding. When the priest asked him if he took Katherina as his wife, he replied, ‘Yes, damn it!’ He swore so loudly that the shocked priest dropped the Holy Bible. When he stooped to pick it up, Petruchio — that mad-brained bridegroom — hit him and made the priest and the Holy Bible fall again. Petruchio then said, ‘Now help pick them up, if anyone wants to.’”

“What did Katherina say when the priest rose again?”

“She said nothing,” Gremio replied. “All she did was tremble and shake because Petruchio stamped his feet and swore as if he thought that the vicar meant to cheat him in some way. But after all the religious rites were done, Petruchio called for wine: ‘A toast!’ He acted as if he were on board a ship, carousing with his mates after a storm. He chugged the wine and then threw the dregs in the sexton’s face, giving as his reason that the sexton’s beard grew thinly and seemed to require nourishment to grow thicker. This done, he took his bride, Katherina, about the neck and kissed her lips with such a loud smack that the church echoed. Seeing this, I left because I was embarrassed for Katherina. Coming after me, I know, the whole crowd of guests will soon arrive. Such a mad marriage as this has never been seen before.”

At their church marriage, Petruchio and Katherina had made their vows before God. The vows had come from the 1559 Book of Common Prayer.

Petruchio had vowed before God, “I, Petruchio, take you, Katherina, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, to love and to cherish,

until death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance, and I give you my true and faithful word to keep this vow."

Katherina had vowed before God, "I, Katherina, take you, Petruchio, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, to love, cherish, and obey, until death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance, and I give you my true and faithful word to keep this vow."

Katherina had seemed to respect the wedding ceremony, and she had made the vow, but she did not seriously take the vow that she had made, as her actions would soon show. She had promised to love, honor, and obey her husband, but very quickly, she would refuse to do those things.

Petruchio had seemed to make a mockery of the wedding ceremony, but he had made the vow, and he seriously took the vows that he and Katherina had made, as his actions would soon show. If he did not love and cherish his wife, he would ignore her and allow her to continue to be a shrew, but he instead would take great pains to improve her character — she would become a wife who seriously took the vow she had made before God.

Gremio said, "Listen! I hear the minstrels playing. The bride, groom, and guests are coming."

As music played, Petruchio, Katherina, Bianca, Baptista, Hortensio, Grumio, and many other people, including guests, arrived.

Petruchio said, "Gentlemen and friends, I thank you for your pains in preparing this wedding. I know that you think to dine with me today, and I know that you have prepared a great wedding feast, but I need to leave quickly and so now I mean to take my leave."

“Is it possible you will go away tonight?” Baptista asked.

“I must go away today, before night comes,” Petruchio said. “Don’t be surprised; if you knew my business, you would beg me to go rather than to stay.”

This is true, he thought. My business is to tame my shrew of a wife and make her a good wife who will respect the vow she made before God.

He added, “And, honest company, I thank you all. You have seen me give myself away to this most patient, sweet, and virtuous wife. Dine with my father, and drink a toast to me. I must leave, and so I say farewell to you all.”

“Let us entreat you to stay until after dinner,” Tranio said.

“I still must leave,” Petruchio said.

“Let me entreat you,” Gremio said.

“I still must leave,” Petruchio said.

“Let me entreat you,” Katherina said.

“I am content,” Petruchio said.

“Are you content to stay?”

“I am content that you have entreated me to stay, but yet I will not stay, no matter how much you entreat me.”

“If you love me, stay,” Katherina said.

“Grumio, bring my horses,” Petruchio said.

“Yes, sir, they are ready. The oats have eaten the horses.”

“No,” Katherina, who had just minutes ago vowed to obey her husband, said. “Do whatever you will, I will not go today. In fact, I will not go tomorrow. In fact, I will not go until it pleases me. The door is open, sir; there lies your

way. Leave now, and you will start your journey with clean boots. As for me, I will not leave until it pleases me to leave. It is likely that you will prove to be an overbearing, surly bridegroom, since you are throwing your weight around so boldly.”

Petruchio said, “Kate, be content. Please, do not be angry.”

“I will be angry,” Katherina said. “What business is it of yours?”

Anticipating an interruption, she said, “Father, be quiet. My husband will wait until I say it is time to leave.”

Gremio anticipated a scene: “Now she’ll get it!”

Katherina said, “Gentlemen, go to the bridal dinner. I see that a woman may be made a fool, if she lacks the spirit to resist.”

Petruchio said, “They shall go to the bridal dinner, Kate, at your command.”

He said to the guests, “Obey the bride, all of you who are celebrating her marriage. Go to the feast, revel and riot, carouse in full measure to celebrate the passing of her virginity. Be mad and be merry, or go hang yourselves. But as for my lovely Kate, she must go with me.”

He added to the guests, and to Katherina, as he pretended that the guests were going to come between his wife and him, “No, do not defy me. Do not look offended; do not stamp your feet, or stare, or fret. I will be master of what is my own. She is my goods, my moveable possessions; she is my house, my household stuff, my field, my barn, my horse, my ox, my ass, my anything.”

Petruchio knew the Bible well, including the Tenth Commandment: “*You shalt not covet your neighbor’s house, you shalt not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his*

manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Petruchio said, "Here my wife stands. If anyone dares to touch her, I will bring a legal action against even the proudest man who tries to stop me from leaving Padua and taking my wife with me. Grumio, draw your weapon, for we are beset by thieves. Rescue your mistress, if you be a man."

He pretended that his wife was afraid that the wedding guests were going to keep her from joining her husband: "Fear not, sweet wench. They shall not touch you, Kate. I will shield you against a million like them."

He carried her away as Grumio "protected" them with his drawn but broken sword.

Baptista watched them leave, realized that his daughter had already broken her promise to obey her husband, remembered that he hoped that Petruchio would be the right husband — a husband who could tame her and whom she could respect — for his shrewish daughter, and said, "Let them go. They are certainly a 'quiet' and 'peaceful' couple."

Gremio said, "If they had not left so quickly, I would have died from laughing so much."

"Of all mad matches, this is the maddest," Tranio said.

Lucentio asked Bianca, "What is your opinion of your sister and her marriage?"

"I believe that, being mad herself, she is madly mated."

Gremio said, "In my opinion, Petruchio is Kated. Either they are equally matched, or one of them has met his match. Either way, Petruchio is mated with Kate."

Baptista said, "Neighbors and friends, although the bride and bridegroom will not be eating with us, you know that we have no lack of delicacies at the feast."

He added, "Lucentio, you shall sit in the bridegroom's seat and Bianca shall take her sister's seat."

Tranio asked, "Shall sweet Bianca practice how to bride it?"

"She shall, Lucentio," Baptista replied. "Come, gentlemen, let's go."

CHAPTER 4 (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

— 4.1 —

Grumio entered Petruchio's house in Verona and said, "Damn all weak and ill-conditioned horses! Damn all mad masters! Damn all bad roads! Was ever a man as beaten as I am? Was ever a man so dirty? Was ever a man so tired? I have been sent ahead of my master and his wife to make a fire; they will soon be here and will need to warm themselves. I am freezing, although I am a little pot and soon hot — although I am short, I get angry quickly and so warm up. If this were not true, I am so cold that my lips might freeze to my teeth and my tongue might freeze to the roof of my mouth, and my heart might freeze in my chest before I should come by a fire to thaw me. I will warm myself by fanning the embers. It is a good thing that I am short — a taller man than I am would catch cold."

With a voice that quivered because he was shivering, Grumio shouted for a servant, "Curtis!"

Curtis walked into the room and asked, "Who is it who calls so coldly?"

"A piece of ice," Grumio replied, "If you doubt that I am a piece of ice, you may slide from my shoulder to my heel with no greater a running start than my head and my neck. Start a fire, good Curtis."

"Are my master and his wife coming, Grumio?"

"Yes, Curtis, yes, and therefore start a fire. An old song says, '*Scotland's burning ... Fire, fire! Cast on water,*' but throw no water on this fire because I need it badly to keep from freezing."

Curtis started making a fire in a fireplace.

“Is my master’s wife as hot a shrew as she’s reported to be?” Curtis asked.

“She was, good Curtis, before this frost,” Grumio replied, “but, as you know, winter tames man, woman, and beast. It has tamed my old master and my new mistress and myself, fellow Curtis.”

“You may be a beast, but I am not,” Curtis said. “Do not call me your fellow since you have just admitted that you are a beast. Go away, you three-inch fool!”

“Is what is mine only three inches long?” Grumio said, “Why, the horn on your head that identifies you as a man with an unfaithful wife is a foot long. What I have between my legs is at least that long. But will you make a fire, or shall I complain about you to our mistress, whose hand, now that she is close at hand, you shall soon feel, to your cold comfort, for being slow in your hot office? Do your job, and make a fire.”

“Good Grumio, tell me, how goes the world? What’s the news?”

“The world is cold,” Grumio said, “for everyone but you, who has the job of making fires, so do your duty, and take what is due to you, because my master and mistress are almost frozen to death. Petruchio and Katherina are, like me, cold.”

“The fire is ready,” Curtis said. “Therefore, Grumio, tell me the news.”

Grumio sang, “Jack, boy! Ho, boy!”

Then he added, “Before I can tell you anything, the news must thaw.”

“Come, you are so full of trickery! You must be a master at trapping rabbits!”

“Make the fire bigger because I have caught extreme cold,” Grumio said. “Where’s the cook? Is supper ready? Is the house tidied? Are the rushes strewn on the floor? Are the cobwebs swept away? Are the serving men wearing their new livery and their white stockings? Does every upper servant have his wedding token on? Are all the male and female servants ready and the big and little glasses, too? Are the tablecloths on the tables, and is everything in order?”

“All is ready; and therefore, please, please tell me the news. What happened during your journey?”

“First, know that my horse is tired,” Grumio said, “and know that my master and mistress have fallen out.”

“How?”

“They have fallen out of their saddles into the dirt; and thereby hangs a tale.”

“Let us hear the tale, good Grumio.”

“Lend me your ear.”

“Here it is,” Curtis said, inclining an ear toward Grumio, who hit it.

“You are making me feel a tale, not hear a tale,” Curtis said.

“And therefore it is called a sensible tale because you are able to sense it,” Grumio said. “I knocked at your ear to wake it up and beg it to listen. Now I begin my tale: *Imprimis* — that is legal talk for ‘first of all’ — we came down a foul hill, my master, Petruccio, riding behind my mistress, Katherina.”

“Were both riding on one horse?”

“What is the difference?”

“Why, the difference of a horse.”

“You should tell the tale since you are going to keep interrupting,” Grumio said. “If you had not interrupted me, you would have heard how Katherina’s horse fell and she fell under her horse. You would have heard in how muddy a place she fell, how she was covered in mud, how he left her with the horse over her, how he beat *me* because *her* horse stumbled, how she waded through the dirt to pluck him off me, how he swore, how she prayed — this woman who never prayed before — how I cried, how the horses ran away, how her bridle was broken, how I lost my crupper — that strap that goes under the horse’s tail and keeps the saddle steady — with many other things worth recording, which now shall die in oblivion due to being untold, resulting in you returning unenlightened to your grave.”

“According to your tale, Petruchio is more of a shrew than his wife.”

“Yes, he is,” Grumio said, “and you and the proudest of you all shall find that to be true when he comes home. But why am I talking about this? Call forth Nathaniel, Joseph, Nicholas, Philip, Walter, Sugarsop, and the rest. Let their heads be sleekly combed, their servants’ blue coats brushed, and their garters be matched. Let them curtsy with their left legs and not presume to touch a hair of my master’s horse’s tail until they have kissed their master’s and their mistress’ hands in greeting. Are they all ready?”

“They are.”

“Call them forth.”

Curtis shouted, “Did you hear?”

Some servants were eavesdropping.

Curtis shouted, “You must meet my master to countenance — to pay respect to — my mistress.”

“To countenance?” Grumio, who was always willing and happy to deliberately misinterpret words, said. “Why, she has a face of her own.”

“Who does not know that?”

“Apparently, you — you are the one calling for company to countenance her.”

“I call them forth to credit her — to pay respect to her, to honor her,” Curtis said.

“To credit her? Why, she has not come to borrow something from them.”

Some servants entered the room.

Nathaniel said, “Welcome home, Grumio!”

Philip asked, “How are you, Grumio?”

Joseph said, “Hey, Grumio!”

Nicholas said, “Grumio, my friend!”

Nathaniel asked, “How are you, old lad?”

Grumio said to the four servants, “Welcome, you ... how are you now? ... hey, you ... my friend, you.”

Then he added, “So much for my greetings. Now, my fine fellows, is everything ready, and are all things tidy?”

Nathaniel replied, “All things are ready. How near is our master?”

“Very close indeed,” Grumio said. “By this time, he has dismounted. Therefore, you must — quiet! I hear him coming!”

Petruchio and Katherina entered the room. Katherina went directly to the fire.

“Where are these knaves?” Petruchio shouted. “What, no servant at my door to hold my stirrup or to take my horse! Where are Nathaniel, Gregory, Philip?”

Nathaniel said, “Here, sir.”

Gregory said, “Here, sir.”

Philip said, “Here, sir.”

Petruchio shouted, “Here, sir! Here, sir! Here, sir! You logger-headed and unpolished servants! What, you can’t be bothered to show up to do your work? You can’t be bothered to show respect to me? You can’t be bothered to obey me? Will no one do his duty? Where is the foolish knave I sent here before me?”

Grumio replied, “Here I am, sir — I am just as foolish as I was before.”

Petruchio shouted at him, “You peasant country bumpkin! You son of a whore! You are as much of a mindless drudge as a horse that turns a treadmill to grind barley to make malt! Did I not order you to meet me outside and bring along these rascal knaves with you?”

Grumio replied with several ridiculous excuses: “Nathaniel’s coat, sir, was not fully made. Gabriel’s shoes needed to be repaired. Peter’s hat was not darkened because no smoky torch could be found. Walter had not yet found a sheath for his dagger. No one was properly dressed except for Adam, Ralph, and Gregory. All the rest were ragged, old, and beggarly. Yet, dressed as they are, they have come here to meet you.”

Petruchio said, “Go, rascals, go, and fetch my supper.”

The servants exited.

Petruchio sang, "*Where is the life that late I led —*"

He stopped singing and began to say, "Where are those —"

Then he interrupted himself and said, "Sit down, Kate, and welcome."

He began to bang on the table and shout, "Food! Food! Food! Food!"

The servants arrived with the meal and began to place it on a serving table near the dining table at which Petruchio and Katherina were sitting.

Petruchio shouted at the servants, "Hurry!"

He said to his wife, "Don't look sad, Kate. Be merry."

To the servants, he shouted, "Take off my boots! Hurry!"

Part of Petruchio's plan was to outshrew the shrew and by so doing show her how her shrewish and inconsiderate actions affected other people. This part of his plan was succeeding.

He sang, "*It was the friar of orders grey,*

"As he walked forth on his way —"

He shouted at a servant who was trying to pull off one of his boots, "Get out, rogue! You are twisting my ankle! You better do a better job with the other boot! Take that!"

He hit the servant.

He said, "Be merry, Kate."

He shouted, "Bring some water here!"

"Where's Troilus, my cocker spaniel?"

“Get you hence, and order my cousin Ferdinand to come hither. He is one, Kate, whom you must kiss, and be acquainted with.

“Where are my slippers?”

“Bring me some water!”

A servant entered, carrying water.

Petruchio said, “Come, Kate, and wash your hands, and welcome heartily.”

The servant dropped the water, and Petruchio shouted, “You son of a whore! You villain! Will you let it fall?”

Petruchio hit the servant who had dropped the water.

“Have patience, please,” Katherina said. “He did not do it on purpose.”

Katherina was learning about kindness and forgiveness and about feeling sympathy for other people. She was learning how shrewish behavior affected other people.

Petruchio said, “He is the son of a whore! He is a beetle-headed, flap-eared knave!”

He added, “Come, Kate, sit down. I know that you are hungry. Will you give thanks to God, sweet Kate; or else shall I?”

He asked a servant, “What is this? Mutton?”

The servant replied, “Yes.”

“Who brought it?”

The servant Peter replied, “I did.”

“This mutton is burnt, and so is all the food. What dogs are these servants! Where is the rascal cook? How dare you,

villains, bring this food and serve it like this to me who hates burnt mutton and burnt food! Take it away!”

He swept the food and the dishes off the table and shouted, “You heedless joltheads and unmannered slaves! What, are you servants grumbling and complaining? I’ll set you straight right away!”

“Please, husband,” Katherina said. “The food was fine. You need not be so picky.”

“I tell you, Kate, it was burnt and dried up, and I am expressly forbidden to touch it because overcooked food makes people hot-headed and angry. It is better that both of us fast rather than eat it because both of us have quick tempers. Be patient. Tomorrow this fault will be corrected, and we will have good food to eat. Tonight, however, both of us will go without food. Come, I will take you to your bridal chamber.”

Petruchio and Katherina exited, and the servants began to talk.

Nathaniel asked, “Peter, did you ever see the like of that?”

“Petruchio is beating her at her game. She is hot-headed, but he is pretending to be even more hot-headed than she is. He is giving her a taste of her own medicine.”

Curtis came into the room.

Grumio asked, “Where is Petruchio?”

Curtis replied, “He is in her bedchamber, talking to her about self-control. In his sermon to her, he shouts, and swears, and scolds, so that she, poor soul, does not know which way to stand, to look, or to speak. She sits dazed as if she has newly awakened from a dream.”

Curtis heard a noise and said, “Let’s go now! I hear

Petruchio coming!”

The servants left quickly.

Petruchio walked into the room and started to think out loud:

“I have started my reign with cunning, and I hope that my carefully thought-out plan will succeed.

“We train falcons to obey their masters by keeping them very hungry, and I will keep Kate very hungry. I will not allow her to eat her fill until she fulfills the vow she made before God to love, honor, and obey me.

“To train a hawk, and have it obey the call of her master, the trainer must watch the hawk until it is trained. Untrained hawks will be enraged and will beat their wings in frustration and will not be obedient.

“Kate ate no food today, and I will not allow her to eat tonight. Last night she did not sleep, and tonight I will not allow her to sleep. I pretended to find fault with the food, and I will pretend to find fault with the bed. I will fling the pillow there, I will fling the cushion here, I will fling the coverlet this way, and I will fling the sheets another way.

“While I do these things, I will tell her that everything I do is done in reverend care of her — and that is true, if it gets rid of her shrewishness, as I intend it will.

“Kate shall stay awake all night. And if she begins to nod and go to sleep, I’ll shout and brawl and with the clamor keep her always awake.

“This is a way to kill a wife with kindness.

“By doing these things, I will curb her mad and headstrong shrewishness. Once she is tamed, I will be a proper husband to her. I will love and cherish her. I do, already,

although it may not seem like it.

“If anyone knows better how to tame a shrew, I want to hear from him his better way. His telling everyone the secret would be a service to the world.”

— 4.2 —

Tranio and Hortensio were speaking in front of Baptista’s house. Tranio was still disguised as his master, Lucentio, and Hortensio was still disguised as the tutor Litio. Hortensio had been spying on Bianca and was convinced that she and the tutor Cambio — who was really Lucentio in disguise, although Hortensio did not know that — were in love.

Tranio said, “Is it really possible, friend Litio, that Mistress Bianca fancies any one other than me, Lucentio? I tell you, sir, she seems to treat me encouragingly, although you say that she is completely deceiving me. Is she really leading me on?”

“Sir, to satisfy you that what I have said is true,” Hortensio replied, “stand hidden here and watch the interaction of tutor Cambio and student Bianca.”

Lucentio and Bianca walked into the garden for a lesson.

Lucentio asked, “Bianca, have you learned anything from what you have read?”

“Which book are you reading? Answer me that first,” Bianca said.

“I am reading a book whose advice I follow: Ovid’s *The Art of Love*.”

Lucentio thought, *It is a manual on how to seduce women.*

Bianca said, “I hope that you are a master in that art.”

“And I hope that you will prove to be the mistress of my heart!”

Hortensio said, “They are fast learners! What do you think? Do you still think that Bianca loves no one except for you?”

“Bianca’s ‘love’ for me has been deceiving and deceitful,” Tranio said. “Women are unfaithful. What I have seen here is incredible, Litio.”

Hortensio decided to reveal his true identity: “Be mistaken no more. I am not Litio. I am Hortensio, who disguised myself as a music tutor to be close to Bianca and woo her. But I am ashamed that I have acted in this way. Bianca is not worthy of my wooing her. She prefers a low-born man like Cambio to a gentleman of high birth like me. She loves a peasant. She does not love me.”

Tranio replied, “Signior Hortensio, I have often heard that you loved Bianca with all your heart. My eyes are now witnesses of her unworthiness and unfaithfulness. I am ready — like you — to stop wooing Bianca. Do you approve of my decision?”

“Look at how they kiss and court each other!” Hortensio said. “I do approve of your decision. Let’s shake on it. Here and now I firmly vow never to woo Bianca — I do give her up because she is unworthy of all the former favors that I have previously given to her.”

“And here I take the unfeigned oath that I will never marry her even if she begs me to,” Tranio said. “To Hell with her! Look at how unashamedly she pursues him!”

“I wish that everyone would vow not to marry Bianca so that she would be forced to marry her penniless tutor or be an old maid,” Hortensio said. “To help ensure that I keep my oath, I will be married to a wealthy widow before three

days have passed. This widow has loved me as long as I have loved this proud and disdainful Bianca. And so farewell, Signior Lucentio. Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks, shall win my love, and so I take my leave. I will keep the vow that I have made and you have witnessed.”

He exited.

Tranio, of course, was happy that Hortensio had decided to marry a wealthy widow rather than Bianca. Hortensio was now one less rival suitor to Bianca, and his withdrawal made it more likely that the real Lucentio would succeed in marrying Bianca.

Tranio went over to Lucentio and Bianca and said, “Mistress Bianca, may God bless you with such happiness as belongs to a lover. I have caught you two courting, and both Hortensio and I have sworn not to marry you.”

“Tranio, are you joking?” Bianca said. “Has Hortensio really sworn not to marry me?”

“Bianca, we have both sworn not to marry you.”

Lucentio had figured out that the tutor Licio was really Hortensio in disguise. He said, “Then we are rid of Licio.”

“Yes, you are,” Tranio said. “He said that he will marry a merry widow. He intends to woo and wed her quickly.”

“May God give him joy!” Bianca said.

“Hortensio will tame the widow,” Tranio said.

“He *says* that he will, Tranio,” Bianca replied.

“Indeed, he has gone to the taming-school.”

“The taming-school?” Bianca said. “Is there really such a place?”

“Yes, there is,” Tranio said, “and Petruchio is the schoolmaster. He teaches the right tricks for taming a shrew and her chattering tongue. Hortensio has gone to visit Petruchio in Verona.”

Lucentio’s other servant, Biondello, arrived and said, “Master, I have been on the lookout so long for a man who will pretend to be your father that I am dog-weary, but at last I have spied a Heaven-sent old man coming down the hill. He is the right kind of man to pretend to be your father.”

“What is he like, Biondello?” Lucentio asked.

“Master, he is a merchant or perhaps a pedant, I do not know for sure, but his clothing, walk, and appearance are like those of a father.”

“What do we do now, Tranio?” Lucentio asked.

“If he is credulous and trusts the tale I will tell him,” Tranio said, “I will make him glad to pretend to be your father, Vincentio, and to make promises to Baptista Minola about the dower that I — while pretending to be you — have promised for Bianca. He will pass as your father. Now you and Bianca go inside and leave me alone to talk to him.”

Lucentio and Bianca went inside.

The old man arrived, walking on the street outside Baptista’s house.

The old man saw Tranio and greeted him, “God bless you, sir!”

Tranio walked over to the old man and said, “And may God bless you, sir! You are welcome. Do you have far to travel, or have you reached your destination?”

“I will stay here for a week or two, but then I will travel

farther. I will go to Rome and then to Tripoli, if God permits.”

“Where are you from, please?”

“I am from Mantua.”

“From Mantua, sir!” Tranio pretended to be shocked. “God forbid! Why have you come to Padua, where your life is in danger?”

“My life is in danger!” the old man said. “That is hard news! Why is my life in danger?”

“It is death for anyone in Mantua to come to Padua,” Tranio said. “Don’t you know the cause? The Duke of Padua, who is quarreling with the Duke of Mantua, has ordered all Mantuan ships to be detained in Venice. News of the Dukes’ quarrel has spread widely. It is a marvel that you have not yet heard about it, but then you are newly arrived in Padua. Otherwise, you would have heard about it.”

“This is extremely bad news for me,” the old man said. “For I have promissory notes from Florence that I must exchange here for cash.”

“Well, sir, I will do you a favor and also give you advice,” Tranio said. “First, tell me, have you ever been in Pisa?”

“Yes, sir,” the old man said. “I have often been in Pisa, which is renowned for grave and wise citizens.”

“Among these grave and wise citizens, do you know a certain Vincentio?”

“I do not know him personally, but I have heard of him,” the old man said. “He is a merchant of immense wealth.”

“He is my father, sir,” Tranio lied, “and, it is true to say, in appearance he somewhat resembles you.”

Biondello thought, *Vincentio and this old man resemble each other as much as do an apple and an oyster, but that hardly matters.*

“To save your life in these extremely dangerous circumstances, I will do you a favor for my father’s sake. It is fortunate that you resemble Vincentio because you can pretend to be him and assume his name and reputation. You will safely stay in my house. Just be careful to stay in character as my father — that is important. That way, you can stay in Padua until you have finished your business here. If you wish to accept my kind offer, you are welcome to do so.”

“Sir, I do accept your kind offer,” the old man said. “For ever after, I will consider you the savior of my life and liberty.”

“Then go with me and we will put this plan in action,” Tranio said. “As we walk, let me give you information. My father is expected here any day now to make a formal agreement about a dower in marriage — I will be married to one of the daughters of a certain Baptista here. I will teach you what to say and what to do, and I will dress you in clothing that will suit the role you will play.”

— 4.3 —

In a room of Petruchio’s house, a very hungry Katherina was attempting to get the servant Grumio to bring her food. This attempt was doomed to be unsuccessful because Grumio was obeying the instructions of Petruchio, part of whose plan to tame the shrewish Katherina was to keep food from her.

“No, I will not bring you food,” Grumio said. “If I were to get caught, Petruchio would kill me.”

“The greater the wrong he does to me, the more spiteful

Petruchio becomes,” Katherina said. “Did he marry me in order to starve me? Beggars who come to my father’s door and ask for food are immediately given a meal. If they are not, they are given charity elsewhere. But I, who have never learned how to beg, and who have never needed to beg, am starved for lack of food and giddy for lack of sleep. I am kept awake by loud oaths and fed with brawling. And what vexes me more than all these things is that he says that he does these things because he loves me with a perfect love. It is as if he believes that if I should sleep or eat, then I would get a deadly sickness or die immediately. Please go and get me something to eat. I don’t care what you get me, as long as it is wholesome food.”

“What do you say to a cooked calf’s foot?” Grumio asked.

“It is very good. Please let me have it.”

“I fear that it is a food that causes ill temper,” Grumio said.

“What do you say to a fat tripe finely broiled?”

“I like it well. Good Grumio, bring me one.”

“I don’t know. I am afraid that it would cause you to be ill tempered. What do you say to a piece of beef and mustard?”

“It is a dish that I love to eat.”

“True, but the mustard is a little too hot.”

“Then bring me the beef without the mustard.”

“No, I will not,” Grumio said. “You shall have mustard, or else you get no beef from Grumio.”

“Then bring me both, or just one of them, or any kind of food at all.”

“Why then, I will bring you the mustard without the beef.”

“Get away from me,” Katherina said, hitting Grumio. “You are a false deluding slave who feeds me only with words and not with food. May God bring sorrow upon you and all the pack of you who triumph and feel glad because I am miserable. Get out!”

Petruchio and Hortensio, who was visiting Petruchio, came into the room. They were carrying food.

“How are you, my Kate?” Petruchio said. “What, sweetie, are you depressed?”

Hortensio asked, “How are you?”

“I am cold because I have met with cold cheer,” Katherina replied.

“Pluck up your spirits, and look cheerfully upon me,” Petruchio said. “Here, love. You can see how diligent I am to fix this food myself and bring it to you. I am sure, sweet Kate, that this kindness merits thanks. What, not a word of thanks? I can see that you do not want this food and therefore I went to all this trouble for nothing. I see that I need to have this food taken away.”

“Please, let the food stay here,” Katherina said.

“The smallest service is repaid with thanks, and so shall my service be repaid before you touch the food.”

“I thank you, sir,” Katherina said.

“Signior Petruchio, you are to blame for Kate’s poor spirits,” Hortensio said. “Come, mistress Kate, I’ll join you for your meal.”

Petruchio was willing for Kate and him to go hungry, but he was not willing for a guest to go hungry, especially when the guest could help him in his plan to tame Katherina.

He whispered, “Do me a favor, Hortensio, and eat all the food. Do not let Kate have any of it.”

Petruchio said loudly, “Hortensio, may your courtesy do your gentle heart good! Kate, eat quickly. My honey love, we will return to your father’s house and enjoy ourselves while dressed as splendidly as the others there. We will have silken coats and hats and golden rings, with ruffs and cuffs and hooped skirts and things, with scarfs and fans and double change of fine clothing, with amber bracelets, beads, and lots of other girly things.”

As Petruchio talked, Hortensio ate most of the food. Kate got very little — Petruchio and Hortensio made sure of that.

Petruchio said, “Are you finished eating? The tailor is waiting for you. He will adorn your body with his finery and ruffles.”

The tailor entered the room, and Petruchio said, “Come, tailor, let us see these ornaments. Let us see the dress that you have made. Lay it out so we can see it.”

A hat maker also entered the room, and Petruchio asked, “What business have you here?”

The hat maker replied, “Here is the hat your worship ordered.”

Petruchio looked at the hat and pretended to dislike it.

He said, “Why, this was molded on a porridge bowl! It is a velvet dish! It is cheap and nasty! Why, it is a mollusk shell or a walnut shell. It is a knick-knack, a trifle, a piece of nonsense, a baby’s hat. Take it away! Come, let me have a bigger hat!”

Katherina said, “I will have no bigger hat. This size is fashionable, and gentlewomen wear such hats as these.”

Petruchio replied, “When you are gentle, you shall have one, too — but not until then.”

Hortensio thought, *That will not be any time soon.*

Katherina said, “Why, sir, I trust I may have permission to speak, and speak I will. I am no child. I am no babe. Your betters have endured hearing me say my mind, and if you cannot endure it, it is best that you stop your ears. My tongue will tell the anger that is in my heart — if I keep that anger hidden, my heart will break. Rather than have it break, I will speak as freely as I want, even if what I have to say is extreme.”

Petruchio pretended that Katherina had agreed with him that the hat was bad: “Why, what you say is true. This is a paltry hat, a custard-coffin — a crust for a custard — a bauble, a meat pie. I love you and your taste in hats — you hate this hat.”

“Whether you love me or love me not, I like the hat. And I will have it, or I will have none.”

Petruchio motioned for the hat maker to leave, and the hat maker obeyed.

The tailor had laid out the dress for inspection.

Petruchio said, “Let us look at the dress. Tailor, show it to us.”

Petruchio looked at the dress and pretended not to like it: “Have mercy, God! What kind of fancy dress is this? What’s this? A sleeve? It is like a small cannon. I see that you have pricked it open all over like an apple-tart. Here’s a snip and a nip and a cut and a slish and a slash — these holes resemble an incense-burner with a perforated top in a barber’s shop. Why, what in the devil’s name, tailor, do you call this?”

Hortensio thought, *I can see that Kate is also not likely to have a new dress.*

“You wanted me to make the dress properly and well, according to the fashion of this time,” the tailor said.

“So I did,” Petruchio said, “but if you remembered, I did not order you to spoil it for all time. Leave here and pass every street gutter as you hop off to your home. For you shall hop off without any business from me, sir. I want none of the clothing you make. Go now! Take this dress and do whatever you want with it!”

Katherina said to Petruchio, “I have never seen a better-fashioned dress. I have never seen a dress that is more elegant, more pleasing, or more commendable. Are you trying to make a puppet — an easily manipulated doll — out of me?”

Petruchio pretended that she was talking about the tailor: “Why, that is true; the tailor is trying to make a puppet out of you.”

The tailor replied, “She says that *you* intend to make a puppet out of her.”

“Oh, monstrous arrogance!” Petruchio said. “You lie, you thread, you thimble — you are a yard, three-quarters of a yard, a half-yard, a quarter of a yard, one-sixteenth of a yard! You are a flea, a nit, a thin-legged insect! Am I to be defied in my own house by a spool of thread? Get out, you rag, you fragment, you remnant, or I shall so beat you with your yardstick that for the rest of your life you will think twice before prattling on this way. I tell you that you have ruined her dress.”

“You are deceived,” the tailor said. “The dress has been made according to the order given to my boss. Grumio gave us the order about how it should be done.”

“I gave him no order; I gave him the fabric,” Grumio said.

“But how did you want the dress to be made?” the tailor asked.

“Sir, with needle and thread,” Grumio replied.

“But did you not request that the fabric be cut?”

“You have bedecked many things, haven’t you?” Grumio asked.

“Yes, I have decorated many dresses with trimmings,” the tailor said.

“Well, do not try to bedeck me. I will not be decked in a fight,” Grumio said, “no matter how many men you have decked. I will not stand for it! I asked your boss to cut out the dress, but I did not ask him to cut it to pieces; therefore, you lie.”

“I have right here the written order for the dress,” the tailor said. “It tells in what fashion the dress should be made.”

“Read it out loud,” Petruchio ordered.

“The note lies if it says that I ordered the dress to be cut to pieces,” Grumio said.

The tailor read out loud, “*First, a loose-bodied dress —*”

Grumio objected, “A loose-bodied dress! That is a dress for a woman with a loose body — a loose woman! Master, if ever I said loose-bodied dress, sew me in the skirts of it, and beat me to death with a bobbin of brown thread. I said a dress, not a loose-bodied dress.”

“Proceed,” Petruchio ordered.

The tailor read, “*With a small compassed cape.*”

“I confess that I ordered the cape,” Grumio said.

“*With a wide sleeve,*” the tailor read.

“I confess that I ordered two sleeves,” Grumio said.

“The sleeves elaborately cut,” the tailor read.

“There is the villainy — there is the problem,” Petruchio said.

“There is an error in the order, sir,” Grumio said. “I ordered that the sleeves should be cut out and then sewed up again. I will prove it in combat even though the tailor arms his little finger with a thimble.”

“Everything that I have read is true,” the tailor said. “If I had you in the right place — a court of law — the judge would agree with me, and not with you.”

“I am ready to fight you now,” Grumio said. “You take the order form, I will take your yardstick, and let us fight each other without mercy. You have no need to hold back when you fight me.”

“May God have mercy,” Hortensio said. “The tailor won’t have a chance if he is armed only with a piece of paper.”

“Well, sir, in brief, the dress is not for me,” Petruchio said to the tailor. “I do not want it.”

“You are in the right, sir,” Grumio said. “It is for my mistress — your wife.”

“Take the dress back to your boss and let him do what he wants with it,” Petruchio said to the tailor. “Take it away for your master’s use.”

“Isn’t that dirty?” Grumio asked.

“What do you mean?” Petruchio asked.

“You want this tailor to take away the dress for his master’s

use. That sounds like you want him to take the dress off a woman so that his master can use her,” Grumio replied. “I am shocked!”

Petruchio ignored Grumio’s coarse jesting and whispered, “Hortensio, say that you will see that the tailor will be paid.”

To the tailor, Petruchio said, “Go and take the dress away. Be gone, and say no more.”

Hortensio whispered to the tailor, “Do not worry. I’ll pay you for the dress tomorrow. Do not be offended by Petruchio’s rash and inconsiderate words. Go now, and send my regards to your boss.”

The tailor exited.

Petruchio said, “Well, come, my Kate; we will go to your father’s house wearing these respectable everyday clothes. Our purses shall be rich because we have not spent our money, and our garments will be poor. Our minds are more important than our bodies, and a rich mind will adorn the body. Just like the Sun breaks through the darkest clouds, honor can be seen through the meanest clothing. Is the loudly chattering blue jay more precious than the beautifully singing but plainly adorned morning lark because its feathers are more beautiful? Or is the poisonous adder better than the tasty eel because its patterned skin pleases the eye? Of course not, good Kate. And you are not the worse for this poor and mean clothing. If you consider your clothing to be shameful, blame it on me. I believe that quality of character is all and quality of clothing is nothing. And therefore let us be merry. We will leave immediately and go to your father’s house to feast and be entertained.”

He ordered a servant, “Go, call my men, and let us go straight to Kate’s father. Bring our horses to the end of Long Lane. We will walk there and mount our horses. Let’s

see, I think it is now around seven o'clock, and we will probably arrive at Kate's father's house by dinnertime."

"I do assure you, sir, that it is almost two o'clock," Katherina said. "And it will be suppertime before we arrive there."

Petruchio replied, "It shall be seven or I will not mount my horse. Look, Kate, whatever I speak, or do, or think to do, you are always saying that I am wrong."

He told his servants, "Forget it. I will not go to Kate's father's house today; and before I do, it shall be whatever o'clock I say it is."

Hortensio thought, *Why, Petruchio intends to command the Sun to be whatever o'clock he says it is.*

— 4.4 —

Tranio and the old man, who was now dressed like Vincentio, Lucentio's father, talked together in front of Baptista's house. The old man was wearing boots and was bareheaded to make it seem as if he had just arrived from a journey.

Tranio said, "Sir, this is Baptista's house. Do you want me to ring his bell?"

"Of course, what else?" the old man said. "But unless I am deceived, Signior Baptista may remember me. Nearly twenty years ago, in Genoa, we met when we were lodgers at the Pegasus Inn."

"All will be well," Tranio said. "Keep in character no matter what happens. Be sure to have the gravitas that a father should have."

"I will," the old man said.

Biondello arrived.

The old man said, "But, sir, here comes your servant. It is a good idea for him to know what we are doing."

"Do not worry about him," Tranio said.

He added, "Biondello, now do your duty thoroughly, I advise you. Pretend that this man is the real Vincentio."

"I will. Don't worry," Biondello said.

"Did you take my message to Baptista?" Tranio asked.

"I told him that your father was at Venice, and that you expected him to arrive today in Padua."

"You are a good fellow," Tranio said. "Here, take this money and buy yourself a drink later."

He looked up and said, "Here comes Baptista. Old man, get ready."

Baptista and Lucentio walked over to Tranio, the old man, and Biondello.

Tranio said, "Signior Baptista, you are happily met."

He said to the old man who was pretending to be Lucentio's father, "Sir, this is the gentleman I told you about. I hope that you will be a good father to me now. Give me Bianca as and for my inheritance."

"Steady, son!" the old man said.

To Baptista, the old man said, "Sir, by your leave. I have come to Padua to collect some debts, and my son Lucentio has told me about an important matter: Your daughter and he love each other. Because of the good reports that I have heard about you and because my son loves your daughter and she loves him, I am willing, as a loving father should be, to allow my son to be married right away. If you like this match of your daughter and my son as much as I do,

then we can come to a financial agreement and together consent to this marriage. I will not try to drive a hard bargain with you, Baptista — I have heard many good things about you.”

“Sir, pardon me for what I have to say,” Baptista said. “Your plain-spokenness and your brevity well please me. It is true that your son Lucentio here loves my daughter and she loves him — or both are putting on quite an act! Therefore, as long as you assure me that like a good father who wants his son to be happy you will give my daughter a sufficient dower, the match is made and all is done. Your son shall marry my daughter with my consent.”

“I thank you, sir,” Tranio said. “Where then do you know that your daughter and I can best be formally engaged and the proper financial agreements be drawn up?”

“Not in my house, Lucentio,” Baptista said, “for, you know, pitchers have ears, and I have many servants. Besides, old Gremio is always listening so perhaps we may be interrupted.”

“Then we will do these things at my lodging, if it pleases you,” Tranio said. “There, my father is staying; and there, this night, we will settle this business privately and well. Send for your daughter by your servant Cambio here. My servant Biondello shall fetch the notary at once to write out the financial agreements. The worst thing is that with so little notice, you are likely to have a thin and slender meal at my lodging.”

“That is fine,” Baptista said. “Cambio, go to my home and tell Bianca to get herself ready immediately. Please tell her what has happened: Lucentio’s father has arrived in Padua, and she is likely to become Lucentio’s wife.”

Lucentio, disguised as Cambio, exited. As he did, Tranio winked at him and laughed.

“I pray to the gods that she will become Lucentio’s wife with all my heart!” Biondello said.

“Dally not with the gods, but leave now,” Tranio said.

Biondello exited. He had a message that Tranio wanted him to give to Lucentio.

Tranio said, “Signior Baptista, shall I lead the way? Welcome! A single course will most likely be all the food you receive at my lodging here, but we will do better in Pisa.”

“I will follow you,” Baptista said.

Tranio, the old man, and Baptista exited.

Biondello, meanwhile, shouted, “Cambio!”

Lucentio, still disguised as Cambio, walked over to him and said, “What do you want, Biondello?”

“Did you see my master wink and laugh?”

“Yes, Biondello, but what of that?”

“In themselves, nothing, but he has left me here behind to tell you the meaning of his wink and laugh.”

“Please tell me their meaning.”

“Baptista is safely away from you; he is talking with the pretend father of a pretend son.”

“What about him?”

“You are supposed to bring his daughter to the supper.”

“And what of it?”

“The old priest of Saint Luke’s church is on duty at all hours.”

“And what does this have to do with me?”

“While Baptista is busy with Tranio and the old man, why not rush things a little to make sure that you get the girl and she is yours forever? Take her to the church, gather about you the priest, clerk, and some honest witnesses, and do what people do at weddings. If this is not what you want, then I have no more to say except that you ought to tell Bianca farewell for forever and a day.”

“Listen, Biondello —”

“I cannot tarry,” Biondello said. “But I can tell you that I knew a woman who was married one afternoon as she went to the garden to get parsley to stuff a rabbit. You may do much the same thing, sir, and so goodbye, sir. My master the pretend Lucentio has ordered me to go to Saint Luke’s and tell the priest to be ready to marry you when you come with the woman who will complete you.”

Biondello left.

Lucentio said, “I may do this, and I will do this, if it pleases Bianca. But she will definitely be pleased, so why should I worry about what I should do? Whatever will be will be. I will go to Bianca and ask her to marry me now. It would be embarrassing if I showed up at the church alone.”

— 4.5 —

Petruchio, Katherina, Hortensio, Grumio, and some servants were traveling on the road to Padua to go to Katherina’s father’s house.

Katherina was thinking:

I have a decision to make. Do I allow myself to be tamed, or do I continue to resist obeying my husband, Petruchio?

Or, better, do I tame myself?

If I am tamed through the use of hunger and lack of sleep, I am no better than an animal, a hawk that a trainer tames. If I am tamed, I will obey my husband, but I will do so without love and without honoring him. He will not get the wife he wants, and I will no longer be Katherina. I will have no spirit.

If I tame myself, I do what I have decided to do. The hunger and exhaustion do not determine what I shall do, although they make it clear that I need to make a decision. If I tame myself, and if I keep the vow that I made before God, I will love, honor, and obey my husband. I will still be Katherina, and I will still have spirit.

Should I tame myself? Has being a shrew made me happy?

I have tied up and beaten my own sister because she would not tell me which of her suitors she liked best. She said that she had no preference. I did not believe her.

Is that the kind of person I want to be? Is that the kind of person God wants me to be? No.

And is that the kind of wife that Petruchio wants me to be? No.

What kind of husband do I want Petruchio to be? Do I want him to be a husband who ignores me? No. Do I want him to be the kind of husband who will tolerate a shrewish wife? No. I need a husband I can respect, a husband who has as much spirit as I have.

I have learned how shrewish behavior affects other people. It is not pleasant to witness. I have learned to consider the feelings of other people — now I have empathy for other people and do not want to see them harshly criticized for minor faults or for things that are mostly or entirely out of their control.

If anyone needs to be tamed, I do. I need to decide whether I should now tame myself.

If I tame myself, how will I benefit? I will be a better person, and most likely, I will get a better husband. Is Petruchio a bad husband? Does he always act like this? Will he continue to act like this if I tame myself? I doubt it. It is obvious that he seriously takes the vow I made before God — to love, honor, and obey my husband. I think that he seriously takes the vow he made before God — to love and cherish his wife. If he had no intention of keeping his vow, he would ignore me and allow me to remain a shrew. Instead, he is going to great lengths to be married to a good wife. Also, what he does to me he is doing to himself. I am hungry, and I can look at him and see that he has lost weight. I sleep very little, and he sleeps very little so that he can ensure that I stay awake. He treats his wife as he treats himself.

But am I his wife? Are we husband and wife? Not yet. Not really. We have not consummated the marriage. I respect that in him. He is not a rapist. He will not sleep with me and consummate the marriage until I am the wife he wants and until I truly embrace a Christian marriage.

So, I have a decision to make: To be a shrew, or not to be a shrew?

Petruchio said, “So now we are on the way toward our father’s house. Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the Moon!”

Katherina said, “The Moon! It is the Sun that is shining: It is not Moonlight now.”

“I say it is the Moon that shines so bright,” Petruchio replied.

“I know it is the Sun that shines so bright,” Katherina said.

‘Now, by my mother’s son, and that’s myself,’ Petruchio said, “it shall be Moon, or Sun, or whatever I say it is before I journey to your father’s house. It is time for us to turn our horses around and return home. You contradict me and contradict me and contradict me.”

Hortensio said to Katherina, “Say what he wants you to say, or we shall never go to Padua.”

Katherina thought, *I have made my decision.*

“Let us go forward, please, since we have come so far,” Katherina said. “And let it be Moon, or Sun, or whatever you please. If you want to call it a poor and dimly lit candle, henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.”

“I say it is the Moon,” Petruchio said.

“I know it is the Moon,” Katherina replied.

“Nay, then you lie: It is the blessed Sun.”

“Then, God be blessed, it is the blessed Sun. But Sun it is not, when you say it is not. And the Moon changes even as your mind. What you will have it named, that is what it is; and so it shall be so for Katherina.”

Petruchio thought, *Husbands and wives should be able to speak plainly to each other. The Moon changes from New Moon to Full Moon, and Katherina said that my mind changes like the Moon changes. Katherina knows that the Sun is the Sun. She is obeying me, but she knows what reality is and she is letting me know that she knows. Lunatics are also supposed to be adversely affected by the Moon, which is Luna in Latin. Katherina is implying that I am acting like a lunatic. To be honest, the things that I have been doing are things that a lunatic would do — except that I have a very good reason for doing them. Katherina is still spirited, but Katherina is a better*

Katherina, and I like it. And very soon I intend to stop acting like a lunatic.

Hortensio whispered to Petruchio, “You have won. You have tamed the shrew.”

Petruchio said, “Well, let us go forward, then. This is the way that things should be. The bowling ball should curve naturally and make a strike and not curve unnaturally and go into the gutter.”

He thought, *Katherina is behaving as she ought to behave.*

He saw someone coming and said, “Look, we are about to have some company.”

Lucentio’s real father, Vincentio, walked toward them. He was an old man.

Petruchio said to him, “Good morning, young mistress. Where are you headed?”

He added, “Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly, too. Have you ever seen a more youthful gentlewoman? White and red compete within her cheeks! What stars spangle Heaven with as much beauty as those two eyes that beautify her Heavenly face?”

He said to Vincentio, “Fair lovely maiden, once more good morning to you.”

He added, “Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty’s sake.”

Hortensio thought, *He will make this old man mad by pretending that this old man is a young woman.*

Katherina hugged Vincentio and said, “Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet, to where are you going and where do you live? Happy are the parents of so fair a child as you, and even happier will be the man to whom a happy

fate will allot you to be his wife and his lovely bed-fellow!”

Petruchio thought, *Kate has out-done me. When we first met, we had a battle of wits and I narrowly defeated her. Now we are having a contest of wits — a game of wits — and she has defeated me by being funnier than me. This is the new Katherina — the spirited but faithful-to-her-marriage-vow Katherina. I have never been so happy to be defeated in my life.*

When a wife is obedient, that does not mean that she is a slave. A husband and a wife should work toward the same goals and not oppose each other. Those goals should be worthy. I admit that much of what I am requiring Katherina to do is silly, but I want that to stop soon. As soon as I know that both of us — not just me — are taking our marriage vows seriously, I will stop this silliness, and Katherina and I will work toward worthy goals.

A husband is supposed to love and cherish his wife. That means to treat her with respect and affection and tenderness. And according to 1 Peter 3:7, a husband must honor his wife.

According to Proverbs 31:10, the worth of a virtuous woman is far above the worth of rubies.

He said, “Why, Kate! I hope that you are not mad. This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, and withered. He is not a maiden, as you said he is.”

“Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes,” Katherina said, “that have been so bedazzled by the Sun” — she glanced at Petruchio to see whether the Sun was still the Sun; it was — “that everything I look on seems young. Now I see that you are a reverend father. Pardon me, please, for my mad mistaking.”

Katherina smiled at Petruchio, who thought, *Katherina has*

learned to play and to be funny.

“Do, good old grandsire,” Petruchio said, “let us know which way you are travelling. If you travel along with us, we shall be happy to have your company.”

“Fair sir, and you my merry mistress, your greeting of me has much amazed me. But my name is Vincentio; I live in Pisa; and I am traveling to Padua to visit a son of mine, whom I have not seen for a long time.”

“What is his name?” Petruchio asked.

“Lucentio, gentle sir.”

“Then happily have we met,” Petruchio said, “and happily for your son. And now by law, as well as because of your old age, I am entitled to call you my loving father. By this time, your son has married the sister of my wife, who just now greeted you, and so we are related. Do not be amazed or worried. The woman whom your son married is of good reputation, her dowry is rich, and she is of good birth. In addition, she has many good qualities that the wife of a noble gentleman ought to have. Let me hug you, and we will travel together to see your noble son, who will rejoice when you arrive.”

“Is all this true?” Vincentio said. “Or is this another of the jokes that you play on travellers? You seem to enjoy playing jokes.”

“I do assure you, father,” Hortensio said, “that what he has said is true.”

“Come with us and see for yourself that what I have said is true,” Petruchio said. “I can understand that the way we first greeted you has made you wary.”

Vincentio joined the travelers.

Hortensio thought, *This has been an interesting trip. I have seen how Petruchio tamed the shrew. If the widow I will soon marry turns out to be a shrew, I know exactly what to do.*

Both Petruchio and Katherina thought, *I hope that we get to Baptista's house soon — I'm starving.*

CHAPTER 5 (The Taming of the Shrew)

— 5.1 —

Gremio stood in front of Lucentio's house. He did not see Biondello, Lucentio, and Bianca, who were further down the street. Lucentio was no longer disguised as Cambio.

Biondello said, "Let us move quietly and swiftly, sir; the priest is ready."

Lucentio said, "I am hurrying, Biondello, but they may need you at home so leave us and go home."

"Not yet," Biondello said. "I will go with you to the church, and then I will return to the house as quickly as I can."

Biondello, Lucentio, and Bianca left to go to the church.

"I wonder why Cambio is not here," Gremio said.

Petruchio, Katherina, Vincentio, Grumio, and some servants now arrived and went to Lucentio's house.

Petruchio said to Vincentio, "Sir, here's the door; this is Lucentio's house. My father-in-law Baptista's house is closer to the marketplace. There I must go, and so here I leave you, sir."

"You shall have a drink before you go," Vincentio said. "I think that any friend of mine will be welcomed here, and in all likelihood, some entertainment has already been prepared."

He knocked on the door.

Gremio said, "They are all busy inside; you better knock louder."

The old man who was pretending to be Vincentio looked

out of a window and asked, “Who is knocking as if he would like to beat down the door?”

Vincentio asked, “Is Signior Lucentio within, sir?”

“He’s inside, sir, but he is too busy to speak to anyone.”

Vincentio, who had brought money to give to his son, asked, “What if a man was bringing him a hundred pounds or two, for him to spend as he wishes? Is he still too busy to talk to me?”

The old man replied, “Keep your hundred pounds to yourself: Lucentio shall not lack money as long as I live.”

Petruchio said to Vincentio, “See, I told you that your son is well beloved in Padua.”

Petruchio said to the old man, “Listen, sir. To make matters clear, please tell Signior Lucentio that his father has come from Pisa and is here at the door and wants to speak with him.”

The old man was worried. He was pretending to be Vincentio, and here before him was the real Vincentio! He decided to continue to pretend to be Vincentio: “You lie! His father has already come from Padua and he is here and is looking out the window.”

“Are you Lucentio’s father?” Vincentio asked.

“Yes, sir,” the old man said. “So his mother says, if I may believe her.”

Petruchio said to the real Vincentio, “Why, what are you doing! This is outright knavery — you have taken another man’s name and are pretending to be him.”

The old man at the window said, “Lay hands on the villain and arrest him. I believe that he intends to cheat somebody in this city while pretending to be me.”

Biondello arrived.

He thought, *I have seen Lucentio and Bianca in the church together. May God bless them! But who is here? He is my old master: Vincentio! Now our plans are undone and brought to ruin!*

Vincentio saw Biondello, recognized him, and said, “Come here, you rope-stretcher! Your neck was made to fit a hangman’s noose!”

Biondello decided to brazen it out and said, “You are not the boss of me.”

“Come here, you rogue,” Vincentio said. “What, have you forgotten me?”

“Forgotten you!” Biondello replied. “No, sir. I could not forget you because I have never seen you before in all my life.”

“What, you notorious villain, have you never seen your master’s father, Vincentio?”

“The father of my master? Yes, indeed, sir. I see him right now — he is looking out of the window.”

“Is that so!” Vincentio said. He hit Biondello.

Biondello shouted, “Help, help, help! This is a madman who wants to murder me!”

He ran away.

The old man who was pretending to be Vincentio shouted, “Help, son! Help, Signior Baptista!”

The old man withdrew from the window.

Petruchio said, “Kate, let’s stay here and see what happens.”

They withdrew a little to a spot where they could still see what happened.

The old man who was playing Vincentio walked onto the street. So did Tranio, Baptista, and some servants.

Tranio recognized Vincentio and decided to try to brazen it out. He said, "Sir, who are you to presume to beat my servant?"

"Who am I!" Vincentio cried. "Who are you? Oh, my God! You are a fine villain! Look at what you are wearing! A silk jacket! Velvet stockings! A scarlet cloak! And a fancy hat! The work I have done is undone! While I carefully manage my money at home, my son and my servant spend all I have at the university!"

Tranio said to Vincentio, "What's the matter with you?"

"Is this man a lunatic?" Baptista asked.

Tranio said to Vincentio, "Sir, you seem to be a respectable old gentleman judging by your clothing, but your words show that you are a madman. Why, sir, what concern is it of yours if I wear pearls and gold? I thank my good father, with whose help I am able to buy my fine clothing."

"With the help of your father!" Vincentio said. "Villain! Your father is a sail maker in Bergamo."

"You are mistaken, sir," Baptista said. "You are definitely mistaken, sir. What do you think is this man's name?"

"What is his name?" Vincentio said. "I know his name! I have brought him up ever since he was three years old, and his name is Tranio."

The old man who was pretending to be Vincentio said, "Away, away, mad ass! This man's name is Lucentio, and he is my only son and the only heir to the lands of me,

Signior Vincentio.”

“You think that his name is Lucentio!” Vincentio said.
“Oh, he must have murdered his master! I order you in the Duke’s name to lay hold of him and arrest him. Oh, my son, my son!”

He said to Tranio, “Tell me, villain, where is my son, Lucentio?”

“Bring a police officer here,” Tranio ordered.

A servant arrived with a police officer, and Tranio said,
“Carry this mad knave to prison. Father Baptista, we must see that this man is brought to trial.”

“Carry me to prison!” Vincentio exclaimed.

Gremio said, “Wait, officer. This man shall not go to prison.”

“Be quiet, Gremio,” Baptista said. “I say that he shall go to prison.”

“Be careful, Signior Baptista, lest you be tricked in this business,” Gremio said. “I dare to swear that this man is the right Vincentio.”

“Swear, if you dare,” the old man pretending to be Vincentio said.

Gremio backtracked and said, “No, I dare not swear it.”

“Are you willing to say that I am not Lucentio?” Tranio asked.

“No, I know that you are Lucentio,” Gremio replied.

Baptista said about the real Vincentio, “Away with the dotard! Take him to prison!”

“In Padua, strangers are harassed and abused,” Vincentio

said. "This is monstrous!"

Biondello arrived with Lucentio and Bianca. Biondello had told them about the situation they would face.

"We are ruined and — there he is," Biondello said. "Deny that he is the real Vincentio or else we are all ruined!"

Lucentio did not deny his father.

Instead, he kneeled before him — and made Bianca also kneel — and said, "Pardon me, sweet father."

"Is my sweet son still alive?" Vincentio said. He had truly been afraid that Tranio and Biondello had murdered his son so that they could steal his identity and his money and his possessions.

Seeing and hearing this, Biondello, Tranio, and the old man who had pretended to be Vincentio ran away as quickly as they could.

Bianca said, "Pardon me, dear father."

Baptista asked her, "How have you offended me? Where is Lucentio?"

Baptista meant Tranio, who had run away, but the real Lucentio said, "Here I am. I am the real Lucentio, the real son to this man, the real Vincentio. I have married your daughter, Bianca, and have made her mine. I did that while you were blinded by counterfeits who pretended to be me and my father."

"Here is a conspiracy, with no mistake," Gremio said. "They have deceived us all!"

"Where is that damned villain Tranio?" Vincentio asked. "I have not forgotten how he badly treated and defied me."

Still puzzled, Baptista asked, "Why, is not this man

Cambio?”

Bianca replied, “Cambio is really Lucentio.”

“Love resulted in these miracles,” Lucentio said. “My love for Bianca made me give my identity to Tranio. He became a master, and I became a servant. He pretended to be me here in Padua. But finally and happily I have arrived at the wished-for haven of my bliss by marrying Bianca. What Tranio did, I myself forced him to do, so pardon him, sweet father, for my sake.”

Vincentio said, “I’ll slit the villain’s nose — he would have sent me to prison!”

Baptista said to Lucentio, “Listen, and answer me. Have you married my daughter without my consent?”

Vincentio replied for his son, “Do not worry, Baptista. We will make you happy with the dower we will give Bianca. Let us go inside and make everything right.”

Baptista followed him inside the house, saying, “We need to get to the bottom of all this and fix it.”

Lucentio said, “Don’t look pale, Bianca. My father will give you a good dower, and your father will not frown at you.”

Gremio said, “My attempt to be married has utterly failed, but I will go inside with everybody else. I hope to be invited to the wedding and get a share of the feast.”

Katherina said, “Husband, let’s follow all the others and see the end of this ado.”

“First kiss me, Kate, and we will.”

“What, kiss you in the middle of the street?”

Petruchio smiled and said gently, “What, are you ashamed

of me?”

“No, sir, God forbid that, but I am ashamed to kiss you in the street.”

“Why, then let’s go home again. Come, let us leave now.”

“No, I will give you a kiss.”

She gave him a quick kiss and said, “Now, please, my love, let us follow the others.”

“Is not this good?” Petruchio said. “Come, my sweet Kate. Better once — at some time — than never, for never is too late to mend. Better late than never, and better late than later.”

— 5.2 —

In Lucentio’s house, everyone was celebrating the marriage of Lucentio and Bianca. Many people were present, including Baptista, Vincentio, Gremio, Petruchio and Katherina, Hortensio and the widow he had married, Lucentio and Bianca, Biondello, and Grumio. Vincentio had decided not to severely punish Tranio, who was now bringing in dessert.

Lucentio said, “At last, though after a long time, our jarring notes are in harmony, and it is time, now that the raging war is done, to smile at escapes and dangers that have passed.

“My fair Bianca, bid my father welcome, while I with the same courtesy welcome your father.

“Brother Petruchio, sister Katherina, and you, Hortensio, with your loving widow, feast with your best appetite, and welcome to my house.

“This dessert will finish the meal that began with our great good reception at Baptista’s house. Please, everyone, sit

down. We now sit to chat as well as eat.”

Petruchio, who had been stuffing himself — so had Katherina — said, “We do nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!”

Baptista said, “Padua is famous for this kind of hospitality, son Petruchio.”

“Padua contains everything that is kind,” Petruchio replied.

Hortensio said, “For both our sakes, I wish that word ‘kind’ were true.”

“Now, by my life,” Petruchio said, “Hortensio fears his widow. He wishes that his widow were kind.”

Not quite hearing, the widow replied, “Did you say that my husband frightens me? Believe me when I say that I am not afraid of him.”

“That is sensible,” Petruchio said, “but you did not hear me correctly. I meant that Hortensio is afraid of you.”

The widow replied, “He who is giddy thinks the world turns round.”

Petruchio joked, “Roundly — that is, smartly — replied.”

Katherina, however, did not like what the widow had said. If a giddy man thinks that the world turns round, then a man who is afraid of his wife thinks that other men are afraid of their wives. Why would a man be afraid of his wife? Because his wife is a shrew.

She asked the widow, “What do you mean by your comment that ‘he who is giddy thinks the world turns round’?”

The widow replied, “I mean what I conceive by your husband and his comment about Hortensio.”

“Conceive by Kate’s husband?” Petruchio said. “Why, that is me! How do you, Hortensio, like your wife’s conceiving by me? Shall you soon hear the pitter-patter of little feet?”

“My wife means that she conceived what she believes by hearing your comment,” Hortensio said.

“Very well interpreted, Hortensio,” Petruchio said. “Kiss him for that, good widow.”

Katherina repeated, “‘He who is giddy thinks the world turns round.’ Please, tell me what you meant by that.”

The widow, who well knew Katherina’s reputation as a shrew, replied, “Your husband, being troubled with a shrew, projects his own trouble onto my husband, and now you know my meaning.”

“It is a very mean — a very contemptible — meaning,” Katherina said.

“Yes, it is mean,” the widow said. “I mean you.”

“I am mean indeed — when it comes to you,” Katherina said.

“Catfight! You tell her, Kate!” Petruchio said.

“You tell her, widow!” Hortensio said.

“I bet a hundred marks that my Kate defeats the widow,” Petruchio said. “My Kate will put her down.”

“That’s my job,” Hortensio said. “I will put the widow down on her back and do what husbands do.”

“That is your office, and so you are an officer,” Petruchio said. “Let me drink to you.”

He drank.

Baptista asked Gremio, “How do you like these quick-

witted folks?”

“Believe me, sir, they like to butt their heads together.”

“Head and butt!” Bianca said. “A quick-witted person would say that those butt-heads are likely to have heads with horns — cuckolds’ horns.

“Ah, mistress bride,” Vincentio said, “Has that awakened you?”

“Yes, it has awakened me, but it has not frightened me,” Bianca replied. “Therefore, I’ll go to sleep again.”

“No,” Petruchio said. “Don’t go back to sleep. Since you have awakened and made a jest, I will target you with a shrewd jest or two of my own.”

“Am I your target? Am I a bird that you are hunting?” Bianca asked. “I will move my bush and go to another bush; if you want, you can follow me and draw your bow. Please pardon me.”

Bianca, Katherina, and the widow went into another room, leaving the men behind.

“She has forestalled me,” Petruchio said. “Signior Tranio, Bianca is the bird you aimed at, although you did not hit her, and therefore let us drink to all who shot at her and missed.”

Tranio replied, “I acted like a greyhound that Lucentio had freed from the leash. I ran after Bianca but made sure that Lucentio got the catch.”

“That is a good swift simile,” Petruchio said, “but something currish — pun definitely intended.”

Tranio said, “It is good, sir, that you did your own hunting, but it is thought that your deer — that is, dear — holds you at bay. Does she wear the pants in your family?”

“Petruccio!” Baptista said. “Tranio got you!”

Lucentio said, “Thank you for that jest, good Tranio.”

“Confess,” Hortensio said. “Hasn’t Tranio hit his target?”

“It is a notable quip, I agree,” Petruccio said. “However, although it hit its target, it bounced off me and ten to one it hit one of you and stuck there.”

“Seriously,” Baptista said, “I know my daughter Katherina, and good Petruccio, I think you have the most thoroughgoing shrew of anyone here.”

“Well, I say that I don’t,” Petruccio said. “But let’s put it to the test. Let each of us send for his wife, and he whose wife is the most obedient and comes quickest when he sends for her shall win the wager that we will propose.”

“Good idea,” Hortensio said. “What wager will we make?”

Lucentio said, “Twenty crowns.”

“Twenty crowns!” Petruccio said. “I’ll venture that much on my hawk or hound, but twenty times that much on my wife.”

“Make it a hundred crowns,” Lucentio said.

“Agreed,” Hortensio said.

“Agreed,” Petruccio said. “We have made our bet.”

“Who will go first?” Hortensio asked.

“I will,” Lucentio replied.

He ordered, “Biondello, go to Bianca and ask her to come to me.”

“I will,” Biondello said, exiting.

“Son, I will assume half of your bet,” Baptista said to

Lucentio.

“No, I will take all the risk and all the profit for myself,”
Lucentio said. “I am sure that Bianca will come.”

Biondello came back, alone.

“What happened?” Lucentio asked.

“Sir, my mistress sends you word that she is busy and she cannot come,” Biondello replied.

Petruchio laughed and said, “What! She is busy and she cannot come! Is that the answer you were expecting?”

Gremio said, “At least it is a polite answer. You better pray to God that your own wife will not send you a worse one.”

“I expect to receive a better answer,” Petruchio said.

Hortensio said, “Biondello, go and entreat my wife to come to me immediately.”

Petruchio said, “‘Entreat’? Once she hears that, your widow must come, I suppose.”

Hortensio said, “I am afraid, sir, that no matter what you do, your own wife will not come to you when asked.”

Biondello came back, alone.

“Now, where’s my wife?” Hortensio said.

“She says that you have some kind of practical joke in mind, and so she will not come. She told me to tell you to come to her,” Biondello said.

“Worse and worse; she will not come! Oh, such a reply is vile, intolerable, and not to be endured!” Petruchio said.
“Grumio, go to your mistress and tell her that I command her to come to me.”

Grumio exited.

Hortensio said, "I know what your wife's answer will be."

"What?"

"She will not come."

"Then the fouler fortune is mine, and that's all there is to it."

Baptista looked up and said, "I don't believe it! Katherina is coming!"

Katherina asked Petruchio, "What may I do for you?"

"Where are your sister and Hortensio's wife?"

"They are sitting and talking by the parlor fire."

"Bring them here," Petruchio said. "If they say that they will not come, force them to come here to their husbands. Go and bring them here right away."

Katherina exited to get Bianca and the widow.

Lucentio said, "This is a wonder, if anyone wants to talk about a wonder."

"And so it is," Hortensio said. "I wonder what will be the result of it."

Petruchio said, "The result will be a peaceful and loving and quiet life. We will have a Christian marriage, based on the rightful and proper authority of and love by a husband who earns respect and obedience and honor and love from his wife. To be short, our marriage will be all that is sweet and happy. Both she and I will take our marriage vows — the same marriage vows that all Christian husbands and wives make — seriously."

"Good fortune has fallen on you, Petruchio," Baptista said.

“You have won the wager, and in addition to the money that you have won from Lucentio and Hortensio, I will give you twenty thousand crowns. This is an additional dowry for an additional daughter. The old Katherina is gone. Katherina is still a spirited Katherina, but she is a better Katherina.”

“I am not done yet,” Petruchio said. “I will demonstrate even better than I have that I have won the wager by displaying to better advantage Katherina’s new virtue and obedience. Look. She is coming now and is bringing the disobedient wives. She has made them come although they did not want to.”

Katherina had Bianca and the widow each by an arm, and she led them over to their husbands.

Petruchio said, “Katherina, your hat does not flatter you. It is a mere bauble. Throw it on the floor.”

Katherina threw her hat on the floor.

The widow said, “God, I hope that I never see any troubles until *after* I act silly like that!”

“Do you men call this *silly* action a wife’s *duty*?” Bianca asked.

“I wish that your duty was as ‘silly,’” Lucentio said. “Your conception of a wife’s duty to her husband, fair Bianca, has cost me a hundred crowns since suppertime.”

“The more fool you, for betting on my duty,” Bianca said.

Petruchio said, “Katherina, please tell these headstrong women what duty they owe to their Lords and husbands.”

“You’re joking,” the widow said. “We will listen to no lectures.”

“Speak, Katherina,” Petruchio said, “and begin with the

widow. Tell her what is her duty to her husband.”

“She shall not,” the widow said.

“I say that she shall,” Petruchio said, “and I insist that my wife begin by telling you your duty to your husband.”

Katherina thought about what the Bible says about a wife’s duty to her husband:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” — Ephesians 5:22

“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.” — Ephesians 5:23

“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be [that is, submit] to their own husbands in everything.” — Ephesians 5:24

She also thought about what the Bible says about a husband’s duty to his wife:

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;” — Ephesians 5:25

“Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” — 1 Peter 3:7

“But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” — 1 Timothy 5:8

And, of course, she thought about this verse:

“Nevertheless let everyone of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” — Ephesians 5:33

Katherina then gave a spirited defense of Christian marriage. She said to the widow, “Shame on you! Stop scowling! Unknit that threatening unkind brow, and stop darting scornful glances from those eyes to wound your Lord, your King, your Governor — your husband! Your scowls and frowns blot your beauty as frosts do stain the meadows. They destroy your reputation the way that whirlwinds shake fair buds, and in no sense are your scowls and frowns appropriate or amiable.”

Then Katherina began to talk to both the widow and Bianca:

“An ill-tempered woman is like a troubled and agitated fountain: muddy, ill-seeming, thick, and robbed of beauty. And while the fountain is like that, no one — no matter how dry or thirsty he is — will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.

“Your husband is your Lord, your life, your keeper, your head, your King; he is the one who cares for you, and to be able to take good care of you he commits his body to painful labor both by sea and land. He stays awake during storms at sea and during cold weather by day while you are lying warm at home, secure and safe. Your husband craves no other tribute at your hands but love, fair looks, and true obedience; this is too little payment for so great a debt.

“Such duty as the subject owes the Prince is what a wife owes to her husband, and when she is perverse, peevish, sullen, sour, and not obedient to his honest and honorable will, what is she but a foul and willful rebel and graceless traitor to her loving Lord?

“I am ashamed that women are so simple-minded as to offer war when and where they should kneel for peace — or to seek for rule, supremacy, and sway, when they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

“Why are our bodies made so soft and weak and smooth, unfitted to toil and trouble in the world, except for the reason that our soft conditions and our hearts should well agree with our external parts?”

“Come, you perverse and incapable worms — you disobedient wives! My mind has been as big and proud as one of yours. My courage has been as great, and my intelligence and character perhaps even more suited than yours to shoot forth insulting words and shoot forth frowns. But now I see that our lances are only straws. Our strength is weak, and our weakness is past comparison. When wives wear the pants in the family, wives are at their worst and weakest.

“So suppress your pride, which is of no use to you. Metaphorically place your hands below your husband’s foot. To show my husband that I am loyal to him, I am willing to do that literally as well as metaphorically, if he should ever want me to.”

“Why, there’s a wife!” Petruchio said. “Come on, and kiss me, Kate.”

They kissed for real, lips on lips.

Lucentio said, “Well done and congratulations, old pal. You have won the bet, and you have won a good wife.”

Vincentio said, “It is good news when one’s children are well behaved and obedient.”

Lucentio said glumly, “But it is bad news when women and wives are badly behaved and disobedient.”

“Come, Kate, we will go to bed,” Petruchio said. “We three couples are all married, but I predict that two of the marriages will have problems.”

He said to Lucentio, who had married Bianca, whose name

means white, “It was I who won the wager, though you won the white. Now that I am a winner, may God give you a good night!”

Petruchio and Katherina left to consummate their marriage.

Hortensio said, “Well, Petruchio, run along. You have tamed a curst shrew.”

Lucentio said, “It is a wonder, if you don’t mind my saying so, that she allowed herself to be tamed.”

AFTERWORD (*The Taming of the Shrew*)

As he took his bows at the end of the play, the actor playing Christopher Sly thought, *I am glad that this is a play. Obviously, we can learn about Christian marriage from this play, but anyone who wants to do in real life what Petruchio does in this play is a complete and utter idiot.*

In writing the above paragraph, I do not think that I am going against Shakespeare. I believe that the major purpose of the Christopher Sly introduction is to strongly tell the audience that *The Taming of the Shrew* is a play. What better way to emphasize that than to make *The Taming of the Shrew* a play within a play? The appearance of the actor playing Christopher Sly during the curtain call is another strong reminder that *The Taming of the Shrew* is a play. When the actor playing Christopher Sly appears during the curtain call, the male audience members should be thinking, “I have just seen a theatrical comedy. I better not try to imitate Petruchio at home!”

By the way, according to Wikipedia (“Marriage Vows”), “On September 12, 1922, the Episcopal Church voted to remove the word ‘obey’ from the bride’s section of wedding vows.”

Chapter XI: TWELFTH NIGHT

PREFACE (*Twelfth Night*)

In Shakespeare's time, Twelfth Night was the night before Twelfth Day, the final day of the twelve days of Christmas. The First Day of Christmas is December 25, Christmas Day, and so Twelfth Day is January 5, which is the eve of Epiphany: January 6. According to tradition, Jesus was born on December 25, and the Visit of the Magi — the Three Wise Men from the East visiting the newly born Jesus and giving him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh — occurred on January 6. Twelfth Night is a festive time and is full of merry-making and the playing of practical jokes. As you would expect, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is a comedy.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Twelfth Night*)

Main Male Characters

ORSINO, Duke of Illyria.

SEBASTIAN, Brother to Viola.

ANTONIO, a Sea Captain, Friend to Sebastian.

A Sea Captain, Friend to Viola.

VALENTINE & CURIO: Gentlemen attending on the Duke.

SIR TOBY BELCH, Uncle to Olivia.

SIR ANDREW AGUECHEEK.

MALVOLIO, Steward to Olivia.

FABIAN, Servant to Olivia.

FESTE, a Clown: Servant to Olivia.

Main Female Characters

OLIVIA, a rich Countess.

VIOLA, in love with the Duke.

MARIA, Olivia's Woman.

Other Characters

Lords, Priests, Sailors, Officers, Musicians, and other Attendants.

CHAPTER 1 (*Twelfth Night*)

— 1.1 —

Duke Orsino, his attendant Curio, and some lords were in the Duke's palace in Illyria, which is located northwest of Greece. Musicians were playing.

Orsino said, "If music be the food of love, play on. Continue to play music until I grow sick of music, so that, having suffered from an excess, my appetite for love will sicken and then die."

He paused to listen to the music and then said, "Play that melody again! It has a languishing descent that sounded so sad. It passed over my ears like the sweet sound made by a gentle breeze that breathes upon a bed of violets and takes the scent of violets and carries it afar. That's enough. No more of that melody. It is not as sweet now as it was before."

He added, "Spirit of love, how lively and refreshing are you. Your capacity for receiving passions is as enormous as the sea's capacity for receiving tributary streams, yet everything that enters into you, of whatever strength and from whatever height, falls into diminishing value and a low price, even within a minute. Love is so full of constantly changing images that it alone is supremely imaginative and nothing can compare to it. Love can be strange. I am in love, and yet I want to be out of love. I wanted to listen to music, and then I did not want to listen to music."

An impartial observer could very well think, *The one thing Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, does love consistently is the idea of love itself. He is more in love with the idea of love than he is in love with the Countess Olivia, whom he says*

he loves. This is why he wanted to hear this love song.

Duke Orsino's attendant Curio did not take Orsino's lovesickness seriously. He asked, "Will you go hunting, sir?"

"Hunting what, Curio?"

"The hart: a stag."

"Why, yes, I do go hunting," Orsino replied. "I go hunting for a heart, the noblest that I have: my own. When my eyes did first see Olivia, I thought that she purged the air of pestilence and plague! In that instant, I was turned into a hart like Actaeon was when he did first see Diana. Diana, a virgin goddess, was bathing naked and was not happy to be seen. To punish Actaeon, she turned him into a hart, and his hunting dogs pursued him and tore him into pieces. Ever since I saw Olivia, my desire for her pursues me and hunts me like savage and cruel hounds."

Valentine, another of Orsino's attendants, entered the room. Orsino had sent him to tell Olivia of Orsino's love for her.

Orsino said to him, "What news have you brought me about Olivia?"

"Sir, she would not admit me into her home and let me talk to her. But I do bring you the message that I received from Maria, her personal servant: 'For the next seven years, Olivia will not display her face to the open air. It shall always be veiled. She will be like a nun cloistered from the world. Once a day, her salt tears will water her chamber. The salt in her tears will season and keep fresh her love for her dead brother, whom she wishes to remember clearly and forever.'"

Orsino said, "Olivia has a sensitive heart because she will pay this debt of love to someone who was only a brother —

someone she is related to by birth. She will love even more when Cupid's golden arrow — the arrow that causes people to fall in love — hits her and she loves only me, forgetting all her other loves. When that happens, her mind and heart and soul will be given to one person, and she will take a husband. Now I will go to my garden and see sweet beds of flowers. Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers. A shady and flowery garden is a good place to think about love.”

— 1.2 —

On the shore of the Adriatic Sea on the coast of Illyria, the noblewoman Viola, as well as a sea captain and some sailors, had just landed after surviving a storm at sea that had sunk their ship.

Viola asked, “What country, friends, is this?”

The captain replied, “This is Illyria, lady.”

Viola said, “I wonder what I should do now. My twin brother has almost certainly drowned and is in Elysium, the good part of the afterworld. But perhaps my brother did not drown. What do you think, sailors?”

The captain replied, “It is only by great good fortune that you yourself did not drown.”

“And since I was saved, perhaps my poor brother was also saved.”

“True, madam,” the captain said. “Here is some comfort for you. I can assure you that when our ship split in two and sank and you and the few others here who survived held onto our drifting ship, I saw your brother acting bravely and resourcefully during such a dangerous time. He tied himself to a floating mast. I saw him keeping himself from drowning for as long as I could see him. He rode on the

mast like Arion rode on the dolphin that had listened to his music and saved him when he was in danger of drowning after being captured by pirates. The dolphin carried Arion to land, and the mast may keep your brother alive until he can reach land.”

“Thank you for saying such reassuring words to me,” Viola said.

She handed him some money and said, “There is gold for you. My own escape from drowning gives me hope that my brother is still alive, and so do your words — words from someone who knows the sea well.”

She added, “Do you know this country of Illyria well?”

“Yes, madam, I do know it well,” the captain replied. “I was born and raised not three hours’ travel from this very place.”

“Who governs here?”

“A noble duke,” the captain said. “He is noble both in nature and in name.”

“What is his name?”

“Orsino.”

“Orsino!” Viola said. “I have heard my father talk about him. He was a bachelor at that time.”

“He is still a bachelor,” the captain said. “Or at least he was a bachelor until very recently — I have been gone from Illyria for a month. At that time, the gossip was — as you know, the common people gossip about the nobles — that he was seeking the love of fair Olivia.”

“Who is she?”

“She is a virtuous maiden, the daughter of a Count who

died a year ago, leaving her in the protection of his son, her brother, who shortly afterward died. Because of her love for her brother and her grief over his death, people say that she has decided to shun the company and the sight of men.”

“I would like to be employed by that lady and not reveal who I am to the world until I know more certainly what my position and standing in life will be here. I must be cautious because I am a woman in a strange land.”

“It will be difficult or impossible to get a position with Countess Olivia,” the captain said, “because she has shut herself away and will not listen to any kind of request, not even Duke Orsino’s.”

“You seem to look and act like a good person, captain. Although some people have an appearance of goodness that hides evil, I believe that your mind suits your fair and outward character. Therefore, I ask you to — and I will pay you well — conceal my identity and aid me as I assume another identity for the time being. I intend to become an employee of Duke Orsino. You shall tell him that I am a eunuch — a castrated male. This will be a win-win-win situation for you, the Duke, and me. I will be a competent employee, and you will get the credit for bringing me to the Duke’s attention. I do have talents. I can sing and play musical instruments, and I will provide good value to the Duke. What happens after I enter his employ, only time will tell. But please keep quiet about my identity until I reveal who I really am.”

The captain replied, “Go ahead and pretend to be a eunuch, and I will pretend to be a man who is mute and unable to reveal your identity. If I should ever tell your secret, may I go blind.”

“Thank you. Now please lead me to Duke Orsino.”

Viola thought, *Of course, I may need to alter my plan*

according to circumstances. If I pretend to be a eunuch, that will explain my lack of beard and my high voice as I sing songs. But if, for some reason, it is not a good idea to pretend to be a eunuch — for example, if Duke Orsino is tired of music — then I can pretend to be a youth who as of yet is incapable of growing a beard. As a young woman, I can manage to assume that identity.

— 1.3 —

In Olivia's house, Olivia's personal servant, Maria, and Olivia's alcoholic uncle, Sir Toby Belch, who was staying with Olivia for a while, were talking.

“Why the Devil is my niece so heavily grieving the death of her brother?” Sir Toby Belch said. “Why does she want to mourn him and to stay away from men for the next seven years? I am sure that grief is an enemy to life.”

Sir Toby Belch may have been correct in his opinion of excessive grief, but he was a Hell-raiser and a partier and a lover of the drinking of alcohol and the spending of money — especially other people's money. Maria, the personal servant of Olivia, had been sent to Sir Toby to try to convince him to keep regular hours and to party less.

“I swear, Sir Toby, you must start coming home and going to bed earlier. Olivia dislikes your late hours. She takes great exception to them.”

“If she wants to except something, then let her make an exception of me,” Sir Toby replied.

“You must engage in moderate and orderly conduct. Confine yourself — and your drinking — within reasonable limits.”

“Confine? The only thing that I will confine myself in is my clothing! These clothes are good enough to drink in,

and so are these boots! If my boots are not good enough to drink in, then they can hang themselves by their own bootstraps.”

“Your chugging and drinking will be your downfall. I heard Olivia talk about your drinking yesterday, and I heard her talk about a foolish knight you brought here to woo her and to try to marry her.”

“Who? Sir Andrew Aguecheek?”

“Yes, him.”

“He is as brave a man as any man in Illyria.”

“So what?”

“He’s rich. He has an income of three thousand ducats a year.”

“True, but he will keep his wealth for only a year. He is a fool and a spendthrift.”

“You should not say that,” Sir Toby said. “He plays cello, and he speaks three or four languages from memory without having to hold a translating dictionary in his hands, and he has all the good gifts of nature.”

“He is a natural, all right,” Maria said. “He is a natural fool — if not an idiot. In addition, he is a great quarreler. Fortunately, he also has the gift of being a coward. If not for this gift of retreating from those whom he has angered, all wise and prudent people think that he would quickly receive the gift of a grave.”

“The people who say those things are scoundrels and gossip-mongers. Who are these people?”

“These people are those who add that he and you get drunk together each night.”

“We get drunk from drinking to the health of my niece, Olivia. I’ll drink to her as long as I have a throat and Illyria has alcohol. Anyone who will not drink to Olivia’s health until his brain spins like a top is a coward and a knave.”

Seeing Sir Andrew coming, Sir Toby said to Maria, “Heads-up. Speaking of the Devil, here comes Sir Andrew Agueface now.”

Sir Andrew, who was tall and thin, entered the room and said, “Sir Toby Belch! How are you, Sir Toby?”

“Sweet Sir Andrew! I am well.”

To Maria, a very small and very short woman, Sir Andrew said, “Hello, fair shrew.”

Unfortunately for Sir Anthony, “shrew” has more than one meaning. He was thinking of a very small mammal, but Maria thought of an evil-tempered woman.

Maria instantly disliked Sir Andrew and instantly realized that all the rumors about him being a fool were true. She had no interest in him, but she would be polite — make that somewhat polite — to him because she was Olivia’s personal servant.

She replied, “Hello to you, too, sir.”

“Offense,” Sir Toby said to Sir Andrew. “Take the offense.”

“What are you talking about?” Sir Andrew asked.

“I am talking about this woman, my niece’s personal servant.”

“Ms. Offense,” Sir Andrew said to Maria, “I hope to know you better.”

Maria’s nickname was Mary, so she said, “My name is

Mary, sir.”

“That’s a good name: Mary Offense —”

Sir Toby said, “You are mistaken, Sir Andrew. Her name is not ‘Offense.’ I meant for you to take the offense, to mount an attack, and to conquer this woman. Imagine that you are a pirate attacking a ship.”

Sir Toby was more than willing to get Sir Andrew to do and say stupid things and expose himself as a fool. Sir Toby knew that Maria’s wit was more than adequate to defend herself against whatever offense Sir Andrew would attempt to mount.

“I am not willing to mount this woman,” Sir Andrew said. “Heaven forbid that I should mount an attack on a woman!”

Disgusted, Maria said, “Fare you well, gentlemen. I am leaving now.”

Sir Toby, “If you let her go so easily and with such a weak offense, you may never have the opportunity to draw your sword again.”

Maria smiled faintly. She knew the part of a man’s body that Sir Toby was referring to as a “sword.”

Sir Andrew said to Maria, “If you leave now, I may never have the opportunity to draw a sword again.”

Maria laughed at him.

Sir Andrew did not know why she laughed. He asked, “Do you think that you have fools at hand?”

Maria replied, “Sir, I am not holding your hand.”

“But you will,” Sir Andrew said, and he grabbed and held her hand.

Maria thought, *And now I have a fool at hand.* She noticed that Sir Andrew's hand was dry like the hand of an old and sexually impotent man.

She said to Sir Andrew, "Whenever a man asks me if he is a fool, I say, 'Thought is free.' But I also think that you should do something to make your hand wet. Bring your hand to the buttery bar and let it drink."

She brought Sir Andrew's hand to just in front of his crotch and thought, *If you smear butter on your hand, it will not be dry. Masturbation ought to make your hand wet and your bar buttery.*

"Why, sweetheart? I don't understand," Sir Andrew said.

"Your hand is dry, sir."

"Yes, it is," Sir Andrew said. "I am not such an ass that I cannot keep my hand dry. Are you making a joke?"

"If I am, it is a dry joke. I have a dry sense of humor."

"Are you full of jokes?"

"I have a joke at the ends of my fingers," Maria said.

She let go of Sir Andrew's hand and said, "Now that I am no longer holding your hand, I no longer have a joke at the ends of my fingers."

She left the room.

Sir Toby said to Sir Andrew, "You need a drink. I have never seen a man so badly defeated by a woman. She really put you down. Have you ever been so put down before?"

"Only when I am put down by too much wine and take up residence under a table," Sir Andrew said. "Sometimes I think that I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has, but I eat a lot of beef and I think that the

fat clogs my brain.”

“No doubt about it,” Sir Toby sympathized.

“If I believed that, I’d avoid red meat,” Sir Andrew replied.

He added, “I am going to leave here tomorrow and go back to my home.”

“*Pourquoi*, my dear knight?”

Pourquoi? means “Why?” in French, but Sir Andrew did not know that.

“What does *pourquoi* mean? To leave or not to leave? I wish that I had spent more time learning languages instead of fencing, dancing, and bear-baiting — I love to see savage dogs torment bears! I should have sought an education! I should have been able to curl my tongue around more languages!”

Sir Toby thought, *When I said that Sir Andrew knows three or four languages, I exaggerated. No, I didn’t exaggerate — I lied.*

Sir Toby said to Sir Andrew, “If you had learned additional languages, then you would now have an excellent head of hair.”

“How would learning more languages improve my hair?”

“A curling-tong would curl it. You can see that your hair is straight.”

“My hair is attractive enough as it is, isn’t it?”

“Your hair is excellent,” Sir Toby said. “It looks like flax being spun straight by a housewife. If the housewife wanted to, she could spin your hair away and then you would be bald. And if the housewife were also a prostitute, she could give you syphilis and then your hair would fall

out.”

“Ugh,” Sir Andrew said. “I am going home tomorrow, Sir Toby. I am here to court your niece, but she will not allow me to see her. Even if I could see her, the odds are four to one against her marrying me; after all, the Duke of Illyria himself wants to marry her.”

“Olivia does not want to marry Orsino,” Sir Toby said, “She will not marry anyone above her in wealth, age, or intelligence. I have heard her swear it. Don’t worry. You still have a chance to marry her. Where there’s life, there’s hope.”

“I will stay a month longer,” Sir Andrew decided. “I can change my mind very quickly. I delight in masquerades with music and dancing and I delight in partying — sometimes all at the same time.”

“Are you good at dancing?”

“I am as good as any man in Illyria, whoever he is, as long as his social standing is not above mine. Still, it is true that I am not as good as an old man who is experienced at dancing.”

“Can you dance a lively five-stepped dance?”

“I can cut a caper.”

“And I can cut the mutton to go with your caper,” Sir Andrew said, thinking of the little peppery berries — capers — that are often served with mutton.

“I can also dance backwards.”

“Why are you hiding these talents of yours?” Sir Toby asked. “It is like you have put curtains in front of them to keep the dust off the way we put curtains in front of paintings to protect them. Why don’t you dance on your

way to church, and after church is over dance a different dance on your way back home? If I were you, I would dance instead of walk. I would dance even while going to a bathroom. I would dance a sink-a-pace — oops, I mean the French dance called *cinquepace* — up to a sink and then I would pee in it. What do you mean by hiding your talent for dancing? Is this the kind of world you ought to hide virtues in? When I saw your legs, I immediately knew that you were born to dance.”

“Yes, my legs are strong,” Sir Andrew said, “and they look good in stockings. Shall we do some reveling?”

“What else?” Sir Toby said. “Weren’t both of us born under the astrological sign of Taurus?”

“Doesn’t Taurus rule the sides and heart?”

“No, sir, it rules the legs and thighs,” Sir Toby said.

Actually, Taurus is supposed to rule the neck and throat. Sir Andrew got it wrong through ignorance. Sir Toby got it wrong so he could laugh at Sir Andrew.

Sir Toby said, “Let me see you dance a caper.”

Sir Andrew began dancing.

“That’s it! Move your knees higher! Higher!”

— 1.4 —

Viola had put her plan in action. She had dressed in male clothing and was now working for Duke Orsino. However, she had abandoned the idea of being a eunuch and instead simply called herself a youth — a youth by the name of Cesario. Now she was in Duke Orsino’s palace talking with one of his assistants: Valentine.

Valentine said, “If the Duke continues to show favor to you, Cesario, you are likely to advance far and quickly. He

has known you only three days, and already he treats you as a favorite and not as a stranger.”

Viola, who was dressed in male clothing, said, “You say ‘if.’ You must either fear that Orsino will change his mind about me or that I will neglect my duties and so he may no longer show favor to me. Does he quickly change his opinion about people?”

“No, he does not,” Valentine said. “You have my word on that.”

“Thank you. I see him coming now.”

Duke Orsino, his attendant Curio, and others entered the room.

“Has anyone seen Cesario?” Orsino asked.

“Here I am, and at your service,” Viola said.

Orsino said to Valentine, Curio, and the others, “Stand at a distance for a while. I want to speak to Cesario privately.”

He then said to Viola, “You know no less than everything about me. I have even told you my secrets. You know whom I love: Olivia. Therefore, go to her. Do not allow yourself to be denied to see her. Stand at her door, and tell the servants at her doors that your feet are fixed there and you will not leave until you have seen and talked to Olivia.”

“My noble lord,” Viola said, “if Olivia is much in sorrow and in grieving for her dead brother, as I have heard, it is likely that she will not allow me to see her.”

“Insist on it. Act like a jerk if you have to, but be sure to see her before you return to my palace.”

“Suppose I am able to speak to her, sir. What do you want me to tell her?”

“Tell her about my passionate love for her,” Orsino said. “Overwhelm her with stories about me that will capture her heart. You are the proper messenger for this. She will pay more attention to you, a youth, than she would to an older messenger.”

“I doubt that, sir,” Viola said.

“Youth, believe it,” Orsino replied. “Anyone who calls you a man is mistaken. You are not yet old enough to be a man. Your lips are as smooth and as ruby-red as the lips of the virgin goddess Diana. Your boyish voice is like the voice of a maiden, high and unbroken. Everything about you is feminine. I know that you are the right messenger and have the right personality for this affair.”

Orsino said to his attendants, “Four or five of you go with Cesario on his errand — no, all of you go with him. I like it best when I am alone.”

He said to Viola, “If you perform this errand well, you will prosper. You shall live as well as I do with all of my resources.”

Viola replied, “I’ll do my best to woo the lady and make her yours.”

But she thought, *This is a disagreeable errand. I will be wooing a woman for Orsino to make his wife, but I have fallen in love with him and I want the woman he marries to be me!*

— 1.5 —

Maria, who had recently used her wits to reveal the foolishness of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, was in Olivia’s house talking to a person of wit and intelligence. This person was Feste, a jester who made his living by making other people laugh. Some people called him a clown, and

some people called him a fool. He was funny like so many clowns are, and he was wise like so many fools are. He served Olivia and occasionally picked up tips at other people's houses, and he had been away from Olivia's house for a long time.

Maria said to Feste, "Either tell me where you have been for so long, or I will not utter a word in your defense. You have been away for so long that Olivia is likely to have you hanged."

Both Maria and Feste knew that this was an exaggeration. But if Olivia really would be angry enough to want to have Feste hanged, her face would be an angry red.

Feste replied, "Let her hang me: he that is well hanged in this world need fear no colors."

Maria smiled. She knew that "well hanged" meant "well hung."

She said, "Explain what you mean by 'fear no colors.'"

"A hung man is a dead man, and he will see no colors."

"That is a good Lenten answer, Feste. Lent is a time of fasting, and your answer lacks substance. You have made a lame joke with no meat on it."

She added, "I can tell you where the saying 'I fear no colors' comes from."

"From where, Mistress Mary?" Feste asked.

"From the wars," Maria said. "Soldiers wear colored uniforms, and they march under a colored flag. Someone who fears no colors is not afraid of the enemy. When you face Olivia, who will be angry because of your long absence, you will be facing the enemy, and you better hope that you fear no colors."

“Well, may God give more wisdom to those who already have it. As for those who are fools, let them use whatever talents they have.”

“As I said, you will be hanged because you have been absent for so long,” Maria said, “or you will be fired and lack employment. Won’t that be the same as a hanging to you?”

Feste said, “Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage.”

Maria smiled. She knew the proverb “Better be half hanged than ill married.” She also thought that a man’s being well hung might be advantageous in keeping a wife happy.

Feste added, “As for being fired, it is summer and that will make unemployment bearable.”

“You are resolute not to tell me where you have been?”

“Not necessarily,” Feste said, “but I am braced to make two points.”

“Those two points are the places where your braces — your suspenders — are attached to buttons so they can keep your pants up. If only one point suffers a mishap and the button comes off, the other point will keep your pants up. But if you lose both buttons, you will also lose your pants.”

“Well jested,” Feste said. “Go about your business now, but let me say that if Sir Toby would stop drinking, he would realize that you are as witty as any daughter of Eve in Illyria. He might even realize that just as Eve became Adam’s wife, you could be a clever wife for him.”

Maria replied, “Hold your tongue. I don’t want to hear any more of that. Look. Here comes Olivia. You had better come up with a good way to explain to her why you have been absent for so long.”

Maria left the room as Olivia and Malvolio, Olivia's dignified and dutiful steward, entered it. Malvolio was not the type of person to take a long authorized leave of absence the way that Feste had. A few other male servants also entered the room.

Feste thought to himself, *I need to be witty so that Olivia will cease her anger at me for being away for so long. If I can make her laugh, I won't get fired.*

He said to himself, being sure that he spoke loud enough for Olivia to overhear him, "Wit, if it be thy will, make me funny. Just as ancient epic poets invoked the Muses and asked them for help in telling their tales, I am invoking Wit and asking it for inspiration. Many wits who think that they are witty very often prove to be fools. I am sure that I lack wit, and since I am aware of what I lack, I may pass for a wise man, just as Socrates did. What does the great philosopher Kungfooey say? 'Better a witty fool, than a foolish wit!'"

He looked at Olivia and said, "God bless thee, lady!"

She was not happy with him. She said, "Take the fool away."

Feste said, "Didn't you hear her, fellows? Take away the lady."

"Go away," Olivia said. "I want nothing more to do with you. For one thing, you have grown unreliable. A major part of success is simply showing up, and you have not been doing that recently. Apparently, your wit has dried up. You, Feste, are a dry fool."

"You have mentioned two faults, lady, that drink and good advice can mend," Feste replied. "Give a dry fool a drink, and he will no longer be dry. Bid a man with chronic absence to mend himself, and if he does mend himself, he

is no longer chronically absent, but if he does not mend himself, let a tailor mend him. Anything that's mended is patched. If a virtuous man is mended, he is patched with sin. If a sinful man is mended, he is patched with virtue. If this simple argument is valid, well and good. If it is not valid, what would be the remedy? Olivia, the only true cuckold is calamity. People are wedded to fortune, and when fortune turns bad and is unfaithful to them, they become the equivalents of cuckolds. So, Olivia, turn away from calamity — turn away from excessive mourning for your late brother. The living must return to living. Know that beauty is a flower. It will not last. Enjoy the flower of your beauty, Olivia, and marry before your flower fades. *Carpe diem*, for all of us must one day die. Olivia has been behaving like a fool; therefore, I say again, take her away."

Olivia replied, "Sir, I bade them to take away *you*."

"Then you have made an error of the very worst kind," Feste said. "You have called me a fool, and it is true that I am wearing motley, which is the costume of a fool, but I do not wear motley in my brain. Good lady, give me permission to prove to you that you are a fool."

"Can you do it?"

"With ease, good lady," Feste replied.

"Prove it."

"I will do so with a catechism. I will ask you questions, and you will answer them honestly."

"Well, sir, for lack of a better entertainment, I will do so."

"Good lady, why do you mourn?"

"Good fool, I mourn because of my brother's death."

"I think his soul is in Hell, good lady."

“I know his soul is in Heaven, fool.”

“Then you must be a fool, good lady, to mourn because your brother’s soul is in Heaven.”

Feste turned to the male servants and said, “Take away the fool, gentlemen.”

Pleased with Feste, Olivia said, “What do you think of this fool, Malvolio? Hasn’t he mended himself?”

“Yes, he does mend, and he shall continue to mend until the pangs of death shake him,” Malvolio, who did not like Feste’s long absence and dereliction of duty, said. “Infirmity, that decays the wise, does ever make the better fool. Senility makes fools of even the wisest.”

“God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the betterment of your folly!” Feste, who was fighting — very well — for his job and did not want Olivia to hear Malvolio’s criticisms of him, replied. “Sir Toby is willing to swear that I am not a sly and cunning and dangerous fox, but he will not bet even two pennies that you are not a fool.”

“What do you say to that, Malvolio?” Olivia asked.

“I marvel that your ladyship takes delight in such an uninspired rascal as Feste,” Malvolio replied. “I saw him defeated in a battle of wits the other day by an ordinary fool who has no more brains than a stone. Look at him now. He has shrugged his shoulders and turned away. Unless you laugh and thereby encourage him to make jokes, he is gagged and unable to say anything. I swear that I regard so-called wise men, who crow with laughter at these professional fools, as being no better than the fools’ sidekicks.”

“Oh, you are sick with self-love and pride, Malvolio, and you taste with a sick appetite,” Olivia said. “You are unable

to appreciate what a jester does. You ought to be generous and liberal-minded, guiltless, and good-natured. You ought to regard as blunted arrows all those things that you now regard as cannonballs. A professional fool such as Feste commits no slander, even when he says nothing but abuse and criticism. A good jester will speak truth to power — and make that truth funny, too. A good fool can give good advice while making bad — and sometimes good — puns. That is a part of his job. And a man such as yourself who is known for his sound judgment is not a ranting lunatic even when he criticizes and complains. That is a part of your job. You have sound judgment, and that sound judgment can result in sound criticism.”

Feste said to Olivia, “May Mercury, the god of deception, give you the gift of lying well because you have spoken so kindly of fools. If you are going to talk well about fools, you need to be able to lie well.”

Maria entered the room and said to Olivia, “Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman who much desires to speak with you.”

“Count Orsino sent him, didn’t he?”

“I don’t know, madam. He is a handsome young man, and he has some other men with him.”

“Who is talking to him now and keeping him from entering this house?”

“Sir Toby, madam, your uncle.”

“Keep Sir Toby away from the young man, please. Sir Toby — darn him! — speaks as if he were a madman.”

Maria left to talk to Sir Toby.

Olivia said, “Take care of this, Malvolio. If Orsino sent this young man, get rid of him. Tell him that I am sick or not at

home. Say whatever you have to — just get rid of him.”

Malvolio left the room to talk to the young man.

Olivia said to Feste, “You can see that some people think that your fooling has grown stale, and they dislike it.”

Feste replied, “You have spoken up in favor of fools, madam, just as if your oldest son, if you had one, wanted to be a fool and you were defending him. May Jove — the god Jupiter — stuff the head of your oldest son — when you have one — with brains. He may need the extra help because one of your relatives has a very weak brain — look! Here he comes!”

Sir Toby Belch entered the room.

Olivia said to Feste, “I swear that he is already half-drunk.”

She asked Sir Toby, “Who was at the gate?”

“A gentleman.”

“I know that. Which gentleman?”

“He is a gentleman —”

Sir Toby belched and then said, “Darn these pickled herrings!”

He saw Feste and said, “How are you, fool?”

“I am well, good Sir Toby.”

Olivia said, “Sir Toby, you are practically in a drunken stupor. It’s still early in the day. Why are you so early in a state of lethargy?”

Sir Toby misheard her, or pretended to: “Lechery! I defy lechery!”

Then he added, “There is someone at the gate.”

“Who is he?” Olivia asked.

“He can be the Devil, if he wants,” Sir Toby replied. “I don’t care. Give me faith, and that will protect me from the Devil. Well, it doesn’t matter.”

Sir Toby left the room.

Olivia asked Feste, “What is a drunken man like, fool?”

“A drunken man is like a fool, a madman, and a drowned man. One drink too many makes him a fool. Two drinks too many make him a madman. Three drinks too many drown him.”

“Go and find a coroner, and let him hold an inquest on Sir Toby because Sir Toby has had three drinks too many — he has drowned. Go, and look after Sir Toby.”

“Sir Toby is only a madman right now,” Feste said. “The fool shall look after the madman.”

Feste left to keep an eye on Sir Toby. Feste knew that his job was now secure.

Malvolio entered the room and said to Olivia, “The young fellow outside swears that he will not leave until he speaks to you. I told him that you were sick. He said that he knew that and that was why he needed to speak to you. I told him that you were asleep. He said that he knew that and that was why he needed to speak to you. What can I say to him, lady? Whatever I say to him, he has an answer, and he will not leave.”

“Tell him that he cannot speak to me.”

“I have told him that, and he says that he will stand at your door as if he were one of the columns holding up the porch roof or as if he were one of the legs of a bench outdoors. He says that he will not leave until after he has spoken to

you.”

“What kind of man is he?”

“Just an ordinary man.”

“What manner of man?”

“He is an ill-mannered man. He says that he will speak to you whether you want him to or not.”

“What is his appearance, and how old is he?”

“He is not yet a man and no longer a boy. He is like a peapod or an apple just before it ripens. He stands between being a man and being a boy. He is good-looking, and he speaks very sharply. He speaks as if he were an ill-tempered young child who has just been forced to stop drinking his mother’s milk.”

“Let him come in and talk to me. Call in Maria to be with me and be a chaperone.”

Malvolio called, “Maria, Olivia wants you to come here.”

Maria walked into the room.

Olivia said, “Give me my veil. Throw it over my face. Once again, I will listen to one of Orsino’s ambassadors.”

Maria also put on a veil. This made it difficult for Viola to tell who was the lady of the house and who was the servant.

Viola came into the room, accompanied by a few attendants.

She asked, “Who is the lady of the house?”

Olivia replied, “Speak to me; I shall answer for her. What do you want?”

Viola began to recite a speech that she had written: “Most

radiant, exquisite, and unmatched beauty.”

She stopped and then said to Maria, “Please, tell me if this woman is the lady of the house because I have never seen the lady of the house. I would hate to recite my speech to the wrong person because it is a very good speech and I have taken great pains to memorize it.”

Viola said to both Olivia and Maria, “Good beauties, do not mock me. I am very sensitive, and I feel even the smallest unkindness.”

“From where have you come, sir?” Olivia asked.

“I am here to recite my speech,” Viola said. “The answer to your question is not part of my speech.”

She added, “Gentle lady, please tell me whether you are the lady of the house, so that if you are I can proceed with my speech.”

“Are you an actor?” Olivia asked.

“No, my wise little sweetheart, I am not a professional actor,” Viola said.

She thought, *And yet, in the teeth of ill fate, I swear that I am not the person whose part I play.*

Then she asked again, “Are you the lady of the house?”

“If I do not usurp myself, I am,” Olivia replied.

“If you are the lady of the house, then you usurp herself,” Viola said. “You wrongfully possess your own person. What is yours to give is not yours to keep. You ought to give yourself to a husband. But I ought to be reciting my speech, and I am not doing that. I will continue with my praise of you in my speech, and then I will tell you the heart — the important part — of the message.”

“Just tell me the important part,” Olivia said. “You may skip the praise.”

“But, lady,” Viola objected. “I worked hard to memorize the praise, and it is poetic.”

“The more poetic it is, the more likely it is to be fake,” Olivia said. “Please keep the praise to yourself. I heard that you were rude when you were at my gate. I allowed you to see me because I wanted to marvel at such a rude person — not because I wanted to hear what you have to say. If you are insane, go away; if you have reason, be brief. I am not so lunatic that I want to be a part of an insane conversation.”

Maria said to Viola, “Will you hoist sail, sir? Here lies your way.”

She pointed to the door.

“No, good swabber of decks. I intend to cast anchor here for a while longer,” Viola said to Maria.

Viola said to Olivia about Maria, who was a very short woman, “Please pacify your threatening giant, sweet lady.”

She added, “Are you willing to hear my message?”

Olivia said, “You must have some hideous message to deliver, since you are ill mannered. Tell me what you have to say.”

“It alone concerns your ear,” Viola said. “I bring no declaration of war, no demand for tribute: I hold the olive branch in my hand; my words are as full of peace as they are full of content.”

“Yet you have behaved rudely. Who are you? What do you want?”

“The rudeness that has been apparent in me I have learned

from the way I have been treated here. Who I am, and what I want, are as secret as virginity. My message is for your ears only. To you, my message is divine. To others, my message is profane.”

Olivia said to the other people in the room, “Let this young man and me be alone. I will hear his divine message to me.”

Maria and the others left the room.

Olivia said, “You said that you have something divine to tell me. What is your text? What is the gospel passage that you will preach about?”

Viola began, “Most sweet lady —”

Olivia interrupted, “That is a comfortable doctrine — it brings comfort to me. Much may be said in favor of your text. Next question: Where lies your text?”

“In the chest of Orsino.”

“In his chest!” Olivia said. “That’s an interesting place for a text. In what chapter of his chest?”

“To continue your use of biblical exegesis, it lies in the foremost place in his heart.”

“I have read that text,” Olivia said. “It is heresy. Have you anything more to say?”

“Good madam, let me see your face.”

“Has Orsino told you to negotiate with my face? You are now departing from your text — that is, straying from your theme — but I will draw the curtain and show you the picture you want to see.”

She took off her veil, and then she said, “Look at my face now. This is the way I look at the present time. Think of

my face as a portrait. Don't you think that it is well done?"

Viola replied, "It is excellently done, if God did all that I see and you have had no help from cosmetics."

"Everything you see is natural. Cosmetics wash off, but my face will endure wind and weather."

"Then your beauty has a truly beautiful blending of colors: the red of your lips and cheeks and the white of your face. Nature has painted your face with paint that is not artificial. Lady, you are the cruelest woman alive if you will take your beauty to the grave and leave the world no copy."

"Sir, I will not be so hard-hearted. I will give the world more than one copy. I will give several lists of my beauty — it shall be inventoried, and every item and every part will be added as a codicil to my will. Item: two lips, red. Item: two grey eyes, with lids. Item: one neck. Item: one chin. And so forth."

"I meant that you should leave behind you a copy in the form of a child."

"Were you sent here just to praise my beauty?"

"I can see that you are too proud, but even if you were as proud as the Devil, you are beautiful. Orsino, my master, loves you. Such love would receive no more than its due even if you were crowned with the title of the unequalled Queen of Beauty!"

"How does he love me?"

"He loves you with adorations, abundant tears, with groans that thunder love, and with sighs of fiery heat."

"Orsino knows what I think about him. I cannot love him. Yet I suppose him to be virtuous, and I know that he is noble. He is wealthy, and he is a fresh and stainless youth."

He is well spoken of and has a good reputation. He is generous, and he is well educated and courageous. Physically, he is a graceful and attractive person. Nevertheless, I do not love him. He should know that; he has certainly heard it for a long time.”

“If I loved you the way that Orsino — a martyr to love — loves you, and if I suffered the way that he suffers because of his love for you, I would not be able to understand why you refuse to return his love. I would find no sense in such a refusal.”

“And what would you do if you were Orsino?” Olivia asked.

“Willows are the emblems of unrequited love. I would make for myself a willow cabin at your gate, and I would call upon my soul — that is, you — within your house. I would write songs about a faithful love that is not returned, and I would sing them loudly even in the middle of night. I would shout your name to the echoing hills and make the air call your name: ‘Olivia!’ The nymph Echo would continually be at my service and help me make the air sound your name. No matter where you would go, you would pity me.”

Olivia thought, *I would like that — a lot. I want to know this young man better — much better.*

She said, “Doing such things might get you somewhere. Who are your parents?”

“My parents’ social rank was above that of my present social rank, yet I am doing well. I am a gentleman.”

“Return to Orsino and tell him that I cannot love him. Tell him to send no more messengers to me, unless, perhaps, you come to me again to tell me how Orsino takes my message. Fare you well. I thank you for your pains: Spend

this for me.”

She held out money for Viola to take, but Viola declined to take it.

She said, “I am no messenger who needs a tip, lady; keep your money. It is Orsino, not myself, who lacks recompense. He gets no return for the love he has spent. May you fall in love with someone who has a heart of flint, and may that someone regard with contempt your love, the way you regard with contempt Orsino’s love. Farewell, fair cruelty.”

Viola left the room to return to Orsino.

Olivia said to herself, “I asked him about his parents, and he said that their social rank was above that of his present social rank and that he is a gentleman. I can well believe that he is a gentleman. His manner of speaking, face, limbs, actions, and spirit provide five proofs that he is a gentleman. But, Olivia, slow down! You could go fast if this young man were Orsino and Orsino were the servant. What is happening to me? Can I be falling in love so quickly? This young man has perfections that invisibly and stealthily are creeping into my mind. Well, I am in love. So be it.”

She took a ring off her finger and called, “Malvolio!”

Malvolio entered the room and said, “Here I am, madam, at your service.”

“Run after that stubborn messenger, Orsino’s servant. He left this ring behind him, with no regard to whether or not I wanted it. Tell him that I don’t want it. Tell him not to flatter Orsino that I may love him — tell him not to give Orsino any hope that I may love him. I do not love Orsino. If that young messenger will come tomorrow, he can tell me how Orsino takes my rejection of his love for me.

Hurry, Malvolio, and catch up to the young messenger.”

“Madam, I will,” Malvolio said, and he left the room.

“I am not sure what I am doing,” Olivia said to herself. “I am afraid that I am falling in love with this young man’s good looks and that I am not using my mind. Fate, you are in control — we do not control ourselves. Whatever will be, will be.”

CHAPTER 2 (Twelfth Night)

— 2.1 —

Viola's twin brother, Sebastian, had survived the shipwreck. Now he was on the coast, talking with the person who had saved his life and who had given him food and shelter: Antonio.

Antonio asked, "Won't you stay longer here? And if you must go, will you allow me to go with you?"

Sebastian replied, "I am sorry, but I must leave, and I must not allow you to go with me. My astrological stars shine darkly over me, and my fate is malignant. If you go with me, my bad luck may affect you; therefore, I must ask you to allow me to travel alone. I would repay your kindness badly if I were to share my bad fortune with you."

"At least let me know where you are bound."

"My plan is to simply wander here and there. I do not know where I will end up. I see, however, that you have good manners, and they prevent you from asking questions about myself because you are afraid that you will ask about something that I do not want to talk about. Etiquette demands that I tell you about myself. You ought to know that my real name is Sebastian. Out of caution, I have been using the alias Roderigo. My father was Sebastian of Messaline, a man I know you have heard of. When he died, he left behind him my sister and me. We were twins; we were both born in the same hour — I wish to God that we had both died in the same hour! But you, sir, prevented that. You rescued me from the sea that drowned my sister."

"I am sorry that she drowned."

"Although she was said to resemble me, many people

thought that she was beautiful. That may have been generous praise, but I can say without reservation to anybody and everybody that her mind was so good and intelligent that even an envious person would have to admit that that is true. My sister drowned in the salt water of the sea, and my salty tears drown her memory each time I think of her.”

“Pardon me, sir, for not giving you better hospitality.”

“Forgive me, Antonio, for the trouble I have given to you.”

Antonio deeply loved Sebastian as a friend.

Antonio said, “Unless you want me to die out of grief because you are leaving me, allow me to be your servant and go with you.”

“Don’t ask that. It would kill me — thereby undoing your heroic act of saving my life — if you were to suffer from my bad fortune by going with me. I am filled with tenderness toward you, and I am enough like my mother that I too easily cry and show my feelings. But now I will set out on the first part of my wanderings. I am going to the court of Orsino, the Duke of Illyria. Goodbye.”

Sebastian departed, and Antonio said to himself, “May the gods protect you! I have many enemies in the court of Duke Orsino; otherwise, I would go there and see you. But, come what may, I do adore you so, that danger shall seem to be like entertainment, and I will go. So, off I will go to Court Orsino’s town, where I intend to see you.”

— 2.2 —

Viola walked on a street, and Malvolio, walking more quickly than she, caught up with her.

Malvolio said to Viola, “Are you the young man who was just now talking with the Countess Olivia?”

“Yes, I was, sir. I have been walking and have just now arrived here.”

“Olivia returns this ring to you, sir. You would have saved me the trouble of walking after you, if you had taken it away yourself. She adds, moreover, that you should tell Orsino very clearly that she wants nothing to do with him. One more thing: Olivia does not want you to deliver any more declarations of love from Orsino, although she will allow you to report to her how Orsino takes her rejection of his love for her. Now, take back this ring.”

Viola knew that she had left no ring for Olivia; therefore, this must be Olivia’s ring; however, Viola did not want to reveal that information to Malvolio.

Viola said, “Olivia took the ring. I want nothing to do with it.”

Malvolio replied, “Come, sir, you peevishly threw it to her; and she wants to return it to you.”

He dropped the ring on the ground and said, “There the ring lies. If it is worth stooping for, pick it up. If you don’t want to pick it up, let it become the property of whoever finds it.”

Malvolio departed.

Viola picked up the ring and said, “I left no ring with Olivia. What does she mean by this? God forbid that she has fallen in love with me. My disguise has fooled her! She certainly stared at me when we were alone together. Indeed, she stared so much that she became distracted and spoke in starts and did not finish her sentences. Sometimes, she lost the power of speech. She is in love with me, and she is crafty enough to send this churlish messenger to me to make an invitation to visit her again. She says that she does not want the ring of Orsino — why, he did not give

her a ring! I am the ‘man’ she loves! If this is true, and it is, then I feel pity for Olivia. She would be better off if she loved a dream. Disguise, I see, is wicked, and the Devil uses it to make mischief. How easy is it for handsome and deceitful men to imprint themselves on the hearts of women just like a seal imprints itself on wax! It’s a pity, but the frailty of us women is the cause of our susceptibility to fall in love — we ourselves are not the cause! We are made this way, and neither Olivia nor I can help falling in love. How will this turn out? Orsino has fallen in love with Olivia, I — a woman dressed in men’s clothing — have fallen in love with Orsino, and poor Olivia, who thinks that I am a man, seems to have fallen in love with me. What will become of this? I am a monster: part man and part woman. Since I am disguised as a man, I cannot gain the love of Orsino. Since I really am a woman, Olivia cannot gain my love. She shall sigh hopelessly out of unrequited love. Time, you must untangle this, not I; it is too hard a knot for me to untie!”

— 2.3 —

In Olivia’s house, Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek were partying. As usual, they had drunk too much.

Sir Toby said, “Come here, Sir Andrew. We are not in bed although it is after midnight, and therefore we are up early. And, of course, *deliculo surgere saluberrimum est* — to rise early is very healthy. I am sure that you know that.”

“No, I do not know that. Latin is another language I do not know. But I do know this: To be up late is to be up late.”

“That is a false conclusion. I hate it the way I hate an empty tankard. To be up after midnight is to be up early — it is in the early hours of the morning. Therefore, to go to bed after midnight is to go to bed early. So say the ancient scholars.

Do not the ancient scholars also say that our life consists of the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth?”

“Yes, they say that, but I think that life consists of eating and drinking.”

“I prefer your scholarship to that of the ancient scholars,” Sir Toby said.

He called, “Maria! Bring us a jug of wine!”

Feste entered the room and said, “How are you, my friends! Have you ever seen the picture of ‘We Three’?”

The picture Feste referred to showed two fools or asses — the third fool or ass was the person looking at the picture.

Sir Toby replied, “Welcome, ass. Now let’s have a song.”

Feste’s talents included playing musical instruments and singing and dancing.

Sir Andrew said, “Truly, the fool has an excellent singing voice. I would give a large amount of money to be able to play and sing and dance as well as this fool can.”

He said to Feste, “Truly, last night you were very funny. You spoke wonderful nonsense about Picrogromitus and the Vapians passing the equator of Queubus. That tale was very good entertainment. I sent you sixpence to spend on your girlfriend — did you get it?”

Sir Andrew had praised Feste’s nonsense, so Feste replied with nonsense to thank him: “I did impeticos thy gratillity, for Malvolio’s nose is no whipstock. My lady has a white hand, and the Myrmidons are no bottle-ale houses.”

“Excellent!” Sir Andrew said. “Why, this is the best fooling, and the best entertainment, when all is said and done. Now, let’s hear a song!”

“Good idea,” Sir Toby said, handing Feste some money.
“There is sixpence for you. Let’s have a song.”

“Here is sixpence from me, too,” Sir Andrew said. “If one knight gives a sixpence, the second knight ought to, too.”

Feste asked, “Do you prefer a love song or a song of the good and simple life in the countryside?”

“A love song, a love song,” Sir Toby said.

“I agree,” Sir Andrew said. “I don’t care for a good and simple life.”

Feste sang, “*Oh, mistress mine, where are you roaming?*”

“*Oh, stay and hear; your true love’s coming,*

“*Who can sing both high and low.*

“*Trip no further, pretty sweeting;*

“*Journeys end in lovers meeting,*

“*Every wise man’s son does know.*”

Feste thought, *Wise men — and wise women — seek love.*

Sir Andrew said, “Excellent.”

Sir Toby added, “Good, good.”

Feste sang, “*What is love? ’tis not hereafter;*

“*Present mirth has present laughter.*

“*What’s to come is still unsure:*

“*In delay there lies no plenty;*

“*Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,*

“*Youth’s a stuff that will not endure.*”

Feste thought, *Seize the day. Carpe diem. Youth is fleeting, so enjoy it. Neither Orsino nor Olivia is now doing that.*

Sir Andrew was full of praise for Feste's singing: "He has a mellifluous voice — this I swear as a true knight."

Sir Toby said, "He sang a catchy tune — it is contagious."

Sir Andrew said, "It is sweet and contagious."

Sir Toby said, "If we could hear the tune with our nose, we would enjoy catching a cold."

He added, "What shall we do now? Shall we drink until the sky spins in circles? Shall we sing and keep the night owl up late — and early? Love songs are supposed to draw souls out of the body because of the songs' wickedness, so I'm not sure why weavers sing psalms — love songs to God — as they work. Shall we sing a three-singer song that will draw our souls out of our bodies? Shall we do that?"

"Please, let's do it," Sir Andrew said. "I am as expert at singing catchy songs as a dog is at whatever a dog does."

Feste said, "Like you, a dog is an expert when it comes to a catch."

"That is true," Sir Andrew said, "Let our catchy three-singer song be 'Hold Your Peace, Knave, and I Beg that You Hold Your Peace.'"

"Hold Your Peace" was a riotous party song.

"In this song, each of the singers takes turns singing," Feste said, "and each of the singers calls the other singers 'knave.' Is it all right if I call you a knave, knight?"

"It won't be the first time that I have been called a knave," Sir Andrew said. "You start the song, fool. It goes, 'Hold your peace.'"

“If I hold my peace, I will have to remain silent,” Feste said. “I will never be able to get started singing.”

“That funny!” Sir Andrew said. “But, now, begin.”

The three partiers sang, and in their song two drunks and one fool called each other names and told each other to shut up.

Maria walked into the room and said to Sir Toby, “What a caterwauling you are making! Olivia must be awakening her steward, Malvolio, and ordering him to kick you out of her house. If she isn’t, never again believe anything I say.”

Sir Toby replied drunkenly, “Olivia is from China, we are politicians, and Malvolio has his nose to the grindstone. Olivia is a Confucian and concerned about order, we are cunning schemers who want preferential treatment, and Malvolio’s nose bleeds.”

He sang, “*Three merry men be we.*”

He then asked Maria, “Aren’t I related to Olivia? Aren’t she and I niece and uncle? Fiddle-faddle. I don’t need to worry about Olivia.”

He sang, “*There dwelt a man in Babylon, lady, lady!*”

“Heaven help me,” Feste said to Sir Andrew. “Sir Toby makes an excellent clown.”

“Yes, he does it well enough when he is in the mood,” Sir Andrew said. “So do I. He acts the clown with a good deal of style. I do it more naturally.”

Yes, Feste thought. You act the clown as if you were a born idiot.

Sir Toby sang, “*Oh, the twelfth day of December.*”

Maria said, “For the love of God, be quiet!”

Malvolio entered the room and said, “My masters, are you mad? If not, what are you? Have you no wit, manners, or decency that would stop you from gabbling like foul-mouthed, drunken tinkers at this time of night? Do you think Olivia’s house is an alehouse where you can squeak out your cobblers’ songs at the top of your voices? Is there no respect of place, persons, or time — it is past midnight — in you?”

Sir Toby replied, “We do respect time — we did keep time, sir, in our songs. We have good rhythm. Go hang yourself!”

Malvolio replied, “Sir Toby, I must be blunt with you. My lady told me to tell you, that, though she has given you a place to stay because you are her uncle, she dislikes your disorders. If you can separate yourself from your misdemeanors, you are welcome to stay in her house; if not, and if it would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to tell you goodbye.”

Sir Toby sang, “*Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.*”

“No, good Sir Toby,” Maria said. “Don’t sing.”

Feste sang the next line of the song: “*His eyes do show his days are almost done.*”

“Must you continue to sing?” Malvolio asked.

Sir Toby sang, “*But I will never die.*”

Feste made up an additional lyric: “*Sir Toby, there you lie.*”

Malvolio said sarcastically, “Your behavior does you credit.”

Sir Toby sang, “*Shall I tell him to go?*”

Feste sang, “*What happens if you do?*”

“Shall I tell him to go and not mince my words?” Sir Toby sang.

“Oh, no, no, no, no, you dare not,” Feste sang.

Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “Are we singing out of time? Not with our rhythm! You lied! You are nothing more than an employee — a steward!”

He added, “Do you think, because you are virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?”

For Sir Toby, it was always time for cakes and ale and parties. For Olivia and for Malvolio, it was not time for cakes and ale and parties when Olivia was trying to sleep.

Feste said, “Very definitely, sometime is the right time for cakes and ale. Hot ale spiced with ginger warms the mouth. Saint Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, knew the importance of wine. Jesus’ first miracle was turning water into wine so that a wedding could be properly celebrated.”

Sir Toby said to Feste, “You are right.”

Feste favored Sir Toby over Malvolio — Sir Toby gave him tips.

Feste had been drinking — a lot — and as Sir Toby continued to argue with Malvolio, Feste began to nod and then to sleep.

Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “Go and rub your steward’s chain with crumbs to polish it. You are only a servant.”

He said to Maria, “Bring us a jug of wine, Maria.”

Maria got a jug of wine for Sir Toby, whom she liked.

Malvolio said to Maria, “If you prized Olivia’s wishes and did not have contempt for them, Mistress Mary, you would not bring more wine out to encourage this uncivil behavior.

I shall tell Olivia what you have done.”

Malvolio departed.

After Malvolio had gone, Maria said in the direction of the door he had exited through, “You have donkey ears. Go and shake them.”

Sir Andrew said, “I think that it would be an excellent idea to challenge a man to a duel and then not show up and so make a fool of him. I would like to make a fool of Malvolio.”

“Do it,” Sir Toby said, thinking that Sir Andrew fighting would be a funny sight. “You are a knight, after all. I will write your challenge to Malvolio for you, or if you prefer, I will deliver your challenge orally.”

Maria said, “Sweet Sir Toby, be calm, quiet, and patient for tonight. Since Duke Orsino’s young man talked with your niece Olivia, she has been much disturbed and distracted. As for Monsieur Malvolio, leave him to me. If I do not trick him, do not think that I am intelligent enough to lie straight in my bed. I intend to make the name ‘Malvolio’ a synonym for ‘laughingstock.’ I know that I can do it.”

“Tell us something about Malvolio,” Sir Toby said. “What characteristics of his can you use to trick him?”

“Sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan. He affects a puritanical demeanor. He is morally narrow-minded and thinks that everyone else ought to be, too.”

Sir Andrew said, “If I thought that, I would beat him like a dog.”

“What, for being a Puritan?” Sir Toby said. “What is your ingenious reason for wanting to beat him?”

“I have no ingenious reason, but I have reason good

enough.”

Maria said, “Malvolio is not a Puritan; he is a kind of Puritan. Sometimes, he acts like a Puritan. Sometimes, he does not. He is a time-server — he changes his views to suit the prevailing circumstances or fashion. He is nothing consistently except for being an affected ass who learns rules by heart and quotes them at great length. He has the highest opinion of himself, and he thinks that he is so crammed with excellent qualities that he believes with all his heart that all those who see him like him.”

An impartial observer might think, *Malvolio knows very well that Sir Toby does not like or respect him, but Maria is angry that Malvolio is going to tell Olivia that she served the late-night-partier Sir Toby a jug of wine, and so she exaggerates when she says that Malvolio “thinks that he is so crammed with excellent qualities that he believes with all his heart that all those who see him like him.” If she is exaggerating about that, she may also be exaggerating about other things concerning Malvolio.*

Maria added, “I will exploit Malvolio’s failings and make a fool of him.”

Sir Toby asked, “What will you do?”

“I will drop where he will find it an ambiguous love letter that he will think is written to him because it will describe the color of his beard, the shape of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expression of his eye, his forehead, and his complexion. Malvolio shall read the letter and think that he is fully described in it. My handwriting is very similar to that of Olivia, your niece. When we find an old note that we have forgotten about, she and I can hardly decide which of us wrote it.”

“Excellent! I smell an excellent practical joke,” Sir Toby said

“I have it in my nose, too,” Sir Andrew said.

“You will write a love letter and Malvolio shall find it,” Sir Toby said. “He shall think that my niece wrote the letter and that she is in love with him.”

“Yes,” Maria said. “My idea is a horse of that color. If you had thought differently, that would be a horse of a different color.”

Sir Andrew said, “Your horse of the same color is to make him an ass.”

“You better believe it,” Maria said.

“This is an admirable plan!” Sir Andrew said.

“It will be fun fit for a King,” Maria said. “I know that my plan will work. He will get the medicine that is coming to him. You two and the fool will be placed where you can see Malvolio find and read the letter. You shall see how he interprets the letter and thinks that Olivia loves him. But right now, it is time to go to bed and dream about our joke and our revenge. Good night.”

Maria exited.

Sir Toby said, “Good night, Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons.” This was another mild joke about Maria’s short stature.

“I swear that she is a good woman,” Sir Andrew said.

“She is a beagle — a small hound,” Sir Toby said. “She adores me. What do you think about that?”

“I was adored once, too,” Sir Andrew replied.

Men — and women — seek love. Using love as the bait for a trap was likely to work. And if Sir Andrew could be adored, why not Malvolio?

Sir Toby said, "It's time for bed, Sir Andrew. But remember to send for more money for us to spend."

"If I don't marry Olivia, your niece, I will be grievously out of pocket."

"Send for money, Sir Andrew. If you don't marry Olivia, then you have my permission to call me a eunuch."

"I do think that I will marry Olivia. If I don't, never again believe anything I say."

"Come with me," Sir Toby said. "I'll heat up some wine. It is too late to go to bed now. Come, Sir Andrew."

A drunk Sir Andrew was more likely to send away for more money.

— 2.4 —

Orsino, Viola, Orsino's attendant Curio, and others, including musicians, were in a room in Duke Orsino's palace.

Orsino said, "Play some music for me."

The musicians began to play.

Orsino said, "Good morning, friends. Cesario, remember that old and quaint song that we heard last night? I thought that it did relieve my lovesickness much more than the light airs and studied, artificial phrases of these fast and giddy-paced times. I would like to hear a verse of that song."

Curio answered, "The person is not here, sir, who should sing it."

"Who sings that song?"

"Feste, the jester, sir; he is a fool whom the lady Olivia's father took much delight in. He is somewhere in the

palace.”

“Find him, and while we wait we will listen to the music of that song.”

Curio exited, and the musicians played the tune to the song. They had heard the song the previous night, and they knew the tune.

Orsino said to Viola, “Come here, young man. If you ever love someone, remember me as you endure its sweet pangs. For such as I am, all true lovers are: changeable and difficult to deal with. The only thing that I can focus on is the face of the woman I love.”

He added, “Do you like this tune?”

Viola, who did like the tune, said, “It gives a very echo to the seat — the heart — where Love is throned. Anyone who hears it feels what a lover feels.”

“You speak masterfully,” Orsino said. “I swear that as young as you are, your eye has seen a face that it loves. Is that true, young man?”

“A little. Yes.”

“What kind of woman do you love?”

“She is very much like you.”

“In that case, you deserve someone better. How old is she?”

“About your age.”

“Then she is too old,” Orsino said. “A woman always ought to love someone who is older than she is. That way, she can adapt herself to him, and that way she will stay beautiful longer and keep herself in her husband’s affection until that affection becomes rock-steady. After all, young man, although we men praise ourselves, we are not as constant in

love as women are. Our loves are more giddy and unstable than the loves of women, and our loves are more flighty and wavering, and they are quicker to be lost and to become worn-out than the loves of women are.”

“I think that you are right, sir,” Viola said.

“So let the woman you love be younger than yourself, so you will continue to love her long enough for your love to become rock-steady. If she is older than you, she may lose her beauty too quickly for that to happen. Women are as roses, whose fair petals, once they have fully opened, do begin to fall to the ground that very hour.”

“Unfortunately, the beauty of women is exactly like that,” Viola said. “As soon as their beauty reaches perfection, it begins to die.”

Curio returned with Feste. The musicians stopped playing.

Orsino said, “Feste, let me hear the song you sang last night. Listen to it, Cesario. It is old and plain. The spinners and the knitters in the sun and the carefree maidens who weave lace often sing it. It is simple truth, and its theme is the innocence of love in the old days.”

Feste asked, “Are you ready to hear it, sir?”

“Yes. Please sing.”

The musicians started playing, and Feste sang, “*Come quickly to me, come quickly, death,*

“*And in a sad coffin made of cypress let me be laid;*

“*Go away, go away, breath;*

“*I am slain by a fair cruel maiden.*

“*My shroud of white, adorned with yew leaves,*

“Oh, prepare it!

“No lover more constant than I

“Has ever died for love.

“Not a flower, not a flower sweet

“On my black coffin let there be strewn;

“Not a friend, not a friend greet

“My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:

“A thousand thousand sighs to save,

“Lay me, oh, where

“Sad true lover shall never find my grave,

“To weep there!”

Feste thought, *The theme of this song is dying because of unrequited love. In the entire history of the world, this has never happened although many, many people have thought that it would happen. Right now, Orsino believes — or enjoys believing — that this could happen to him. He is wrong.*

Orsino gave Feste money, saying, “This is for your pains in singing that song.”

“There is nothing painful about it, sir. I enjoy singing.”

“In that case, the money is for your pleasure.”

“As the saying goes,” Feste said, “pleasure will be paid with pain, sooner or later.”

“Give me now leave to leave thee,” Orsino said. This was a polite way of saying that Feste should go now. Orsino was in a melancholy mood and not in a mood for jests.

Feste said, “May the melancholy god — Saturn — protect you; and may your tailor make your jacket out of iridescent silk because your changeable mind is like an opal that constantly changes colors. Men like you should become sea-merchants so that they could deal in everything and go everywhere. Your variable moods would match the variable moods of the sea. You would have a good sea voyage. Farewell.”

Feste saw something in Orsino that made him think that Orsino was changeable, although so far Orsino had been consistent in expressing his love for Olivia. Certainly, Orsino had been changeable in one way. He had wanted to hear music, and so he had ordered Feste to be brought to him, but as soon as Feste had finished singing the song, Orsino had ordered him to go away.

Feste departed, and Orsino said, “Everyone except for Cesario, please leave.”

They left, and Orsino said, “Once more, Cesario, go to Olivia, who cruelly does not love me, and tell this woman that my love is more noble than any other in the world. Tell her that I regard as lightly as fortune does her land and property and everything that she has inherited. Fortune does not value them, because it gives them and takes them away. What I value, and what attracts my soul, is the beauty with which nature has adorned Olivia.”

Viola replied, “But what if she cannot love you, sir?”

“I will not take that for an answer.”

“But you must, sir,” Viola said. “Say that some lady — and such a lady may exist — loves you as much as you love Olivia. You cannot love this lady, and you tell her that. Doesn’t she have to take that as an answer?”

“No woman’s body could withstand the beating of so

strong a passion as love has given to my heart. No woman's heart could be so big as to hold so much passion as my heart holds. Women lack the ability to retain such passion. Unfortunately, women's love is like appetite. It comes from the palate, not from the heart. Women's love can be more than satisfied — it can have too much and feel repulsion because of excess. But my appetite is as hungry as the sea. It can swallow everything. Make no comparison between the love that a woman could have for me and the love that I have for Olivia.”

“Yes, but I know —”

“You know what?”

“I know too well how a woman can love a man. Truly, women are as true of heart as men. My father had a daughter who loved a man the way, perhaps, that I might love you, if I were a woman.”

“What happened to her?”

“It is a blank page. She never told the man of her love for him, so her love stayed hidden. The concealment destroyed the rosininess of her cheeks like a worm destroys an apple. Brooding, she grieved with lovesickness, and with a pallid melancholy, she sat like a carving of smiling Patience on a tomb. She did not display the true emotion that she felt. Isn't this woman's behavior indicative of love? We men may say more and swear more, but indeed we are putting on a show. We men show greater love than we feel. We men make impressive vows of love, but the vows are more impressive than the love.”

“Did your sister die of love?”

“I am all the daughters of my father's house, and all the brothers too, but as of now I do not know the answer to that question,” Viola said.

She asked, “Shall I go and see Olivia for you?”

“Yes. That is the business at hand. Go quickly to her. Give her this jewel and tell her my love for her cannot be restrained and that she must love me.”

— 2.5 —

A change had been made in Maria’s plan. She would still plant the forged love letter where Malvolio would find it, but the people who would witness what would happen afterward would be Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian, a servant who knew Sir Toby well and was on good terms with him. Fabian did not work directly under Malvolio. The original plan had been for Feste, not Fabian, to be present when Malvolio found the forged letter.

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian were in Olivia’s garden, a place where Malvolio liked to take walks.

Sir Toby said, “Come with us, Mr. Fabian.”

“Absolutely,” Fabian said. “I do not want to miss this. If I did, I would drown in sadness.”

Sir Toby asked Fabian, “Won’t you be happy to see this sheep-biter, this sneaky dog, this hypocrite, this Malvolio be shamed?”

“I would exult. Did you know that he got me into trouble with Olivia because of a bear-baiting here? Olivia is tender-hearted and does not want bears to be chained up and then attacked by dogs.”

Sir Toby said, “To make Malvolio angry, we will bring the bear back here, and we will fool Malvolio so badly that he will feel as if he is black and blue with bruises. Isn’t that right, Sir Andrew?”

“It certainly is. If we don’t make a fool of Malvolio, we

don't deserve to live.”

Sir Toby saw Maria coming toward them and said, “Here comes the little practical joker.”

Maria told the three men, “All of you hide yourselves in the shrubbery. Malvolio is coming this way. For the past half-hour, he has been walking in the sunlight and using his shadow as a mirror as he practices courtly gestures. Watch him, and laugh at him. I know that this letter I forged will make a self-deceiving idiot of him. Hide, if you want to have a good laugh.”

She dropped the letter on the ground and said, “Lie there until Malvolio finds you. Poachers catch trout by stroking their gills. We will catch Malvolio by stroking his ego with flattery. His pride will make him believe that this letter proves that Olivia loves him.”

Maria departed, and Malvolio arrived.

Malvolio said to himself, “Luck is important. Luck is all-important. I am not married to Olivia because of bad luck. I had the bad luck to be born into a lower social class than Olivia. Maria once told me that Olivia was fond of me, and I have heard Olivia herself come close to saying she loved me. She said that, if she ever fell in love, it would be with someone who is like me. In addition, she treats me better and with more respect than she does any of her other servants. Knowing these things, what should I think?”

“He’s an overweening, arrogant, presumptuous rogue!” Sir Toby said.

“Be quiet!” Fabian said. “His conceit is making a proud rooster out of him. Look at how he struts with his nose held high!”

“I could so beat the rogue!” Sir Andrew said.

“Be quiet, I say!” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio said, “I want to be Count Malvolio!”

“Idiot!” Sir Toby said.

“Shoot him!” Sir Andrew said.

“Be quiet,” Sir Toby said.

“I could be Count Malvolio. There is precedent for it. A woman from a high social class married a man from a lower social class: The lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe.”

“Damn him! He is like Jezebel, the proud wife in the Old Testament!” Sir Andrew said.

“Shh!” Fabian whispered. “Malvolio is deep in his daydream. His imagination is making him swell up his chest.”

“After I have been married to Olivia for three months, and after I have sat in my chair of state — my throne — for three months —”

“I would like to have a crossbow that can fire stones right now,” Sir Toby said. “I would hit him in the eye!”

Malvolio continued, “I would call my servants together, as I wore my velvet robe that is embroidered with leafy branches. I would have just come from a couch where I left Olivia sleeping.”

Presumably, she would be sleeping after a session of sex.

“Fire and brimstone!” Sir Toby said.

“Shh!” Fabian hissed.

“I would adopt an air of authority, and I would gravely look at all who are present and tell them that I know my place

and I hope that they know their place. Then I would ask for my new relative Sir Toby.”

“Bring bolts and shackles! Bring fetters!” Sir Toby said.

“Shh! Be quiet!” Fabian said.

“Seven of my servants would obediently go out to find Sir Toby,” Malvolio said. “I would frown as I wait. Perhaps I would wind my watch or I would play with my —”

Here Malvolio touched the chain that stewards wore as a mark of their position. He remembered that if he married Olivia he would no longer wear a chain, and so he finished the sentence with “some rich jewel.”

Neglecting to say “Sir,” he continued, “Toby approaches and bows to me.”

“I am going to kill this guy,” Sir Toby said.

“Although it is torture, we must be quiet,” Fabian said.

Malvolio continued, “I would extend my hand to him like this, and I would replace my friendly smile with a stern look of authority.”

Sir Toby said, “And then I would hit him in the mouth.”

Malvolio continued, “I then say, ‘Kinsman Toby, my having married your niece gives me the right to speak to you frankly.’”

“Oh, really?” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio continued, “You must stop getting drunk.”

“And you must stop being a jackass,” Sir Toby said.

“Be quiet,” Fabian said, “or you will ruin our trap.”

Malvolio continued, “In addition, you are wasting your

time with a foolish knight.”

Sir Andrew said, “He means me. I’m sure of it.”

Malvolio continued, “I refer, of course, to Sir Andrew.”

Sir Andrew said, “I knew that he meant me. Lots of people call me foolish.”

Malvolio saw the letter that Maria had written and then dropped in the garden. He said, “What is this?”

Fabian said, “The mouse has seen the cheese in the trap.”

Malvolio picked up the letter.

Sir Toby said, “Shh! Please, please, read the letter out loud!”

Malvolio looked at the writing on the outside of the letter and said, “This is Olivia’s handwriting. Look! Here are her exact C’s, her U’s and her T’s and this is how she makes her big P’s. It is, without any question, her handwriting.”

Sir Andrew asked, “Why ‘seas,’ ‘ewes,’ and ‘teas’?”

Sir Toby and Fabian both smiled, knowing as they did that CUT was a slang expression for a vulva and knowing as they did that vulvas are useful in making big pees.

As Sir Toby had hoped, Malvolio began to read the letter out loud: “*To the unknown beloved, this letter, and my good wishes.*”

Malvolio said, “These are the exact phrases that she uses while writing.”

He looked at the sealing wax and saw the picture of Lucrece, a Roman woman who had committed suicide after being raped by an Etruscan King’s son, imprinted in the wax. The Italians then overthrew the Etruscan King and

established the Roman Republic.

Malvolio said, “This is more proof that Olivia wrote this letter. It is sealed with her seal. But to whom is this letter written?”

Fabian said, “He will take the bait — and he will take it hook, line, and sinker.”

Malvolio read out loud, “*Jove knows I love:*

“*But who?*

“*Lips, do not move;*

“*No man must know.*”

Malvolio said, “‘*No man must know.*’ What follows this line? The meter of poetry now changes! I wonder if Olivia is referring to me.”

“Hang yourself now, you stinking badger,” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio read out loud, “*I may command where I adore;*

“*But silence, like the knife of Lucrece,*

“*With bloodless stroke my heart does gore:*

“*M, O, A, I does rule my life.*”

Fabian said, “This riddle uses ridiculously lofty language!”

“Maria is an excellent woman, I believe,” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio said, “‘*M, O, A, I does rule my life.*’ Hmm, let’s think about this.”

Fabian said, “Maria has mixed a drink of poison for him.”

“And he is eager to drink it,” Sir Toby said.

Malvolio said, “‘*I may command where I adore.*’ Why, Olivia may command me. I am her servant. She is the lady

who gives me orders. Why, the meaning of the sentence is obvious to any reasonable mind. There is no difficulty in understanding the meaning of this sentence.”

He looked at the letter and said, “What about the end: ‘*M, O, A, I does rule my life*’? Here is an alphabetical puzzle. What is its meaning? If only these letters related to me! Think! M, O, A, I.”

Sir Toby said, “Malvolio is like a hunting dog trying to find a scent. But the scent is cold.”

Fabian said, “The dog will find the scent again and howl as if it has made a great discovery. Malvolio will follow the false scent, although the true scent actually stinks like a fox and Malvolio should be able to easily find it.”

Malvolio said, “M. Malvolio. M is the first letter of my name!”

Fabian said, “Didn’t I say that he would find the false scent again? He is good at picking up scents.”

Malvolio said, “That explains M. But there is no consistent explanation of the following letters. A should be the next letter, but O is the letter that actually follows M.”

Fabian said, “And O shall be Malvolio’s end, I hope. Let an O — a hangman’s noose — be around his neck.”

“Aye, or I’ll beat him,” Sir Toby said, “and make him cry, ‘Oh!’”

Malvolio said, “M, O, A, I. An ‘I’ comes at the end.”

Fabian said, “Aye. If you had an eye in the back of your head, you might see more detraction and loss of reputation at your heels than good fortune in front of you.”

Malvolio said, “M, O, A, I: This puzzle is not like the former puzzle, and yet, I can make it solvable — all of

these letters are in my name. But there is more. At this point, the letter contains prose.”

Malvolio read out loud, *“If this letter should fall into your hands, think. In my good fortune I am above you in social class; but be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. Your Fates have generously opened their hands; let your passion and courage embrace them. And, to accustom yourself to what you are likely to be, cast off your humble ways and appear fresh and new. Be disagreeable with a kinsman, be surly with servants; let your tongue speak about important matters; make yourself act eccentrically. Thus the woman who sighs with love for you advises you. Remember who complimented your yellow stockings, and who wished to see you wearing garters that cross your leg. Remember, I say. Do these things. Your fortune is made — if you want it to be made. If you do not, do everything the way that you have always done them and make no change in your life. Go ahead and stay a steward, be a companion to servants, and show that you are not worthy to touch the fingers of Fortune. Farewell from a woman who now commands you but would like you to command her. THE FORTUNATE UNHAPPY.”*

Malvolio paused and then said, “Everything is clear. Daylight and open country cannot reveal anything more. The meaning of this letter is straightforward, and I will do as it says. I will be proud, I will read authors who write about politics, I will treat Sir Toby with contempt, and I will stop being the companions of servants; in short, I will do everything to the letter that this letter tells me to do.”

He added, “I do not now fool myself. I am not letting my imagination deceive me. Everything points to this conclusion: Olivia loves me. She did compliment my yellow stockings recently, and she did praise my legs when

they were cross-gartered. In this letter, she declares her love for me, and she tells me how she wishes me to act. I thank my good fortune. I am happy. I will do as she wishes. I will immediately be distant and aloof and proud. I will dress in yellow stockings and be cross-gartered, just as quickly as I can change my clothing. Jove and good fortune be praised!”

He looked at the letter and said, “Here is a postscript: ‘You must know who I am. If you accept my love, show it by smiling. Your smiles are becoming; therefore, please smile whenever you are in my presence, my sweet dear.’”

Malvolio added, “Jove, I thank you. I will smile. I will do everything that Olivia will have me do.”

Malvolio left the garden.

An impartial observer — and everyone else — might think, *Malvolio did not correctly solve the puzzle of M, O, A, I. True enough. But what is the correct solution to the puzzle? What if M, O, A, and I are — in part — an anagram? We certainly have seen Malvolio and the people spying on him when he finds the letter in Olivia’s garden talk about rearranging the letters. Malvolio tells us that A should go after M, and Fabian mentions O and end. What do we get when we rearrange the letters and put I at the beginning? I M A O. I am A and O. The O goes at the end, and the end is Omega. If the end is Omega, what is the beginning? The beginning is Alpha. Therefore, I am Alpha and Omega. This is Revelation 22:13: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” These are words — and letters — that apply to God, but Malvolio is applying them to himself. Revelation is the last book of the Bible. What is the first book of the Bible? Genesis. What is the most important part of Genesis? The Fall. The serpent tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil: “For God doth know that in*

the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” Eve — and Adam — ate the fruit, committing the sin of pride. They placed themselves before God and disobeyed the command of God. The sin of pride is regarding oneself as the center of the universe, as being more important than anything or anybody else. Pride is a deadly sin, and it is the foundation of the other deadly sins:

1) Pride.

I am the center of the universe, and I am better than other people. Quite simply, I am more important than other people.

2) Envy.

I am the center of the universe, so I ought to have it all, and if you have something I want, I envy you.

3) Wrath.

Because I am the center of the universe, everything ought to go my way, and when it does not, I get angry.

4) Sloth.

I am the center of the universe, so I don't have to work at something. Either other people can do my work for me, or they can give me credit for work I have not done because if I had done the work, I would have done it excellently.

5) Avariciousness and Prodigality.

I am the center of the universe, so I deserve to have what I want. If I want money, I get money and never spend it, or if I want the things that money can buy, then I spend every dime I can make or borrow to get what I want. Either way, I deserve to have what I want.

6) Gluttony.

I am the center of the universe, so I deserve these two extra pieces of pie every night. This is my reward to myself for being so fabulous.

7) *Lust.*

I am the center of the universe, so my needs take precedence over the needs of everyone else. If I want to get laid, it's OK if I lie to get someone in bed and never call in the days and weeks afterward. My sexual pleasure is more important than the hurt of someone who realizes that he or she has been used.

Malvolio's name is Mal Volio — "I wish badly." Proud people wish badly.

The rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden led to the first sin committed by human beings. Previously, an angel had committed the first sin by supernatural beings.

That proud supernatural being is Lucifer, who put himself before God and rebelled against him. Because of this sin, Lucifer is condemned to spend eternity shackled in the darkness of Hell. Adam and Eve committed the original sin of human beings. Lucifer committed the original sin of supernatural beings.

If Malvolio were a better person, he would solve the puzzle of I M A O correctly and he would realize that he is guilty of the sin of pride. He wants to marry Olivia, but he wants to marry her because doing so will improve his position in society. He does not want to marry Olivia because he can make her happy. He loves Olivia's social standing and her wealth.

Malvolio regards himself as being more important than Olivia: I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia because doing so will make ME happy. I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia for

her social standing and money. I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia although I do not love her.

If Malvolio were a more intelligent person, he would realize that he on the verge of a fall just like Adam and Eve were when the serpent tempted them in the Garden of Eden or like Lucifer when he rebelled against God.

Malvolio is not morally good enough or intelligent enough to correctly solve Maria's puzzle. He believes the letter that Maria wrote and he will be punished for believing it just like Lucifer was punished. However, the people judging him and punishing him are not God.

Fabian watched Malvolio walk away, and then he said, "I would not have missed this entertainment even if the Shah of Persia had offered me a pension of thousands of pounds."

"I could marry Maria as a reward for this practical joke," Sir Toby said.

Sir Andrew, who sometimes repeated whatever Sir Toby said, being incapable sometimes of figuring out something to say, said, "I could marry her, too."

Sir Toby said, "I would not even ask her for a dowry — except for another practical joke like this one."

"Me, too," Sir Andrew said.

Fabian said, "Here comes the trickster herself."

Maria walked up to the three men.

Sir Toby asked, "May I kiss your feet?"

"May I, also?" Sir Andrew asked.

Sir Toby asked, "Would you like me to be your servant for

the rest of my life?”

“And would you like me to be your lifelong servant?” Sir Andrew asked.

Sir Toby said, “Your practical joke has worked so well that Malvolio is living in a dream. When his bubble of a daydream bursts, he will go mad.”

“Tell me the truth,” Maria said. “Did my letter really work?”

“He took to the letter like a midwife takes to brandy,” Sir Toby said.

“If you want to see how the practical joke will work out,” Maria said, “watch Malvolio the next time he appears before Olivia. He will wear yellow stockings, and yellow is a color she hates. He will be cross-gartered, and that is a style she hates. He will smile constantly, and she will dislike that because she is now in a mood for melancholy. Malvolio will definitely make a fool of himself in front of her. If you wish to witness this, follow me.”

“I will follow you to the gates of Hell, you most excellent Devil of wit,” Sir Toby said.

“I’ll go, too,” Sir Andrew said.

They followed Maria into Olivia’s house.

CHAPTER 3 (Twelfth Night)

— 3.1 —

A little later, Viola walked into Olivia's garden, where she met Feste, who had a small drum — known as a tabor — hanging around his neck.

“God bless you and your music, friend,” Viola said. “Do you live by your drum?”

Feste replied, “No, sir, I live by the church.”

“Are you a member of the clergy?”

“No, sir, but I live by the church; for I live at my house, and my house stands by the church.”

“When I asked, ‘Do you live by your drum?’ I meant, ‘Do you make your living by playing your drum?’ I see that you are playing with language. You would say that the King lies by a beggar if a beggar dwells near him. But then you would make ‘lies by the beggar’ mean ‘sleeps with the beggar.’ Or you would say that the church stands by your drum, if the church is standing by — that is, located next to — your drum. But then you would have ‘stands by’ mean the church ‘is supported by’ your drum if you donate to the church some of the money your playing the drum earns for you. Or you would have ‘stands by’ mean the church ‘is supported by’ your drum if your drum leans against the church.”

“Well said, sir,” Feste replied. “We live in a wonderful age. A sentence is like a glove to a good wit. A good wit can turn a sentence inside out as easily as he can turn a glove inside out.”

“That's the truth,” Viola said. “People who play with words

can quickly make them wanton and undisciplined.”

“That’s why I wish that my sister had no name, sir,” Feste replied.

“Why is that?”

“Why, sir, her name is a word; and to play with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed words are very untrustworthy now that they are used in legal documents.”

“Why can’t the words in legal documents be relied on?” Viola asked.

“To tell the truth, in order to answer your question I would have to use words, and words are so wanton and undisciplined that I am loath to try to talk sense with them,” Feste said.

“I believe that you are a merry fellow and care for nothing. You are carefree, and you don’t care what you say.”

“That’s not true,” Feste said. “I do care for something. I care for Olivia. In my heart, I do not care for you. If that means that I do not care for nothing, sir, then you should disappear because you are nothing to me. If you are bringing another unwelcome message from Orsino to Olivia, it would be best if you left.”

Viola had no intention of leaving, but she realized that Feste was witty.

“I think I recognize you now,” Viola said, “Aren’t you the Lady Olivia’s fool?”

“No, indeed not, sir,” Feste replied. “The Lady Olivia has no folly. She will keep no fool, sir, until she is married. Fools are to husbands as oranges are to grapefruits; the husband is bigger and makes the bigger fool. Indeed, I am not Olivia’s fool — I am her corrupter of words.”

“I saw you recently at the palace of Duke Orsino.”

“Foolery, sir, walks around the world like the Sun does. Foolery and the Sun shine everywhere. Shouldn’t Orsino’s fool be with him as much as I am with Olivia? I think I saw your wisdom at the palace of Duke Orsino.”

“Whoa!” Viola said. “If you are going to call me a fool, I will have no more to do with you. Wait. Here is a coin for you.”

Feste took the coin and said, “The next time Jove receives a delivery of hair, may he give you a beard.”

“To tell the truth, I am almost sick because I don’t have a beard,” Olivia replied.

That’s true, she thought. I love and want Orsino, and he has a beard. I certainly don’t want a beard that grows on my chin.

She asked Feste, “Is Olivia inside?”

He held out the coin and said, “Would not a pair of these breed, sir?”

“They would, indeed, if kept together and invested wisely.”

“I would like to play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, and introduce this coin, whose name is Troilus, sir, to a coin named Cressida.”

Troilus and Cressida were two Trojans who had had a famous love affair with Pandarus as their go-between.

Viola gave him a second coin and said, “I understand you, sir. It is well begged. Here is a female coin to go with the male coin I gave you earlier.”

Earlier, Feste had made a jab at Viola when he said that he did not care for her. Now, Viola returned the jab by calling

Feste a beggar. (Professional fools are not beggars, even when they jest for tips.) Tit for tat, and Feste respected that — but he would make it clear that Cressida, and not he — was a beggar.

“I hope that my request for a second coin is not a big deal, sir,” Feste said, “Begging for a beggar is not wrong. It is said that Cressida became a beggar in her old age.”

A beggar’s begging is not wrong. It is the beggar’s vocation, and it is no sin to labor in one’s vocation.

Feste added, “To answer your question, Olivia is inside the house. I will tell the people inside that you are here and from where you have come. Who you are and why you have come is not part of what I know. I would say that I’m out of my element, but that’s a cliché.”

Feste left to tell Olivia that a young man wanted to talk to her.

Viola respected Feste’s wit, but she was loyal to Orsino. Feste respected Viola’s wit, but he was loyal to Olivia.

She said to herself about Feste, “This fellow is wise enough to play the fool; and to do that well requires a kind of wit. He must observe the mood of those with whom he jests. He must observe their social standing and the occasion. He can’t be like a hungry hawk that seizes every opportunity to hunt; instead, Feste must seize every *proper* opportunity to get what he wants, which means that he must know when and when not to make a joke. His is a skill as full of labor as the art of a wise man. A fool’s folly is full of wit and wisdom, but a wise man who falls into folly loses his reputation for wit and wisdom.”

Viola also thought about Feste calling her a fool. Normally, that is an insult, but when a professional fool — a wise fool — calls you a fool, and even refers to you as “your

wisdom,” perhaps it ought to be regarded as a compliment.

Sir Toby and Sir Andrew walked up to Viola.

“God bless you, gentleman,” Sir Toby said to Viola.

She replied, “And you, sir.”

Sir Andrew said to her, “*Dieu vous garde, monsieur,*” which is French for “God keep you, sir.”

Viola replied, “*Et vous aussi; votre serviteur,*” which is French for “And you, too; at your service.”

Sir Andrew, who did not know French well, replied, “I hope, sir, you are; and I am yours.”

Sir Toby’s language could be odd. He said to Viola, “Will you encounter the house? My niece is desirous that you should enter, if your business is with her.”

Viola replied, “I am bound for your niece, sir. She is the list — the destination — of my voyage.”

“Taste your legs, sir; put them to motion,” Sir Toby said.

“My legs do better understand me, sir — they stand under me — than I understand what you mean by bidding me to ‘taste’ my legs,” Viola replied.

“I mean, to go, sir, to enter,” Sir Toby said.

I understand now, Viola thought. “Taste” is a word for the verb “test.” I have heard of tasting valor, but I have never before now heard of tasting legs. Also, Sir Toby made a malapropism when he said “encounter” rather than “enter.” Another way for words to be unmanageable is for them to be misused. Sir Toby is trying to be fancy in his word choice, and he is making mistakes. Yet another way for words to be unmanageable is when someone does not understand a language well.

She replied, “I would answer you with gait and entrance, but we are forestalled. I see Olivia and Maria walking toward us.”

Viola said to Olivia, “Most excellent accomplished lady, may the Heavens rain perfume on you!”

Sir Andrew appreciated Viola’s choice of words. He said to himself, “‘Rain perfume’ — well said.”

Viola said to Olivia, “My message is for only your receptive and attentive ears.”

Sir Andrew said to himself, “‘Rain perfume,’ ‘receptive,’ and ‘attentive’ — I intend to memorize all three and have them ready to use in conversation.”

Olivia said, “Leave me and this young man alone, and shut the door to the garden.”

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria all left, leaving Viola and Olivia alone in the garden.

Olivia said to Viola, “Give me your hand, sir.”

Viola gave Olivia her hand, and she bowed, then let go of Olivia’s hand.

Viola said, “I give you my duty, madam, and my most humble service.”

“What is your name?”

“Cesario is my name, and I am your servant, fair princess.”

“You are my servant! The world has never been happy ever since fake humility was called flattery. You are Duke Orsino’s servant, young man.”

“Count Orsino is your servant, and therefore what is his is yours. Your servant’s servant is your servant, madam.”

“As for Duke Orsino, I never think about him. As for his thoughts, I wish that they were blank rather than filled with me.”

“Madam, I have come to urge you to like him.”

“Please, I beg you to never speak again about him to me. However, if you would like to undertake another suit — your own — I had rather hear you do that than to hear the music from the spheres.”

Viola was shocked: “Dear lady!”

“Let me speak, please. After you first visited me — and enchanted me — I sent a servant after you to give you a ring. Thus did I wrong myself, my servant, and, I fear, you. I wronged myself by lying, I wronged my servant, Malvolio, by making him lie, and I wronged you by implying that you had thrown the ring at me. You must have a harsh interpretation of my deed and of myself because I tried to force the ring on you with shameful cunning. You knew that the ring did not belong to you. What must you think?

“Haven’t you been setting me and my honor at the stake like a bear and tormenting me? Haven’t you been cruelly laughing at me for my so passionate actions? I have revealed enough of myself to you that you, with your intelligence and perception, understand me. Only a thin piece of gauze covers my heart, which I know that you can see. So, let me hear you speak.”

Viola, who knew that Olivia was passionately in love with her, said, “I pity you.” She also put Olivia’s ring on a piece of furniture.

Olivia replied, “Pity is a step toward love.”

“No, it is not a step toward love,” Viola replied. “It is

common knowledge that often we pity our enemies.”

“Well, then I can smile again because my enemy shows me pity,” Olivia said. “How proud the poor are! The poor and the deprived such as myself are so quick to grasp at straws that might bring them a little happiness! If one should be a prey, how much better it is to fall before the lion than the wolf! In other words, although you do not love me, at least I fell in love with a man who is worthy to be loved. I have been destroyed by a noble enemy rather than an ignoble one.”

Olivia also thought, *You, Cesario, are only a servant and I am a Countess, but you show that you are proud by rejecting my love for you.*

The clock struck.

Olivia said, “The clock criticizes me for wasting time. Do not be afraid, young man — I cannot force you to marry me. However, when your wit and youth have arrived at maturity, your wife is likely to reap a proper man.”

Olivia pointed to the garden gate and said, “There lies your way, due west.”

“Then westward-ho!” Viola replied. “May God bless you and give peace of mind to you.”

She added, “Do you have a message for me to take to Orsino?”

Olivia did not speak, and Viola turned to go.

“Wait,” Olivia said. “Please, tell me what you think of me.”

“I think that you do think you are not what you are,” Viola said.

This sentence is ambiguous. Viola meant this: *You do not think that you are in love with a woman, but you are.*

Olivia, however, understood the sentence to mean this: *You do not think that you are behaving beneath your social class — you are a Countess who is in love with a gentleman servant — but you are.*

Olivia replied, “If I think so, I think the same of you.”

By this, she meant that she believed that Viola was of a higher social class than she was pretending to be.

This was true. As Cesario, of course, Viola was working as a gentleman servant, but she was born into a higher class.

Viola said, “Then know that you think rightly: I am not what I am.”

Viola meant that yes, she was not what she was pretending to be. She meant that she was a woman pretending to be a man, but Olivia thought that Viola was talking about social class.

Olivia said, “I would you were as I would have you be!”

She meant this: *I wish that you would return my love!*

Viola replied, “Would that be an improvement? I wish that it would be. Right now I am your fool. You are wasting my time. You told me to leave, and then you told me to stay. You are treating me as if I were your fool. I must obey you because I represent Orsino and he would not want me to be rude to you and leave.”

Olivia thought, *Cesario looks beautiful when he’s angry and scornful! His lips show his anger and contempt! He is showing that he is angry at me, but that increases my love for him. Guilt due to murder cannot conceal itself, and neither can love. Love’s night is noon. Love tries to hide itself, but it is as obvious as the noon Sun. I have made Cesario angry, but even now I cannot conceal my love for him.*

Olivia said to Viola, “Cesario, by the roses of the spring, by virginity, honor, truth, and everything, I love you so much that despite all your pride, and you show your pride by rejecting me, neither my intelligence nor my reason can hide my passion for you. Don’t think that you ought not to love me because I have pursued you. Instead, reason this way: Love sought is good, but love given unsought is better.”

Viola replied, “I swear by my innocence and by my youth that I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth, and that no woman has ever been or ever will be mistress of it, except for me. And so goodbye, good madam. I will never again bring to you Orsino’s tearful love messages that so deplore you.”

“Please come here again,” Olivia said. “Perhaps you may move a heart, which now hates, to like his love.”

Olivia was deliberately ambiguous, hoping that Viola would misunderstand what she had said.

She hoped that Viola would think that she had meant this: *Perhaps you may move my heart, which now hates Orsino, to like his love for me.*

But Olivia actually meant this: *Perhaps you may move your own heart, which now hates me, to like Orsino’s love, who is me.*

— 3.2 —

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian were meeting in a room in Olivia’s house.

Sir Andrew, who was angry, said, “No, I will not stay in this house a second longer.”

“Your reason, dear venomous one,” Sir Toby said, “give us your reason.”

Fabian said, "Yes, you must tell us your reason."

Sir Andrew said to Sir Toby, "I saw your niece treating Duke Orsino's young messenger much better than she has ever treated me. I saw them together in the garden."

Sir Toby asked, "Did my niece see you looking at her and Duke Orsino's young messenger?"

"She saw me as plainly as I see you now," Sir Andrew replied.

Fabian, who was as eager and willing as Sir Toby to make a fool of Sir Andrew by playing a trick on him, said, "This is evidence that Olivia loves you."

"Are you trying to make a fool of me?" Sir Andrew asked.

"I can prove that Olivia loves you by using judgment and reason," Fabian said.

Sir Toby noted that Fabian did not mention truth.

Sir Toby said to Sir Andrew, "Judgment and reason have been part of the grand jury since before Noah was a sailor."

Fabian said, "Olivia showed favor to Orsino's young messenger in your sight only to make you jealous, to exasperate you, to awaken your sleeping valor, to put fire in your heart and brimstone in your passion. You should then have accosted her; and with some excellent jests, as brilliant as coins fresh from the mint, you should have made the youth speechless. She wanted you to do that, but you did not. You have wasted a golden opportunity. Now you have sailed into the north of Olivia's regard, and she regards you frostily, as if you were hanging like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard, unless you redeem yourself by doing some praiseworthy deed either of bravery or cunning."

Sir Andrew replied, "If it must be done, it must be done with a brave act because I hate cunning. I would rather be a heretic than a cunning schemer."

"Why, then build your fortunes upon the basis of bravery," Sir Toby said. "Challenge Orsino's young messenger to a fight. Wound him in eleven places. My niece shall take note of it; assure yourself that nothing in the world is better than a report of valor in getting a woman to love you."

Fabian said, "There is no other way to proceed than this, Sir Andrew."

"Will either of you carry my challenge to Orsino's young messenger?"

"Go and write your challenge in a martial hand," Sir Toby said. "Be fierce and brief. Your letter does not need to be cunning, but it ought to be eloquent and filled with lies. Talk down to him and insult him. Write as many lies as will lie in your paper, no matter how big the sheet of paper is. Even if your paper is about three meters square — as big as a sheet that fits the bed of Ware in England — fill it with lies. Although you write with the pen of a goose — one made from a goose feather — let your ink be mixed with gall."

Sir Toby thought, *Yes, Sir Andrew will be writing with the pen of a goose — he is a goose.*

"Where shall I find you after I have written the challenge?"

Sir Toby replied, "We will call on you in your bed-chamber. Go now and write."

Sir Andrew left to write his challenge.

Fabian said, "He is a dear puppet to you, Sir Toby. You can manipulate him so easily."

“I have been dear — expensive — to him, lad,” Sir Toby said. “I have spent approximately two thousand of his ducats. His income is three thousand ducats per year.”

“The letter he writes will be remarkable. Are you actually thinking of delivering the letter to Orsino’s young messenger?”

Fabian thought, *We don’t want to carry the joke too far.*

“Of course I will,” Sir Toby said. “If I don’t, never again believe a word I say. In the meantime, find Orsino’s young messenger and do whatever you can to make him ready to fight Sir Andrew. I think that oxen and heavy ropes will not be able to get Sir Andrew and the young messenger together so that they can fight. If you ever see Sir Andrew shirtless, look at his back. If he doesn’t have a yellow streak there, I swear that I will become a cannibal.”

Fabian said, “Sir Andrew’s opponent, the young messenger, bears in his face no sign of fierceness. He does not look like a fighter.”

Maria walked up to Sir Toby and Fabian.

Sir Toby said to Fabian, “Look, the youngest wren of nine is walking toward us.”

He was commenting on Maria’s small size. According to folklore, the smallest bird hatches last.

Maria said to them, “If you want to laugh so hard that you will have stitches in your side, come with me. The fool Malvolio has become a heathen and renounced Christianity. No one who wants to be saved by believing the right things could ever believe the absurdities that I put in my letter — and act them out! He is doing everything that my letter told him to do. He is wearing yellow stockings.”

“Is he cross-gartered?” Sir Toby asked.

“Yes, he is, and that style looks abominable,” Maria said. “He looks like a pedant who keeps a school in the church. He thinks that he looks stylish, but he looks old-fashioned and rustic and obsolete. I have dogged him — I have followed him as if I were his murderer and were going to ambush him. He is obeying every point of the letter that I dropped to betray him. He smiles his face into more lines than is in a new map with the newest island created by underwater volcanoes. You have never seen such a funny sight as his smiling face. I can hardly keep myself from throwing things at him. I know that Olivia will hit him. If she does, he will smile and think that she likes him.”

Sir Toby said, “Lead us to where Malvolio is.”

— 3.3 —

On a street in a town in Illyria, Sebastian and Antonio were talking.

Sebastian said, “I did not want to trouble you, but since you enjoy helping me, I will no longer nag you to stop.”

“I could not stay behind and let you travel alone,” Antonio said. “My desire, which is sharper than the point of a steel spur, spurred me on to follow and find you. I did not want just to see you, although that desire would have made me take an even longer voyage. Instead, I was worried about what might happen to you during your travels. You do not know this territory, which can be rough and inhospitable to an unguided and friendless stranger. My deep friendship for you, reinforced by my fear of what might happen to you, led me to set forth and follow you.”

“My kind Antonio,” Sebastian said, “I can make no other answer but thanks, and thanks, and thanks again. All too often good deeds are thanked with words and not money, but if my wealth were as great as my sense of gratitude to you, you would receive better treatment than I can now

give you.”

He added, “What shall we do now? Shall we go and see the sights of this town?”

“Let us do that tomorrow, sir,” Antonio said. “It is best to first go and see about our lodging.”

“I am not tired, and it is a long time until night. Please, let us satisfy our eyes with the memorials and the things of fame that make this town renowned.”

“Please pardon me,” Antonio said. “I do not without danger walk these streets. Once, in a sea-fight, I fought against Duke Orsino’s galleys and did such deeds of note that if I were arrested here, I would be in serious trouble.”

“Do you kill a great number of his people?”

“No,” Antonio said. “That did not happen, although the time and reason of the quarrel could have led to great bloodshed. This quarrel could have been patched up by now. All that was needed to do was to return to Duke Orsino’s people what we had taken from them. In fact, most of us did that because we wanted to be able to do business with Illyria. I alone did not return what I had taken. Because of that, if I am arrested in Illyria, I shall pay a heavy price.”

“Don’t be conspicuous in this country.”

“I don’t intend to be,” Antonio said. “Wait, Sebastian, here is my wallet and money. The best place to lodge in this town is in the south suburbs at the Elephant Inn. You go ahead and take in the sights here and learn about the town; I will go to the Elephant and order our meals and arrange for our lodging. You will find me at the Elephant.”

“Why did you give me your wallet and money to hold for you?”

“Perhaps as you are wandering the town, you will see some trifle that you would like to buy. Your own money is not sufficient, I think, for unnecessary purchases.”

“I will be your money-bearer and leave you for an hour.”

“I will be at the Elephant Inn.”

“I will meet you there.”

— 3.4 —

Olivia and Maria talked together in Olivia’s garden.

Olivia said to herself, “I have sent a servant after Orsino’s young messenger, Cesario, to make him come back and see me. What kind of food should I serve him? What gift should I give him? Young men are bought — won over with gifts — more often than begged or borrowed.”

She noticed Maria looking at her, and then she said to herself, “I am too loud.”

She said in her normal voice to Maria, “Where is Malvolio? He is serious and respectable, and he is well suited to be a servant to me now.”

She thought, *Right now, I am hopelessly in love with someone who does not love me.*

She asked again, “Where is Malvolio?”

“He is coming, madam, but he is behaving very strangely,” Maria replied. “He seems to be possessed by the Devil, madam.”

“Why, what’s the matter with him? Does he rave?”

“No, madam, he does nothing but smile. I advise that your ladyship have a bodyguard near you when Malvolio comes. I am sure that the man’s wits are tainted.”

“Go and tell him to come here.”

Maria exited.

Olivia said to herself, “I am as mad — as insane — as he is, if sad madness and merry madness are equally madness. Malvolio does nothing but smile, as his is a merry madness. I cannot smile, as mine is a sad madness.”

Maria and Malvolio walked into the garden.

Olivia asked Malvolio, who was indeed smiling, and who continued to smile, “How are you, Malvolio?”

Malvolio replied, “Sweet lady,” and chuckled.

“Why are you smiling?” Olivia asked. “I sent for you on serious business.”

This was true. She wanted to ask him how she should entertain Cesario.

“Serious, lady?” Malvolio said. “I could be serious. This cross-gartering does keep my blood from flowing freely in my legs, but if the cross-gartering pleases the eyes of a certain person, then I say, as does the song, ‘Please one, and please all.’”

The theme of the song was that all women want the same thing. The song may mean that all women want their own way — or that all women want something else.

“How are you, man?” Olivia asked. “What is the matter with you?”

“My mind is not black, but my legs are yellow,” Malvolio replied.

He added, “It did come to his hands, and commands shall be executed.”

This meant, *I did receive your letter, and I shall follow the instructions you wrote in it.*

He then said, "I think we do know the sweet Roman hand that is Italian calligraphy."

This meant, *Both of us know that the handwriting in the letter is your handwriting.*

Olivia asked, "Do you want to go to bed, Malvolio?"

"To bed?" Malvolio replied.

He sang, "*Yes, sweetheart, and I will come to you.*"

Olivia was shocked: "May God help you!"

Malvolio blew her some kisses.

Olivia said, "Why do you keep on smiling and kissing your hand?"

"How are you, Malvolio?" Maria asked.

Following the letter's instructions to cast off lower-class acquaintances, Malvolio said, "Do you think that I am going to speak to you? Do nightingales talk to crows?"

"Why are you talking so boldly to my lady, Olivia?" Maria asked.

Malvolio quoted the letter: "*Be not afraid of greatness.*"

He added, "That was well written."

Olivia asked, "What do you mean by that, Malvolio?"

"*Some are born great,*" he replied.

Olivia asked, "What?"

"*Some achieve greatness.*"

"What are you saying?"

“And some have greatness thrust upon them.”

“Heaven help you!”

“Remember who complimented your yellow stockings.”

“Your yellow stockings!” Olivia said.

“And wished to see thee cross-gartered.”

“Cross-gartered!”

“Do these things. Your fortune is made — if you want it to be made.”

“Did you say, ‘Your fortune is mad’? Are you saying that I am mad?” Olivia asked.

“If you do not, do everything the way that you have always done them and make no change in your life. Go ahead and stay a steward.”

“You are suffering from midsummer madness.”

One of Olivia’s servants arrived and said, “Madam, I have brought back with me Duke Orsino’s young messenger — with great difficulty. I could scarcely convince him to see you. He is now waiting for you.”

“I will come to him right away,” Olivia said.

She said to Maria, “This fellow needs to be looked after and cared for. Where is my uncle Toby? Have some of my servants take good care of Malvolio. I would not have anything bad happen to him for half of my dowry.”

Olivia and Maria left, leaving Malvolio behind, alone in the garden.

Malvolio said to himself, “So, Olivia, do you understand me now? Do you know now that I will follow the instructions in your letter and be the kind of man you wrote

that you wanted me to be?”

Malvolio believed that Olivia had pretended to be shocked at his behavior because Maria was present.

He added, “No less a man than a knight — Sir Toby — to look after me! This is part of Olivia’s plan as recounted in the letter. She is sending Sir Toby to me so that I can be rude to him. She wrote about that in her letter: ‘Your Fates have generously opened their hands; let your passion and courage embrace them. And, to accustom yourself to what you are likely to be, cast off your humble ways and appear fresh and new. Be disagreeable with a kinsman, be surly with servants; let your tongue speak about important matters; make yourself act eccentrically.’ She also wrote down the manner of how I should look: a serious face, a dignified deportment, a slow manner of speech, dressing like a distinguished gentleman, and so forth. I have gotten her! But this is Jove’s doing, and may Jove make me thankful! When she went away just now, she said, ‘This fellow needs to be looked after and cared for.’ She said ‘fellow,’ not Malvolio nor my job title, but ‘fellow.’ She is referring to me as an equal. Why, everything is coming together! Nothing — not even the tiniest thing or the tiniest part of a thing — can come between success and me! I have no obstacles and no impediments between success and me! I will marry Olivia! Well, Jove, not I, is the doer of this, and he is to be thanked.”

Maria walked into the room, bringing with her Sir Toby and Fabian.

Sir Toby asked, “Where is he, in the name of sanctity?”

Sir Toby was going to pretend that Malvolio was possessed by demons, so now he pretended to fortify himself for the encounter by invoking sanctity.

He said, “If all the Devils of Hell be drawn together in a

bunch, and Legion — the name of a group of Devils — himself has possessed Malvolio, yet I will speak to him.”

“Here he is,” Fabian said.

Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “How are you, sir? How are you, man?”

The letter had instructed Malvolio to cast off base acquaintances and to be rude to a kinsman — and if he married Olivia, Sir Toby would be his kinsman — and so he replied, “Go away, I don’t want to speak with you. Let me enjoy my privacy. Go away.”

Maria said, “Listen to how spookily the fiend possessing him speaks! Didn’t I tell you that he is possessed? Sir Toby, my lady wants you to take care of him.”

Malvolio said to himself, “Does she now?”

Sir Toby said to Maria and Fabian, “Quiet, please. We must deal gently with Malvolio.”

He asked Malvolio, “How are you? How are you doing? Defy the Devil, who is inside you. Renounce him! Remember, the Devil is our enemy and an enemy to all Humankind.”

“Do you even know what you are saying?” Malvolio replied.

Maria said to Sir Toby, “You spoke ill of the Devil — look at how badly Malvolio takes it! Pray to God that Malvolio is not bewitched!”

Fabian said, “Carry a sample of Malvolio’s urine to the wise woman so she can analyze it.”

“Good idea,” Maria said, “and it shall be done tomorrow morning, I promise. My lady would not lose Malvolio for more than I can say.”

“What are you saying!” Malvolio said.

“Oh, Lord!” Maria replied.

“Please, be quiet,” Sir Toby said, “This is not the way to act in front of Malvolio. Can’t you see that you are agitating him? Let me be alone with him.”

“Treat him gently,” Fabian said. “The fiend inside Malvolio is vicious and will not allow himself to be roughly treated.”

Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “How are you, bawcock — my fine fellow! How are you doing, my chuck?”

“Sir!” Malvolio said, resentful about being talked down to and called silly and childish names.

“Bidly, come with me,” Sir Toby said to Malvolio, “What, man! A dignified man ought not to play childish games with Satan. Satan is a dirty and dishonest coalman — hang him!”

“Get him to say his prayers, good Sir Toby,” Maria said. “Get him to pray.”

“You want me to say my prayers, hussy!” Malvolio said.

“No, Malvolio will not say his prayers,” Maria said. “He is possessed by a Devil who cannot stand godliness.”

“Go and hang yourselves, all of you!” Malvolio said. “You are idle and shallow things: I am not of your element — I am superior to you! You shall learn more later.”

He left.

Sir Toby said, “Is it really true that our trick is working so well?”

Fabian said, “If this were played upon a stage right now, I would condemn it as an improbable fiction.”

Sir Toby said, “He completely and totally believes that Olivia wrote the letter!”

Maria said, “Let us quickly continue the trick. Soon our joke will become known, and it will be spoiled.”

“Should we do that?” Fabian asked. “What if he really and truly becomes insane?”

Maria said, “The house will be quieter.”

She meant that she would no longer have to listen to Malvolio’s criticisms of her. The house would likely become noisier with no one to at least attempt to restrain Sir Toby’s late-night parties. Also, if Malvolio were to become insane, he would likely be locked up in a dark room, where he would howl. The dark room would be in a place where few people, if any, could hear him.

Sir Toby said, “Come on. We will have Malvolio tied up and placed in a dark room — the standard treatment for treating insanity. Olivia already believes that Malvolio is insane, and so we can continue to treat Malvolio however we like until we get tired of this joke and show mercy to him. When we get tired of laughing at him, we will let our trick become known by all and crown you, Maria, as a finder of madmen.”

He saw Sir Andrew coming toward him and said, “Look who’s coming.”

“Here is more merriment,” Fabian said.

Sir Andrew came to them with his letter in his hand and said, “Here is the challenge — read it. I promise that vinegar and pepper are in it.”

“Is it so saucy?” Fabian joked. “Saucy” means both spiced like a sauce and insulting.

Sir Andrew, who failed to get the joke, said, “Yes, it is, I promise you that. Read it.”

Sir Toby said, “Give it to me.”

He read out loud, “*Youth, whatever else you are, you are a scurvy fellow.*”

Fabian commented, “That is good, and valiant. It shows courage and determination.” He would praise the letter no matter how silly it got.

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*Don’t wonder at or be surprised by what I call you. I will not tell you why I call you that.*”

“This is a good note,” Fabian said. “It keeps you on the right side of the law. You will not be sued.”

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*You have talked with the lady Olivia. I have seen that she treats you nicely. But you lie in your throat — that is not why I am writing you and challenging you to fight me.*”

If Cesario were lying in his throat when he talked to Olivia, he would be lying when he said that he did not love her.

Fabian said, “Very brief, and very good sense.” To Sir Toby, he whispered, “Sense — less.”

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*I will ambush you when you go home. If it should happen that you kill me —*”

“Good,” Fabian said.

Sir Andrew thought that Fabian meant that the half-sentence was well written, but Fabian was joking that it would be a good thing if Sir Andrew were killed.

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*If it should happen that you kill me, you kill me like a rogue and a villain.*”

Fabian enjoyed the sentence. The phrase “a rogue and a villain” was ambiguous. It could refer to Cesario — or to Sir Andrew.

Fabian said, “You are still keeping yourself on the right side of the law. Good work.”

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*Fare thee well; and God have mercy upon one of our souls! He may have mercy upon mine, but my hope is better.*”

Fabian thought, *Funny! Sir Andrew thought that he was writing that he hopes to survive, but instead he wrote that he hopes to be damned to Hell.*

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*Look to yourself. I am your friend, to the extent that you treat me as a friend.*”

Fabian thought, *Sir Andrew is trying to say that the quarrel is all Cesario’s fault.*

Sir Toby continued reading out loud, “*Signed, Your sworn enemy, ANDREW AGUECHEEK.*”

Sir Toby said, “If this letter does not move Cesario, his legs must be paralyzed. I will give him your letter.”

“You will soon have a good opportunity to do that,” Maria said. “Cesario is talking to Olivia, and he will soon leave her.”

“Go, Sir Andrew,” Sir Toby said, “Keep watch for Cesario in the corner of the garden. Act like a sheriff’s official who arrests debtors. Don’t let him get away. As soon as you see him, draw your sword, and as you draw your sword, swear horribly. It often happens that a terrible oath, when pronounced boldly, gives a man a better reputation for courage than he would have gotten if he had actually fought. Go now.”

Sir Andrew said, "I'm really good at swearing," and left.

Sir Toby said, "I will not give Cesario Sir Andrew's letter. Cesario's behavior shows that he is a young gentleman of intelligence and education. His employment as a go-between for Orsino and Olivia confirms that. Therefore, if Cesario were to read this letter, which is so silly, it would not terrify him because he would realize that its writer is an idiot. Instead, sir, I will deliver Sir Andrew's challenge in person, orally. I will say that Sir Andrew is famous for his courage, and I will make Cesario believe — he is young, so he will believe whatever I tell him — that Sir Andrew is known for his rage, skill, fury, and impetuosity. Both Cesario and Sir Andrew will be so frightened of each other that a mere look from them will kill the other, just as the mythological creatures known as basilisks are said to be able to kill with a look."

Olivia and Viola now entered the garden.

Fabian said, "Here come Cesario and your niece. Wait until he leaves, and then go after him."

"In the meantime, I will think about what to say to Cesario," Sir Toby said. "I will make up some horrible challenge for him."

Sir Toby, Fabian, and Maria all left the garden, leaving Viola and Olivia alone. Sir Andrew watched the two from a distance.

Olivia said to Viola, "I have said too much to you and to your heart of stone, and I have unwisely risked my reputation. I may have done the wrong thing, but my fault is so headstrong and powerful that it mocks reproof. I may have done the wrong thing in telling you that I love you, but I can't regret it."

"Your passion for me compels you to tell me that you love

me,” Viola said. “Orsino’s passion for you compels him to send you the message that he loves you.”

Olivia said, “Here, wear this jeweled miniature for me — it is my picture. Don’t refuse it. It has no tongue to vex you. I ask that you come to me again tomorrow. You can ask nothing of me that I will deny you except that which honor requires me to deny you.”

Viola did not take the locket. She said, “I ask you for nothing but this — that you love Orsino.”

“How can I honorably give him that which I have already given to you?”

“I will return that gift to you.”

Olivia said, “Well, come again tomorrow. Fare thee well. A fiend like you might bear my soul to Hell.”

She went back inside her house.

Sir Toby and Fabian had been watching. Now they approached Viola.

“May God save you,” Sir Toby said.

“And you, sir,” Viola replied.

Sir Toby said to Viola, “Whatever skill you have in fencing, now is the time for you to use it. I don’t know what wrongs you have done to him, but I know that he is full of hatred for you and that he is as bloodthirsty as a dog hunting its prey. He is waiting for you there in the corner of the garden. Unsheathe your rapier and quickly prepare to defend yourself because your enemy is quick, skillful, and deadly.”

“You must be mistaken, sir,” Viola replied. “I am sure that no man has any reason to quarrel with me. I can remember no offense that I have committed against any man.”

Sir Toby replied, "Your enemy thinks otherwise, I assure you; therefore, if you value your life, be on guard because your enemy has youth, strength, skill, and anger."

"Please, sir, who is he?"

"He is a knight," Sir Toby said. "He became a knight not through his service in battle, but through domestic service. Nevertheless, he is a Devil when it comes to his private quarrels. He has killed three men and sent their souls to either Heaven or Hell. Right now, his anger at you is so implacable that it can be satisfied only by pangs of death and entombment in a burial vault. His motto is 'Kill, or be killed.'"

"I will go into the house and ask Olivia for someone to escort and protect me," Viola said. "I am no fighter. I have heard that some men start quarrels without cause on purpose as a test of their own and other men's courage. This man must be like that."

"Sir, no, he is not," Sir Toby said. "His anger comes from a very notable insult, and therefore you must fight him. I will not allow you to go back inside the house unless you first fight me, and so you might as well fight him. Therefore, either draw your sword and fight him, or admit to your cowardice and never again wear a sword."

"This is both rude and unintelligible," Viola said. "I ask you to do me a favor: Find out from the knight what he thinks is my offense to him. Whatever it is, it is accidental and was not done on purpose."

"I will do so," Sir Toby said, "Mr. Fabian, stay by Cesario until my return."

Sir Toby wanted Fabian to keep Cesario from either going into Olivia's house or running away.

Sir Toby left to talk to Sir Andrew.

Viola said to Fabian, "Please, sir, do you know anything about this?"

"I know that the knight is angry at you — so angry that he wants to kill you — but I do not know the reason why."

"What kind of man is he?"

"If you look at him, you would not think that he is a courageous fighter, but you will change your mind as soon as you see him in action. He is, indeed, sir, the most skillful, bloody, and deadly enemy that you could possibly have found in any part of Illyria. Will you walk with me to him and meet with him? I will make your peace with him if I can."

"I would appreciate it if you can make peace," Viola said. "I am the kind of person who would rather meet Sir Priest than Sir Knight. I don't care what that makes people think about my courage."

Meanwhile, Sir Toby was talking to Sir Andrew.

Sir Toby said, "Why, man, Cesario is a very Devil; I have not seen such a virago — he may look feminine, but he fights like a seasoned male warrior. I had a practice bout with him, and he thrust his sword at me with such a deadly motion, that I could not defend against it. When I thrust back at him, he thrust again and would have killed me a second time if our fight had been for real. He stabs you with his sword just as surely as your feet hit the ground they step on. They say that he has been fencer to the Shah of Persia."

"Damn, I'll not fight him," Sir Andrew said.

Sir Toby said, "That's a wise decision, but now Cesario is so angry that he will not be pacified. Look! Fabian can

scarcely hold him yonder — Cesario is eager to kill you.”

Fabian was holding Viola’s arm as she struggled to escape and run away.

“If I had known he was so brave and so skillful in fencing, I would have seen him damned before I would have challenged him. If he will forget about it, I’ll give him my horse: Grey Capilet.”

“I’ll see what I can do,” Sir Toby said. “Stand here, and put on a show of bravery. I intend that this shall end without the loss of life.”

He walked toward Fabian and Viola, who were now walking toward him, and he thought, *I will end up riding Sir Andrew’s horse as well as riding Sir Andrew.*

Sir Toby said quietly to Fabian, “I can get Sir Andrew’s horse — he wants me to settle this quarrel. I have persuaded him that Cesario is a Devil when it comes to a fight.”

Fabian said quietly to Sir Toby, “Cesario is just as scared of Sir Andrew as Sir Andrew is of him. Cesario hyperventilates and looks pale, as if a bear were chasing him.”

Sir Toby said quietly to Viola, “There’s no remedy, sir. I can do nothing to stop this fight. He has thought about the reason for this quarrel, and he finds that it is now scarcely worth talking of, but he will fight you because he made an oath to fight you. Therefore, draw your sword, but be aware that he is fighting you only because of his oath, and he promises that he will not hurt you.”

Viola thought, *May God defend me! I am almost ready to tell them what part I lack of a man.*

Fabian advised Viola, “Give ground and retreat if you see

him really furious.”

Sir Toby said quietly, “Come, Sir Andrew, you can’t get out of this. The gentleman will, for his honor’s sake, have one bout with you. By the rules of dueling, he cannot avoid fighting you, but as he is a gentleman and a soldier, he has promised me that he will not hurt you. Come on. It’s time to fight him.”

Sir Andrew said, “Pray God he keep his oath!”

Viola said, “It is against my will.”

Sir Andrew thought that Cesario meant that it was against his will that he keep his oath not to hurt Sir Andrew, but Viola meant that it was against her will that she was fighting at all.

Sir Andrew and Viola drew their swords. Antonio, who was looking for Sebastian, saw them from the street. Thinking that Viola was her brother, Sebastian, he entered Olivia’s garden and said to Sir Andrew, “Put up your sword. If this young gentleman has done any offence, I take the fault on me. If you have offended him, then I defy you for him.”

Sir Toby asked, “You, sir, who are you?”

Antonio replied, “I am one, sir, who for his deep friendship for this man will do more than you have heard me say to you that I will do.”

Angry that his fun had been interrupted, Sir Toby said, “If you are willing to fight in his place, I am willing to fight in Sir Andrew’s place.”

Sir Toby and Antonio drew their swords, but Fabian said to Sir Toby, “Wait! Here come two officers of the law!”

Sir Toby said to Antonio, “I won’t fight you right now, but

I will after the officers leave.”

Viola said to Sir Andrew, “Please, sir, put your sword back in its scabbard, if you please.”

He replied, “Indeed, I will, sir, and, as for that which I promised you, I will be as good as my word: My horse will bear you easily and reins well.”

Viola was mystified by the comment, but everyone put their swords back in their scabbards.

The first officer pointed to Antonio and said, “This is the man; do your duty.”

The second officer said, “Antonio, I arrest you in the name of Duke Orsino.”

“You have mistaken me for someone else,” Antonio said.

The first officer replied, “No, not at all. I know your face well, though now you have no sea cap on your head. Take him away: He knows that I know who he is.”

Antonio said to the officers, “I will go quietly.”

Antonio said to Viola, “This is a result of my seeking you, but that is the way it is. I will face the consequences. I will either defend myself well or pay the penalty. However, I worry about you. What will you do now that my circumstances force me to ask you to return my money? I grieve much more about not being to help you than I grieve for myself.”

Viola looked shocked at these words. She had never seen Antonio before.

Antonio said to her, “You seem shocked, but don’t worry about me.”

The second officer said, “Come on, sir. Let’s go.”

Antonio said to Viola, "I must ask you for some of that money."

Viola replied, "What money, sir? For the kindness you have given to me here, when you offered to fight this man for me, and in part because I pity you in your present trouble, I'll lend you some of the little money I have. I don't have much money, but I'll divide it with you. Here, take half of the money I have."

The amount of money was much less than what Antonio had given to Sebastian.

Antonio said to Viola, "Are you going to pretend not to know me? Is it possible that you will do that despite all that I have done for you? I have been arrested, and you ought to help me. Don't make me demean myself by reminding you of all the things that I have done to help you."

"Other than the good deed you have done for me just now, I know of nothing that you have done to help me," Viola said. "I do not know your voice or your face. I hate ingratitude more in a man than lying, vanity, babbling drunkenness, or any other vice that our weak human nature is susceptible to."

"Oh, my God!" Antonio said.

The second officer said, "Come, sir, let's go."

"Let me say a few words," Antonio said. "This youth whom you see here I snatched out of the jaws of death. He was half dead, but I lovingly nursed him back to health, and devoted myself to him because he looked so noble and good."

The first officer replied, "What is that to us? The time is passing. We need to leave!"

Antonio said, "But this man who seemed to be a god turns

out to be a vile idol. You shame your good looks, Sebastian. The only real blemish is a blemish of the mind. The only real deformity is an unnatural hardness of heart:

“In nature there’s no blemish but the mind;

“None can be called deformed but the unkind.

“Virtue and beauty are supposed to be synonymous, but some evil people are beautiful; they are like empty trunks whose exterior is decorated by the Devil:

“Virtue is beauty, but the beauteous evil

“Are empty trunks overflourished by the Devil.”

The first officer said, “Antonio is becoming insane. Let’s take him away! Come with us, Antonio.”

“Take me away,” Antonio said.

He left with the two officers of the law.

Viola said to herself, “He speaks with such passion that I think that he believes what he says. But I don’t.”

But then an explanation for Antonio’s words occurred to her: “I hope that it may be true. My brother, Sebastian, may still be alive, and Antonio may have thought that I am he.”

Sir Toby had been amused by Antonio’s couplets. He said, “Come with me, Sir Andrew and Fabian. We will say among ourselves a couplet or two of most sage saws.”

Viola said to herself, “Antonio said the name Sebastian. Whenever I look into a mirror, I see the image of my brother. We look almost exactly alike. We have the same features, the same face. We are dressed in the same style and color of clothing and with the same ornaments because I imitated him when I disguised myself as a man. If my brother is still alive, then tempests are kind and waves are

fresh and filled with love. Unkind tempests and salt waves have foregone their ordinary attributes, if my brother is alive.”

Viola exited.

Sir Toby said, “Cesario is a very dishonest and paltry boy, and he is more cowardly than is a hare. Cesario shows that he is dishonorable because he is doing nothing to help his friend in need and even denies knowing him. As for Cesario’s cowardice, ask Fabian about it.”

“It is true,” Fabian said. “Cesario is a coward, a most devout coward. He is as devoted to cowardice as if it were his religion.”

Happy to hear that Cesario is a coward, Sir Andrew said, “By God, I’ll go after him and beat him.”

Sir Toby said, “Do that, Sir Andrew, fight him. Beat him soundly. But do not draw your sword against him.”

“I swear that I will —”

Sir Andrew left.

Fabian said to Sir Toby, “Come on. Let’s go and watch.”

“I bet you that nothing will come of it. Those two still will not fight.”

They followed Sir Andrew.

CHAPTER 4 (Twelfth Night)

— 4.1 —

Sebastian and Feste were arguing in front of Olivia's house. Olivia had sent Feste to find Cesario and bring him back to her, and Feste thought that Sebastian was Cesario.

Feste said, "Are you trying to make me believe that I was not sent for you?"

Sebastian replied, "Go away. You are a foolish fellow. Stay out of my way."

"You are certainly stubborn about denying who you are! No, I do not know who you are. No, my lady did not send me to get you. No, your name is not Cesario. No, my nose is not my nose. According to you, nothing that is so is so."

"Please, go and vent your folly somewhere else. You do not know me."

"Vent my folly! You have heard those words from some important and learned man and now you are applying them to a fool. Vent my folly! I am afraid that affectation and foppery will spread all over the world. Please, stop denying that you know me — we have met and talked before. Tell me what I shall vent to my lady, Olivia. Shall I vent to her that you are coming and will see her?"

"Please, foolish fellow, depart from me. Here is a coin for you. If you keep bothering me, I will give you worse payment."

"Truly, you have a generous hand," Feste said, remembering the two coins that Viola had given to him earlier. "These wise men who give fools money get for themselves a good reputation — if they keep on giving

money for fourteen years.”

Sir Andrew, Sir Toby, and Fabian now came running up to Sebastian. Like Feste, they thought that Sebastian was Cesario.

Sir Andrew said to Sebastian, “Now, sir, I have met you again.”

He hit Sebastian and said, “That’s for you.”

Sebastian drew his dagger and hit an astonished Sir Andrew three times with the hilt, saying, “That’s for you! And that! And that!”

He then said, “Are all the people in Illyria insane?”

Sir Toby did not want Sebastian to keep hitting his source of income. He said, “Stop, sir, or I’ll throw your dagger over the house.”

Things were starting to get serious, and Feste said, “I am going to tell Olivia all about this. I would not be in some of your shoes for two pennies.”

Feste was loyal to Olivia and knew that she would want to know about fights on her property.

Sir Toby had grabbed hold of Sebastian. Sir Toby said, “Stop your fighting.”

Sir Andrew said, “Let him go. I can fight him another way. I’ll have an action of battery brought against him, if there is any law in Illyria. I struck him first, but that doesn’t matter.”

“Let go of me,” Sebastian said to Sir Toby.

“I will not let you go. Come, my young warrior, put up your dagger. You are too eager to fight.”

“I will be free from you,” Sebastian said.

He struggled, got himself free of Sir Toby’s grip, drew his sword, and said, “What will you do now? If you dare to keep on bothering me, draw your sword.”

“What!” Sir Toby said. “In that case, I must have an ounce or two of your impudent blood from you.”

Alerted by Feste, Olivia came running.

She said, “Sir Toby, stop! On your life, I order you to stop.”

Sir Toby stopped. Olivia gave him free room and board. He did not want to push her too far. He was her uncle, but she held the power and owned the property.

“Madam!” he said.

“Will it always be this way?” Olivia asked. “Ungracious wretch, you are fit only for the mountains and the barbarous caves, where good manners and etiquette are never learned or practiced. Get out of my sight!”

Olivia said to Sebastian, “Don’t be offended, dear Cesario.”

Noticing that Sir Toby was still present, she yelled at him, “Rudesby, lout, be gone!”

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Fabian all left.

Olivia said to Sebastian, “Please, good friend, let yourself be guided by your calm wisdom and not by your anger at this uncivil and unjust attack against you. Come with me into my house, and I will tell you of many stupid and demeaning pranks that this ruffian has clumsily dreamed up. When you hear about them, you will probably smile at this one, too.”

Sebastian was hesitant about going with a strange woman,

but Olivia said, “I will not allow you to do anything but go with me. Do not deny me my wish.”

Olivia believed that she was talking to Cesario. She also believed that her heart was not her own — she was in love with and had given her heart to Cesario.

She said to Sebastian, “Curse that ruffian. He made my heart jump like a hart that has been startled and driven out into the open by hunters.”

Sebastian thought, *How sweet and beautiful this woman is! But what is going on? Either I am mad, or else this is a dream. If it is a dream, then let me drink from the Lethe River of mythology so that I will forget what reality is and remain with this sweet and beautiful woman in my dream.*

Olivia said to him, “Please, come with me. I wish that you would allow me to guide you.”

Sebastian said, “Madam, I will.”

Happy, Olivia said, “You have said it! Now live it!”

— 4.2 —

Malvolio had been locked in a small, dark room in Olivia’s house. In a room adjoining that room, Maria and Feste were talking. Maria was carrying a false beard and clerical clothing.

Maria said to Feste, “Please, put on this gown and this beard. I want to make Malvolio believe that you are Sir Topas, the curate. Put on these things quickly. I will go and get Sir Toby so that he can enjoy the fun.”

Feste said, “Well, I will put these things on, and I will disguise myself in them. A disguise is a kind of dissembling, and I wish that I were the first person who ever dissembled in such a gown. Too many clerics have

been corrupt.”

He was in an odd position. A professional fool is a kind of servant and must keep the people around him happy. He needed to be loyal to Olivia, who was the most important person in the house, but he also needed to humor Sir Toby, who was a source of income. As for Malvolio, he had tried to get Olivia to fire Feste, and Feste would like to have revenge.

Feste put on the fake beard and the cleric’s gown and said, “I am not distinguished enough to play the role well, nor lean enough to be thought a good student; still, to be said to be an honest man and a good host is almost as good as being said to be a dutiful man and a great scholar. I hear the co-conspirators coming.”

Sir Toby and Maria entered the room.

Sir Toby said to Feste, “May Jove bless you, Master Parson.”

“*Bonos dies*, Sir Toby,” Feste said in deliberately bad Latin, thinking that a real parson ought to know Latin well.

Feste then began to mock philosophical language: “As the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen and ink, very wittily said to a niece of King Gorboduc, ‘That that is, is.’ I, being Master Parson, am Master Parson. After all, what is ‘that’ but ‘that’ and what is ‘is’ but ‘is’?”

“Malvolio is your prey,” Sir Toby said. “Go after him.”

Disguising his voice, Feste called, “Hello! May there be peace in this prison!”

Sir Toby said to Maria, “The knave counterfeits well; he is a good knave.”

Hearing Feste’s voice, Malvolio, locked but not bound in

the dark room, yelled, "Who calls there?"

Feste said, "I am Sir Topas the curate, and I have come to visit Malvolio the lunatic."

"Sir Topas, Sir Topas, good Sir Topas, go to my lady, Olivia, and take her a message from me."

Feste pretended that Malvolio was possessed and that the Devil within Malvolio was speaking. Feste yelled, "Out, hyperbolic fiend! See how you are vexing this man! Fiend, can you talk about nothing but women?"

Sir Toby complimented Feste, "Well said, Master Parson."

Malvolio said, "Sir Topas, never was a man so much wronged as I am. Good Sir Topas, do not think that I am mad. They say that I am insane, and they have laid me here in hideous darkness."

"Satan, you are dishonest," Feste said. "I call you dishonest instead of the stronger word 'liar' because I am one of those gentle ones who will treat the Devil himself with courtesy. Did you say that this place is dark?"

"As dark as Hell itself, Sir Topas," Malvolio said.

"Why, it has bay windows that are as transparent as solid barricades, and the upper windows facing toward the south-north are as white and transparent as ebony wood, so why are you complaining of darkness?"

"Sir Topas, I am not mad. I say again to you: This place is dark."

"Madman, you are wrong. I say that there is no darkness except for ignorance and you are more ignorant than were the Egyptians in the fog that caused three days of darkness."

Malvolio replied, "I say that this place is as dark as

ignorance, even though ignorance were as dark as Hell; and I say, there was never any man more abused than I am. I am no more mad than you are. Test me and see if I am mad. Ask me a question.”

Feste asked, “What is the opinion of the ancient Greek philosopher Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?”

“He believed in reincarnation and that the soul of our grandmother might perhaps be in a bird.”

“What do you think of his theory?”

“I think nobly of the soul, and in no way approve of his theory.”

“Fare thee well,” Feste said. “Remain you always in darkness. You shall believe in the theory of Pythagoras before I will believe that you are sane, and you will be afraid to kill a really stupid woodcock, lest you dispossess the soul of your grandmother. Fare thee well.”

“Sir Topas! Sir Topas!” Malvolio called as Feste seemed to walk away.

Actually, Feste walked only a few steps away, just enough to be out of Malvolio’s hearing if Feste and others spoke quietly.

Sir Toby complimented Feste, “My most exquisite Sir Topas! You performed your role perfectly well!”

Feste said, “I can sail any sea. I can perform all roles.”

Maria said, “You could have performed the role without wearing the false beard and the parson’s gown. Malvolio cannot see you.”

The false beard and the gown had been Maria’s idea. Now she was mocking Feste for doing what she had told him to do.

Sir Toby said to Feste, “Talk to Malvolio in your own voice, and bring me word about what happens.”

He added, “I wish that this joke was over and that we were well rid of this knavery. If we could release Malvolio from this prison without too much trouble, I would do so. I am now in so much trouble with Olivia, my niece, that I cannot much longer continue this joke, although I would like to.”

He said to Maria, “Come by and by to my chamber.”

Sir Toby and Maria departed, leaving Feste alone with Malvolio.

Feste had his orders, and he followed them.

In his own voice, he sang about a woman who first loved one man and then loved another:

“Hey, Robin, jolly Robin,

“Tell me how your lady does.”

Malvolio recognized Feste’s voice and called, “Fool!”

Feste sang, *“My lady is unkind, certainly.”*

Malvolio called, “Fool!”

“Alas, why is she so?”

“Fool, I say!”

“She loves another.”

Feste’s song was about the inconstancy of some loves. A person can love one person for a while, and then end up loving another person.

Feste stopped singing and asked, “Who is calling me?”

Malvolio said, “Good fool, if you would like to do something for me that will be well rewarded, get me some

candles, and a pen, ink, and paper. As I am a gentleman, I will reward you for it.”

“Are you Master Malvolio?”

“Yes, good fool.”

“Sir, how did you fall out of your five wits: common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, and memory?”

“Fool, never was a man so notoriously and obviously abused: I am as well in my wits, fool, as you are.”

“Only as well in your wits as I am?” Feste said. “Then you must be mad indeed, if you are no better in your wits than a fool.”

“They are treating me like a thing, not like a person,” Malvolio said. “They keep me in darkness, they send ministers to me, and they do everything they can to drive me out of my mind. They are asses!”

“Be careful what you say,” Feste said. “Sir Topas is here.”

Using the voice of Sir Topas, Feste said, “Malvolio, Malvolio, may Heaven restore your wits! Try to go to sleep, and stop talking your bibble babble.”

Malvolio called, “Sir Topas!”

Feste pretended to be Sir Topas, who he pretended was talking to Feste, “Don’t talk to him, good fellow.”

In his own voice, Feste said, “Who, I, sir? Not I, sir. God be with you, good Sir Topas.”

In the voice of Sir Topas, Feste said, “Be well.”

In his own voice, Feste said, “I will, sir, I will.”

“Fool, fool, fool, I say!” Malvolio called, afraid that Feste was leaving.

“Sir, be quiet,” Feste said. “What do you want to say, sir? Sir Topaz has just rebuked me for talking to you.”

“Good fool, get me some candles and a pen, ink, and paper. I tell you that I am as well in my wits as any man in Illyria.”

“I wish that that were true, sir.”

“I swear that I am sane,” Malvolio said. “Good fool, get me a pen, ink, paper, and candles. Deliver to Olivia the letter that I will write. I will reward you more than you have ever been rewarded for the delivery of a letter.”

“I will help you,” Feste said. “I will get you what you need. But tell me the truth: Are you really mad? Or are you just pretending to be insane?”

“Believe me, I am not insane. I am telling you the truth.”

“I don’t believe you. I will never believe a madman until I see his brains. For one thing, I want to verify whether or not he has brains. Nevertheless, I will fetch you candles and a pen and paper and ink.”

“I will pay you well,” Malvolio said. “Please, go and get me what I need.”

Feste left Malvolio. Throughout their encounter, Malvolio had been angry, but dignified and controlled.

Sir Toby and Maria were pretending that Malvolio was possessed by the Devil. If this were true, Malvolio would need an exorcism to cast the Devil out of his body. As he left Malvolio, Feste sang a song about old Vice, the son of the Devil, driving the Devil away with a wooden dagger:

“I am gone, sir,

“And quickly, sir,

*“I’ll be with you again,
“In a trice,
“Like to the old Vice,
“In order to help you resist the Devil;
“Who, with dagger of lath,
“In his rage and his wrath,
“Cries, ‘Ah, ha!’ to the Devil:
“Like a mad lad,
““Pare your fingernails, Dad;
““Adieu, good man Devil.””*

— 4.3 —

Alone in Olivia’s garden, Sebastian marveled at his good fortune. He was a stranger in a strange land, but a sweet and beautiful lady who was a rich Countess had taken him in — and she appeared to have fallen in love with him at first sight. He wondered whether this were real.

He said to himself, “This is the air; that is the glorious Sun; this is the pearl she gave me — I feel it and I see it. I am enveloped in wonder, but I am not enveloped in madness.

“I wonder where Antonio is. I could not find him at the Elephant Inn, yet he had been there; and there I learned that he had left to walk the streets and find me. If he were here, he could give me golden advice. His counsel now might do me golden service. My mind agrees with my senses. Somehow there has been a mistake somewhere, but I am not mad. This unexpected and sudden flood of good luck exceeds all precedent and likelihood and so I am ready not to believe my own eyes and I am ready to distrust my

reason when it tells me that I am not mad and that this lady is not mad. However, if this lady were insane, she could not run her house, command her servants, and handle her household affairs and make decisions with such a smooth, discreet, and stable bearing as I see she does. Something here is deceptive, and I don't know what it is. But here comes the lady now."

Olivia and a priest walked up to Sebastian.

Olivia said to Sebastian, "Forgive me for my haste, but if your intentions toward me are consistent with marriage, go with me and this holy man now into the chapel. There, before the priest and underneath the chapel's consecrated roof, marry me and promise to be true to me so that my most jealous and too doubtful soul may be at peace. The priest shall conceal our marriage until you are willing that it be made public. At that time, we will have a public wedding that is suitable for a Countess. What do you say? Are you willing to marry me?"

"I will follow this good man, and I will go with you. I will marry you, and I will always be true and faithful to you."

Olivia said to the priest, "Lead the way, good father; and may the Sun shine and Heaven bless this marriage."

CHAPTER 5 (Twelfth Night)

— 5.1 —

In front of Olivia's house, Feste and Fabian were talking.

Fabian said to Feste, "Please let me see Malvolio's letter."

"Fabian, grant me a request first."

"Anything you want."

"Do not desire to see this letter."

"It's as if you gave me a dog and then as recompense asked for the dog back again."

Duke Orsino, Viola, Curio, and others arrived. Finally, Orsino was going to see Olivia face to face and do his own courting.

Orsino asked, "Are you servants of the Lady Olivia?"

Feste replied, "Yes, we decorate her household."

Recognizing Feste, Orsino said, "I know you well. How are you, my good fellow?"

"Sir, I am better off because of my enemies and worse off because of my friends."

"Don't you mean the contrary?" Orsino asked. "Aren't we better off because of our friends?"

"No, sir, we are worse off."

"How can that be?"

"Friends praise me and make an ass of me, but my enemies tell me plainly I am an ass. When I associate with my enemies, I profit by knowing myself better. When I

associate with my friends, I am abused and made to do foolish things.”

Feste thought, *This is true. Sir Toby and Maria, who are supposed to be friends of mine, made me do something bad to Malvolio, although I admit I did not resist. Cesario, however, is not supposed to be my friend because he serves Orsino, who bothers Olivia, whom I serve. But I profited by speaking to Cesario; we shared our jests and wisdom — and he tipped me well.*

Feste added, “If four negatives make two positives, I am worse off because of my friends and better off because of my enemies. Four negatives are a good thing. If I ask to kiss a woman, and she says, ‘no, no,’ the rules of grammar and of logic conclude that she is saying one yes. If I receive four noes, then logically I get two kisses. And when two quarreling lovers quarrel and then make up, they kiss. Their four lips that have been saying ‘no’ now become two mouths that kiss and say ‘yes.’”

“This is excellent foolery,” Orsino said.

“Indeed, it is not. You seem to be one of my friends.”

“I do not want to be a friend who makes you worse off,” Orsino said. “Here is gold for you.”

He gave Feste a coin.

“Except that it would be double-dealing, sir, I wish that you would make it another.”

“To be ‘double-dealing’ — duplicitous — would be bad counsel. And so would be, financially speaking, paying twice for something.”

“Realize that your grace is in your pocket, sir. Feel free to go ahead and fish it out.”

“Well, I will be so much a sinner as to be a double-dealer,” Orsino said. He reached into his pocket, took out a coin, and gave it to Feste, saying, “Here is the second coin that I have dealt to you.”

Feste counted one through three in Latin, “*Primo, secundo, tertio*. These words make a good beginning. Third time lucky, and the third pays for all. In music, triple time is good to dance to, and the bells of Saint Benedict’s Church, sir, may put you in mind to be generous: They toll one, two, three.”

“You can fool no more money out of me in this particular game,” Orsino said, smiling, “but if you will let Olivia know that I am here to speak with her, and if you bring her to me, it may further awaken my generosity.”

“Sir, let your generosity sleep until I return again. I am going, sir, to get Olivia for you, but I would not have you think that my desire for coins is the sin of covetousness.”

Feste thought, *Getting a really good tip is an art. Getting any tip is a necessity.*

He added, “As you say, sir, let your generosity take a nap for now, but don’t worry, I will awaken it soon.”

Feste left.

Viola said to Orsino, “Here comes the man, sir, who rescued me when Sir Andrew wanted to duel me.”

Some officers of the law brought Antonio to Orsino.

Orsino said, “That face of his I do remember well, but when I saw it last, it was in the smoke of war besmeared as black as the face of Vulcan, the blacksmith god. He was the captain of a little boat with shallow draught and of little worth, but with that boat he grappled with and did such damage to the most noble ship of our fleet that we his

enemies envied his bravery and despite our losses proclaimed his honor and gave him a great reputation for valor. Why is he here?"

The first officer said, "Orsino, this is that Antonio who captured the *Phoenix* and her freight from Candia, the capital of Crete. He also boarded the *Tiger*, in which encounter your young nephew Titus lost his leg. Here in our streets, he recklessly disregarded his notoriety in our country and the shame that comes from dueling in a private brawl, and so we arrested him."

Viola said to Orsino, "He did me kindness, sir. He drew his sword so he could fight for me, but afterward, he spoke strange things to me. I don't know the reason except that he must be mad."

Orsino said to Antonio, "Notable pirate! You salt-water thief! What foolish boldness brought you here to us, whom you, with bloody and harmful actions that have been costly to us, have made your enemies? Why have you put yourself into our hands and made yourself subject to our mercy?"

"Orsino, noble sir, allow me to shake off these names you give me. I, Antonio, have never been a thief or a pirate, though I confess that I have been, for good reason, your enemy. A kind of witchcraft drew me to Illyria. That most ungrateful boy there by your side, from the rough sea's enraged and foamy mouth did I save."

He looked at Viola and then added, "He was close to death and seemed to be past hope. I saved his life and I gave him all my friendship without reservation. I dedicated myself to him. Because of my devoted friendship, in order to serve him I came here and exposed myself to the danger of this hostile town. I drew my sword to defend him when thugs beset him. After I was arrested, he did not want to face any danger and so his ungrateful cunning made him deny that

he ever knew me. In the time that it takes to blink, he pretended to be a stranger who had not seen me for the last twenty years. In addition, he refused to give me my own money, which I had given him to hold and to use not half an hour previously.”

“How could these things even be possible?” Viola said.

“When did this young man first come to my town?” Orsino asked.

“He came here today, sir,” Antonio said. “During the three months previous to today, he and I have always been together, day and night, with not even a minute of separation between us.”

Olivia and her attendants now walked toward Orsino and the others.

Orsino said, “Here comes the Countess. Heaven now walks on earth.”

He said to Antonio, “As for you, your words are insane. For the past three months, this youth has been my servant. We will talk more about this later.”

He said to the officers of the law, “Take Antonio to one side. I will now talk with Olivia.”

Olivia said to Orsino, “How can I help you, sir? Don’t ask for what I can’t give you — my love — but otherwise I will gladly help you.”

She said to Viola, whom she thought was Sebastian, whom she had married, “You should be here by my side.”

Shocked, Viola said, “Madam!”

Orsino began speaking, “Gracious Olivia —”

But Olivia interrupted him and said to Viola, “What do you

say, Cesario?”

Orsino wanted to speak to Olivia, but she said, “Not now,” and then she looked at Viola.

Viola said, “My lord — Orsino — wants to speak to you; my duty is to be quiet while he speaks.”

Olivia said to Orsino, “If you are here to sing the same old words to the same old tune, the experience will be as burdensome and distasteful to my ears as would be howling after I have heard beautiful music.”

“Are you still so cruel, Olivia?”

“I am still so constant.”

“Constant to what? Perverseness? You are perverse in constantly refusing my love for you. You, lady, are cruel. My soul has made more sacrifices on your ungrateful and unpropitious altars than a lover has ever made before. What shall I do?”

“Do whatever you want, as long as it is suitable for you.”

“Why shouldn’t I, if I had the heart to do it, act like the Egyptian thief who, when he was close to death, decided to kill the woman he loved? That kind of savage jealousy can sometimes seem to be noble. But listen to me now. Since you reject my love, and since I know from your words at least in part why you keep rejecting my love, I am going to take away from you that young man who has taken the place in your heart that ought to be mine. Go ahead and keep your cold heart of marble. But this young man, this Cesario, I will keep away from you. You will never see him again. I care deeply for this young man, but I am angry because he has taken your love — love that ought to be mine.”

Orsino said to Cesario, “Come with me now. If you were

Olivia's darling, you would benefit greatly, but I will keep you away from her to spite her. I will sacrifice a lamb — you, Cesario — to spite Olivia. She has a raven's heart in her dove's body."

Viola revealed her feelings for Orsino: "I, most happily, readily, and willingly, to give you peace and satisfaction, a thousand deaths would die."

"Where are you going, Cesario?" Olivia asked.

"After the man I love more than I love my eyes, more than I love my life, more by far than ever I shall love a wife. If I am lying, then let the gods punish me and take my life for being disloyal to my love."

Olivia said, "I am detested. I have been lied to."

Viola asked, "Who has lied to you? Who has done you wrong?"

"Have you forgotten who you are?" Olivia asked Viola. "Has it been so long?"

She ordered a servant, "Bring the priest to me."

Orsino said to Viola, "Let's go now."

Olivia said to Orsino, "Where to, my lord?"

She said to Viola, "Cesario, my husband, stay here."

"Husband!" Orsino said.

"Yes, husband. Can he deny that we are married?"

Orsino asked Viola, "Are you married to Olivia?"

"No, my lord, not I."

Olivia said to Viola, "It is your base fear that makes you deny that you are married to me. Do not be afraid, Cesario."

Reveal your good fortune. Acknowledge that you are my husband, as you know that you are, and then, because Orsino will know you are married to a Countess, you will have nothing to fear from him.”

The priest walked toward Olivia, who said to him, “Welcome, father! Please, reverend father, tell everybody — although we had wanted to keep secret what now we must reveal due to circumstances — what you know has recently happened between this young man and me.”

The priest said, “You two have made an eternal bond of love. This was confirmed by the mutual joining of your hands, attested by the holy kiss of your lips, and strengthened by the exchange of rings. I as priest and witness sealed all the ceremony of your eternal bond of love. My watch tells me that you two were married two hours ago.”

Orsino said to Viola, “You lying little cub of a fox! How evil will you be by the time you have a few grey hairs on your head? Or will you become so evil so quickly that it will trip you and destroy you even before you grow gray? Goodbye. Stay with your wife, but make sure that I never see you again.”

Viola replied, “My lord, I swear —”

Olivia interrupted and said, “Do not swear! Keep at least a little faith even though you are afraid of Orsino.”

Sir Andrew came running up to the group of people. His head was bleeding a little. He did not see Viola.

He shouted, “For the love of God, get me a doctor and send a doctor to Sir Toby!”

“What’s the matter?” Olivia asked.

“He has hit me on the head and has bloodied Sir Toby’s

head, too! For the love of God, get me some help! I would give more than forty pounds to be safe in my home.”

“Who has done this, Sir Andrew?” Olivia asked.

“Orsino’s young gentleman. His name is Cesario. We took him for a coward, but he fights like the very Devil incarnate.”

Viola thought, *Sir Andrew means “incarnate” or “incarnadine” — blood-red — or both.*

“My gentleman?” Orsino asked. “Cesario?”

Sir Andrew noticed Viola and said, “My God! Here he is! You hit me on the head for nothing. Whatever I did, I did it because Sir Toby wanted me to do it.”

“Why are you saying that I hurt you?” Viola said, remembering her earlier “duel” with Sir Andrew. “I never hurt you. You drew your sword upon me without cause, but I spoke to you respectfully, and I did not hurt you.”

“If giving someone a bloody head is hurting him, then you have hurt me,” Sir Andrew said. “Do you think that a bloody head is nothing?”

Sir Toby came up to them, with Feste assisting him.

Sir Andrew said, “Here comes Sir Toby limping. You shall hear more about the fight. If he had not been drunk, he would have touched you with his sword.”

Orsino asked, “What’s wrong with you, Sir Toby?”

“Nothing important,” Sir Toby answered. “A man has defeated me in a fight, and that is all there is to it.”

He asked Feste, “Fool, have you seen Dick the doctor?”

“He is drunk, Sir Toby,” Feste said. “He has been drunk for

an hour. His eyes were closed because of drunkenness at eight in the morning.”

“Then he’s a rogue, and he is slow and reeling like someone dancing a passy measures panyn — a slow and stately dance that requires reeling like a drunk from side to side. I hate a drunken rogue.”

Olivia said, “Take Sir Toby away and get him help. Who has made this havoc with them?”

Sir Andrew said, “I’ll help you, Sir Toby. You and I can have our wounds taken care of together.”

Sir Toby was angry because he had lost a fight and been wounded and he was especially angry because Olivia was angry at him. He took out his anger on Sir Andrew: “You will help me? You are an ass and a fool and a knave. You are a thin-faced knave and a sucker!”

Olivia said, “Put Sir Toby to bed, and find someone to take care of his wound.”

Feste, Fabian, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew left.

Sebastian now came running up to Olivia. He did not notice Viola or Antonio.

He said to her, “I am sorry, Olivia, that I have hurt your uncle, but even if he had been my own brother, I would have been forced to hurt him for my own safety.”

Olivia was looking strangely at him, for good reason.

He said to her, “You are looking strangely at me, and because of that I know that my action has offended you. Pardon me, sweet one, and remember the vows we made to each other so recently.”

Orsino looked back and forth at Sebastian and Viola. He said, “One face, one voice, one style and color of clothing,

and two persons. An optical illusion made by nature. It seems to be real, but it can't be!"

Sebastian noticed Antonio. He went to him and said, "My dear Antonio! The hours since I have been separated from you have racked and tortured me since I did not know where you were and whether you were safe."

"Are you Sebastian?" Antonio asked.

"Can you doubt that I am, Antonio?"

"How have you managed to divide and duplicate yourself? An apple, cut in two, is not more alike than you and this other person. Which of you two is Sebastian?"

Olivia said, "This makes me full of wonder."

Seeing Viola, Sebastian said, "Is that me standing there? I never had a brother, and I do not have the powers of a deity — I am not here and everywhere. I am not omnipresent. I had a sister, but she drowned in the remorseless waves and swells of the sea."

He said to Viola, "Be kind and tell me, how are you related to me? We so resemble each other that we must be related. Which town and country are you from? What is your name? Who were your parents?"

Viola replied, "I come from Messaline. Sebastian was my father's name. It was also my brother's name. He drowned and now has a watery tomb. If spirits can take on the appearance and the clothing of the deceased, you have come here to frighten us."

"I have a soul, indeed, but my soul is still clad with the body that I received while I was still in my mother's womb. If you were a woman instead of a man, since everything but that says that you are my sister, I would hug you and let my tears fall upon your cheek, and say to you, 'Welcome,

drowned Viola! Welcome, and welcome again!”

Viola said, “My father had a mole upon his brow.”

“And so did my father.”

Viola said, “My father died on the day when Viola turned thirteen years old.”

“I remember well the day my father died. He did indeed die on the day that my sister turned thirteen years old.”

Viola said, “If nothing else prevents our mutual happiness at finding each other except these deceptive male clothes that I have used to disguise myself, do not hug me until each circumstance of place, time, and fortune fit together and prove that I am Viola. To confirm that I am Viola, I will take you to a sea captain in this town. In his house, he has my female clothing. He helped save my life so that I survived to serve Duke Orsino. Ever since the shipwreck, I have served as a messenger between Orsino and Olivia.”

Sebastian said to Olivia, “So this is how you mistook me for my sister, whom you did not know to be a woman. But nature corrected that mistake and turned it to your advantage. By loving my sister, you were loving someone like me. If the mistake had not been corrected, you would have married a maiden. Nevertheless, you were not deceived. You have married both a maiden and a man. I am a man, but I am also like a maiden — I am a virgin.”

Olivia, of course, was shocked by the discovery that she had married someone whom she had just met.

Orsino said to her, “Don’t worry. This young man — Sebastian — is of noble blood. You have not married a commoner.”

He added, “If all these things are true, and they seem to be, since Sebastian and Cesario — as I call her — are mirror

images of each other, then I also shall benefit from this most fortunate shipwreck.”

He said to Viola, “Disguised as a young man, you have said to me a thousand times that you never would love a woman as much as you love me.”

“All those sayings I will swear again,” Viola said. “They are as true as the fact that the Sun shines on the Earth and separates day from night.”

Orsino said to her, “Give me your hand.”

They held hands.

He said to her, “Let me see you dressed in your female clothing.”

Viola replied, “The captain who brought me safely to shore has my female clothing, but he is now in jail because of a complaint brought against him by Malvolio, who is a gentleman and a servant to Olivia.”

Olivia said, “Malvolio shall set the sea captain free.”

She ordered a servant, “Go and get him.”

Then she said, “But wait. I remember now that people say that he, poor gentleman, has become insane.”

Feste and Fabian now walked up to the group of people.

Olivia said, “My own distractions completely made me forget about him.”

She asked Feste, “How is Malvolio?”

“He is keeping off Beelzebub as well as a man in his condition may do. I have in my hand a letter that he wrote to you. I should have given it to you this morning, but the letters of a madman are not gospel truth and so it does not

matter much when they are delivered.”

Olivia ordered, “Open the letter, and read it out loud.”

Feste said, “When a fool reads the words of a madman, there is much to be learned.”

He imitated the voice of a madman as he read, “*By the Lord, madam —*”

“What are you doing? Why are you reading the letter like that? Are you yourself mad?”

“No,” Feste answered, “but I am reading madness. If you want me to read the letter out loud as it ought to be read, you must allow me to read it in the voice of a madman. It must be a dramatic reading.”

She told him, “Read it as a man who has his right wits would read it.”

“I am doing that,” Feste said, “but the right wits of a madman are different from the right wits of a sane man. Therefore, perpend and be attentive, and listen.”

For once, Feste had misjudged his audience. Olivia respected Malvolio, and she was angry at Feste.

Olivia told Fabian, “You read the letter out loud.”

Feste gave Fabian the letter.

Using his normal voice, but louder, Fabian read, “*By the Lord, madam, you wrong me, and the world shall know it. Although you have put me into a dark room and given your drunken uncle rule over me, yet I have the benefit of my senses as well as your ladyship has. I have your own letter that induced me to act as I did. This letter will justify my actions and show that you have behaved shamefully. Think about me as you please. As your steward, I should be more polite, but I am aggrieved. THE MADLY USED*

MALVOLIO.”

Even when he thought that he had a grievance against Olivia, Malvolio was conscious of his duty and aware when he was not living up to his own standards.

“Did he write this?” Olivia asked Feste.

“Yes, madam.”

Orsino said, “This letter does not sound as if it were written by a madman.”

Olivia ordered, “Fabian, release Malvolio from the dark room and bring him here.”

He left to go and get Malvolio.

Olivia said to Orsino, “My lord, I hope that after you think these things over that you will like to have me as a sister-in-law instead of as a wife. If you agree, on the same day two weddings will be held that will make us in-laws. We will have the weddings here at my house and at my expense.”

Orsino replied, “I am happy to accept your offer.”

He said to Viola, “I release you from having to do service to me. Because you have done me service for so long, which was unfeminine and beneath your soft and tender breeding, and since you have called me master for so long, here is my hand.”

Viola held it.

Orsino continued, “You shall be my wife.”

Olivia said, “And you shall be my sister-in-law!”

Fabian arrived, leading Malvolio.

Orsino asked, “Is this the supposed madman?”

“Yes, my lord,” Olivia replied. “This is he.”

She asked, “How are you, Malvolio? What has happened?”

He replied, “Madam, you have done me wrong — outrageous wrong.”

“Have I, Malvolio?” Olivia said. “No.”

“Lady, you have. Please, read this letter I have.”

He handed it to Olivia, who began reading it.

“You cannot possibly deny that this is your handwriting. Try to write differently from it, in handwriting or in choice of words. Try to say that this is not the seal with which you stamp your letters. Try to say that this is not your style. You cannot deny any of these things. Therefore, admit that you wrote that letter and explain honestly and sincerely to me why you wrote so clearly that I was in your favor, why you wrote that I should smile and put on cross-gartered yellow stockings, why you wrote that I should frown upon Sir Toby and people lower in social status than I am, and why, after I obediently followed all your instructions and hoped for your love, you allowed me to be locked in a dark prison, visited by the priest, and made the most notorious fool and sucker who was ever tricked. Tell me why.”

“I am sorry, Malvolio,” Olivia said, “but this is not my handwriting, although I confess that it is much like my own. But unquestionably this is Maria’s handwriting. And now I remember that it was Maria who first told me that you were mad. Afterward, you came in smiling and you were dressed in such a way and you acted in such ways that this letter told you to do. Please, do not be so upset. This practical joke badly fooled you, but when we know the motivations and the perpetrators of this joke, you will be the plaintiff and the judge in your own case. You will pass judgment and give any sentences.”

Fabian, who did not want Olivia angry at him, said to her, “Good madam, hear me speak, and let no quarrel or brawl spoil the pleasure of this present hour and the planning of two marriages, which has amazed me. In hope that present pleasure shall not be ruined, very freely I confess that I and Toby set up this practical joke to make a fool of Malvolio because we have seen some arrogant and discourteous qualities in him. Maria wrote the letter at Sir Toby’s great insistence. Because of that, he has married her. How the practical joke played out with entertaining mischievousness should lead to laughter rather than revenge if we consider the injuries that both sides — Malvolio and us — have endured.”

Not only had Malvolio been made a fool, but now he had to listen to Fabian say that the practical joke was justified and something that should cause laughter.

Olivia said to Malvolio, “Poor fellow, how have they exposed you to ridicule!”

Feste said to Malvolio, “Why, ‘Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrown upon them.’ I was one, sir, in this interlude; I was one Sir Topas, sir; but that doesn’t matter. ‘By the Lord, fool, I am not mad.’ But do you remember what you said earlier? ‘I marvel that your ladyship takes delight in such an uninspired rascal. Unless you laugh and encourage him to make jokes, he is gagged and unable to say anything.’ The wheel of fortune turns and brings revenge.”

Malvolio said calmly and coldly to Fabian, “I’ll be revenged —”

Fabian’s face fell.

Malvolio turned and faced Feste and finished, “— on the whole pack of you.”

Feste's face fell.

Angry but unbroken, Malvolio then bowed to Olivia and went inside her house.

Olivia had not been impressed by Fabian's and Feste's words. She said, "Malvolio has been most outrageously abused." She made it clear that she was angry.

Orsino said to a couple of his servants, "Pursue him and entreat him to make peace."

Olivia shook her head at Orsino. Malvolio needed to be alone for a while.

Orsino raised his hand in a Stop gesture, and the servants who had started to go after Malvolio stopped.

Olivia thought, *It is better to talk to Malvolio after he has recovered somewhat from his ordeal.*

Orsino said to Olivia, "Malvolio has not told us about the sea captain yet. When we have learned that part of the story and when the proper time has come, we shall hold our two weddings. In the meantime, sweet sister-in-law, we will stay here and talk."

He added, "Cesario, come; for so I shall call you while you are dressed as a man. When you dress in female clothing and are seen, then you will be my wife and my Queen."

Everyone went into Olivia's house except for Feste, who was once again in trouble with Olivia and who sang this song:

"When that I was only a little tiny boy,

"With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,

"A foolish thing was but a toy,

*“For the rain it raineth every day.
“But when I came to man’s estate,
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
“’Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,
“For the rain it raineth every day.
“But when I came — alas! — to take a wife,
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
“By swaggering could I never thrive,
“For the rain it raineth every day.
“But when I came unto my beds,
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
“With toss-pots [sots] still had drunken heads,
“For the rain it raineth every day.
“A great while ago the world was begun,
“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
“But that’s all one, our story is done,
“And we’ll strive to please you every day.”*

And such is life for many fools. We are born, become children, and have mischievous deeds dismissed as trifles, and then we reach maturity and go from underachievement to underachievement. Possible opportunities disappear and both important and “important” people often shut their gates against us because they think that we are knaves or thieves, and we often grow to regret either having a spouse or not having a spouse. After boasting to ourselves about the great things we will do, we often find ourselves not able

to do them. We grow older, we find that life grows tougher, we have thoughts that keep us awake at night, and the preferred entertainment of many people, perhaps including ourselves, is getting drunk. Our stories are just some more such stories of very many such stories in the history of the world. As with fools, so with Malvolio — and authors. I hope that you have enjoyed this book and that you will read another of my retellings of Shakespeare. At least the weather never goes away although readers often do. But I will keep on writing.

**Afterword: Who is the Proudest and Most Evil
Character in *Twelfth Night*? (*Twelfth Night*)**

Note: This brief essay includes but enlarges on some material found above in my retelling of the play.

When Maria writes a letter to fool Malvolio into making an ass of himself, she includes the letters M, O, A, I. Malvolio realizes that this is a puzzle, and he tries to solve the puzzle. He believes that the letters refer to himself because all of the letters are in his name.

Malvolio did not correctly solve the puzzle of M, O, A, I. True enough. But what is the correct solution to the puzzle? What if M, O, A, and I are — in part — an anagram? We certainly have seen Malvolio and the people spying on him when he finds the letter in Olivia's garden talk about rearranging the letters. Malvolio tells us that A should go after M, and Fabian mentions O and end. What do we get when we rearrange the letters and put I at the beginning? I M A O. I am A and O. The O goes at the end, and the end is Omega. If the end is Omega, what is the beginning? The beginning is Alpha. Therefore, I am Alpha and Omega. This is Revelation 22:13 (King James Bible): "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*" These are words — and letters — that apply to God, but Malvolio is applying them to himself. Revelation is the last book of the Bible. What is the first book of the Bible? Genesis. What is the most important part of Genesis? The Fall. The serpent tempted Eve to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil: "*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*" (Genesis 3:5, King James Bible). Eve — and Adam — ate the fruit, committing the sin of pride. They placed themselves before God and disobeyed the command of God. The sin of pride

is regarding oneself as the center of the universe, as being more important than anything or anybody else. Pride is a deadly sin, and it is the foundation of the other deadly sins:

1) Pride.

I am the center of the universe, and I am better than other people. Quite simply, I am more important than other people.

2) Envy.

I am the center of the universe, so I ought to have it all, and if you have something I want, I envy you.

3) Wrath.

Because I am the center of the universe, everything ought to go my way, and when it does not, I get angry.

4) Sloth.

I am the center of the universe, so I don't have to work at something. Either other people can do my work for me, or they can give me credit for work I have not done because if I had done the work, I would have done it excellently.

5) Avariciousness and Prodigality.

I am the center of the universe, so I deserve to have what I want. If I want money, I get money and never spend it, or if I want the things that money can buy, then I spend every dime I can make or borrow to get what I want. Either way, I deserve to have what I want.

6) Gluttony.

I am the center of the universe, so I deserve these two extra pieces of pie every night. This is my reward to myself for being so fabulous.

7) Lust.

I am the center of the universe, so my needs take precedence over the needs of everyone else. If I want to get laid, it's OK if I lie to get someone in bed and never call in the days and weeks afterward. My sexual pleasure is more important than the hurt of someone who realizes that he or she has been used.

Malvolio's name is Mal Volio — "I wish badly." Proud people wish badly.

The rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden led to the first sin committed by human beings. Previously, an angel had committed the first sin by supernatural beings.

That proud supernatural being is Lucifer, who put himself before God and rebelled against him. Because of this sin, Lucifer is condemned to spend eternity shackled in the darkness of Hell. Adam and Eve committed the original sin of human beings. Lucifer committed the original sin of supernatural beings.

If Malvolio were a better person, he would solve the puzzle of I M A O correctly and he would realize that he is guilty of the sin of pride. He wants to marry Olivia, but he wants to marry her because doing so will improve his position in society. He does not want to marry Olivia because he can make her happy. He loves Olivia's social standing and her wealth.

Malvolio regards himself as being more important than Olivia: I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia because doing so will make ME happy. I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia for her social standing and money. I am the center of the universe, and I ought to marry Olivia although I do not love her.

If Malvolio were a more intelligent person, he would

realize that he is on the verge of a fall just like Adam and Eve were when the serpent tempted them in the Garden of Eden or like Lucifer when he rebelled against God.

Malvolio is not morally good enough or intelligent enough to correctly solve Maria's puzzle, and he believes the letter that Maria wrote and he will be punished for believing it just like Lucifer was punished. However, the people judging him and punishing him are not God.

There are important differences in Malvolio's sin and the sin of Adam and Eve and of Lucifer:

1) Adam and Eve actually ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and Lucifer actually led a rebellion of some angels against God. Malvolio wants to marry Olivia although he does not love her — he does respect her — because it will improve his social status. However, he does not actually marry Olivia. Motive is important in judging, but so are consequences.

2) God judges Adam and Eve and Lucifer. Who judges Malvolio? Mainly Maria and Sir Toby. We do have evidence that Malvolio is proud from Olivia, who tries to make peace between Malvolio and Feste after Malvolio criticizes Feste after he returns from a long absence. She tells Malvolio that he is "sick of [from] self-love." But Olivia is not judging Malvolio in order to punish him. She is trying to make peace between Malvolio and Feste.

3) God judges sinners, and God punishes them. God gives people free will, and he judges them after they die and then either rewards or punishes them. If a sinful human being repents before dying, even with his or her last breath, that person will be rewarded with Paradise. Maria and Sir Toby judge Malvolio and punish him by treating him as if he were insane.

Maria writes M, O, A, I in her letter, but to whom do those

letters most apply? Malvolio, or Maria? They apply to Maria more than they apply to Malvolio.

Maria thinks this: I am the center of the universe, and therefore I can judge and sentence Malvolio however I see fit. I am greater than God because I am able to judge Malvolio now instead of giving him a chance to repent before his death.

As I see it, Maria and Sir Toby are the most evil characters in the play. What punishment do they sentence Malvolio to undergo? They sentence Malvolio to be bound and placed in a room that is as dark as Hell. (In actual performance, the binding (at least of hands) apparently does not take place, as we know because Malvolio is able to write a letter to Olivia. Also, it allows actors more freedom of movement.) How is Lucifer punished? He is bound and placed in Hell, which is in eternal darkness. Only God can justly judge a person and justly give such a punishment.

Maria is the person most responsible for judging Malvolio. Sir Toby participates in the fooling of Malvolio, but he lacks a good brain. Maria is more intelligent than Sir Toby, who is more intelligent than Sir Andrew, who allows himself to be manipulated by Sir Toby. Fabian and Feste play roles in the fooling of Malvolio, but they at least admit to Olivia the roles that they played. Their 'confessions' are problematic, however, as Fabian wants to avoid getting in trouble with Olivia and Feste states that one reason for him to be involved in the practical joke is revenge for the time that Malvolio criticized him in front of Olivia.

What is Malvolio's real sin?

Malvolio's sin is wanting to marry Olivia although his reason is to advance his social standing — we have no indication that Malvolio feels romantic love for her. (Malvolio also thanks Jove, not God, for what he thinks is

his good fortune. Wanting to marry someone simply in order to improve one's social standing is unChristian.)

Some of Malvolio's 'sins' are not sins. Sir Toby is angry at Malvolio for wanting to stop the late-night party, but Malvolio works for Olivia and his job as steward is to help run the household and to carry out her orders, which include trying to keep Sir Toby from partying — his partying keeps her from sleeping. Sir Toby shows pride because he thinks that a mere servant such as Malvolio ought not to tell him — a knight! — not to party so much.

Malvolio also lacks diplomacy. He criticizes Feste in front of Olivia. If he were more intelligent, he would realize that Olivia enjoys Feste's foolery and therefore Feste is providing good value for his room and board and whatever stipend he may get.

Malvolio appears to be a very competent steward and may be a bit of a workaholic. He walks in Olivia's garden, which ought to be a source of pleasure and entertainment, but he does such things as practice his courtly gestures, something that would make him a better steward.

Many of Malvolio's faults are not sins. We think that Feste is a fine fool and that Malvolio is missing out by not appreciating his foolery. We think that there is a time for work and a time for play, but Malvolio appears not to take much time to play — the most fun he has in the play is imagining what he would do if he and Olivia were married. One thing that he would do is to rebuke Sir Toby — if anyone ever needed to be rebuked, that person is Sir Toby.

When it comes to fun, everyone needs to have some fun, but the amount that is appropriate varies with age. Young children should spend most of their free time playing. College students should spend a lot of time studying but still have time for fun. Older people such as Malvolio —

and Sir Toby — definitely should have fun, but they should also be productive. For workers such as Malvolio, chances are that they have little time for fun. Sir Toby basically sponges off his niece and suckers such as Sir Andrew; he contributes little to anyone. Feste's job is providing fun for others, and that is a difficult job indeed.

Can a person judge whether another person is really having fun? You may attend a play that you enjoy. You notice a critic who is not laughing with the audience, but who is watching the play intently. You think that the play will receive a mediocre review at best, but the next day you read the critic's review and find out that he or she was having the time of his or her life. (My idea of a good time is sitting on the couch and reading a good book — Sir Toby would probably walk in on me and ask, "Where are the cakes and ale?")

One fault that Malvolio has is an inability to appreciate satire. That is one reason he criticizes Feste. If an inability to appreciate good and real satire — some so-called "satire" is not satire — were a sin, however, many people we consider to be good would go to Hell.

Malvolio does show one sin — understandably — at the end of the play: anger. He vows to get revenge "on the whole pack of you." We are not told to whom he says it, but my guess is to Fabian and Feste, who have confessed their part in the cruel practical joke but who have not expressed remorse for what they did — remorse is an important part of religious confession. Malvolio's anger is a direct result of the cruel practical joke and its aftermath. By thinking up and performing the practical joke, Maria has given Malvolio an opportunity to sin. We are horrified that Lady Macbeth leads her husband to sin. Maria's sin is not as bad as that of Lady Macbeth's because a steward, even if he were to turn evil, cannot cause as much damage

as a Thane or a King.

Malvolio has sinned in his desire to marry Olivia simply in order to improve his social standing — we have no evidence that he loves Olivia. He does not repent that sin. We can note that Lucifer also does not repent his sin. None of the sinners in Dante's *Inferno* repent. But Malvolio is not yet dead, and he has time to repent.

Anyone who sees *Twelfth Night* thinks that Malvolio is treated way too harshly for whatever faults he has. Shakespeare understood human nature, and he had to have known that this is the way that we would feel. Therefore, this is the feeling that he wanted us to have: He wanted us to sympathize with Malvolio. Usually, Malvolio is seen as the bad guy in the play, but I think that, despite Malvolio's faults, Sir Toby and Maria are much more evil than Malvolio, with Maria being the most evil — and the proudest — of all.

Perhaps actors are not playing Malvolio correctly if they cry and scream when Malvolio is locked in the dark room. Perhaps he maintains his dignity while he is in the dark room. If he did, that would prevent the cringing that the audience feels when the actor playing Malvolio cries and suffers. Audiences, in my opinion, should feel sympathy for Malvolio when he is imprisoned, but they should not cringe. (When the actor playing Malvolio cries and screams, I feel that the actor is saying, "Hey, everybody! Look at me! I'm acting!") And although Malvolio is angry, perhaps when he says at the end of the play that he will be revenged on "the whole pack of you," perhaps he says that only to Feste and Fabian — the other members of the pack are Sir Toby and Maria, who are not present. Perhaps he says this calmly and coldly and not furiously. His anger may be a controlled anger. What happens to Malvolio after the end of the play? We don't know, but one possibility is

that he goes to his room in Olivia's house, freshens up, and then tries to decide on the proper punishments for those who mistreated him. Olivia told him that he would be prosecutor and judge. No doubt he found them guilty and as judge he must decide on the proper punishments: ones that are severe enough to satisfy him but not so severe that Olivia changes her mind about letting him be judge.

By the way, in Dante's *Inferno*, we find out what is at the center of the universe. Dante believed that the Earth was at the center of the universe. The Inferno, aka Hell, goes all the way down to the center of the Earth, which is where Lucifer is imprisoned. Dante and his guide, Virgil, need to travel up to the Earth's surface on the other side of the entrance of Hell so that they can reach the Island of Purgatory, so they climb down Lucifer's body to reach a passageway leading to Purgatory. At Lucifer's midpoint, they turn around and reverse direction because they have reached the center of the Earth and are no longer going down but are heading up again. What is the exact center of the universe? It is located in Lucifer's rectum.

One final point: All of sin is based on pride, and all of us have sinned. All of us have at one time or another considered ourselves to be the center of the universe.

Recommended Reading

Inge Leimberg, "'M.O.A.I.' Trying to Share the Joke in *Twelfth Night* 2.5 (A Critical Hypothesis)." *Connotations* 1.1 (1991): 78-95. Web.

Chapter XII: THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*)

Duke of Milan, *father to Silvia.*

Valentine, Proteus, *the two gentlemen of Verona.*

Antonio, *father to Proteus.*

Thurio, *a foolish rival to Valentine.*

Eglamour, *agent for Silvia in her escape.*

Host, *at whose establishment Julia lodges in Milan.*

Outlaws, *with Valentine.*

Speed, *a quick-witted young page to Valentine.*

Launce, *a servant to Proteus.*

Panthino, *a servant to Antonio.*

Julia, *who loves Proteus.*

Silvia, *who loves Valentine.*

Lucetta, *a waiting-woman to Julia.*

Servants, Musicians.

Crab, *dog to Launce.*

Scene: Verona; Milan; and a forest.

The name VALENTINE is associated with true love.

PROTEUS was a sea-god who was a shape-shifter. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus captures PROTEUS and holds on to him although he changes into many shapes. PROTEUS then gives Odysseus the information he asks

for. PROTEUS is a name that is associated with fickleness
in love.

CHAPTER 1 (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*)

— 1.1 —

In Verona, Valentine and Proteus were talking together. They were friends, but they would be separated because Valentine was leaving Verona to travel to Milan. Proteus was staying in Verona because he had fallen in love with Julia and wanted to be with her.

“Stop trying to persuade me to stay in Verona, my lovesick friend Proteus,” Valentine said. “Home-staying youth always have homely — simple and dull — wits. If it were not the case that your affectionate love chains your tender and youthful days to the sweet glances of your honored love, I would rather have your company as I see the wonders of the world abroad than for you to live dully and like a sluggard at home and wear out your youth with aimless idleness. But since you are in love, love continually and thrive therein, just like I will when I begin to love.”

“Will you be gone? Do you still intend to travel?” Proteus asked. “Sweet Valentine, *adieu!* Think about your Proteus, when you happen to see some rare and noteworthy object during your travel. Wish that I could partake in your happiness when you meet with good fortune, and when you are in danger, if ever danger comes to you, commend your grievance to my holy prayers, for I will be your beadsman, Valentine. Like a beadsman, I will pray for you.”

A beadsman is paid to pray for another person. The beadsman prays on a Bible.

“Will you pray on a love-book for my success?” Valentine asked. “Will you pray on a book of love stories?”

“Upon some book I love, I will pray for you.”

“Some book you love? That will be a book that tells some shallow story of deep love — for example, how young Leander crossed the Hellespont.”

Leander was a young man who loved a woman named Hero. He was accustomed to swim across the Hellespont each night so that he could be with her.

“That’s a deep story of a deeper love,” Proteus said. “For he was more than over shoes in love.”

Yes, Leander was deeply immersed in love — he was over his shoes in love. He was also deeply immersed in water. One night when he was swimming in the Hellespont to visit Hero, he drowned.

“Yes, that is true, and what I said about you and love is true,” Valentine said. “You yourself are over boots in love, and yet you have never swum the Hellespont.”

“Over the boots? No, do not give me the boots.”

Proteus was referring to a game played in Warwickshire; the loser had his buttocks slapped with a pair of boots. The expression “Don’t give me the boots” came to mean “Don’t make me a laughingstock.”

“No, I will not give you the boots,” Valentine said, “for it will not boot — profit — you.”

“What do you mean by ‘it’?”

“By ‘it,’ I mean your being in love. When you are in love, your groans buy you scorn. When you are in love, heart-sore sighs buy you disdainful looks. When you are in love, twenty wakeful, weary, tedious nights buy you one fading moment’s mirth. If with luck you win your love, perhaps what you win will be unlucky. If you fail to win your love, then you have won only a grievous labor — sorrow and work. Whatever the outcome, this is all you get:

Intelligence buys foolishness, or else foolishness vanquishes intelligence.”

“So, by your speech and based on circumstantial evidence, I guess that you are calling me a fool,” Proteus said.

“So, because of your circumstances and your situation, I fear you’ll prove to be a fool,” Valentine said.

“It is Love you have an argument with,” Proteus said. “I am not Love.”

Love is the winged and blindfolded god Cupid, son of Venus.

“Love is your master, for he masters you,” Valentine replied. “And a man who is in that way yoked by a fool, I think, should not be recorded in the history books as a wise man.”

“Yet writers say, just like the eating caterpillar dwells in the sweetest bud, so eating love dwells in the finest wits of all,” Proteus said.

“And writers say, just like the most promising bud is eaten by the caterpillar before the bud blooms, the young and tender wit is turned to foolishness by love. The young and tender wit is withered in the bud and loses its freshness and vitality even in the springtime. It also loses all the fair effects of future hopes.

“But why am I wasting time to give advice to you, who are a worshipper of foolish desire?”

“Once more *adieu!* My father is at the harbor waiting for me. He wants to see me set out on my voyage.”

“And thither I will accompany you, Valentine.”

“Sweet Proteus, no; let us now take our leave of each other. Send letters to me in Milan and let me hear from you about

your fortunes — good or bad — in love, and tell me what other news happens here while I, your friend, am absent. Likewise, I will send letters to you here in Verona.”

“May all happiness happen to you in Milan!” Proteus said.

“And may you experience all happiness here at home!” Valentine said. “And so, farewell.”

They hugged, and then Valentine set off to walk to the harbor.

Alone, Proteus said, “He hunts honor, and I hunt love. He leaves his friends to dignify and honor them more by acquiring a better reputation for himself in the world, while I leave myself, my friends and all else, for love.

“You, Julia, have metamorphosed me. You have made me neglect my studies, waste my time, war against good advice, and value the world at nothing. You have made my intelligence weak because I keep musing about you, and you have made my heart sick because I keep thinking about you.”

Speed, who was Valentine’s quick-witted servant, walked over to Proteus, for whom he had delivered a letter and from whom he hoped to receive a large tip — certainly more than sixpence.

“Sir Proteus, may God save you!” Speed said. “Have you seen my master, Valentine?”

“Just now he departed from here to get on board ship and travel to Milan.”

“Twenty to one then the ship has sailed already, and I have played the sheep in losing him.”

“Indeed, a sheep very often strays, if the shepherd is away for a while.”

“You conclude that my master is a shepherd, then, and I am a sheep?” Speed asked.

“I do.”

“Why then, my horns are his horns, whether I wake or sleep.”

Sheep have horns, and cuckolds — men with unfaithful wives — are said to have horns. Since neither Valentine nor Speed was married, Speed was saying that he and Valentine would in the future have horns.

Speed was also alluding to a nursery rhyme:

*Little Boy Blue,
Come blow your horn,
The sheep's in the meadow,
The cow's in the corn;
But where is the boy
Who looks after the sheep?
He's under a haystack,
He's fast asleep.
Will you wake him?
Oh no, not I,
For if I do
He will surely cry.*

Proteus said, “That is a silly answer and well suited to a sheep.”

“This proves then that I am still a sheep?”

“That is true, and it proves that your master is a shepherd.”

“No,” Speed said. “I can make an argument that this is not true.”

“Things shall go poorly for me unless I can prove that the statement is true by another argument,” Proteus said.

“The shepherd seeks the sheep, and the sheep does not seek the shepherd,” Speed said, “but I seek my master, and my master does not seek me; therefore, I am no sheep.”

“The sheep follows the shepherd in order to get fodder,” Proteus counter-argued. The shepherd does not follow the sheep in order to get food. You follow your master in order to get wages; your master does not follow you in order to get wages; and therefore you are a sheep.”

“Such another proof will make me cry ‘baa,’” Speed said. “Or should I cry ‘bah’?”

“Listen,” Proteus said. “Did you give my letter to Julia?”

“Yes sir,” Speed said. “I, a lost mutton, gave your letter to her, who is a laced mutton, and she, a laced mutton, gave me, a lost mutton, nothing for my labor.”

A mutton is a woman — often a prostitute. A laced mutton is a woman wearing fancy clothing.

“Here’s too small a pasture for such a store of muttons,” Proteus said.

“If the ground is overcharged — overfull — with mutton, you had best stick her.”

To stick a mutton could mean to kill a sheep by stabbing it with a knife, or it could mean to have sex with a mutton — a woman.

“No, when you say that, you go astray, and it would be best

for me to pound you,” Proteus said.

He thought, *Because of what you just said, I should give you a beating — I should use my fists to pound you.*

Speed had run an errand for Proteus, and he wanted a good tip for running the errand. He preferred to get the tip quickly — before answering a lot of questions. The information he had to give to Proteus was not what Proteus wanted to hear and would result in either a small tip or no tip.

“A pound?” Speed said. “No, a pound is too much money to pay me for running this errand. “Less than a pound shall be a good tip for me for carrying your letter.”

Speed wanted a good tip, but he knew better than to be greedy. He knew that there was no way he would receive a pound as a tip from Proteus.

“You mistake my meaning,” Proteus said, setting up another pun. “I mean that I should impound you — I should put you in a pinfold, an enclosure — a pound — for stray animals.”

“You have gone from a pound, which is a good tip, to a pin, which is a worthless tip,” Speed said. “Fold it over and over, and it is threefold too little for carrying a letter to your lover.”

Again, Speed was punning. A pound — paper money — can be folded, but a fold is also an enclosure for sheep.

“What did she say to you when you delivered my letter to her?” Proteus asked.

Speed nodded.

Proteus gave Speed a questioning look, and Speed said, “Ay.”

“Nod, followed by ‘ay’ — why, that’s ‘noddy,’” Proteus said. “A noddy is a fool.”

“You mistook my meaning, sir,” Speed said. “I indicated that she nodded, and you asked me if she nodded, and I said, ‘Ay.’”

“And set together they make nod-ay, aka noddy.”

“Now that you have taken the pains to set it together, take the word for your pains,” Speed said. “You are a noddy.”

“No, no; you shall have the word ‘noddy’ as payment for your pains in bearing the letter,” Proteus said.

“Well, I see that I must be obliged to bear with you,” Speed said.

One meaning of “to bear with” is “to put up with.”

“Why, sir, how do you bear with me?”

“I really did bear the letter very orderly; I have followed your orders, and yet I have nothing but the word ‘noddy’ for my pains.”

“Curse me, but you have a quick wit,” Proteus said.

“And yet it cannot overtake your slow purse.”

“Come, come, open up and tell me what I want to know quickly. What did she say?”

“Open your purse so that the money and the information you want may be both at once quickly delivered.”

Proteus gave Speed a sixpence — a smaller tip than Speed was hoping for — and said, “Well, sir, this is for your pains. What did she say?”

“Truly, sir, I think you’ll hardly win her.”

“Why, could you perceive so much from her?”

“Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her; no, not so much as a ducat for delivering your letter,” Speed said.

Actually, he could not perceive anything at all from Julia because he had not seen her; he had given the letter to Lucetta, Julia’s waiting-woman. Because Speed was annoyed with Proteus, he was making things up.

“All I was looking for from her was a tip, and I could not perceive one. Because she was so hard to me who brought her your letter, which revealed what is on your mind, I fear she’ll prove to be as hard to you when you talk to her in person. Give her no gift but stones because she’s as hard as steel.”

Stones can be precious jewels — or family jewels.

“What did she say?” Proteus asked. “Nothing?”

“No, not so much as ‘Take this for your pains,’” Speed said. “I can testify about how you tip. I thank you because you have given me a testern, a sixpence, and therefore you have testerned me. In response to such a tip, I shall let you hereafter carry your own letters and deliver them yourself. And so, sir, I’ll leave now and give my master your greetings.”

“Go, go, be gone, and save your ship from shipwreck,” Proteus said. “The ship cannot wreck and perish with you onboard because you are destined to die a drier death on shore. You are destined to hang and so you shall never be drowned.”

Speed exited.

Alone, Proteus said to himself, “I must use a better messenger than Speed. I fear my Julia will not willingly accept my letters when they are delivered by such a

worthless postman.”

— 1.2 —

In the garden of Julia’s home in Verona, Julia and her waiting-woman, Lucetta, were talking. The name “Lucetta” is a diminutive of “Lucy.”

Julia said, “Lucetta, now we are alone, tell me whether you would advise me to fall in love.”

“Yes, I would advise you to fall in love, madam, as long as you do not heedlessly stumble.”

The stumble could be a sexual indiscretion.

“Of all the fair company of gentlemen who every day encounter me and parley — talk to — me, in your opinion which is the worthiest man to love?”

“If it will please you to repeat their names, I’ll tell you what I think about them according to my shallow, simple skill,” Lucetta replied.

“What do you think of the handsome Sir Eglamour?”

“I think of him as a knight well-spoken, neat and fine and something of a dandy; however, if I were you, he never should be mine.”

“What do you think of the rich Mercatio?”

“I think well of his wealth, but he himself is so-so.”

“What do you think of the well-born Proteus?”

“Lord, Lord!” Lucetta said. “See what folly reigns in us!”

“What!” Julia said. “What is the meaning of your strong emotion when you hear his name?”

“I beg your pardon, dear madam. It is a surpassing shame

that I, unworthy as I am, should pass judgment like this on loving and amorous gentlemen.”

“Why not pass judgment on Proteus, as you have on all the rest?”

“Then this is my opinion,” Lucetta said. “Of many good gentlemen, I think him best.”

“Why do you think so? What is your reason?”

“I have no other reason, but only a woman’s reason; I think him so because I think him so,” Lucetta said. “‘Because’ is a woman’s reason.”

“And would you have me cast my love on him?”

“Yes, if you thought your love not cast away.”

“Why, he, of all the rest, has never told me he loves me,” Julia said.

“Yet he, of all the rest, I think, best loves you,” Lucetta said.

“His lack of speaking to me shows that his love for me is only small.”

“Fire that’s most closely confined burns most of all.”

“They do not love who do not show their love.”

“To the contrary, they love least who let other men know their love.”

“I wish I knew what Proteus was thinking,” Julia said.

Lucetta handed her a letter and said, “Read this letter, madam.”

Julia read out loud, “‘*To Julia,*’ and then she said, “Tell me, from whom did this letter come?”

“The contents will show that,” Lucetta replied.

“Tell me, who gave it to you?”

“Speed, Valentine’s page, gave it to me, and the letter was written, I think, by Proteus. Speed would have given the letter to you; but I, running into him, took it and said that I would give it to you. Pardon me for doing so, please.”

“Now, by my modesty, you are a good go-between! Do you dare to presume to harbor wanton and lascivious lines of writing? Do you dare to whisper and conspire against my youth? Now, trust me, a go-between is a position of great worth and you are an officer fit for the position. There, take the letter and see that it is returned. If you do not, then leave and return no more into my sight.”

“To plead for love deserves more recompense than to plead for hate deserves,” Lucetta said, accepting the letter that Julia handed to her.

“Will you leave?”

“Yes, I will, so that you can think things over.”

Carrying the letter, Lucetta exited.

Alone, Julia said to herself, “And yet I wish I had looked at and read the letter. It would be a shame to call Lucetta back again and ask her to do something — hand me the letter — for which I scolded her.

“What a fool she is! She knows that I am a young, unmarried woman and so she should have forced me to read the letter from a male admirer. And yet she did not. Doesn’t she realize that unmarried women, in modesty, say ‘no’ to reading a love letter — and yet they want the deliverer of the love letter to interpret that ‘no’ as meaning ‘yes’?”

“How wayward is this foolish love that, like an irritable baby, will scratch the nurse and soon all humbled will kiss the rod and accept its punishment!

“How churlishly I scolded Lucetta away from here, when actually I want her to be here! I have taught my brow to frown angrily when inward joy makes my heart smile!

“My penance is to call Lucetta back and ask forgiveness for my past folly.”

She called, “Lucetta! Come here!”

Carrying the letter, Lucetta returned and asked, “What does your ladyship want?”

“Is it almost dinnertime?” Julia asked.

“I wish it were, so that you might kill your stomach on your meat and not upon your maid.”

In this society, the stomach was regarded as the site both of hunger and of anger. Lucetta wanted Julia to kill her stomach on food — that would kill her hunger. This would be preferable to killing her stomach on her maid — relieving her anger by directing it at Lucetta.

Lucetta dropped the letter on purpose so that Julia would notice it. Lucetta then picked up the letter.

“What is it that you picked up so gingerly?” Julia asked.

“Nothing.”

“Why did you stoop, then?”

“To pick a letter up that I let fall.”

“And is that letter nothing?”

“Nothing concerning me,” Lucetta said.

“Then let it lie for those whom it concerns,” Julia said.

Deliberately mistaking the word “lie” (“remain”) to mean “tell a falsehood,” Lucetta replied, “Madam, it will not lie where it concerns unless it has a false interpreter.”

She meant that the words in the love letter were true — Proteus did love Julia.

“Some love of yours has written to you in rhyme,” Julia said, pretending that the letter was a love letter to Lucetta.

Lucetta and Julia then began to make puns on musical terms.

“So that I can sing it to a tune, madam, give me a note,” Lucetta said. “Your ladyship can set.”

The word “note” could mean “a short document” as well as a note of music, and the word “set” could mean “set down in writing” as well as “set to music.”

Julia replied, “Set as little store by such toys as may be possible. Best sing it to the tune of ‘Light of Love.’”

Lightness in love could mean promiscuity.

“It is too heavy — too serious and important — for so light — so trivial — a tune.”

“Heavy! It likely has some burden then?”

The word “burden” meant “a load” as well as “an undersong or bass.” During lovemaking in the missionary position, the woman bears the burden of the man’s weight.

“Yes,” Lucetta said, “and it would be melodious if you would sing it.”

“Why don’t you sing it?”

“I cannot reach so high,” Lucetta said.

She meant that she could not reach the high notes, and she meant that Proteus' social position was so high that he was out of her league.

"Let's see your song," Julia said, reaching for the letter.

Lucetta would not hand over the letter.

Angry, Julia said, "What do you think you are doing, minx!"

"Keep tune there still, so you will sing it out," Lucetta replied. "And yet I think I do not like this tune."

If Julia were to sing, she would have to keep in tune, and yet her emotions were out of tune. Julia was angry at Lucetta, who was angry at Julia.

"You do not like this tune?"

"No, madam, it is too sharp," Lucetta said.

Julia's anger was making her be sharp with Lucetta.

"You, minx, are too saucy," Julia said. "You are impudent."

"No, now you are too flat," Lucetta replied.

The word "flat" meant "below normal pitch" as well as "outspoken." Julia was speaking "flat out" — without holding anything back.

Lucetta added, "You mar the concord with too harsh a descant."

"Concord" is "harmony," and "descant" is "variation on the tune."

Lucetta added, "There lacks only a mean to fill your song."

The "mean" is in between soprano and bass — a tenor. In

other words, Julia needed a tenor — a man such as Proteus. If she had a man, her song would sound good, and she would achieve Aristotle's mean between extremes: She would have good temper, which is the mean between the extreme of anger and the extreme of passivity or not caring.

Julia replied, "The mean is drowned with your unruly bass."

An "unruly bass" is an "uncontrolled bass voice," while the homonym "unruly base" applied to behavior refers to "uncontrolled bad behavior" — or "unruly base" could mean "unruly foundation" or "unruly character."

"Indeed, I bid the base for Proteus," Lucetta said.

She meant that she was attempting to sing bass in the absence of Proteus, who as a male would be more likely than she to succeed at it. That was a way of saying that she was attempting to do the work of Proteus, whom she admired and regarded as a good catch for Julia. She also was referring to a chase. In the game "Prisoner's Base," a child would use the phrase "Bid the base" to challenge another child to chase and try to catch him. On Proteus' behalf, Lucetta was challenging Julia to chase after him.

Lucetta handed Julia the letter.

"This babble shall not henceforth trouble me," Julia said. "This letter has created a fuss with its declarations of love!"

After quickly glancing at the letter, she tore it into pieces and dropped the pieces on the ground.

Lucetta stooped to pick up the pieces, but Julia ordered, "Get you gone, and let the pieces of paper lie there. You are touching them just to anger me."

Leaving, Lucetta muttered, "She pretends to be angry; but she would be very happy to be angered like this with

another letter.”

Julia overheard her.

Alone, Julia said, “No, I wish I were angered like this with the same letter — I wish that it were still in one piece! Oh, hateful hands, to tear such loving words! My hands are injurious wasps that feed on such sweet honey and kill with your stings the bees that yield it!

“I’ll kiss each piece of paper to make amends.

“Look, here is written ‘*kind Julia.*’ It should be ‘unkind Julia’! To get revenge on your ingratitude, I throw your name — Julia! — against the bruising stones and I tramp contemptuously on your disdain.

“And here is written ‘*love-wounded Proteus.*’ Poor wounded name! My bosom shall be a bed where you can lodge until your wound is thoroughly healed.”

She kissed the piece of paper before putting it in a pocket over her chest, saying, “Thus I treat your wound with a healing kiss.”

A breeze began to blow in the garden, and Julia said, “But twice or thrice the name ‘Proteus’ was written down. Be calm, good wind, and do not blow a word away until I have found each letter in the letter, except my own name, which some whirlwind can carry to a rugged, fearful, hanging rock and throw my name from there into the raging sea!

“Look, here in one line is his name twice written: ‘*Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus, to the sweet Julia.*’ The part of the scrap of paper that bears my name I’ll tear away. And yet I will not, since he couples it so prettily to his complaining names.

“I fold the piece of paper so that my name touches his name, one on top of the other. Now names, you can kiss,

embrace, contend, do what you will.”

The kind of “contention” she meant was the kind that sometimes results in babies.

Lucetta came back into the garden and said, “Madam, dinner is ready, and your father is waiting for you.”

“Well, let us go,” Julia replied.

“What, shall these pieces of paper lie like telltales here?”

“If you value them, it is best that you should take them up.”

“No, I was taken up — rebuked — for laying them down. Yet here they shall not lie, for fear of their catching cold.”

The chase and resultant capture that result from a love letter should be hot.

Lucetta picked up the pieces of the letter.

“I see you have a month’s mind for them,” Julia said.

“A month’s mind” is a strong inclination or desire. In the ninth month of pregnancy, a woman often is of a mind to eat certain foods, and she had better get what she wants or else.

“Yes, madam, you may say what sights you see,” Lucetta replied. “I see things, too, although you may think that my eyes are closed.”

Lucetta meant that she knew that Julia had a month’s mind for Proteus despite what Julia had said.

No longer angry, Julia said, “Come, come; are you ready to go?”

Antonio, Proteus’ father, was talking to Panthino, his

servant. They were in a room of Antonio's house in Verona.

"Tell me, Panthino, what serious talk was that which my brother was having with you in the cloister?"

"We were talking about his nephew Proteus, your son."

"Why, what about him?"

"He wondered that your lordship would allow him to spend his youth at home, while other men, of slender and insignificant reputation, make their sons seek advancement in the world. Some sons go to the wars to seek their fortune there. Some travel to discover islands far away. Some go to the studious universities. For any or all of these exercises, he said that Proteus your son was suitable, and he requested me to press you to no longer allow Proteus to spend his time at home. He will regret in his old age not having traveled when he was young."

"You don't much need to press me to do that which I have been seriously thinking about this month. I have considered well Proteus' waste of time and how he cannot be an accomplished man unless he is tested and tutored in the world. Experience is achieved by industry, and it is perfected by the swift course of time. We learn from trying hard to accomplish something and from growing older. So tell me, where would it be best for me to send him?"

Panthino replied, "I think your lordship is not ignorant that Proteus' friend and companion, youthful Valentine, is now attending the Emperor in his royal court at Milan."

The Emperor was the ruler of the territory; another of his titles was Duke of Milan.

"I do know it well," Antonio said.

"It would be good, I think, if your lordship should send him

there. He shall practice tilts and tournaments — military exercises — there. He shall also hear sweet discourse, converse with noblemen, and see every exercise worthy of his youth and nobleness of birth.”

“I like your counsel,” Antonio said. “You have well advised me, and you can see how well I like your advice by how quickly I put it into action. As quickly as possible, I will send Proteus to the Emperor’s court.”

“Let it wait until tomorrow, if it pleases you,” Panthino said, “because Don Alphonso and other gentlemen who are well esteemed are journeying to Milan to salute the Emperor and to hand over their service to his will.”

“They will be good company,” Antonio said, “so Proteus shall go with them.”

He looked up and saw Proteus entering the garden and said, “He has come at exactly the right moment. I will break the news to him now about what I am going to have him do.”

Proteus, at some distance from his father and Panthino, was reading a love letter from Julia.

He said to himself, “Sweet love! Sweet lines! Sweet life! Here is her handwriting, the agent of her heart. Here is her oath for love, her honor’s pledge. Oh, I wish that our fathers would applaud our loves and seal our happiness with their consents! Oh, Heavenly Julia!”

Antonio and Panthino walked over to Proteus, and Antonio asked, “How are you? What letter are you reading there?”

“May it please your lordship, it is a word or two of greetings sent from Valentine in Milan and delivered by a friend who came from him.”

“Lend me the letter; let me see what his news is,” Antonio asked.

“There is no news, my lord, except that he writes about how happily he lives, how well beloved and daily honored he is by the Emperor, and that he wishes that I were with him so I could be the partner of his fortune.”

“What do you think about Valentine’s wish for you?”

“I will obey your lordship’s will and not be dependent on his friendly wish.”

“My will is somewhat in agreement with his wish for you,” Antonio said.

Proteus looked surprised.

Antonio said, “Don’t be surprised that I now suddenly have made plans for you because what I will, I will, and there’s an end to it.

“I am resolved that you shall spend some time with Valentine in the Emperor’s court. Whatever monetary allowance he receives from his family, you shall receive a comparable allowance from me. Tomorrow, you must be ready to begin your journey to Milan. Don’t try to make excuses for not going, for my mind is made up.”

“My lord, I cannot be ready as soon as tomorrow,” Proteus said. “I won’t have time to pack everything that I will need. Please, think about this for a day or two.”

“Look, whatever you need that you leave behind shall be sent after you,” Antonio said. “Talk no more of staying in Verona! Tomorrow you must go to Milan.”

He then said, “Come on, Panthino: you shall be employed to hasten Proteus on his journey.”

Antonio and Panthino exited.

Alone, Proteus said to himself, “Just now, I shunned the fire for fear of being burned and instead drenched myself in

the sea, where I am drowned. I was afraid to show my father Julia's letter, lest he should object to my love. As a result, he has taken advantage of my own excuse and made the greatest possible obstacle to my love.

“Oh, how this spring of love resembles the uncertain glory of an April day, which now shows all the beauty of the Sun, and by and by a cloud takes it all away!”

Panthino returned and walked over to Proteus and said, “Sir Proteus, your father is calling for you. He is impatient; therefore, I ask you to please go.”

Proteus said, “Why, this is how it is with me: My heart wants me to be obedient to my father, and yet a thousand times to my father's plan for me my heart answers ‘no.’”

CHAPTER 2 (The Two Gentlemen of Verona)

— 2.1 —

Valentine and Speed talked together in a room of the palace of the Duke of Milan. Earlier, Silvia, who was the Duke's daughter, had deliberately dropped her glove in front of Speed, knowing that he would pick it up and give it to Valentine, his master.

“Sir, here is your glove,” Speed said.

Without looking at the glove, Valentine said, “It can't be mine; my gloves are on — I am wearing them.”

“Why, then, this glove may be yours, for this glove is only one — and ‘one’ is only one letter different from ‘on.’”

Valentine looked at the glove, recognized it as Silvia's glove, and said, “Ha! Let me see it. Yes, give it to me — it's mine. This glove is a sweet ornament that decks a thing divine! Ah, Silvia, Silvia!”

Speed shouted, “Madam Silvia! Madam Silvia!”

“Why are you yelling, sirrah?” Valentine asked.

“Sirrah” was a word used to address someone socially inferior to the speaker of the word, but Valentine liked Speed and sometimes called him “Sir.” Speed usually called Valentine “Sir.”

“She is not within hearing, sir.”

“Why, sir, who asked you to call her?”

“Your worship, sir; or else I am mistaken.”

“Well, you'll always be too forward.”

“And yet the last time I was rebuked it was for being too slow.”

“Sir, tell me, do you know Madam Silvia?”

“She whom your worship loves?” Speed asked.

“Why, how do you know that I am in love?”

“By these special signs: First, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to cross your arms and form a wreath like a melancholy malcontent. Second, you have learned to sing a love song, like a robin redbreast. Third, you have learned to walk alone, like one who has caught the plague and so is avoided by everyone. Fourth, you have learned to sigh, like a schoolboy who has lost his A B C schoolbook. Fifth, you have learned to weep, like a young girl who has buried her grandmother. Sixth, you have learned to fast, like one who is dieting. Seventh, you have learned to stay awake at night like one who fears being robbed. Eighth, you have learned to speak in a whining voice, like a beggar at Hallowmas: November 1.

“You were accustomed, when you laughed, to crow like a cock. You were accustomed, when you walked, to walk like a lion. You were accustomed, when you fasted, to fast immediately after eating dinner. You were accustomed, when you looked sad, to look sad because of lack of money.

“But now you are so metamorphosed because you have fallen in love that, when I look at you, I can hardly recognize that you are my master.”

“Are all these things perceived in me?” Valentine asked.

“They are all perceived without you,” Speed replied.

He meant that they could be perceived by looking at Valentine. His exterior appearance and his behavior

showed that he was in love.

“Without me? That is impossible. If I am absent, these things cannot be perceived.”

“Without you? On your exterior?” Speed said. “You are wrong when you say that your follies cannot be perceived: These follies of yours can certainly be perceived, for, without you — that is, unless you — were so simple, no one would be able to tell that you are in love. But what you are is simple — it is easy to understand that you are in love. Seeing that you are in love presents no difficulty to anyone who sees you.

“You are so without these follies — these follies are so pervasive in your appearance — that these follies are within you — they are a part of you — and they shine through you like the water in a urinal, so that not an eye that sees you but is a physician to comment on your malady.”

Physicians of that time would have patients pee into a glass urinal. The physicians would examine the color of the water, aka urine, and thereby learn about the health of the patient. By being so much in love, Valentine was exhibiting the symptoms of lovesickness so obviously that anyone seeing him could diagnose his illness.

Valentine said, “Tell me, do you know my lady Silvia?”

“She whom you stare at as she is sitting and eating supper?” Speed replied.

“Have you observed that? She is the woman I mean.”

“Why, sir, I know her not,” Speed said, using the Biblical meaning of “know.”

“You say that you know her by my staring at her, and yet you do not know her?”

“Is she not hard-favored, sir?” Speed asked.

“Hard-favored” meant “ugly.”

“She is not as fair, boy, as she is well-favored. She is not as beautiful as she is charming.”

“Sir, I know that well enough,” Speed replied.

“What do you know?”

“That she is not so fair as she is, by you, well-favored.”

“By ‘well-favored,’ Speed meant ‘partial.’ Valentine was partial to Silvia and looked on her favorably.

“I mean that her beauty is exquisite, but her favor — her grace and kindness — is infinite,” Valentine said.

“That’s because the one is painted and the other is out of all count,” Speed said.

Women who used cosmetics were said to paint their faces.

“What do you mean by ‘painted’ — and by ‘out of all count’?” Valentine asked.

“Sir, her face is so painted in order to make her fair, aka attractive, that no man takes any account of, aka values, her beauty.”

“Don’t you think anything of my opinion?” Valentine said.

“I count her as a beautiful woman.”

“You never saw her since she was deformed,” Speed said.

Speed meant that Valentine was not seeing Silvia as she really was. He was looking at her with the eyes of love, and those eyes changed her form and made her more beautiful to Valentine. A lover cannot see a loved one as she really is.

“How long has she been deformed?” Valentine asked.

“Ever since you loved her.”

“I have loved her ever since I saw her; and I still see her as beautiful.”

“If you love her, you cannot see her,” Speed said.

“Why not?”

“Because Love is blind. Oh, I wish that you had my eyes, or that your own eyes had the lights they used to have when you laughed at Sir Proteus because he walked around with his stockings ungartered because he was so in love that he had forgotten his garters!”

“If I were able to see, what would I see?”

“Your own present folly and her surpassing deformity. Sir Proteus, being in love, could not see to garter his stockings, but you, being in love, are worse off than Proteus because you cannot see to put on your stockings. He walks around without garters, while you walk around without garters and stockings.”

“Perhaps, boy, you are in love because this past morning you could not see to wipe and clean my shoes.”

“That is true, sir,” Speed said. “I was in love with my bed. I thank you: You beat me because of my love, which makes me all the bolder to twit you because of your love.”

Valentine said, “In conclusion, I stand affected by and devoted to her. I continue to love Silvia.”

“I wish you were seated so that your affection would cease,” Speed replied.

“Last night she asked me to write some lines to someone she loves,” Valentine said.

“And have you?”

“I have.”

“Aren’t they lamely written?” Speed asked.

“No, boy,” Valentine replied. “I have written them as well as I can write them. Quiet! Here she comes.”

Speed looked up and saw Silvia walking toward them. He thought, *Now I will see an excellent puppet show! Silvia will be more than a puppet because she is using Valentine — in a good way — and making him her puppeteer!*

Speed was quick-witted. He knew that Silvia was in love with Valentine, as Valentine was with her. He had seen how they acted around each other, and he had seen Silvia deliberately drop her handkerchief so that he could pick it up and give it to Valentine. Because of that, he could guess that the lines she had asked Valentine to write were a love letter that was not written to another man. Silvia had made Valentine write a love letter for her — a love letter that she was going to give to him! A puppeteer provides words for the puppets, and Valentine had written a love letter for Silvia. Valentine, the puppeteer, was providing the words for Silvia, the puppet. But Silvia was more than a puppet because she had been the one who had made Valentine write those words.

Silvia walked over to Valentine and Speed.

“Madam and mistress, a thousand good mornings,” Valentine said.

A mistress is a woman who is loved.

Speed, amused by the greeting, thought, *Simply say, “Good day.” Here’s a million of manners — Valentine is really overdoing it!*

Silvia replied, “Sir Valentine and servant, to you two thousand good mornings.”

In this culture, one meaning of “servant” is “a man who loves and serves a woman.”

Speed thought, *Valentine is in love with Silvia, and so he ought to show his interest in her, and Silvia is giving him interest. He wished her a thousand good mornings and she doubled it to two thousand — that’s quite a high rate of interest!*

“As you asked me, I have written your letter to the secret nameless loved one of yours; this was a task that I was very unwilling to proceed in except that I wanted to be of service to your ladyship.”

Valentine gave Silvia the letter, which she looked over and then said, “I thank you, gentle servant. It is very well written.”

“Now trust me, madam, I wrote it with difficulty,” Valentine said. “Because I was ignorant about who would receive the letter, I wrote randomly and very uncertainly.”

“Perhaps you think that the letter was not worth taking so many pains to write?”

“No, madam; so long as it helps you, I will write, if you command me to, a thousand times as much,” Valentine said. “And yet —”

Silvia was pleased with his response up until the “And yet —”

She interrupted, “A pretty period! Well, I can guess the sequel.”

A period is a full stop: a complete end. However, “And yet” showed that more words would form a sequel.

Valentine wanted to be of service to her, and yet —

Silvia continued, “And yet I will not state the sequel; and yet I care not; and yet take this letter again; and yet I thank you, and I intend hereafter to trouble you no more.”

She handed him the letter that he had written for her.

Speed thought, *And yet you will trouble him some more; and there will be yet another “yet.” You are in love, Silvia. You will not leave Valentine alone.*

“What does your ladyship mean?” Valentine asked. “Don’t you like the letter?”

“Yes, yes; the lines are very ingeniously written, but since you wrote them unwillingly, take them again.”

Valentine declined to accept the letter.

Silvia repeated, “Take these lines.”

Valentine said, “Madam, these lines are for you.”

“Yes, yes,” Silvia said, “you wrote them, sir, at my request. But I want nothing to do with them; they are for you; I would have had them written more movingly.”

“If you want, I will write your ladyship another love letter.”

“And when it’s written, for my sake read it over, and if it pleases you, so be it, but if it does not please you, why, so be it.”

“If the letter pleases me, madam, what then?” Valentine asked.

“Why, if it pleases you, take it as a reward for your labor,” Sylvia said.

This was a pretty big hint that the love letter was written especially for Valentine: He was its intended audience.

Unfortunately, Valentine could be dense in matters of love. Fortunately, Speed was quick-witted and knew exactly what Silvia was doing and why she was doing it.

Silvia said to Valentine, “And so, good morning, servant.”

She exited.

Speed said, “Oh, this jest is as unseen, inscrutable, invisible, as a nose on a man’s face, or a weathercock on a steeple! My master is acting as a suitor to her, and she has taught her suitor, who is her pupil, to become her tutor.

“Oh, what an excellent device for attaining what she wants! Was there ever heard a better plan? She has made my master, who is a scribe, write a love letter to himself.”

“What is it, sir?” Valentine asked. “Why are you talking to yourself? What are you reasoning about with yourself?”

“I was not reasoning; I was rhyming,” Speed replied. “It is you who have the reason.”

“Reason to do what?”

“To be a spokesman for Madam Silvia.”

“A spokesman? To whom?”

“To yourself,” Speed said. “Why, she is wooing you by using a figure.”

A “figure” is an “ingenious device.” For example, a figure of speech is an ingenious use of language.

“What figure?”

“A letter, I should say.”

“What do you mean? She has not written to me.”

“Why should she write to you, when she has made you

write to yourself? What? Don't you perceive — understand — what is going on?"

"No, believe me," Valentine said.

"There is no believing you, indeed, sir. What Silvia is doing should be obvious. But did you perceive her earnest?"

Speed meant that Silvia was earnest in loving Valentine, but Valentine understood "earnest" as meaning "down payment" or "initial installment."

Valentine said, "She gave me none, except an angry word."

"Why, she has given you a letter."

"That's the letter I wrote to her loved one."

"And that letter she has delivered to her loved one, and there is an end to the matter."

"I wish it would be no worse than this," Valentine said.

"I'll warrant you, this end is as good as you could wish because you have often written to her, and she, because of modesty, or else because she lacked leisure time, could not reply to you, or else she feared that some messenger might learn whom she loved, and so she herself has taught her loved one himself to write to her lover. All this I speak exactly, as if it were written down and in print, for in the print of the letter I found it.

"Why muse you, sir? It is dinner-time."

"I have dined," Valentine said. "I have feasted on Silvia's beauty."

"Yes, but pay attention, sir," Speed said. "Although the chameleon Love can feed on the air, I am one who is nourished by my victuals, and would gladly eat. Oh, be not

like your mistress; be moved, be moved.”

Valentine’s meeting with Silvia was not entirely satisfactory to him; she had not been moved the way he wanted her to be moved.

Valentine and Speed moved to the room where dinner was served.

— 2.2 —

In the garden of Julia’s father’s house in Verona, Julia and Proteus were speaking. Proteus was leaving for Milan, and this was their farewell to each other.

“Have patience, gentle Julia,” Proteus said. “Be calm.”

“I must, when there is no remedy.”

“When I possibly can, I will return.”

“If you turn not, you will return the sooner,” Julia said.

She meant that if he did not turn his attention to another woman, he would return sooner to Verona.

She gave him a ring and said, “Keep this remembrance — this love token — for your Julia’s sake.”

“Why then, we’ll make an exchange of rings,” Proteus said.

He gave her a ring and said, “Here, take this.”

“And we will seal the bargain with a holy kiss,” Julia said.

They kissed.

Proteus said, “Here is my hand to pledge my true constancy — my true fidelity — to you.”

They held hands.

He added, “And when an hour passes without my sighing

for you, Julia, then I wish that during the next ensuing hour some foul mischance may torment me for forgetting my love!

“My father awaits my coming; don’t answer me. The tide of the sea is high now and I must leave. Don’t cry. Your tide of tears will keep me here longer than I should.

“Julia, farewell!”

Julia exited.

Proteus said, “What, gone without a word? Yes, true love should do so. True love cannot speak; truth is better adorned and honored by deeds than by words.”

Panthino walked over to Proteus and said, “Sir Proteus, you are awaited.”

“Go; I am coming. I am coming. It’s a pity! This parting strikes poor lovers dumb.”

—2.3 —

Proteus’ servant, Launce, talked to himself in a garden. With him was his dog, Crab. Crab apples are sour, and the dog was crabby and sour-natured. Launce was preparing to leave the garden and join his master on board ship so he could serve him in Milan. Only 100 or so miles separated Milan and Verona, but at the time this was considered a long distance that could be dangerous to travel. Launce carried a walking staff.

Launce said, “No, I am not ready to stop crying yet. It will be an hour before I have finished weeping. All the members of the Launce family have this same fault.

“I have received my proportion, like the prodigious son, and I am going with Sir Proteus to the Imperial’s court.”

Launce frequently misused words. “By “proportion,” he

meant “portion.” By “prodigious,” he meant “prodigal.” By “Imperial,” he meant “Emperor.”

He added, “I think Crab, my dog, is the sourest-natured dog that lives. My mother is weeping, my father is wailing, my sister is crying, our maid is howling, our cat is wringing her hands, and all our house is in a great perplexity, and yet this cruel-hearted cur did not shed one tear. He is a stone, a very pebble stone, and he has no more pity in him than a dog does. A hard-hearted Jew would have wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam, who has no eyes, you see, wept herself blind at my parting.”

Launce took off his shoes, put them on a table, and said, “I’ll show you the manner of it. This right shoe is my father — no, this left shoe is my father. No, no, this left shoe is my mother — no, that cannot be so neither. Wait! Yes, it is so, it is so, my left shoe has the worser sole — and women, as is well known in my society, have souls worser than the souls of men. This shoe, with the hole in it, is my mother, which is obviously appropriate, and this shoe is my father.”

He dropped the shoe and said, “Damn it!”

He picked it up and said, “There it is. Now, sit. This staff is my sister, for, you see, she is as white as a lily and as slender as a wand. This hat is Nan, our maid. I am the dog. No, the dog is himself, and I am the dog — wait! The dog is me, and I am myself; yes, that is correct.

“Now I come to my father. Father, give me your blessing. Now the shoe should not speak a word because of weeping. Now I should kiss my father; well, he weeps on.

“Now I come to my mother. Oh, I wish that she could speak now like an excitable woman! Well, I now kiss her.”

He kissed the shoe, which resulted in smelling the shoe, and he said, “Why, there it is; here’s my mother’s breath

exactly.

“Now I come to my sister.”

He waved the staff in the air while making a whooshing sound and said, “Listen to the moan she makes while mourning.

“Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears. My tears drop onto the ground and keep the dust down.”

Panthino, Antonio’s servant, entered the garden and said, “Launce, leave, leave, you must get onboard! Your master is onboard the ship, which is anchored in the harbor. You are to get in a rowboat and go into the harbor and join him.

“What’s the matter? Why are you weeping, man? Leave, ass! You’ll lose the tide and the ship will sail without you, if you tarry any longer.”

Launce replied, “It does not matter if the tied were lost; for it is the unkindest tied that ever any man tied.”

“What’s the unkindest tide?” Panthino asked.

“Why, he that’s tied here — Crab, my dog.”

“Tut, man, I mean that you will lose the flood of water, aka high tide, and, in losing the flood, you will lose your voyage, and, in losing your voyage, you will lose your master, and, in losing your master, you will lose your job, and, in losing your job —”

Launce put his hand over Panthino’s mouth.

Panthino moved Launce’s hand away and asked, “Why did you cover my mouth?”

“For fear you should lose your tongue.”

“Where should I lose my tongue?”

“In your tale.”

“In your *tail!*” Panthino shrieked.

“Lose the tide, and the voyage, and the master, and the job, and the tied! Why, man, if the river were dry, I would be able to fill it with my tears; if the wind were down, I could drive the boat forward with my sighs.”

“Come, come away, man,” Panthino said. “I was sent to call you.”

“Sir, call me what you dare to call me.”

“Will you go?”

“Well, I will go.”

They exited. Launce was ready to board the ship.

— 2.4 —

Silvia, Valentine, Thurio, and Speed were together in a room in the palace of the Duke of Milan. Silvia was the daughter of the Duke of Milan, and Thurio was a rival suitor for Silvia.

“Servant!” Silvia said to Valentine.

“Mistress?” he replied.

This angered Thurio. As a rival suitor for Silvia, he wanted Silvia to be his mistress and he wanted to be her servant. In this context, a mistress was a female sweetheart and a servant was her loved one.

Speed said, “Master, Sir Thurio is frowning at you.”

“Yes, boy, it’s because of love,” Valentine replied.

“Not love of you.”

“Love of my mistress, then.”

“It would be good if you were to knock him down.”

Speed exited.

Silvia said, “Servant, you are solemn.”

“Indeed, madam, I seem so,” Valentine replied.

“Do you seem to be something that you are not?” Thurio asked, wishing that Valentine only seemed to be Silvia’s servant.

“Perhaps I do,” Valentine replied.

“So do counterfeits,” Thurio said.

A counterfeit is an imposter, a fake, a sham, a pretender.

“So do you.”

“What do I seem to be that I am not?” Thurio asked.

“Wise.”

“What evidence do you have that I am not wise?”

“Your folly.”

“And how can you observe my folly?”

“I observe it in your jerkin,” Valentine replied.

Jerkins and doublets are kinds of jackets.

“My jerkin is a doublet.”

“Well, then, I’ll double your folly,” Valentine said.

“What!” Thurio exclaimed.

“What, are you angry, Sir Thurio?” Silvia asked. “Do you change color? Is your face red because you are angry?”

“Give him permission to change color, madam,” Valentine said. “He is a kind of chameleon that changes color.”

“I am the kind of chameleon that has more mind to feed on your blood than live in your air,” Thurio replied.

People in this society believed that chameleons did not eat, but got all their nourishment from the air. Of course, “to live in your air” included the meaning “to hear you speak.”

“You have said, sir. You have spoken to the point.”

“Yes, sir,” Thurio said, “and I have done, too, for this time.”

He was implying that at some time in the future he would do more — he would fight Valentine.

“I know well, sir, that you have done,” Valentine said. “You always end before you begin.”

Valentine was accusing Thurio of picking fights, but never actually fighting. He was also accusing Thurio of having little wit — the little wit he had ran out while his opponents’ wit was still strong. Valentine was also hinting that Thurio suffered from premature ejaculation.

“This is a fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly shot off,” Silvia said.

Perhaps Silvia had heard that Thurio suffered from premature ejaculation.

“It is indeed, madam,” Valentine said. “We thank the giver.”

“Who is that, servant?” Silvia asked.

“It is yourself, sweet lady; for you gave the fire,” Valentine replied. “You were the match that fired the cannons that shot the volley of words. Sir Thurio borrows his wit from

your ladyship's looks, and he naturally spends what he borrows in your company."

"Sir, if you spend word for word with me," Thurio said, "I shall make your wit bankrupt."

"I know it well, sir," Valentine said. "You have a treasury of words, and, I think, no other treasure to give your servants, for it appears by their threadbare liveries that they live by your bare words."

"No more, gentlemen, no more," Silvia said. "Here comes my father."

The Duke of Milan walked over to them and said, "Now, daughter Silvia, you are hard beset. You have to contend with two admirers."

"Sir Valentine, your father's in good health. What do you say about a letter from your family that contains much good news?"

"My lord, I will be thankful," Valentine replied, "to any messenger bearing good news who and that comes from Verona."

"Do you know Don Antonio, your countryman?" the Duke of Milan asked.

"Yes, my good lord, I know the gentleman to be of worth and worthy estimation. Not without desert is he so well reputed."

"Doesn't he have a son?"

"Yes, my good lord; he has a son who well deserves the honor and regard of such a father," Valentine replied.

"Do you know the son well?"

"I know him as well as I know myself, for from our infancy

we have kept company and spent our hours together, and although I myself have been an idle truant, not using the sweet benefit of time to clothe my age with angel-like perfection, Sir Proteus, for that's his name, has made use and fair advantage of his days. He is young in years, but old in experience. His head is unmellowed because his hair is not gray, but his judgment is ripe. All the praises that I now bestow on him are far behind his worth. He has in feature and in mind all the good graces that grace a gentleman."

"Believe me, sir, but if he is as good as you say he is, he is as worthy to win an Empress' love as he is fitting to be an Emperor's counselor," the Duke of Milan said. "Well, sir, this gentleman has come to me, with commendations from great potentates, and here he means to spend his time for awhile. I think that this is not unwelcome news to you."

"If I should have wished for something, it would have been for him to come here," Valentine replied.

"Welcome him, then, according to his worth," the Duke of Milan said. "Silvia, I am telling this to you, and to you, Sir Thurio. As for Valentine, I need not tell him this. I will send Proteus hither to you quickly."

The Duke of Milan exited.

Valentine said to Silvia, "This is the gentleman I told your ladyship would have come along with me, except that his mistress held his eyes locked in her crystal looks. He did not come with me because he was in love."

"Probably his mistress has enfranchised and freed his eyes because she has enchanted another man's eyes," Silvia said.

"No," Valentine said. "To be sure, I think she holds his eyes prisoners still. I am sure that he still loves her."

"If he is in love, then he should be blind," Silvia said. "And

if he is blind, then how can he see to travel to seek you?"

"Why, lady, Love has twenty pairs of eyes," Valentine said.

Thurio interrupted, "They say that Love has not an eye at all. Cupid is blind."

Valentine replied, "Love has not an eye at all when it comes to seeing such lovers, Thurio, as yourself. When near a homely object, Love can close his eyes."

Silvia said, "Enough, enough, no more arguing; here comes the gentleman."

Thurio exited as Proteus entered the room.

"Welcome, dear Proteus!" Valentine said. "Mistress, I ask you to confirm his welcome with some special honor for him."

"His worth is guarantee for his welcome hither, if this man is he whom you often have wished to hear from," Silvia replied.

"Mistress, it is he," Valentine said. "Sweet lady, take him into your service and let him be my fellow-servant to your ladyship."

Valentine did not mean for the service to be that of a lover, but instead that of a friend. After all, Proteus had recently expressed his love for Julia.

"I am too low a mistress for so high a servant," Silvia said.

"That is not so, sweet lady," Proteus said, "for I am too mean a servant to receive a look from such a worthy mistress."

"Stop disparaging yourselves," Valentine said. "Sweet lady, take him into your service."

“I will boast only of my duty as your servant,” Proteus said.
“I will speak of nothing else.”

“And duty never yet did lack his reward,” Silvia replied.
“Servant, you are welcome to a worthless mistress.”

“I will fight to the death anyone who says that, except you,” Proteus said.

“Do you mean to fight him who says that you are welcome?” Silvia asked.

“I mean to fight him who says that you are worthless,” Proteus replied.

Thurio returned and said to Silvia, “Madam, my lord your father wants to speak with you.”

“I will go to him,” Silvia said. “Come, Sir Thurio, go with me.”

She said to Proteus, “Once more, new servant, welcome.”

She then said to both Valentine and Proteus, “I’ll leave you two to talk about news at your home city: Verona. When you have done, I hope that you will come to me.”

“We’ll both go to your ladyship,” Proteus said.

Silvia and Thurio exited.

Valentine asked Proteus, “Now, tell me, how is everyone in Verona?”

“Your friends and family are well, and they have sent you many greetings.”

“And how are your friends and family?”

“I left them all in health,” Proteus said. “They are well.”

“How is your lady, Julia?” Valentine asked. “And how is

your love for each other thriving?”

“My tales of love are likely to weary you,” Proteus said. “I know you take no joy in talking about love.”

“That used to be true, Proteus, but my life is altered now,” Valentine replied. “I have done penance for condemning Love, whose high imperious and magisterial thoughts have punished me with bitter fasts, with penitential groans, with nightly tears and daily heart-sore sighs. To get revenge for my contempt of love, Love has chased sleep from my enthralled eyes and made them stay awake and watch my own heart’s sorrow.

“Oh, gentle Proteus, Love’s a mighty lord and has so humbled me that I confess there are no woe and sorrow that compare to Love’s punishment, and yet in Love’s service I experience the greatest joy on Earth.

“Now let us have no discourse, unless we talk of love. Now I can break my fast, and I can dine, eat, and sleep upon the mere name of Love.”

“Enough,” Proteus said. “I read your fortune in your eye. I knew immediately that you are in love. Was this woman I just met the idol whom you worship so?”

“Yes,” Valentine said. “Is she not a Heavenly saint?”

“No, but she is an Earthly paragon.”

“Call her divine.”

“I will not flatter her.”

“Oh, flatter me and tell me what I want to hear,” Valentine said, “for love delights in praises.”

“When I was sick, you gave me bitter pills,” Proteus said, remembering Valentine’s comments about love — the comments of a person who had never been in love. “Now I

must minister similar bitter pills to you.”

“Then speak the truth of her,” Valentine said. “If she is not divine, then let her be a Principality, sovereign to all the creatures on the earth.”

A Principality is a member of one of the nine orders of angels: the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the Dominations, Virtues, and Powers; and the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.

“Your mistress, Silvia, is sovereign to everyone on Earth except for my mistress: Julia,” Proteus replied.

“Sweet friend,” Valentine said, “except — exclude — no one from being under the sovereignty of Silvia except — unless — you will take exception to my love.”

“Have I not reason to prefer my own mistress?” Proteus asked.

“And I will help you to prefer — promote, advance — her, too,” Valentine said. “She shall be dignified with this high honor — to bear my lady’s train, lest the base earth should from her train chance to steal a kiss if it should trail on the ground. If the earth did steal such a kiss, it might grow so proud from enjoying that kiss that it might disdain to let the summer-swalling flowers take root in it and it might make rough winter last forever.”

“Why, Valentine, what braggardism is this?” Proteus asked. “Where did you learn to brag in this way about your mistress?”

“Pardon me, Proteus. All I can say about Silvia is nothing — it completely and inadequately describes her, whose worth makes other worthies nothing. Silvia is alone — she is unique.”

“If she is alone, then let her alone,” Proteus said.

“Not for the world,” Valentine replied. “Why, man, she is my own, and I am as rich in having such a jewel as twenty seas, if all their grains of sand were pearls, the water was nectar, and the rocks were pure gold.”

Valentine added, “Forgive me for not focusing my attention on you. As you can see, I am dotting upon my love. My foolish rival, Thurio, is a man whom Silvia’s father likes only because his possessions and wealth are so huge. Thurio has accompanied Silvia as she sees her father, and I must go after them because love, you know, is full of jealousy.”

“But Silvia loves you?” Proteus asked.

“Yes, and we are secretly engaged to be married,” Valentine said. “We have decided to elope, and we have decided on our marriage-hour and have made a cunning plan for our flight. I will climb to her window, using a ladder made of rope, and together we have plotted and agreed on everything necessary for my happiness — marriage to Silvia will make me happy.

“Good Proteus, go with me to my chamber so that you can aid me with your advice.”

“You go on ahead of me,” Proteus replied. “I shall seek you later. Right now I must go to the harbor to unload from the ship some necessaries that I need now. As soon as I am done, I will go to you.”

“Will you make haste?” Valentine asked. “Will you hurry?”

“I will.”

Valentine exited.

Alone, Proteus said to himself, “Even as one heat expels another heat, or as one nail by strength drives out another

nail, so a newer object of my affection makes me quite forget the remembrance of my former love.

“Is it my praise, or Valentine’s praise, Silvia’s true perfection, or my wrongful violation of loyalty to my former love, that makes me reasonless — without cause — to reason thus, to justify my loss of love for one woman and my new love for another woman? What is causing me to make up excuses for my lack of loyalty to the woman I loved in Verona?”

“Silvia is beautiful; and so is Julia, whom I love — make that whom I did love, for now my love is thawed. My love is like a waxen image held near a fire; it has melted and bears no resemblance to the thing it was.

“I think that my devotion and loyalty to Valentine is cold, and that my love for him as a friend is not like it used to be. Oh, but I love his lady as a lover much too much, and that’s the reason I love him as a friend so little.

“How shall I dote on her when I see more of her, I who at first sight began to love her! It is only her picture — her appearance — I have so far seen, and that has dazzled my reason’s light. But when I am able to look on her inward perfections, there is no doubt that I shall be blinded.

“If I can check and stop my erring love, I will; if I cannot, to gain her I’ll use all my skill.”

— 2.5 —

On a street in Verona, Speed, the servant of Valentine, and Launce, the servant of Proteus, met. They knew each other well enough to exchange friendly insults and to play jokes on each other.

Speed knew that Launce sometimes misused words, so he teased him by saying, “Launce! By my honesty, welcome

to Milan!”

“Do not perjure yourself, sweet youth, for I am not welcome,” Launce said. “I believe this always, that a man is never ruined and destroyed until he is hanged, and a man is never welcome to a place until the tavern bill is paid and the hostess says, ‘Welcome!’”

“Come on, you madcap, I’ll go to the alehouse with you in a moment,” Speed said. “There, for one bill of five pence, you shall have five thousand welcomes. But, sirrah, how did your master, Proteus, part with Madam Julia?”

“Truly, after they embraced in earnest, they parted very cordially in jest.”

“But shall she marry him?” Speed asked.

“No.”

“What then? Shall he marry her?”

“No, neither.”

“What, are they broken?” Speed asked.

He meant to ask whether they had broken up, but Launce took the word “broken” literally.

“No, they are both as whole as a fish.”

“As whole as a fish” meant “healthy, but “whole” sounds like “hole,” and “fish” is slang for “vagina,” something that Speed well knew.

“Why, then, how stands the matter with them?” Speed asked.

Speed knew that “stand” was sometimes used for “have an erection.”

“Like this,” Launce said. “When it stands well with him, it

stands well with her.”

“What an ass are you! I don’t understand you,” Speed said, pretending not to understand.

“What a blockhead you are, since you cannot understand me!” Launce said. “Even my staff understands me.”

“What are you saying?”

“I say what I say, and I do what I do,” Launce replied. “Look, I’ll lean.”

He leaned on his staff and added, “My staff understands me.”

“It stands under you, indeed,” Speed said.

“Why, stand-under and under-stand is all one and the same thing.”

“But tell me truly,” Speed said. “Have Proteus and Julia made a marriage match? Will they be married?”

“Ask my dog,” Launce said. “If he says yes, there will a wedding. If he says no, there will be a wedding. If he shakes his tail and says nothing, there will be a wedding.”

“The conclusion then is that there will be a wedding,” Speed said.

“You shall never get such a secret from me except by a parable,” Launce said. “I will tell you such a secret only indirectly, not straightforwardly.”

“It is OK that I learn such a secret indirectly,” Speed said. “But, Launce, what do you say about this? My master has become a notable lover! He is in love! A lover!”

“I never knew him to be otherwise,” Launce said.

“Other than how?” Speed said.

“Other than what you said. A notable lubber,” Launce replied.

A lubber is a clumsy oaf.

“Why, you whoreson ass, you mistake me,” Speed said.

He meant that Launce had made a mistake in hearing “lubber,” not “lover,” but Launce thought that Speed was saying that he had made the mistake of calling Speed, not Valentine, a lubber.

“Why, fool, I wasn’t calling you a lubber; I meant your master.”

“I tell you, my master has become a hot lover,” Speed said.

“Why, I tell you, I don’t care even if he burns himself in love,” Launce said. “If you want, go with me to the alehouse. If you don’t go with me, you are a Hebrew, a Jew, and not worth the name of a Christian.”

“Why?”

“Because you do not have as much charity in you as it takes to go to the ale with a Christian. Will you go?”

The word “ale” used in this context could mean an alehouse or tavern, a country festival, or a church-ale, which was a festive fundraiser for a church.

“I am at your service,” Speed said, and he and Launce set off to go to an alehouse.

— 2.6 —

Proteus was alone in a room in the palace of the Duke of Milan.

He said to himself, “If I leave my Julia, I shall have broken my oath to love her. If I love Silvia, I shall have broken my

oath to be faithful to Julia. If I wrong Valentine, I shall have badly broken my oath to be his friend. But even that power that gave me first my oath provokes me to this threefold perjury: Love bade me swear to love Julia and Love now bids me not to love Julia but to love Silvia instead.

“Oh, sweetly tempting Love, if you have sinned by tempting me, teach me, your tempted subject, to excuse it! At first I adored Julia, who is a twinkling star, but now I worship Silvia, who is a celestial Sun.

“Heedless vows may be heedfully broken; a thoughtless vow may be broken after careful thought.

“The man who wants his settled and decided will to teach his intelligence to exchange the bad — Julia — for the better — Silvia — lacks intelligence. Damn my irreverent tongue! You call Julia bad, whose sovereignty so often you have declared with twenty thousand soul-strengthening oaths.

“I cannot stop loving, and yet I do; but I stop loving Julia and begin loving Silvia. In doing so, I lose Julia and I lose Valentine. If I keep them as my mistress and my friend, I necessarily must lose myself. If I lose them, I find something else by their loss. If I lose Valentine, I find myself. If I lose Julia, I find Silvia.

“I to myself am dearer than a friend, for love is still most precious in itself. And Silvia — Heaven, which made her beautiful, knows! — shows that Julia is nothing but a swarthy Ethiopian and ugly in comparison.

“I will forget that Julia is alive, remembering that my love for her is dead. And Valentine I’ll consider as an enemy, aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend.

“I cannot now prove to be faithful to myself, unless I am

treacherous to Valentine. Tonight he intends with a rope ladder to climb up to celestial Silvia's chamber-window. He has told me, his competitor for Silvia, this secret.

"Soon I'll give her father notice of their deceptive and intended flight. Her father, all enraged, will banish Valentine because her father intends that Thurio shall wed Silvia.

"But, once Valentine is gone, I'll quickly use some sly trick to thwart stupid Thurio's dull courtship of her.

"Love, lend me wings to achieve my goal swiftly, as you have lent me wit to plot this scheme!"

— 2.7 —

Julia and Lucetta were engaged in conversation in Julia's chamber in her father's house in Verona.

"Lucetta, give me advice," Julia said. "Gentle girl, assist me. With kind love I entreat you, who are the writing tablet wherein all my thoughts are visibly written and engraved, to teach me and tell me some good means by which I may honorably and without hurting my reputation undertake a journey to my loving Proteus in Milan."

"Sadly, the way to Milan is wearisome and long!" Lucetta said.

"A truly devoted pilgrim is not weary when it comes to crossing kingdoms with his feeble steps; much less weary shall she be who has Love's wings with which to fly and when the flight is made to one so dear, of such divine perfection, as Sir Proteus."

"You had better wait patiently until Proteus returns," Lucetta said.

"Oh, don't you know that his looks at me are my soul's

food? Pity the dearth of looks that have starved me and made me pine because I have been longing for that food for so long a time.

“If you knew the inward touch of love, you would as soon try to kindle fire by using snow as seek to quench the fire of love by using words.”

“I do not seek to quench your love’s hot fire, but I do seek to moderate the fire’s extreme rage, lest it should burn above the bounds of reason,” Lucetta said.

“The more you try to dam up the fire of love, the more it burns,” Julia said. “The current that with gentle murmur glides, you know, being stopped, impatiently rages. But when his fair course is not hindered, he makes sweet music with the enameled — variegated and brightly colored — stones, giving a gentle kiss to every grassy sedge that he overtakes in his pilgrimage, and so by many winding nooks he strays with willing sport to the wild ocean.

“If you let me go and do not hinder my course, I’ll be as patient as a gentle stream and make a pastime of each weary step, until the last step brings me to my love, and there I’ll rest, as after much turmoil a blessed soul does in Elysium, the blessed abode in the afterlife.”

“But what clothing will you wear during your journey?”

“I will not dress like a woman,” Julia said, “because I wish to prevent the immoral advances of lascivious men. Gentle Lucetta, outfit me with such clothing as some well-reputed page would wear.”

“Why, then, your ladyship must cut your hair,” Lucetta said.

“No, girl, I’ll tie my hair up in silken strings with twenty elaborate true-love knots. To be imaginative and fanciful

like that may suit a youth of greater age than I shall pretend to be.”

“In what fashion, madam, shall I make your breeches?”

“That question makes as much sense as ‘Tell me, my good lord, with what waist dimensions will you wear your farthingale?’”

A farthingale was a hooped skirt; of course, men did not wear them. Women in this society did not wear breeches.

Julia continued, “Why, make my breeches in whatever fashion you like best, Lucetta.”

“You must have breeches with a codpiece, madam.”

A codpiece was an attachment sewn onto the front of the breeches over the male genitals.

“Lucetta!” a shocked Julia said. “That would be ugly and unsightly.”

“The breeches you must wear are not worth a pin unless you have a codpiece to stick pins on.”

Some men decorated their codpieces with ornamental pins.

“Lucetta, as you love me, let me have whatever breeches you think suitable and most mannerly — I must appear to be a man, but I hope to appear to be a man of good manners. But tell me, lass, how will people regard me for undertaking so immodest a journey? I am afraid that people will regard my journey as scandalous.”

“If you think so, then stay at home and don’t go,” Lucetta said.

“No, I will not stay at home.”

“Then don’t worry about getting a bad reputation, but go. If

Proteus likes your journey when you come, it will not matter who's displeased when you are gone. I am afraid, however, that he will scarcely be pleased with your journey."

"That is the least, Lucetta, of my fears," Julia said. "A thousand oaths, an ocean of his tears, and particular instances of the infinity of his love guarantee that my Proteus will welcome me."

"All these are servants to deceitful men," Lucetta said. "Deceitful men swear oaths, cry, and seem to be infinitely loving."

"Base men use them for base purposes!" Julia said. "But truer stars governed Proteus' birth. The astrological influences on him are good. His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles, his love is sincere, his thoughts are immaculate, his tears are pure messengers sent from his heart, and his heart is as far from fraud as Heaven is from Earth."

"Pray to Heaven that he proves to be the man you think he is, when you see him in Milan!"

"Now, as you love me, don't do him the wrong of having a hard opinion of his truth. You can deserve my love only by loving him.

"Go with me now to my chamber, to take note of what I stand in need of to outfit me for my longing journey. All that is mine, I leave at your disposal: my goods, my lands, and my reputation. For all this I ask only that you help me leave here. Come, don't say anything, but hop to it immediately!

"I am impatient at my delay."

CHAPTER 3 (The Two Gentlemen of Verona)

— 3.1 —

The Duke of Milan, Thurio, and Proteus were in the garden of the Duke's palace in Milan.

The Duke of Milan said, "Sir Thurio, let us please be alone for a while. We have some secrets to confer about."

Thurio exited.

"Now, tell me, Proteus," the Duke of Milan said, "what do you want to talk about with me?"

"My gracious lord, that which I wish to reveal, the law of friendship bids me to conceal. But when I remember the gracious favors you have done for me, undeserving as I am, my duty to you urges me to utter that which otherwise no worldly good should draw from me.

"Know, worthy Prince, that Sir Valentine, my friend, this night intends to steal away with and elope with Silvia, your daughter. I myself was made privy to the plot. I know you have determined to bestow her on Thurio, whom your gentle daughter hates. And I know that if she should thus be stolen away from you, it would be very vexatious to you, especially at your age. Thus, for the sake of my duty to you, I rather chose to thwart my friend in his intended plot rather than, by concealing it, heap on your head a pack of sorrows that would press you down — if this elopement were not prevented — to your untimely grave."

"Proteus, I thank you for your honest concern for me," the Duke of Milan said. "To repay you, you can ask me for favors while I live.

"This love of theirs I myself have often seen, sometimes

when they have thought that I was fast asleep, and often I have thought about forbidding Sir Valentine to keep her company and to stay at my court. But because I was afraid that my suspicious guess might be wrong and could wrongly disgrace the man — I have always shunned rashness — I gave him gentle looks, hoping to find, if it were true, that which you have now disclosed to me.

“And, so that you may know I have feared this, knowing as I do that tender youth is soon tempted, I nightly lodge her in an upper tower, the key to which I have always kept, and from thence she cannot be conveyed away.”

Proteus replied, “Know, noble lord, that they have devised a means — a rope ladder — by which he will climb to her chamber-window and fetch her down. The youthful lover now has gone to fetch a rope ladder, and he will come this way with it soon. Here, if you please, you may intercept him. But, my good Lord, intercept him so cunningly that he will not know that I have told you about his plot. Love of you, and not hatred for my friend, has made me tell you about this plot.”

“Upon my honor, he shall never know that I had any information from you about this.”

“*Adieu*, my lord,” Proteus said. “Sir Valentine is coming.”

Proteus exited the garden.

The Duke of Milan called, “Sir Valentine, where are you going so quickly?”

Not wanting to be rude, Valentine walked over to the Duke of Milan and said, “If it please your grace, a messenger is waiting for me to give him my letters so that he can bear them to my friends, and I am going now to deliver my letters to him.”

“Are your letters important?”

“Their theme is my health and happiness at your court.”

“Then they are not important, so stay with me awhile,” the Duke of Milan said. “I want to talk with you about some affairs that closely concern me, which you must keep secret. You know that I have sought to match my friend Sir Thurio with my daughter; I want them to marry.”

“I know it well, my lord,” Valentine replied, “and, surely, the match will be rich and honorable; besides, the gentleman is full of virtue, bounty, worth, and qualities that are befitting for such a wife as your fair daughter. Cannot your Grace persuade her to fancy and love him?”

“No, trust me; she is obstinate, sullen, perverse, proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty. She neither acts like my child should act nor reveres me as a child should revere her father. And, may I say to you that this pride of hers, upon reflection, has made me cease to love her. I had thought that her child-like duty would have treated me with affection and kindness for the rest of my life, but I now am fully resolved to take a wife and turn out my daughter to whoever will take her in. I will let Silvia’s beauty be her wedding-dowry because she does not value me and my possessions.”

“What does your Grace want me to do in this matter?”

“There is a lady of Verona whom I love and am aiming to obtain as a wife, but she is fastidious and shy, and she does not esteem my aged eloquence. Therefore, I want you to be my tutor now — because long ago I forgot how to court a woman; besides, the fashion of the time has changed — and teach me how to act so that her Sun-bright eyes will value me.”

The Duke of Milan had chosen to pretend that he loved a

woman of Verona so that he could more plausibly ask Valentine, who was from Verona, to advise him.

“Win her with gifts,” Valentine advised, “if she does not pay attention to words. More than quick and lively words, dumb jewels often in their silent nature move a woman’s mind.”

“But she scorned a present that I sent her,” the Duke of Milan replied.

“A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her,” Valentine said. “Send her another gift; never give up on obtaining her. A woman may scorn at first, but that makes the love that follows all the more. If she frowns, it is not because she hates you, but rather she frowns to make love grow greater in you. If she criticizes you, it is not to have you leave. Why, the fools become insane, if they are left alone. Take no repulse, whatever she says. If she says, ‘Get out,’ she does not mean ‘Go away!’ Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces; even if their faces are black, say they have angels’ faces. Any man who has a tongue, I say, is no man, if with his tongue he cannot win a woman.”

“But she whom I am talking about has been promised by her family to a youthful gentleman of worth, and she is kept severely from the visits of men, so no man has access by day to her.”

“Why, if you can’t see her by day, then I advise you to visit her by night.”

“Yes, but the doors are locked and the keys are kept safe, so that no man has recourse to her by night,” the Duke of Milan said.

“What prevents anyone from entering her chamber through her window?”

“Her chamber is aloft, far from the ground, and it is built so that it juts out and no one can climb it without obvious risk to his life.”

“Why then, a ladder skillfully made of rope, to cast up, with a pair of anchoring hooks, would serve to scale another Hero’s tower — bold Leander would risk it.”

Leander swam across the Hellespont so he could visit Hero, his beloved, in her tower. She lit a lamp to guide him there.

The Duke of Milan said, “Now, as you are a nobly born gentleman, tell me where I may find such a ladder.”

“When would you use it? Please, sir, tell me that.”

“This very night; for Love is like a child, who longs for everything that he can come by.”

“By seven o’clock, I’ll get you such a ladder,” Valentine said.

“But, listen,” the Duke of Milan said. “I will go to her alone. How shall I best carry the ladder there?”

“The rope ladder will be light enough, my lord, that you may carry it under a cloak that has some length.”

“Will a cloak as long as yours serve the purpose?”

“Yes, my good lord.”

“Then let me see your cloak,” the Duke of Milan said. “I’ll get me a cloak of the same length.”

“Why, any cloak will serve the purpose, my lord.”

“How shall I accustom myself to wearing a cloak?” the Duke of Milan asked. “Please, let me feel your cloak upon me.”

He pulled Valentine’s cloak off him and said, “What letter

is this? What's here? It is addressed, 'To Silvia'! And here is a rope ladder suitable for my plan. I'll be so bold for once to break the seal of this letter."

He broke the seal and read the letter out loud:

"My thoughts do lodge with my Silvia nightly,

"And slaves they are to me who send them flying:

"Oh, could their master come and go as freely and lightly,

"He himself would lodge where insensible they are lying!

"My message-bearing thoughts in the pocket over your pure bosom rest:

"While I, their king, who hither them urge and press,

"Do curse the grace, aka honor, that with such grace, aka success, has blessed them,

"Because I myself do lack my thoughts' fortune:

"I curse myself, for my thoughts are sent by me,

"That they should lodge where their lord would be."

The Duke of Milan said, "What else is here?"

He read the rest of the letter out loud:

"Silvia, this night I will free you."

The Duke of Milan said, "What is written in this letter is true, and here's the rope ladder that you intended to use to elope with my daughter.

"Why, Phaëthon — for you are Merops' son — will you aspire to guide the Heavenly car and with your daring folly burn the world? Will you try to reach stars because they shine on you?"

The Duke of Milan was referring to the myth of Phaëthon.

Phaëthon went to his father, the god Apollo, and asked to be allowed to drive the Sun-chariot across the sky and bring light to the world. But Phaëthon, doomed youth, was unable to control the stallions, and they ran wildly away with the Sun-chariot, wreaking havoc and destruction upon Humankind and the world by making the chariot come so close to the Earth that it set the Earth on fire. The King of the gods, Jupiter, saved Humankind and the world by throwing a thunderbolt at Phaëthon and killing him.

Although Phaëthon was the son of the god Apollo, the Duke of Milan said that he was the son of Merops, who was the mortal man who had married Phaëthon's mother. The Duke of Milan was accusing Valentine of arrogant ambition, of trying to marry a woman who was above him: Silvia, the daughter of the Duke of Milan, who was also an Emperor.

The Duke of Milan continued, "Go, base intruder! Go, arrogant rogue! Bestow your fawning smiles on equal mates — women of your own social class — and know that my patience, more than anything you deserve, is the reason for your being allowed to depart from here. I could do worse to you than banish you! Thank me for this more than for all the too numerous favors I have given to you.

"But if you linger in my territories longer than the swiftest action will give you time to leave our royal court, by Heaven my wrath shall far exceed the love I ever bore my daughter or yourself.

"Be gone! I will not hear your vain excuses, but if you love your life, go speedily from here."

The Duke of Milan exited.

"Why not give me death rather than living torment?"

Valentine asked. “To die is to be banished from myself, and Silvia is myself. To be banished from her is to have self banished from self — a deadly banishment!

“What light is light, if Silvia is not seen? What joy is joy, if Silvia is not nearby, unless it is to *think* that she is nearby and feed upon the image but not the reality of perfection?

“Unless I am by Silvia in the night, there is no music in the nightingale.

“Unless I look upon Silvia during the day, there is no day for me to look upon.

“She is my essence, my very life, and I cease to exist, if I am not by her fair influence fostered, illumined, cherished, kept alive.

“If I flee from his deadly doom, I am fleeing from death. If I stay here, I must expect death, but if I flee from here, I fly away from life.”

Proteus and Launce appeared, seeking Valentine.

Proteus said to Launce, “Run, boy, run, run, and seek him out.”

Launce saw Valentine and cried, “Soho! Soho!”

This hunting cry meant that the game — for example, a hare — had been sighted.

“What do you see?” Proteus asked.

“I see him whom we set out to find,” Launce said. “There’s not a hair on his head but it is a Valentine.”

A Valentine is a true lover right down to each of his hairs. But can Valentine be a true lover of a woman from whose presence he has been banished? In such a case, can Valentine be Valentine?

“Valentine?” Proteus asked.

“No,” Valentine replied.

“Who are you, then?” Proteus asked. “His ghost?”

“I am not his ghost, either,” Valentine replied.

“What are you then?”

“Nothing,” Valentine replied.

“Can nothing speak?” Launce asked. “Master, shall I strike? Shall I hit?”

“Who would you strike?” Proteus asked.

“Nothing,” Launce said.

“Villain, stop,” Proteus said to Launce.

“Why, sir, I’ll strike nothing,” Launce said.

He meant that he would not strike anything; even if he tried to strike a ghost, he would hit nothing because a ghost has no body.

Launce said to Proteus, “Please —”

Proteus interrupted, “Sirrah, I say, stop. Friend Valentine, let me have a word with you.”

“My ears are stopped and cannot hear good news because they have already heard so much bad news,” Valentine replied.

“Then in dumb silence I will bury my news because it is harsh, disagreeable, and bad,” Proteus said.

“Is Silvia dead?”

“No, Valentine.”

“There is no Valentine, indeed, for sacred Silvia. Has she

forsworn and renounced me?”

“No, Valentine.”

“There is no Valentine, if Silvia has forsworn and renounced me. What is your news?”

Launce said, “Sir, there is a proclamation that you are vanished.”

Launce frequently misused words. Instead of “vanished,” he meant “banished.”

Someone hearing Launce and the others talk might think that being sentenced to death would be worse than being banished, although Valentine thought that banishment from Silvia would result in his death.

Proteus said, “That you are banished — oh, that’s the news! You have been banished from here, from Silvia, and from me, your friend.”

“Oh, I have fed upon this woe already,” Valentine said, “and now excess of it will make me become ill from overeating. Does Silvia know that I am banished?”

“Yes, yes,” Proteus said, “and she has tried to get her father’s judgment on you reversed. Unless it is reversed, it shall be carried out in full. To her father she has offered a sea of melting pearl, which some call tears. She tendered those pearls at her father’s churlish feet. Along with her tears, she offered, upon her knees, her humble self. She wrung her hands, whose whiteness so suited them as if just now they grew pale for woe. But neither bended knees, pure hands held up, sad sighs, deep groans, nor silver-shedding tears could penetrate her uncompassionate father.

“His judgment is that Valentine, if he is captured, must die. Besides, her intercession on your behalf enraged him so, when she was a suppliant to him for your banishment to be

repealed, that he commanded that she be held prisoner in a private cell and he made many bitter threats that she would remain there.”

“Say nothing more, unless the next word that you speak will have some malignant power upon my life and kill me,” Valentine said. “If that word does have that power, then I beg you to breathe it in my ear; let it be the funeral anthem of my endless pain.”

“Cease to lament for that you cannot help,” Proteus advised, “and think about help for that which you lament. Time is the nurse and breeder of all good.

“If you stay here, you cannot see your loved one. Besides, your staying will shorten your life. Hope is a lover’s staff; walk away from here with that and wield hope against despairing thoughts.

“Your letters may be here, even though you are away from here. You can write to Silvia and send the letters to me, and I shall deliver them to the milky-white bosom of your love.

“We lack time for further discussion. Come, I’ll take you through the city-gate; and, before I part with you, we will talk fully of all that may concern your love affairs.

“As you love Silvia, though you may not be concerned about safety for yourself, think about the danger you are in, and come along with me!”

Valentine requested, “Please, Launce, if you see my page, Speed, tell him to make haste and meet me at the North Gate.”

“Go, sirrah, and find him,” Proteus ordered. “Come, Valentine.”

“Oh, my dear Silvia! I am unlucky, unfortunate Valentine!”

Valentine and Proteus exited.

Alone, Launce said to himself, “I am only a fool, you see, and yet I have the wit to think that my master is a kind of a knave, but that’s all one, if he is only one knave. He is a single knave, but if he were to use guile to marry a woman whom his best friend wanted to marry, that would make him more than a single knave.”

Launce believed that what is in one’s heart is important, but it is not as important as what one actually does. Proteus wanted in his heart to be disloyal to Julia and Valentine and to marry Silvia, but that is not as evil as would be actually marrying Silvia. Launce might believe that having in one’s heart the desire to commit rape is evil, but that is not as evil as would be actually committing rape.

Launce continued, “No man lives now who knows that I am in love, yet I am in love, but a team of horses shall not pluck that from me, nor whom it is I love, and yet it is a woman, but what woman she is, I will not tell myself, and yet she is a milkmaid, yet she is not a maid [aka maiden], for she has had older women as godmothers to her progeny, yet she is a maid, because she is her master’s maid and serves for wages.”

On a farm, one animal can service — have sex with — another animal. If Launce’s girlfriend provided that kind of service for wages, she was a prostitute.

Launce added, “She has more qualities than a water-spaniel, which is much in a bare Christian.”

“Qualities” are accomplishments. Water-spaniels are submissive dogs, and men in this society wanted their wives to be submissive, and so this was a positive point for Launce’s girlfriend. Water-spaniels were supposed to be fonder of their master the more their master beat them.

The word “bare” meant “mere.” According to Launce, his girlfriend was a mere Christian.

Launce pulled out a paper and said, “Here is the cate-log of her condition.”

In this society, a “cate” was a delicacy, and a “Kate” could be a whore. Some Kates were cates.

He read, “*Imprimis: She can fetch and carry.*”

He commented, “Why, a horse can do no more — no, a horse cannot fetch, but only carry; therefore, she is better than a jade.”

A jade is a worthless horse — or a worthless woman.

He read, “*Item: She can milk.*”

He commented, “You can see that this is a sweet virtue in a maid with clean hands.”

The sentence “She can milk” could refer to milking a cow — or a penis.

Speed walked over to Launce and said, “How are you now, Signior Launce! What is the news about your mastership?”

“About my master’s ship?” Launce replied. “Why, it is at sea.”

“Well, this is your old vice still,” Speed said. “You mistake — misinterpret — the word. What news, then, is in the paper that you have in your hands?”

“The blackest news that ever you heard.”

“Why, man, how black?”

“Why, as black as ink.”

“Let me read the news that is in your paper,” Speed said.

“That is likely, you blockhead! You cannot read.”

“You lie; I can.”

“I will test you,” Launce said. “Tell me this: Who begot you?”

“Indeed, the son of my grandfather.”

“Oh, you illiterate and lazy loiterer!” Launce said. “It was the son of your grandmother.”

In the days before DNA testing, only a mother knew whether her son was legitimate. According to Launce, a literate man should have read that.

Launce added, “Your answer proves that you cannot read.”

“Come, fool, come; test my literacy with your paper.”

Launce handed Speed the paper and said, “There; and may St. Nicholas be your speed! Let him be your aid!”

St. Nicholas was the patron saint of scholars, especially young scholars.

Speed read, “*Imprimis: She can milk.*”

Launce commented, “Yes, that she can.”

Speed read, “*Item: She brews good ale.*”

Launce commented, “And thereof comes this proverb: ‘Blessing of your heart, you brew good ale.’”

Speed read, “*Item: She can sew.*”

Launce commented, “That’s as much as to say, Can she so?”

Speed read, “*Item: She can knit.*”

Launce commented, “What need a man care for a stock,

aka dowry, with a wench, when she can knit him a stock, aka stocking?”

Speed read, “*Item: She can wash and scour.*”

Launce commented, “That is a special virtue because then she herself need not be washed and scoured.”

Speed read, “*Item: She can spin.*”

Launce commented, “Then may I set the world on wheels, when she can spin for her living.”

Anyone who is able to set the world on wheels leads an easy and comfortable life.

Speed read, “*Item: She has many nameless virtues.*”

A nameless virtue is a virtue of such great worth that it cannot be named — or a virtue of such smallness that it need not be named.

Launce commented, “Nameless virtues are virtues without names. That’s as much as to say, bastard virtues; they, indeed, know not their fathers and therefore have no names.”

Speed read, “*Here follow her vices.*”

Launce added, “Close at the heels of her virtues.”

Speed read, “*Item: She is not to be kissed fasting in respect of her breath.*”

In other words, her morning breath was so bad that it was not a good idea to kiss her first thing in the morning.

Launce commented, “Well, that fault may be mended with a breakfast. Once she breaks her fast, her breath does not smell so bad because she has washed her mouth with food. Read on.”

Speed read, "*Item: She has a sweet mouth.*"

A sweet mouth could mean a sweet tooth, or it could mean a pretty mouth, or it could mean a lascivious mouth.

Launce commented, "That makes amends for her sour breath."

Speed read, "*Item: She talks in her sleep.*"

Launce commented, "That does not matter as long as she does not sleep in her talk."

Speed read, "*Item: She is slow in words.*"

Launce commented, "Oh, a villain set this down among her vices! To be slow in words is a woman's only virtue. Please, take it out of the list of vices and place it first among her virtues."

Speed read, "*Item: She is proud.*"

Launce commented, "Take that out, too. Pride is the legacy of Eve in the Garden of Eden myth; pride cannot be taken from this or any woman."

Speed read, "*Item: She has no teeth.*"

Launce commented, "I don't mind that because I love to eat crusts."

Speed read, "*Item: She is curst.*"

A curst woman was a shrew and/or a dangerous woman.

Launce commented, "Well, the best thing about that is, she has no teeth to bite."

Speed read, "*Item: She will often praise her liquor.*"

Launce commented, "If her liquor is good, she shall praise it. If she will not, I will because good things should be

appraised and praised.”

Speed read, “*Item: She is too liberal.*”

In this society, the word “liberal” meant either “generous” or “lascivious.”

Launce commented, “She cannot be liberal with her tongue because it is written down that she is slow of word. She shall not be liberal with her purse because I’ll keep that shut. Now, of another thing she may be liberal — that thing between her legs — and that I cannot help. Well, proceed.”

Speed read, “*Item: She has more hair than wit, and more faults than hairs, and more wealth than faults.*”

Launce said, “Stop there. I’ll have her. She was mine, and not mine, twice or thrice in that last item. Read that once more.”

Speed read, “*Item: She has more hair than wit —*”

Launce said, “More hair than wit? That may be the truth — yes, it is the truth, and I’ll prove it. The cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than the salt; the hair that covers the wit is more than the wit because the greater hides the less.”

Launce was using this proverb: “The greater hides the less.” Salt cellars — now we may call the modern version salt shakers — of the time were much larger than they are now. Imagine a plate on which salt has been poured, and then imagine that plate has been covered with a large lid. The lid is big enough to cover the salt and so it is greater than the salt.

The word “salt” also had the meaning of “wit,” aka intelligence. Hair covers the head, and so hair covers the wit and so Launce’s girlfriend has more hair than she has wit. A bald person tends to be an aged person with

experience, and so a bald person tends to have more wit than hair. A young person without experience tends to have a full head of hair. In Launce's society, men were considered to be of more value — and have more intelligence — than females.

Another meaning of the word "salt" was "lechery." A salty wit is a lascivious wit, and it may be worth pointing out that pubic hair covers the center of female lasciviousness.

Launce asked, "What's next?"

Speed read, "*Item: — and she has more faults than hairs —*"

Launce commented, "That's monstrous. Oh, I wish that that were off the list of vices!"

Speed read, "*— and she has more wealth than faults.*"

Launce commented, "Why, that word — 'wealth' — makes the faults gracious. The more faults, the more wealth. Well, I'll have her — I wish to marry her — and if it be a match, as nothing is impossible —"

This is the whole proverb: "Nothing is impossible to a willing heart."

Speed asked, "What then?"

He meant what is the rest of what you were going to say?

Launce replied, "Why, then, I will tell you — that your master is waiting for you at the North Gate."

"For me?" Speed asked.

"For you!" Launce exclaimed. "Yes, who are you? He has waited for a better man than you."

"And must I go to him?"

“You must run to him, for you have stayed so long that merely going — walking — will scarcely serve the purpose.”

“Why didn’t you tell me sooner?” Speed complained. “A pox on your love letters!”

Speed exited.

Launce said to himself, “Now he will be beaten for reading my letter instead of going to Valentine. Speed is an unmannerly slave who insists on thrusting himself into secrets! I’ll follow him so I can see and enjoy the young page’s punishment.”

— 3.2 —

The Duke of Milan and Thurio were speaking to each other in a room of the Duke’s palace.

The Duke of Milan said, “Sir Thurio, don’t be afraid that she will not love you now Valentine has been banished from her sight.”

“Since his exile, she has despised me most, forsworn my company and ranted at me, and now I despair of ever getting her as my wife,” Thurio said.

“This weak imprint of love that she has for Valentine is like a figure carved in ice, which with an hour’s heat melts to water and loses its form,” the Duke of Milan said. “A little time will melt her frozen thoughts and worthless Valentine shall be forgotten.”

Proteus entered the room and the Duke of Milan said to him, “How are you now, Sir Proteus! Has your countryman, Valentine, gone from our territory in accordance with our proclamation?”

“He has gone, my good lord.”

“My daughter takes his going sorrowfully.”

“A little time, my lord, will kill that grief,” Proteus said.

“So I believe,” the Duke of Milan said, “but Thurio thinks that is not true. Proteus, the good opinion I hold of you — for you have shown some signs that you have great merit — makes me the readier to confer with you.”

“Longer than I prove loyal to your grace, let me not live to look upon your grace,” Proteus said. “If I should ever prove to be disloyal to you, have me killed.”

“You know how willingly I want to make a marriage match between Sir Thurio and my daughter,” the Duke of Milan said.

“I do, my lord,” Proteus replied.

“And also, I think, you are not ignorant about how she opposes herself against my will.”

“She did, my lord, when Valentine was here.”

“Yes, and perversely she perseveres,” the Duke of Milan said. “What might we do to make the girl forget her love of Valentine and make her love Sir Thurio?”

“The best way is to slander Valentine by saying that he is guilty of falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent,” Proteus said. “These are three things that women highly hate.”

“Yes, but she’ll think that it is spoken out of hatred and is false,” the Duke of Milan said.

“Yes, it would be — if Valentine’s enemy were to deliver it. Therefore, it must with the addition of circumstantial ‘evidence’ be spoken by one whom she believes to be Valentine’s friend.”

“Then you must undertake to slander him,” the Duke of

Milan said.

“And that, my lord, I shall be loath to do,” Proteus replied. “It is an evil office for a gentleman, especially when done against his true friend.”

“Where your good word cannot advantage him, your slander can never damage him,” the Duke of Milan said. “Therefore, the act of slander is neither good nor bad, since I, your friend, am entreating you to do it.”

The Duke of Milan was every bit as devious as Proteus.

“You have prevailed, my lord,” Proteus said. “If I can do it with whatever I can speak in his dispraise, she shall not long continue to love him. But say this slander weeds and removes her love from Valentine, it does not necessarily follow that she will love Sir Thurio.”

Thurio said, “Therefore, as you unwind her love from him, lest it should become tangled and be good to no one, you must work to wind her love on me. This must be done by praising my worth as much as you dispraise Sir Valentine’s worth.”

“And, Proteus, we dare trust you in this matter because we know, on Valentine’s report, that you are already Love’s firm disciple,” the Duke of Milan said. “You love Julia, and you cannot soon revolt and change your mind. Because of your love for a woman who is not my daughter, you shall have access to Silvia so that you and she can talk at length because she is dull, heavy, and melancholy, and, for your friend Valentine’s sake, she will be glad to speak to you. You can use this opportunity to mold her by your persuasion to hate young Valentine and to love my friend Thurio.”

“As much as I can do, I will do,” Proteus said. “But you, Sir Thurio, are not sharp and keen and ardent enough. You

must lay a trap to entangle her desires by using plaintive songs, whose elaborately constructed rhymes should be jam-packed with your vows to serve her.”

“Yes,” the Duke of Milan said. “Strong is the force of Heaven-inspired poetry.”

Proteus said to Thurio, “Say that upon the altar of her beauty you sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart. Write until your ink is dry, and with your tears moisten it again, and fashion some feeling line that may reveal your undivided devotion.

“Remember that Orpheus’ lute was strung with the sinews of poets, and Orpheus’ golden touch on the strings could soften steel and stones, make tigers tame, and make huge leviathans — whales — forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.

“After your deeply sorrowful love songs, visit by night your lady’s chamber-window with some sweet musicians; to their instruments tune a mournful melody. The night’s dead silence will well become such sweetly complaining love pains.

“This, or else nothing, will gain her for you.”

The Duke of Milan said to Proteus, “This advice shows that you have been in love.”

Thurio added, “And your advice I’ll put into effect tonight. Therefore, sweet Proteus, my instructions-giver, let us go into the city immediately to find some gentlemen who are well skilled in music.

“I have a song that will serve the purpose of beginning to put into effect your good advice.”

“Go about it, gentlemen!” the Duke of Milan said. “Get started!”

Proteus said, “We’ll wait upon your grace until after supper, and afterward we will determine how to proceed.”

“Don’t wait!” the Duke of Milan said. “Get started now! I will pardon you from having to wait upon me.”

CHAPTER 4 (The Two Gentlemen of Verona)

— 4.1 —

Some outlaws were talking together in a forest.

The first outlaw said, “Fellows, stand fast; I see a traveler.”

“If there are ten travelers, do not shrink and be afraid, but down with them,” the second outlaw said.

Valentine and Speed approached the outlaws.

The third outlaw said, “Stand — stop — sir, and throw us that which you have about you. If you don’t, we’ll make you sit down and we will search and rob you.”

Speed said to Valentine, “Sir, we are undone and ruined; these are the villains whom all the travellers fear so much.”

Valentine began, “My friends —”

“That’s not so, sir,” the first outlaw said. “We are your enemies.”

The second outlaw said, “Quiet! Peace! Let’s hear what he has to say.”

“Yes, by my beard,” the third outlaw said, “we will because he’s a handsome man.”

Valentine said, “Then know that I have little wealth to lose. I am a man who is thwarted by adversity. My riches are these poor pieces of clothing, of which if you should here strip and dispossess me, you take the sum and substance of what I own.”

The second outlaw asked Valentine, “Where are you traveling?”

“To Verona.”

“From where have you come?” the first outlaw asked.

“From Milan.”

“Have you lived there long?” the third outlaw asked.

“Some sixteen months, and I might have stayed longer, if devious fortune had not thwarted me,” Valentine replied.

“Were you banished from Milan?” the first outlaw asked.

“I was.”

The second outlaw asked, “For what offence?”

Valentine decided to lie. He did not want to say that he loved Silvia and had tried to elope with her — that might damage her reputation. Also, he wanted to say something that might impress the outlaws, and a failed elopement was unlikely to do that.

Valentine said, “I was banished for an offense which now torments me to relate. I killed a man, whose death I much repent, but yet I slew him manfully in a fight without an unfair advantage or base and dishonorable treachery.”

“Why, don’t repent it, if it were done in that manner,” the first outlaw said. “But were you really banished for so small a fault?”

“I was,” Valentine said, “and I am happy that I was given such a sentence. Being banished is better than being executed.”

“Do you know foreign languages?” the second outlaw asked.

“My youthful travel and travail — hard study — therein made me happy and fluent,” Valentine said, “or else I often

had been miserable.”

“By the bare scalp of Robin Hood’s fat friar, Friar Tuck, this fellow could be a King for our wild band!” the third outlaw said.

“We’ll make him our King,” the first outlaw said.

He said to the other outlaws, “Sirs, a word.”

The outlaws withdrew and talked.

Speed said to Valentine, “Master, be an outlaw along with them; it’s an honorable kind of thievery.”

“Peace, servant!” Valentine said. “Quiet!”

The second outlaw asked Valentine, “Tell us this: Have you any resources to fall back on?”

“Nothing but my fortune — whatever fate or destiny has in store for me.”

The third outlaw said, “Know, then, that some of us are gentlemen, such as the fury of ungoverned youth has thrust from the company of lawful men. I myself was banished from Verona for plotting to steal away with a lady who was an heir and closely related to the Duke of Verona.”

The second outlaw said, “And I was banished from Mantua because in my anger I stabbed a gentleman in the heart.”

The first outlaw said, “And I was banished for similar petty crimes as these, but let’s get to the point. We cite our crimes so that they may excuse our lawless lives. And partly, seeing that you are beautified with a good shape and by your own report are a linguist and a man of such perfection as we do much want in our band—”

“—indeed, because you are a banished man,” the second outlaw said. “For that reason, above all the other reasons,

we will discuss terms with you. Are you willing to become our general? Are you willing to make a virtue of necessity and live, as we do, in this wilderness?"

"What do you say?" the third outlaw said. "Will you be one of our band of outlaws? Say yes, and you will be the Captain of us all. We'll do you homage and be ruled by you, and we will love you as our commander and our King."

"But if you scorn our courtesy and our offer, you die," the first outlaw said.

"You shall not live to brag about what we have offered you," the second outlaw said.

Valentine replied, "I accept your offer and will live with you, provided that you do no outrages on helpless women or poor travelers."

"No, we detest such vile and base and dishonorable practices," the third outlaw said. "Come, go with us, we'll bring you to our crews and show you all the treasure we have got, which, along with ourselves, all rest at your disposal."

— 4.2 —

Outside the Duke of Milan's palace, under the upper-story window of Silvia's chamber, Proteus stood.

He said to himself, "Already I have been traitorous to Valentine and now I must be as unjust to Thurio. Under the pretext of commending and praising him, I have access to Silvia and can promote my own love for her.

"But Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy and virtuous, to be corrupted with my worthless gifts. When I protest true loyalty to her, she twits me with my falsehood to my friend Valentine. When to her beauty I commend my vows, she

orders me to think about how I have broken my word by breaking faith with Julia, whom I loved.

“And notwithstanding all her sharp sarcastic insults, the least of which would quell a lover’s hope, yet I am like a spaniel — the more she spurns my love, the more my love grows and the more I fawn on her still.

“But here comes Thurio. Now we must go to her window, and play some evening music to her ears.”

Thurio arrived with some musicians.

“How are you now, Sir Proteus?” Thurio asked. “Have you crept before us?”

Thurio was suspicious about Proteus’ presence under Silvia’s tower.

“Yes, nobly born Thurio,” Proteus replied, “for you know that love will creep in service where it cannot walk upright.”

“Yes, but I hope, sir, that you love no one here.”

“Sir, I do,” Proteus said. “If I did not, I would be elsewhere.”

“Who do you love? Silvia?”

“Yes, Silvia — for your sake,” Proteus replied.

“I thank you for your own sake,” Thurio said. “Now, gentlemen, let’s play and go to it heartily for awhile.”

At a distance, the host of a local inn arrived. With him was Julia, who was disguised in the clothing of a young page and who called herself Sebastian. They were close enough to hear what Proteus and the others said.

The Host said, “Now, my young guest, I think you’re

allycholly. Please, tell me why.”

“My Host, I am melancholy because I cannot be merry,”
the disguised Julia said.

This was a variation of the proverb “I am sad because I
cannot be glad.”

The Host said, “Come, we’ll have you merry. I’ll bring you
where you shall hear music and see the gentleman whom
you asked for.”

“But shall I hear him speak?” the disguised Julia asked.

“Yes, that you shall.”

“That will be music,” the disguised Julia replied.

Music played.

The Host said, “Listen! Listen!”

“Is he among these people?” the disguised Julia asked.

“Yes, but be quiet! Let’s hear them.”

Proteus played the lute and sang these lyrics:

“Who is Silvia? What is she,

“That all our lovers praise her?”

“Holy, fair, and wise is she;

“The Heaven such grace did lend her,

“So that she might admired be.

“Is she as kind and gracious as she is fair?”

“For beauty lives with kindness.

“Love does to her eyes hasten,

“To help him with his blindness,

“And, being helped, lives there.

“Then to Silvia let us sing,

“That Silvia is excelling;

“She excels each mortal thing

“Upon the dull Earth dwelling.

“To her let us garlands bring.”

Julia was dejected because Proteus, the man she loved, was singing a love song to another woman.

The Host said, “What’s going on! Are you more downcast than you were before? How are you, man? The music likes you not.”

By “likes,” the Host meant “pleases.”

The disguised Julia replied, “You are mistaken; the musician likes me not.”

“Why, my pretty youth?”

In this society, one of the meanings of the word “father” was a title of respect for an old man.

“He plays false, father,” the disguised Julia said.

By “playing false,” Julia meant that Proteus was not being faithful to her.

“How? Are the strings out of tune?”

“They are not, but yet they are so false that he grieves my very heartstrings.”

Proteus’ heartstrings were out of tune; they should have been in tune with Julia’s heartstrings.

“You have a quick ear,” the Host said.

“Yes, but I wish I were deaf,” the disguised Julia said. “My quick ear makes me have a gloomy, dejected heart.”

“I see that you don’t take delight in music.”

“Not a whit, when it jars so.”

To “jar” meant “to sound discordant” and “to hurt.”

The Host said, “Listen, what fine change is in the music!”

The “change” the Host meant was modulation and variation.

The disguised Julia replied, “Yes, that change is the annoying spite.”

The “change” she meant was the change in Proteus’ heart.

The Host asked, “Would you have them always play only one thing?”

“I would always have one play only one thing,” the disguised Julia replied.

She meant that Proteus should desire only one woman — Julia — and be faithful to her.

She added, “But, Host, does this Sir Proteus whom we are talking about often pay attention to this gentlewoman?”

“I will tell you what Launce, his man-servant, told me,” the Host replied. “Launce told me that Sir Proteus loves her beyond all reckoning.”

“Where is Launce?”

“Gone to seek his dog,” the Host replied. “Tomorrow, by his master’s command, Launce must take his dog so it can be given as a present to Proteus’ lady.”

“Peace! Quiet!” the disguised Julia said. “Stand to one side. The company departs.”

Proteus said, “Sir Thurio, do not fear. I will so plead to Silvia that you shall say my cunning scheme excels.”

“Where shall we meet?” Thurio asked.

“At Saint Gregory’s well,” Proteus replied.

“Farewell,” Thurio said.

Thurio and the musicians exited.

Silvia appeared at the window of her chamber and looked down on Proteus.

“Madam, good evening to your ladyship,” Proteus said.

“I thank you for your music, gentlemen,” Silvia said. Her eyes had not adjusted to the darkness and she did not know that the musicians had departed.

She asked, “Who is that man who spoke?”

“I am a man, who, if you knew his pure heart’s truth, you would quickly learn to know him by his voice.”

“Sir Proteus, as I take it,” Silvia said.

“I am Sir Proteus, gentle lady, and I am your servant.”

“What’s your will?” Silvia asked. “What do you want?”

“I want to obtain your will,” Proteus said.

“Will” meant “wish.” It also meant “sexual desire.”

“You have your wish,” Silvia said. “This is my will: I wish for you to immediately hurry off home to bed. You are a treacherously cunning, perjured, false, disloyal man! Do you think that I am so shallow, so dense, and so unintelligent that I will allow myself to be seduced by the

flattery of you, who have deceived so many with your vows?

“Return, return, and make your love — Julia — amends. For me, by this pale queen of night — the Moon, Diana, the virgin goddess of chastity — I swear that I am so far from granting your request that I despise you for your wrongful wooing of me, and by and by I intend to chide myself even for this time that I spend in talking to you.”

“I grant, sweet love, that I did love a lady,” Proteus said, “but she is dead.”

Julia thought, *That is false, even if I — who am now Sebastian, not Julia — should speak it because I am sure she is not buried.*

“Let’s say that she is dead,” Silvia said, “yet Valentine, who is your friend, survives; to whom, as you yourself are witness, I am betrothed. Aren’t you ashamed to wrong Valentine with your persistent wooing of me?”

“I likewise hear that Valentine is dead,” Proteus lied.

“And so suppose I am,” Silvia said, “because you can assure yourself that my love is buried in his grave.”

“Sweet lady, let me rake your love from the earth.”

“Go to your lady’s grave and call her love from thence, or at the least, bury your love in her grave.”

Julia thought, *Proteus did not hear that.*

Proteus said to Silvia, “Madam, if your heart is so obdurate, grant me your picture for my love. Give me the picture that is hanging in your chamber. To that I’ll speak, to that I’ll sigh and weep. Because the substance — the essential part — of your perfect self is elsewhere devoted, I am only a shadow, and to your shadow I will make true love.”

Julia thought, *If the image in the picture were a substance — a solid, real thing — you would, surely, deceive it, and make it only a shadow, as I am. Because of heartbreak and my disguise, I have been changed from my real self — I am only a shadow of my real self.*

“I am very loath to be your idol, sir,” Silvia said, “but since your falsehood shall become you well to worship shadows and adore false shapes, send someone to me in the morning and I’ll send the picture to you, and so, have a good rest.”

Silvia was being insulting to Proteus. She was saying that he was the type of man who ought to love a mere picture and not a real woman.

Proteus replied, “I shall rest as well as wretches do who wait overnight for their execution in the morning.”

Proteus walked away, and Silvia went back into her chamber.

The disguised Julia asked, “Host, are you ready to go?”

“By my Christian faith, I was fast asleep.”

“Please tell me, where is Sir Proteus staying?”

“At my inn,” the Host replied. “Trust me, I think it is almost day.”

“It is not almost day,” the disguised Julia said, “but it has been the longest night that I have stayed awake and the very heaviest.”

The word “heaviest” meant both “darkest” and “most sorrowful.”

— 4.3 —

Very early the next morning, Sir Eglamour stood alone under the window of Silvia’s chamber. He was not the

same Eglamour who had been one of Julia's wooers.

He said to himself, "This is the hour that Madam Silvia entreated me to call and know her mind. There's some great matter she shall employ me in."

He called, "Madam! Madam!"

Silvia appeared at her window and asked, "Who is calling me?"

"Your servant and your friend," Eglamour replied, "one who attends your ladyship's command."

"Sir Eglamour, a thousand times good morning," Silvia said.

"As many, worthy lady, to yourself. In accordance with your ladyship's command, I am thus early come to know in what service it is your pleasure to command me."

"Oh, Eglamour, you are a gentleman — don't think that I am flattering you, for I swear I am not — you are valiant, wise, compassionate, and well accomplished. You are not ignorant what dear good will I bear for the banished Valentine, nor how my father would force me to marry foolish Thurio, whom my very soul abhors. You yourself have loved; and I have heard you say that no grief ever came so near your heart as when your lady — your true love — died, and upon whose grave you vowed pure chastity.

"Sir Eglamour, I want to go to Valentine, to Mantua, where I hear he now lives, and because the roads are dangerous to pass, I desire your worthy company, upon whose faith and honor I rely.

"Don't tell me that my father will be angry, Eglamour, but instead think about my grief, a lady's grief, and think about the justness of my flying from here, to keep me from a

most unholy match, which Heaven and fortune always reward with plagues.

“I want you, deep from a heart as full of sorrows as the sea is full of sands, to bear me company and go with me. If you will not, I want you to hide and keep secret what I have said to you, so that I may venture to depart alone.”

“Madam, I much pity your distress, which I know has not been caused by any wrongdoing on your part, and so I consent to go along with you, caring as little what befalls me as much as I wish that all good things befall you. When will you go?”

“This evening.”

“Where shall I meet you?”

“At Friar Patrick’s cell, where I intend to make holy confession.”

“I will not fail your ladyship,” Eglamour said. “Good morning, gentle lady.”

“Good morning, kind Sir Eglamour.”

— 4.4 —

Later, but at the same spot, Launce and his dog, Crab, arrived.

Launce said to himself, “When a man’s servant shall play the cur with him, you see, it goes hard. My dog is one that I brought up from when he was a puppy; he is one that I saved from drowning, when three or four of his very young and still-blind brothers and sisters went to their drowning and died.

“I have taught him, even as one would say precisely, ‘Thus I would teach a dog.’ I was sent to deliver him as a present to Mistress Silvia from my master, Proteus, and I came no

sooner into the dining-chamber than he steps over to her dinner plate and steals her chicken leg.

“Oh, it is a foul thing when a cur cannot control himself in all kinds of company! I would have, as one should say, one that takes upon him to be a dog indeed, to be, as it were, a dog at all things.”

“To be a dog at all things” means “to be adept at all things.” This is shown by the words “to be an old dog at something” — an old dog is an experienced dog.

Launce continued, “If I had not had more intelligence than he, to take a fault upon me that he did, I think verily he had been hanged for it; as sure as I live, he would have suffered for it; you shall judge.”

In this society, a dog could be literally hanged to death for committing an offence.

Launce continued, “He thrust himself into the company of three or four gentlemanlike dogs under the Duke of Milan’s table: he had not been there — pardon my French! — a pissing while, aka the time it takes to piss, but everyone in the chamber smelt him. ‘Out with the dog!’ says one. ‘What cur is that?’ says another. ‘Whip him out of the chamber!’ says the third. ‘Hang him!’ says the Duke of Milan.

“I, having been acquainted with the smell before, knew it was Crab, and I went to the fellow who whips the dogs: ‘Friend,’ said I, ‘do you mean to whip the dog?’ ‘Yes, indeed, I do,’ said he. ‘You do him the more wrong,’ said I; ‘it was I who did the thing you know of.’ He makes me no more ado, but whips me out of the chamber. How many masters would do this for his servant?

“I’ll swear that I have sat in the stocks for puddings — sausages — he has stolen; otherwise, he would have been

executed. I have stood on the pillory for geese he has killed; otherwise, he would have suffered for it.”

He said to his dog, “You don’t think of this now. No. I remember the trick you served me when I took my leave of Madam Silvia. Didn’t I tell you to always watch me and do as I do? When did you see me heave up my leg and make water — piss — against a gentlewoman’s hooped skirt? Did you ever see me do such a trick?”

Proteus and the disguised Julia walked over to Launce and his dog.

Proteus said to the disguised Julia, “Sebastian is your name? I like you well and will employ you in some service soon.”

“In whatever you please, I’ll do what I can,” the disguised Julia replied.

“I hope you will,” Proteus said.

He then said to Launce, “Here you are, you whoreson peasant! Where have you been loitering these past two days?”

“Indeed, sir, I carried Mistress Silvia the dog you bade me.”

“And what does she says about my little jewel?”

“Indeed, she says your dog was a cur, and tells you that currish and snarling thanks is good enough for such a present.”

“But she accepted my dog?” Proteus asked.

“No, indeed, she did not,” Launce said. “I have brought him back here again.”

Proteus looked at Crab and said, “What! Did you offer her

this dog as a gift from me?”

“Yes, sir,” Launce said. “The other ‘squirrel’ — a little lapdog — was stolen from me by the hangman boys in the marketplace — someday those boys will hang. So then I offered Silvia my own dog, which is a dog as big as ten of yours, and therefore my dog is the greater gift.”

“Go and find my dog again, or never return again into my sight,” Proteus ordered. “Away, I say! Do you stay here to vex me?”

Launce and Crab exited.

Proteus said, “He is a rascal, who continually does things that shame me! Sebastian, I have hired you, partly because I have need of such a youth who can with some discretion do my business, for it is no use to trust yonder foolish lout with such business, but chiefly I have hired you because of your face and your behavior, which, if my discernment does not deceive me, provide evidence of a good bringing up, fortune, and truth. Therefore, you should know that I am hiring you because of these things.”

He gave the disguised Julia a ring and ordered, “Go immediately and take this ring with you. Deliver it to Madam Silvia. The woman who gave me this ring loved me well.”

Julia had given Proteus the ring.

The disguised Julia said, “It seems that you did not love her, since you are relinquishing her token. She is dead, perhaps?”

“That is not so,” Proteus said. “I think she still lives.”

“It’s a pity!”

“Why did you cry, ‘It’s a pity?’” Proteus asked.

“I cannot choose but to pity her.”

“Why should you pity her?”

“Because I think that she loved you as well as you love your lady Silvia. Your old loved one dreams of a man who has forgotten her love, while you dote on a woman who does not care for your love. It is a pity that love should be so contrary, and thinking of it makes me cry, ‘It’s a pity!’”

“Well, give Silvia that ring and with it this letter. That’s her chamber,” Proteus said, pointing to Silvia’s window. “Tell my lady I want her to fulfill the promise she made to give me her Heavenly picture. Once your message is delivered, hurry home to my chamber, where you shall find me, sad and solitary.”

Proteus exited.

“How many women would deliver such a message?” Julia asked herself. “Alas, poor Proteus! You have hired a fox to be the shepherd of your lambs. Alas, poor fool — poor me! Why do I pity him — Proteus — who with his very heart despises me? Because he loves her, he despises me. Because I love him, I must pity him.

“This is the ring I gave to him when he parted from me, to bind him to remember my good will. And now I, unhappy messenger, am supposed to plead for that which I wish he will not obtain, to carry that which I would have refused, to praise his faith that I would have dispraised. I am supposed to plead for him to Silvia, whom he loves instead of me.

“I am my master’s true-confirmed love, but I cannot prove to be a true servant to my master, unless I prove to be a false traitor to myself.

“Yet I will woo Silvia for him, but yet I will woo her very coldly because, as Heaven knows, I would not have him

succeed.”

Silvia, accompanied by some serving women, including a serving woman named Ursula, appeared outside her tower.

The disguised Julia said, “Gentlewoman, good day! Please, take me to where I may speak with Madam Silvia.”

“What would you want with her, if I were she?” Silvia asked.

“If you are she, I ask for your patience so you can hear me speak the message I am sent to deliver.”

“From whom?” Silvia asked.

“From my master, Sir Proteus, madam,” the disguised Julia replied.

“Oh, he sent you for a picture.”

“Yes, madam.”

“Ursula, give me my picture there,” Silvia asked.

Ursula was a competent servant. Knowing that the picture would be needed, she had it with her and handed it to Silvia.

“Go and give your master this,” Silvia said, giving the portrait to the disguised Julia. “Tell him from me, that one Julia, whom his changing thoughts have forgotten, would better suit his chamber than this portrait — my shadow.”

Julia said, holding out a letter, “Madam, please read this letter—”

Silvia took it, but it was the wrong letter — it was the love letter to Julia from Proteus that Julia had torn up and then pieced back together.

Julia said, “Pardon me, madam; I have thoughtlessly given

you a letter that I should not,” and she pulled the letter out of Silvia’s hand.

She held out another letter to Silvia and said, “This is the letter to your ladyship.”

Suspicious, Silvia said, “Please, let me look at that first letter again.”

She had seen the words “*To Julia*” and recognized Proteus’ handwriting.

“It may not be,” the disguised Julia said. “Good madam, pardon me.”

“There! Stop!” Silvia said. “I will not look upon your master’s lines. I know they are stuffed full of protestations of love and full of freshly created oaths, which he will break as easily as I tear up his letter.”

She tore up the letter that Proteus had written to her.

“Madam, he also sends your ladyship this ring,” the disguised Julia said, offering Silvia the ring, which Silvia refused.

Silvia said, “The more shame for him for sending it to me because I have heard him say a thousand times that his Julia gave it to him at his departure. Although his false finger has profaned the ring, my finger shall not do his Julia so much wrong.”

“She thanks you,” the disguised Julia said.

“What did you say?”

“I thank you, madam, that you feel concern for her. Poor gentlewoman! My master wrongs her much.”

“Do you know her?” Silvia asked.

“Almost as well as I know myself. I can say that after thinking upon her woes, I have wept a hundred separate times.”

“Probably, she thinks that Proteus has forsaken her.”

“I think she does, and that’s her cause of sorrow,” the disguised Julia said.

“Is she not surpassingly fair and beautiful?”

“She has been fairer, madam, than she is. When she thought my master loved her well, she, in my opinion, was as fair as you. But since that time, she has neglected her mirror and thrown her Sun-mask away so her face has no protection against the Sun’s beauty-harming rays. The air has starved the roses in her cheeks and pinched the lily-color of her face, so that now she is as black as I am.”

Julia was now tanned, and as part of her disguise she may have used umber, a natural pigment, to darken her complexion. In the culture of Julia and Silvia, a fair — light — complexion was prized and regarded as beautiful.

“How tall was Julia?” Silvia asked.

“About my height,” the disguised Julia replied, “for at Pentecost, when all our pageants of delight were played, our youth got me to play the woman’s part in a play, and I was dressed in Madam Julia’s gown, which fit me as well, by all men’s judgments, as if the garment had been made for me. Therefore, I know she is about my height.

“And at that time I made her weep in earnest because I played a lamenting character part. Madam, it was Ariadne expressing extreme grief because Theseus had falsely promised to always love her. She saved him from King Minos’ Minotaur on Crete, but unjustly, Theseus abandoned her on an island and fled from her.

“I acted so lively with my tears this role that my poor mistress, Julia, moved by my performance, wept bitterly, and I wish I might be dead if I in my thoughts did not feel her true sorrow!”

“She is beholden to you, gentle youth,” Silvia said. “Alas, poor lady, desolate and abandoned! I myself weep when I think upon your words. Here, youth, here is my purse; I give you this for your sweet mistress’ sake, because you love her. Farewell.”

Silvia exited with her serving women.

Alone, Julia said to herself, “And she shall thank you for it, if ever you know her. You are a virtuous gentlewoman, mild and beautiful. I hope my master’s suit will be but cold, since Silvia respects the love of my mistress — Julia, who is myself — so much.

“Alas, how love can trifle with itself!

“Here is Silvia’s picture. Let me see. I think, if I had such a headdress as she is wearing, this face of mine would be every bit as lovely as this face of hers, and yet the painter flattered her a little, unless I flatter myself too much. I may be complimenting myself too much, and I may be encouraging myself with false hopes.

“Her hair is blond, mine is perfect yellow. If that is all the difference in his love and the reason he loves her and not me, I’ll get myself a blond wig. Her eyes are grey as glass, and so are mine. Yes, but her forehead’s low, and mine’s as high.

“What is it that he values in her that I can’t make worthy of being valued in me, if this foolish god Love — Cupid — were not a blinded god?

“Come, shadow — I am a shadow of myself because of

grief — come and take this shadow — this portrait of Silvia — because it is your rival. Oh, you insensible form, you portrait, you shall be worshipped, kissed, loved, and adored!

“And, if there were sense in his idolatry, my substance — I am real — should be a statue — something substantial — in the stead of this picture, a mere image.

“I’ll treat you kindly for your mistress’ sake, who treated me kindly, or else I vow by Jove that I should have scratched out your unseeing eyes to make my master fall out of love with you!”

CHAPTER 5 (The Two Gentlemen of Verona)

— 5.1 —

Sir Eglamour arrived at the abbey in Milan where Friar Patrick had his cell.

He said to himself, “The Sun begins to gild the western sky, and now it is about the very hour that Silvia, at Friar Patrick’s cell, should meet me. She will not fail, for lovers do not miss the hour that they appoint, unless it is to come early — a person who is in love has spurs in his or her sides. I see Silvia coming now.”

Silvia walked over to Eglamour, who said, “Lady, a happy evening!”

“Amen, amen!” Silvia said. “Let’s go, good Eglamour. Let’s go out at the side gate by the abbey wall. I fear I am being followed by some spies.”

“Fear not,” Eglamour said. “The forest is not three leagues away. If we reach the forest, we are safe enough.”

— 5.2 —

Thurio, Proteus, and the disguised Julia were in a room of the Duke of Milan’s palace.

Thurio asked, “Sir Proteus, what does Silvia say about my proposal to marry her?”

“Oh, sir, I find her milder and gentler than she was, and yet she takes exception to your physical appearance.”

“What? She thinks that my leg is too long?”

“No; that it is too thin,” Proteus replied.

“I’ll wear a riding boot to make it somewhat rounder,”

Thurio said.

The disguised Julia thought, *But love will not be spurred to love what it loathes.*

“What does she say about my face?” Thurio asked.

“She says it is a fair one,” Proteus replied.

“Then the willful, capricious lady lies; my face is black.”

“But pearls are fair,” Proteus said, “and the old saying is ‘Black men are pearls in beauteous ladies’ eyes.’”

Julia thought, *The old saying is true, assuming that such pearls are those that put out ladies’ eyes, for I had rather close my eyes than look at a swarthy man.*

The “pearls” Julia meant were eye cataracts.

“How does she like my conversation?” Thurio asked.

“Ill, when you talk about war,” Proteus replied.

“But well, when I discourse of love and peace?” Thurio asked.

Julia thought, *But she likes your conversation better, indeed, when you hold your peace.*

“What does she say about my courage and valor?”

“Oh, sir, she has no doubt concerning your courage and valor,” Proteus replied.

Julia thought, *She need not have any doubt, when she knows that your “courage and valor” are actually cowardice.*

“What does she say about my noble ancestry?”

“That you are well descended.”

Julia thought, *That is true. You have descended from the gentleman who sired you; you are a fool.*

“Does she think about my possessions such as my lands?”
Thurio asked.

“Oh, yes, and she pities them.”

“For what reason?”

Julia thought, *That such an ass should own them.*

“That they are leased out,” Proteus said.

Julia said, “Here comes the Duke of Milan.”

The Duke of Milan walked over to them and said, “How are you now, Sir Proteus! How are you now, Thurio! Which of you has seen Sir Eglamour lately?”

“Not I,” Thurio replied.

“Nor I,” Proteus replied.

“Have you seen my daughter, Silvia?” the Duke of Milan asked.

“I haven’t seen her either,” Proteus replied.

“Why then, she’s fled to that base peasant Valentine, and Eglamour is in her company,” the Duke of Milan said. “It is true; Friar Laurence met them both as he in penance wandered through the forest. He recognized Eglamour, and he guessed that my daughter accompanied him, but since she was wearing a mask to protect her face from the Sun, he was not sure of it. Besides, Silvia intended to make her confession at Friar Patrick’s cell this afternoon; and she did not show up. These things confirm her flight from here.

“Therefore, please, don’t stand here and talk, but mount your horses immediately and meet me on the upward slope

of the foot of the mountain that leads towards Mantua, where they are fled.

“Hurry, sweet gentlemen, and follow me.”

The Duke of Milan exited.

“Why, this is what it is to be a peevish, obstinate girl,” Thurio said, “who flies her fortune — my proposal to marry her — when it follows her. I’ll go after her, more to be revenged on Eglamour than for the love of uncaring and inconsiderate Silvia.”

Thurio exited.

“And I will go after her, more for love of Silvia than hatred of Eglamour, who goes with her,” Proteus said.

Proteus exited.

“And I will go after her, more to thwart Proteus’ love than out of hatred for Silvia, who has fled because of love,” Julia said.

The disguised Julia exited.

— 5.3 —

In the forest, the outlaws had captured Silvia.

The first outlaw said to her, “Come, come, be patient and calm; we must bring you to our Captain.”

“A thousand greater misfortunes than this one have taught me how to endure this patiently,” Silvia said.

“Come, bring her away,” the second outlaw said.

“Where is the gentleman who was with her?” the first outlaw asked.

“Being nimble-footed, he has outrun us,” the third outlaw

replied. "But Moyses and Valerius are following him. Go with this woman to the west end of the wood, where our Captain is. We'll follow the gentleman who fled. The thicket is surrounded; he cannot escape us."

The first outlaw said to Silvia, "Come, I must bring you to our Captain's cave. Don't be afraid. He has an honorable mind, and he will not treat a woman lawlessly."

Silvia cried, "Oh, Valentine, I endure this for you!"

— 5.4 —

Alone, Valentine said to himself, "How custom breeds a habit in a man! I endure this shadowy, deserted, and unfrequented woods better than flourishing peopled towns: Here I can sit alone, unseen by anyone, and to the nightingale's complaining notes tune my distresses and sing my woes."

He then said to his heart, which he had figuratively left with his beloved, Silvia, in Milan: "Oh, you who inhabit my breast, do not leave the mansion tenantless so long, lest, growing ruinous, the building fall and leave no memory of what it was!"

He then said, "Revive me with your presence, Silvia. You gentle nymph, cherish your forlorn swain!"

He heard noises and said, "What hallooming and stir is this today? These are my mates, outlaws who make their wills their law and do whatever they want. They are chasing some unfortunate traveler. These outlaws much respect me, yet I have much to do to keep them from committing uncivilized outrages."

He saw some people and said to himself, "Withdraw, Valentine, and hide. Who are these people coming here?"

Proteus, Silvia, and Julia arrived; they did not see

Valentine.

Proteus said to Silvia, “Madam, in return for this service I have done for you, although you do not value anything your servant does — I have risked my life and rescued you from him who would have forced your honor and your love; he would have raped you — grant me, as my reward, just one gentle look. A smaller boon than this I cannot beg and less than this, I am sure, you cannot give.”

Proteus may have been overvaluing the service, if any, that he had done for Silvia when he claimed that the first outlaw had tried to rape her — the first outlaw may not have tried to rape her. Silvia was certainly now more concerned about Proteus than she was about the first outlaw.

Valentine thought, *How like a dream is this that I see and hear! Love, lend me patience to be patient for a while.*

Silvia said, “Oh, I am miserable and unhappy!”

“Unhappy were you, madam, before I came,” Proteus said, “but by my coming I have made you happy.”

“By your approaches — your amorous advances — you make me most unhappy,” Silvia said.

Julia thought, *And he makes me most unhappy, when he approaches — makes amorous advances — to your presence.*

Silvia said, “Had I been seized by a hungry lion, I would have preferred to have been a breakfast to the beast, rather than have false and disloyal Proteus rescue me. Oh, Heaven be the judge how I love Valentine, whose life’s as precious to me as my soul! And just as much, for more there cannot be, I detest false perjured Proteus. Therefore be gone; chase after me no more.”

“What dangerous action, even if it stood next to death,

would I not undergo for one gentle look from you!” Proteus said. “Oh, it is the curse in love, and continually proven to be a curse, when women cannot love who loves them!”

“It is the curse in love when Proteus cannot love where he’s beloved,” Silvia replied. “Read over Julia’s heart, your first and best love, for whose dear sake you made a thousand oaths to be faithful, and then you perjured all those oaths in order to love me. You loved Julia and promised to faithfully love her, but then you tore up your faith into a thousand oaths, and you perjured all those oaths, in order to love me.

“You have no faith left now, unless you are able to be faithful to two women, and that’s far worse than having no faith; it is better to have no faith than to have a plural faith which is too much by one, you counterfeit friend — false and imitation friend! — to your true friend, Valentine!”

Proteus replied, “A person who is in love no longer pays attention to friendship. When in love, who respects a friend?”

Silvia answered, “All men except Proteus.”

“If the gentle spirit of moving words can in no way change you to a milder form, I’ll woo you like a soldier, at the point of a sword — or at the tip of my penis — and love you against the nature of love. I’ll force you to submit to me.”

“Oh, Heaven!” Silvia cried.

Grabbing Silvia’s arm, Proteus said, “I’ll force you to yield to my desire — I’ll rape you!”

Valentine came out of hiding and said, “Ruffian, let go that rude, uncivilized touch, you wicked ‘friend!’”

“Valentine!” Proteus said.

“You commonplace friend, who is without faith or love, for such is a friend now, in these times, treacherous man!” Valentine said. “You have deceived my hopes; nothing but my own eyes could have persuaded me that you are a false friend. Now I dare not say that I have one friend alive; you would disprove me. Who should be trusted, when one’s own right hand is perjured and untrue to the bosom? Proteus, you were like my right hand to me, but now I am sorry I must never trust you any more. Because of you, I must regard all men in the world as strangers, not as friends. The wound given by an intimate friend is deepest. Oh, these times are most accursed because my friend is the worst among all my foes!”

Proteus instantly repented.

“My shame and guilt overcome me,” Proteus said. “Forgive me, Valentine. If hearty sorrow is a sufficient ransom for offence, I offer it here. I do as truly suffer as ever I did sin.”

“Then I am paid; I have received the ransom,” Valentine said. “And once again I regard you as honest. Whoever is not satisfied by repentance is neither of Heaven nor of Earth, for repentance pleases both of these. The wrath of Eternal God is appeased by repentance.”

What Valentine had said about God’s forgiveness was theologically correct. A person could be evil all or most of his entire life, but if that person truly repents his sins with his final breath, or earlier, God will forgive that person and that person will have a place in Paradise.

Valentine had forgiven Proteus because Proteus had repented. Valentine now provided a model for Proteus to follow if Proteus had truly repented. A good person is not a selfish person. A good person does not regard himself as the center of the universe. A good person will not blindly follow and satisfy his desires.

Valentine said to Proteus, “And, so that my friendship may appear plain and generous, all that was mine in Silvia I give to you.”

Silvia stayed silent. Either she was shocked, or she trusted Valentine enough to wait and see what he was up to.

What was Valentine up to? He wanted Proteus to follow his model and give up Silvia, thereby allowing Valentine to claim her. Proteus’ quick repentance was some evidence that Proteus would follow Valentine’s model.

Proteus did not immediately answer because the disguised Julia cried, “Oh, unhappy me!” Then she fainted.

Referring to the disguised Julia, Proteus said, “Look after the boy.”

“Why, boy!” Valentine said, crouching by the disguised Julia, who was reviving. “Why, lad! How are you now! What’s the matter? Look up. Speak.”

The disguised Julia said, “Oh, good sir, my master ordered me to deliver a ring to Madam Silvia, which, out of my neglect, was never done.”

Of course, Julia had tried to deliver the ring, which Silvia had refused, but Julia wanted now to reveal her identity, using the rings that Proteus and she had exchanged when he departed from Verona.

“Where is that ring, boy?” Proteus asked.

“Here it is,” the disguised Julia said. “This is it.”

She deliberately handed him the wrong ring. Proteus had ordered her to deliver to Silvia the ring that Julia had given to him. Silvia had refused to accept the ring. Now Julia handed Proteus the ring that he had given to her, Julia, when he departed from her in Verona.

“What!” Proteus said. “Let me see that ring! Why, this is the ring I gave to Julia.”

“Oh, I beg your mercy, sir,” the disguised Julia said. “I made a mistake.”

She held up the other ring and said, “This is the ring you sent to Silvia.”

“But how did you come to have this first ring? At my departure from Verona, I gave this ring to Julia.”

“And Julia herself gave it to me,” the disguised Julia said, “and Julia herself has brought it here.”

“What!” Proteus said. “You are Julia!”

“Behold her who was the target for all your oaths of fidelity, and who received them deep in her heart,” Julia said. “How often have you with your perjured oaths of faithfulness split the bottom of my heart!

“Oh, Proteus, let this page’s clothing I am wearing make you blush! Be ashamed that I have taken upon myself to wear such immodest clothing, if you — a false lover — can feel shame.

“It is the lesser blot, modesty finds, for women to change their shapes than men their minds. It is a lesser sin for women to disguise themselves than for men to be unfaithful.”

Proteus finally grew up. He followed Valentine’s model of rejecting selfishness. He also followed Julia’s model of being true and faithful.

“Than men their minds!” Proteus said. “It is true. Oh, Heaven! If a man is true and faithful, that man is perfect. That one error — unfaithfulness — fills a man with faults; that one error makes a man run through and commit all the

remaining sins. When a man is true, unfaithful passions drop away before they even begin.”

Proteus made his decision. He chose Julia, who loved him, instead of Silvia, who loved Valentine.

Proteus said, “There is nothing in Silvia’s face that I cannot see to be fresher in Julia’s face when I look at Julia with a constant and faithful and loving eye.”

“Come, come, Proteus and Julia, hold hands,” Valentine said. “Let me be blest to make this happy union between you two. It is a pity that two such lovers were for so long foes.”

Holding Julia’s hand, Proteus looked into her eyes and said, “Bear witness, Heaven, I have my wish forever.”

“And I have mine,” Julia replied.

Silvia felt relieved.

The outlaws now entered the scene. They had taken the Duke of Milan and Thurio captive.

The outlaws shouted, “A prize! A prize! A prize!”

“Stop! Stop, I say!” Valentine ordered the outlaws. “It is my lord the Duke of Milan.”

He said to the Duke, “A disgraced man bids your grace welcome. I am banished Valentine.”

“Sir Valentine!” the Duke said.

Thurio said, “Yonder is Silvia, and Silvia’s mine.” He stepped forward.

Valentine drew his sword and said, “Thurio, step back, or else embrace your death. Do not come within the striking distance of my wrath. Do not say that Silvia is yours. If you

say it once again, not all the soldiers in Verona will be able to guard you and keep you safe. Here Silvia stands; if you are thinking of touching her, let me tell you that I dare you to even breathe upon my love.”

Silvia felt further relieved.

Thurio replied, “Sir Valentine, I don’t care for her. I regard as a fool a man who will endanger his body for a girl who does not love him. I don’t claim her, and therefore she is yours.”

Valentine sheathed his sword.

The Duke of Milan said, “The more degenerate and dishonorable are you, Thurio, to make such efforts for her as you have done and leave her for such a slight reason — you simply don’t want to fight for her.

“Now, by the honor of my ancestry, I applaud your spirit, Valentine, and I think that you are worthy of an Empress’ love. Know then, I here forget all former grievances, cancel all grudges, repeal your banishment, and call you home again. Because of your unrivalled merit, you and I have a new and better relationship, as shown by what I say here: Sir Valentine, you are a gentleman and well descended. Take Silvia as yours, for you have deserved her.”

Silvia felt happy.

“I thank your grace,” Valentine replied. “The gift has made me happy. I now implore you, for your daughter’s sake, to grant one boon that I shall ask of you.”

“I grant it, for your own sake, whatever it is,” the Duke of Milan replied.

“These banished men that I have kept company with are men endued with worthy qualities. Forgive them what they have committed here and let them be recalled from their

exile. They are reformed, civil, full of good, and fit for great service, worthy lord.”

“You have prevailed,” the Duke of Milan said. “I pardon them and you. Dispose of them as you know their worth and merit. Come, let us go. We will bring to a close all disagreements with entertainments, mirth, and marvelous festivities.”

“And, as we walk along, I will dare to be audacious enough in our conversation to make your grace smile,” Valentine said.

He motioned toward Julia, who was still wearing the male clothing of a page, and asked the Duke of Milan, “What do you think of this page, my lord?”

“I think the boy has grace in him,” the Duke of Milan replied. “He blushes.”

“I promise you, my lord, the page is more Grace than boy,” Valentine said.

He meant that Julia had the feminine charms of the Three Graces — goddesses of beauty, charm, and creativity.

“What do you mean by saying that?” the Duke of Milan asked.

“If you please,” Valentine replied, “I’ll tell you as we walk along, so that you will marvel at what has happened.”

He added, “Come, Proteus, your only penance is to hear the story of your loves revealed. Once that is done, our day of marriage shall be yours: One feast, one household, one mutual happiness. Julia and you shall be wed; at the same time, Silvia and I shall be wed.”

HISTORIES

Chapter XIII: KING JOHN

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*King John*)

Male Characters

King John of England.

Prince Henry, son to the King; after King John's death, he becomes King Henry III of England.

Arthur, Duke of Bretagne, nephew to the King; his father was King John's older brother Geoffrey.

Earl of Pembroke.

Earl of Essex.

Earl of Salisbury.

Lord Bigot.

Hubert de Burgh.

Robert Faulconbridge, son to Sir Robert Faulconbridge.

Philip, aka the Bastard, Robert Faulconbridge's half-brother; Philip's father is King Richard I of England, aka Richard the Lionheart. Philip's reputed father was Sir Robert Faulconbridge, and so early in life he was known as Philip Faulconbridge.

James Gurney, servant to Lady Faulconbridge.

Peter of Pomfret, a prophet.

Philip II, King of France.

Louis the Dauphin; after King Philip II's death (not in this book), he becomes King Louis VIII of France.

Lymoges, Duke of Austria.

Cardinal Pandulph, the Pope's legate.

Melun, a French Lord.

Chatillion, ambassador from France to King John.

Female Characters

Queen Eleanor, mother to King John; widow of King Henry II; she is also known as Eleanor of Aquitaine; her children include King Richard I, King John, and Geoffrey; one of her grandchildren is Blanche of Spain.

Constance, mother to Arthur; widow of Geoffrey, one of King John's older brothers.

Blanche of Spain, niece to King John; her grandfather is King Henry II of England and her grandmother is Queen Eleanor of England. One of Queen Eleanor's children is Eleanor of Castile; Blanche of Spain is her daughter. Blanche is also known as Blanche of Castile as well as Blanche of Spain. She marries Louis the Dauphin and later becomes Queen of France.

Lady Faulconbridge.

Minor Characters

Lords, Citizens of Angiers, Sheriff, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants.

Scene: England and France.

Nota Bene:

Between 1349 and 1830, "Dauphin" was the title given to the oldest living son of the King of France.

King John of England: 24 December 1166 to 19 October 1216. He reigned 6 April 1199 to 19 October 1216.

The King of England before King John was Richard I, known as Richard the Lionheart. He died without leaving behind legitimate children. Before dying, he wrote a will leaving the Kingship to his nephew Arthur, but on his deathbed Eleanor persuaded him to change his will and leave the Kingship to John, her son.

One conflict in this play is a disagreement about who is the legitimate King of England. Normally, the Kingship would pass to a legitimate son, but Richard the Lionheart had no legitimate son. Is the legitimate successor John, whom Richard the Lionheart named as his successor in his final will? Or is it Arthur, the son of a deceased older brother of John?

King Philip II of France: 21 August 1165 to 14 July 1223.
He was Junior King from 1 November 1179 to 18 September 1180. He was Senior King from 18 September 1180 to 14 July 1223.

CHAPTER 1 (King John)

— 1.1 —

King John of England, Queen Eleanor, the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Essex, and the Earl of Salisbury were in a room of King John's palace. With them were attendants and Chatillion, the ambassador from France to King John.

King John asked, "Now, tell us, Chatillion, what does the King of France want with us?"

"Thus, after greeting you, speaks the King of France in my person to the majesty, the borrowed majesty, of England here," Chatillion replied.

By referring to "borrowed majesty," he was saying that King John was not the true King of England.

Queen Eleanor said, "This is a strange beginning: 'borrowed majesty'!"

"Silence, good mother," King John said. "Listen to the message from the ambassador."

Chatillion continued, "King Philip II of France, in right and true behalf of your deceased older brother Geoffrey's son, Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim to this fair island and the territories, to Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine. He commands you to lay aside the sword of state that rules usurpingly over these several lands, and put these lands into the hand of young Arthur, your nephew and the true royal sovereign of England."

"What happens if we don't do this?" King John asked, using the royal plural.

"The forceful compulsion of fierce and bloody war will

enforce these rights so forcibly withheld,” Chatillion replied. “If you won’t willingly give these lands to Arthur, we will make war against you and force you to do so.”

“Here we have war for war and blood for blood,” King John said. “Compulsion will answer compulsion. This is my answer to the King of France.”

“Then take my King’s defiance from my mouth,” Chatillion said. “This is the most extreme response permitted by my charge as ambassador.”

“Bear my defiance back to him, and so depart in peace,” King John said. “Be like lightning and appear before the eyes of the King of France, for before you can report your news I will be there, and the thunder of my cannon shall be heard. So leave! Be the trumpet of our wrath and be the sullen presentiment of your own destruction.

“Let him have an honorable escort. Pembroke, look to it.

“Farewell, Chatillion.”

Chatillion and the Earl of Pembroke exited.

Queen Eleanor said, “What now, my son! Haven’t I always said that ambitious Constance, the mother of Arthur, would not stop until she had kindled France and all the world to work toward the rights and on the side of her son? This might have been prevented and put right with very easy expressions of friendship, but now the rulers of two Kingdoms must arbitrate the matter with fearsome bloody consequences.”

“On our side we have our strong possession of England and our right to be King,” John said, using the royal plural.

Queen Eleanor whispered quietly to him, “Your strong possession of England is of much more worth than your right to be King. People will respect more your possession

of the throne of England, or else it must go wrong with you and me. So much my conscience whispers in your ear, which none but Heaven and you and I shall hear.”

A Sheriff entered the room.

Seeing him and knowing why he had come, the Earl of Essex said, “My liege, here is the strangest controversy that ever I heard come from country to be judged by you. Shall I produce the men?”

“Let them approach,” King John said. “Our abbeyes and our priories shall pay this expedition’s expeditious charge — this sudden expense and speedy attack. They will pay for the war that I must fight.”

Robert Faulconbridge and Philip Faulconbridge entered the room.

King John asked, “What men are you? Who are you?”

Philip Faulconbridge, who would quickly become informally known as the Bastard, said, “I am your faithful subject, a gentleman who was born in Northamptonshire and I am the eldest son, as I suppose, to Robert Faulconbridge, a soldier who was knighted in the field of combat by the honor-giving hand of Coeur-de-lion — Richard the Lionheart.”

King John asked the other man, “Who are you?”

Robert Faulconbridge replied, “I am the son and heir to that same Faulconbridge.”

“Is that man the elder son, and you are the heir?” King John said. “You came not of one mother then, it seems. You two men must have had different mothers.”

Philip Faulconbridge said, “Most certainly one mother gave birth to both of us, mighty King. That is well known and

completely certain, and, as I think, we had one and the same father. But for the certain knowledge of that truth, I direct you to Heaven and to my mother. I don't have certain knowledge of who is my father; all men's children lack that certain knowledge."

It is proverbial that men may know definitely who their mother is but not know definitely who their father is — at least in the days before DNA testing.

"Get out, rude man!" Queen Eleanor said. "You shame your mother and wound her honor with this distrust."

"I, madam?" Philip Faulconbridge said. "No, I have no reason for that distrust. That is my brother's plea and none of mine; my brother claims that I am illegitimate. And if he can prove that, he pops me out of my father's estate and takes away from me at least five hundred pounds a year. May Heaven guard my mother's honor and my land!"

"You are a good blunt fellow," King John said. "Why, being younger born, does he lay claim to your inheritance?"

"I don't know why, except to get the land," Philip Faulconbridge said. "But once he slandered me with bastardy. But whether I am as truly begotten as he or not, that still I lay upon my mother's head. But that I am as well begotten as he, my liege — may fair things befall the bones that took the pains for me! — compare my brother's and my faces and judge for yourself."

The two brothers did not look alike. Robert Faulconbridge was thin-faced and resembled his father: Sir Robert Faulconbridge. Philip Faulconbridge was a strongly built man and resembled the late King Richard I of England, aka Richard the Lionheart.

Philip Faulconbridge continued, "If old Sir Robert did beget us both and were our father and this son definitely

resembles him, then oh, old Sir Robert, father, on my knee I give Heaven thanks I do not resemble you!”

King John said, “Why, what a madcap Heaven has lent us here! This man is a mad-brained fellow!”

“He has a trick of Coeur-de-lion’s face and resembles him,” Queen Eleanor said. “The accent of his tongue copies the accent of Richard the Lionheart’s tongue. Don’t you read some tokens of my son Richard the Lionheart in the large and powerful body of this man?”

Richard the Lionheart was one of King John’s late brothers, and so King John knew well what he looked like.

“My eye has well examined this man’s bodily parts and finds them to perfectly resemble Richard,” King John said.

He then said to Robert Faulconbridge, “Sirrah, speak. What moves you to claim your brother’s land?”

“Sirrah” was a term of address used when a person of high social status spoke to a male of lower social status.

Philip Faulconbridge interrupted and answered the question, “Because he has a half-face, like my father. With half that face he would have all my land: a half-faced groat worth five hundred pounds a year!”

A half-face is a thin face or a face shown in profile. A half-faced groat is a coin of little value.

Robert Faulconbridge said, “My gracious liege, when my father was still alive, your brother Richard the Lionheart much employed my father —”

Philip Faulconbridge interrupted, “Well, sir, by this you cannot get my land: Your tale must be how he employed my mother.”

“Employed” meant “used the services of”; in this case, the

term included the meaning “used the sexual services of.”

Robert Falconbridge continued, “And your brother once dispatched my father in an embassy to Germany so that he and the emperor there could treat of high affairs affecting that time.

“Your brother the King — Richard the Lionheart — took advantage of his absence and in the meantime sojourned at my father’s home. How he prevailed there with my mother I am ashamed to say, but truth is truth. Large lengths of seas and shores between my father and my mother lay, as I have heard my father himself say, when this same robust gentleman — Philip Falconbridge — was begotten. My father on his deathbed bequeathed in his will his lands to me, and he swore that this Philip Falconbridge, my mother’s son, was no son of his. And if he were, he came into the world fully fourteen weeks prematurely. So then, my good liege, let me have what is mine — my father’s land, as was stated in my father’s will.”

In this society, a wife’s child would be legally declared illegitimate if the husband was absent overseas for more than the entire nine months of the pregnancy; this had not happened in this case.

“Sirrah, your brother is legitimate,” King John said. “Your father’s wife bore him after wedlock, and if she played false, the fault was hers; this fault lies on the hazardous fortunes of all husbands who marry wives. This is a risk that all husbands take.”

The word “fault” meant “sin”; it was also slang for “vagina.”

King John continued, “Let us assume that it is true that my brother, as you say, took pains to get this son. What if he had from your father claimed this son for his? Truly, good friend, your father might have kept this calf bred from his

cow from all the world. When a bull fathers a calf on a cow, the owner of the cow keeps the calf. Truly your father might; so then, if Philip Faulconbridge were my brother's son, my brother might not claim him, and your father, although Philip Faulconbridge is no child of his, could not refuse him. This concludes the matter. If the assumption we made is true, then my mother's son did beget your father's heir, and your father's heir must have your father's land."

King John was saying that the father's will did not count; what counted was legitimacy. King Philip II of France would have agreed. King Richard I's will was not enough to make King John the true King of England. Since King Richard I had not left behind a legitimate son, what counted was being a legitimate son of the man who would have been next in line to be King if he were alive. Arthur was the legitimate son of Geoffrey, the man who if he had been alive would have been next in line to be King after Richard I.

Robert Faulconbridge said, "Shall then my father's will be of no force to dispossess that child who is not his? Doesn't my father's will count?"

Philip Faulconbridge interrupted, "Your father's will has no more force to dispossess me, sir, than was his will to beget me, as I think."

He was punning. "Will" meant three things: 1) intention, 2) sexual desire, and 3) penis.

Queen Eleanor asked Philip Faulconbridge, "Which would you rather be? Would you choose to be a Faulconbridge and be like your brother so you can enjoy your land? Or would you choose to be the reputed son of Coeur-de-lion, Richard the Lionheart? If you choose to be known as his bastard son, you would be the lord of your presence and the lord of no land."

Philip Faulconbridge replied, “Madam, suppose my brother had my shape, and I had his shape, which is the shape of old Sir Robert, and suppose my legs were two such slender riding whips, my arms such stuffed eel-skins, and my face so thin that I would not dare stick a rose in my ear lest men should say ‘Look, three-farthings is going there!’”

Three-farthing coins bore a profile of Queen Elizabeth I. Behind her ear was depicted a rose.

He continued, “And suppose his shape were heir to all this land, then I wish I might never stir from off this place. I would give away every foot of the land in order to have this face that I have. I would not be Sir Nob in any case.”

“Nob” was a diminutive of “Robert.” “Nob” also meant “knob” and “head.”

Queen Eleanor said, “I like you well. Will you forsake your fortune, bequeath your land to your half-brother, Robert Faulconbridge, and follow me? I am a soldier and am now going to France to make war.”

Philip Faulconbridge said, “Brother, you take my land, and I’ll take my chances. Your face has gotten you five hundred pounds a year, yet if you were to sell your face for five pence, the price would be expensive because your face is not worth five pence.

“Madam, I’ll follow you to the death.”

Queen Eleanor joked, “No, I would have you go before me there.”

Philip Faulconbridge joked, “Our rural manners give our betters way. Where I come from, the person with the higher rank goes first.”

King John asked, “What is your name?”

Philip Faulconbridge, who had not yet stated his name, said now, "Philip, my liege, so is my name begun — Philip, good old Sir Robert Faulconbridge's wife's eldest son."

"From henceforth you will bear the name of the man whose form you bear," King John said. "You will change your name to Richard. Kneel down, Philip, but you will rise up a greater man."

Philip Faulconbridge knelt.

King John knighted him and said, "Arise, Sir Richard Plantagenet."

Plantagenet was the family name of Richard the Lionheart and of King John.

From now on, Philip Faulconbridge would be known as Sir Richard Plantagenet formally and as the Bastard informally. Sometimes he would be referred to as Philip or as Faulconbridge. Most often, as in this book henceforward, he would be called the Bastard.

The Bastard said to Robert Faulconbridge, "Brother by the mother's side, give me your hand. My father gave me honor, yours gave you land. Now blessed be the hour, by night or day, when I was begotten, while Sir Robert was away!"

In this society, "hour" and "whore" were pronounced alike.

Queen Eleanor said, "This is the very spirit of Plantagenet! I am your grandmother, Richard; call me your grandmother."

"Madam, you are my grandmother by chance but not by truth," the Bastard said, "because my mother was not true and faithful to her husband. I am not your legitimate grandson. What of it, though?"

The Bastard now made several references to bastardy: “Something irregularly, a little from the right, in at the window, or else over the hatch.”

Some doors were made of two half-doors: one above the other. The hatch is the lower half-door.

The Bastard continued, “Who dares not stir by day must walk by night, and have is have, however men catch and get hold of it. Near or far off, well won is still well shot.”

Whether the archer is close to the target or far from it, a bull’s-eye deserves praise. “Well-shot” also meant “well-ejaculated.”

The Bastard continued, “And I am I, however I was begot.”

King John said, “Go, Robert Faulconbridge. Now you have what you desired. A landless knight — the new Sir Richard Plantagenet — makes you a landed squire.

“Come, madam, and come, Richard, we must speedily go to France, for it is more than necessary that we go to France. Our need to go there is urgent.”

The Bastard said to Robert Faulconbridge, “Brother, *adieu*. May good fortune come to you, for you were begotten in the way of honesty.”

Everyone except the Bastard exited.

The Bastard spoke to himself about his new honors: “I am a foot of honor better than I was, but I am many and many foot of land the worse. Well, now can I make any common Joan a Lady.

“Someone will say to me, ‘Good evening, Sir Richard!’

“I will reply, ‘May God give you mercy, fellow!’

“And if his name is George, I’ll call him Peter. For new-

made men of honor forget men's names. People converted to a higher social rank find it too respectful and too sociable to remember the names of people of a lower social rank.

“Now I will be called ‘your worship,’ and I will invite a traveller — he and his toothpick — to dine with me.”

Travellers sometimes used toothpicks — not then well known in England — as a way to show that they had travelled and were familiar with some of the ways that other cultures did things. A person such as the Bastard was not affected and chose to suck his teeth to remove food rather than use a toothpick. Despite being recently knighted, the Bastard had no intention of becoming affected; instead, he was mocking affectation.

The Bastard continued, “And when my knightly stomach is full, why then I will suck my teeth and catechize — question — my picked man of countries.”

The traveller was picked because 1) he was refined and 2) he had picked his teeth with a toothpick.

The Bastard mocked polite conversation: “I will say, ‘My dear sir.’ Like this” — he demonstrated — “leaning on my elbow, I begin, ‘I shall beseech you’ — that is Question now, and then comes Answer like an Absey book.”

An Absey book is an ABC book, or a primer, or a catechism book for children. Many such books were written in the form of questions and answers.

The Bastard continued, “‘Oh, sir,’ says Answer, ‘at your best command. At your employment; at your service, sir.’ ‘No, sir,’ says Question. ‘I, sweet sir, am at yours.’”

“And so, before Answer knows what Question wants to ask, except in dialogue of compliment, and talking about

the Alps and the Apennines, the Pyrenees and the Po River, the end of supertime draws near.

“But this is worshipful society and befits the mounting and ambitious spirit of a person such as myself. A person is but a bastard to the time — not a true child of the time — who does not smack — savor the taste — of the observation of polite courtesies. An ambitious person should be able to engage in polite conversation and formal dining.

“And I am a bastard, both a bastard in heritage and a bastard to the time — whether I smack or not. I will be a bastard to the time whether or not I savor the taste of the observation of polite courtesies. Even if I choose to engage in polite social behavior, I will still be on the outside and not fully a member of that culture.

“I will be a bastard and not a true child of the time not only in clothing and device — my coat of arms would have a bar sinister to indicate my bastardy — and not only in exterior form and outward special trappings, but also I will be a bastard and not a true child of the time when it comes to the inward motion to deliver sweet, sweet, sweet poisonous flattery for the age’s tooth.

“Although I will not practice flattery to deceive others, yet to avoid being deceived myself by flattery, I mean to learn about flattery because flattery shall strew the footsteps of my rising. I am ambitious and intend to rise higher. I know that others will flatter me in order to deceive me, but I have no intention of being deceived in that way.”

The Bastard looked up and saw a woman in riding clothes.

He said to himself, “But who comes in such haste in riding robes? What woman-post is this? Has she no husband who will take pains to blow a horn before her?”

Normally, men rode post horses, so seeing a woman-post

was unusual.

People who rode post-horses rode quickly and so blew horns to warn people to get out of their way. A horn also sounded to announce the post-rider's arrival.

The Bastard made a joke when he said, "Has she no husband who will take pains to blow a horn before her?" In stories about cuckolds, a husband who blew his horn was publicly announcing that he was a cuckold. Cuckolds were men with unfaithful wives; cuckolds were said to have invisible horns growing on their heads.

Having dismounted, Lady Faulconbridge walked over to the Bastard. Following her was James Gurney, her servant. Respectable women in this culture would not travel without a male accompanying them.

The Bastard said to himself, "Oh, me! It is my mother."

He greeted her out loud, "How are you now, good lady! What brings you here to court so hastily?"

"Where is that slave, your brother?" Lady Faulconbridge demanded. "Where is he, that man who pursues and hunts my honor up and down and everywhere?"

"Robert, my brother?" the Bastard asked. "Old Sir Robert's son? Colbrand the Giant, that same mighty man?"

Colbrand the Giant was the Bastard's mocking name for Robert Faulconbridge. In the fourteenth-century romance *Guy of Warwick*, the title character defeated Colbrand the Giant of Denmark.

The Bastard continued, "Is it Sir Robert's son that you seek so?"

"Sir Robert's son!" Lady Faulconbridge said. "Yes, you irreverent boy, Sir Robert's son. Why do you mock Sir

Robert like that? He is Sir Robert's son, and so are you."

The Bastard said, "James Gurney, will you give us leave awhile?"

This was a polite request to be left alone with his mother. The Bastard's use of the servant's full and correct name showed that he was on familiar terms with the servants of his mother; it was also evidence that he would not allow his new knighthood to make him proud and affected.

"Good leave, good Philip," James Gurney replied.

The phrase "good leave" meant that yes, he would leave them alone.

"Philip!" the Bastard said. "Sparrow!"

Philip was his old name; it was a name commonly given to pet sparrows.

The Bastard said, "James, there's toys abroad. Soon I'll tell you more."

"Toys" are trifles. In this case, the toys were the Bastard's knighthood and new name. As you can see, the Bastard was not taking his new honors overly seriously.

The Bastard said to his mother, Lady Faulconbridge, "Madam, I was not old Sir Robert's son. Sir Robert might have eaten his part in me on Good Friday and never broken his fast: He had no part in making me. Sir Robert could do well — I confess it — if he could beget me."

One meaning of the phrase "to do" is "to have sex."

The Bastard continued, "Sir Robert could not do it: He could not have begotten me. We know his handiwork: Look at his legitimate son Robert. Therefore, good mother, to whom am I beholden for these limbs? Sir Robert never helped to make this leg."

That Bastard's legs were muscular; Robert Faulconbridge's legs were scrawny.

Lady Faulconbridge asked, "Have you conspired with your brother, too? You should for your own gain defend my honor; that way, you will inherit the estate. What do you mean by this scorn, you most unmannerly knave?"

"Not knave — I am a knight, a knight, good mother, just like Basilisco," the Bastard replied.

Basilisco was a fictional character in Thomas Kyd's play *Soliman and Perseda* who insisted on being called a knight, not a knave.

The Bastard continued, "I have been dubbed a knight! I have it on my shoulder."

Part of the ceremony of making someone a knight involved tapping the man's shoulder with a sword.

The Bastard continued, "But, mother, I am not Sir Robert's son. I have disclaimed Sir Robert and my land. Legitimacy, name, and all are gone. So then, my good mother, let me know who is my father. Some proper man, I hope. Who was he, mother?"

"Have you denied that you are a Faulconbridge?" his mother asked.

"As faithfully as I deny the Devil," the Bastard replied.

"King Richard Coeur-de-lion was your father," Lady Faulconbridge admitted. "By a long and vehement suit, I was seduced into making room for him in my husband's bed. May Heaven not lay my transgression to my charge! You are the issue of — the child resulting from — my dear offence, which was so strongly urged past my defenses."

"Now, by this light, if I were to be begotten again, Madam,

I would not wish for a better father,” the Bastard said. “Some sins bear their privilege on Earth, and so does yours; your fault was not your folly.”

Sins that bear their privilege on Earth are those that have immunity and advantages.

The Bastard continued, “You necessarily lay your heart at King Richard I’s disposal; your heart was subjected tribute to commanding love, against whose fury and unmatched force the fearless lion could not wage the fight, nor keep his Princely heart from Richard’s hand. He who by force robs lions of their hearts may easily win a woman’s.”

A legend about King Richard I stated that while he was being held prisoner, a lion was released in his cell to kill him. But when the lion roared, Richard thrust his naked hand and arm into the lion’s throat and pulled out the lion’s heart. This is how he came to be known as “Lionheart.”

The Bastard continued, “Yes, my mother, with all my heart I thank you for my father! Anyone who lives and dares to say that you did not well when I was begotten, I’ll send his soul to Hell. Come, lady, I will show you to my kin, and they shall say that when Richard begot me, if you had said no to him, it would have been a sin. Whoever says it was a sin, he lies; I say it was not.”

The Bastard was cleverly punning on “not” and “naught.” “Naught” has two meanings: 1) nothing, and 2) evil. In this culture, the word “naughty” had a much darker and more serious meaning than it does in our culture.

CHAPTER 2 (King John)

— 2.1 —

Before the city of Angiers in France, two groups of people met. Angiers was a possession of England. In one group were the Duke of Austria and some of his forces, including drummers. In the other group were King Philip II of France and some of his forces. Also with him were Louis the Dauphin, his son, who was next in line to be King of France; Arthur, who had a claim to be King of England; Constance, Arthur's mother; and some attendants. The Duke of Austria was wearing a lion skin that he had taken from King Richard I — the Lionheart — of England.

Louis the Dauphin said, "We are well met before the city of Angiers, brave Duke of Austria.

"Arthur, that great forerunner of your blood, King Richard I, who robbed the lion of his heart and fought the holy wars — the Crusades — in Palestine, was sent by this brave Duke of Austria early to his grave. To make amends to his posterity, at our importuning he has come here to unfurl his battle flags, boy, in your behalf and to rebuke the usurpation of your unnatural uncle, John of England. Embrace him, love him, and give him welcome here."

Arthur said to the Duke of Austria, "God shall forgive you Coeur-de-lion's death all the sooner because you are giving life to his offspring, sheltering their right under your wings of war. I give you welcome with a powerless — lacking an army — hand, but with a heart full of unstained love."

Arthur then said, "Welcome before the gates of Angiers, Duke."

"You are a noble boy!" Louis the Dauphin said. "Who

would not do right by you?”

The Duke of Austria kissed Arthur and said, “Upon your cheek I lay this zealous kiss as seal to this contract of my love. I swear that I will return no more to my home until Angiers and the territory you have rights to in France, together with that pale, white-faced shore, whose foot spurns back the ocean’s roaring tides and defends from other lands her islanders, even until that England, hedged in with the ocean, that water-walled bulwark, always secure and confident — safe and sure — from foreign designs and plots, even until that utmost corner of the west salutes you as her King. Until you have all the land, including England, you have the right to possess, fair boy, I will not think of home, but instead will follow arms and the way of war.”

Constance said, “Oh, take his mother’s thanks, a widow’s thanks, until your strong hand shall help to give him strength to make a better requital for your love and friendship!”

The Duke of Austria said, “The peace of Heaven is theirs who lift their swords in such a just and charitable war.”

“Well then, let’s get to work,” King Philip II said. “Our cannon shall be aimed against the brows of this resisting town. Call for our men who best understand military strategy to select the spots that offer the best advantages for our cannon. We’ll lay before this town our royal bones and wade to the marketplace in Frenchmen’s blood, but we will make it subject to this boy.”

“Stay for an answer to your embassy to King John,” Constance advised, “lest unadvisedly and without proper deliberation you stain your swords with blood. My Lord Chatillion may bring from England that right in peace which here we urge in war, and then we shall repent each drop of blood that hot rash haste so unjustly and

illegitimately shed.”

Chatillion entered the scene.

Seeing him, King Philip II said, “It’s a wonder, lady! Look, following upon your wish, our messenger Chatillion has arrived!

“Tell us briefly and quickly, gentle lord, what King John of England says. We calmly and coolly pause for you. Chatillion, speak.”

“Then turn your forces from this paltry siege and stir them up against a mightier task,” Chatillion replied. “King John of England, provoked by your just demands, has put himself in armor. The adverse winds, which kept me in England waiting for favorable winds, have given him time to land his legions here in France at the same time I landed here. His army marches quickly to this town. His forces are strong, his soldiers confident. Coming along with him is the Mother Queen. She is an Ate, a goddess of discord, stirring him to blood and strife. With her is her niece, the Lady Blanche of Spain. With them is a bastard of the deceased King Richard I, and all the unsettled humors — restless, disgruntled men — of the land. They are rash, inconsiderate, fiery volunteers, with ladies’ faces and fierce dragons’ spleens — that is, they are good-looking and have hot tempers. They have sold their fortunes at their native homes, and now bear their birthrights proudly on their backs in order to make hazard of new fortunes here; in other words, they sold all they had so they could equip themselves to make war against us. In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits than now the English ships have wafted over never has floated upon the swelling tide to do offence and scathing damage in Christendom.”

The sound of King John’s drums filled the air.

Chatillion continued, “The interruption of their churlish

drums cuts off the telling of more details. They are at hand, either to parley or to fight; therefore, prepare yourselves.”

“This expedition is very unexpected!” King Philip II said.

The Duke of Austria said, “By how much unexpected, by so much we must rouse our efforts for our defense, for courage rises when it is needed. Let them be welcome then; we are prepared.”

King John, Queen Eleanor, Blanche, the Bastard, and some lords and forces arrived.

“May peace belong to France, if the King of France in peace permits our just and lineal entrance to our own town and territory,” King John said. “If not, let France bleed, and let peace ascend to Heaven, while we, God’s wrathful agent, punish the proud contempt of those who beat His peace and send it to Heaven.”

King Philip II of France replied, “May peace belong to England, if your soldiers and their war return from France to England, there to live in peace. We love England, and it is for England’s sake that we sweat here from the burden of our armor. This toil of ours should be your toil — you should be making sure that Arthur has his rights as the legitimate King of England. But you are so far from loving England that you have undermined England’s lawful King. You have cut off the sequence of posterity, intimidated a child King, and raped the maidenly virtue of the crown.

“Look here upon your brother Geoffrey’s face: Look at Arthur. These eyes, these brows, were molded out of his. Arthur is a child who is a little abstract — a little summary — of his father, Geoffrey, but with time he will become as huge a volume as his father.

“Geoffrey was born your elder brother, and this boy Arthur is his son; England was rightfully Geoffrey’s and this boy

is rightfully Geoffrey's, and so England is rightfully this boy's. In the name of God, how comes it then that you are called a King, when living blood beats in the temples of Arthur, who owns the crown that you have usurped?"

King John replied, "From whom have you received this great commission, King of France, that allows you to demand that I answer your charges — your articles of condemnation against me?"

King Philip II replied, "I have received my commission from that supernatural Judge Who stirs good thoughts in any breast of strong authority to look into the blots and stains affecting what is right: I have a commission to look into injustice. That Judge has made me guardian to this boy, Arthur, under whose warrant I charge you with injustice and with the Judge's help I mean to chastise it."

King John replied, "You usurp authority."

"I have an excuse," King Philip II said. "I usurp authority in order to beat down usurpation."

"Who is it you are calling a usurper, King of France?" Queen Eleanor asked.

"Let me make the answer," Constance, the mother of Arthur, said. "Your usurping son: John."

Eleanor and Constance were mother- and daughter-in-law. Eleanor had given birth to Richard the Lionheart, Geoffrey, and King John, and Constance was Geoffrey's widow.

"Damn you, insolent woman!" Queen Eleanor replied. "Your bastard shall be King so that you may be a Queen, and check the world!"

She was using the metaphor of a game of chess. A Queen can check — threaten — a King, and Blanche, if she were Queen, would check — threaten — the world.

“My bed was always to your son as true as your bed was to your husband,” Constance said, “and this boy is more similar in his features to his father, Geoffrey, than you and John are in your manners and conduct, although you and John, your son, are as similar as rain is to water, or the Devil is to his dam. My boy a bastard! By my soul, I think his father never was so truly begotten. It cannot be, if you were his mother.”

“There’s a good mother, boy, who insults your father,” Eleanor said to Arthur.

“There’s a good grandmother, boy, who would insult you,” Constance said to Arthur.

“Peace! Silence!” the Duke of Austria said.

“Hear the crier,” the Bastard said.

In law courts, a crier cried, “Peace! Silence!”

“Who the Devil are you?” the Duke of Austria asked.

“One who will play the Devil, sir, with you,” the Bastard said, “if he may catch your hide and you alone. You are the hare whose valor pulls the beards of dead lions, according to the proverb. I’ll smoke your skin-coat — I’ll beat you — if I catch you right. Sirrah, look to it; truly, I will, truly.”

Blanche said, “Oh, well did he become that lion’s robe who did disrobe the lion of that robe!”

The Duke of Austria was responsible for the death of Richard the Lionheart, who had owned the skin of the lion he had killed. Such skins could be worn as clothing. After the PanHellenic hero Hercules killed the Nemean Lion, he wore its skin. Now the Duke of Austria was wearing Richard the Lionheart’s lion skin.

The Bastard said, “Richard’s lion skin lies as attractively on

the back of the Duke of Austria as great Alcides' shoes lie upon an ass."

"Alcides" is an alternate name of Hercules.

The Bastard was conflating two proverbial expressions: 1) Hercules' shoe will not fit a little foot, and 2) an ass in a lion's skin.

One of Aesop's fables is about an ass that found a lion skin and wore it. At first, the other animals were afraid when they saw the ass, but out of happiness at being feared, the ass brayed, and the other animals were no longer afraid of him. The proverb that came from the fable is this: "Fine clothes may disguise, but silly words will reveal a fool."

The Bastard's point was that the Duke of Austria was not the man that Richard the Lionheart was; he was like an ass compared to a lion.

The Bastard continued, "But, ass, I'll take that burden from your back, or lay on you a burden — blows — that shall make your shoulders crack."

The Duke of Austria asked, "What cracker — boaster — is this man who deafens our ears with this abundance of superfluous breath?"

"King Philip, determine what we shall do immediately."

King Philip II said, "Women and fools, break off your conversation."

"King John, this is the very sum of all. I claim England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, and Maine as being the rightful possessions of Arthur; they do not belong to you. Will you resign them and lay down your arms?"

"I will as soon lay down my life," King John said. "I defy you, King of France."

“Arthur of Bretagne, yield yourself into my hand, and out of my dear love I’ll give you more than the coward hand of France can ever win. Submit yourself to me, boy.”

Queen Eleanor said to Arthur, “Come to your grandmother, child.”

Constance used baby talk to say sarcastically to Arthur, “Do, child, go to its grandam, child. Give grandam Kingdom, and its grandam will give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig. There’s a good grandam.”

“To give someone the fig” meant “to make an insulting gesture at someone.”

“My good mother, peace!” Arthur said. “I wish that I were laid low in my grave. I am not worth this disturbance that’s made over me.”

“His mother shames him so, poor boy,” Queen Eleanor said. “He weeps.”

“Now shame upon you, whether she does or not!” Constance said. “His grandmother’s wrongs, and not his mother’s shames, draw those Heaven-moving pearls — tears — from his poor eyes, which Heaven shall take in nature of a fee. Yes, with these crystal beads, which are like prayer beads, Heaven shall be bribed to do him justice and to do revenge on you.”

“You monstrous slanderer of Heaven and Earth!” Queen Eleanor said.

“You monstrous injurer of Heaven and Earth!” Constance said. “Don’t call me a slanderer. You and your son John usurp the dominions and the royal prerogatives and rights of this oppressed boy. This is your oldest grandson, and he is unfortunate in nothing except in you. Your sins are visited in this poor child: The canon of the law is laid on

him, being but the second generation removed from your sin-conceiving womb.”

Constance was referring to Exodus 20:5: “[...] *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me [...]*” (King James Version).

The canon of the law is the rule of the church.

“Madwoman, be quiet,” King John ordered.

Constance replied, “I have only this to say, that he is not only plagued for her sin, but that God has made her sin and herself the plague on this grandson. Eleanor committed adultery and gave birth to John, who is a bastard. Arthur is plagued because of her, and he is plagued by her. Her sin — the adultery that resulted in the birth of John — is her grandson’s injury. Her injuriousness is the beadle — the officer who punishes sinners — to her sin. Both Eleanor and John are punishing Arthur, who ought not to be punished. The person who should be punished is Eleanor. All is punished in the person of this child, Arthur, and all is punished because of her — may a plague fall upon her!”

“You rash, foolhardy scold,” Queen Eleanor said, “I can produce a will that bars the title of your son.”

Richard the Lionheart had made a will that declared John would inherit his throne.

In her reply, Constance used the word “will” to mean “desire” and “sexual desire.”

She said, “True, who doubts that? A will! A wicked will. A woman’s will; a cankered, diseased grandmother’s will!”

“Peace, lady, quiet!” King John ordered. “Pause, or be more calm and temperate. It ill beseems this presence to cry

‘Aim!’ to these ill-tuned repetitions. It is not fitting for this royal company to encourage these harsh-sounding accusations.”

Spectators to an archery match cried “Aim!” as a way to encourage an archer.

King John ordered, “Let some trumpeter summon hither to the walls these men of Angiers. Let us hear them say whose title they permit: Arthur’s or John’s. They will tell us whether they believe Arthur is King of England, or I am.”

The trumpet sounded. Some citizens appeared on the wall of the city.

The first citizen asked, “Who is it who has summoned us to the walls?”

King Philip II said, “It is the King of France, on behalf of Arthur, King of England.”

King John said, “It is the King of England, on behalf of himself. You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects —”

King Philip II interrupted, “You loving men of Angiers, Arthur’s subjects, our trumpet called you to this gentle parley —”

Using the royal plural, King John interrupted, “— for our benefit; therefore, listen to us first.

“These flags of France that are advanced here before the eye and prospect of your town have marched here to your harm. The cannons have their bowels full of wrath, and they are ready mounted to spit forth their iron indignation against your walls. All preparation for a bloody siege all mercilessly proceeding from these French soldiers confronts your city’s eyes, your winking — opening and closing — gates. And except for our approach, those sleeping stones, which like a belt girdle you and make up

your city walls, would have been attacked. The French army's ordinance would have compelled the stones of your city wall to leave their fixed beds of mortar, and wide havoc that is made for bloody power would have rushed upon your peace."

The cry "havoc!" to soldiers meant "attack and pillage and show no mercy!"

King John continued, "But at the sight of us, your lawful King, who diligently with much expeditious marching have brought a countercheck — a counter maneuver — before your gates, to save unscratched your city's threatened cheeks, behold, the dumbfounded French permit a parley.

"And now, instead of cannonballs wrapped in fire that would make a shaking fever in your walls, they shoot only calm words folded up in smoke — deceitful and obscure words. They want your ears to make an error and trust words that are not backed up by faith.

"Kind citizens, trust their words as they ought to be trusted, and let in your city us, your King, whose labored spirits, wearied in this action of swift speed, craves harborage and shelter within your city walls."

King Philip II said, "When I have finished talking, make answer to us both."

He took Arthur's hand in his right hand and said, "Look, in this right hand, whose protection is most divinely vowed to support the just rights of him whose hand it holds, stands young Arthur Plantagenet, son to the elder brother of this man named John, and King over him and all that he enjoys.

"For that which is right but has been downtrodden and oppressed, we tread in warlike march these greens before your town, but we are no further enemy to you than the constraint of hospitable zeal in the relief of this oppressed

child religiously provokes.

“Be pleased then to pay that duty that you truly owe to that boy who owns it, namely this young Prince, and then our arms, just like a muzzled bear except in appearance, will end all offence. Our cannons’ malice shall vainly be spent against the invulnerable clouds of Heaven, and with a blessed and unmolested retreat, with unhacked swords and helmets all unbruised by blows, we will bear home again that fierce energy and blood that we came here to spout against your town. And so we will leave your children, wives, and you in peace.

“But if you foolishly ignore our proffered offer, the round circumference of your walls that are so well built that they did not require refacing cannot hide you from our messengers of war — our cannonballs — even if all these English and their military discipline were harbored in your wall’s rough circumference.

“Then tell us, shall your city call us lord, on behalf of Arthur, on whose behalf we have challenged your city? Or shall we give the signal to release our rage and martial spirit and stalk in blood to our possession? Shall we attack your city and through warfare gain possession of it?”

The first citizen replied, “In brief, we are the King of England’s subjects. For him, and in his right, we hold this town.”

“In his right” meant “in his rightful ownership.”

“Acknowledge then the King, and let me in,” King John said.

The first citizen replied, “We cannot do that, but he who proves himself to be the King, to him we will prove loyal. Until that time we have closed our gates against the world.”

King John asked, “Doesn’t possession of the crown of England prove who is the King? And if that doesn’t, I bring you witnesses, twice fifteen thousand hearts of England’s breeding —”

The Bastard said, “Bastards, and otherwise.”

King John continued, “— to verify our title with their lives.”

King Philip II said, “As many and as well-born bloods as those —”

The Bastard said, “Including some bastards.”

King Philip II continued, “— stand in his face to contradict his claim.”

The first citizen responded, “Until you settle whose right is worthiest, we on behalf of the worthiest withhold the right from both of you.”

King John said, “Then may God forgive the sin of all those souls who to their everlasting residence, before the dew of evening falls, shall fleetly flee from this mortal world in dreadful battle to determine our Kingdom’s King!”

“Amen! Amen!” King Philip II said. “Mount, chevaliers! To arms!”

Chevaliers are French knights.

The Bastard said, “Saint George, who thrashed the dragon, and ever since sits on his horseback at my hostess’ door, teach us some fencing and some defense!”

Saint George, the patron saint of England, appeared mounted on horseback on the signs of many English inns.

The Bastard then said to the Duke of Austria, “Sirrah, if I were at your home, at your den, with your lioness I would

set an ox-head onto your lion's hide, and make a monster of you."

Lionesses had the reputation of especially liking sex. The Bastard was saying that he would give the Duke of Austria horns by sleeping with his wife and making him a cuckold.

"Peace! Silence! Say no more," the Duke of Austria said.

"Oh, tremble, for you hear the lion roar," the Bastard said, sarcastically referring to the Duke of Austria, who was wearing Richard the Lionheart's lion skin.

"Let's go up higher to the plain," King John ordered, "where we'll set forth in the best arrangement all our regiments."

The Bastard said, "Let us hurry, then, to take the most advantageous place of the battlefield."

King Philip II said, "It shall be so, and at the other hill command the rest to stand. Fight for God and our right!"

The two Kings set their troops in military formation and then the battle began.

After the battle was over, a French herald, with trumpeters, went to the gates of the city and said, "You men of Angiers, open wide your gates, and let young Arthur, Duke of Bretagne, in, who by the help of the King of France this day has made much reason for tears in many English mothers whose sons lie scattered on the bleeding ground. Many a widow's husband lies prostrate, coldly embracing the discolored earth, and victory, with little loss, plays upon the dancing banners of the French, who are at hand, triumphantly displayed in formation, and are prepared to enter your city as conquerors and to proclaim Arthur of Bretagne England's King and yours."

The English herald then arrived, accompanied by

trumpeters, and said, “Rejoice, you men of Angiers, ring your bells. King John, your King and England’s, approaches. He is commander of this hot malicious day. The English armored soldiers, who marched here so silver-bright, hither return all gilt with the blood of Frenchmen. No plume stuck in any English crest has been removed by a French spear shaft. Our colors return in those same hands that displayed them unfurled when we first marched forth, and, like a troop of jolly huntsmen, come our vigorous, strong English soldiers, all with purpled hands, dyed in the dying slaughter of their foes.”

In this culture, hunters dipped their hands in the blood of the deer they had killed.

The English herald continued, “Open your gates and give the victors entry.”

The first citizen said, “Heralds, from off our towers we have beheld, from first to last, the onset and retire of both your armies, whose equality by our best eyes cannot be criticized. Your two armies have fought to a standstill. Blood has bought blood, and blows have answered blows. Strength has matched with strength, and power has confronted power. Both sides are alike, and both alike we like. One side must prove greater. While both sides weigh so evenly, we hold our town for neither, yet for both.”

King John and King Philip II arrived, along with many soldiers.

King John spoke to the King of France, using a metaphor. He imagined his right to the throne as a current that was being blocked by the impediment of the King of France. Irritated by the impediment, his right to the throne would spill over the banks and flood the surrounding area, causing destruction.

King John said, “King of France, do you still have more

blood to cast away? Tell me whether the current of our right shall run on? Our current's passage, vexed with your impediment, shall leave its native channel and overswell with a disturbed course even your confining shores, unless you let its silver water keep a peaceful progress to the ocean."

King Philip II replied, "England, you have not saved one drop of blood in this hot trial more than we of France have; instead, you have lost more blood than we have. And by this hand that holds sway over the earth this part of the sky overlooks, I swear before we will lay down our just-borne — justly borne and just-now borne — arms, we'll put down you, against whom these arms we bear, or add a royal number and name to the list of the dead, gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss with slaughter coupled to the name of Kings."

In other words, one or the other King would die on the battlefield.

"Majesty! Ha!" the Bastard said. "How high your glory towers, when the rich blood of Kings is set on fire! Oh, now Death lines his dead jaws with steel. The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs. And now Death feasts, mousing — tearing — the flesh of men, in unresolved quarrels of Kings. Why do these royal faces stand amazed and thunderstruck like this? Kings, cry 'Havoc!' Go back to the bloodstained battlefield, you equal potentates, you fiery kindled spirits! Then let the destruction of one side confirm the other's peace. Until then, blows, blood, and death!"

"Whose side do the townsmen yet admit to be King of England and admit into the town?" King John asked.

"Speak, citizens, for England," King Philip II said. "Who's your King?"

"The King of England," the first citizen said, "when we

know who is the King.”

Using the royal plural, King Philip II said, “Know him in us, who here uphold his rights.”

Using the royal plural, King John said, “Know him in us, who are our own great deputy and bear possession of our person here, lord of our presence, of Angiers, and of you.”

King John was pointing out that unlike Arthur, he needed no deputy to act for him.

“A greater power than we denies all this,” the first citizen said, “and until who is King of England is beyond doubt, we lock our former doubt about the right thing to do in our strong-barred gates, Kings of our fears, until our fears, resolved and allayed, be by some certainly legitimate King purged and deposed.”

The Bastard said, “By Heaven, these scoundrels of Angiers flout you and mock you, Kings. They stand securely and safely on their battlements, as if they were in a theater, from whence they stare and point at your industrious and laborious scenes and acts of death.

“Allow your royal presences to be ruled by me. Do like the mutineers of Jerusalem did. Be friends for a while and both of you join together and aim your sharpest deeds of malice on this town. By east and west let the King of France and the King of England mount their battering cannon charged to the mouths, until the cannons’ soul-frightening clamors have brawled down the flinty ribs of this contemptuous city. I’d aim the cannon incessantly upon these jades — these worthless wretches — even until unfenced desolation leaves them as naked as the common air.

“Once that is done, separate your united strengths, and part your mingled battle flags once again. Turn face to face and bloody spear point to bloody spear point. Then, in a

moment, Fortune shall cull forth out of one side her happy favorite, to whom in favor she shall give the day, and kiss him with a glorious victory.

“How do you like this wild counsel, mighty heads of state? Doesn't it smack something of political intrigue?”

King John replied, “Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads, I like it well. King of France, shall we knit our armies together and lay this Angiers even to the ground, and then afterward fight over who shall be King of it?”

The Bastard said to King Philip II, “If you have the mettle of a King, being wronged as we are by this peevish town, then turn the mouth of your artillery, as we will ours, against these insolent walls, and when we have dashed them to the ground, why then we will defy each other and pell-mell we will make battle upon each other, sending souls either to Heaven or Hell.”

“Let it be so,” King Philip II decided.

He asked King John, “Tell me, from where will you assault the city?”

King John replied, “We from the west will send destruction into this city's bosom.”

“I will send destruction from the north,” the Duke of Austria said.

King Philip II said, “Our thundering cannon from the south shall rain their drift of cannonballs on this town.”

The Bastard said to himself, “Oh, prudent military discipline! From north to south, the Duke of Austria and the King of France will shoot in each other's mouth. I'll encourage them to do it.”

He said out loud, “Come, away, away! Let's go!”

The first citizen of Angiers said, "Listen to us, great Kings. Please wait a while, and I shall show you peace and a fair-faced alliance and treaty. You will win this city without a sword stroke or a wound. You will rescue those breathing lives who come here as sacrifices for the battlefield; you will rescue them so that they can die in beds. Don't persevere in destroying the city, but listen to me, mighty Kings."

King John said, "Speak on with permission; we are inclined to hear what you have to say."

The first citizen said, "That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanche, is the niece of King John of England. Look upon the years of Louis the Dauphin and that lovely maiden. If lusty love should go in quest of beauty, where would he find it fairer than in Blanche? If zealous love — holy love — should go in search of virtue, where would he find it purer than in Blanche? If ambitious love should seek a match of birth — a dynastic marriage — whose veins enclose richer blood than those of Lady Blanche?

"Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, and birth, so also is the young Dauphin in every way complete. If he is not complete in anything, say he is not she. And she again falls short of nothing, and so lacks nothing, except that she is not he.

"This man and this woman each requires the other to make their own perfection more perfect.

"He is the half part of a blessed man, left to be finished by such as she. And she is a fair divided excellence, whose fullness of perfection lies in him."

"Oh, two such silver currents, when they join, glorify the banks that bound them in, and two such shores to two such streams made one, two such controlling bounds shall you be, Kings, to this Prince and Princess, if you marry them to

each other.

“This union shall do more than the battery of cannonballs can to open our fast-closed gates, for at this match, with swifter eagerness than gunpowder can enforce, the mouth of passage — our city gate — we shall fling wide open, and give you entrance to our city.

“But without this marriage match, the enraged sea is not half so deaf, lions more confident, mountains and rocks more free from motion, no, not Death himself in moral fury half so preemphory, as we are to keep this city.”

The Bastard said to himself, “Here’s a stop that shakes the rotten carcass of old Death out of his rags! Here’s a large mouth, indeed, that spits forth death and mountains, rocks, and seas, that talks as familiarly of roaring lions as maidens of thirteen do of puppy-dogs!

“What cannoneer begot this strong, vigorous, hot-blooded fellow? He speaks plain cannon fire, and smoke and explosive noise. He gives the bastinado — the beating — with his tongue. Our ears are cudged. Not a word of his but buffets better than a fist of a soldier of France. Zounds! I was never so bethumped with words since I first called my brother’s father Dad.”

It’s possible that the Bastard’s brother’s father knew that the Bastard was a bastard and so objected to being called Dad by him.

Queen Eleanor said to King John, “Son, listen to this proposed union and make this match. Give with our niece a dowry large enough to accomplish your goals: For by this marriage knot you shall so securely tie your now precarious assurance to the crown that yonder green, inexperienced boy shall have no Sun to ripen the bloom that promises a mighty fruit. His claim to be King of England shall never bear fruit.”

Constance and Arthur were not present; they were in the French camp.

Queen Eleanor continued, “I see a yielding in the looks of the King of France. See how the French whisper. Urge them while their souls are capable of this ambition, lest zeal, now melted by the windy breath of soft petitions, pity, and remorse, cool and congeal again to what it was. Let the marriage take place before the French change their minds and renew their zeal to help Arthur.”

The first citizen said, “Why don’t the double majesties — the King of England and the King of France — answer our threatened town’s friendly proposal for agreement?”

King Philip II said, “Let the King of England speak first. He has been eager to first speak to the citizens of this city.”

He asked King John, “What do you have to say?”

King John replied, “If the Dauphin there, your Princely son, can in this book of beauty — Blanche — read ‘I love,’ her dowry shall weigh equal to that of a Queen: Anjou and fair Touraine, Maine, Poitiers, and all that we find liable to our crown and dignity upon this side of the English Channel, except this city now by us besieged, shall gild her bridal bed and make her rich in titles, honors, and promotions, as she in beauty, education, and blood holds hands with and is equal to any Princess of the world.”

King Philip asked his son, “What do you say, boy? Look at the lady’s face.”

“I am, my lord,” Louis the Dauphin said, “and in her eye I find a wonder, or a wondrous miracle: the shadow of myself formed in her eye. This shadow, being but the shadow of your son, becomes a Sun and makes your son a shadow.”

In Blanche's eye Louis saw a reflection of himself. This reflection was a reflection of his Kingly father's royal, Sun-like glory. Therefore, it was fitting for the Sun — the King. It also made the son a shadow — something created by the Sun-like King.

The marriage was being made for dynastic purposes, and in marrying Blanche, Louis was merely an instrument being used to achieve the ambitions of his father.

Louis the Dauphin continued, "I protest I never loved myself until now infixed — captured and firmly held — I beheld myself drawn in the flattering tablet of her eye."

Although this would be an arranged marriage, Louis the Dauphin was not opposed to it. He loved the reflection of himself in Blanche's eye, and by extension he loved Blanche's eye and Blanche herself.

He then talked quietly to Blanche.

The Bastard talked to himself and made fun of Louis the Dauphin's use of language:

"'Drawn in the flattering tablet of her eye!' Hanged, aka suspended, in the frowning wrinkle of her brow! And quartered, aka lodged, in her heart! He sees himself as a traitor in love. This is a pity now, that hanged and drawn and quartered, there should be in such a love so vile a lout as he."

In this culture, traitors to the King were hung, drawn, and quartered. They were hung but taken down from the rope while still alive. They then were disemboweled — their entrails were drawn out of their body. Finally, they were quartered — their bodies were cut into four pieces.

Blanche said to Louis the Dauphin, "My uncle's will and desire in this respect is mine. If he sees anything in you that

makes him like you, then that anything he sees, which moves his liking, I can with ease translate it to my will — I can make it suit my own desires. Or if you prefer, to speak more properly, I will enforce it easily to my love.

“Further I will not flatter you, my lord, by saying that all I see in you is worthy of love, other than this: I see nothing in you, even if churlish thoughts themselves should be your judge, that I can find should merit any hate. I see nothing in you that I ought to hate.”

King John said, “What say these young ones? What do you say, my niece?”

Blanche replied, “That she is bound in honor always to do what you in wisdom always deign to say.”

“Speak then, Prince Dauphin,” King John said. “Can you love this lady?”

“Ask me instead if I can refrain from loving her, for I do love her most unfeignedly,” Louis the Dauphin replied.

“Then I give Volquessen, Touraine, Maine, Poitiers, and Anjou, these five provinces, with her to you,” King John said, “and this in addition: fully thirty thousand marks of English coin.

“Philip of France, if you are pleased with this, command your son and future daughter-in-law to join hands.”

“I like this well,” King Philip II said. “Young Prince and Princess, join your hands.”

“And your lips, too,” the Duke of Austria said, “for I am well assured that I did so when I was first assured — that is, when I was first betrothed.”

Louis the Dauphin and Blanche held hands and kissed.

The joining of hands and a kiss were enough for a legal

marriage, but a church wedding customarily followed.

King Philip II said, "Now, citizens of Angiers, open your gates. Let in that amity that you have made, for at Saint Mary's chapel immediately the rites of marriage shall be solemnized.

"Isn't the Lady Constance in this troop? I know she isn't, for her presence would have much interrupted this match we have made up. Where are she and her son? Tell me, whoever knows."

Louis the Dauphin said, "She is sad and impassioned at your highness' tent."

"And, by my faith, this league that we have made will give her sadness very little cure," King Philip II said.

"Brother of England, how may we content this widow lady? In her right we French came, but we, God knows, have turned another way, to our own advantage. We came to win the rights of Arthur, her son, but we have chosen to do something more advantageous to us."

"We will heal up all," King John said, "for we'll give young Arthur the titles of Duke of Bretagne and Earl of Richmond, and we will make him lord of this rich fair town."

He ordered, "Call the Lady Constance. Some speedy messenger, go to her and tell her to go to our solemnity: this marriage ceremony. I trust we shall, if not fill up the measure of her will, yet in some measure satisfy her so that we shall stop her exclamations of distress and outrage.

"Let us go, as well as haste will allow us, to this unlooked for and unplanned pomp."

Everyone except the Bastard exited.

The Bastard said to himself, “This is a mad world with mad Kings and a mad truce!

“John, to stop Arthur’s title to the whole, has willingly parted with a part.

“And the King of France, whose conscience buckled on his armor, whom zeal and charity brought to the battlefield as God’s own soldier, has been whispered to in the ear by that same purpose-changer, that sly Devil, that pimp who always breaks the head of faith, that daily vow-breaker, he who wins of all — of Kings, beggars, old men, young men, and maidens, who, having no external thing to lose except the word ‘maiden,’ he cheats the poor maiden of that. To whom am I referring? I am referring to that smooth-faced, deceitful gentleman who is flattering self-interest — self-interest, the bias of the world.

“The world of itself is well balanced and made to run even upon even ground until this advantage, this vile-drawing bias, this sway of motion, this self-interest, makes it throw off the control of all impartiality and of all direction, purpose, course, and intent.

“And this same bias, this self-interest, this bawd, this pimp, this all-changing word, placed on the outward eye of ambition — as opposed to the inward eye of conscience — of the fickle King of France, has drawn him from his own determined aid, from a resolved and honorable war, to a most base and vilely concluded peace.

“And why do I rail against this self-interest? Only because self-interest has not wooed me yet. It’s not because I have the power to clutch my hand shut when any fair angels — coins bearing the image of an angel — would salute my palm; instead, it’s because the palms of my hands have not been tempted yet, and so like a poor beggar, I rail against the rich.

“Well, while I am a beggar, I will rail and say there is no sin except to be rich. And when I am rich, my virtue then shall be to say there is no vice except begging.

“Since Kings break faith when tempted by self-interest, then be my lord, Gain, for I will worship you.”

The Bastard’s words and actions did not match. Often he spoke cynically about following his own self-interest, but his deeds showed that he was loyal and patriotic.

CHAPTER 3 (King John)

— 3.1 —

Constance, Arthur, and the Earl of Salisbury spoke together in the French King's pavilion. The Earl of Salisbury had brought Constance news about the marriage of Louis the Dauphin and Blanche, niece of King John.

Constance said to the Earl of Salisbury, "Gone to be married! Gone to swear a peace! False, faithless blood joined to false, faithless blood! Gone to be friends! Shall Louis have Blanche, and Blanche have those provinces?"

"It is not so: You have misspoken; you have misheard. Be well advised and sensible; tell your tale again. It cannot be; you only say it is so.

"I trust I may not trust you, for your word is only the vain breath of a common man. Believe me: I do not believe you, man. I have a King's oath to the contrary. You shall be punished for thus frightening me, for I am sick and susceptible to fears, oppressed with wrongs and therefore full of fears. I am a widow, husbandless, subject to fears. I am a woman, by nature heir to fears.

"And even if you now confess you only jested, I cannot make peace with my vexed spirits, and they will quake and tremble all this day.

"What do you mean by shaking your head? Why do you look so sorrowfully at my son? What means that hand upon that breast of yours? Why does your eye hold that lamentable tear, like a proud river peering over its banks?"

"Are these sad signs confirmers of your words? Then speak again; don't tell all your former tale, but say this one word: whether your tale is true."

The one word she wanted to hear was that his news was *not* true.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “My words are as true as I believe you think them — King Philip II and his son the Dauphin — false who give you reason to know that what I say is true.”

Constance said, “Oh, if you teach me to believe this sorrow, then teach this sorrow how to make me die, and let belief and life encounter in the same way as does the fury of two desperate men who in their very meeting fall and die.

“Louis marry Blanche!”

She said to Arthur, “Oh, boy, then what will become of you and your claim on the throne of England?”

She continued, “With the King of France friends with the King of England, what becomes of me?”

“Fellow, be gone: I cannot endure your sight. This news has made you a very ugly man.”

Constance was so upset that she was speaking contemptuously to the Earl of Salisbury, including calling him “fellow.”

The Earl of Salisbury replied, “What other harm have I, good lady, done, except speak the harm that is by others done?”

“Which harm within itself is so heinous that it makes harmful all who speak of it,” Constance said.

“I beg you, madam, be calm,” Arthur said.

“If you, who bid me to be calm, were grim, ugly, and slanderous to your mother’s womb, full of unpleasing blots and sightless stains, lame, foolish, crooked, swarthy,

monstrous, patched with foul moles and eye-offending marks, I would not care, I then would be calm, for then I should not love you, no, nor would you become and suit your great birth nor would you deserve a crown.

“But you are good-looking, and at your birth, dear boy, Nature and Fortune joined to make you great. Of Nature’s gifts you may with lilies boast, and with the partially blossomed rose.”

The lily is a symbol of France, and the rose is a symbol of England.

Constance continued, “But Fortune, oh, she is corrupted, changed, and won from you. She commits adultery hourly with your uncle John, and with her golden hand has plucked on the King of France to tread down fair respect of sovereignty, and made his majesty the bawd to theirs. The King of France is a bawd to Fortune and to King John — that strumpet Fortune, that usurping John!”

She said to the Earl of Salisbury, “Tell me, fellow, isn’t the King of France forsworn? Hasn’t he broken his word? Poison him with words, or get you gone and leave those woes alone that I alone am bound to bear and endure and suffer.”

“Pardon me, madam,” the Earl of Salisbury said. “I may not go without you to the Kings.”

“You may, you shall,” Constance said. “I will not go with you. I will instruct my sorrows to be proud, for grief is proud and makes its owner stoop. To me and to the state of my great grief let Kings assemble, for my grief’s so great that no supporter but the huge firm earth can hold it up. Here I and my sorrows sit. Here is my throne. Tell Kings to come bow to it.”

She sat on the ground.

King John, King Philip II, Louis the Dauphin, Blanche, Queen Eleanor, the Bastard, the Duke of Austria, and some attendants walked over to her.

King Philip II said to Blanche, “It is true, fair daughter-in-law, and this blessed day always in France shall be kept a festival day. To solemnize this day, the glorious Sun stays in his course and plays the alchemist, turning with the splendor of his precious eye the meager cloddy Earth to glittering gold. The yearly course that brings this day about shall never see it except as a holiday.”

Constance said, “It is a wicked day, and not a holy day!”

She stood up and said, “What has this day deserved? What has it done that it in golden letters to make it stand out should be set among the great festivals in the calendar? Instead, turn this day out of the week and delete this day of shame, oppression, and perjury.

“Or, if it must stand in the calendar, let pregnant wives pray that their children may not be born on this day, lest their hopes be disappointed with the birth of a monster. Let seamen fear shipwreck on no day except on this day. Let no agreements break except those that are on this day made. On this day, let all things begun come to an ill end. Yes, let faith itself change to hollow falsehood!”

“By Heaven, lady, you shall have no cause to curse the fair proceedings of this day,” King Philip II said. “Haven’t I pledged to you my majesty?”

Constance replied, “You have beguiled me with a counterfeit that merely resembles majesty, which, being tested and tried, proves to be valueless. You are forsworn, forsworn; you have broken your word. You came in arms to spill my enemies’ blood, but now in arms — arm in arm with King John — you strengthen it with your blood. The grappling vigor and rough frown of war is cold in amity

and feigned peace, and the oppression of Arthur and me has created the formation of this league.

“Arm, arm, you Heavens, against these perjured Kings! A widow cries; protect me as a husband would protect a wife, Heavens! Let not the hours of this ungodly day wear out the day in peace, but before sunset set armed discord between these perjured Kings! Hear me, oh, hear me!”

“Lady Constance, peace! Be calm!” the Duke of Austria said.

“War! War! No peace!” Constance shouted. “Peace is to me a war. Oh, Lymoges! Oh, Austria! You shame that bloody spoil — that lion skin taken from Richard the Lionheart. You slave, you wretch, you coward!

“You are little in bravery, but great in villainy. You are always strong upon the stronger side! You always choose to side with the stronger side! You are Lady Fortune’s champion who never fights except when her temperamental ladyship is nearby to teach you how to keep yourself safe! You have perjured yourself, too, and you flatter great and powerful people. What a fool you are, a ramping, boasting fool, to brag and stamp and swear in my cause and on my side! You cold-blooded slave, haven’t you spoken like thunder on my side, sworn that you are my soldier, told me that I can depend upon your stars, your fortune, and your strength, and do you now fall over to my foes?

“You wear a lion’s hide! Take it off for shame, and hang a calfskin on those recreant limbs.”

Lions are known for courageousness; calves are known for meekness.

“I wish that a man would speak those words to me!” the Duke of Austria said.

Immediately, the Bastard said, “And hang a calfskin on those recreant limbs.”

“You dare not say so, villain, on your life,” the Duke of Austria said.

Immediately, the Bastard repeated, “And hang a calfskin on those recreant limbs.”

Using the royal plural, King John said, “We do not like this; you forget your place.”

Cardinal Pandulph arrived.

Seeing him, King John said, “Here comes the holy legate of the Pope.”

“Hail, you anointed deputies of Heaven!” Cardinal Pandulph said. “To you, King John, my holy errand is. I, Pandulph, Cardinal of fair Milan, and from Pope Innocent III the legate here, do in his name religiously demand why you against the church, our holy mother, so willfully spurn, and with violent compulsion keep Stephen Langton, whom the Pope has chosen to be Archbishop of Canterbury, from that holy see? This, in our aforesaid holy father’s name, Pope Innocent III, I demand of you.”

King John replied, “What worldly name to interrogatories can task the free breath of a sacred King? What worldly man can force a sacred King to answer questions? You cannot, Cardinal, invent a name as slight, unworthy, and ridiculous as the name of the Pope to order me to make an answer to a question.

“Tell him what I have said, and from the mouth of the King of England add this much more, that no Italian priest — no Pope — shall tithe or toll, aka collect church revenues — in our dominions.

“As we, under Heaven, are supreme head, so under Him we

will alone uphold, without the assistance of a mortal hand such as that belonging to the Pope, that great supremacy, with which we do reign.

“So tell the Pope, with all reverence to him and his usurped and stolen authority cast aside.”

King Philip II said, “Brother of England, you blaspheme in doing and saying this.”

King John replied, “Although you and all the Kings of Christendom are led so grossly by this meddling priest, the Pope, dreading the curse that money may buy out, and by the merit of vile gold, dross, and dust, you and the other Kings purchase the corrupted pardon of a man, who in that sale sells pardon from himself and not from God, and moreover damns himself, and although you and all the rest of the Kings so grossly led cherish this cheating witchcraft and superstition with revenue, yet I alone, alone oppose the Pope and count his friends my foes.”

King John was criticizing the church’s practice of selling indulgences, in which sinners paid money for the forgiveness of sins.

Cardinal Pandulph said to King John, “Then, by the lawful power that I have, you shall stand cursed and excommunicated. And blessed shall any man be who revolts from his allegiance to a heretic — you. And that hand that takes away by any secret course — such as poison — your hateful life shall be called meritorious, canonized, and worshipped as a saint.”

Constance said, “Oh, let it be lawful that I can join with Rome to curse awhile! Good father Cardinal, cry amen to my keen curses, for without my wrong there is no tongue that has power to curse him right. He cannot be cursed correctly unless the wrong he has done to me is acknowledged.”

“My curse is justified,” Cardinal Pandulph replied. “There’s law and warrant, lady, for my curse.”

“And for mine, too,” Constance said. “When law can do no right, then let it be lawful that law bar no wrong. Law cannot give my child his Kingdom here, for the man — King John — who holds his Kingdom upholds the law. Therefore, since law itself is perfectly wrong, how can the law forbid my tongue to curse?”

King Philip II of France and King John of England were holding hands because of the alliance that they had just arranged through marriage.

Cardinal Pandulph said, “King Philip II of France, on peril of a curse, let go of the hand of that arch-heretic, and raise up the power of France against King John’s head and army, unless he submits himself to Rome.”

“Why do you look pale, King of France?” Queen Eleanor asked. “Do not let go of King John’s hand.”

“Take action, Devil,” Constance said to Queen Eleanor. “If you don’t, the King of France will repent and let go of King John’s hand, and Hell will lose a soul.”

“King Philip II, listen to the Cardinal,” the Duke of Austria advised.

“And hang a calfskin on his recreant limbs,” the Bastard said.

The Duke of Austria replied, “Well, ruffian, I must pocket up and endure these wrongs, because —”

The Bastard interrupted, “— your breeches best may carry them.”

King John asked, “Philip, what do you say to the Cardinal?”

“What should he say but that he agrees with the Cardinal?” Constance asked.

Louis the Dauphin said, “Think, father, about this decision. The difference is a heavy curse from Rome, or the light loss of the King of England for a friend. Forego the easier.”

Blanche said, “The easier one to forego is the curse of Rome.”

“Oh, Louis, stand fast!” Constance advised. “The Devil tempts you here in the likeness of a new and virgin bride.”

Blanche said, “The Lady Constance speaks not from her faith, but from her need. She says not what she believes, but what she thinks will get her what she wants.”

Constance said to King Philip II, “Oh, if you grant me what I need, which lives only by the death of faithfulness, that need must necessarily imply this principle: Faithfulness would live again by the death of what I need. Oh, then, trample down my need, and faithfulness mounts up. Keep my need up, and faithfulness is trodden down!”

Constance’s need was for Arthur to become King of England. For that to happen, King Philip II would have to break his faithfulness — that is, he would have to break the alliance he had just faithfully sworn to King John.

King John said, “The King of France is moved — emotionally shaken — and he does not make an answer to this.”

“Oh, for him to be removed from King John, and for him to answer well!” Constance said.

“Do so, King Philip,” the Duke of Austria advised. “Remove yourself from King John, and hang no more in doubt.”

“Hang nothing but a calfskin, most sweet lout,” the Bastard said to the Duke of Austria.

“I am perplexed, and I don’t know what to say,” King Philip II said.

“What can you say but what will perplex you more, if you stand excommunicated and cursed?” Cardinal Pandulph said.

“Good reverend father, put yourself in my place,” King Philip II said, “and tell me how you would bestow yourself. What would you do if you were me? King John’s royal hand and my royal hand are newly joined, and our inward souls are conjoined and newly married in league, coupled and linked together with all the religious strength of sacred vows. The most recent breath that gave the sound of words was deeply sworn faithfulness, peace, amity, and true love between our Kingdoms and our royal selves, and just before this truce, just a little while before, no longer than we well could wash our hands to seal and settle this royal bargain of peace, Heaven knows, our hands were besmeared and stained all over with the broad paintbrush of slaughter, where revenge did paint the fearsome difference of incensed Kings.

“Shall these hands, so lately purged of blood, so newly joined in love, so strong in both, unyoke this seizure and this kind return of salutation? Play fast and loose with faith? So jest with Heaven, make such changeable and fickle children of ourselves, as now again to snatch our palm from palm, unswear and take back the faith we have sworn, and on the marriage bed of smiling peace to march a bloody army, and make a riot on the gentle brow of true sincerity?

“Oh, holy sir, my reverend father, let it not be so! Out of your grace and with the power of your office, devise,

ordain, impose some gentle order and compromise and solution; and then we shall be blest to do your pleasure and continue to be friends.”

“All form is formless and all order is orderless, save what is opposed and hostile to the love and friendship of the King of England,” Cardinal Pandulph said. “Therefore to arms! Make war against England. Be champion of our church, or let the church, our mother, breathe her curse, a mother’s curse, on her rebelling son.

“King of France, you may safer hold a serpent by the tongue, an angry lion by the deadly paw, a fasting tiger by the tooth, than keep in peace that hand which you now hold.”

“I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith,” King Philip II said. “I can stop holding the hand of King John, but I cannot break the faithful vow I made that I will be in alliance with him.”

“And so you are making faithfulness an enemy to faith,” Cardinal Pandulph said, “and like a civil war you set oath against oath, and your tongue against your tongue. Oh, let the vow you made first — the vow you made to Heaven — be the first performed to Heaven. That is, you vowed to be the champion of our church!

“The vow that you have sworn since — the vow that you swore to King John — is a vow that you have sworn against yourself and it may not be performed by yourself because that which you have sworn to do amiss is not amiss when it is truly done, and being not done, where doing tends to ill, the truth is then most done in not doing it.”

Cardinal Pandulph wanted King Philip II to not keep the vow he had made to King John. The Cardinal was arguing that although it is usually unethical not to keep a vow you have sworn to keep, it is ethical not to keep an unethical

vow.

Cardinal Pandulph continued, “The better act of purposes mistook is to mistake again; although deceitful, yet deceit thereby grows undeceitful, and falsehood cures falsehood, as fire cools fire within the scorched veins of one newly burned.”

According to Cardinal Pandulph, it is morally right to commit a wrong if it leads one to the right path. It is morally right for King Philip II to not keep a vow if it leads to his obeying and being loyal to the church. King Philip II had committed a wrong when he made an alliance with King John. Now he needed to commit the wrong of breaking that vow because this second wrong would put him on the right path — it would make him loyal again to the church.

This society believed that exposing a burn to heat would help cure the burn. In this analogy, the burn was King Philip II’s vow to be allied with England, and the heat was the breaking of that vow.

Cardinal Pandulph continued, “It is religion that makes vows be kept, but you have sworn a vow to King John that is against religion. You have sworn by your faith a vow that is against your faith. What you have sworn is against the thing you have sworn by. You have sworn an oath to God and made that oath the guarantee that you will keep that vow which goes against the will of God.

“You ought not to swear to the truth of something you are uncertain about. When you are hesitant to swear to the truth of something, you should swear only that you will not forswear and perjure yourself.

“The truth you are hesitant to swear swears only not to be forsworn. Otherwise, it would be a mockery to swear!

“But you have sworn only to be not forsworn, and you will be most forsworn if you do what you have sworn to do.”

King Philip II’s vow contained two parts: 1) I swear by God, Whom I serve, that 2) I will form an alliance with England. King Philip II definitely wanted to keep the second part of the vow, but Cardinal Pandulph felt that King Philip II was hesitant about keeping the first part of the vow.

According to the Cardinal, the first part was the part of the vow that needed to be kept. That was the part that included the vow that the vow-maker will not be forsworn. Since that was the only part of the vow that absolutely needed to be kept, the other part of the vow — forming an alliance with England — need not be kept because it contradicted the first part.

He also meant that King Philip II had made a vow that he now needed to break, although he desperately wanted to keep that vow. King Philip II had sworn a vow to King John; that vow made him forsworn to the church. If he kept his vow to King John, he would be forsworn to the church.

Cardinal Pandulph continued, “Therefore, your later vow, which is against your first vow, is in yourself rebellion to yourself.”

The vow made to King John was against the first vow that King Philip II had made, which was to support the church, and this conflict of vows led to a conflict within King Philip II. In fact, according to Cardinal Pandulph, the later vow, which conflicted with his vow to the church, made him a rebel to himself and his better nature as well as to the church.

Cardinal Pandulph continued, “And better conquest never can you make than to arm your constant and your nobler parts against these giddy loose suggestions.”

The best thing for King Philip II to do, according to Cardinal Pandulph, was to reject the “giddy loose suggestions” of staying loyal to King John; instead, he should stay loyal to the church.

Cardinal Pandulph continued, “Upon which better part our prayers come in, if you allow our prayers to come in. But if you don’t allow our prayers to come in, then know that the peril of our curses will light on you so heavy that you shall not shake them off, but in despair you will die under their black weight.”

Religious people believe that in the case of conflicting vows, if one of the vows is made to the church and the other vow is made to an Earthly King, the vow to the church is the one that must be kept.

The Duke of Austria said, “Rebellion, flat rebellion!”

He was referring to Cardinal Pandulph’s statement to King Philip II, “Therefore, your later vow against your first vow is in yourself rebellion to yourself.”

“Will you never be quiet?” the Bastard said. “Wouldn’t a calfskin stop that mouth of yours?”

“Father, to arms!” Louis the Dauphin advised.

“On your wedding day?” Blanche protested. “Against the blood relatives of the woman whom you have married? Shall our feast be kept with slaughtered men? Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums, the clamors of Hell, be the music to our wedding celebration?”

“Oh, husband, listen to me! How new is the word ‘husband’ in my mouth! Even for that word, that name, which until this time my tongue has never pronounced, upon my knee I beg you to not go to arms against King John, my uncle.”

Like Blanche, Constance now knelt and said, "Oh, upon my knee, made hard with kneeling, I pray to you, you virtuous Dauphin, don't alter the doom and judgment aforethought by Heaven!"

"Now I shall see your love," Blanche said to her husband. "What motive may be stronger with you than the name of 'wife'?"

Constance answered for Louis the Dauphin, "That which upholds him that you uphold: his honor. Oh, your honor, Louis, your honor!"

Louis the Dauphin said to his father the King, "I wonder because your majesty seems so cold and indifferent when such weighty and important considerations pull you on."

"I will proclaim a curse upon his head," Cardinal Pandulph said.

"You shall not need to," King Philip II said, making up his mind.

He said to King John, "King of England, I will fall away from you. I am your enemy now, not your ally."

Constance said, "Oh, fair return of banished majesty!"

Queen Eleanor said, "Oh, foul revolt of French inconstancy!"

King John said, "King of France, you shall rue this hour within this hour."

The Bastard said, "Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton Time, is it as he will? Well, then, France shall rue."

The sexton of a church both wound the clocks and dug the graves. Old Time makes a good metaphorical sexton because as time passes, all living people grow closer to the grave. With a battle fast approaching, many Frenchmen —

and Englishmen — would die.

“The sun’s overcast with blood,” Blanche said. “Fair day, *adieu!* Which is the side that I must go with? I am with both sides. Each army has a hand, and in the armies’ rage, I have hold of a hand of both sides. Both sides swirl asunder and dismember me.

“Louis, husband, I cannot pray that you may win.

“King John, uncle, I necessarily must pray that you may lose.

“King Philip II, father-in-law, I may not wish good fortune to be yours.

“Eleanor, grandmother, I will not wish your fortunes to thrive.

“Whoever wins, on that side I shall lose. I am assured a loss before the match is played.”

Louis the Dauphin said to her, “Lady, come with me; your fortune lies with me.”

“There where my fortune lives, there my life dies,” Blanche replied.

“Kinsman, go draw our soldiers together,” King John ordered.

The Bastard exited to carry out the order.

King John then said, “King of France, I am burned up with inflaming wrath — a rage whose heat has this condition, that nothing can allay it, nothing but blood, the blood, and the dearest-valued blood, of the King of France.”

King Philip II replied, “Your rage shall burn you up, and you shall turn to ashes before our blood shall quench that fire. Look after yourself, for your life is in jeopardy.”

“No more than the life of him who threatens me,” King John said. “To arms! Let’s hurry!”

— 3.2 —

The armies had been fighting for a while. The Bastard, holding the cut-off head of the Duke of Austria, stood on the battlefield. By killing the Duke of Austria, who had received the credit for killing Richard the Lionheart, the Bastard had avenged the death of his father. The Bastard was wearing the lion skin that had belonged to his father.

The Bastard said to himself, “Now, by my life, this day grows wondrously hot. Some airy Devil hovers in the sky and pours down mischief.”

This society believed that airy demons caused such things as thunderstorms, but the Bastard was referring here to the noise of the continuing battle.

The Bastard put the head on the ground and said to himself, “The Duke of Austria’s head will lie there, while I, who was once named Philip but am now named Richard, catch my breath.”

King John; Arthur, who had been captured; and Hubert, who was a loyal supporter of King John, entered the scene.

King John said, “Hubert, keep this boy.”

He then said to the Bastard, “Philip, move forward to the front. My mother is assailed in our tent, and I fear that she has been captured.”

“My lord, I rescued her,” the Bastard said. “Her highness is in a safe place, fear you not. But let’s go on, my liege; for very little pain and effort will bring this labor to a happy end.”

— 3.3 —

The battle was over; England had triumphed. King John, Queen Eleanor, Arthur, the Bastard, Hubert, and some lords met together.

King John said to his mother, Queen Eleanor, “So it shall be; your grace shall stay behind here in France and be very strongly guarded.”

He said to Arthur, “Nephew, don’t look sad. Your grandmother loves you, and your uncle will be as dear to you as your father was.”

Arthur said, “Oh, this will make my mother die with grief!”

King John said to the Bastard, “Kinsman, go for England! Hasten there and arrive before us. And, before we arrive there, see that you shake the moneybags of hoarding abbots; set the imprisoned angels at liberty. The fat ribs of peace must by the hungry now be fed upon. Use our commission to its utmost force.”

King John wanted the Bastard to go to England and raise money — lots of money — from the church; he wanted to empty the church’s moneybags in order to pay for the war England had just fought and to feed hungry English soldiers. The “angels” were coins.

The Bastard replied, “Bell, book, and candle shall not drive me back, when gold and silver beckon me to come on. I shall not fear being excommunicated. I leave your highness.”

He then said to Queen Eleanor, “Grandmother, I will pray, if I ever remember to be holy, for your fair safety, and so I kiss your hand.”

“Farewell, gentle kinsman,” Queen Eleanor said.

“Kinsman, farewell,” King John said.

The Bastard exited.

Queen Eleanor said to Arthur, her grandson, "Come here, little grandson; listen as I talk to you."

"Come here, Hubert," King John said. "Oh, my gentle Hubert, we owe you much! Within this wall of flesh that is my body, there is a soul who accounts you her creditor and with interest means to repay your love and friendship. And my good friend, your voluntary oath of loyalty to me lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.

"Give me your hand. I had a thing to say, but I will say it at some better, more suitable time. By Heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed to say how well I love and respect you."

"I am much obliged to your majesty," Hubert said.

"Good friend, you have no reason to say that yet," King John said, "but you shall have reason, and even if time creeps ever so slowly, yet I shall do you good.

"I had a thing to say, but let it go. The Sun is in the Heaven, and the proud day, accompanied by the pleasures of the world, is all too gay and cheerful and too full of showy ornaments such as flowers to give me audience and listen to me.

"If the midnight bell, with its iron tongue and brazen brass mouth, sounded on into the drowsy race of night; if this same were a churchyard where we stand, and you were the owner of a thousand wrongs; or if that surly spirit, melancholy, had baked your blood and made it heavy and thick, your blood that otherwise runs tingling up and down your veins, making that idiotic jester, laughter, keep men's eyes and strain their cheeks to idle merriment, a feeling hateful to my purposes; or if that you could see me without eyes, hear me without your ears, and make a reply to me without a tongue, using your imagination alone, without

eyes, ears, and the harmful sound of words; then, in despite of this brooding and watchful — like a bird watching her nestlings — day, I would pour my thoughts into your bosom.

“But, ah, I will not! Yet I love you well, and I swear that I think you love me well.”

King John was hinting that he wanted Hubert to do something important for him.

“I love you so well,” Hubert replied, “that whatever you tell me to do, even though my death were the inevitable result of my act, by Heaven, I swear I would do it.”

“Don’t I know that you would?” King John said. “Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw your eye on yonder young boy.”

The young boy was Arthur, who had a claim to the throne of England.

King John continued, “I’ll tell you what, my friend. He is definitely a serpent in my way, and wherever this foot of mine treads, he lies before me. Do you understand what I am saying? You are his keeper, his jailor.”

“And I’ll keep him in such a way,” Hubert said, “that he shall not offend your majesty.”

“Death,” King John said bluntly.

“My lord?” Hubert said, shocked.

“A grave,” King John said.

“He shall not live,” Hubert said.

“Enough,” King John said. “Good. I could be merry now. Hubert, I love you. Well, I’ll not say what I intend to do for you. Remember.”

He said to Queen Eleanor, “Madam, fare you well. I’ll send those soldiers over to your majesty.”

“My blessing goes with you!” Queen Eleanor replied.

“Go to England, nephew, go,” King John said to young Arthur. “Hubert shall be your servant and wait on you with all true duty.

“Onward toward Calais, ho!”

Calais was a seaport.

— 3.4 —

King Philip II of France, Louis the Dauphin, and Cardinal Pandulph met together. Some attendants were present.

King Philip II said, “So, a roaring tempest on the sea has scattered a whole armada of our defeated ships and separated them from each other.”

“Have courage and comfort!” Cardinal Pandulph advised. “All shall yet go well.”

“What can go well, when we have run so ill?” King Philip II replied. “Are we not beaten? Is not Angiers lost? Arthur taken prisoner? Many dear friends slain? And the bloody King of England has gone into England after overpowering our resistance — he has done this in spite of me, the King of France!”

“The towns he has won, he has fortified,” Louis the Dauphin said. “He has done this quickly and with good deliberation. Such temperate order in so fierce a cause is without parallel. Who has read or heard of any such action similar to this?”

“I could well endure the King of England having this praise, as long as we could find some other country that has endured the shame we endure,” King Philip II said.

Constance entered the scene. She was distraught, and her hair was loose.

“Look at who is coming here!” King Philip II said. “A grave for a soul; she is holding the eternal spirit against her will, in the vile prison of afflicted breath and life. Her body is the prison of her soul.”

He said to Constance, “Please, lady, come with me.”

She said, “Now, now see the result of your peace.”

“Patience, good lady!” King Philip II said. “Be calm! Have comfort, gentle Constance!”

“No, I defy all counsel, all redress, except that which ends all counsel, true redress,” Constance said. “I mean death, death.

“Oh, amiable and lovely Death! You sweet-smelling stench! Sound and wholesome rottenness! Arise from the resting place of lasting night — Hell — you hate and terror to prosperity, and I will kiss your detestable bones and put my eyeballs in your empty eye sockets that resemble vaults. And I will ring these fingers with the worms that serve your household, and I will stop this gap of breath — my mouth — with repulsive dust and be a carrion monster like yourself.”

Constance was distraught and speaking in oxymora: “You sweet-smelling stench! Sound and wholesome rottenness!”

She continued, “Come, grin at me, and I will think you smile and I will buss you as your wife. Misery’s love — oh, come to me!”

Death is often portrayed as a skeleton, which has a fixed, unmoving grin rather than a smile, which involves the movement of facial muscles.

In this society, men were said to kiss their wives and buss their wantons, aka mistresses or prostitutes. “To buss” means “to sensually kiss.”

“Oh, fair afflicted one, be at peace!” King Philip II said. “Be calm!”

“No, no, I will not,” Constance said. “Not as long as I have breath to cry. Oh, I wish that my tongue were in the thunder’s mouth! Then with an emotional outburst of grief I would shake the world, and rouse from sleep that fell anatomy — that cruel skeleton we call Death — that cannot hear a lady’s feeble voice, and that scorns an ordinary incantation of a sorcerer.”

“Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow,” Cardinal Pandulph said.

“You are not holy to tell such a lie about me,” Constance said. “I am not mad. This hair I tear is mine. My name is Constance. I was Geoffrey’s wife. Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost. I am not mad. I wish to Heaven I were mad! For if I were mad, it is likely that I would forget myself. Oh, if I could, what grief I would forget! Preach some philosophy to make me mad, and you shall be canonized, Cardinal Pandulph. Because I am not mad but am able to feel grief, my reasonable part produces a reasonable way for me to be delivered of these woes — it teaches me to kill or hang myself.

“If I were mad, I would forget my son, or madly think he were a ragdoll — a baby made of rags. I am not mad; too well, too well I feel the different plagues and afflictions of each calamity I have suffered.”

“Bind up your loose tresses of hair,” King Philip II said to Constance.

He then said to the others present, “Oh, what love I note in

the fair multitude of her hairs! Where but by chance a silver drop — a tear — has fallen, ten thousand wiry friends — hairs — glue themselves to that drop in sociable, companionable grief, like true, inseparable, faithful loves, sticking together in calamity.”

Earlier, King Philip II had requested Constance to come with him. Now she responded, “To England, if you will.”

She wanted him to invade England.

“Bind up your hair,” King Philip II said.

“Yes, I will do that, and why will I do it? I tore these hairs from their bonds and cried aloud, ‘Oh, I wish that these hands could so redeem and free my son, just as they have given these hairs their liberty!’ But now I envy their liberty, and I will again commit them to their bonds because my poor child is a prisoner.”

She bound her hair.

She continued, “And, Father Cardinal Pandulph, I have heard you say that we shall see and know our friends in Heaven. If that is true, I shall see my boy again, for since the birth of Cain, the first male child, to him who just yesterday took his first breath, there was not such a creature born who was so filled with divine grace.”

Cain was the first child ever born; he was also the first murderer, having murdered Abel, his brother.

Constance continued, “But now canker-sorrow and gnawing grief will eat my bud — Arthur — and chase the native beauty from his cheek and he will look as hollow as a ghost, as dim and meager as a fit of illness, and so he’ll die; and, rising from death so again, when I shall meet him in the court of Heaven, I shall not know him. Therefore, never, never will I behold my pretty Arthur any more.”

“You hold too terrible an opinion of grief,” Cardinal Pandulph said.

“The man who talks to me never had a son,” Constance said.

“You are as fond of grief as you are of your child,” King Philip II said.

Constance replied, “Grief fills the room left unoccupied by my absent child, lies in his bed, walks up and down with me, puts on my son’s pretty looks, repeats his words, reminds me of all his gracious qualities, stuffs his — Arthur’s — vacant garments with his — grief’s — form. So then, do I have reason to be fond of grief?”

“Fare you well. If you had endured such a loss as I have, I could give you better comfort than you give me.”

She unbound her hair again and said, “I will not keep orderly hair upon my head, when there is such disorder in my mind.

“Oh, Lord! My boy, my Arthur, my fair son! My life, my joy, my food, my all the world! My widow-comfort, and my sorrows’ cure!”

She exited.

King Philip II said, “I am afraid that she may harm herself, and so I’ll follow her.”

He exited.

Louis the Dauphin said, “There’s nothing in this world that can make me feel joy. Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale that vexes the bored ear of a drowsy man, and bitter shame has spoiled the sweet world’s taste so that it yields nothing but shame and bitterness.”

Cardinal Pandulph said, “Before the curing of a strong

disease, even at the instant of healing and health, the fit is strongest; evils that take their leave show evil most of all on their departure. What have you lost by losing the recent battle?"

"All days of glory, joy, and happiness," Louis the Dauphin said.

"If you had won the battle, certainly you would have lost all days of glory, joy, and happiness," Cardinal Pandulph said. "When Fortune means to do the most good to men, she looks upon them with a threatening eye. It is strange to think how much King John has lost in this battle that he believes he has so clearly won. Aren't you grieved that Arthur is his prisoner?"

"As heartily as King John is glad that he has him," Louis the Dauphin replied.

Cardinal Pandulph said, "Your mind is entirely as youthful as your blood. Now listen to me speak with a prophetic spirit, for even the breath of what I mean to speak shall blow each speck of dust, each straw, each little obstacle out of the path that shall directly lead your foot to England's throne, so therefore pay close attention to what I say.

"John has seized Arthur; and it cannot be that, while warm life plays and moves in that noble youth's veins, the misplaced — wrongly placed on England's throne — John should enjoy an hour, one minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest.

"A scepter snatched with an unruly hand must be as forcefully and violently maintained as it was gained, and he who stands upon a slippery place shows no scruple about using any vile means to help him stay on top. So that John may stand, Arthur must fall. So be it, for it cannot be but so. Soon Arthur shall be dead."

“But what shall I gain by young Arthur’s fall?” Louis the Dauphin asked.

“You, because of the rightful claim of Lady Blanche your wife, may then make all the claim that Arthur did,” Cardinal Pandulph said. “Arthur had a rightful claim to the throne of England. Once Arthur is dead, you, because of your marriage to Blanche, will have a rightful claim to the throne of England.”

“And I will lose it, life and all, as Arthur did,” Louis the Dauphin replied.

“How green and inexperienced and fresh in this old world you are!” Cardinal Pandulph said. “John devises plots that you can exploit and the times conspire with you, for he who steeps his safety in true blood shall find only bloody and untrue safety. John will spill Arthur’s true blood in order to secure his grasp on the throne, but that grasp will be slippery.

“This act of murder so evilly carried out shall cool the hearts of all his people and freeze their zeal, so that they will cherish and take advantage of any opportunity, no matter how small, to check his reign.

“No natural luminous appearance in the sky, no scope of nature, no distempered day, no common wind, no customary event, will occur that they do not pluck away its natural cause and call them meteors, prodigies, and signs, abnormalities, presages, and tongues of Heaven, plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.”

In other words, English citizens will interpret even common, ordinary occurrences of nature as being supernatural portents calling for vengeance against King John.

Louis the Dauphin said, “Maybe John will not touch young

Arthur's life, but merely keep Arthur safe and harmless as his prisoner."

Cardinal Pandulph said, "Attack England, and when John hears of your approach, if young Arthur is not already dead, then as soon as John hears the news that you have invaded England, Arthur dies. When that happens, the hearts of all John's people shall revolt from him and kiss the lips of unfamiliar change and find strong reasons for revolt and wrath in John's bloody fingertips.

"I think I see this commotion all already on foot, and even better reasons than I have named are coming into existence for you to invade England! The Bastard, who was once named Faulconbridge, is now in England, ransacking the church and offending charity. If a dozen — only a dozen! — French were there in arms, they would be as a lure to entice ten thousand English to join their side. They would be like a little snow that, tumbled about, soon becomes a mountainous avalanche.

"Oh, noble Dauphin, go with me to your father, the King. It is wonderful what may be wrought out of the Englishmen's unhappiness, now that the souls of their leaders are filled to the brim with offence and wrongdoing.

"Go to England and invade it. I will go to your father, the King of France, and urge him to do this."

"Strong reasons result in strong actions," Louis the Dauphin said. "Let us go. If you say yes, the King will not say no."

CHAPTER 4 (King John)

— 4.1 —

Hubert and some executioners met in a room in the castle where Arthur was being held prisoner.

Hubert said to the executioners, “Heat these irons hot for me, and stand in the alcove behind the wall hanging. When I stamp my foot on the ground, rush forth and bind the boy whom you shall find with me fast to the chair. Be heedful. Go now, and watch.”

“I hope your warrant will authorize this deed,” the first executioner said.

“You have offensive scruples!” Hubert said. “Don’t be afraid. Look to it — do your part.”

The executioners stood behind the wall hanging.

Hubert called, “Young lad, come here; I have something to say to you.”

Arthur walked into the room.

“Good morning, Hubert,” Arthur said.

“Good morning, little Prince,” Hubert said.

“Considering that I have so great a title to be more than a Prince — I ought to be recognized as a King! — I am as little a Prince as it is possible to be.”

Looking closely at Hubert, he added, “You are sad.”

“Indeed, I have been merrier,” Hubert said.

“Have mercy on me!” Arthur said. “I think that nobody should be sad but I, yet I remember that when I was in

France, young gentlemen like myself would be as sad as night, but only because it was a whim of theirs. By my faith as a Christian, I swear that if I were out of prison and kept sheep as a shepherd, I would be as merry as the day is long, and so I would be here, except that I am afraid that my uncle plots more harm to me. He is afraid of me, and I am afraid of him. Is it my fault that I am Geoffrey's son? No, indeed, it is not; and I wish to Heaven that I were your son, as long as you would love me, Hubert."

Hubert thought, *If I talk to him, his innocent prattling will awaken my mercy, which lies dead within me; therefore, I will be sudden and dispatch this business quickly.*

"Are you sick, Hubert?" Arthur asked. "You look pale today. Truly, I wish you were a little sick, so that I might sit up all night and stay awake with you. I assure you that I love you more than you love me."

Hubert thought, *His words take possession of my bosom. His words fill my heart.*

He said out loud, "Read this, young Arthur."

He gave Arthur a paper.

Hubert thought, *Foolish tears, what are you doing! Turning pitiless torture out of doors! I must be quick, lest my resolution drops out of my eyes in tender womanish tears.*

He said out loud, "Can you not read it? Is it not fairly and clearly written?"

"It is written too fairly, Hubert, for so foul an effect," Arthur said. "Must you with hot irons burn out both of my eyes?"

"Young boy, I must," Hubert replied.

“And will you?” Arthur asked.

One meaning of “will” was “want,” so one of the meanings of Arthur’s question was “And do you want to?”

“And I will,” Hubert replied.

“Have you the heart?” Arthur asked. “When your head ached, I tied my handkerchief around your brows, the best I had; a Princess embroidered it for me, and I never asked you for it again.”

In this society, handkerchiefs were expensive, so Arthur was generous in not asking for it to be returned to him.

Arthur continued, “And with my hand at midnight I held your head, and like the watchful minutes to the hour, always and continually I cheered up the heavy time, saying, ‘What do you need?’ and ‘Where does it hurt?’ Or ‘What good deed may I perform for you?’”

Arthur had continually talked to Hubert, making sounds, just like a clock does when it ticks.

He continued, “Many a poor man’s son would have lain still and never have spoken a loving word to you, but you when you were sick had a Prince serve as your nursemaid. You may think that my love was devious love and call it cunning. Do so, if you will. If Heaven will be pleased that you must use me ill, why then you must.

“Will you put out my eyes? These eyes never did and never shall as much as frown at you.”

“I have sworn to do it,” Hubert said. “And with hot irons I must burn them out.”

“None except those in this Iron Age would do it!” Arthur said.

People in this society believed in a historical succession of

ages, aka eras, each one worse than the previous one: the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. The worst was the Iron Age, which was characterized by fraud and violence.

Arthur continued, “The iron itself, although heated red-hot, as it approached near these eyes, would drink my tears and quench its fiery indignation even in the matter — the tears — of my innocence. Indeed, after that, the iron would consume itself and rust away simply because it had contained fire to harm my eyes.

“Are you more stubborn and hard than hammered iron? If an angel would have come to me and told me that Hubert would put out my eyes, I would not have believed the angel — I would believe no tongue but Hubert’s.”

Hubert stamped his foot on the ground and called, “Come out.”

The executioners came out from their hiding place behind the wall hanging. They carried a rope, a heated iron spike, and a brazier of hot coals.

Hubert ordered, “Do what I told you to do.”

Arthur pleaded, “Oh, save me, Hubert, save me! My eyes are blinded just from the fierce looks of these bloody men.”

“Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here,” Hubert ordered.

“Why do you need to be so violent and rough?” Arthur asked. “I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.

“For Heaven’s sake, Hubert, let me not be bound! Listen to me, Hubert, drive these men away, and I will sit as quietly as a lamb. I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word, nor look upon the iron angrily. Just thrust these men away, and I’ll forgive you, whatever torment you inflict on me.”

Hubert told the executioners, "Go and stand in another room; let me alone with him."

The first executioner said, "I am very pleased to be away from such a deed."

The executioners exited.

"I have driven away my friend!" Arthur said, referring to the first executioner. "He has a stern look, but a gentle heart. Let him come back so that his compassion may give life to yours."

"Come, boy, prepare yourself," Hubert said.

"Is there no remedy?" Arthur said. "Is there no way I can avoid being blinded?"

"None," Hubert said. "You must lose your eyes."

"Oh, Heaven, I only wish that there were a mote in your eyes, a grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair, any annoyance in that precious sense of eyesight!" Arthur said. "Then feeling what small things are irritable and painful there, your vile intent to put a hot iron in my eyes must necessarily seem horrible to you."

"Are you doing what you promised to do once I sent away the executioners?" Hubert asked. "You promised to be quiet. Hold your tongue."

"Hubert, a pair of tongues is unable to plead adequately for a pair of eyes," Arthur said. "Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert. Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue and let me keep my eyes. Oh, spare my eyes even if their only use is always to look at you!"

"Look, I swear that the instrument of blinding is cold and would not harm me."

"I can heat it, boy," Hubert said.

“No, truly the fire is dead with grief,” Arthur said. “Being created for comfort, it died rather than be used to inflict undeserved acts of cruelty.

“See for yourself. There is no malice in this burning coal; the breath of Heaven has blown its spirit out and strewn repentant ashes on its head.”

“But with my breath I can revive it, boy,” Hubert said. “I can blow on it and make it glow.”

“If you do, you will only make it blush and glow with shame at your proceedings, Hubert,” Arthur said. “Perhaps it will throw sparks in your eyes, and like a dog that is compelled to fight, it will snatch at its master who incites him to fight.

“All things that you should use to do me wrong deny their service to you. Only you lack that mercy which fierce fire and iron extends to me; fire and iron are noted for their merciless uses.”

“Well, see to live,” Hubert said. “You will be able to see so that you can take care of your living self. I will not touch your eyes for all the treasure that your uncle — King John — owns. Yet I swore and I did intend, boy, with this same iron to burn out your eyes.”

“Oh, now you look like Hubert!” Arthur said. “You were disguised all this time.”

“Peace; say no more,” Hubert said. “*Adieu*. Your uncle must not hear anything except that you are dead. I’ll fill these fierce, cruel spies with false reports of your death. Pretty child, you shall sleep safe and without fear and secure, knowing that Hubert, for the wealth of all the world, will not hurt you.”

“Oh, Heaven!” Arthur said. “I thank you, Hubert.”

“Silence; say no more,” Hubert said. “Stay close to me and secretly go in with me. I am undergoing much danger for you.”

— 4.2 —

King John, the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Salisbury, and some other lords met. King John had recently been crowned again. When he had been excommunicated, his subjects had been released from their vows of loyalty to him. When King John was crowned again, his subjects renewed their vows of loyalty. The other lords did not think that it had been necessary for King John to be crowned again.

Using the royal plural, King John said, “Here once again we sit, once again crowned, and looked upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.”

“This ‘once again,’ except that it pleased your highness, was superfluous,” the Earl of Pembroke said. “You have been crowned one time too many. You were crowned before, and that high royalty — your crown — was never plucked from off your head, and the faiths of your subjects were never stained and spoiled with revolt. Your subjects never troubled the land with fresh anticipation of any longed-for change or better government.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Therefore, to be possessed with double pomp, to adorn a title that was rich before, to gild refined gold, to paint a lily, to throw perfume on the violet, to smooth ice, or add another hue to the rainbow, or light a candle in hopes of adding beauty to the Sun — the beauteous eye of Heaven — is wasteful and ridiculous excess.”

“Except that your royal pleasure must be done,” the Earl of Pembroke said, “this act is like an ancient tale told again, and in the last repeating troublesome, being urged at a time

unseasonable. It is like repeating a story that is already well-known and does not need repeating — and in addition telling it at a bad and inconvenient time.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “In this the ancient and well-known face of plain old form — simple customary behavior — is much disfigured, and, like a change of wind blowing into a sail, it makes the course of thoughts fetch about and change direction, it startles and frightens thought, and it makes sound opinion sick and truth be suspected, because you have put on so new a fashioned robe.”

His point was that by having a second, unnecessary coronation, King John was causing people to wonder why it had been held. Did King John feel it was needed because of a weak claim on the throne?

The reference to “so new a fashioned robe” meant 1) a new coronation robe as opposed to the one King John had worn when he was first crowned, and 2) a robe of a new style, rather than the robe of “plain old form,” aka a coronation done in the customary manner.

The Earl of Pembroke said, “When workmen strive to do better than well, they confound their skill and harm their work because of greediness to do even better. Often the excusing of a fault makes the fault worse because of the excuse. It is like patches set upon a little tear that discredit more in the hiding of the fault than did the fault before it was so patched. A small tear may not be noticed; a large patch will definitely be noticed.”

“We made these points when we gave advice to you before you were newly crowned,” the Earl of Salisbury said, “but it pleased your highness to overrule our advice, and we are all well pleased, since all and every part of what we would, aka wish, makes a stand at what your highness will.”

“Makes a stand” is ambiguous. The phrase can mean

“halt,” in which case the Earl of Salisbury was saying that he and the other lords would halt their own wishes when King John overruled them. The phrase can also mean “stand up to,” in which case the Earl of Salisbury was saying that he and the other lords would stand up to King John.

Although the Earl of Salisbury had said that he and the other lords were “all well pleased,” in fact they were not.

King John said, “Some reasons for this second coronation I have informed you of, and I think that the reasons are strong. Later, when lesser is my fear, I shall give you more reasons that are stronger than these.”

He may have been referring to a time after Arthur was dead; Arthur’s death would lessen his fear of losing his crown.

He continued, “In the meantime, ask about what you would have reformed that is not already well, and well shall you perceive how willingly I will both hear you and grant you your requests. Make a petition to me now.”

The Earl of Pembroke said, “Then I, as the one who is the spokesman of these lords present in order to express the proposals of all their hearts, both for myself and them, but chief of all for your safety and security, for the which I myself and they direct our best efforts, heartily request the enfranchisement of Arthur. We want him to be released from prison because his imprisonment moves the murmuring lips of discontent to break into this dangerous argument: If you rightfully hold what in peacetime you have, why should then your fears, which, as they say, attend the steps of wrong, move you to coop up your tender kinsman and to choke his days with barbarous ignorance and deny his youth the rich advantage of good exercise, training, and education? If you are rightfully King, why

should Arthur be imprisoned?

“That the time’s enemies — those opposed to the current state of affairs — may not have this to use as an excuse for discontent, let our petition that you have bid us to ask be for his liberty, which for our goods we no further ask than to the extent that our welfare, which depends on you, counts it as your welfare that he have his liberty.”

The Earl of Pembroke and the other lords wanted Arthur to be set free because they believed that this would be in King John’s best interest.

Hubert entered the room.

“Let it be done,” King John said. “Arthur shall be set free, and I commit his youth to your direction. You shall supervise his education.

“Hubert, what news did you bring with you?”

He and Hubert talked quietly; the others could not hear them.

The Earl of Pembroke said quietly to the other lords so that King John and Hubert could not hear him, “This — Hubert — is the man who would do the bloody deed of killing Arthur. He showed his warrant to a friend of mine. The image of a wicked heinous sin and crime lives in his eye; that secretive appearance of his shows the mood of a much-troubled breast, and I fearfully believe that he has done that which we so feared he had orders to do.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “The color of the King’s face comes and goes between his purpose and his conscience. The color changes from red to white depending on whether he is happy he has achieved his aim or is horrified at the evil he has done. The color is like red-wearing heralds going between two dreadful armies set up for battle: The

red comes and goes. His passion is so ripe that it necessarily must break. His emotion is so strong that it will break out like the bursting of a boil.”

The Earl of Pembroke said, “And when it breaks, I fear that the foul corruption of a sweet child’s death will issue from it.”

King John said, “We cannot hold mortality’s strong hand.”

This meant 1) Even I, the King, cannot keep death away from the living, and 2) Even I, the King, cannot survive grasping mortality’s strong hand; I, the King, will also die. In other words, all of us are mortal.

He continued, “Good lords, although my will to give is living, the request that you demand is gone and dead. Hubert tells us that Arthur died last night.”

“Indeed, we feared his sickness was past cure,” the Earl of Salisbury said.

“Indeed, we heard how near his death he was before the child himself felt he was sick,” the Earl of Pembroke said.

In other words, the lords believed that Arthur had not died of illness but had been murdered.

The Earl of Pembroke continued, “This must be answered and accounted for either here or hence.”

“Hence” meant in the afterlife.

“Why do you bend such solemn brows on me?” King John asked. “Why do you frown at me? Do you think I bear the shears of destiny? Do I command the pulse of life?”

The three Fates commanded the pulse of life; they controlled human life. Clotho spun the thread of life. Lachesis measured the thread of life, determining how long a person lived. Atropos cut the thread of life; when the

thread was cut, the person died.

“This is obvious foul play,” the Earl of Salisbury said, “and it is shameful that greatness — a King — should so blatantly inflict it. May your game — your intrigue — end with the same result! And so, farewell.”

The Earl of Pembroke said, “Wait a moment, Lord Salisbury. I’ll go with you, and find the inheritance of this poor child — his little Kingdom of a grave that he violently inherited. That blood — that life — which owned the breadth of this isle, now holds and owns just three feet of it. It’s a bad world when such things happen! This evil must not be thus endured. This evil will break out to all our sorrows, and before long I fear.”

The lords exited.

“They burn in indignation,” King John said. “I repent because my plan did not work. There is no sure foundation set on blood, no certain life achieved by others’ death.”

A messenger entered the room.

King John said to him, “You have a fearful and frightening eye. Where is the blood that I have seen inhabit those cheeks of yours? So foul a sky does not clear without a storm. Pour down your weather and news, which must be bad. How goes all in France?”

“All in France move from France to England,” the messenger said. “Never has such an army for any foreign invasion been before levied in the body of a land. They have learned from your example of doing things speedily. At the time you should be told that they are preparing to invade England, the news instead comes that they have all arrived and invaded England.”

“Oh, where has our intelligence — the people who should

have gathered this information — been drunk?” King John said. “Where has it slept? Where is my mother’s care? How can such an army be gathered in France, and she not hear of it?”

“My liege, your mother’s ear is stopped with dust,” the messenger said. “Your noble mother died on the first of April, and I hear, my lord, that the Lady Constance died in a delirious frenzy three days before your mother died, but this information comes from a rumor I idly heard without paying much attention to it. I don’t know whether it is true or false.”

“Withhold your speed, dreadful events!” King John said. “Oh, make a treaty with me until I have pleased my discontented peers! Bad news is coming to me too quickly.

“My mother is dead! How wildly then walks my estate in France! My affairs in France that my mother was taking care of are now disordered!

“Under whose leadership came those armies of France that you tell me have truly landed here?”

“They are under the leadership of Louis the Dauphin,” the messenger said.

“You have bewildered me with these ill tidings,” King John said.

The Bastard entered the room. With him was Peter of Pomfret.

King John said, “Now, what says the world to your proceedings? What is the reaction to what you have done under my orders? Do not seek to stuff my head with more ill news, for it is full.”

“If you are afraid to hear the worst,” the Bastard said, “then let the worst unheard fall on your head.”

Two proverbs of the time were 1) “It is good to fear the worst” and 2) “To know the worst is good.” If you know and fear the worst, you can take steps to deal with it.

“Bear with me, kinsman,” King John said, “because I was bewildered under the tide of bad news, but now I breathe again aloft the flood of bad news, and can pay attention to any tongue, whatever news it brings.”

“How I have fared among the clergymen, the sums I have collected shall express,” the Bastard said. “But as I labored and traveled here through the land, I found the people full of strange fantasies. They are possessed by rumors, full of idle dreams, not knowing what they fear, but full of fear.

“And this man here is a prophet, whom I brought with me from the streets of Pomfret. I found him with many hundreds treading on his heels; to them he sang, in rude harsh-sounding rhymes, that, before the next Ascension Day at noon, your highness should deliver up your crown.”

Ascension Day commemorates the ascension of Jesus Christ — bodily — into Heaven.

King John said to Peter of Pomfret, “You idle dreamer, why did you do that?”

“Because I have foreknowledge,” Peter of Pomfret said. “I know that this will truly happen.”

“Hubert, take this man away,” King John said. “Imprison him, and at noon on that day which he says I shall yield up my crown, let him be hanged. Take him to a prison, and then return, for I must make use of you.”

Hubert exited with Peter of Pomfret.

King John said to the Bastard, “Oh, my gentle cousin, have you heard the news that is abroad about who have arrived on our shores?”

“The French, my lord,” the Bastard replied. “Men’s mouths are full of the news. Besides, I met Lord Bigot and Lord Salisbury, who have eyes as red as newly kindled fire, and others as well, who were going to seek the grave of Arthur, who they say was killed last night at your instigation.”

“Gentle kinsman, go, and thrust yourself into their companies,” King John said. “Join them. I have a way to win their loves again; bring them before me.”

King John may have been willing to execute Hubert in order to appease the nobles.

“I will seek them out,” the Bastard said.

“Make haste,” King John said. “Put the better foot before you and go as fast as you can! Oh, let me have no enemies who are my subjects, not when adverse foreigners frighten my towns and cause dread with their show of determined invasion! Be Mercury, attach feathers to your heels, and fly as fast as thought from them to me again.”

Mercury, the messenger of the gods, wore winged sandals. In some myths, he had winged feet.

“The spirit of the time shall teach me speed,” the Bastard said. “Speed is necessary at this time.”

He exited.

King John said, “Spoken like a spirited noble gentleman.”

He then said to the messenger, “Go after him, for he perhaps shall need some messenger to go between me and the peers; you shall be that messenger.”

“With all my heart, my liege,” the messenger said.

He exited.

“My mother is dead!” King John said.

Hubert entered the room.

“My lord, they say five moons were seen last night,” Hubert said. “Four were fixed and did not move, and the fifth whirled about the other four in a bizarre motion.”

“Five moons!” King John said.

“Old men and beldams — crones — in the streets prophesy upon the sight ominously and daringly. Young Arthur’s death is common gossip in their mouths, and when they talk about him, they shake their heads and whisper to one another in the ear, and he who speaks grips the hearer’s wrist, while he who hears reacts in fear, with wrinkled brows, with nods, and with rolling eyes.

“I saw a blacksmith stand with his hammer, like this” — he demonstrated — “while his iron cooled on the anvil, with open mouth swallowing a tailor’s news. The tailor, with his shears and measuring tape in his hand, standing in slippers, which in his nimble haste he had incorrectly thrust upon the wrong feet, told of many thousand warlike French who were marshaled for fight and drawn up in battle positions in Kent.

“Another lean unwashed artificer cut off the tailor’s tale and talked about Arthur’s death.”

“Why do you seek to possess me with these fears?” King John asked. “Why did you urge me so often to cause young Arthur’s death? Your hand has murdered him. I had a mighty reason to wish him dead, but you had none to kill him.”

“Had no reason, my lord?” Hubert said. “Why, didn’t you incite me to kill him?”

King John said, “It is the curse of Kings to be served by slaves who take their whims for a warrant to break within

the blood-containing house of life, and when the King shuts his eyes such slaves infer a law and suppose themselves to know the meaning of dangerous majesty, when perhaps majesty frowns more because of a whim than because of a deliberate and carefully considered decision.”

Showing King John a document, Hubert replied, “Here is your signature and seal authorizing what I did.”

King John replied, “Oh, when the last account between Heaven and Earth is to be made and we are judged, then this signature and seal shall be witnesses against us and damn us!

“How often the sight of means to do ill deeds makes deeds ill done! If you had not been nearby — you, who are a fellow by the hand of nature noted, written down, and confirmed with a signature to do a deed of shame — this murder had not come into my mind. But taking note of your abhorred appearance, and finding you fit for bloody villainy and apt and liable to be employed in danger, I half-heartedly mentioned Arthur’s death to you, and you, to be endeared to a King, made it no matter of conscience to destroy a Prince.”

“My lord —” Hubert began.

King John interrupted, “Had you only shook your head or paused when I spoke darkly and obscurely what I purposed, or turned an eye of doubt upon my face, as if you were asking me to tell my tale in explicit words, deep shame would have struck me dumb and made me break off, and those fears of yours might have wrought fears in me. But you understood me by my signs and did in signs again parley with sin.

“Yes, without a pause you let your heart consent, and consequently your rude hand enacted the deed, which both of our tongues held vile to name.

“Get out of my sight, and never see me anymore! My nobles leave me, and my government is challenged, even at my gates, with ranks of foreign troops.

“Indeed, in the body of this fleshly land of mine, this Kingdom, this confine of blood and breath, hostility and civil tumult reign between my conscience and my nephew’s death.”

“Arm yourself against your other enemies,” Hubert said. “I’ll make a peace between your soul and you. Young Arthur is alive. This hand of mine is still a maiden and an innocent hand; it is not painted with the crimson spots of blood. Within this bosom never entered yet the dreadful emotion of a murderous thought, and you have slandered nature in my form, which, however rude exteriorly, is yet the cover of a fairer mind than to be butcher of an innocent child.”

“Does Arthur live?” King John said. “Oh, hasten to the peers, throw this report on their incensed rage, and make them tame to their obedience! When the lords hear that Arthur lives, they will again obey me.

“Forgive the comment that I in my anger made about your appearance, for my rage was blind, and foul imaginary eyes of blood presented yourself as more hideous than you are.

“Don’t answer me, for there is no time, but to my private chamber bring the angry lords with all expedient haste.

“I beseech you only slowly; run faster than I beseech you.”

— 4.3 —

Arthur, wearing the clothing of a ship-boy, stood on a wall of the castle in which he was imprisoned.

He said to himself, “The wall is high, and yet I will leap down. Good ground, be pitiful and don’t hurt me! There’s

few or none who know me. If they see me, this ship-boy's appearance has quite disguised me. I am afraid to jump, and yet I'll venture it. If I get down, and do not break my limbs, I'll find a thousand stratagems to get away. It's as good to die and go, as to die and stay. It's as good to die while attempting an escape as to stay and die at my uncle's orders."

He jumped — and fell hard on the rocks below.

He said, "Oh, me! My uncle's hard spirit is in these hard stones. I am mortally hurt. May Heaven take my soul, and may England keep my bones!"

He died.

The Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Salisbury, and Lord Bigot arrived on the scene.

Talking about Louis the Dauphin, the Earl of Salisbury said, "Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmundsbury. It is our best safeguard, and we must welcome this courteous offer at this perilous time."

"Who brought that letter from the Cardinal?" the Earl of Pembroke asked.

The Earl of Salisbury replied, "The Count Melun, a noble lord of France, whose private communication to me of the Dauphin's friendship is much more comprehensive than these lines import."

Lord Bigot said, "Tomorrow morning let us meet him then."

"Or rather let us then set forward," the Earl of Salisbury said, "for it will be two long days' journey, lords, before we meet him."

The Bastard entered the scene.

“Once more today well met, distempered lords!” he greeted them.

Earlier that day, the Bastard had met them as they set out to find Arthur’s grave.

The Bastard continued, “The King by me requests your presence immediately.”

“The King has dispossessed himself of us,” the Earl of Salisbury said. “We will not line his thin and stained cloak with our pure honors, nor serve the foot that leaves the print of blood wherever it walks. We will not serve and obey him. Return and tell him that. We know the worst. We know that he had Arthur killed.”

“I will say whatever you think, but good words, I think, would be best to send to the King,” the Bastard said.

“Our griefs, and not our manners, reason now,” the Earl of Salisbury said. “Our grievances talk for us; we no longer observe courtesy when it comes to the King.”

“But there is little reason in your grief,” the Bastard said. “Therefore, it would be reasonable if you had manners now.”

“Sir, sir, anger has its privilege,” the Earl of Pembroke said.

“That is true,” the Bastard said. “Anger has the privilege to hurt the one who is angry; it does not have the privilege to hurt anyone else.”

A proverb of the time stated, “Anger punishes itself.”

They had been traveling as they talked, and the Earl of Salisbury said, “This is the prison.”

Seeing the corpse of Arthur, the Earl of Salisbury asked, “Who is he who is lying here?”

Recognizing Arthur, the Earl of Pembroke said, "Oh, death, made proud with pure and Princely beauty! The earth had not a hole to hide this deed. No grave could hide this murder."

The Earl of Salisbury said, "Murder, hating what itself has done, lays this murder out in the open to urge on revenge."

Lord Bigot said, "Or, when he doomed this beauty to a grave, found it too precious-Princely for a grave."

The corpses of Kings and Princes were not buried in graves; they were embalmed and placed in mausoleums and tombs.

"Sir Richard, what do you think?" the Earl of Salisbury asked. "Have you beheld, or have you read or heard anything like this? Could you think that such a thing could happen? Do you almost doubt, although you see it, that you see it? Could thought, without this object, form such another? This is the very top, the height, the crest, or the crest upon the crest, of murder's aims. This is the bloodiest shame, the wildest savagery, the vilest stroke, that ever glaring-eyed wrath or staring rage presented to the tears of soft remorse."

"All past murders are excused because of this inexcusable murder," the Earl of Pembroke said. "And this murder, so sole and so unmatched, shall give a holiness, a purity, to the yet unbegotten sins of times to come and show that a deadly bloodshed is only a jest in comparison to this heinous spectacle."

"It is a damned and a bloody work," the Bastard said. "It was done by the graceless action of a heavy hand, if this is the work of any hand."

"If it is the work of any hand!" the Earl of Salisbury said. "We had a kind of inkling of what would ensue. This

murder is the shameful work of Hubert's hand, and the stratagem and the plan of the King, whom I forbid my soul ever to obey."

He knelt and said, "Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life, and breathing to Arthur's breathless excellence the incense of a vow, a holy vow, I vow never to taste the pleasures of the world, never to be infected with delight — to enjoy delight while such a murder is unavenged is an illness — nor be conversant with ease and idleness, until I have made this hand glorious by giving it the honor of revenge."

"Our souls religiously confirm your words," the Earl of Pembroke and Lord Bigot said.

The Earl of Salisbury stood up.

Hubert arrived.

Not seeing the corpse of Arthur, he said, "Lords, I am hot with haste in seeking you. Arthur is still alive; the King has sent for you."

The Earl of Salisbury said, "Oh, he is old and does not blush at death. Avaunt — leave! — you hateful villain. Get thee gone!"

The word "thee" was less formal and less respectful than the word "you."

"I am no villain," Hubert said.

"Must I rob the law?" the Earl of Salisbury said, drawing his sword.

By killing Hubert before Hubert had a fair trial, the Earl of Salisbury would be robbing the law, which would, he thought, sentence Hubert to death.

"Your sword is bright, sir; put it up again," the Bastard said. "Sheath your sword."

A bright sword is unused; the Bastard's implication was that the Earl of Salisbury's sword was for decorative purposes only.

"Not until I sheathe it in a murderer's skin," the Earl of Salisbury said.

"Stand back, Lord Salisbury, stand back, I say," Hubert said. "By Heaven, I think my sword's as sharp as yours. I would not have you, lord, forget yourself, nor tempt the danger of my true defense, lest I, by paying attention only to your rage, forget your worth, your greatness, and your nobility."

"Get out, dunghill!" Lord Bigot said. "Do you dare to challenge a nobleman?"

Hubert's social class was lower than that of the lords.

"Not for my life," Hubert said, "but yet I dare to defend my innocent life against an Emperor."

The Earl of Salisbury said, "You are a murderer."

"Do not prove that I am a murderer by making me kill you," Hubert said. "As of now, I am no murderer. Whoever speaks falsely, speaks not truly; whoever speaks not truly, lies."

In this society, these were close to fighting words. Hubert was close to calling the Earl of Salisbury a liar. Two noblemen would fight a duel if one called the other a liar. If a commoner called a nobleman a liar, the nobleman would probably attack him. In this culture, however, a high-ranking man would often refrain from killing a low-ranking man, regarding such a deed as beneath him.

"Cut him to pieces," the Earl of Pembroke said.

"Keep the peace, I say," the Bastard said.

“Stand aside, or I shall wound you, Faulconbridge,” the Earl of Salisbury said to the Bastard.

“You would be better off if you wounded the Devil, Salisbury,” the Bastard said. “If you only frown at me, or move your foot, or direct your hasty anger to do me shame, I’ll strike you dead. Put up your sword immediately; or I’ll so maul you and your toasting-iron — your sword, which you use only for toasting cheese — that you shall think the Devil has come from Hell.”

“Is this what you want to do, renowned Faulconbridge?” Lord Bigot said. “Second — that is, support — a villain and a murderer?”

Hubert said, “Lord Bigot, I am neither a villain nor a murderer.”

“Who killed this Prince?” Lord Bigot said, pointing to Arthur’s corpse.

Seeing the corpse for the first time, and recognizing Arthur, Hubert said, “An hour has not passed since I left him alive and well. I honored him, I loved him, and I will weep the rest of my life for the loss of his sweet life.”

He wept.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes, for villainy is not without such tears, and he, long experienced in villainy, makes his eyes’ water seem like rivers of remorse and innocence. Come away with me, all you whose souls abhor the unclean, morally impure stinks of a slaughterhouse, for I am choked by this smell of sin.”

Lord Bigot said, “Let’s go toward Saint Edmundsbury to see Louis the Dauphin there!”

The Earl of Pembroke said to the Bastard, “Tell the King he

may find us there.”

The lords exited.

“Here’s a good world!” the Bastard said sarcastically.
“Here’s a mess!”

He asked Hubert, “Did you know about this ‘fair’ work? If you did this deed of death, then you are beyond the infinite and boundless reach of mercy, and you are damned, Hubert.”

“Listen to me, sir,” Hubert said.

“Ha!” the Bastard said. “I’ll tell you what. You are damned as black — no, nothing is as black and damned as you are black and damned — you are more deeply damned than Prince Lucifer. There is not yet so ugly a fiend of Hell as you shall be, if you killed this child.”

“Upon my soul —” Hubert began.

The Bastard interrupted, “If you even just consented to this most cruel act, do nothing but despair because you are already damned. And if you need a cord, the smallest thread that a spider ever twisted from her womb will be enough to strangle you, a slender reed will be a beam you can use to hang yourself on, or if you want to drown yourself, put just a little water in a spoon, and it shall be like all the ocean, enough to drown such a villain as you. I suspect you very seriously.”

Many people of the time believed, “The greater the villain, the worse the fortune.”

Hubert replied, “If I in act, consent, or sin of thought am guilty of stealing that sweet breath which was enclosed in this beauteous clay — Arthur’s body — then let Hell lack enough pains to torture me. Let Hell torture me with every torment it has. When I left Arthur, he was well.”

“Go, carry him in your arms,” the Bastard said. “I am amazed and bewildered, I think, and I lose my way among the maze of thorns and dangers of this world.”

Hubert picked up Arthur’s body.

The Bastard said, “How easily you take all England up!”

“All England” literally meant “the rightful King of England.” Figuratively, it referred to the country of England. Arthur’s death would have bad effects on England. Already it had caused some English lords to desert King John and go over to the side of Louis the Dauphin.

The Bastard continued, “From forth this morsel of dead royalty, the life and the right and the truth of all this realm has fled to Heaven, and England now is left to tug and scramble and to tear by the teeth the disputed ownership of the proud-swelling state — it is disputed because the rightful English King is dead.

“Now for the bare-picked bone of majesty, dogged war bristles his angry crest and snarls in the gentle eyes of peace. Now French armies away from their home and discontents here at home in England meet in one line and fight on the same side, and vast confusion waits — as a raven waits for a sick, fallen beast to die — for the imminent decay and destruction of usurped Kingship.

“Now happy is he whose cloak and belt can withstand this tempest.”

He said to Hubert, “Carry away that child and follow me with speed. I’ll go to King John. A thousand pressing matters are at hand, and Heaven itself frowns upon the land.”

CHAPTER 5 (King John)

— 5.1 —

King John, Cardinal Pandulph, and some attendants were in a room of the King's palace. Cardinal Pandulph was holding King John's crown.

King John said to Cardinal Pandulph, "Thus have I yielded into your hand the circle — the crown — of my glory."

Cardinal Pandulph gave the crown to King John and said, "Take again from this my hand — as a grant from the Pope — your sovereign greatness and authority."

King John put the crown on his head and said, "Now keep your holy word. Go and meet the French, and use all your power from his Holiness to stop their marches before we are engulfed with fire.

"Our discontented counties — shires and lords — revolt; our people refuse to practice obedience, instead swearing allegiance and the love of their soul to foreign blood, to foreign royalty.

"This inundation of diseased dispositions can be made healthy again only by you. So don't pause, for the present time is so sick that medicine must be immediately ministered, or else an incurable destruction will ensue."

Cardinal Pandulph replied, "It was my breath that blew this tempest up, following your stubborn treatment of the Pope, but since you are a gentle convert and are again obedient to the church, my tongue shall hush again this storm of war and make fair weather in your blustering land.

"On this Ascension Day, remember well that I, following upon your oath of service to the Pope, go and make the

French lay down their arms.”

He exited.

King John said, “Is this Ascension Day? Didn’t the prophet say that before Ascension Day at noon I should give up my crown? And so I have. I thought that I should give it up on constraint and force, but Heaven be thanked, I gave it up only voluntarily.”

The Bastard entered the room and delivered this bad news: “All Kent has yielded; nothing there holds out except Dover Castle. London has received, like a kind host of an inn, the Dauphin and his armies. Your nobles will not listen to you, but have gone to offer their service to your enemy, and wild amazement and bewilderment hurry up and down the small number of your worried, fearful friends — friends whose loyalty to you can be doubted.”

“Wouldn’t my lords return to me and be loyal again, after they heard that young Arthur was alive?” King John asked.

“They found him dead and cast into the streets,” the Bastard said. “He was an empty casket, where the jewel of life by some damned hand was robbed and taken away.”

“That villain Hubert told me that young Arthur lived,” King John said.

“So, on my soul, Arthur did live, for anything Hubert knew,” the Bastard said. “Hubert sincerely thought that Arthur was alive. But why do you droop? Why do you look sad? Be great in act, as you have been in thought. Don’t let the world see fear and serious doubt govern the motion of a Kingly eye. Be as stirring as the time; be fire with fire; threaten the threatener and defy and intimidate the brow of threatening horror. If you do this, inferior eyes, which borrow their behaviors from the great, will grow great by your example and put on the dauntless spirit of resolution.

“Go, and glisten like Mars, the god of war, when he intends to grace and honor the battlefield. Show boldness and aspiring confidence.

“What, shall they seek the lion in his den — the King in his country — and frighten him and make him tremble there? Oh, let it not be said. Range abroad and seek the enemy, and run to meet displeasure farther from the doors, and grapple with him before he comes so near.”

King John said, “The legate of the Pope has been with me, and I have made a happy peace with him: He has promised to dismiss the armies led by the Dauphin.”

“Oh, what an inglorious, shameful, and humiliating league and alliance!” the Bastard said. “Shall we, upon the footing of our own land, send fair-play orders and make compromise, insinuation, parley, and base truce to an invading army?

“Shall a beardless boy — the Dauphin, who is a pampered, spoiled child — confront our battlefields, and flesh his spirit in a warlike soil, mocking the air with colors idly spread, and find no check?”

“To flesh a sword” meant “to cover it with an enemy’s blood.” Here the Bastard was complaining that a representative of the Pope would make peace when the Bastard preferred to fight.

The Bastard continued, “Let us, my liege, go to arms. Let’s prepare to fight. Perhaps Cardinal Pandulph cannot make your peace, or if he does, let it at least be said that the French saw that we intended to defend ourselves against their invasion.”

“You have the management of this present time,” King John said. “Do what you said you want to do. Prepare an army.”

“Let’s leave, then, with good courage!” the Bastard said. “Yet, I know, our party may well meet a prouder foe.”

His last words were ambiguous and could mean 1) Our army could very well meet a prouder and more courageous army than our army is, or 2) Our army could very well fight off a prouder and more courageous army than the one the Dauphin has brought.

— 5.2 —

Louis the Dauphin, the Earl of Salisbury, Lord Melun, the Earl of Pembroke, and Lord Bigot met in Louis the Dauphin’s camp at Saint Edmundsbury. Some French soldiers were present.

Louis the Dauphin handed Lord Melun a document and said, “My Lord Melun, let this be copied out, and keep it safe for our memory. Return the original to these English lords again, so that, having our fair and equitable agreement written down, both they and we, perusing over these notes, may know why we took the sacrament and keep our faiths firm and inviolable.”

In this culture, people would take communion in order to sanctify a treaty or agreement.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Upon our sides our agreement never shall be broken. Noble Dauphin, although we swear a voluntary zeal and an uncompelled faith to your proceedings, yet believe me, Prince, I am not glad that such a sore of the present time should seek a healing bandage by despised revolution and heal the inveterate corruption of one wound — Arthur’s death — by making many. The present time is ill and must be healed — unfortunately — by rebellion against King John.

“It grieves my soul that I must draw this metal sword from my side to be a widow-maker there where honorable rescue

and defense cries out upon the name of Salisbury!”

The Earl of Salisbury was conflicted. He believed that he was honorably rescuing England by rebelling against King John and so honorably rescue cried out in support of the name of Salisbury, but he was also supporting a French army’s invasion of England and so honorable defense cried out against the name of Salisbury.

He continued, “But such is the infection of the time that, for the health and medicine of our right, we cannot act except with the very hand of stern injustice and confused wrong. And isn’t it a pity, my grieved and unhappy friends, that we, the sons and children of this isle, were born to see so sad an hour as this, wherein we step after a foreigner, march upon her gentle bosom, and fill up our country’s enemies’ ranks? I must withdraw and weep upon the stain of this cause forced upon us — to favor the gentry of a remote land and follow unfamiliar battle flags here.

“What, here? Oh, my nation, I wish that you could move yourself away from here! I wish that Neptune’s arms, which hug you, could bear you away from the knowledge of yourself, and grapple you to a pagan shore, where these two Christian armies might join the blood of malice in a vein of league, and not spend it so unneighborly!”

Neptune is the Roman god of the ocean. By saying that Neptune’s arms hug England, the Earl of Salisbury meant that it was an island country.

“You show a noble temperament in this emotion of yours,” Louis the Dauphin said. “Great emotions wrestling in your bosom make an earthquake of nobility.”

In this culture, people believed that violent winds under the surface of the earth caused earthquakes.

He continued, “Oh, what a noble combat you have fought

between compulsion and a worthy, excellent respect — between what you have been forced to do and the brave consideration of your true duty!”

Wiping away the tears from the Earl of Salisbury’s face, Louis the Dauphin said, “Let me wipe off this honorable dew that with a silvery appearance trickles down your cheeks. My heart has melted at a lady’s tears, which are an ordinary inundation, but this effusion of such manly drops, this shower, blown up by a tempest in the soul, startles my eyes, and makes me more amazed than if I had seen the domed top of Heaven decorated all over with burning meteors.

“Lift up your brow, renowned Salisbury, and with a great heart heave and thrust away the storm. Hand over these waters to those eyes of a baby who never saw the giant adult world enraged, nor met with fortune other than at feasts, completely full of warm emotions, of mirth, and of merrymaking.

“Come, come; for you shall thrust your hand as deep into the purse of rich prosperity as I — Louis myself — do. And so, nobles, shall you all, all you who knit your sinews to the strength of my sinews.

“And even there, I think, an angel spoke.”

One kind of angel was a coin. Louis the Dauphin had promised to pay the English lords for their support. Here he may have been contemptuous of the English lords, although he would have been careful not to show it.

Cardinal Pandulph arrived.

Seeing him, Louis the Dauphin said, “Look where the holy legate is coming in order to give us authorization from the hand of Heaven and on our actions to set like a seal on a warrant the name of right with holy breath.”

“Hail, noble Prince of France!” Cardinal Pandulph said to Louis the Dauphin. “The news is this: King John has reconciled himself with Rome; his spirit has submitted that so stood out against the holy church, the great metropolis and jurisdiction of Rome.

“Therefore, now wind up your threatening battle flags, and tame the savage spirit of wild war, so that like a lion reared by hand, it may lie gently at the foot of peace, and be no further harmful except in appearance.”

“Your grace must pardon me,” Louis the Dauphin said. “I will not go back to France. I am too highly born to be treated like a piece of property, to be a second-in-command, or a useful serving man and instrument to any sovereign state throughout the world.

“Your breath first enflamed the dead embers of wars between this chastised Kingdom and myself and brought in matter that should feed this fire, and now it is far too huge to be blown out with that same weak wind which inflamed it.

“You taught me how to know the face of right, you acquainted me with my interest in — my valid claim to — this land. Yes, you thrust this enterprise into my heart, and now you come to tell me that King John has made his peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?

“I, by the honor of my marriage bed, after the death of young Arthur, claim this land for mine. As the husband of Blanche, I am next in line to the English throne.

“And, now that England is half-conquered, must I go back to France because King John has made his peace with Rome? Am I Rome’s slave? What penny has Rome spent on this military expedition, what men has Rome provided, what munitions has Rome sent to prop up and support this military action? Isn’t it I who take on this expense? Who

else but I, and such as to my claim are liable, sweat in this business and maintain this war?

“Haven’t I heard these islanders shout out, ‘*Vive le Roi!*’ — ‘Long live the King! — as I have traveled past their towns? Haven’t I here the best cards for the game, to win this easy match played for a crown? And shall I now give up all that has already been conceded to me? This is a game that I have almost won and that I will win.

“No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said that I gave up such an easy victory.”

“You look only on the outside of this work,” Cardinal Pandulph said. “You are looking only at the surface.”

Louis the Dauphin replied, “Outside or inside, I will not return to France until my attempt so much is glorified as was promised to my ample hope before I gathered this gallant army of war, and selected these fiery spirits from the world to stare down conquest and to win renown even in the jaws of danger and of death.”

A trumpet sounded to announce an important visitor.

“What robust trumpet thus summons us?” Louis the Dauphin asked.

The Bastard arrived, accompanied by attendants.

“Let me have audience in accordance with the fair play and rules of chivalry of the world,” the Bastard said to the Dauphin. “I have been sent to speak to you.”

He then said to Cardinal Pandulph, “My holy lord of Milan, I have come from King John to learn how you have done on his behalf. And, as you answer, I know the scope and warrant limited to my tongue. As you answer, I know what I can and I cannot say in my position as King John’s ambassador.”

Cardinal Pandulph said, "The Dauphin is too obstinately hostile, and he will not conform to my entreaties. He flatly says he'll not lay down his arms."

Referring to young Lewis the Dauphin, the Bastard said, "By all the blood that fury ever breathed, the youth says well."

The Bastard preferred warfare to diplomacy.

He then said to Lewis the Dauphin, "Now hear our English King, for thus his royalty speaks through me.

"He is prepared, as is reasonable he should be prepared.

"King John smiles at this apish and unmannerly approach, this armed masquerade and unadvised revelry, this unbearded sauciness and these boyish troops, and he is well prepared to whip this dwarfish war, these pigmy arms, from out of the circle of his territories.

"Think of that hand which had the strength, even at your door, to cudgel you and make you leap over the bottom half of a two-part stable door, to dive like buckets in concealed wells, to crouch in the straw covering your stable floors, to lie like pawned articles locked up in chests and trunks, to cuddle with swine, to seek sweet safety in vaults and prisons, and to shiver and shake even at the crying of your nation's crow, thinking that the crow's voice comes from an armed Englishman.

"Shall that victorious hand be enfeebled here in England, that victorious hand which in your own chambers in France chastised you?

"No.

"Know the gallant monarch is in arms and like an eagle over his aery soars in order to swoop down on and drive away any annoyance that comes near his nest.

“And you degenerate, you ingrate rebels, you bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb of your dear mother England the way that Emperor Nero of Rome ripped up his mother’s womb after he murdered her, blush for shame, for your own ladies and pale-faced maidens like Amazonian warrior-women come tripping after drums, their thimbles changed to armed gauntlets, their needles changed to lances, and their gentle and peaceful hearts changed to fierce and bloody inclination.”

Louis the Dauphin said, “There end your bravado, and turn your face away in peace. We grant that you can out-scold us.

“Fare you well. We regard our time as too precious to be spent with such a braggart.”

“Give me permission to speak,” Cardinal Pandulph said.

“No, I will speak,” the Bastard said.

Using the royal plural, Louis the Dauphin said, “We will listen to neither of you.”

He ordered, “Strike up the drums, and let the tongue of war plead for our interest and our being here.”

The Bastard said, “Indeed your drums, being beaten, will cry out, and so shall you, when you are beaten. Do but start an echo with the clamor of your drum, and even at hand a drum is ready braced that shall reverberate entirely as loudly as your drum. Sound another drum of yours, and another drum of ours shall sound as loud as your drum and rattle the sky’s ear and mock the deep-mouthed thunder.

“Now at hand, close by, not trusting to this dilatory, shifting legate here, whom he has used for entertainment rather than need is warlike John, and on his forehead sits a bare-ribbed death — a skeleton — whose duty this day is to

feast upon whole thousands of the French.”

“Strike up our drums so we can find this danger,” Louis the Dauphin said.

“And you shall find it, Dauphin,” the Bastard said. “Do not doubt it.”

— 5.3 —

King John and Hubert talked together on the battlefield as the battle raged.

“How goes the day with us?” King John asked. “Who is winning? Tell me, Hubert.”

“It goes badly for us, I fear,” Hubert replied. “How fares your majesty? How are you?”

“This fever, which has troubled me so long, lies heavy on me,” King John said. “My heart is sick!”

A messenger arrived and said, “My lord, your valiant kinsman, Faulconbridge, wants your majesty to leave the battlefield and send him word by me which way you go.”

Faulconbridge was Sir Richard, aka the Bastard.

“Tell him that I am going toward Swinstead, to the abbey there,” King John said.

“Be of good comfort because the great supply of reinforcement troops that was expected by the Dauphin here was wrecked three nights ago on Goodwin Sands,” the messenger said. “This news was brought to Sir Richard just now. The French fight coldly, and they are retreating.”

“Ay, me!” King John said. “This tyrant fever burns me up, and it will not let me welcome this good news. Let’s set on toward Swinstead. Take me immediately to my litter. Weakness possesses me, and I am faint.”

In another part of the battlefield, the Earl of Salisbury, the Earl of Pembroke, and Lord Bigot talked among themselves. Some soldiers were present.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “I did not think that King John had so many friends who were willing to fight for him.”

“Let’s go and fight once again and put spirit in the French,” the Earl of Pembroke said. “If the French are destroyed, we are, too.”

“That misbegotten Devil, Faulconbridge, in spite of spite and in defiance of anything we can do, alone upholds the day,” the Earl of Salisbury said. “He is holding the English troops together.”

“They say King John — who is very sick — has left the battlefield,” the Earl of Pembroke said.

Lord Melun, a Frenchman, arrived. He was mortally wounded.

He said, “Lead me to the rebels of England here.”

“When we were happy, we had other names,” the Earl of Salisbury said.

He disliked being called rebel.

The Earl of Pembroke said, “This man is the Count Melun.”

“Wounded to death,” the Earl of Salisbury said.

“Flee, noble Englishmen,” Lord Melun said. “You are bought and sold; you are betrayed. Unthread the rude eye of rebellion and welcome home again your discarded faith.”

Lord Melun was using the metaphor of a needle and thread. The thread of rebellion had been pushed through the eye of the needle, and now Lord Melun wanted the English rebels to pull the thread back out of the eye of the needle. He wanted them to retrace the steps that had taken them through the difficult passage leading to rebellion.

He continued, “Seek out King John and fall before his feet, for if the French become lords of this loud day by winning the battle, Louis the Dauphin intends to recompense the pains you are taking for him by cutting off your heads. Thus has he sworn and I with him, and many more with me, upon the altar at Saint Edmundsbury, even on that altar where we swore to you dear friendship and everlasting love.”

“Can this be possible?” the Earl of Salisbury asked. “Can this be true?”

Lord Melun said, “Don’t I have hideous death within my view? Don’t I retain only a small quantity of life, which bleeds away like a wax figure melting and losing its shape from the heat of a fire?”

Witches were reputed to be able to kill by making and melting wax figures of their enemies.

He continued, “What in the world can make me now deceive, since I must lose the profit of all deceit? Why should I then be false, since it is true that I must die here and live hence by truth?”

To get into Heaven, Lord Melun needed to be truthful here on Earth.

He continued, “I say again, if Louis wins the day’s battle, he is forsworn if ever those eyes of yours see another day break in the East. He has sworn that if he wins this battle, you will not live to see another dawn. Instead, this ill night,

whose black contagious breath already smokes about the burning crest of the old, feeble, and day-wearied Sun, your breathing shall expire, paying the fine of rated — evaluated — and berated treachery even with a treacherous fine, aka end, of all your lives, if Louis with your assistance wins the day.

“Commend me to a man named Hubert who is with your King John. Because of my friendship with him, and because my grandfather was an Englishman, my conscience has awakened and confessed all this.

“In recompense for this, please carry me away from the noise and tumult of the battlefield to somewhere I may think the remnant of my thoughts in peace, and part this body and my soul with contemplation and devout desires. I want to die in peace.”

“We believe what you have confessed to us,” the Earl of Salisbury said. “Curse my soul if I do not love the appearance and the manner of this most fair occasion and opportunity, by means of which we will retrace the steps of damned flight, and like an abated and retired flood, leaving our rankness and irregular course, stoop low within those bounds we have overflowed and calmly run on in obedience even to our ocean, to our great King John.

“My arm shall give you, Lord Melun, help to bear you away from here, for I see the cruel pangs of death unmistakably in your eye.

“Let’s go, my friends! New flight and happy change maintain old right. We will flee to King John and be loyal again.”

— 5.5 —

Louis the Dauphin and his attendants were in the French camp following the battle.

He said, "I thought that the Sun of Heaven was loath to set; instead, it stayed in the sky and made the western welkin blush when the English traversed backward over their own ground in faint-hearted retreat. Oh, we came splendidly off the battlefield, when with a volley of our unnecessary shot at the retreating enemy, after such bloody toil, we bid them good night. We then wound our waving battle flags up without opposition from the English. We were the last remaining soldiers in the battlefield, and we were almost lords of it!"

A messenger arrived and asked, "Where is my Prince, the Dauphin?"

"Here I am," Louis the Dauphin said. "What is your news?"

The messenger replied, "The Count Melun has been slain; the rebelling English lords by his persuasion have deserted you and returned to King John, and your reinforcements, for whom you have wished so long, have been destroyed and sunk on Goodwin Sands."

"This is foul and ominous news!" Louis the Dauphin said. "Curse your very heart! I did not think to be as sad tonight as this has made me. Who was he who said that King John fled an hour or two before the stumble-causing night parted our weary armies?"

"Whoever spoke it, it is true, my lord," the messenger said.

"Good," Louis the Dauphin said. "Keep good guard and take good care tonight. The Sun shall not be up as soon as I will be to try the fair venture of tomorrow."

— 5.6 —

In an open space in the neighborhood of Swinstead Abbey, the Bastard and Hubert met. The night was dark, and they did not recognize each other.

“Who’s there?” Hubert asked, “Speak! Speak quickly, or I’ll shoot.”

“I am a friend,” the Bastard said. “Who are you?”

“I am on the side of England,” Hubert said.

“Where are you going?” the Bastard asked.

“What’s that to you?” Hubert asked. “Why can’t I ask about your business just like you ask about mine?”

Recognizing his voice, the Bastard said, “You are Hubert, I think.”

Hubert replied, “You think correctly. I will bet anything that you are my friend, since you know my voice so well. Who are you?”

“Whoever you want me to be,” the Bastard said. “But if you please, you will be my friend if you think I am descended on one side from the Plantagenets.”

Knowing that he was talking to Sir Richard, aka the Bastard, Hubert said, “My memory is faulty and unkind! I should have recognized your voice. You and the eyeless night have done me shame — you by recognizing my voice when I did not recognize yours, and the night by keeping me from clearly seeing you and thereby recognizing you.

“Brave soldier, pardon me that any accent breaking from your tongue should escape the true acquaintance of my ear. I apologize for not recognizing your voice.”

“Come, come,” the Bastard said. “There’s no need for apologies. What news is abroad?”

“To bring you the news is my reason for walking here in the black brow of night as I seek to find you.”

“Be quick, then,” the Bastard said. “What’s the news?”

“Oh, my sweet sir, this news is suitable for the night — it is black, fearsome, comfortless, and horrible.”

“Show me the very wound of this ill news,” the Bastard said. “I am no woman. I’ll not swoon when I hear it.”

“The King, I am afraid, has been poisoned by a monk,” Hubert said. “I left King John almost unable to speak, and I rushed out to inform you of this evil so that you could better arm yourself for the unexpected emergency than if you had after a delay learned about this.”

“How was he poisoned?” the Bastard asked. “Who was his food taster?”

A food taster ate a portion of the King’s food to check for poison before the King ate.

“A monk,” Hubert said. “I must say that he was a determined villain who deliberately ate the poison — as a result, his bowels suddenly exploded.

“King John still speaks and perhaps may recover.”

“Who did you leave to tend his majesty?” the Bastard asked.

“Haven’t you heard?” Hubert asked. “The rebelling English lords have all come back, and they brought Prince Henry, King John’s son — in their company. At Prince Henry’s request, the King has pardoned them, and they are all around his majesty.”

Referring to the poisoning of King John, the Bastard prayed, “Withhold your indignation, mighty Heaven, and tempt us not to bear above our power! Don’t give us more trouble than we can endure.”

He then said, “I need to tell you, Hubert, that half my army last night, passing these flatlands, were taken by the tide.

These Lincoln Washes have devoured them; they drowned. I myself, well mounted on a good horse, barely and with great difficulty escaped.

“Let’s go. Lead the way. Conduct me to King John. I am afraid that he will be dead before I see him.”

— 5.7 —

In the garden of Swinstead Abbey, Prince Henry, the Earl of Salisbury, and Lord Bigot talked.

“It is too late,” Prince Henry said. “The life of all his blood is infected and corrupted, and his pure, uncorrupted brain, which some suppose to be the soul’s frail dwelling-house, foretells by the foolish, lunatic comments that it makes the ending of mortality. Clearly, my father is dying.”

The Earl of Pembroke entered the scene and said, “His highness is still able to speak, and he believes that if he were brought into the open air, it would lessen the burning quality of that deadly poison which assails him.”

“Let him be brought into the garden here,” Prince Henry ordered.

Lord Bigot exited.

Prince Henry continued, “Does he still rave?”

“He is calmer than when you left him,” the Earl of Pembroke said. “Just now he sang.”

“Oh, delusion of sickness!” Prince Henry said. “Fierce extremes in their continuance will not feel themselves. As they continue, they will not be felt. Death, having preyed upon the outward parts, leaves them insensible, and his siege is now against the mind, which he pricks and wounds with many legions of strange fantasies, which in a throng press to that last stronghold and confound and destroy

themselves — the dying person becomes incoherent.

“It is strange that death should sing. I am the cygnet — baby swan — of this pale, faint swan, who chants a doleful hymn to his own death, and from the organ-pipe of frailty sings his soul and body to their lasting rest.”

Swans were thought to sing only when dying.

“Be consoled, Prince,” the Earl of Salisbury said, “for you are born to set a form upon that formless mass which he has left so shapeless and so rude. You were born to bring order to the chaos that England currently endures.”

Some attendants and Lord Bigot carried King John in a chair over to Prince Henry and the lords.

“Yes, by the Virgin Mary,” King John said, “now my soul has elbow-room. It would not go out through windows or through doors. There is so hot a summer in my bosom that all my bowels crumble to dust. I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen upon a parchment, and against this fire I shrink the way parchment does when it is too close to a fire.”

“How fares your majesty?” Prince Henry asked. “How are you?”

“I am poisoned — I fare ill. I fare badly as a result of eating ill fare, aka food. I am dead, forsaken, and cast off, and none of you will bid the winter to come and thrust his icy fingers in my mouth, nor will you let my Kingdom’s rivers take their course through my burned bosom, nor will you entreat the north to make its bleak winds kiss my parched lips and comfort me with cold. I do not ask much from you; I beg cold comfort — the comfort that I can get from the cold. But you are so stingy and so ungrateful that you deny me even cold comfort.”

Even while dying, King John was capable of punning. Another meaning of “cold comfort” is “little comfort.”

“I wish that there were some virtuous, helping quality in my tears, so they might relieve you!” Prince Henry said.

“The salt in them is hot,” King John replied.

Tears of grief are hot. Because of the way that King John was dying, anything hot was unpleasant to him. In addition, he was aware of the medical theory that salt is necessary for healthy blood, and he was saying that he was too far gone for the salt in his son’s tears to make his blood healthy again.

King John continued, “Within me is a Hell, and there the poison is as a fiend confined to tyrannize on unretrievable, condemned blood.”

Sinners were thought to carry Hell within themselves. That King John had a Hell within him may make us doubt that his soul flew upward to Heaven when he died.

“Unretrievable, condemned blood” is like the blood of a criminal who has been condemned to die and who will not be pardoned.

The Bastard entered the scene and said, “I am heated with my intense desire and impetuous speed to see your majesty!”

“Kinsman, you have come to close my eyes after I die,” King John said. “The tackle of my heart is cracked and burned, and all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail are turned to one thread, one little hair. My heart has one poor string to support it, one string that will hold only until your news has been uttered, and then all this you see is only a clod of clay and an empty model of destroyed royalty.”

This society believed that heartstrings supported the heart;

when someone died, their heartstrings broke. King John was saying that he had only one heartstring left to support his heart. He also was comparing heartstrings to the tackle, aka rigging, of a ship, including the shrouds, aka ropes that supported the mast.

King John had asked for the Bastard's news, and so the Bastard told him his news: "The Dauphin is preparing to come here, and only Heaven knows how we shall fight and repel him, for at night the best part of my army, when I took advantage of an opportunity and moved it, was in the Washes all unexpectedly devoured by the unexpected flood. The greater part of my soldiers drowned."

King John died. The new King was his son; Prince Henry now became King Henry III.

The Earl of Salisbury said to the Bastard, "You speak this dead news in as dead an ear."

Dead news is deadly news.

He continued, "My liege! My lord! A moment ago you were a King, and now you are this."

"Even so must I run on, and even so I must stop," King Henry III said. "Like my father the King, I will live, and I will die. What security of the world, what hope, what support can exist when this was just now a King, and is now clay?"

"Are you gone so?" the Bastard said to King John's corpse. "I stay behind only to do the duty of revenge for you, and then my soul shall attend on you in Heaven, as my soul on Earth has always been your servant."

He said to the lords who had rebelled but then had returned to serve King John, "Now, now, you stars who move in your right spheres, where are your powers? Show now your

mended faiths, and immediately return with me again to the battlefield to push destruction and perpetual shame out of the weak door of our fainting land. Straightaway let us seek, or straightaway we shall be sought. The Dauphin rages at our very heels. We must fight him.”

“It seems then that you don’t know what we know,” the Earl of Salisbury said. “The Cardinal Pandulph is resting inside. Half an hour ago he came from Louis the Dauphin, and he brought from him such offers of peace as we may accept with honor and respect. Louis the Dauphin intends immediately to stop this war and return to France.”

“He will do that when he sees ourselves well prepared to defend ourselves,” the Bastard said.

“No,” the Earl of Salisbury said. “It is in a way done already, for many cannon and much other military equipment he has sent to the seaside, and he has put his cause and quarrel to the disposition of Cardinal Pandulph, with whom you, myself, and other lords, if you think it is suitable, this afternoon will go to consummate this business happily.”

“Let it be done,” the Bastard said, “and you, my noble Prince, with other nobles who may best be spared, shall attend your father’s funeral.”

King Henry III said, “At Worcester his body must be interred, for so he willed it.”

“And so it shall be then,” the Bastard said, “and happily may your sweet self put on the lineal state and glory of the land! To you with all submission and on my knee, I bequeath my faithful services and true subjection everlastingly.”

The Bastard and the other lords knelt as they pledged to be loyal to the new King of England.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “And the same offer of our love we make, to continue without a stain of disloyalty for evermore.”

King Henry III said, “I have a kind soul that would give you thanks and knows not how to do it except with tears.”

The Bastard and the other lords rose.

“Let us pay the time only necessary woe,” the Bastard said, “since it has been beforehand with our griefs.”

Their griefs, in part, had already been remedied. King John had died, but King Edward III had taken his place. England had been at war with France, but now that war had ended.

The Bastard continued, “This England never did, and never shall, lie at the proud foot of a conqueror, except when it first helped to wound itself with disloyalty. Now that these her lords have come home and are loyal again, let the three remaining corners of the world come against us in arms, and we shall forcibly repel them. Nothing shall make us rue, if England to itself do remain but true.”

Chapter XIV: RICHARD II

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Richard II*)

MALE CHARACTERS

King Richard II; his father was the late Edward of Woodstock, known as The Black Prince.

Henry, surnamed Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, son of John of Gaunt; afterwards King Henry IV.

Uncles of King Richard II

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster; father of Henry Bolingbroke; he was called John of Gaunt because Gaunt was his birthplace; in modern English his birthplace is spelled Ghent; Ghent is in Belgium.

Edmund of Langley, Duke of York; uncle to both King Richard II and Henry Bolingbroke.

All of King Richard II's other uncles are dead at the beginning of Shakespeare's play.

Supporters of King Richard II

Sir John Bushy, friend of King Richard II.

Sir John Bagot, friend of King Richard II.

Sir Henry Green, friend of King Richard II.

Earl of Salisbury.

Lord Berkeley.

Bishop of Carlisle.

Abbot of Westminster.

Sir Stephen Scroop.

Captain of a band of Welshmen.

Supporters of Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford

Earl of Northumberland.

Henry Percy, son to Northumberland; in *1 Henry IV*, young Henry Percy has acquired the nickname “Hotspur.”

Lord Ross.

Lord Willoughby.

Officials in Trial by Combat.

Lord Marshal.

First Herald.

Second Herald.

Other Male Characters

Duke of Aumerle, son to the Duke of York; another of his titles is Earl of Rutland.

Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

Duke of Surrey.

Lord Fitzwater.

Sir Pierce of Exton.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

Queen to King Richard II.

Duchess of York.

Duchess of Gloucester.

Two ladies attending on the Queen.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Lords, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, Head Gardener, two Assistant Gardeners, Jail Keeper, Messenger, Groom, and other Attendants.

SCENE

England and Wales.

NOTA BENE

See “Appendix A: Brief Historical Background” if you need a very brief refresher on English history.

King Richard II’s reign began on 21 June 1377; he was deposed on 30 September 1399 and then murdered on 14 February 1400.

King Richard II and Henry Bolingbroke were first cousins. They shared the same grandfather: King Edward III. Their fathers were brothers, and so each man’s father was the other man’s uncle.

The action of this book begins in 1398; the previous year the Duke of Gloucester had been killed. The Duke of Gloucester was the brother of John of Gaunt and the uncle of both King Richard II and Henry Bolingbroke. The action of this book ends in 1400.

CHAPTER 1 (Richard II)

— 1.1 —

At Windsor Castle, King Richard II talked with John of Gaunt. Other nobles and attendants were present.

King Richard II said, “Old John of Gaunt, time-honored Duke of Lancaster, have you, according to your oath and bond, brought here Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, your bold son, to make good his boisterous and violent recent accusation, which then our lack of leisure would not let us hear, against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?”

“I have, my liege,” replied John of Gaunt.

“Tell me, moreover, have you questioned him to find out if he accuses the Duke of Norfolk on account of ancient hatred toward him, or worthily, as a good subject should, on some known ground of treachery in him?”

“As near as I could find out by questioning him on that topic, he makes the accusation on account of some apparent and obvious danger seen in the Duke of Norfolk that is aimed at your highness, and not because of long-standing malice and hatred.”

“Then call them into our presence,” King Richard II said, using the royal plural. “We ourselves will hear the accuser and the accused — face to face, and frowning brow to brow — freely speak. High-stomached — proud and stubborn — are they both, and full of ire; in rage they are deaf as the sea, and as hasty as fire.”

Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, and Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, entered the room.

Henry Bolingbroke said to King Richard II, “May many years of happy days befall you, my gracious sovereign, my most loving liege!”

Thomas Mowbray said to the King, “May each day always better the previous day’s happiness, until the Heavens, envying Earth’s good fortune, add an immortal title to your crown!”

“We thank you both,” King Richard II replied, “yet one of you is only flattering us, as well appears by the reason you come here — namely to accuse each other of high treason.

“Henry, my cousin of Hereford, what accusation do you bring against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?”

“First, let Heaven be the witness to my speech!” Henry Bolingbroke said. “In the devotion of a subject’s love, feeling concern for the precious safety of my Prince, and free from other misbegotten hate, I come as accuser into this Princely presence.

“Now, Thomas Mowbray, I turn to you. Mark well what I say to you; for what I speak my body shall make good upon this Earth, or my divine soul shall answer it in Heaven. I will fight you and prove by defeating and killing you that you are guilty of what I accuse you.

“You are a traitor and a miscreant, too highborn to be these things and too bad to live, since the more beautiful and crystal-clear the sky is, the uglier seem the clouds that in it fly.

“Once more, the more to aggravate the mark of your disgrace, I stuff down your throat the name of a foul traitor, and I wish, if it pleases my sovereign, before I move, to prove with sword drawn in righteous cause to prove that what I say is true.”

Thomas Mowbray replied, “Let not my cool, calm words here make anyone accuse me of lacking zeal. The trial of a woman’s war, the bitter clamor of two eager tongues, a battle fought only with words, cannot arbitrate this dispute between us two. The blood is hot that must be cooled for this. We must fight and spill blood on the ground.

“Yet I cannot boast of possessing such tame patience as to be hushed and to say nothing at all.

“First, the fair reverence of your highness — my respect for you, King Richard II, who are a blood relative to Henry Bolingbroke — curbs me from giving reins and spurs to my free speech, which otherwise would posthaste return these terms of treason and stuff them redoubled down his throat.

“Setting aside his high blood’s royalty, thereby letting him be no kinsman to my liege, I defy him, and I spit at him. I call him a slanderous coward and a villain, and to prove that what I say is true I would allow him odds, and meet him in man-to-man combat, even if I were obliged to run on foot all the way to the frozen ridges of the Alps, or any other uninhabitable ground where an Englishman has dared to set his foot.

“In the meantime let *this* defend my loyalty,” Thomas Mowbray said as he put his hand on the hilt of his sword. “I swear by all my hopes of attaining Heaven that most falsely he lies.”

Henry Bolingbroke threw his glove on the ground. The glove was his gage, a challenge to fight. If Thomas Mowbray picked up the gage, the two were obliged to fight.

Henry Bolingbroke said, “Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage. I renounce here the kindred of the King, and I lay aside my high blood’s royalty. I say that fear of me, not respect for my being related to the King, makes you hold back from fighting me. You say that you respect

the blood of the King — well, now that I have renounced my royal blood, you have no reason not to fight me.

“If guilty dread has left you so much strength as to take up my honor’s pawn, then stoop and pick up my gage. By that gage and all the other rites of knighthood, I will make good against you, arm against arm, what I have spoken, before you can devise even worse crimes to commit.”

Thomas Mowbray picked up the gage and said, “I take it up, and by that sword that gently tapped me on my shoulder when I was knighted, I swear that I’ll answer your challenge in any fair degree or chivalrous design of knightly trial. And when I mount my horse to fight you, may I not dismount alive from my horse, if I am a traitor or if I fight for an unjust cause!”

King Richard II said to Henry Bolingbroke, his first cousin, “What crime does our cousin charge that Mowbray is responsible for? It must be great if it will possess us of even as much as a thought of evil in him.”

“Pay attention to what I say,” Henry Bolingbroke replied. “My life shall prove that what I say is true. Mowbray received eight thousand nobles to pay as lendings — advances of pay — for your highness’ soldiers, but he retained that money and used it for improper employments, like a false, treacherous traitor and injurious villain.

“In addition, I say and will in battle prove, either here or elsewhere to the furthest border that ever was surveyed by English eye, that for these past eighteen years since the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381 all the treasons plotted and contrived in this land stem from false Mowbray, who is their first head and spring.”

The Duke of Gloucester had been murdered while in the custody of Thomas Mowbray. Some people in this society believed that King Richard II had ordered the death of the

Duke of Gloucester and that Thomas Mowbray, after delaying for three weeks, had ordered people who served him to carry out the order. The Duke of Gloucester was the uncle of both Henry Bolingbroke and King Richard II.

Referring to this murder, Henry Bolingbroke continued, “Further I say and further I will maintain upon his bad life to make all this good, that he plotted the Duke of Gloucester’s death, tempted his soon-believing adversaries, and subsequently, like a traitor coward, sluiced out the Duke of Gloucester’s innocent soul through streams of blood. This blood, like the blood of Abel, who sacrificed lambs to God and then was murdered by Cain, whose sacrifice of crops was not as well regarded by God, cries, even from the tongueless caverns of the earth, to me for justice and rough chastisement, and, by the glorious worth of my descent, this arm shall do it before this life is spent.”

The story of Abel and Cain is told in Genesis 4. In Genesis 4:12, we read, “*The Lord said, ‘What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.’*”

King Richard II said, “To how high a height the resolution of Henry Bolingbroke soars!

“Thomas Mowbray of Norfolk, what do you say to this?”

“Oh, let my sovereign turn away his face and bid his ears be deaf for a little while until I have told this disgrace to his blood relatives how God and good men hate so foul a liar.”

“Mowbray, our eyes and ears are impartial,” King Richard II said. “If Henry Bolingbroke were my brother, or even my Kingdom’s heir — although as it is, he is only my father’s brother’s son — but now, by the reverence due to my scepter and my majesty, I make a vow that such neighbor nearness to our sacred blood shall not privilege him, nor shall his close blood relationship to me make the

unstooping firmness of my upright soul biased in his favor.”

Richard II believed that Kings are supposed to stoop — bow — to no one except God.

King Richard II continued, “Henry Bolingbroke is our subject, Mowbray, and so are you. I grant you permission to speak freely and without fear.”

Thomas Mowbray said, “Then, Bolingbroke, I say that as low as to your heart, through the perfidious passage of your throat, you lie. Three parts of that money I received for Calais I duly disbursed to his highness’ soldiers. The other part I retained with King Richard II’s consent because my sovereign liege was in my debt because of an unpaid balance of a dear — both expensive and loving — account. I paid out my own money when recently I went to France to fetch King Richard II’s Queen. Now swallow down that lie.”

King Richard II had married Isabella of Valois.

Thomas Mowbray continued, “As for the Duke of Gloucester’s death, I did not slay him, but to my own disgrace I neglected my sworn duty in that case.

“As for you, my noble John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, you who are the honorable father to my foe, I once lay an ambush for your life. That is a trespass that vexes my grieving soul, but before I last received the sacrament I confessed my sin and expressly begged for your grace’s pardon, and I hope I had it.

“That is my fault. As for the other things I am accused of, they issue from the rancor of a villain, a cowardly and most degenerate traitor, and I boldly will defend myself against those charges.”

He threw down his glove and said, “I in turn hurl down my gage upon this overweening and arrogant traitor’s foot, and I will prove myself a loyal gentleman even in the best blood chambered in his bosom. I will spill the blood of his heart to prove that I am a loyal gentleman.

“Most heartily I pray that your highness will quickly assign a day for our trial by combat.”

Both Henry Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray had picked up the other’s gage.

“Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me,” King Richard II said. “Let’s purge this choler without letting blood.”

In this society, physicians sometimes treated illnesses by bleeding. The physician would make shallow incisions in veins and bleed the patient.

Using the royal plural, King Richard II continued, “This we prescribe, although we are no physician. Deep malice makes too deep incision. Forget and forgive; come to terms and be agreed to be reconciled. Our doctors say this is no month to bleed.”

In this society, physicians believed that some months were more favorable than others for bleeding.

Using the royal plural, King Richard II said to John of Gaunt, “Good uncle, let this end where it began. We’ll calm the Duke of Norfolk; you calm your son.”

John of Gaunt said, “To be a peacemaker shall be suitable for my age. Throw down, my son, the Duke of Norfolk’s gage.”

King Richard II said, “And, Duke of Norfolk, throw down Bolingbroke’s gage.”

Henry Bolingbroke did not throw down Mowbray’s gage.

Nor did Mowbray throw down Bolingbroke's gage.

John of Gaunt said, "When, Harry, when will you do what I tell you to do? Filial obedience bids I should not bid again. A dutiful son would have already done what I told you to do."

King Richard II said, "Norfolk, we order you to throw down Henry Bolingbroke's gage; there is no alternative."

Thomas Mowbray knelt and said, "Myself I throw, dread sovereign, at your foot. My life you shall command, but not my shame. The one my duty owes to you, but my fair name, a name that will live on after I am dead and in my grave, to dark dishonor's use you shall not have. I am disgraced, accused, and publicly treated with infamy here. I am pierced to the soul with the poisoned spear of slander, and no balm can cure that except the heart's-blood of the man who uttered these poisoned words against me."

"Rage must be withstood," King Richard II said. "Give me Henry Bolingbroke's gage. Lions make leopards tame. Kings make nobles tame."

"Yes, lions make leopards tame, but they cannot change the leopard's spots," Mowbray said. "Just take away my shame, and I will resign my challenge and take back my gage."

A spot is a stain, aka sin or crime. Mowbray may have been saying that if King Richard II would admit that he had ordered the death of the Duke of Gloucester, then Mowbray would take back his gage and his challenge.

Mowbray continued, "My dear, dear lord, the purest treasure mortal times afford is spotless reputation. Take that away, and men are only gilded loam or painted clay."

According to Genesis, God created men out of dust. Take

away a man's spotless reputation, and all that is left is dust that has been covered with guilt or paint.

Mowbray continued, "A jewel in a ten-times-barred-up chest is like a bold spirit in a loyal breast. My honor is my life; both grow in one — they are intertwined. Take honor from me, and my life is done. So then, my dear liege, let me put my honor to the test. In defending honor I live, and for honor I will die."

King Richard II said to Henry Bolingbroke, "Cousin, give up your challenge; you begin the peace-making process."

"Oh, may God keep my soul from such deep sin!" Henry Bolingbroke said. "Shall I seem crestfallen and humbled in my father's sight? Or with fear appropriate to a pale beggar discredit my high birth before this brazen dastardly coward? Before my tongue shall wound my honor with such feeble wrong, or sound so base a truce, my teeth shall tear the slavish instrument of recanting fear, and I will spit my bleeding tongue with its high disgrace where shame finds harbor — I will spit my tongue in Mowbray's face."

King Richard II said, "We were not born to beseech, but to command, which since we cannot do to make you friends, be ready, as your lives shall answer for it if you are not ready, at Coventry, upon Saint Lambert's day — September 17 — in this year of 1398. There shall your swords and lances arbitrate the swelling difference of your deep-rooted hate. Since we cannot reconcile you, we shall see the justice of God designate which of you shall be the victor and therefore is in the right.

"Lord Marshal, command our officers at arms to be ready to manage these home — as opposed to foreign — disturbances."

In his house in London, John of Gaunt and the Duchess of Gloucester, whose husband had been murdered at King Richard II's order, talked together.

John of Gaunt said, "Alas, the blood I shared with my brother Thomas of Woodstock, the Duke of Gloucester, urges me more than your exclamations to stir and take action against the butchers of his life! But since correction lies in the hands of him who committed the crime — the King's hands — we cannot avenge the crime, and so we leave revenge to the will of Heaven. God, when He sees the right time and the ripe hours on Earth, will rain hot vengeance on such offenders' heads."

The Duchess of Gloucester said, "Doesn't brotherhood find in you a sharper spur? Has love in your old blood no living fire? King Edward III had seven sons, and you yourself are one. Those seven sons were like seven vials of his sacred blood, or seven beautiful branches springing from one root. Some of those seven are dried by nature's course; they have died. Some of those branches were cut by the Destinies — the Fates who spin, weave, measure, and cut the thread of life.

"But Thomas of Woodstock, my dear lord, my life, my Duke of Gloucester, who was one vial full of King Edward III's sacred blood, one flourishing branch of his most royal root, is cracked, and all the precious liquor spilt. He is hacked down and his summer leaves are all faded, by hatred's hand and murder's bloody axe.

"Ah, Gaunt, his blood was yours! That bed, that womb, that stuff, that same mold that fashioned you made him a man; and although you live and breathe, yet you are slain in him. You consent in some large measure to your father's death, in that you see your wretched brother die, who was the model of your father's life.

“Don’t call it Christian patience, Gaunt; it is despair and desperation — a sin. Despair is loss of hope. Christian patience is forbearance and self-control; it is Christian long-suffering — waiting patiently for God to act.

“In allowing thus your brother to be slaughtered, you show the naked, defenseless pathway to your own life, and you teach stern murder how to butcher you. That which in mean men we entitle patience is pale cold cowardice when it appears in noble breasts.

“What shall I say? To safeguard your own life, the best way is to avenge my Gloucester’s death.”

“God’s is the quarrel,” John of Gaunt replied. “God’s substitute, His deputy anointed in His sight, has caused the death of the Duke of Gloucester. That substitute is King Richard II, who was crowned in the sight of God in the coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey. All Kings, good or bad, are God’s deputies. If King Richard II caused Gloucester’s death wrongfully, let Heaven revenge it, for I may never lift an angry arm against the minister of God.”

“To whom then, alas, may I complain?” the Duchess of Gloucester asked.

“To God, the widow’s champion and defense.”

“Why, then, I will. Farewell, old Gaunt. You go to Coventry, there to behold our kinsman the Duke of Hereford fight deadly Mowbray.

“Oh, may my husband’s wrongs sit on Hereford’s spear, so that it may enter the butcher Mowbray’s breast! Or, if misfortune miss the first charge in the man-to-man combat, may Mowbray’s sins sit so heavy in his bosom that they break his foaming courser’s back, and throw the rider headlong in the combat arena, a captive coward to my cousin Hereford!

“Farewell, old Gaunt. Your at one time brother’s wife with her companion, Grief, must end her life.”

“Sister-in-law, farewell,” John of Gaunt replied. “I must go to Coventry. May as much good stay with you as goes with me!”

“Yet one word more,” the Duchess of Gloucester said. “Grief rebounds from where it falls, not with its empty hollowness, but with its weight. It rebounds because it is so heavy and returns to the mourner.

“I take my leave before I have begun, for sorrow does not end when it seems to be done.

“Commend me to your brother, Edmund of Langley, the Duke of York.

“Well, that is all — no, do not yet depart. Although this is all, do not so quickly go. I shall remember more things to say. Tell the Duke of York — ah, what? — with all good speed at Plashy visit me.”

Plashy was the home of the Gloucester family in Essex.

The Duchess of Gloucester continued, “Alas, and what shall good old York see there but empty rooms and undecorated walls since the tapestries have been taken down while I am away. What shall good old York see there but unpeopled rooms where servants should be doing their work, and untrodden stones? And what should old York hear there for his welcome except my groans?

“Therefore convey my greetings to him, but let him not come there to seek the sorrow that dwells everywhere.

“Desolate, desolate, I will go there and die. My weeping eyes now take their last leave of you.”

On this Saint Lambert's day — 17 September 1398 — the lists — the area prepared for combat — had been prepared at Coventry for the combat between Henry Bolingbroke and Mowbray. The duel would decide which man was honorable; people believed that God would help the honorable man defeat the dishonorable man in this fight to the death.

The Lord Marshal and the Duke of Aumerle spoke together.

The Lord Marshal asked, "My Lord Aumerle, is Harry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, armed?"

"Yes, at all points he is fully armed, and he longs to enter into the fighting arena."

The Lord Marshal said, "The Duke of Norfolk, full of spirit and bold, waits only for the summons of the accuser's trumpet."

The Duke of Aumerle replied, "Why, then, the champions are prepared, and I am waiting for nothing except his majesty's approach."

The trumpets sounded, and King Richard II entered with John of Gaunt, Bushy, Bagot, Green, and others. They sat, and Thomas Mowbray, fully armed, entered with his herald. Mowbray was the defendant in this trial by arms.

King Richard II said, "Lord Marshal, demand of yonder champion the cause of his arrival here in arms. Ask him his name and orderly proceed to make him swear to the justice of his cause."

The Lord Marshal said to Mowbray, "In God's name and the King's, say who you are and why you have come here thus knightly clad in arms, say against what man you have come here to fight, and say what are your quarrel and cause

of complaint with that man. Speak truly, on your knighthood and your oath, and may God and your valor protect you in accordance with the justice of your cause.”

Knights identified themselves as part of the ritual. They were wearing helmets with the visors down and in some cases would not be recognized. Also, one of the rules of chivalry was that knights were under no obligation to fight those challengers who were not knights.

“My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, and I have come here engaged by my oath — which God forbid a knight should violate! — both to defend my loyalty and truth to God, my King, and my descendants against the Duke of Hereford who accuses me and, by the grace of God and this my arm, to prove, in defending myself, that he is a traitor to my God, my King, and me, and as I fight for the truth, may Heaven defend me!”

The trumpets sounded, and Henry Bolingbroke, the accuser of Mowbray, entered the combat arena fully armed, accompanied by a herald.

King Richard II said, “Marshal, ask yonder knight in arms both who he is and why he comes here thus armed in plate armor in the habiliments of war, and formally, according to our law, take an oath from him about the justice of his cause.”

The Lord Marshal asked, “What is your name? And why have you come here before King Richard II in his royal lists? Against whom have you come? And what’s your quarrel? Speak like a true knight, so that Heaven may defend you!”

“I am Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,” Henry Bolingbroke replied.

He called himself Lancaster because he was the heir to the

Duke of Lancaster. He was also the Duke of Hereford and the Earl of Derby.

He continued, "I stand here in arms ready to prove, by God's grace and my body's valor, in this combat arena, against Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, that he is a traitor, foul and dangerous, to God of Heaven, King Richard II, and to me, and as I fight for the truth, may Heaven defend me!"

The Lord Marshal said, "On pain of death, no person shall be so bold or foolhardy as to interfere in the combat arena, except the Marshal and such officers as are appointed to direct this fair undertaking."

"Lord Marshal," Henry Bolingbroke said, "let me kiss my sovereign's hand, and bow my knee before his majesty, for Mowbray and I are like two men who vow a long and weary pilgrimage. Then let us take a ceremonious leave and loving farewell of our many friends."

The Lord Marshal said to King Richard II, "The accuser greets your highness in all duty, and he requests to kiss your hand and take his leave."

"We will descend and enfold him in our arms," King Richard II said, coming down from his chair of state, which was on a platform, and hugging Henry Bolingbroke, his first cousin.

He added, "Cousin of Hereford, to that extent that your cause is right, so be your fortune in this royal fight! If your cause is just, then win. If your cause is unjust, then die. Farewell, my blood. If today you shed your blood, I am permitted to lament you, but not to revenge your death. If you die, Mowbray has proven that your cause is unjust, and revenging your death would be unjust."

"Oh, let no noble eye drop a profane tear for me, if I am

gored with Mowbray's spear," Henry Bolingbroke replied. "As confidently as against a bird the falcon takes flight, I with Mowbray fight. My loving lord, I take my leave of you.

"I also take my leave of you, my noble cousin, Lord Aumerle. I am not sick, although I have to do with death; instead, I am strong, young, and cheerfully drawing breath.

"Lo, as at English feasts, at which sweet things are served last, so I greet the sweetest, most delicious, and daintiest last, to make the end most sweet."

He then said to his father, John of Gaunt, "Oh, you, the Earthly author of my blood, whose youthful spirit, in me reborn, with a twofold vigor lifts me up to reach out for victory above my head, add tested strength to my armor with your prayers, and with your blessings steel and strengthen my lance's point so that it may pierce Mowbray's armor as if it were made of wax, and polish anew the name of John of Gaunt through the vigorous behavior of his son."

John of Gaunt replied, "May God make you prosperous because your cause is good! Be swift like lightning in the execution, and let your blows, doubly redoubled, fall like stupefying thunder on the helmet of your adverse pernicious enemy. Rouse up your youthful blood, be valiant, and live."

"I rely for success on my innocence and the help of Saint George, the patron saint of England," Henry Bolingbroke said.

Thomas Mowbray said, "However God or fortune casts my lot, there lives or dies, true to King Richard II's throne, a loyal, just, and upright gentleman: myself. Never did a captive with a freer heart cast off his chains of bondage and embrace his golden uncontrolled freedom more than my

dancing soul celebrates this feast of battle with my adversary.

“Most mighty liege, and my companion peers, take away from my mouth the wish of happy years. As gentle and as jocund as to an entertainment, I go to fight. Truth has a calm breast.”

“Farewell, my lord,” King Richard II said. “I confidently see virtue with valor lying poised and ready in your eye.

“Order the trial, Marshal, and let the combat begin.”

The Lord Marshal had inspected the opponents’ lances to make sure that they were the same length. Now he gave the opponents their lances.

He said, “Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby, receive your lance; and may God defend whoever has right on his side!”

“Strong as a tower in hope, I cry, ‘Amen,’” Henry Bolingbroke said.

The Lord Marshal ordered an officer, “Go bear this lance to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.”

The first herald said, “Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby, stands here for God, his sovereign and himself, on pain to be found false and cowardly, to prove that the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray, is a traitor to his God, his King, and himself, and dares him to set forward to the fight.”

The second herald said, “Here stands Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, on pain to be found false and cowardly, both to defend himself and to prove that Henry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby is to God, his sovereign, and himself disloyal. Thomas Mowbray stands here courageously and with a free desire to fight, and is waiting only for the signal

to begin.”

The Lord Marshal said, “Sound, trumpets; and set forward, combatants.”

The trumpets sounded a charge, but King Richard II threw his warder — his baton — down. This was a signal to stop the combat.

The Lord Marshal ordered, “Stop! The King has thrown his warder down.”

King Richard II said, “Let them lay by their helmets and their spears, and both return back to their chairs again.”

Using the royal plural, he then ordered the lords of his Council, “Withdraw with us, and let the trumpets sound until we notify these Dukes what we decree.”

The trumpets made a succession of calls until the deliberation stopped.

King Richard II then said to the combatants, “Come close, and listen to what with our Council we have decided.

“Because our Kingdom’s earth should not be soiled with that dear blood that it has fostered, and because our eyes hate the dire aspect of wounds plowed up with neighbors’ swords in civil war, and because we think the eagle-winged pride of sky-aspiring and ambitious thoughts, with rival-hating envy, set you on to disturb our peace, which in our country’s cradle draws the sweet infant breath of gentle sleep, and which would become excessively roused up with savage out-of-tune military drums, with harsh resounding trumpets’ dreadful brays, and with the grating shock of wrathful iron arms — these disturbances might from our quiet confines frighten fair Peace and make us wade even in our kindred’s blood — we therefore banish both of you from our territories.

“You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of losing your life, until twice five summers have enriched our fields, shall not greet again our fair dominions. Instead, for ten years you shall tread the foreign paths of banishment.”

“Your will be done,” Henry Bolingbroke replied. “This must be my comfort: The Sun that warms you here shall shine on me there, and the Sun’s golden beams that are given to you here shall also shine on me and gild my banishment.”

King Richard II said to Mowbray, “Duke of Norfolk, for you remains a heavier doom, a more serious sentence, which I with some unwillingness pronounce. The stealthy and slow hours shall not bring to an end the endless time of your dear — dire — exile. The hopeless words of ‘never to return’ speak I against you, upon pain of losing your life.”

“This is a heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,” Mowbray replied, “and all unlooked for from your highness’ mouth. I have deserved at your highness’ hands a dearer merit, not so deep a wound as to be cast forth in the common air.

“The language I have learned these forty years, my native English, now I must forego. And now my tongue is of use to me no more than an unstrung viol or a harp. My tongue is as useful to me as a skillfully made musical instrument put away in its case. My tongue is as useful to me as a skillfully made musical instrument put into the hands of a person who does not know how to play a tuneful harmony. Within my mouth you have jailed my tongue. It is doubly guarded with portcullises — my teeth and lips.”

A portcullis is a strong, heavy grating that can be lowered to block the entrance to a castle.

Mowbray continued, “Dull, unfeeling, barren ignorance is made my jailer to wait on me. I am too old to fawn upon a

wet nurse, too far in years — too old — to be a pupil now. I cannot learn a foreign language either from a wet nurse — a servant who takes care of and breastfeeds someone else’s baby and teaches it to say its first words — or from a tutor. What is your sentence then but speechless death, which robs my tongue from breathing native breath and speaking native words?”

King Richard II replied, “It does not help you to be piteously full of lamentation. After we have pronounced our sentence, complaining comes too late.”

“Then thus I turn myself away from my country’s light, to dwell in solemn shadows of endless night,” Mowbray said, preparing to leave.

King Richard II said to him, “Return again, and take an oath with you.”

Using the royal plural, he then said to both Thomas Mowbray and Henry Bolingbroke, “Lay your banished hands on our royal sword — the sword, hilt, and guard form a cross. Swear by the duty that you owe to God — now that I have banished you, you owe no duty to me — to keep this oath that we administer:

“You shall never — so help you truth and God! — embrace each other’s friendship in banishment, shall never look upon each other’s face, shall never write each other, greet each other again, or reconcile this frowning tempest of your home-bred hate, and shall never by premeditated plan meet to plot, contrive, or collude in any ill against us, our state, our subjects, or our land.”

Henry Bolingbroke said, “I swear.”

Thomas Mowbray said, “And I swear to keep all this.”

Henry Bolingbroke said to Mowbray, “Duke of Norfolk, so

far as I may speak to my enemy, let me say this: By this time, if the King had permitted us to fight, one of our souls had wandered in the air because it had been banished from this frail sepulcher of our flesh, as now our flesh is banished from this land. Confess your treasons before you fly from the realm. Since you have far to go, do not bear along with you the clogging burden of a guilty soul.”

A clog is a weight that is attached to the leg of a prisoner to impede movement.

“No, Bolingbroke,” Thomas Mowbray replied. “If I ever were a traitor, may my name be blotted from the Book of Life, and may I from Heaven be banished as I am banished from England! But what you are, God, you, and I know, and all too soon, I fear, the King shall rue what you are.

“Farewell, my liege. Now no way can I stray, unless I come back to England. All the world’s my way. I can go anywhere I want except England.”

Mowbray exited.

King Richard II looked at John of Gaunt, who was mourning the exile of Henry Bolingbroke.

King Richard II said, “The eyes mirror what is in the heart. Uncle, even in the mirrors of your eyes I see your grieving heart. Your sad expression has from the number of your son’s banished years plucked away four years.”

He said to Henry Bolingbroke, “After six frozen winters are spent and gone, return with welcome home from banishment.”

Henry Bolingbroke replied, “How long a time lies in one little speech from a King! Four lagging, lingering winters and four wanton, luxuriant springs disappear with a King’s small speech: Such is the breath of Kings.”

John of Gaunt said, “I thank my liege because in his regard for me he shortens my son’s exile by four years, but little advantage shall I reap thereby, for before the six years that my son has to spend in exile can change their Moons, making months pass, and bring their times to an end, my oil-dried lamp and my wasted-away-by-time light shall be extinct with age and endless night. My inch of taper will be burnt and done, and blindfolded death will not let me see my son. I will never see my son again; I will die before his exile is over.”

“Why, uncle, you have many years to live,” King Richard II said.

“But, King, you cannot give to me even a minute,” John of Gaunt said. “You can shorten my days with sullen sorrow, and you can pluck nights away from me, but you cannot give me a morning. You can help time to furrow — wrinkle — me with age, but you can stop no wrinkle in time’s pilgrimage. Your word is current with time for my death, but once I am dead, your Kingdom cannot buy my breath. You have the power to kill me, but once I am dead you lack the power to give me life.”

“Your son is banished upon good advice,” King Richard II said. “Your own tongue assented to this group verdict. Why then at our justice do you seem to frown?”

“Things sweet to taste prove in digestion to be sour,” John of Gaunt said. “You urged me to express my opinion as a judge; but I had rather you would have bid me to argue like a father. Oh, if it had been a stranger and not my child I was judging, I would have been milder and glossed over his fault. I sought to avoid being accused of being biased because I was judging my son. So I advocated exile, and with this sentence I destroyed my own life. Alas, I looked for the time when some of you would say that I was too strict when I made my own son go away in exile, but you

gave permission to my unwilling tongue against my will to do myself this wrong.”

King Richard II said to Henry Bolingbroke, “Cousin, farewell.”

He then said to John of Gaunt, “Uncle, tell your son farewell. For six years we banish him, and he shall go.”

The trumpets sounded, and King Richard II and his train of attendants exited.

The Duke of Aumerle, who was loyal to King Richard II, said to Henry Bolingbroke, “Cousin, farewell. What presence must not know, from where you do remain let paper show. You won’t be able to communicate with me in person, but be sure to write to me.”

The Duke of Aumerle, King Richard II, and Henry Bolingbroke were all first cousins, since they were the sons of three brothers, all of whom were sons of King Edward III. The Duke of Aumerle was the son of the Duke of York.

The Lord Marshal said to Henry Bolingbroke, “My lord, no leave from you will I take, for I will ride, as far as land will let me, by your side. I will ride to the harbor with you.”

Henry Bolingbroke stayed silent because of his grief at leaving England.

His father, John of Gaunt, said to him, “Oh, for what reason do you hoard your words with the result that you return no courteous sentences to your friends?”

“I have too few words to take my leave of you,” Henry Bolingbroke said. “Now my tongue’s duty is to be prodigal in expressing the abundant dolor of my heart.”

“Your grief — cause of sorrow — is only your absence from England for a time,” John of Gaunt said.

“As long as joy is absent, grief — sorrow — is present for that time,” Henry Bolingbroke said.

“What are six winters? They are quickly gone.”

“To men in joy, but grief makes one hour seem like ten.”

“Call it a travel that you are taking for pleasure,” John of Gaunt said.

“My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,” Henry Bolingbroke said. “It is a travail — a forced pilgrimage.”

“Think of it this way,” John of Gaunt said. “The sullen, gloomy passage of your weary steps is a foil wherein you are to set the precious jewel of your home return.”

A foil is a thin piece of metal set under a jewel to make it more brilliant. The foil has little value, but the jewel has great value. The time spent in exile, according to John of Gaunt, will make his son’s return to England seem all the more brilliant.

“No,” Henry Bolingbroke replied. “Rather, every tedious stride I make will only remind me at what a great distance away I wander from the jewels whom I love.

“Isn’t it true that I must serve a long apprenticeship to foreign passages, and in the end, having again my freedom, I must boast of nothing else but that I was a journeyman to grief? I will spend time in exile, but I will gain nothing for it — except six years of serving grief.”

“All places that the eye of Heaven visits are to a wise man ports and happy havens,” John of Gaunt said.

A proverb stated, “A wise man makes every country his own.”

He continued, “Teach your necessity to reason like this. There is no virtue like necessity.

“Don’t think that the King banished you; think that you banished the King.

“Woe does the heavier sit, where it perceives it is but faintheartedly borne.

“Go, and say that I sent you forth to earn honor instead of saying that the King exiled you.

“Or suppose that a devouring pestilential plague hangs in our air and you are fleeing to a fresher, healthier climate.

“Look, whatever your soul holds dear, imagine that it lies the way you are going, and not from whence you came. Say that you are traveling to find whatever your soul holds dear.

“Imagine that the singing birds are musicians. Imagine that the grass you tread on is the King’s presence chamber strewn with rushes. Imagine that the flowers are fair ladies, and your steps are no more than a delightful stately or lively dance.

“Gnarling — snarling and gnashing — sorrow has less power to bite the man who mocks it and regards it as light.”

“Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand by thinking about the frosty Caucasus Mountains that separate Europe from Asia?” Henry Bolingbroke replied. “Who can cloy — satiate — the hungry edge of appetite with only the imagination of a feast? Who can wallow naked in December snow by thinking about summer’s fantastic heat?

“Oh, no! The awareness of the good only gives the greater feeling to the worse. Cruel Sorrow’s tooth never rankles and creates a festering wound more than when it bites and creates a sore, but does not lance it.”

Some wounds do not leave an opening, meaning that any pus stays inside the body, and the wound does not heal. Lancing a wound leaves an opening that allows the pus to

drain and fosters healing.

“Come, come, my son,” John of Gaunt said. “I’ll accompany you on your way. If I had your youth and cause, I would not delay.”

“Then, England’s ground, farewell,” Henry Bolingbroke said. “Sweet soil, *adieu*. My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet! Wherever I wander, boast of this I can: Although I am banished, I am yet a trueborn Englishman.”

— 1.4 —

King Richard II was at his court. With him were Bagot and Green and the Duke of Aumerle.

“We did observe that,” King Richard II said in mid-conversation.

He then said, “Cousin Aumerle, how far did you accompany high Hereford on his way?”

The word “high” was ambiguous. It could mean “highborn” or “proud and haughty.”

“I accompanied high Hereford, if you call him so, only to the next highway, and there I left him,” Aumerle replied.

“Tell me, what quantity of parting tears was shed?” King Richard II asked.

“Indeed, no tears were shed by me, except the north-east wind, which then blew bitterly against our faces, awakened the sleeping seepage of my eye, and so by chance I graced our hollow — insincere — parting with a tear.”

“What did our cousin say when you parted from him?”

“‘Farewell,’ and, because my heart disdained that my tongue should so profane the word ‘farewell’ by saying it to Bolingbroke, my heart taught me the craftiness to

counterfeit and imitate oppression of such grief that words seemed buried in my sorrow's grave. I pretended that I was so overcome with sorrow that I could not speak. Truly, if the word 'farewell' would have lengthened the hours and added years to Bolingbroke's short banishment, he would have had a volume of farewells from me, but since it would not, he had none from me."

King Richard II said, "He is our cousin, cousin."

King Richard II, the Duke of Aumerle, and Henry Bolingbroke were all first cousins.

He continued, "But when time shall call Bolingbroke home from banishment, it is doubtful whether he, our kinsman, will come back to see his friends. When his exile is ended and he is supposed to return to England, I may come up with a reason to extend his exile."

Using the royal plural, he said, "We ourself and Bushy, Bagot here, and Green observed Henry Bolingbroke's courtship to the common people — how he seemed to dive into their hearts with humble and familiar courtesy, what reverence he threw away on slaves, wooing poor craftsmen with the craft — deceit — of smiles and the patient endurance of his fortune, as if to carry their affections into exile with him.

"Off goes his hat to an oyster-wench — a female who sells oysters. A pair of draymen — wagon drivers — bid that God speed him well, and they had the tribute of his supple, easily bending knee, with 'Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends.' He acted as if he would inherit our England, and as if he were our subjects' next hope to be King."

"Well, he is gone; and with him go these thoughts," Green said. "Now for the rebels who refuse to yield in Ireland. Expeditious management must be made, my liege, before

further leisure yield them further opportunities for their advantage and your highness' loss."

"We will ourself go in person to this war," King Richard II said. "And, as for our coffers, with too great a court and liberal largess, they are grown somewhat light, and so we are forced to farm our royal realm."

He had leased out parts of the country to tax-farmers. They paid King Richard II a large sum of money, and then recovered that money — and a profit — by levying their own taxes on the people.

He continued, "The revenue from leasing out the country shall furnish us for our affairs in hand — it shall pay for the war in Ireland. If that revenue falls short, our deputies at home in England shall have blank charters. When my deputies shall know what men are rich, they shall subscribe them for large sums of gold and send the gold to us to supply our wants, for we will make for Ireland soon."

The blank charters were like blank checks. The rich man would sign the blank charter, and the King's deputy would then fill in an amount of money that would be sent to King Richard II.

Bushy entered the room.

"Bushy, what is the news?" King Richard II asked.

"Old John of Gaunt is grievously sick, my lord. He has suddenly taken ill, and he has sent posthaste to entreat your majesty to visit him."

"Where is he staying?"

"At Ely House," Bushy replied.

Ely House was the London palace of the Bishops of Ely; often Ely House was rented out to nobles.

King Richard II said, “Now put it, God, in the physician’s mind to help John of Gaunt to his grave immediately! The lining of his coffers shall make coats to deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.

“Come, gentlemen, let’s all go visit him. Pray God we may make haste, and come too late!”

Everyone replied, “Amen!”

CHAPTER 2 (Richard II)

— 2.1 —

At Ely House, a dying John of Gaunt spoke to the Duke of York, his brother. Attendants were also present.

John of Gaunt said, “Will the King come, so that I may breathe my last while giving wholesome counsel and advice to his unrestrained youth?”

“Don’t vex yourself, and don’t strive with your breath,” the Duke of York said, “because all in vain comes counsel to his ears.”

“Oh, but they say the tongues of dying men force others to pay attention as if they were hearing deep harmony and beautiful music. Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain because people who breathe and speak their words in pain breathe and speak truth.

“He who soon must say no more is listened to more than they whom youth and ease have taught to prattle and talk superficially. More are men’s ends marked than their lives before: People pay special attention to the dying.

“The setting sun, and music at its close, just like the last taste of sweets, are sweetest because they are last, and they are written in remembrance more than things long past. A person’s last words linger longest in the memory of other people.

“Although Richard would not hear my counsel while I was healthy, my death’s sad tale may yet undeafen his ears so that he will listen to me.”

“No,” the Duke of York said. “His ears are stopped with other flattering sounds, such as praises, of whose taste even

the wise are fond. His ears are also stopped with lascivious, sexual meters, to whose venomous sound the open ears of youth always listen. In addition, his ears are stopped with reports of fashions in proud Italy, whose manners our apish nation always basely imitates after they are outmoded.

“Where does the world thrust forth a vanity — as long as it is new, no one cares how vile it is — that is not quickly buzzed into King Richard II’s ears?”

“Then all too late comes counsel to be heard in the place where desires mutiny against reason’s considerations.

“Don’t try to guide King Richard II because he himself will choose which way he will go.

“It is breath you lack, and that breath you will lose if you try to guide the King with wise counsel.”

John of Gaunt replied, “I think that I am a prophet newly inspired, and thus expiring I foretell the King’s future. His rash and fierce blaze of riotous and wasteful living cannot last, for violent fires soon burn themselves out.

“Light showers last long, but sudden storms are short.

“A man tires betimes — soon — who spurs his horse too fast betimes — early in the day.

“With eager and hasty feeding, food chokes the feeder.

“Light vanity is frivolous, unthinking pride. It is like an insatiable cormorant — a seabird that gulps its prey. Once it has consumed the resources at its disposal, it soon preys upon itself.”

John of Gaunt then began to talk about the British island:

“This royal throne of Kings, this scepter’d isle, this earth of majesty, this seat — throne — of the war-god Mars, this other Eden, this demi-paradise, this fortress built by Nature

for herself against infection and the hand of war. This happy breed of men, this little world, this precious stone set in the silver sea, which serves it in the role of a wall to keep out invaders, or which serves it as a defensive moat to a house, against the envy and malice of less happier lands. This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England, this nurse, this teeming — fertile — womb of royal Kings, feared because of their lineage and famous by their birth, renowned for their deeds as far from home for Christian service in the Crusades and true chivalry as is the Holy Sepulcher in the land of stubborn Jews who rejected Christ, the Holy Sepulcher of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son —

“Yes, this land of such dear souls, this dear and again dear land, this land dear for her reputation throughout the world, is now leased out — I die as I say this — as if it were a tenement or a paltry farm.

“England, bound in with — surrounded by — the triumphant sea whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege of watery Neptune, is now bound in with — legally restrained by — shame, with inky blots and rotten parchment bonds, with blank charters and the farming-out of taxes.

“England, which was accustomed to conquer others, has made a shameful conquest of itself.

“Ah, if the scandal would vanish with my life, how happy then would be my ensuing death!”

Several people entered the room: King Richard II, the Queen, the Duke of Aumerle, Bushy, Green, Bagot, Lord Ross, and Lord Willoughby.

The Duke of York said to John of Gaunt, “The King has come. Deal mildly with his youth; for once young hot colts are enraged they rage all the more.”

The Queen asked, “How fares our noble uncle, John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster?”

“What comforting thing can you say to me, man?” King Richard II asked. “How is it with aged Gaunt?”

“Oh, how that name ‘Gaunt’ fits my condition!” John of Gaunt replied. “I am old Gaunt indeed, and I am gaunt through being old. Within me grief has kept a painful fast, and who abstains from food who is not gaunt?”

“For sleeping England I have stayed awake and watched a long time. Watching breeds leanness, and leanness is all gaunt. The pleasure that some fathers feed upon is something from which I strictly fast — I mean, the pleasure I would receive from looking at my children. Because Henry Bolingbroke, my son, is in exile, I cannot look upon him.

“And because I am fasting from that pleasure, you have made me gaunt. Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave, whose hollow womb inherits and receives nothing but bones since all else has wasted away through fasting.”

“Can sick men play so nicely and subtly with their names?” King Richard II asked.

“Misery makes it a sport — an entertainment — to mock itself,” John of Gaunt said. “Misery entertains itself by mocking itself.

“Since you seek to kill my name in me by exiling my son, I mock my name, great King, to flatter you.”

John of Gaunt was saying that the King had tried to ruin John of Gaunt’s family by exiling Henry Bolingbroke, his son, and therefore the King should be pleased when John of Gaunt mocked his own name.

“Should dying men flatter those who live?” King Richard II

asked.

“No, no, men who are living flatter those who die,” John of Gaunt replied.

“You, who are now dying, say that you are flattering me.”

“Oh, no!” John of Gaunt said. “You are dying, although I am sicker than you.”

“I am healthy, I breathe, and I see you ill,” King Richard II said.

“Now He who made me knows that I see you ill,” John of Gaunt said. “Ill in myself to see, and in you seeing ill. I see ill — badly —but I see that you are ill — evil.

“Your deathbed is no lesser than your land — England — wherein you lie sick in reputation. And you, a patient too heedless to take care of yourself, commit your anointed body to the cure of those physicians — flatterers — who first wounded you.

“A thousand flatterers sit within your crown, whose compass is no bigger than your head, and yet, caged in so small a compass, the waste is not a bit less than your land.

“Oh, had your grandfather — King Edward III — with a prophet’s eye seen how his son’s son should destroy his sons, from out of your reach he would have laid your shame, deposing you before you were possessed of the crown — you who are now possessed by the Devil and acting in such a way as to depose yourself.

“Why, nephew, even if you were regent of the whole world, it would be a shame to lease out this land. Since you don’t rule the world but only this land, isn’t it more than shame to shame it so by leasing it out?

“You are now the landlord of England, not its King. Your

state of law is bondsman to the law. If you were King, you would be the law, but since you are a landlord you are subject to the law and must keep the legal arrangements you have entered into.

“And you —”

King Richard II interrupted, “A lunatic lean- and gaunt-witted fool, presuming on an illness’ privilege, you dare with your frozen admonition to make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood with fury away from its native residence. You are using the excuse of your illness to make me pale with anger.

“Now, by the right royal majesty of my throne, if you were not brother to great King Edward III’s son — if you were not the brother of my father, Edward the Black Prince — this tongue that runs so roundly and bluntly in your head should run your head from your disrespectful shoulders. Such speech would get your head chopped off if you were not my uncle.”

John of Gaunt replied, “Oh, spare me not, my brother Edward the Black Prince’s son, simply because I was the son of his father, King Edward III. That blood, as does the pelican, you have already tapped out like a drink drawn from a tapped barrel and drunkenly consumed as you caroused.”

In this culture, the pelican was thought to bite its chest so that its young could drink its blood. This was a metaphor for parental love and filial ingratitude. John of Gaunt was going to accuse King Richard II of spilling King Edward III’s blood in the murder of the Duke of Gloucester, one of the sons of King Edward III.

He continued, “My brother the Duke of Gloucester, a plain well-meaning soul, whom may good things befall in Heaven among happy souls, may be a worthy example and

good evidence that you have no qualms about spilling King Edward III's blood.

“May you join with the sickness that I now have, and may your unkindness be a scythe that is crooked and bent like old age, so that you may cut down at once a too long withered flower.

“Live in your shame, but may your shame not die with you! May your shame continue after you are dead! May these words hereafter your tormentors be!”

He then said to his attendants, “Convey me to my bed, and then to my grave. People who have love and honor love to live. I receive no love and honor from King Richard II.”

John of Gaunt's attendants helped him exit.

King Richard II said, “And let them die who have old age and sullen moods, for you have both, and both are fitting for the grave.”

The Duke of York said, “I do beseech your majesty to impute John of Gaunt's words to his perverse sickliness and old age. He loves you, on my life, and he holds you as dear as Harry, Duke of Hereford, were he here.”

The Duke of York meant that John of Gaunt loved King Richard II as much as he loved his own son, but Richard II deliberately misinterpreted him to be saying that John of Gaunt loved him as much as his son, Henry Bolingbroke, loved him — that is, not at all.

King Richard II replied, “Right, what you say is true: As the Duke of Hereford loves me, so does John of Gaunt. As their love for me is, so is mine for them, and let all be as it is.”

The Earl of Northumberland entered the room and said, “My liege, old Gaunt commends him to your majesty. He

conveys his greetings.”

“What does he says?” King Richard II replied.

“Nothing; all is said,” the Earl of Northumberland said. “His tongue is now a stringless instrument. Words, life, and all, old John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, has spent. He is dead.”

The Duke of York said, “May I, the Duke of York, be the next who must be bankrupt — dead — so! Although the state of death is poor, it ends a mortal woe.”

“The ripest fruit first falls, and so does he,” King Richard II said. “His time is spent; our pilgrimage through life must also be.

“So much for that.

“Now for our Irish wars. We must get rid of those rough and shaggy-headed lightly armed Irish foot soldiers, who live like venomous snakes where no venomous snakes other than themselves have privilege to live.”

According to tradition, Saint Patrick had driven all snakes out of Ireland.

King Richard II continued, “And because these great affairs require some expense, towards our assistance we seize to us the plate, coin, revenues, and moveable possessions that our uncle John of Gaunt possessed.”

“How long shall I be patient?” the Duke of York said. “Ah, how long shall tender duty make me tolerate wrong? Not the Duke of Gloucester’s death, nor the Duke of Hereford’s banishment, nor King Richard II’s rebukes and insults to John of Gaunt, nor wrongs done to private individuals in England, nor Richard II’s preventing poor Bolingbroke from marrying the cousin of the King of France, nor my own disgrace have ever made me sour my patient cheek, or

bend one wrinkle on my sovereign's face. I have never frowned at Richard II, and I have never caused Richard II to frown at me.

"I am the last survivor of noble King Edward III's sons, of whom your father, Edward the Black Prince, the Prince of Wales, was the first and the eldest. In war a lion never raged more fiercely, in peace a gentle lamb was never milder, than was that young and Princely gentleman.

"His face you have, for he looked just like you when he was your age, but when he frowned, it was against the French and not against his friends; his noble hand won what he spent, and he did not spend that which his triumphant father's hand had won. His hands were guilty of no kindred blood; instead, they were bloody with the enemies of his kin.

"Oh, Richard! York — me — is too far gone with grief, or else he never would compare between —"

King Richard II, who had not been paying attention but instead had been looking around, appraising the value of the former possessions of the late John of Gaunt, asked, "Why, uncle, what's the matter?"

"Oh, my liege," the Duke of York said, "pardon me, if you please; if you don't please to pardon me, I, who will be pleased not to be pardoned, am content nevertheless.

"Do you seek to seize and grab into your hands the prerogatives and rights of the banished Duke of Hereford? Is not Gaunt dead, and does not Hereford live? Was not Gaunt just, and is not Harry, Duke of Hereford, true and loyal? Did not the one deserve to have an heir? Is not his heir a well-deserving son?"

"If you take Hereford's rights away, then you take from Time its charters and its customary rights. One time-

honored tradition is legal inheritance.

“Unless you respect legal inheritance, then don’t let tomorrow follow today. Be not yourself — a King. Why? Because how can you be a King except by fair sequence, progression, and order of succession?”

“Now, before God — may God forbid that what I say will become true! — if you wrongfully seize Hereford’s rights, if you wrongfully call in and reject all the letters patent that allow him to use those whom he has given his power of attorney to sue and institute proceedings for him to lawfully inherit his father’s lands and other possessions, and if you wrongfully deny him the opportunity to offer the homage he would give to you as part of inheriting his father’s estate, then you pull down a thousand dangers on your head. You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts and prick my tender patience to think those thoughts that honor and allegiance cannot think.”

King Richard II replied, “Think what you will, we seize into our hands his gold- and silverplate, his goods, his money, and his lands.”

“I’ll not be present for this,” the Duke of York said. “My liege, farewell. What will ensue from this action, there’s no one who can tell, but we understand that the consequences of bad courses of action can never fall out good.”

The Duke of York exited.

King Richard II said, “Go, Bushy, to the Earl of Wiltshire, my Lord Treasurer, straightaway. Tell him to make his way to us at Ely House to see about this business of seizing John of Gaunt’s estate. Tomorrow we will make for Ireland, for it is time, I know. And we create, in absence of ourself, our uncle the Duke of York lord governor of England because he is just and has always loved us well.

“Come on, our Queen. Tomorrow we must part. Be merry, for our time of stay is short.”

King Richard II, the Queen, the Duke of Aumerle, Bushy, Green, and Bagot exited, leaving behind the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Ross, and Lord Willoughby.

“Well, lords, the Duke of Lancaster is dead,” the Earl of Northumberland said.

“And living, too,” Lord Ross said, “for now his son is the Duke of Lancaster.”

“Barely in title, and not at all in revenue,” Lord Willoughby said.

“He would be richly in both, if justice had her right,” the Earl of Northumberland said.

“My heart is great,” Lord Ross said, “but it must break with silence, before it is disburdened with an indiscreet tongue.”

“No, speak your mind,” the Earl of Northumberland said, “and let him never speak again who repeats your words to do you harm! If anyone causes you harm by repeating your words, let him never again say anything!”

Lord Willoughby said, “Does what you would speak relate to the Duke of Hereford? If it does, then out with it boldly, man. Quick is my ear to hear of good towards him.”

“No good at all can I do for him,” Lord Ross said, “unless you call it good to pity him because he is bereft and gelded of his patrimony.”

The Earl of Northumberland said, “Now, before God, it is shameful that such wrongs are borne by him, a royal Prince, and by many more of noble blood in this declining land. The King is not himself, for flatterers basely and shamefully lead him; and whatever they will inform him of,

merely and purely out of hatred, against any of us, that will the King severely prosecute against us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.”

“He has pillaged the common people with grievous taxes, and quite lost their hearts,” Lord Ross said. “He has fined the nobles for ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.”

“And daily new exactions of exorbitant taxes are devised,” Lord Willoughby said, “such as blank charters and forced loans, and I know not what else, but what, in God’s name, is done with this money?”

The Earl of Northumberland said, “Wars have not wasted it because King Richard II has not warred. Instead, he shamefully and basely yields upon compromise that which his noble ancestors achieved with blows.”

An example of what the Earl of Northumberland was referring to occurred in 1397, when King Richard II surrendered the port of Brest to the Duke of Brittany.

He continued, “King Richard II has spent more money in peace than they in wars.”

Lord Ross said, “The Earl of Wiltshire has the realm in farm so he can make money through taxation.”

“The King’s grown bankrupt, like a broken man,” Lord Willoughby said.

“Reproach and dissolution hang over him,” the Earl of Northumberland said.

“He has no money for these Irish wars,” Lord Ross said, “despite his burdensome taxations, except by robbing the banished Duke of Hereford.”

“The Duke of Hereford is his noble kinsman!” the Earl of Northumberland said. “Richard II is a most degenerate

King! He is not the man his father and grandfather were! But, lords, we hear this fearful tempest sing, yet we see no shelter in which we can avoid the storm. We see the wind sit sore upon our sails, and yet we strike not, but heedlessly perish because of our overconfidence that we are secure.”

The word “strike” was ambiguous. It could mean to strike — lower — one’s sails, as in greeting a larger ship or as a defensive maneuver when a sudden squall sprang up. In each case, lowering one’s sails was a sign of inferiority. The word “strike” could also mean to strike with weapons against the King. One option was to submit to King Richard II; another option was to rebel against him.

“We see the very wreck that we must suffer,” Lord Ross said, “and unavoidable is the danger now because we have been tolerating the causes of our wreck.”

“That is not so; the danger is avoidable,” the Earl of Northumberland said. “Even through the hollow eyes of death I spy life peering, but I dare not say how near the tidings of our comfort are.”

“Let us share your thoughts, as you do ours,” Lord Willoughby said.

“Be confident that you can speak freely, Earl of Northumberland,” Lord Ross said. “We three are just like you, and if you speak freely to us, your words are like thoughts and will not be heard by anyone else; therefore, be bold and speak freely.”

The Earl of Northumberland said, “Then listen to this: I have from Port le Blanc, a bay in Brittany, received news that Harry, the Duke of Hereford; Rainold Lord Cobham; Thomas Arundel, the son and heir of Richard Arundel, who until his beheading in 1397 was the Earl of Arundel — Thomas Arundel recently broke away and escaped from the Duke of Exeter; Richard Arundel’s brother, who was

recently Archbishop of Canterbury until King Richard II asked the Pope to remove him from that office; Sir Thomas Erpingham; Sir John Ramston; Sir John Norbery; Sir Robert Waterton; and Francis Quoint, all these well furnished by the Duke of Bretagne with eight grand ships and three thousand soldiers of war, are making for England with all due speed and shortly mean to land on our northern shore. Perhaps they would have landed before this, except that they are waiting first for the departure of King Richard II for Ireland.

“If then we shall shake off our slavish yoke, and graft new feathers on our drooping country’s broken wing, redeem from the pawnbroker the blemished crown, wipe off the dust that hides our scepter’s gilt, and make high majesty look like itself, then go with me posthaste to the port called Ravenspurgh.

“But if you are fainthearted, and are afraid to do so, then stay and keep this secret, and I myself will go.”

“Let’s go to horse, to horse!” Lord Ross said. “Use your persuasive powers on them who are afraid, not on us!”

Lord Willoughby said, “If my horse holds out, I will be the first one there.”

— 2.2 —

The Queen, Bushy, and Bagot spoke together in the palace.

Bushy said to the Queen, “Madam, your majesty is too much downcast. You promised, when you parted from the King, to lay aside life-harming heaviness and depression and to maintain a cheerful disposition.”

“To please the King I did promise that,” the Queen replied. “To please myself I cannot do it, yet I know no cause why I should welcome such a guest as grief, except that I just bid

farewell to so sweet a guest as my sweet Richard.

“Yet again, I think, some unborn sorrow, ready to be born from out of Fortune’s womb, is coming towards me, and my inward soul at nothing trembles. At something it grieves, more than with parting from my lord the King.”

Bushy said, “Each real grief has twenty shadows, which appear to be grief itself, but they are not so. Sorrow’s eye, glazed with blinding tears, divides one thing that is complete in itself into many objects.

“These objects are like perspectives, which rightly gazed upon show nothing but confusion, but when they are eyed awry show clearly and distinctly a form.”

Bushy was referring to a kind of picture that when looked at from the front — the usual right way to look at a picture — did not reveal a form. But when looked at the side, the picture did reveal a form. For example, Holbein’s *The Ambassadors* had a greyish streak at the bottom when looked at from the front, but when looked at from the side, the greyish streak appeared as a human skull.

Bushy continued, “So your sweet majesty, looking awry — mistakenly — upon your lord’s departure, finds shapes of grief, more than himself, to bewail. Your lordship’s departure, looked on as it is, is nothing but shadows of what it is not.”

Here Bushy was referring to another kind of distorted vision. A multiplying glass was one that when looked through would reveal many images. The Queen, looking through her tears at her lord’s departure, saw many images of grief although her lord’s departure was the one image of grief she should have seen. Her tears performed the function of the multiplying glass.

Bushy continued, “So then, thrice-gracious Queen, do not

weep at more than your lord's departure. More grief is not seen, or if it is seen, it is because you are looking with sorrow's false, not genuine, eye, which weeps for imaginary things rather than true things."

The Queen replied, "What you say may be true, but yet my inward soul persuades me that it is otherwise. Whatever the truth may be, I cannot be anything but sad. I am so very sad that although I try to think about nothing, even that nothing makes me very faint and fearful."

"It is nothing but your imagination, my gracious lady," Bushy said.

"It is anything but mere imagination," the Queen said. "Imagination is always derived from some real preceding grief. The grief I feel is not derived from any real preceding grief, for nothing has caused my grief about something, or something has the nothing for which I grieve. The grief is mine because I will inherit it, but what that grief is, that is not yet known to me. I cannot name that grief, and so it is nameless woe, I know."

Green entered the room and said, "God save your majesty! Well met, gentlemen. I hope the King has not yet sailed for Ireland."

"Why do you hope so?" the Queen asked. "It is better to hope that he has sailed for Ireland because his plans need haste, and his haste needs good hope. Why therefore do you hope he has not yet sailed for Ireland?"

Green replied, "So that he, our hope, might pull back his army and keep it in England, and drive into despair an enemy's hope. An enemy has set foot in this land with a strong army. The banished Bolingbroke has himself repealed his sentence of banishment, and with arms brandishing weapons he has safely arrived at the port of Ravenspurgh."

“God in Heaven forbid!” the Queen said.

“Ah, madam, it is too true,” Green said, “and what is worse, the Lord Northumberland; the young Henry Percy, Northumberland’s son; and the Lords of Ross, Beaumont, and Willoughby, with all their powerful friends, have fled to join him.”

Bushy asked, “Why haven’t you proclaimed the Earl of Northumberland and all the rest of the rebellious dissident traitors?”

“We have,” Green said. “When we did that, the Earl of Worcester broke his staff of office and resigned his stewardship, and all the household attendants — among them many nobles — fled with him to join Bolingbroke.”

“So, Green, you are the midwife to my woe,” the Queen said. “And Bolingbroke is my sorrow’s dismal heir. He is the sorrow to whom I gave birth. Now has my soul brought forth her prodigy, a monster, and I, a gasping newly delivered mother, have woe to woe, sorrow to sorrow joined. Normally, giving birth eases the mother’s pains, but since I have given birth to a monster, pain has been added to my pain.”

“Don’t despair, madam,” Bushy said.

“Who shall stop me?” the Queen replied. “I will despair and be at enmity with deceiving Hope. He is a flatterer, a parasite, a keeper back of Death, who gently would dissolve the chains of life — life that false Hope drags out to the utmost degree.”

Green said, “Here comes the Duke of York.”

The Queen said, “He has signs of war about his aged neck.”

The Duke of York was wearing a gorget — armor for the neck. This was sometimes worn with civilian dress to show

others that the wearer had military status.

The Queen added, "Oh, full of worried uneasiness are his looks!

"Uncle-in-law, for God's sake, speak comforting words."

"Should I do so, I would belie my thoughts," the Duke of York replied. "Comfort's in Heaven; and we are on the Earth, where nothing lives except crosses and trials, cares and grief. Your husband has gone to keep far-off Ireland under his English rule, while others come to make him lose his land at home.

"Here I am left to prop up his land, although I, weak with age, cannot support myself. I should be a crutch, but I myself need a crutch.

"Now comes the sick hour that King Richard II's surfeit made. He exceeded his royal power, and now he will pay the price. Now he shall put to the test his friends who flattered him."

A servant entered and said to the Duke of York, "My lord, your son was gone before I could reach him."

The Duke of York had wanted his son, the Duke of Aumerle, to come and help him rule England in this time of trouble and rebellion, but his son had gone to Ireland to be with King Richard II.

"He was?" the Duke of York said. "Why, so be it! Let what will happen, happen! Let everything go whichever way it will! The nobles have fled, the commoners are unsympathetic to King Richard II, and they will, I fear, revolt and join the Duke of Hereford's side."

He ordered the servant, "Go to Plashy, to my sister-in-law, the Duchess of Gloucester. Tell her to send me immediately a thousand pounds. Wait, take my ring and show it to her so

she knows that you have come to her on my orders.”

The servant replied, “My lord, I had forgotten to tell your lordship that earlier today, as I went by her residence, I stopped there — but I shall cause you grief when I report the rest.”

“What is it, servant?” the Duke of York asked.

“An hour before I stopped there, the Duchess of Gloucester died.”

“May God have mercy!” the Duke of York said. “What a tide of woes comes rushing on this woeful land at once! I don’t know what to do. I wish to God, as long as it would not be any disloyalty of mine that had provoked the King to do it, that the King had cut off my head along with the head of the Duke of Gloucester, my brother.

“Are there no messengers dispatched for Ireland? What shall we do for money for these wars?”

He then said to the Queen, “Come, sister-in-law — kinswoman, I should say — please, pardon me.”

He was so distracted that he was thinking of the Duchess of Gloucester when he referred to the Queen as his sister-in-law.

He ordered, “Go, servant, get you home and provide some carts and bring away the armor that is there.”

Because the household attendants, including many nobles, had fled to join Henry Bolingbroke, the Duke of York planned to use the armor that they had left behind.

The servant exited.

The Duke of York said, “Gentlemen, will you go muster men? If I know how or which way to order these affairs thus thrust disorderly into my hands, never believe me.

Both King Richard II and Henry Bolingbroke are my kinsmen. The one is my sovereign, whom both my oath of allegiance and my duty bids me to defend. The other, also my kinsman, is a man whom the King has wronged. Conscience and my relationship to the wronged man bid me to right the wrong done to him.

“Well, we must do something.”

He said to the Queen, “Come, kinswoman, I’ll make arrangements to take care of you since all the household attendants have deserted.”

He then said, “Gentlemen, go, muster up your men, and meet me soon at Berkeley Castle. I should go to Plashy, too, but time will not permit that.

“All is uneven, and everything is left at sixes and sevens. All is in disorder.”

The Duke of York and the Queen exited.

Bushy said, “The wind blows west — good for news to go to Ireland. But no ships can return as long as the wind blows west. For us to levy troops commensurate with those of the enemy is entirely impossible.”

Green said, “Besides, our nearness to the King in love is near — almost equal to — the hate of those who do not love the King.”

Bagot said, “Those who do not love the King are the wavering commoners, for their love lies in their purses, and whoever empties them by so much fills their hearts with deadly hate. They hate the King because of his heavy taxes.”

Bushy said, “Because of that, the King stands condemned by everyone.”

Bagot said, "If they are the judges, then we also stand condemned because we have always been friends to the King."

Green said, "Well, I will for refuge go immediately to Bristol Castle. The Earl of Wiltshire is already there."

"I will join you," Bushy said. "The commoners, who are full of hate, will perform little service for us, except like dogs to tear us to pieces."

He asked Bagot, "Will you go along with us?"

"No, I will go to Ireland to be with his majesty," Bagot replied. "Farewell. If my heart's forebodings have any meaning, we three who now part shall never meet again."

Bushy said, "That depends on whether the Duke of York can successfully beat back Bolingbroke."

"Alas, the poor Duke of York!" Green said. "The task he undertakes is impossible. It is like counting all the grains of sand and drinking the oceans dry. Where one on his side fights, thousands will flee and desert."

"Farewell at once, for once, for always, and forever."

"Well, we may meet again," Bushy said.

Bagot replied, "I am afraid that we will never meet again."

— 2.3 —

In the wilds of Gloucestershire, Henry Bolingbroke and the Earl of Northumberland spoke. Soldiers were present.

Henry Bolingbroke asked, "How far is it, my lord, to Berkeley Castle now?"

"Believe me, noble lord, I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire," the Earl of Northumberland replied.

“These high wild hills and rough uneven ways draw out and lengthen our miles, and make them wearisome, and yet your fair conversation has been like sugar, making the hard way sweet and delectable.

“But I think to myself what a weary way from Ravenspurgh to the Cotswolds will be found by Ross and Willoughby, who lack your company, which, I protest, has very much beguiled the tedious process of my travel. But their travel is sweetened with the hope to have the present benefit that I possess, and hope to joy is little less in joy than hope enjoyed — the anticipation of enjoying joy is almost as good as the actual enjoyment of joy. With this hope the weary lords shall make their way seem short, as mine has seemed because of the sight of what I have, your noble company.”

“Of much less value is my company than your good words,” Henry Bolingbroke replied. “But who is coming here?”

Henry Percy, the young son of the Earl of Northumberland, rode up to them.

The Earl of Northumberland said, “It is my son, young Harry Percy, sent from the Earl of Worcester, my brother, wherever he is.”

He asked his son, “Harry, how fares your uncle?”

“I had thought, my lord, to have learned about his health from you,” young Henry Percy replied.

“Why, isn’t he with the Queen?”

“No, my good lord,” young Henry Percy replied. “He has forsaken and left the court, broken his staff of office, and dispersed the household attendants of the King.”

“What was his reason?” the Earl of Northumberland asked.

“He was not so resolved when we last spoke together.”

“Because your lordship was proclaimed traitor,” young Henry Percy replied. “But he, my lord, has gone to Ravenspurgh, to offer his service to the Duke of Hereford, and he sent me over by Berkeley, to find out what troops the Duke of York had levied there, and he ordered me to then go to Ravenspurgh.”

“Have you forgotten the Duke of Hereford, boy?” his father asked him.

“No, my good lord, for that is not forgotten which never I did remember,” young Henry Percy replied. “To my knowledge, I never in my life have seen him.”

“Then learn to know him now,” his father said, pointing to Henry Bolingbroke. “This is the Duke of Hereford.”

To Henry Bolingbroke, young Henry Percy said, “My gracious lord, I tender — offer — you my service, such as it is, being tender, inexperienced, raw, unpolished, and young, which elder days shall ripen and confirm to more approved service and desert. As I grow older, I shall give you better service.”

“I thank you, noble Percy,” Henry Bolingbroke said, “and be sure that I count myself in nothing else so happy as in a heart that remembers my good friends, and as my fortune — good luck and wealth — ripens with your love, my fortune shall be always your true love’s recompense and reward. My heart this covenant makes, and my hand thus seals it.”

He shook hands with young Henry Percy.

“How far is it to Berkeley?” the Earl of Northumberland asked. “And what business keeps the good old Duke of York there with his men of war?”

“There stands Berkeley Castle, by yonder thicket of trees,” young Henry Percy said. “It is manned with three hundred soldiers, so I have heard, and in it are the Lords of York, Berkeley, and Seymour. No one else of high name and noble rank is there.”

Lord Ross and Lord Willoughby rode up to them.

The Earl of Northumberland said, “Here come the Lords of Ross and Willoughby. They are splattered with blood from spurring their horses, and they are fiery-red because of their haste.”

“Welcome, my lords,” Henry Bolingbroke said to Lord Ross and Lord Willoughby. “I know that you follow a banished traitor — me — because of your good feelings toward me. All my treasury is still only intangible thanks, but when my treasury is more enriched, so shall be the reward for your friendship and labor.”

“Your presence makes us rich, most noble lord,” Lord Ross said.

“And far surpasses our labor to attain it,” Lord Willoughby added.

“‘Thanks’ is always the treasury of the poor,” Henry Bolingbroke said, “and ‘thanks’ will take the place of my bounty until my infant fortune comes to maturity and I can properly repay you.

“But who is coming here?”

From Berkeley Castle, Lord Berkeley rode up to the group. The Duke of York had sent him to talk to Henry Bolingbroke.

“It is my Lord of Berkeley; that is my guess,” the Earl of Northumberland replied.

“My Lord of Hereford, my message is to you,” Lord Berkeley said.

Henry Bolingbroke began to speak to Lord Berkeley, but then he decided that Lord Berkeley would have to address him as the Duke of Lancaster first: “My lord, my answer is — address yourself to Lancaster. I have come to seek that name in England, and I must find that title in your tongue, before I make reply to anything you say.”

“Mistake me not, my lord,” Lord Berkeley said. “It is not my intention to scrape away even one title of your honor. To you, my lord, I come, what lord you will, from the most gracious regent of this land, the Duke of York, to know what pricks you on to take advantage of the King’s absence and frighten our native peace with self-borne arms — with weapons carried for your cause and not the country.”

The Duke of York, too impatient to wait for Lord Berkeley to return after speaking with Henry Bolingbroke, rode with his attendants over to the group of people.

“I shall not need you to transport my words to the Duke of York,” Henry Bolingbroke said. “Here comes his grace in person.”

He knelt and said, “My noble uncle!”

“Show me your humble heart, and not your knee,” the Duke of York said. “Your knee’s duty is deceitful and false and traitorous.”

“My gracious uncle —” Henry Bolingbroke began.

“Tut, tut!” the Duke of York interrupted. “Grace me no grace, and uncle me no uncle. I am no traitor’s uncle, and that word ‘grace’ in an ungracious mouth is only profane and blasphemous.”

“Ungracious” can mean “lacking in divine grace” and/or

“extremely wicked.”

The Duke of York continued, “Why have those banished and forbidden legs of yours dared once to touch a speck of dust of England’s ground?”

“But I have additional questions.

“Why have they dared to march so many miles upon England’s peaceful bosom, frightening her pale-faced villagers with war and the display of despised, contemptible arms?”

“Did you come because the anointed King is away from England?”

“Why, foolish boy, the King is left behind, and in my loyal bosom lies his power. The physical body of the King is in Ireland, but I have the King’s authority to govern England in his physical absence.”

“Were I only now the lord of such hot youth as I was when your brave father — John of Gaunt — and I rescued Edward the Black Prince, that young war-god Mars of men, from the ranks of many thousand French soldiers, oh, then how quickly should this arm of mine, which is now prisoner to the shaking sickness, chastise you and administer correction to your fault!”

“My gracious uncle, let me know my fault,” Henry Bolingbroke replied. “On what condition stands it and wherein? What point of law have I infringed and in what specific way have I infringed it? What personal quality is my fault?”

The word “condition” can mean “point of law” or “personal quality,” and Henry Bolingbroke had used both meanings, but the Duke of York used the meaning “circumstance” in his answer.

“Even in condition — the circumstance — of the worst degree: in gross rebellion and detested treason,” the Duke of York replied. “You are a banished man, and here you have come before the expiration of your time of banishment, and you are defiantly bearing arms against your sovereign.”

“When I was banished, I was banished as Duke of Hereford,” Henry Bolingbroke replied, “but now when I come, I come for the title of Duke of Lancaster. And, noble uncle, I beg your grace to look on my wrongs with an impartial eye.

“You are my father, for I think that in you I see old John of Gaunt alive. Oh, then, my father, will you permit that I shall stand condemned to be a wandering vagabond? Will you permit my rights and royal prerogatives to be plucked from my arms by force and given away to upstart spendthrifts?

“Why was I born? If my cousin-King, Richard II, is King of England, it must be granted that I am Duke of Lancaster.

“You have a son, the Duke of Aumerle, who is my noble cousin. If you had died before my father died, and if your son had been trodden down like I have been, your son would have found in his uncle Gaunt a father who would rouse those who did your son wrong and chase them to the bay — a father who would reveal those who wronged your son and chase them to their dying last stand.

“I am denied the opportunity to sue my livery — institute a lawsuit to obtain possession of my lands here — and yet my letters patent legally allow me to do that. My father’s goods are all confiscated and sold, and these and all else that ought to be mine are all amiss employed.

“What would you have me do? I am a subject, and I demand my legal rights. The use of attorneys is denied to

me, and therefore in person I lay my claim to my inheritance that legally comes to me from my direct descent from my father.”

“The noble Duke of Lancaster has been too much abused,” the Earl of Northumberland said.

“It is your grace’s duty to do the right thing by him,” Lord Ross said.

“Base men are made great by his endowments,” Lord Willoughby said. “Low-born men have become rich men because they have gotten possession of his inheritance.”

“My lords of England, let me tell you this,” the Duke of York said. “I have been troubled by my cousin’s wrongs and have labored all I could to do him right, but for him to engage in this course of action, to bear defiant arms, to be his own carver — to be his own law — and to cut out his own way to bring about right through the use of wrong, it must not be. And all of you who abet him in this course of action cherish rebellion and are rebels.”

“To be his own carver” meant “to carve his own meat” rather than waiting for someone else to carve it. In other words, it meant to help himself to whatever he wanted.

The Earl of Northumberland said, “The noble Duke of Lancaster has sworn his coming is only for what is his own, and for the right of that we all have strongly sworn to give him aid, and let him who breaks that oath never see joy!”

“Well, well,” the Duke of York said, “I see the outcome of these arms. I cannot mend it, I must confess, because my army is weak and all left in disorder and without means.

“But if I could, by Him Who gave me life, I would arrest you all and make you stoop unto the sovereign mercy of the King. But since I cannot, let it be known to you I do remain

as neuter.”

The Duke of York meant that he was neutral between King Richard II and Henry Bolingbroke, but the word “neuter” also meant that he lacked power and effectiveness.

He continued, “So, fare you well, unless you please to enter the castle and repose there this night.”

“We will accept that offer, uncle,” Henry Bolingbroke said. “But we must win — persuade — your grace to go with us to Bristol Castle, which people say is held by Bushy, Bagot, and their accomplices, the caterpillars — parasites — of the commonwealth. I have sworn to weed the commonwealth and pluck away the caterpillars.”

“It may be I will go with you,” the Duke of York said, “but yet I’ll pause for a while, for I am loath to break our country’s laws.

“You are neither my friends nor are you my foes, but to me you are welcome. Things past redress are now with me past care. Past cure, past care.”

— 2.4 —

In a military camp in Wales, the Earl of Salisbury talked with a Welsh Captain.

The Welsh Captain said, “My lord of Salisbury, we have waited for ten days, and with great difficulty kept our countrymen together, and still we hear no tidings from the King; therefore, we will disperse. Farewell.”

“Stay yet another day, you trusty Welshman,” the Earl of Salisbury requested. “King Richard II reposes all his confidence in you.”

“It is thought that the King is dead, so we will not stay. The bay trees — whose evergreen symbolic-of-immortality

leaves in Roman days were used to make crowns for victors — in our country are all withered, and meteors frighten the fixed stars of Heaven. The pale-faced Moon looks bloody on the Earth, and lean-faced soothsayers whisper about frightening changes. Rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap, the one in fear to lose what they possess, the other in hopes to possess those things as a result of violence and war. These signs foretell the death or fall of Kings.

“Farewell. Our Welsh countrymen are gone and fled; they are certain that Richard II their King is dead.”

The Welch Captain exited.

The Earl of Salisbury said to himself, “Ah, Richard, with the eyes of heavy, sorrowful mind I see your glory like a shooting star fall to the base, low ground from the sky. Your Sun sets weeping in the lowly west, foreshadowing storms to come, woe and unrest. Your friends have fled to serve your foes, and disadvantageously to your good all fortune goes.”

CHAPTER 3 (Richard II)

— 3.1 —

Before Bristol Castle, Henry Bolingbroke passed sentence on Bushy and Green, whom he and his men had captured. Also present were the Duke of York, the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Ross, young Henry Percy, Lord Willoughby, and attendants.

“Bring forth these men,” Henry Bolingbroke said.

Some attendants brought to him Bushy and Green.

He said, “Bushy and Green, I will not vex your souls — since soon your souls must part from your bodies — with too much convincing you that you have led pernicious lives, for it would not be charitable.

“Yet, to wash your blood from off my hands, here in the view of men I will unfold some of the legal reasons for your deaths.

“You have misled Richard II, a Prince, a royal King, a gentleman fortunate in birth and appearance and qualities. You have made him wholly unfortunate and disfigured.

“You have with your sinful hours made a kind of divorce between his Queen and him, broken the possession of a royal bed, and stained the beauty of a fair Queen’s cheeks with tears drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs.

“I myself, a Prince by fortune of my birth, close to the King by birth, and close to him in friendship until you made him misinterpret me, have stooped my neck and knelt under your injuries, and sighed my English breath up to foreign clouds, eating the bitter bread of banishment, while you have fed upon my signories and estates, used my parks for

other than their intended purpose of hunting, felled my forest woods, broken my own stained-glass windows bearing my household coat of arms, and scraped away depictions of my heraldic device, leaving me no sign, except men's opinions and my living blood, to show the world I am a nobleman.

“This, and much more, much more than twice all this, condemns you to die.”

He ordered, “See them delivered over to execution and the hand of death.”

Bushy said, “More welcome is the stroke of death to me than Bolingbroke is to England. Lords, farewell.”

Green said, “My comfort is that Heaven will take our souls and plague unjust men with the pains of Hell. We will enjoy Heaven; you shall suffer Hell.”

Henry Bolingbroke ordered, “My Lord Northumberland, see that they are executed.”

The Earl of Northumberland and other attendants exited with Bushy and Green.

Henry Bolingbroke said to the Duke of York, “Uncle, you say the Queen is at your house. For God's sake, let her be treated fairly. Tell her I send to her my kind compliments. Take special care that my greetings are delivered.”

The Duke of York replied, “A gentleman of mine I have dispatched with a letter fully detailing your friendship to her.”

“Thank, gentle uncle,” Henry Bolingbroke said.

“Come, lords, away. We must fight against the Welsh leader Glendower and his accomplices. For a while we will work, and afterward we will enjoy holiday.”

On the coast of Wales within sight of a castle stood King Richard II. With him were the Bishop of Carlisle, the Duke of Aumerle, and some soldiers.

King Richard II asked, “Do they call this nearby castle Barkloughly Castle?”

“Yes, my lord,” the Duke of Aumerle replied. “How does your grace enjoy the air after your recent tossing on the breaking seas as you crossed from Ireland to Wales?”

“I like it well, of course,” King Richard II said. “I weep for joy to stand upon my Kingdom once again.”

He knelt and touched the ground and said, “Dear earth, I do salute and greet you with my hand, although rebels wound you with their horses’ hoofs. Just as a mother long parted from her child plays fondly — affectionately and foolishly — with it and sheds tears and smiles when meeting her child again, so, weeping, smiling, I greet you, my earth, and salute you by touching you with my royal hands.

“My gentle earth, do not feed your sovereign’s foe, nor with your fruits comfort his ravenous appetite. Instead, let your poisonous spiders, which suck up venom from you, my earth, and let clumsy-moving poisonous toads lie in their way and injure the treacherous feet that with usurping steps trample you as they take the ground that is yours. Yield stinging nettles to my enemies, and when they from your bosom pluck a flower, guard it, please, with a lurking adder whose forked tongue may with a mortal touch throw death upon your sovereign’s enemies.

“Don’t mock my imploring of things that lack human sensation, lords. This earth shall have feeling and these stones shall become armed soldiers before her natural King shall falter under foul rebellion’s arms.”

The Bishop of Carlisle said, “Fear not, my lord. That Power that made you King has the power to keep you King in spite of all. The means that Heaven yields must be embraced, and not neglected; else, if Heaven would, and we will not, Heaven’s offer we refuse — we refuse the proffered means of succor and redress. We must make use of the opportunities that Heaven gives us; otherwise, we are rejecting Heaven’s help.”

The Duke of Aumerle explained to King Richard II, “He means, my lord, that we are too remiss in making use of our opportunities. On the other hand, Henry Bolingbroke, because of our overconfidence, grows strong and great in resources and in troops.”

King Richard II replied with a speech in which he compared himself to the Sun. When the Sun shines on the other side of the Earth, it is dark on this side. King Richard II had been away in Ireland, and it had been dark with rebellion in England, but now the King — the metaphorical Sun — had returned to make things light again.

“Disheartening cousin,” King Richard II replied, “Don’t you know that when the searching eye of Heaven — the Sun — is hidden behind this side of the globe, and lights the lower hemisphere, then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen and commit murders and outrage boldly here. But when from under this terrestrial ball the Sun lights the proud tops of the eastern pines and darts light through every hole where the guilty hide, then murders, treasons, and detested sins, since the cloak of night is plucked from off their backs, stand bare and naked, trembling at the revealing of their crimes and sins?”

“So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke, who all this while has reveled in the night while we were wandering with the people in the antipodes — a far-off land — shall see us rising in our throne, the east, his treasons will sit

blushing in his face. Bolingbroke will not be able to endure the sight of day, but self-affrighted — afraid as a result of his own actions — will tremble at his sin.

“Not all the water in the rough rude sea can wash the balm — the consecrated oil used in the coronation ceremony — off from an anointed King. The breath of Earthly, mortal men cannot depose the deputy — the King — elected by the Lord.

“For every man whom Bolingbroke has impressed to lift injurious steel against our golden crown, God for his Richard has in Heavenly pay a glorious angel. Then, if angels fight, weak men must fall, for Heaven always guards the right.”

The Earl of Salisbury rode up to the group.

King Richard II said, “Welcome, my lord. How far away is your army?”

“Neither nearer nor farther off, my gracious lord, than this weak arm of mine,” the Earl of Salisbury replied. “Discouragement guides my tongue and bids me speak of nothing but despair. Your arrival here — one day too late — I am afraid, noble lord, has clouded all your happy days on Earth. Oh, call back yesterday, bid time return, and you shall have twelve thousand fighting men! Today, today, unhappy day, too late, overthrows your joys, friends, fortune, and royal authority. All the Welshmen, hearing that you were dead, have gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed, and fled.”

The Duke of Aumerle said to King Richard II, “Take comfort, my liege; why does your grace look so pale?”

“Just now the blood of twenty thousand men triumphed in my face, and they have fled. And, until so much blood thither comes again, don’t I have reason to look pale and

lifeless?

“All souls who want to be safe fly from my side, for time has set a blot upon my pride.”

“Take comfort, my liege,” the Duke of Aumerle said. “Remember who you are.”

“I had forgotten myself,” King Richard II said. “Am I not the King? Awake, you coward majesty! You sleep. Isn’t the King’s name itself twenty thousand names?”

“Arm, arm, my name! A puny subject strikes at your great glory.”

He said to the lords with him, “Look not at the ground, you favorites of a King.”

Using the royal plural, he added, “Are we not high? High be our thoughts: I know my uncle York has troops enough to serve our turn.

“But who is coming here?”

Sir Stephen Scroop rode over to the group and said, “May more health and happiness befall my liege than can my tongue, which is tuned to the key of sorrow, deliver to him!”

“My ear is open and my heart prepared,” King Richard II replied. “The worst you can unfold is worldly loss. Say, is my Kingdom lost? Why, it was my worry and what loss is it to be rid of worry? Does Bolingbroke strive to be as great as we? Greater he shall not be; if he serves God, we’ll serve Him, too, and be Bolingbroke’s equal in that way. Do our subjects revolt? That we cannot mend. They break their faith to God as well as to us. Even if you proclaim loudly woe, destruction, ruin, and decay, the worst is death, and death will have his day.”

“I am glad that your highness is so armed to bear the tidings of calamity,” Sir Stephen Scroop said. “Like an unseasonably stormy day, which makes the silver rivers drown their shores, as if the world were all dissolved to tears, so high above his banks swells the rage of Bolingbroke, covering your frightened land with hard bright steel and with hearts harder than steel.

“White-bearded old men have put on helmets and armed their balding and hairless scalps against your majesty. Boys, who still have women’s voices, strive to speak forcefully and put their female — weak and delicate — joints in stiff unwieldy armor against your crown. The very beadsmen — old almsmen who are paid to pray for their benefactors — learn to bend their bows of doubly fatal yew against your state.”

Yew is doubly fatal because the wood of the yew tree is poisonous and because it is used to make deadly longbows.

Sir Stephen Scroop continued, “Yes, weaving women put down their distaffs in order to wield rusty halberds against your throne. Both young and old rebel, and all goes worse than I have power to tell.”

“Too well, too well you tell a tale so ill,” King Richard II said. “Where is the Earl of Wiltshire? Where is Bagot? What has become of Bushy? Where is Green? Why have they let the dangerous enemy measure our country’s and King’s confines with such peaceful steps? Why have they let Bolingbroke travel across the country without opposition? If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it. I am sure that they have made peace with Bolingbroke.”

Sir Stephen Scroop made a grim joke: “Peace have they made with him indeed, my lord.”

King Richard II said, “Oh, villains, vipers, damned without hope of redemption! Dogs, easily won to fawn on any man!

Snakes, in my heart-blood warmed, that sting my heart!”

He was referring to a fable by Aesop: A farmer found a frozen snake. Taking pity on it, he put it under his coat and warmed it. Reviving, the snake, which was venomous, bit him. Dying, the farmer said, “Learn from my example. Don’t take pity on scoundrels.”

King Richard II continued, “They are three Judases, each one three times worse than Judas, who betrayed Christ! Would they make peace with Bolingbroke? May terrible Hell make war upon their sin-stained souls for this offence!”

Sir Stephen Scroop said, “Sweet love, I see, changing its character, turns to the sourest and most deadly hate. Take back your curse upon their souls; their peace is made with heads, and not with hands. They did not raise their hands to Bolingbroke in greeting, or shake hands with him, or sign a peace treaty. Those whom you curse have felt the worst of death’s destroying wounds and lie very low, graved in the hollow ground.”

“Are Bushy, Green, and the Earl of Wiltshire dead?” the Earl of Aumerle asked.

“Yes, all of them at Bristol Castle lost their heads,” Sir Stephen Scroop replied.

“Where is the Duke of York, my father, with his troops?” the Duke of Aumerle asked.

“It does not matter where,” King Richard II said. “Let no man speak of comfort. Let’s talk of graves, of worms, and of epitaphs. Let’s make dust our paper and with rainy eyes write sorrow on the bosom of the earth. Let’s choose executors and talk about wills, and yet let’s not do so, for what can we bequeath except our deposed bodies to the ground? Our lands, our lives, and our all are Bolingbroke’s,

and we can call nothing our own except death and that small model of the barren earth that serves as paste and cover to our bones: we own the flesh that surrounds our bones, and we call our own the ground that will cover our corpses when we are dead.

“For God’s sake, let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings — how some have been deposed, some slain in war, some haunted by the ghosts of those they have deposed, some poisoned by their wives, some killed while sleeping, and all murdered, for within the hollow crown that rounds the mortal temples of a King is the place where Death keeps his court. There the grinning jester — Death — sits, scoffing at the King’s splendor and grinning at his pomp, allowing him a breath, a little scene, to play at being a Monarch, and to be feared and to kill with looks. Death infuses the King with the vain conceit of his own self-importance as if this flesh that forms castle walls around our life were impregnable brass. Once Death has amused himself like this, he comes at the last and with a little pin bores through the King’s castle wall, and farewell, King!”

As a sign of respect, subjects did not wear hats while in the presence of the King; however, Richard II did not feel much like a King, and so he told his followers, “Cover your heads and don’t mock my flesh and blood with solemn reverence. Throw away respect, tradition, form, and ceremonious duty, for you have only mistaken me all this while. I live by eating bread like you, I feel hunger and need, I taste grief, I need friends. Since I am subjected to all this, how can you say to me that I am a King?”

The Bishop of Carlisle said, “My lord, wise men never sit and bewail their woes, but immediately they take steps to thwart the pathways that lead to woe. To fear the foe, since fear oppresses strength, gives in your weakness strength to

your foe, and so your follies fight against yourself.

“Fear and be slain; no worse can come by fighting. And to fight and die is death destroying death. If you fight and die, you destroy the power of death by dying. Once you are dead, death has no power over you. In contrast, being afraid of dying pays death servile breath. If you are afraid of dying, you pay Death a servile flattery.”

“My father has some troops,” the Duke of Aumerle said. “Speak to him, and learn to make a body of a limb. His troops can be the nucleus to which more troops are added.”

“You rebuke me well,” King Richard II said. “Proud Bolingbroke, I am coming to exchange blows with you for our day of doom — the day that will decide our fate. My ague fit of fear has blown over — an easy task it is to win our own.

“Tell me, Scroop, where is our uncle with his troops? Speak sweetly, man, although your looks be sour.”

“Men use the appearance of the sky to judge the state and inclination of the day,” Sir Stephen Scroop said. “So may you by my dull and sorrowful eye. My tongue has only a heavier tale to say. I am like a torturer who *slowly* stretches the man on the rack so that he feels more pain. By saying only a little and then a little more, I lengthen the worst that must be spoken.

“Your uncle, the Duke of York, has joined Bolingbroke, and all your northern castles have yielded to Bolingbroke, and all your southern gentlemen have taken up arms in support of Bolingbroke’s party.”

“You have said enough,” King Richard II said.

He then said to the Duke of Aumerle, “Curse you, cousin, who led me away from that sweet way I was in to despair!

What do you say now? What comfort do we have now? By Heaven, I'll hate that man everlastingly who bids me to be of comfort any more."

He then said, "Go to Flint Castle. There I'll pine away. A King, woe's slave, shall Kingly woe obey."

"Those troops whom I have, discharge, and let them go to cultivate the land that has some hope to grow, for I have none. I am barren ground, while Bolingbroke is fertile soil."

"Let no man speak again to attempt to get me to alter my decision, for all counsel to me is in vain."

"My liege, one word —" the Duke of Aumerle said.

Richard II interrupted, "He does me double wrong who wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue."

One wound was the raising of false hopes; another was being called "my liege" when it was apparent to Richard II that soon Henry Bolingbroke would be called "my liege."

He added, "Discharge my followers. Let them from here go away, from Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day."

Previously, Richard II had compared himself as King to the Sun; now he compared Bolingbroke to the Sun.

— 3.3 —

Henry Bolingbroke, the Duke of York, and the Earl of Northumberland spoke together before Flint Castle. With them were attendants and troops.

Holding a piece of paper, Henry Bolingbroke said, "We learn from this information that the Welshmen have dispersed, and that the Earl of Salisbury has gone to meet the King, who recently landed with a few private friends upon this coast."

“The news is very fair and good, my lord,” the Earl of Northumberland said. “Richard has hidden his head not far from here. He has gone into hiding.”

The Duke of York rebuked the Earl of Northumberland: “It would be seemly for the Lord Northumberland to say ‘*King Richard.*’ Feel pity for the sorrowful day when such a sacred King should hide his head.”

“Your grace is mistaken,” the Earl of Northumberland replied. “I left out his title only in order to be brief.”

The Duke of York said, “The time has been, if you would have been so brief with him, he would have been so brief with you as to shorten you, for taking so the head, your whole head’s length. If you were to be headstrong and talk that way to the head of state, he would have had you beheaded.”

Henry Bolingbroke said, “Don’t mistake him, uncle, further than you should. Don’t take wrongly what he said.”

The Duke of York replied, “Take not, good nephew, further than you should lest you mis-take: The Heavens are over our heads. God is watching us.”

The Duke of York was worried that Henry Bolingbroke might unethically take King Richard II’s crown.

“I know it, uncle, and I do not oppose myself against the will of Heaven,” Henry Bolingbroke said. “But who is coming here?”

Young Henry Percy rode over to the group and said to Henry Bolingbroke, “The castle is royally manned, my lord, against your entrance.”

“Royally!” Henry Bolingbroke said. “Why, it contains no King! Or does it?”

“Yes, my good lord,” young Henry Percy said, “it does contain a King; King Richard II stays within the limits of yonder castle made of lime and stone, and with him are the Lord Aumerle, Lord Salisbury, Sir Stephen Scroop, besides a clergyman of holy reverence. Who the clergyman is, I cannot learn.”

“Oh, probably it is the Bishop of Carlisle,” the Earl of Northumberland said.

“Noble lords, go to the rough ribs — the wall — of that ancient castle,” Henry Bolingbroke said. “Through the sound of a brazen trumpet, send the breath of parley — a request for a conference — into the ruined ears.”

The ruined ears referred to the slits in the castle fortifications, through which archers could shoot arrows. “Ruined ears” also referred to the ears of King Richard II, whom Bolingbroke felt would soon be captured and therefore ruined.

Henry Bolingbroke continued, “Deliver this message:

“Henry Bolingbroke on both his knees kisses King Richard II’s hand and sends allegiance and true faith of heart to his most royal person. I, Bolingbroke, have come here to lay my arms and power at Richard II’s feet, provided that the King freely grants that my banishment is repealed and my lands are restored again to me.

“If the King will not do this, I’ll use the superiority of my power and keep down the summer’s dust with showers of blood rained from the wounds of slaughtered Englishmen. But my humble and kneeling duty to the King shall respectfully show how far off from the mind of Bolingbroke is it that such a crimson tempest should drench the fresh green lap of fair King Richard II’s land.”

He said to the Earl of Northumberland, “Go, tell him that,

while here we march upon the grassy carpet of this plain.”

He then said, “Let’s march — without the noise of threatening military drums — so that from this castle’s battered battlements our well-equipped troops may be well seen by the King.”

Marching without the sound of drums signified that the troops were not marching to a battle, but Bolingbroke wanted Richard II and his supporters to see that the troops opposing them were superior to any troops the King had.

Bolingbroke continued, “I think that King Richard II and I should meet with no less terror than the elements of fire and water, when their thundering shock at meeting wounds and tears the cloudy cheeks of Heaven.”

The word “shock” was used to refer to two soldiers mounted on warhorses charging at each other and fighting each other in battle.

He continued, “If King Richard II is the fire, I’ll be the yielding water. Let the rage be his, while on the earth I rain my waters; I will rain them on the earth, and not on him.”

By punning — “rain” and “reign” — Bolingbroke was hinting that he would be a better King than Richard II. In his reign, he would metaphorically rain water — so important for abundant crops — on the fields. And by being the water rather than the fire, he was hinting at military supremacy over King Richard II’s forces, since lots of water — and Bolingbroke had lots of troops — can put out fire.

He concluded, “March on, and take particular notice of how King Richard II looks.”

A trumpet sounded a request for a parle, and from the castle came the sound of an answering trumpet. On the castle

walls appeared King Richard II. With him were the Bishop of Carlisle, the Duke of Aumerle, Sir Stephen Scroop, and the Earl of Salisbury.

Henry Bolingbroke said, "See, see, King Richard II himself appears, as does the blushing discontented Sun from out the fiery portal of the east, when he perceives the malicious clouds are bent to dim his glory and to stain the track of his bright passage to the west."

A red Sun in the morning is a sign of a coming storm.

Looking at King Richard II, the Duke of York said, "Yet he looks like a King. Behold, his eye, as bright as is the eagle's, shoots forth controlling majesty like lightning. It would be a pity, a woe, if any harm should stain so fair a show!"

King Richard II stared at the Earl of Northumberland for a few seconds; the Earl of Northumberland did not kneel to the King.

King Richard II said, "We are amazed; and thus long have we stood to watch for the full-of-fear bending of your knee, because we thought ourself your lawful King. And if we are your lawful King, how dare your joints forget to pay their full-of-awe duty to our presence?"

"If we are not your lawful King, show us the handwriting of God that has dismissed us from our stewardship; for well we know that no mortal hand of blood and bone can seize the sacred handle of our scepter, unless he profanes, steals, or usurps. To seize our scepter, he would have to be a blasphemer, a thief, or a rebel and usurper.

"And though you think that all, as you have done, have jeopardized their souls by turning them from us, and you think that we are barren and bereft of friends; yet you should know that my master, omnipotent God, is mustering

in his clouds on our behalf armies of plague and pestilence, and they shall strike the children who are yet unborn and unbegotten of all you who lift your vassal hands against my head and threaten the glory of my precious crown.

“Tell Bolingbroke — for yonder I think he stands — that every stride he makes upon my land is dangerous treason. He has come to open the bright-red testament of bleeding war, but before the crown he looks for shall live in peace, ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers’ sons shall ill become the flower of England’s face. Those bloody crowns shall change the complexion of her maiden-pale peace to scarlet indignation and shall bedew her pastor’s grass with faithful English blood.”

As King of England, Richard II was the pastor — the caretaker — of England.

He added, “Bolingbroke shall have to endure much civil war and many deaths of English young men before he shall wear the crown in peace.”

“May the King of Heaven forbid that our lord the King should so with civil and uncivil arms be rushed upon!” the Earl of Northumberland said.

The arms — weapons — would be civil because they were used in civil war; they would be uncivil — uncivilized — because they would be used by Englishmen to kill other Englishmen.

He continued, “Your thrice noble cousin Harry Bolingbroke humbly kisses your hand. He is thrice noble because of his descent from his grandfather King Edward III and from his father, John of Gaunt, and because of his own nobility. And he swears by the honorable tomb, that tomb that stands upon your royal grandsire’s bones, the bones of Edward III, and by the royal status of both your bloodlines, currents that spring from one most gracious

head, that of Edward III, and by the buried hand of warlike Gaunt, and by the worth and honor of himself, comprising all that may be sworn or said, as I say, on all these things he swears that his coming here has no further scope than to gain what is his by the right of inheritance and to beg for immediate enfranchisement — for his sentence of exile to be revoked — on his knees.

“Once you on your royal part have granted these things, he will hand over his glittering arms to rust, his armored steeds to stables, and his heart to the faithful service of your majesty.

“This he swears, as he is a just Prince. And I believe him, as I am a gentleman.”

King Richard II said, “Earl of Northumberland, say that this is the King’s answer: The King’s noble cousin is very welcome here, and all the number of his fair demands shall be accomplished without contradiction. With all the gracious utterance you have, speak to Bolingbroke’s gentle hearing my kind regards.”

The Earl of Northumberland left to give King Richard II’s answer to Henry Bolingbroke.

King Richard II said to the Duke of Aumerle, “We do debase ourselves, kinsman, do we not, to look so abject and to speak so courteously? Shall we call back the Earl of Northumberland, and send defiance to Henry Bolingbroke, the traitor, and so die?”

“No, my good lord,” the Duke of Aumerle replied. “Let’s fight with gentle words until time lends us friends and friends lend us their helpful swords.”

“Oh, God! Oh, God!” King Richard II said. “That ever this tongue of mine that laid the sentence of dread banishment on yonder proud man, should take it off again with words

of flattery and appeasement! Oh, I wish that I were as great as is my grief, or lesser than my name — my name of King! I wish that I could either forget what I have been, or not remember what I must be now!

“Do you swell, proud heart? Do you beat faster and swell with pride? I’ll give you scope — room — to beat, since our foes have scope — opportunity — to beat both you and me.”

The Duke of Aumerle said, “The Earl of Northumberland is coming back from talking to Henry Bolingbroke.”

“What must the King do now?” King Richard II said. “Must he submit? The King shall do it. Must he be deposed? The King shall be contented. Must he lose the name of King? In God’s name, let it go.

“I’ll trade my jewels for a set of rosary beads, my gorgeous palace for a hermitage, my gay apparel for an almsman’s robe, my embossed goblets for a wooden dish, my scepter for a religious pilgrim’s walking staff, my subjects for a pair of carved figures of saints, and my large kingdom for a little grave, a little, little grave, an obscure grave — or I’ll be buried in the King’s highway, some way of common passage, where subjects’ feet may each hour trample on their sovereign’s head; for on my heart they tread now while I am alive, and once I am buried, why shouldn’t they trample upon my head?

“Aumerle, you weep, my tender-hearted cousin! We’ll make foul weather with despised tears. Our sighs and tears shall flatten the summer corn, and make a dearth of food in this revolting land. Or shall we wantonly play with our woes, and make up some pretty game with shedding tears? For example, we could drop our tears always upon one place, until they have worn away for us a pair of graves within the earth, and, there we would be laid with this

epitaph: Here lie two kinsmen who dug their graves with weeping eyes. Would not this ill do well? Well, well, I see I talk but idly, and you laugh at me.”

He then said to the Earl of Northumberland, “Most mighty Prince, my Lord Northumberland, what does King Bolingbroke say? Will his majesty give Richard permission to live until Richard dies? If you bend your knee to him, Bolingbroke will say yes to whatever you request.”

The Earl of Northumberland said, “My lord, in the base court he waits to speak with you. May it please you to come down and talk to him.”

The base court was the lower or outer courtyard, sometimes called the servants’ courtyard because servants’ quarters and stables surrounded it.

King Richard II said, “Down, down I come, like glistening Phaëthon, who borrowed the god Apollo’s Sun-chariot and was unable to manage the unruly jades — horses — that pulled it.”

In this ancient myth, Phaëthon attempted to drive the Sun-chariot, but he could not manage the horses, and so it came close to Earth and would have set it on fire, but Jupiter, King of the gods, hurled his thunderbolt and killed Phaëthon, who fell to Earth.

He continued, “In the base court? Base court, where Kings grow base, to come at traitors’ calls and do them grace. In the base court? Come down? Down, court! Down, King! For night-owls shriek where mounting larks should sing.”

Owls are birds of night, while larks are birds of morning. Owls are birds of death and sorrow, while larks are birds of life and joy. Owls swoop low to get their prey, while larks fly high in the sky. Owls shriek, while larks sing beautiful songs. Owls come out when the Sun sets; larks come out

when the Sun rises.

As King Richard II and his supporters descended from the high castle walls to the low base court, Henry Bolingbroke asked the Earl of Northumberland, “What does his majesty say?”

“Sorrow and grief of heart make him speak foolishly, like a madman, yet he is coming.”

King Richard II and his supporters arrived in the base court.

Henry Bolingbroke ordered those with him to bow to the King: “Stand away from the King, and show fair duty to his majesty.”

Henry Bolingbroke knelt and began, “My gracious lord —”

King Richard II interrupted, “Fair cousin, you debase your Princely knee by making the base earth proud by kissing it. I had rather that my heart might feel your love than my displeased eye see your courtesy.”

He pointed to the crown he was wearing and said, “Up, cousin, up; your heart is up, I know, thus high at least, although your knee is low.”

“My gracious lord, I come only for what is mine,” Henry Bolingbroke replied.

“Your own is yours, and I am yours, and all is yours,” King Richard II said.

“Be mine, my most dreaded lord, as far as my true service shall deserve your love,” Henry Bolingbroke said.

“You well deserve it,” King Richard II said. “They well deserve to have, who know the strongest and surest way to get.”

He said to the Duke of York, who was crying, “Uncle, give me your hands. No, don’t weep. Dry your eyes. Tears show their love for whom the tears are shed, but tears lack their remedies — they cannot cure what causes them.”

He then said to Henry Bolingbroke, “Cousin, I am too young to be your father, although you are old enough to be my heir. What you will have, I’ll give to you, and willingly, too, for we must do what force will have us do.

“Shall we set on towards London, cousin? Is that what you want?”

“Yes, my good lord,” Henry Bolingbroke replied.

“Then I must not say no,” King Richard II replied.

— 3.4 —

In the garden of one of the Duke of York’s houses, the Queen and two ladies talked.

The Queen said, “What entertainment shall we devise here in this garden to drive away the gloomy thought of sorrow?”

A lady said, “Madam, we’ll play the game of bowls.”

“It will make me think the world is full of rubs, and that my fortune rubs against the bias,” the Queen said.

Rubs are obstacles that prevent the ball from going where it should. A bias is a weight on one side of the bowl — ball — that makes it curve in a particular direction as it rolls. The Queen’s fortune was not going in the direction it ought to go.

“Madam, we’ll dance,” a lady said.

“My legs can keep no measure — no graceful movement — in delight, when my poor heart keeps no measure — no

limit — in grief,” the Queen said. “Therefore, no dancing, girl; suggest some other entertainment.”

“Madam, we’ll tell stories,” a lady said.

“Of sorrow or of joy?” the Queen asked.

“Of either, madam,” the lady replied.

“Of neither, girl,” the Queen said. “For if the stories are of joy, then because I altogether lack joy, they will remind me all the more of sorrow. Or if the stories are of grief, then because I am altogether sad, they will add more sorrow to my lack of joy. For what I have — sorrow — I don’t need to repeat, and what I lack — joy — it doesn’t help to lament.”

“Madam, I’ll sing,” a lady said.

“It is well that you have cause to sing, but you would please me better if you would weep.”

“I could weep, madam, if it would do you good,” the lady replied.

“And I could sing, if weeping would do me good, and I would never have to borrow any tear from you,” the Queen said. “If weeping would do me good, then much good would be done to me because I have wept so much, and I would be able to sing and I would not need you to weep for me.”

A head gardener and two assistant gardeners entered the garden.

Seeing them, the Queen said, “But wait, here come the gardeners. Let’s step into the shadow of these trees. I bet all my wretchedness against a row of pins — something trivial — that they’ll talk about affairs of state, for everyone does that when they anticipate a political change; woe is forecast

by woe.”

The Queen and the two ladies moved into the shadows, where they were not seen.

The head gardener said to one assistant, “Go, bind up young dangling apricots, which, like unruly children, make their sire — father — stoop with oppression of their prodigal and excessive weight. Give some support to and prop up the bending twigs.”

He said to the other assistant, “Go, and like an executioner, cut off the heads of too quickly growing sprays — shoots and branches — that look too lofty — tall and overbearing — in our commonwealth. All must be even in our government.”

He added, “While you two are thus employed, I will go and root away the noisome, noxious weeds, which without profit and fruit suck the soil’s fertility and keep it from wholesome flowers.”

An assistant asked, “Why should we within the compass of a fenced-in area keep law and form and due proportion, showing, as in a model, our stable, secure estate, when our sea-walled garden, the whole land of England, is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up and suffocated, her fruit trees all upturned, her hedges ruined, her knots — intricately designed flowerbeds — disordered and her wholesome herbs swarming with parasitic caterpillars?”

“Hold your peace and be quiet,” the head gardener said. “He who has suffered this disordered spring has now himself met with the fall of leaf — it is his autumn. The weeds that his broad-spreading leaves sheltered — those weeds that ate him while seeming to be holding him up — have been plucked up root and all by Bolingbroke. By ‘weeds,’ I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, and Green.”

“Are they dead?” the servant asked.

“They are,” the head gardener said, “and Bolingbroke has seized the wasteful King Richard II. Oh, what a pity it is that the King had not so trimmed and tended his land as we trim and tend this garden! We at the correct season wound the bark, the skin of our fruit trees, lest, being overly proud and excessively swollen by sap and blood, with too much riches it confounds and destroys itself. Unless the fruit trees are pruned, the result is excessive wood and lack of fruit.

“Had King Richard II done so to great and growing men, they might have lived to bear fruit and he to taste their fruits of duty. We lop away superfluous branches so that bearing boughs may live. Had King Richard II done so, he himself would bear the crown, which waste of idle, leisure hours has quite thrown down.”

“Do you think that the King shall be deposed?” an assistant asked.

“He has already been brought low, and there is fear that he will be deposed,” the head gardener said. “A letter came last night to a dear friend of the good Duke of York; the letter tells bad news.”

The Queen said, “Oh, I am pressed to death through want of speaking!”

She was referring to a medieval punishment in which suspects who declined to enter a plea of Guilty or Not Guilty in a court of law would have heavy stones placed on them after they lay down. Sometimes, they would continue not to enter a plea, and they would be crushed to death under the weight of stones. People who pled Guilty or who pled Not Guilty and were found guilty and executed had their property forfeited. Sometimes, people refused to enter a plea because they believed that they would be found guilty and would leave their loved ones destitute.

The Queen came out of the shadow of the trees and said to the head gardener, whom she referred to as the likeness of Adam, the first gardener in the first garden, the Garden of Eden, which he shared with Eve, “You, old Adam’s likeness, ready to cultivate this garden, how dares your harsh and rude tongue sound and cry out this unpleasing news? What Eve, what serpent, has tempted you to make a second fall of cursed man?”

The first fall occurred when Adam and Eve sinned and God banished them from the Garden of Eden. The head gardener was making a second fall by talking about the likelihood of King Richard II being deposed.

She continued, “Why do you say that King Richard II is deposed? Do you dare, you thing little better than earth, prophesy his downfall? Say where, when, and how you came by these ill tidings! Speak, you wretch.”

“Pardon me, madam,” the head gardener said. “Little joy have I in telling you this news, yet what I say is true. King Richard II is in the custody of mighty Bolingbroke. Both their fortunes are weighed in a set of scales. In your lord’s scale is nothing but himself, and some few vain trifles that make him light, but in the balance of great Bolingbroke, besides himself, are all the English peers, and with that superiority he weighs King Richard II down. If you travel to London, you will find it so. I speak no more than what everyone knows.”

The Queen said, “Nimble Mischance, who are so light of foot, doesn’t your message belong to me, and yet I am the last who knows it? Oh, you think to serve me last, so that I may the longest keep your sorrow in my breast.

“Come, ladies, go with me to meet at London London’s King in woe.

“Was I born to this, that my sad look should grace the

triumphal procession of great Bolingbroke?

“Gardener, for telling me this news of woe, I pray to God that the plants you graft may never grow.”

The Queen and ladies exited.

The head gardener said, “Poor Queen! So that your state might be no worse, I wish that my skill were subject to your curse.

“Here she let fall a tear; here in this place I’ll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace. Rue, even for ruth — pity, compassion, and sympathy — here shortly shall be seen, in memory of a weeping Queen.”

CHAPTER 4 (Richard II)

— 4.1 —

In Westminster Hall were meeting Henry Bolingbroke, the Duke of Aumerle, the Earl of Northumberland, young Henry Percy, Lord Fitzwater, the Duke of Surrey, the Bishop of Carlisle, and the Abbot of Westminster. Also present were another lord, a herald, officers, and Bagot.

Henry Bolingbroke ordered, “Call forth Bagot.”

Bagot stood forward.

Henry Bolingbroke ordered, “Now, Bagot, freely speak your mind. What do you know about the noble Duke of Gloucester’s death? Who wrought it with King Richard II, and who performed the bloody task of his untimely end?”

The word “wrought” meant “worked” or “brought it about.” The meaning of that part of the sentence in which the word was used was ambiguous. It could mean “Who brought it about with the King and persuaded him to have the Duke of Gloucester murdered?” or “Who worked with the King to have the Duke of Gloucester murdered?” or both. In September 1397, the Duke of Gloucester had been murdered at Calais.

Bagot replied, “Then set before my face the Lord Aumerle.”

Henry Bolingbroke ordered, “Cousin, stand forth, and look upon that man.”

Bagot said to the Duke of Aumerle, “My Lord Aumerle, I know your daring tongue scorns to unsay what once it has delivered and stated. In that fatal time when Gloucester’s death was plotted, I heard you say, ‘Isn’t my arm long? It

reaches from the restful English court as far as Calais, to my uncle's head.' Among much other talk, at that same time, I heard you say that you would prefer to refuse the offer of a hundred thousand crowns than to have Henry Bolingbroke return to England. You added as well how blest this land would be if your cousin Bolingbroke would die."

The Duke of Aumerle had a higher social status than Bagot. Because of this, if he were challenged to trial by combat he could refuse to fight him on the basis that it would be degrading for him to fight a man of such low rank.

The Duke of Aumerle said, "Princes and noble lords, what answer shall I make to this base man? Shall I so much dishonor my fair stars and high birth to treat him as an equal and give him his punishment? Either I must, or my honor will be soiled by the accusation of his slanderous lips."

He threw down his gage — a gage was an item such as a glove or a hood — as a challenge to combat. They would fight to the death, God would determine the victor, and whichever man still lived would be innocent while the dead man would be guilty.

He said to Bagot, "There is my gage, the manual seal of death, that marks you out for Hell. I say that you lie, and I will maintain that what you have said is false by spilling your heart-blood, although it is all too base to stain the temper and quality of my knightly sword."

Henry Bolingbroke ordered, "Bagot, stand back. You shall not pick up the gage."

Picking up the gage meant accepting the challenge and agreeing to a fight to the death.

The Duke of Aumerle said, "Excepting one person, I wish

that the man who had so angered me were the best man and highest ranking among all the men present here.”

The one exception was Henry Bolingbroke, whom most of the people present believed would soon be King Henry IV.

Lord Fitzwater threw his gage on the ground and said, “If you say that because your valor insists on fighting only those close to your own rank, then there is my gage, Aumerle, in challenge to your gage.

“By that fair Sun that shows me where you stand, I heard you say, and boastingly you said it, that you were the cause of the noble Duke of Gloucester’s death.

“Even if you deny it twenty times, you lie, and I will return your falsehood to your heart, where it was forged, with the point of my rapier.”

“You dare not, coward, live to see that day,” the Duke of Aumerle said.

“Now by my soul, I wish we could fight during this hour,” Lord Fitzwater replied.

“Fitzwater, you are damned to Hell for this,” the Duke of Aumerle said.

Young Henry Percy said, “Aumerle, you lie. Fitzwater’s honor is as true in this appeal as you are entirely unjust, and that you are so, there I throw my gage, to prove it on you to the extremest point of mortal breathing. I will prove that you are lying by fighting you and taking away your mortal breath. Pick up my gage, if you dare.”

“And if I do not, may my hands rot off and never again brandish revengeful steel over the glittering helmet of my foe!” the Duke of Aumerle said, and he picked up the gage.

Another lord said, “I task the earth with a similar burden,

falsely swearing Aumerle, and I spur you on with fully as many charges of falsehood as may be hollered in your treacherous ear from sunrise to sunset.”

He threw his gage to the ground and said, “There is my honor’s pawn — my gage. Pick it up, and engage yourself to a trial by combat, if you dare.”

The Duke of Aumerle said, “Who else is betting? By Heaven, I’ll throw the dice and bet against all. I have a thousand spirits in one breast and so I can answer twenty thousand such as you.”

The Duke of Surrey said, “My Lord Fitzwater, I remember well the exact time that Aumerle and you talked.”

“That is very true,” Lord Fitzwater replied. “You were present then, and you can witness with me that what I say is true.”

“It is as false, by Heaven, as Heaven itself is true,” the Duke of Surrey said.

“Surrey, you lie,” Lord Fitzwater said.

“Dishonorable boy!” the Duke of Surrey said, throwing down his gage. “That lie shall lie so heavy on my sword, that it shall render vengeance and revenge until you the lie-giver and that lie you told do lie in earth as quietly as your father’s skull. In proof of what I say, there is my honor’s pawn. Pick it up and engage to meet me in a trial by combat, if you dare.”

“How foolishly do you spur a horse that is already eager to run!” Lord Fitzwater said. “If I dare to eat, or drink, or breathe, or live, I dare to meet Surrey in a wilderness, where no one will interfere with the fight, and spit upon him, while I say he lies, and lies, and lies.”

He threw down his gage and said, “There is my bond of

faith, to tie and commit you to my strong retribution. As I intend to thrive in this new world that Henry Bolingbroke is bringing about, Aumerle is guilty of my true accusation. Besides, I heard the banished Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, say that you, Aumerle, sent two of your men to execute the noble Duke of Gloucester at Calais.”

“Some honest Christian give me a gage to throw down as I say that the Duke of Norfolk lies,” the Duke of Aumerle said.

Someone gave him a gage, and he threw it down and said, “Here I throw this down. If the banishment of the Duke of Norfolk may be repealed, I will try his honor in a trial by combat.”

Henry Bolingbroke said, “These differences shall all rest under gage — remain as challenges — until the banishment of the Duke of Norfolk is repealed. Repealed it shall be, and, although he is my enemy, all his lands and estates will be restored to him.”

Henry Bolingbroke was taking to himself the power of the King of England. He now used the royal plural: “When the Duke of Norfolk has returned, we will enforce the holding of his trial by combat with the Duke of Aumerle.”

The Bishop of Carlisle said, “That honorable day shall never be seen. Many a time has the banished Duke of Norfolk fought for Jesus Christ as a Crusader on a glorious Christian battlefield, flying in the wind the flag of the Christian cross against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens.

“Exhausted with the works of war, he retired to Italy, and at Venice he died and gave his body to that pleasant country’s earth, and his pure soul to his Captain — Christ — under whose flag he had fought so long.”

“Bishop of Carlisle, is the Duke of Norfolk dead?” Henry

Bolingbroke asked.

“As surely as I live, my lord,” the Bishop of Carlisle replied.

“May sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom of good old Abraham!” Henry Bolingbroke said.

He then said to the lords who had thrown down gages and made challenges, “Lords appellants, your differences shall all rest under gage until we assign you to your days of trial.”

The Duke of York entered the room, accompanied by attendants.

He said, “Great Duke of Lancaster, Henry Bolingbroke, I come to you from plume-plucked and humbled Richard, who with willing soul adopts you as his heir, and yields his high scepter to the possession of your royal hand. Ascend his throne, because as his heir you now descend from him, and long live Henry, fourth of that name!”

“In God’s name, I’ll ascend the regal throne,” Henry Bolingbroke said.

“Mother Mary!” the Bishop of Carlisle said. “God forbid!

“I am only a priest among all you nobles and so I am the lowest-ranking person speaking in this ‘royal’ presence.”

He was sarcastic when he said “‘royal’ presence.” He did not regard Henry Bolingbroke as royalty, although he recognized Henry Bolingbroke as a nobleman.

The Bishop of Carlisle continued, “Yet it may be best fitting for me to speak the truth.

“I wish to God that anyone in this noble presence were noble enough to be the upright judge of noble King Richard II! Then true nobleness would teach him to not commit so

foul a wrong as judging the King.

“What subject can give sentence on his King? And who sits here who is not King Richard II’s subject? Thieves are not judged except when they are nearby and can hear the trial, even when obvious guilt may be seen in them, and shall the figure — the King — of God’s majesty, his captain, steward, deputy-elect, anointed, crowned, planted many years, be judged by subject and inferior breath, and the King himself not present?”

“Oh, forbid it, God. Forbid that in a Christian country refined souls and civilized people should do so heinous, black, and obscene a deed!

“I speak to subjects, and I, who am also a subject, speak, stirred up by God, thus boldly for his King.

“My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call King, is a foul traitor to proud Hereford’s true King: Richard II.”

The Bishop of Carlisle called Henry Bolingbroke “Lord of Hereford,” the title he had had when he was exiled. The Bishop did not want to call him “Duke of Lancaster” and especially did not want to call him “King Henry IV.”

The Bishop of Carlisle continued, “And if you crown him, let me prophesy what will happen. The blood of Englishmen shall fertilize the ground, and future ages shall groan for this foul act. Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels, and in this seat of peace tumultuous wars shall cause kinsmen and fellow-countrymen to confound and destroy each other. Disorder, horror, fear, and mutiny shall inhabit England, and this land shall be called the field of another Golgotha — the place where Christ was crucified as well as a place of dead men’s skulls.

“Oh, if you raise this house against this house, it will prove to be the most woeful division that ever fell upon this

cursed earth.

“Prevent it, resist it, let it not be so, lest child and child’s children cry against you woe!”

The Earl of Northumberland said to the Bishop of Carlisle, “Well have you argued, sir, and for your pains, we here arrest you on a charge of capital treason.”

He then ordered, “My Lord of Westminster, it is your charge to safely keep the Bishop of Carlisle until his day of trial.”

He continued, “May it please you, lords, to grant the commons’ suit.” The commons were the commoners.

The commons’ suit was a request that the terms of the abdication of King Richard II, who was accused of misgoverning England, be published.

Using the royal plural, Henry Bolingbroke ordered, “Fetch hither Richard, so that in public view he may surrender the throne. That way, we shall proceed without suspicion.”

“I will be his escort,” the Duke of York said.

He exited.

Henry Bolingbroke said, “Lords, you who here are under our arrest, procure your guarantees that you will show up for your trials. Little are we beholden to your friendship, and we looked for little help from your helping hands.”

The Duke of York returned with King Richard II. Some officers carried the crown and other important royal items.

King Richard II said, “Alas, why am I sent for to appear before a King, before I have shaken off the regal thoughts with which I reigned? I hardly yet have learned to ingratiate, flatter, bow, and bend my limbs. Give sorrow permission for a while to tutor me in how to behave in this

submission. Yet I well remember the favors — the faces and bows — of these men. Weren't these men mine? Did they not sometimes cry, 'All hail!' to me? So Judas did to Christ, but Christ, who had twelve disciples, found loyalty in all but one. I, with twelve thousand, have found loyalty in none."

He had not yet abdicated the throne, but he was speaking as though he had and as though Henry Bolingbroke were now King Henry IV.

He continued, "God save the King! Will no man say, 'Amen'? Am I both priest and clerk? Well then, amen."

In church services, the priest would say the prayers and the clerk would say, "Amen."

King Richard II continued, "God save the King! Although I am not he, and yet, amen, if Heaven thinks that I am King."

He then asked, "To do what service am I sent for here?"

The Duke of York replied, "To do that office of your own good will that tired majesty — exhaustion caused by ruling England — did make you offer: the resignation of your state and crown to Henry Bolingbroke."

"Give me the crown," King Richard II said.

A lord handed the crown to him, and he said to Henry Bolingbroke, "Here, cousin, seize the crown."

King Richard II chose the word "seize" deliberately.

Henry Bolingbroke hesitated, and King Richard II said impatiently, "Here, cousin."

Henry Bolingbroke laid his hand on the crown, and King Richard II said, "On this side my hand, and on that side yours."

King Richard II now made a comparison in which he referred to a well with two buckets, each tied to one end of the same rope. When a crank was turned, a bucket that was filled with water rose in the air so it could be emptied while the other, empty bucket was lowered into the well water: “Now is this golden crown like a deep well that has two buckets, filling one another, the emptier ever dancing in the air, the other down, unseen and full of water: That bucket down and full of tears am I, drinking my griefs, while you mount up on high.”

Henry Bolingbroke said, “I thought you were willing to resign.”

“I am willing to resign my crown, but my griefs are still mine. You may depose my glories and my state, but not my griefs. You cannot take them away; I am still King of those.”

“Part of your cares you give me with your crown,” Henry Bolingbroke said.

In his reply to Henry Bolingbroke, King Richard II used the word “care” in several senses: obligation, responsibility, concern, grief, and worry. Some of these were personal; others related to ruling a country.

King Richard II said, “Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down. My care is loss of care, by old care done. Your care is gain of care, by new care won. The cares I give I have, although they are given away. They are attendant upon the crown, yet still with me they stay.”

“Are you contented to resign the crown?” Henry Bolingbroke asked.

King Richard II said, “In reply to your question, I answer this: I, no; no, aye. I must nothing be. Therefore no ‘no,’ for I resign the crown to you.”

He meant this:

“I, no; no, yes.

“I, which sounds like ‘aye,’ which means ‘yes,’ means the same thing as a ‘no,’ since I am nothing now that I have lost my identity as King.

“Since I have lost my identity as King, and since I am nothing, I cannot say ‘no’ to you, and therefore there is no ‘no’ — there is only a ‘yes,’ and I resign the crown to you.”

King Richard II paused and then said, “In reply to your question, I answer this: “I know no I. I must nothing be. Therefore no ‘no,’ for I resign the crown to you.”

He meant this:

“I am no longer King because I must resign the crown to you. I am now nothing, a nonentity, and so I cannot know who or what I am.

“Because I am nothing, any reply I can make is meaningless, and so there is no ‘no,’ and I resign the crown to you.”

King Richard II continued, “Now pay careful attention to me and see how I will undo myself.”

The word “undo” meant “undress” and “ruin.”

He continued, “I give this heavy weight — this crown — from off my head and this unwieldy scepter from my hand and the pride of Kingly power from out my heart. With my own tears I wash away the fragrant oil that was used to anoint me during my coronation. With my own hands I give away my crown. With my own tongue I deny my sacred state. With my own breath I release all oaths and rites of duty and loyalty to me. All pomp and majesty I forswear. My manors, rents, and revenues I forego. My

acts, decrees, and statutes I deny. May God pardon all oaths that are broken to me! May God keep all vows unbroken that are sworn to you, Henry Bolingbroke!

“May God make me, who has nothing, be grieved by nothing, and may you be pleased with everything, who have achieved everything!

“Long may you live in Richard’s seat to sit, and may Richard soon lie in an earthly pit!

“May God save King Harry, the no-longer-King Richard says, and send him many years of sunshine days!

“What more remains for me to do?”

The Earl of Northumberland said, “No more, except that you read this list of these accusations and these grievous crimes committed by your person and your followers against the state and profit of this land, so that, by hearing you confess them, the souls of men may deem that you are worthily deposed.”

“Must I do so?” King Richard II said. “And must I unravel and make clear my weaved-up, intertwined follies? Gentle Northumberland, if your offences were recorded, would it not shame you in so fair a troop of people to read them out loud?

“If you should read them out loud, you would find there one heinous article, containing the deposing of a King and cracking the strong warrant of an oath, marked with a blot, damned in the book of Heaven.”

The Earl of Northumberland had sworn an oath of loyalty to King Richard II, who continued, “Nay, all of you who stand here and look at me, while my wretchedness torments me, although some of you, as did Pilate, wash your hands and put on an appearance of pity, yet you Pilates have here

delivered me to my bitter cross, and water cannot wash away your sin.”

The Earl of Northumberland said, “My lord, be quick. Read out loud these articles.”

King Richard II said, “My eyes are full of tears, I cannot see, and yet salt water does not blind my eyes so much that they cannot see a pack of traitors here. Indeed, if I turn my eyes upon myself, I find that I am a traitor with the rest because I have given here my soul’s consent to undeck the ceremonially dressed body of a King, I have made glory base and sovereignty a slave, I have made proud majesty a subject, and I have made splendor a peasant.”

“My lord —” the Earl of Northumberland began.

King Richard II interrupted, “I am no lord of yours, you haughty, arrogant, insulting man, nor am I any man’s lord. I have no name, no title. No, I don’t even have that name that was given to me at the baptismal font — even it has been usurped.”

Followers of Henry Bolingbroke were spreading the rumor that King Richard II was a bastard. They said that his real name was Jehan, aka John, and that his father was a priest of Bordeaux, where Richard had been born.

He continued, “Alas, this heavy, sorrowful day. I have worn so many winters out, and I don’t now know what name to call myself!

“Oh, I wish that I were a mockery King made of snow, standing before the Sun of Bolingbroke, so I could melt myself away in water-drops!

“Good King, great King, and yet not greatly good, if my word is still sterling — valid and current — in England, let my word command that a mirror be brought here

immediately so that it may show me what a face I have, since it is bankrupt of its majesty.”

Henry Bolingbroke ordered, “Go some of you and fetch a looking-glass.”

An attendant exited to obey the order.

The Earl of Northumberland said to King Richard II, “Read out loud this paper listing your sins and crimes until the mirror is brought here.”

“Fiend, you torment me before I arrive in Hell!” King Richard II shouted.

Henry Bolingbroke said, “Leave him alone, my Lord Northumberland.”

“The commons — the commoners — will not then be satisfied,” the Earl of Northumberland said. “They want his sins and crimes to be publicly announced.”

“They shall be satisfied,” King Richard II said. “I’ll read enough, when I see the very book indeed where all my sins are written, and that’s myself — my sins are written in my face.”

The attendant returned, carrying a mirror.

King Richard II said, “Give me the looking-glass, and in it I will read what I see.”

He looked in the mirror and said, “No deeper wrinkles yet? Has sorrow struck so many blows upon this face of mine, and made no deeper wounds? Oh, flattering looking-glass, similar to my fair-weather followers when I was prosperous, you beguile and deceive me! Was this face the face that everyday under his household roof kept and fed ten thousand men? Was this the face that, like the Sun, made beholders shut their eyes? Was this the face that

faced — countenanced — so many follies, and was at last out-faced — discountenanced — by Bolingbroke? A brittle glory shines in this face. As brittle as the glory is the face.”

He threw the mirror on the floor, and the mirror shattered.

King Richard II continued, “For there it is, cracked in a hundred slivers. Note carefully, silent King, the moral of this entertainment: How soon my sorrow has destroyed my face.”

Henry Bolingbroke said, “The shadow of — the darkness cast by — your sorrow has destroyed the shadow — the image — of your face.”

He was contemptuous. King Richard II was acting like a Drama Queen, and Henry Bolingbroke wanted to get the abdication over and done with so he could be King Henry IV.

King Richard II replied, “Say that again. ‘The shadow of my sorrow!’ Ha!

“Let’s see. It is very true that my grief lies all within my soul, and these external manners of laments are merely shadows to the unseen grief that swells with silence in the tortured soul. In my soul lies the substance as opposed to the shadow or appearance, and I thank you, King, for your great bounty that not only gives me cause to wail but also teaches me how to lament the cause.

“I’ll beg one boon — favor — from you, and then I will be gone and trouble you no more.

“Shall I obtain the boon I ask for?”

“Name it, fair cousin,” Henry Bolingbroke replied.

“‘Fair cousin?’” King Richard II said, “I am greater than a King, for when I was a King, my flatterers were then only

subjects, but now that I am a subject, I have a King here to be my flatterer. Being so great, I have no need to beg.”

“Yet ask me,” Henry Bolingbroke said.

“And shall I receive what I ask for?”

“You shall.”

“Then give me permission to go.”

“To go where?”

“Wherever you want me to go, as long as I am away from your sight and the sight of the others in this room.”

Henry Bolingbroke ordered, “Go, some of you convey him to the Tower of London.”

“Oh, good!” King Richard II said. “Convey? Conveyers are you all, who rise thus nimbly by a true King’s fall.”

One meaning of the word “convey” was “steal.” King Richard II was saying that these men were thieves — Henry Bolingbroke had stolen the crown and the rest had been his accomplices. Thieves are said to have nimble fingers.

King Richard II, who was soon to be just Richard, exited, accompanied by some lords and a guard.

Henry Bolingbroke, who was soon to be King Henry IV, said, using the royal plural, “We solemnly set down Wednesday next as the date of our coronation. Lords, prepare yourselves for it.”

Everyone exited except for the Bishop of Carlisle, the Abbot of Westminster, and the Duke of Aumerle.

The Abbot of Westminster said, “We have here beheld a woeful spectacle.”

The Bishop of Carlisle said, "The woe's to come; children yet unborn shall feel that this day is as sharp to them as thorn."

The Duke of Aumerle said, "You holy clergymen, is there no plot, no plan, to rid the realm of this pernicious blot?"

The Abbot of Westminster said, "My lord, before I freely speak my mind on that matter, you shall not only take the sacrament and swear on it to keep secret what I intend, but also you will swear to help make happen whatever plot I shall happen to devise.

"I can see that your brows are full of discontent, your hearts of sorrow, and your eyes of tears. Come home with me to supper; and I'll lay before you a plot that shall show us all a happy day."

CHAPTER 5 (Richard II)

— 5.1 —

The former Queen — King Richard II had been deposed — and her ladies appeared on a street leading to the Tower of London.

The former Queen said, “This is the way the true King will come; this is the way to the Tower that Julius Caesar began building and that was built for evil ends. Proud Bolingbroke sentenced my condemned lord to be a prisoner in the Tower’s flinty bosom.

“Here let us rest, if this rebellious earth has any resting place for her true King’s Queen.”

Richard, formerly King of England, arrived under guard.

The former Queen said, “But wait a moment, see, or rather do not see, my fair rose wither.”

The rose was the King of flowers, just as the lion was the King of beasts.

She continued, “Yet look up, behold, that you — me, myself — in pity may dissolve to dew, and wash him fresh again with true-love tears. Ah, you, Richard, are the ground-plan where old Troy stood.”

She was comparing the ruined Richard to the ruin of a city: the city of Troy, famous for its role in the Trojan War. London was sometimes known as Troynovant — New Troy — because a descendant of the Trojan Prince Aeneas was thought to have founded it.

The former Queen continued, “You are the map and image of honor. You are King Richard II’s tomb, not King Richard II. You most beauteous inn, why should hard-

avored grief be lodged in you, when triumph has become an alehouse guest?"

She was comparing Richard to a beautiful hotel in which Grief was a guest, and Henry Bolingbroke to a common alehouse in which Triumph was a guest.

Richard said to her, "Join not with Grief, fair woman, don't do that because it would make my end too sudden. Learn, good soul, to think our former splendor a happy dream from which we awakened and discovered that the truth of what we are shows us to be only this: I am sworn brother, sweetheart, to grim Necessity, and he and I will maintain an alliance until death.

"Take yourself to France and cloister yourself in some religious house. Our holy lives must win a new world's crown; our profane hours in this world here have struck down our crowns."

The former Queen said, "Is my Richard both in body and mind transformed and weakened? Has Bolingbroke deposed your intellect? Has he been in your heart and taken away your courage? The dying lion thrusts forth its paw, and wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage at being overpowered. Will you, like a student, take your punishment mildly, kiss the rod, and fawn on rage with base humility when you are a lion and a King of beasts?"

"I am a King of beasts, indeed," Richard said. "The people who deposed me are beasts. If I had been the King of anything but beasts, I would have still been a happy King of men.

"Good, former Queen, prepare yourself to leave for France. Pretend that I am dead and that even here and now you are taking, as from my deathbed, your last living leave of me.

"In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire with good old

folks and let them tell you tales of woeful ages that happened long ago; and before you say good night, to requite their tales of griefs tell them the lamentable tale of me and send the hearers weeping to their beds.

“Yes, indeed, the senseless firewood will sympathize with the sorrowful accent of your moving tongue and in compassion weep the fire out. Their resin will seep out like tears. Some pieces of firewood, once burnt, will mourn in ashes, some coal-black, as in wearing mourning clothes, for the deposing of a rightful King.”

The Earl of Northumberland and some other men arrived.

The Earl of Northumberland said to Richard, “My lord, Bolingbroke has changed his mind. You must go to Pomfret Castle in Yorkshire, not to the Tower of London.”

He then said to the former Queen, “And, madam, arrangements have been made for you. With all swift speed you must go away to your native France.”

Richard said, “Earl of Northumberland, you have been the ladder by which the mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne. The time shall not be many hours older than it is before foul sin gathering head like a boil shall break into corruption and ooze pus. You shall think, even if he were to divide the realm and give you half, it is too little a share for you because you helped Bolingbrook to win it all, and he shall think that you, who know the way to plant unrightful kings on the throne, will know again how to do that. Bolingbroke will think that, for only a very little cause, you will know another way to pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.

“The love that wicked men have for each other turns to fear; that fear then turns to hate, and hate turns one or both wicked men into first being a justifiable danger and then getting a deserved death.”

“May my guilt be on my head, and let that be the end to this discussion,” the Earl of Northumberland said. “You two take your leave of each other and part from each other; for you must depart quickly.”

“Doubly divorced!” Richard said. “Bad men, you violate a twofold marriage: one between my crown and me, and the other between me and my married wife.”

He said to his wife, the former Queen, “Let me unkiss the oath of marriage between you and me. And yet we cannot do that, for with a kiss our marriage was made.”

He then said, “Part us, Earl of Northumberland; I will go toward the north, where shivering cold and sickness afflicts the region. My wife will go to France, from whence she set forth in pomp. She came to England adorned like sweet May, and she will be sent back to France adorned like Hallowmas — November 1 — or like the shortest day.”

The former Queen asked, “And must we be divided? Must we part?”

Richard replied, “Yes, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.”

The former Queen said to the Earl of Northumberland, “Banish us both and send the King — my Richard — with me.”

The Earl of Northumberland said, “That would be a great favor to you, but it would make little sense for us politically.”

If Richard and the former Queen were sent to France, they could raise an army and fight a war to get the throne back.

The former Queen said, “Then where he goes, there let me go.”

Richard said, “So we two, together weeping, would make one woe. Weep for me in France, and I will weep for you here: Better far off than near, be never the nearer. We might as well be far away from each other than to be near each other and yet never be any closer to seeing each other.”

He believed that even if his wife were to stay near him in England, they would not be allowed to see each other.

He continued, “Go, count your way with sighs; I will count my way with groans.”

“Then the longest way shall have the longest-lasting moans,” the former Queen said.

She had the longer journey to make. Her destination in France was farther distant from London than Pomfret Castle was.

Richard replied, “Twice for one step I’ll groan, my way being short, and prolong my way with a heavy heart. Come, come, in wooing sorrow let’s be brief, since, wedding it, there is such length in grief. One kiss shall stop our mouths, and in silence we will part.”

By kissing each other, they metaphorically gave each other their hearts.

He kissed her and said, “Thus I give you my heart, and thus I take your heart.”

The former Queen said, “Give me my own heart again; it would be no good part — no good action — for me to keep and kill your heart.”

She felt that she would die from sorrow, and that therefore she would kill Richard’s heart if she had it when she died.

She kissed him and said, “So, now I have my own heart

again, be gone, so that I might strive to kill my own heart with a groan.”

She felt that since she had her own heart again, it was OK to die from sorrow — she would be killing with sorrow her own heart, not Richard’s.

Richard’s final words to her were these: “We make woe wanton and unrestrained with this fond and foolish delay. Once more, *adieu*; the rest let sorrow say.”

— 5.2 —

The Duke and Duchess of York, aged husband and aged wife, talked together in the Duke of York’s palace.

The Duchess of York said, “My lord, you told me you would tell the rest, when weeping made you break the story off, of our two cousins — Richard and Bolingbroke — coming into London.”

“Where did I leave off?” the Duke of York asked.

“At that sad stop, my lord, where rude, unruly hands from high windows threw dust and rubbish on King Richard II’s head.”

“Then, as I said, the Duke of Lancaster, great Henry Bolingbroke, mounted upon a hot and fiery steed that seemed to know his aspiring rider, and with slow but stately pace kept on his course, while all tongues cried, ‘God save you, Bolingbroke!’”

“You would have thought the very windows spoke, so many greedy looks of young and old through casements darted their desiring eyes upon his visage, and that all the walls with painted imagery had said at the same time, ‘Jesus preserve you! Welcome, Bolingbroke!’”

Wall hangings of the time sometimes had word balloons

depicting what the figures in the wall hangings — the painted imagery — were saying.

The Duke of York continued, “While he, from the one side to the other turning, bareheaded, bowing lower than his proud steed’s neck, spoke to them thus: ‘I thank you, countrymen.’ And always acting like this, thus he passed along.”

“Alas, poor Richard!” the Duchess of York said. “What was his ride like while this was happening?”

“Imagine being in a theater, where the eyes of men, after a talented and popular actor leaves the stage, are idly and indifferently bent on the actor who enters next, thinking his prattle to be tedious. Even so, or with much more contempt, men’s eyes scowled at gentle Richard; no man cried, ‘God save him!’ No joyful tongue gave him a welcome home from Ireland and Wales. But dust was thrown upon his sacred head, which with such gentle sorrow he shook off, his face continually combating with tears and smiles, the badges of his grief and his patience, that had not God, for some strong purpose, steeled the hearts of men, they must necessarily have melted and barbaric people themselves would have pitied him.

“But Heaven has a hand in these events, and to Heaven’s high will we submit our calm happiness. To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now, whose high position and honor I always will accept.”

“Here comes my son, the Duke of Aumerle,” the Duchess of York said.

“He *was* the Duke of Aumerle, but he lost that title because he was Richard’s friend. Richard gave him that title, and the new King took it away. Therefore, madam, you must call him the Earl of Rutland now.

“I am in Parliament the pledge — guarantor — for his loyalty and lasting obedience to the new-made King.”

As the pledge of his son’s loyalty, the Duke of York would be in danger if his son were to be disloyal to the new-made King. The Duke of York called Bolingbroke “the new-made King” to emphasize that he had been *made* King; he had not inherited the title.

The former Duke of Aumerle walked over to his parents.

“Welcome, my son,” the Duchess of York said to him. “Who are the violets now that strew the green lap of the new-come spring? Who are the favorites of the new-come King?”

“Madam, I don’t know, nor do I greatly care,” the former Duke of Aumerle said. “God knows I should like just as much to be none than one.”

“Well, conduct yourself honorably in this new spring of time, lest you be cropped — cut down — before you come to prime,” the Duke of York said. “What news is there from Oxford? Will those jousts and tournament still be held there?”

“For anything I know, my lord, they will,” the former Duke of Aumerle said.

“You will be there, I know,” the Duke of York said.

“Unless God prevents it, I intend to,” the former Duke of Aumerle said.

He had a document inside his shirt, but the seal that was attached to the document could be seen.

The Duke of York said, “What seal is that, that is hanging outside your shirt? Do look you pale? Then it must be important. Let me see the document.”

“My lord, it is nothing,” the former Duke of Aumerle said.

“If it is nothing, then it doesn’t matter who sees it,” his father said. “You will do what I tell you to do; let me see the document.”

“I beg your grace to pardon me. It is a matter of small consequence, which for some reasons I would not have seen.”

“Which for some reasons, sir, I mean to see it,” his very suspicious father said. “I fear, I fear —”

“What should you fear?” the Duchess of York said. “It is nothing but an IOU for some money he has borrowed to buy gay apparel in preparation for Bolingbroke’s triumph day.”

“IOU?” the Duke of York said. “An IOU to himself? If he has borrowed money from someone, the other person will be holding the IOU.”

“Wife, you are a fool.

“Boy, let me see the document.”

His son replied, “I beg you, pardon me; I may not show you the document.”

“I will be satisfied,” the Duke of York said. “Let me see it, I say.”

He grabbed the document and read it. Then he shouted, “Treason! Foul treason! Villain! Traitor! You slave!”

“What is the matter, my lord?” the Duchess of York asked.

“Ho!” the Duke of York said. “Who is within there?”

A servant entered the room.

The Duke of York ordered, “Saddle my horse. I pray to

God for His mercy. What treachery is here!”

“Why, what is it, my lord?” the Duchess of York asked.

“Give me my riding boots, I say,” the Duke of York ordered the servant. “Saddle my horse.”

The servant exited to carry out the orders.

The Duke of York then said, “Now, by my honor, by my life, by my pledged loyalty, I will denounce and inform against the villain.”

“What is the matter?” the Duchess of York asked.

“Be quiet, foolish woman,” her husband replied.

“I will not be quiet,” the Duchess of York replied. “What is the matter, Aumerle?”

“Good mother, be content and calm,” the former Duke of Aumerle said. “It is no more than my poor life must answer for.”

“Your life answer for!” she said.

“Bring me my riding boots,” the Duke of York shouted. “I will ride to the King.”

The servant returned, carrying the boots.

“Strike the servant, Aumerle,” the Duchess of York ordered. She was frantic and did not want her son to die, and so she was interfering with the servant’s attempt to help the Duke of York put on his long riding boots.

The former Duke of Aumerle did not strike the servant.

She said, “Poor boy, you are perplexed and bewildered.”

She shouted at the servant, “Go away, villain! Never more come in my sight!”

“Give me my boots, I say,” the Duke of York said.

The Duchess of York said, “Why, York, what will you do? Won’t you hide the trespass of your own flesh and blood? Have we more sons? Are we likely to have more sons? Haven’t my child-bearing years been drunk up by Time? And will you pluck my fair son from my old age, and rob me of a happy mother’s name? Doesn’t he resemble you? Isn’t he your own son?”

“You foolish madwoman,” the Duke of York replied, “will you conceal this dark conspiracy? By reading this document, I know that a dozen conspirators have taken the sacrament, put their signatures on a document that each has a copy of, and sworn to kill King Henry IV at Oxford.”

“Our son shall not be one of the conspirators,” the Duchess of York said. “We’ll keep him here, and so then what is the conspiracy to him?”

“Get away from me, foolish woman!” the Duke of York said. “Even if he were twenty times my son, I would still denounce and inform against him.”

“If you had groaned for him in childbirth as I have done, you would be more pitiful,” the Duchess of York said. “But now I know your mind. You suspect that I have been disloyal to your bed, and that he is a bastard, not your son. Sweet York, sweet husband, don’t be of that mind: Don’t think that. He is as like you as a man may be. He doesn’t resemble me, or any of my kin, and yet I love him.”

“Get out of my way, unruly woman!” the Duke of York shouted.

He exited to get on his horse and ride to King Henry IV to inform on the traitors.

“Go after him, Aumerle!” the Duchess of York said. “Get

to his horse first, mount it, and ride as quickly as you can and get to the King before he does, and beg your pardon from the King before your father accuses you of treason.

“I will follow. I’ll not be long behind; although I am old, I don’t doubt that I can ride as fast as York, and I will never rise up from the ground until Bolingbroke has pardoned you. Away, be gone!”

— 5.3 —

King Henry IV, young Henry Percy, and some other lords talked together in a room at Windsor Palace.

King Henry IV said, “Can’t anyone tell me news about my unthrifty, prodigal, and profligate son? It is fully three months since I last saw him. If any plague is hanging over us, it is he. I wish to God, my lords, that he might be found. Inquire at London, among the taverns there, for there, they say, he daily does frequent, with unrestrained loose companions, even such, they say, as stand in narrow lanes, and beat our night watchmen, and rob our wayfarers. He, that spoiled child and unmanly boy, takes as a point of honor to support so dissolute a crew.”

The King’s prodigal son was known as Prince Hal.

Young Henry Percy said, “My lord, some two days ago I saw the Prince, and I told him about that tournament that will be held at Oxford.”

“And what did the ‘gallant, fine gentleman’ say?” the King asked.

“His answer was, he would go among the brothels, and from the commonest whore pluck a glove, and wear it as a favor — a token of allegiance — and with that he would unhorse the strongest and most robust challenger.”

“My son is as dissolute as he is reckless,” King Henry IV

said, “yet through both bad qualities I see some sparks of better hope, which elder years may happily and hopefully bring forth. But who comes here?”

The former Duke of Aumerle, looking distracted, entered the room and asked, “Where is the King?”

“What does our cousin, who stares and looks so wildly, want?” King Henry IV asked.

“God save your grace!” the former Duke of Aumerle said. “I beg your majesty to allow me to have some conversation alone with your grace.”

King Henry IV ordered the others, “Withdraw yourselves, and leave us here alone.”

Young Henry Percy and the other lords exited.

King Henry IV asked, “Tell me now, what is the matter with you, our cousin?”

“May my knees forever grow to the earth and my tongue forever cleave to my roof within my mouth unless I receive a pardon before I rise or speak,” the former Duke of Aumerle replied.

“Was this fault you want pardoned merely intended, or has it already been committed? Did you merely plan to do it, or have you already committed it? If you merely planned to do it, however heinous it may be, to win your future loyalty I will pardon you.”

“Then give me permission to turn the key and lock the door, so that no man may enter until my tale is done.”

He wanted to ensure that they were alone when he told the King about the planned assassination.

“You may have your desire,” King Henry IV said.

Outside the door, which was now locked, the Duke of York shouted, “My liege, beware; look to defend yourself. You have a traitor in your presence there.”

Instantly suspicious of the former Duke of Aumerle, King Henry IV drew his sword and said, “Villain, I’ll make you harmless by killing you.”

“Stop your revengeful hand; you have no reason to be afraid,” the former Duke of Aumerle said.

Outside the door, the Duke of York shouted, “Open the door, you overconfident, foolhardy King. Shall I for love speak treason to your face? I am committing treason by calling you ‘foolhardy’ because I am so concerned about your safety. Open the door, or I will break it open.”

King Henry IV unlocked the door, and the Duke of York entered the room.

“What is the matter, uncle?” King Henry IV said.

Using the royal plural, he added, “Speak. Catch your breath. Tell us how near is danger, so that we may prepare and arm us to encounter it.”

The Duke of York handed him the document that he had taken from his son and said, “Peruse this writing here, and you shall learn about the treason that the breathlessness caused by my haste will not allow me to tell you.”

The former Duke of Aumerle said to the King, “Remember, as you read, your promise you gave to me. I repent; don’t read my name there in that document. My heart is not in league with my signature.”

“It was, villain, before your hand set your signature down,” the Duke of York said. “I tore the document from the traitor’s bosom, King. Fear, and not love, begets the traitor’s penitence. Forget your promise to pity him, lest

your pity prove to be a serpent that will sting you to the heart.”

Reading the document, King Henry IV said, “Oh, heinous, strong, and bold conspiracy! Oh, loyal father of a treacherous son! You pure, immaculate, and silver fountain, from which this stream — your son — through muddy passages has held his current and defiled himself! Your overflow of good transforms to bad in your son, and your abundant goodness shall excuse this deadly blot — sin and signature — of your transgressing son.

“If that happens, then my virtue shall be his vice’s pander,” the Duke of York said, “and he shall spend my honor with his shame, as thriftless sons spend their scraping, saving fathers’ gold.

“My honor lives when his dishonor dies, or my shamed life in his dishonor lies. You kill me by allowing him to live; to save my life, you ought to cause him to die. By your giving him breath, the traitor lives, and the true and loyal man is put to death.”

Outside the room, the Duchess of York shouted, “What ho, my liege! For God’s sake, let me in.”

“What shrill-voiced suppliant makes this eager cry?” King Henry IV asked.

“A woman, and your aunt, great King,” the Duchess of York replied. “It is I. Speak with me, pity me, open the door. A beggar is now begging who never begged before.”

Recognizing the humor in the situation, King Henry IV said, “Our scene is altered from a serious thing, and it is now changed to a comic scene: ‘The Beggar and the King.’”

He said to the former Duke of Aumerle, who was his first

cousin, “My dangerous cousin, let your mother in. I know she has come to plead about your foul sin.”

The Duke of York said, “If you pardon anyone who asks you for a pardon, more sins may prosper because of your forgiveness. If you cut off this festering limb, the rest of the body politic will rest sound. If you don’t treat the festering limb, it can infect all the rest of the body politic.”

The Duchess of York entered the room and said, “Oh, King, believe not this hard-hearted man — my husband! Love loving not itself, none other can. If a father doesn’t love his son, then he is unable to love anyone, including a King.”

The Duke of York said to his wife, “You frantic woman, what are you doing here? Shall your old dugs once more a traitor rear?”

“Sweet York, be patient,” the Duchess of York said.

She then said to King Henry IV, “Hear me out, gentle liege.”

She knelt.

“Rise up, good aunt,” King Henry IV said.

“Not yet, I beg you,” she replied. “Forever I will walk upon my knees, and never see a happy day, until you give me joy, until you bid me to be joyful, by pardoning the Earl of Rutland, my transgressing boy.”

She knew that it would not be wise to refer to her son as the Duke of Aumerle.

Her son, the former Duke of Aumerle, knelt and said, “In support of my mother’s prayers, I bend my knee.”

The Duke of York knelt and said, “Against them both my true, loyal joints bended be. Ill may you thrive, if you grant

any grace!”

The Duchess of York said, “Do you think that my husband is pleading in earnest? Look at his face: His eyes drop no tears. He pleads to you in jest. His words come from his mouth; our words come from our heart. He pleads only faintly and wants his requests to be denied. We pray with heart and soul and everything else. His weary joints would gladly rise, I know. Our knees shall kneel until to the ground they grow. His prayers are full of false hypocrisy; ours are full of true zeal and deep integrity. Our prayers to you out-pray his; so then let them have that mercy that true prayer ought to have.”

“Good aunt, stand up,” King Henry IV said.

“No. Do not say ‘stand up’ to me. Say the word ‘pardon’ first, and afterwards say ‘stand up’ to me. If I were your wet nurse, and I were teaching you to talk, ‘pardon’ would be the first word you would learn to say.

“I never longed to hear a word until now. Say ‘pardon,’ King; let pity teach you how. The word is short, but it is not so short as it is sweet. No word like ‘pardon’ is for Kings’ mouths so fitting and meet.”

The Duke of York said, “Speak it in French, King; say, ‘*Pardonne moi.*’”

The French words were a polite way of saying no to a request.

The Duchess of York said to her husband, “Do you teach pardon to destroy pardon by using the word against itself? Ah, my sour husband, my hard-hearted lord, you who set the word itself against the word!”

Evil people set the word itself against the word; some evil people even quote the Bible in support of their evil deeds.

She said to King Henry IV, “Speak ‘pardon’ as it is currently used in our English land. The logic-chopping, meaning-changing French we do not understand. Your eye begins to speak; set your tongue there; or in your piteous heart plant your ear; so that hearing how our lamentations and prayers do pierce, pity may move you to speak the word ‘pardon.’”

“Good aunt, stand up,” King Henry IV said.

“I do not plead to you in order to stand,” the Duchess of York said. “Pardon is all the suit — the petition to you — I have in hand.”

“I pardon him, as God shall pardon me,” King Henry IV said.

“Oh, happy vantage of a kneeling knee!” the Duchess of York said. “Who would have thought that kneeling would gain a victory! Yet am I sick for fear. Speak that word again. Twice saying the word ‘pardon’ does not split a pardon in two; instead, it makes one pardon strong.”

“With all my heart, I pardon him,” King Henry IV said.

“You are a god on Earth,” the Duchess of York said.

King Henry IV got serious. Among the conspirators was the Duke of Exeter, his brother-in-law. Also among the conspirators was the Abbot of Westminster.

King Henry IV said, “But as for our ‘trustworthy’ brother-in-law and the abbot, and all the rest of that conspiring crew of traitors, destruction shall immediately dog them at the heels.

“Good uncle, help to order various forces to go to Oxford, or wherever these traitors are. They shall not live within this world, I swear, without my capturing them, if I once know where they are.

“Uncle, farewell; and, cousin, too, *adieu*. Your mother well has prayed, and may you prove to be loyal and true.”

The Duchess of York said, “Come, my old, degenerate son. I pray that God will make you new.”

She wanted her son to reform and be loyal to the new King. She also wanted him to be safe.

— 5.4 —

Sir Pierce of Exton and a servant talked together in a room of Windsor Castle.

Sir Pierce of Exton said, “Did you notice what words King Henry IV spoke? ‘Have I no friend who will get rid of this living fear for me?’ Weren’t these his words?”

“These were his very words,” the servant replied.

“‘Have I no friend?’ said he. He said it twice, and he emphatically stated it twice together, didn’t he?”

“He did.”

“And while speaking it, he wistly — intently and longingly — looked at me, as if he wanted to say, ‘I wish that you were the man who would divorce this terror from my heart,’ meaning King Richard II at Pomfret Castle. Come, let’s go. I am King Henry IV’s friend, and I will rid him of his foe.”

— 5.5 —

On 14 February 1400, Richard, alone in a room of Pomfret Castle, spoke to himself:

“I have been deliberating how I may compare this prison where I live to the world, but because the world is populous and here there is no creature except myself, I cannot do it; yet I’ll puzzle it out, using a hammer to beat things into

shape if I must.

“My brain I’ll show to be the female to my soul. My soul will be the father; and these two — the female brain and the male soul — will give birth to a generation of continually reproducing thoughts, and these same thoughts will people this little world, this prison I am in. These thoughts will have moods and dispositions like the people of this world, the Earth, for no thought is contented.

“The better sort of thoughts, such as thoughts of things divine, are intermixed with introspective doubts and set the word itself against the word — they set one passage of the Bible against another, seemingly contradictory passage of the Bible.

“For example, ‘Come, little ones,’ and then again, ‘It is as hard to come as for a camel to thread the postern of a small needle’s eye.’”

A postern is a little gate.

Matthew 19:14 states, “*Jesus said, ‘Suffer the little children [...] to come unto me.’*”

Matthew 19:24 states, “*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*”

The word “camel” also meant “cable-rope,” and the word “needle” also meant “door for pedestrians’ use in a city gate.”

Richard continued, “My most ambitious thoughts plot unlikely wonders, such as how these vain weak fingernails may tear a passage through the flinty ribs — framework — of this hard world, my ragged prison walls, and, because my fingernails cannot, they die in their own pride — they die of frustrated ambition.

“Thoughts leading to happiness flatter themselves that the thinkers are not the first to be slaves to fortune, nor shall they be the last. They are like silly beggars who while sitting in the stocks with their hands and/or feet restrained take refuge from their shame by thinking that many have already and others must in the future sit there in the stocks, and in this thought they find a kind of ease, bearing their own misfortunes on the back of such people as have before endured the same punishment.

“Thus I play in one person many people, and none of those people is contented and happy.

“Sometimes I am King, but then treasons make me wish myself a beggar, and so I am a beggar in my thoughts. Then crushing penury persuades me I was better off when I was a King, and then I am a King again, and by and by I remember that my crown was usurped by Bolingbroke, and immediately I am nothing, but whatever I am, neither I nor any man who is a man shall be pleased by nothing, until he is eased by being nothing. No man is pleased during this life; death brings ease.”

Music began to play.

Richard said, “Do I hear music?”

He listened; the music was badly played.

He said, “Ha, ha! Keep time. How sour sweet music is, when time is broken and no proportion kept — when the tempo is broken and no proper rhythm is kept!

“So it is in the music of men’s lives, and here in this prison I have the daintiness and sensitivity of ear to rebuke time broken by a disordered stringed instrument. My suffering in prison has made me sensitive to other kinds of disharmony, such as I hear in this music.

“If not for the concord — harmony — of my state and time now, I had not an ear to hear my true situation broken. When I was King — my true situation in life — I paid no attention to the proper conduct of my life, but now that I am no longer King, I can see what I did wrong when I was King. In other words, if not for the peace and quiet of this prison, I would not be able to truly understand the discord in my own affairs when I was King — discord that led to me no longer being King.

“I wasted time, and now Time causes me to waste away, because now Time has made me his numbering clock — a clock with numbers, not a clock that is a sundial.

“My thoughts are minutes, and with sighs they tick, making a discord, and mark their passage on my eyes. My eyes are the outward watch, to which my finger, like the point of a hand on the clock, is always pointing as it cleanses my eyes of their tears. My finger continually wipes away the tears from my eyes.”

Still speaking to himself, Richard said, “Now, sir, the sounds that tell the hour are clamorous groans, which strike upon my heart, which is the bell, and so sighs and tears and groans show minutes, quarter-hours and half-hours, and hours, but my time runs quickly on in Bolingbroke’s proud joy, while I stand fooling here, his Jack of the clock.”

The Jack of a clock is a figurine on top of some clocks that strike the bell and announce the passage of time.

Richard continued, “This music maddens me; let it sound no more because although music has helped madmen to regain their wits, in me it seems it will make wise men mad.

“Yet I ask for a blessing on the heart of the man who gives the gift of music to me! For it is a sign of love, and love given to Richard is a rare jewel in this world of people who

hate Richard.”

A groom who worked with horses in stables entered the room and said, “Hail, royal Prince!”

“Thanks, noble peer,” Richard said. “The cheaper of us is ten groats too dear.”

Richard was being courteous when he called the groom, a servant, “noble peer.” He was also making a joke when he said, “The cheaper of us is ten groats too dear.” The cheaper of the two was Richard because he lacked freedom and was in prison, while the groom was a free man. Richard’s joke lay in making a pun on the names of two coins: a royal and a noble. The royal was worth ten groats more than a noble — a groat is a unit of money. Because Richard was no longer royal, he was only a noble, and the groom was valuing him ten groats too dear.

Richard continued, “Who are you? And how did you come here, where no man ever comes but that sad dog — that miserable man — who brings me food to keep me alive and thereby makes my misfortune continue to live?”

His visitor replied, “I was a poor groom of your stable, King, when you were King. I, travelling towards York, with much trouble have finally gotten permission to look upon my former royal master’s face.

“Oh, how it grieved my heart when I beheld in London streets, that coronation-day, when Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary, that horse that you so often have ridden, that horse that I so carefully have groomed!”

“Did Bolingbroke ride on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend, how went Barbary under Bolingbroke?”

“As proudly as if he disdained to touch the ground.”

Richard said, “So proud he was that Bolingbroke was on

his back! That jade has eaten food from my royal hand. This hand has made him proud with stroking and petting him. Wouldn't Barbary stumble? Wouldn't he fall down, since pride must have a fall, and break the neck of that proud man who usurped his back?

"I beg your forgiveness, horse! Why do I rant about you, since you, created by God for man to awe, were born to bear? I was not made a horse, and yet I bear a burden like an ass, spurred, chafed, and tired by prancing Bolingbroke."

Holding a dish of food, the jail keeper entered the room.

The jail keeper said to the groom, "Fellow, leave; stay here no longer."

Richard said to the groom, "If you are my friend, it is time you left."

"What my tongue dares not, that my heart shall say," the groom said, and then he exited.

The jail keeper said to Richard, "My lord, will it please you to fall to and eat?"

"Taste my food first, as you are accustomed to do," Richard said.

Someone tasted a King's food before he ate, in case of poison.

The jail keeper said, "My lord, I dare not. Sir Pierce of Exton, who recently came here from the King, commands me not to."

"May the Devil take Henry Bolingbroke — the Duke of Lancaster — and you!" Richard shouted. "Patience is stale, and I am weary of it!"

"Stale" was a strong word; a horse's urine was called

“stale.”

Richard began to beat the jail keeper, who shouted, “Help! Help! Help!”

Sir Pierce of Exton and some of his men, all of them armed, entered the room.

Richard shouted, “What is this? What is the meaning of Death attacking me in this violent way?”

He grabbed a weapon from one of the men attacking him and shouted, “Villain, your own hand yields the instrument of your death.”

He killed the man and shouted, “Go, and fill another room in Hell.”

Richard killed another of his attackers, and then Sir Pierce of Exton mortally wounded him.

Richard said, “That hand shall burn in never-quenching fire that made my royal person stagger like this. Exton, your fierce hand has with the King’s blood stained the King’s own land.

“Mount, mount, my soul, and rise! Your seat is up on high, while my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die.”

Richard died.

Sir Pierce of Exton said, “He was as full of valor as of royal blood. Both have I spilled. Oh, I hope that the deed is good! The Devil, who told me I did well, now says that this deed is chronicled in Hell.

“This dead King to the living King I’ll bear.”

He ordered his men, “Take from here the rest, and give them burial here.”

In a room of Windsor Castle, King Henry IV was meeting with the Duke of York. Other lords and some attendants were present.

King Henry IV said, “Kind uncle York, the most recent news we have heard is that the rebels have consumed with fire our town of Cicester in Gloucestershire, but whether the rebels have been captured or slain we have not heard.”

The Earl of Northumberland entered the room.

King Henry IV said to him, “Welcome, my lord. What is the news?”

“First, to your sacred chair of state I wish all happiness,” the Earl of Northumberland replied. “The most pressing news is, I have to London sent the heads of Oxford, Salisbury, Blunt, and Kent. The manner of their capture is described in detail in this paper here.”

“We thank you, gentle Earl of Northumberland and member of the Percy family, for your pains,” King Henry IV said. “And to your worth we will add right worthy — well-merited and quite substantial — gains.”

Lord Fitzwater entered the room and said, “My lord, I have from Oxford sent to London the heads of Brocas and Sir Bennet Seely, two of the dangerous, conspiring traitors who sought at Oxford your dire overthrow.”

“Your pains, Fitzwater, shall not be forgotten,” King Henry IV said. “Very noble is your merit, well I know.”

Young Henry Percy and the Bishop of Carlisle entered the room.

Young Henry Percy said, “The grand conspirator, the Abbot of Westminster, bearing the burden of conscience

and sour melancholy, has died and yielded up his body to the grave. But here is the Bishop of Carlisle, still living and waiting for your Kingly decision and the sentence to punish his pride.”

King Henry IV said, “Carlisle, this is your sentence. Choose some secluded place, some monastic dwelling-place that is more sacred than the dwelling-place — the prison cell — you have now, and within it enjoy your life.

“As long as you live peacefully, you will die free from strife, for although you have always been my enemy, yet in you I have seen high sparks of honor.”

Sir Pierce of Exton entered the room. Some attendants carried in the coffin that contained Richard’s corpse.

Sir Pierce of Exton said, “Great King, within this coffin I present your buried fear. Here in this coffin all breathless lies the mightiest of your greatest enemies, Richard, who was born in Bordeaux, by me brought here.”

King Henry IV replied, “Exton, I thank you not; for you have wrought with your fatal hand a deed that will arouse slanderous talk against my head and all this famous land.”

“From your own mouth, my lord, I did this deed,” Sir Pierce of Exton replied. “You wanted me to kill Richard.”

“People who need poison don’t love poison,” King Henry IV said, “and I don’t love you. Although I wished that Richard were dead, I hate the murderer and I love him who was murdered.

“In return for your labor, take a guilty conscience, but you will receive neither my good word nor my Princely favor.

“With Cain, the first murderer, who murdered Abel, go wander through the shadows of night, and never show your head by day or light.”

He paused and then said, “Lords, I protest that my soul is full of woe that blood should be sprinkled on me to make me grow.

“Come, mourn with me for that person whom I do lament, and put on sullen black clothing immediately. I’ll make a voyage to the Holy Land to wash this blood from my guilty hand.

“March sadly after me; grace my mourning here by weeping after this untimely, premature bier.”

Chapter XV: HENRY IV, PART 1

CAST OF CHARACTERS (1 Henry IV)

The King and His Faction

King Henry the Fourth.

Henry, Prince of Wales, son to the King. Aka Prince Hal.

Prince John of Lancaster, son to the King.

Earl of Westmoreland.

Sir Walter Blunt.

The Rebels

Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester.

Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland.

Henry Percy, his son.

Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March.

Scroop, Archbishop of York.

Sir Michael, his Friend.

Archibald, Earl of Douglas.

Owen Glendower.

Sir Richard Vernon.

The Lowlifes

Sir John Falstaff.

Edward “Ned” Poins.

Gadshill.

Peto.

Bardolph.

The Women

Lady Percy, Wife to Hotspur.

Lady Mortimer, Daughter to Glendower.

Mrs. Quickly, Hostess in Eastcheap.

Other Characters

Lords, Officers, Sheriff, Vintner, Chamberlain, Drawers,
Carriers, Travellers, and Attendants.

CHAPTER 1 (1 Henry IV)

— 1.1 —

In 1399, Henry Bolingbroke succeeded in deposing his first cousin King Richard II of England, thereby becoming King Henry IV. Even after becoming King, however, he ruled over an uneasy country, many citizens of which believed that he had unjustly seized the crown. After Richard II died, Henry IV vowed to go on a crusade to the Holy Land and return it to Christian hands. Political events, however, kept coming up that required delaying that crusade.

King Henry IV met with one of his younger sons, Lord John, who was Earl of Lancaster, as well as with the Earl of Westmoreland and Sir Walter Blunt, and others in his palace in London. King Henry IV was under great stress due to political and personal troubles.

Using the royal we, King Henry IV said, “We are shaken by events and wan with care, but let us find time and breath in this shaky and still-frightened peacetime to talk about the new battles that we intend to fight in distant foreign lands. No more will the English soil drink the blood of her children. No more will the English fields be filled with cutting war. No more will the English flowerets be bruised by the tread of armored warhorses. The soldiers of hostile forces that have recently opposed and killed each other in civil wars were all countrymen, as similar to each other as are shooting stars. Now, these formerly hostile forces shall all march as one in mutual well-ordered ranks. No more will they be opposed against acquaintances, relatives, and allies. They will be united for a common purpose. No more will the edge of war, as if it were an ill-sheathed knife, cut our people. Therefore, friends, we will hold a crusade and go as far as the sepulcher of Christ in Jerusalem. We are

now the soldier of Christ, under Whose blessed cross we have been conscripted and for Whom we are pledged to fight. Therefore, we will raise an English army composed of people who were shaped in their mothers' wombs and born to chase away the pagans from those holy fields over whose acres walked those blessed feet which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed for our benefit to the bitter cross. For twelve months, we have been planning to do this. You know this, so we need not tell you our plans again."

He then ordered, "My noble kinsman Westmoreland, tell us what the council decided yesterday about planning this urgent crusade."

The Earl of Westmoreland replied, "My liege, we hotly discussed this crusade, and we had assigned many specific military responsibilities, but we were interrupted by a messenger bearing important news from Wales. The news was bad concerning the noble Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March. He led the men of Herefordshire to fight the lawless and wild Owen Glendower, who captured him. The Welshmen butchered a thousand men of Herefordshire. The Welshwomen did such a beastly shameless transformation to those corpses that it cannot be retold or spoken about except with much shame."

True, the Earl of Westmoreland thought. The wild Welshwomen castrated the English corpses.

King Henry IV said, "The news of this new battle must have necessarily stopped your debate about our crusade to the Holy Land."

Westmoreland replied, "This news and other news did that. Other news, even more disturbing and unwelcome, came from the north of England. On Holy-rood day, September 14, young Harry Percy — known also as the gallant Hotspur — fought the brave Earl of Douglas, that ever-

valiant Scot, at the hill of Holmedon. The news we received was that they were fighting a serious and bloody battle with much firing of artillery. Our messenger left at the peak of the battle and so was unable to report who would win the battle.”

“I have received more recent news than you about that battle,” King Henry IV said. “A dear, truly devoted friend, Sir Walter Blunt, has newly alighted from his horse. He and his horse are stained with the various kinds of soil that lie between the hill of Holmedon and this palace of ours in London. He has brought us pleasant and welcome news: Hotspur has defeated the Earl of Douglas. Sir Walter Blunt himself saw the bloody corpses of ten thousand bold Scots and twenty-two knights heaped in piles on the plains by Holmedon. Hotspur has taken some nobles prisoner: Mordake, who is the Earl of Fife and the oldest son of the defeated Douglas; and the Earl of Athol, the Earl of Murray, the Earl of Angus, and the Earl of Menteith. Is not this an honorable spoil? Is not this a gallant prize? Ha, Westmoreland, is it not?”

“Truly,” Westmoreland replied, “it is a conquest for a Prince to boast of.”

“Indeed it is,” King Henry IV said, “but you make me sad and make me sin in envy when you say that. I am envious that the Earl of Northumberland is the father to so blest a son as Hotspur. Anyone who wishes to speak of honor speaks about Hotspur. In a crowd of young men, Hotspur stands out; if he were a tree in a grove, he would be the very straightest tree in that grove. Hotspur is the darling and the pride of Fortune. I see people praise Hotspur, and then I look at my own oldest son, my young Harry — my Prince Hal and the future King of England — and I see debauchery and dishonor upon his brow. I wish that I could prove that a mischievous fairy had come by when the two

Harrys were infants and had swapped them! In that case, Hotspur would be my son, and Prince Hal would be the son of the Earl of Northumberland. Such thinking is sinful. But let us move on to other matters. What is your opinion of young Hotspur's pride? He has sent word to me that he shall deliver to me, from all his prisoners, only one: Mordake, the Earl of Fife. He has sent word to me that he will keep all the other prisoners. Hotspur knows that he cannot keep as prisoner Mordake, who is of royal blood, but all prisoners are required to be turned over to me, the King, so that we can ransom them."

Westmoreland replied, "Hotspur must be following the advice of Thomas Percy, the Earl of Worcester, who is his uncle. Worcester is opposed to you in every way possible, and his advice is making Hotspur proud and resistant to your authority. He is like a proud bird that preens its feathers and raises its crest."

"I have sent word to Hotspur to come to me and to answer for his actions," King Henry IV said. "Because of this, I must for a while put aside my crusade to Jerusalem. On Wednesday, we will meet with the council at Windsor. Inform all the lords about the meeting, and then quickly return here. More is to be said and to be done. I am angry now, and I do not wish to speak publicly."

"I will do as you wish, my liege," Westmoreland said.

— 1.2 —

Prince Hal, who was a young man, and Sir John Falstaff, who was an old, obese knight who lived by committing crimes and entertaining people with his wit, were talking together in a place in London where the Prince sometimes stayed.

Falstaff asked, "Hal, what time of day is it, lad?"

Hal replied, “You are so fat-witted because of your drinking of that Spanish white wine we call sack and because of your unbuttoning your pants after supper and sleeping upon benches until afternoon that you have forgotten to ask whatever it is that you truly want to know. What the Devil do you have to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack and minutes were castrated cocks fattened for eating — capons — and clocks were the tongues of women who run brothels and dials were the signs of whorehouses and the blessed Sun himself were a beautiful hot prostitute wearing a flame-colored dress made of taffeta, I see no reason why you need to ask the time of the day.”

“You make a good point, Hal,” Falstaff said. “Those of us who live by robbing travelers and taking their wallets live by the time of the Moon and the seven stars, and not by the time of Phoebus Apollo, that wandering knight so fair who drives the chariot of the Sun across the sky each day. Dear rogue, please, when you are King, God save your grace — oops, I should say ‘God save your majesty’ because you have no grace.”

“What, none?” Prince Hal asked. “I have no sense of propriety, no sense of virtue?”

“No, you don’t, Prince Hal,” Falstaff said, “In fact, you don’t have enough grace to say a prayer before eating an egg and butter.”

“Get to the point,” Prince Hal said. “When I am King, what?”

“I have a request,” Falstaff said. “When you are King, don’t allow those of us who are squires of the night to be called thieves of the day. True, we stay up at night and sleep during the day — we commit our robberies at night. But let us be called by dignified names. Let us be called

Diana the Moon goddess' foresters. Let us be called gentlemen of the shade. Let us be called servants of the Moon. And let men say that we are men of good government or conduct because we are governed, as the sea and its tides are, by our noble and chaste mistress the Moon, under whose countenance we steal."

"You speak truly," Prince Hal said. "Your comparison is apt. The fortune of us who are the Moon's men ebbs and flows like the sea and its tides, because we are governed, as the sea and its tides are, by the Moon. This I can prove with an example. A wallet filled with gold that was resolutely robbed from a traveler on Monday night is dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning. The money is gotten by crying, 'Put your hands up!' And it is spent by crying, 'Sack! Bring in more sack!' We see the ebb when the robber stands at the foot of a ladder leading to a gallows, and we see the flow or flood when the robber is standing at the top of the gallows with a rope around his neck."

"By the Lord, you speak the truth, lad," Falstaff said. Uncomfortable at the thought of hanging, a very real possibility in his life, he changed the subject: "Don't you think that the Hostess of the tavern is a most sweet wench?"

"She is as sweet as the honey from the hills around Syracuse in Sicily, my old lad of the Castle," Prince Hal replied. "Of course, you should know. After all, you know well the London brothel that roisterers everywhere call the Castle. And the Castle is a place where the Hostess of the tavern could very well work. By the way, don't you think that a buff jerkin is a most sweet robe of durance?"

"The Sheriff's officers wear buff jerkins because they are made of leather and so wear well and endure, but of course you mean durance in the sense of imprisonment," Falstaff complained. "You keep bringing up things that could form

part of my future life. Why are you making these particular quips and jests? Why should I want to hear about buff jerkins? I would prefer to hear about the plague!”

“Why should I want to hear about the Hostess of the tavern?” Prince Hal replied. “I would prefer to hear about the pox!”

“The pox is syphilis,” Falstaff said. “If you have much to do with the Hostess of the tavern, you are very likely to hear about syphilis. Remember, Hal, you have called her to a reckoning many times.”

“The reckonings I have called her to have been to pay our bills for food and drink,” Prince Hal said. “I have never needed to pay reckonings for her other business — the one involving women and bedrooms. Have I ever asked you to pay even part of a bill?”

“No, Prince Hal,” Falstaff said. “I’ll give you your due. You have always paid the entire bill.”

“Yes, I have, both here and elsewhere, as long as my money held out,” Prince Hal said. “And when I have run out of money, I have used my credit.”

“Yes, you have,” Falstaff said. “And you have used so much credit that it is fortunate that it is here apparent that you are heir apparent. But, Hal, let ask you whether there will be gallows standing in England when you are King? Will courageous highwaymen continue to be collared by the overly long arm of the law? Please, Hal, when you are King, do not hang thieves.”

“I won’t, but you will,” Prince Hal said.

“Shall I hang thieves?” Falstaff said. “Oh, joy! By the Lord, I’ll be an excellent judge.”

“You are already judging incorrectly,” Prince Hal said. “I

mean that you will do the hanging and therefore become an excellent hangman.”

“If you say so, Hal,” Falstaff said. “Hanging thieves is much better than hanging around in the court.”

“Would you hang out to obtain suits?” Prince Hal asked.

“If I hung out in court, I would obtain lawsuits, but if I were a hangman, I would obtain suits of clothing because the clothing of the hung is forfeited to the hangman. Truly, the hangman does not have a lean wardrobe. But all this talk of hanging is making me as melancholy as a tomcat howling at night or a bear tormented by dogs.”

“Or an old, toothless lion, or a sad note on a lover’s lute.”

“Yes, or the drone of a single note played on a Lincolnshire bagpipe.”

“What about a timorous rabbit, or the melancholy of Moorditch?”

“Moorditch, ugh!” Falstaff said. “That foul drainage ditch! That sewer where lepers and insane people beg! Hal, you make the most unsavory comparisons. Why am I surprised! You are prone to making similes, you rascally, sweet young Prince.”

Falstaff decided to imitate a Puritan, as he so often did, and said, “But, Hal, please, trouble me no more with worldly considerations. I wish to God that you and I knew where a supply of good reputations could be bought. An old lord of the council criticized me the other day in the street because I allow you to be my friend, but I ignored him even though he made some good points. Yes, indeed, he talked very wisely, and in the street, too.”

“You did well because wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it,” Prince Hal said, thinking that if Falstaff

were going to pretend to be a holy man that he would respond by paraphrasing Proverbs 1:20.

“You have a talent for twisting scripture to serve your ends,” Falstaff said, “and you have a talent for corrupting people — even saints! You have done much harm to me by corrupting me, Hal. I pray that God forgives you for it! Before I knew you, Hal, I knew nothing of evil. But now that I know you, Hal, I am, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must repent my life, and I will reform and give my life to the Lord. If I do not, I am a villain and I will be damned to Hell. But I have no intention of being damned — not even for the son of a King.”

“Where shall we steal a wallet tomorrow, Jack?” Prince Hal asked Falstaff.

“By God, wherever you want,” Falstaff said enthusiastically. “I will make up one of the members in your band of robbers. If I do not, call me a villain and disgrace me.”

“I can see that you want to reform your life,” Prince Hal said. “A moment ago you were praying to God, and now you are ready to be a thief.”

Falstaff joked, “Why, Hal, being a thief is my vocation, Hal. It is no sin for a man to labor in his vocation.”

A thief named Edward Poins entered the room. He was on terms of great familiarity with Falstaff and Prince Hal.

Falstaff said, “Welcome, Poins! Now we will learn whether our friend Gadshill has set up a robbery for us to perform. If men were able to be saved by merit, what hole in hell would be hot enough for Gadshill and his evil deeds? He is the most unparalleled villain who ever cried ‘Put your hands up!’ to a honest man.”

True, Prince Hal thought, Gadshill takes his name — the only one I know — from Gad’s Hill, the scene of many, many robberies.

“Good day, Ed,” Prince Hal said to Ned Pains.

“Good day, sweet Hal,” Pains replied.

To Falstaff, Pains said, “How are you, Monsieur Remorse? Are you still repenting your sins — or pretending to? How are you, Sir John Sack and Sugar? Are you still engaging in your favorite hobbies — drinking too much and increasing the size of your belly? Jack, are you and the Devil still tussling over your soul, which you sold to him for a cup of Madeira wine and a cold chicken leg on Good Friday, the most holy of fast days?”

“Sir John will keep his word and his agreement,” Prince Hal said. “The Devil shall get Falstaff’s soul, for Falstaff will not break the proverb that says to give the Devil his due.”

Pains said to Falstaff, “In that case, you are damned because you are keeping your word to the Devil. How odd to be damned for keeping one’s word.”

“Falstaff would have been damned in any case,” Prince Hal said. “If he did not keep his word to the Devil, he would be damned for not keeping his word.”

Pains said, “Now to business. Be at Gad’s Hill by 4 a.m. Pilgrims are going to the holy shrine at Canterbury to make rich donations, and traders are riding to London with fat wallets. I have masks for all of you, and each of you has his own horse. Gadshill will be spending the night in an inn in Rochester. I have already ordered supper for tomorrow night at our favorite tavern in Eastcheap. We could do this robbery in our sleep. If you will go with me and be robbers, I will stuff your wallets full of money; if you will not, stay

at home and be hanged.”

“Ed,” Falstaff said, “if I stay at home and do not go with you, I’ll turn state’s evidence and have you hanged for going.”

“You’re joking, chipmunk cheeks,” Poins said. “You need the money from the robbery. I have never known you when you did not need money from a robbery.”

“Hal, will you make up one of our band of robbers?” Falstaff asked.

“Who? I?” Prince Hal asked, shocked. “Am I a thief? No, I am not. I will not go with you.”

Prince Hal thought, *Falstaff would like for me to be a thief. He truly is a false staff. He would like for me to be an alcoholic and a criminal. That way, he could control me, and later, after I am King, he could loot all of England. Still, he can be great fun to be around.*

“Hal,” Falstaff said, “no honesty, manhood, or good fellowship are in you and it is false that you come from the blood royal, if you lack the courage to rob a man for ten shillings, which as you know, is the monetary worth of our English coin the royal.”

Prince Hal replied, “I will be a madcap and act on wild impulses.”

“That’s well said,” Falstaff said.

“I lied,” Prince Hal said. “I will stay at home.”

“By the Lord, then I’ll be a traitor,” Falstaff said, “when you are King.”

“So be it,” Prince Hal said. “I don’t care.”

Poins said, “Sir John, please leave the Prince and me alone.

I will give him reasons why he should join our band of robbers early tomorrow morning. I will persuade him to go with us.”

Falstaff said to Poins, “May God give you the spirit of persuasion and may Hal profit from what you tell him, so that what you speak may move Hal and what he hears he shall believe. That way, the true Prince may, for the sake of entertainment, prove a false thief. We poor criminals need royal protection. Farewell. If you need me, I will be at my favorite tavern in Eastcheap.”

“Farewell, old man with the vigor of a young robber,” Prince Hal said. “If you were a summer, you would last until November 1: All-Saints Day.”

Falstaff departed, and Poins said to Prince Hal, “Please, my good sweet honey lord, ride with us tomorrow. I have a practical joke that I want to execute that I cannot manage alone. Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill shall rob those men that I have already told you about. You and I will not be with them. When they have robbed the travelers and taken their money, you and I will rob the robbers. If we do not, then cut my head from off my shoulders.”

Prince Hal was intrigued, but he was cautious. He said, “You and I will have to separate ourselves from the four robbers. How can we do that?”

Poins replied, “You and I will set forth before or after them, and we will appoint a place to meet before the robbery, but we will not show up there. Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill will then commit the robbery by themselves. As soon as they have the money, you and I shall set upon them and rob them.”

Still cautious, Prince Hal said, “It is very likely that they will recognize us because of our horses and our clothing, and simply because they know us so well.”

“I have thought of that,” Poins said. “They will not see our horses. I’ll tie them in the wood. They will know the masks that I have brought, but we will change masks. Also, I have some garments made of buckram cloth that we can wear over our clothing.”

“One more thing,” Prince Hal said. “It will be the two of us trying to rob the four of them. The odds are not in our favor.”

Poins replied, “I know that two of them are cowards who will readily turn their backs to us and run away, and if a third fights longer than he sees reason to, I vow never to fight again. Listen: The point of this practical joke is to hear the outrageous lies that fat Falstaff will tell when we meet to eat our supper. He will swear that he fought at least thirty swordsmen. He will describe the parries he made and the blows he took and the dangers he faced. Then you and I will tell him what really happened, and we will laugh at him.”

Prince Hal thought that the reward outweighed the risk, and so he said, “Let’s do it. Get everything we need, and we will play this practical joke. Tomorrow night, we will meet with the would-be robbers in Eastcheap. There we will listen to Falstaff tell his lies. Farewell.”

“Farewell, my lord,” Poins said, then departed.

Now alone, Prince Hal said to himself, “I know all of you for the robbers and lowlifes you are, and for a while I will allow you to commit your crimes and follow your idle, undisciplined inclinations. In so doing, I will imitate the Sun, which allows ugly storm clouds to cover up his beauty and hide him from the world. When the Sun decides to reveal again his glorious self, he will be marveled at all the more because of his absence and because he broke through the ugly storm clouds that seemed to be about to strangle

him. If every day of the year were holidays during which men sought entertainments, to seek entertainments would be as tedious as going to work. But when holidays seldom come, they are desired. Good things that are rare are the most pleasing. Someday, I will stop my riotous and unworthy behavior, and I will accept the responsibilities of being a Crown Prince — responsibilities that I never sought but that came to me because of who my father is. I will make it known that I am so much better than I act now. Men will expect the worst from me, but I will give them my best. I will be like bright metal lying on dark soil. My riotous past will set off my goodness to a greater extent than goodness alone without a riotous past could ever appear. I will live a riotous life now, but I have a plan. I will reform when men think it is most unlikely that I will reform.”

— 1.3 —

In the council chamber of Windsor Castle, King Henry IV met with the nobles from the North who had lately been giving him trouble: Hotspur; Hotspur’s father, the Earl of Northumberland; and Hotspur’s uncle, the Earl of Worcester. Also present were the King’s good and loyal friend Sir Walter Blunt and other people. King Henry IV was angry at Hotspur because Hotspur had not sent him the prisoners that he had captured at the Battle of Holmedon on 14 September 1402.

King Henry IV said, “My blood has been too cold and temperate to be quickly angered by your insults to me. Because you have found me to be so lenient and so mild, you have tried my patience. Know that I will from now on be what my position requires me to be, a King who is mighty and to be feared, rather than the temperate and mild person I am by nature. I have been as smooth as oil and as soft as young down plucked from birds, and therefore you

have not been giving me the respect that the proud pay only to the powerful.”

Worcester replied, “Our house, my sovereign liege, does not deserve to be so criticized by you. You are using the scourge of greatness on us, but it is our family — the Percys — who helped to make you King of England. We supported you when you deposed King Richard II.”

Northumberland started to speak, “My lord — ”

But King Henry IV knew how to divide and conquer. He interrupted Northumberland and ordered, “Worcester, leave this room immediately. I see defiance and disobedience in your eyes. Your attitude is too bold and imperious. A King does not permit any of his subjects to angrily frown in his presence. You have my permission — and my order — to leave. If we need you or your counsel, we will send for you.”

Although angry, Worcester bowed and left the room.

King Henry IV said to Northumberland, “You were about to speak.”

“Yes, my good lord,” Northumberland said. “Those prisoners that were demanded in your highness’ name after Hotspur had captured them at Holmedon were not, he says, denied with such vehemence as was reported to your majesty. The report erred either because of malice or because of a misunderstanding. My son, Hotspur, is not guilty of what he has been accused.”

Hotspur said, “My King, I did deny you no prisoners. But I remember, after the battle was over, when I was drained after the excitement of battle and extreme toil, when I was breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword, a certain lord came to me. He was neat, clean, and fashionably dressed, as fresh as a bridegroom, and his chin was recently

fashionably clipped in a manner not designating a soldier — his chin looked like the stubble left on a field after the harvest. He wore perfume and smelled like a person who makes women's hats. Between his finger and his thumb, he held a perfume-box, which every so often he held up to his nose and sniffed and then sneezed. He smiled and he talked, but when the soldiers carried dead bodies near him, he became angry and called them uneducated and rude lowlifes because they had brought a foul, disgusting corpse between the wind and himself, thus forcing him to smell it. With many fancy and effeminate words, he questioned me. Among other things, he demanded my prisoners on your Majesty's behalf. I was in pain because my wounds were cold, and I was irritated because I was pestered with this perfumed parrot. Out of my pain and my impatience, I answered ... negligently ... I know not what. I said that he should take the prisoners, or I said that he should not take the prisoners. I don't remember because he made me so mad because he gleamed due to being so clean — and because he smelled so sweet and talked just like a waiting-gentlewoman when he spoke of guns and drums and wounds. Can you believe it? He told me that the best thing on Earth was spermaceti — which he said comes from whales — for an inward bruise. He also said that it was a great pity that villainous salt-petre should be dug out of the bowels of the harmless Earth and used for gunpowder to cowardly destroy so many good brave men. He also said that if it weren't for these vile guns, he himself would have been a soldier. This silly, incoherent chatter of his, my lord, I answered absent-mindedly, as I said, and I beg you not to let his report cause trouble between me and your Majesty, whom I hold in high respect.”

Sir Walter Blunt, a good friend and advisor to King Henry IV, said to the King, “Considering the circumstances, my good lord, whatever Hotspur said to such a person at such a

time and in such a place may reasonably be allowed to die and not discredit Hotspur now or later, provided that he make all things right with you now.”

“But he is not making all things right!” King Henry IV said. “Even now, he will not give me his prisoners except with conditions. He demands that we at our own expense immediately ransom his brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer, who, I believe, betrayed his men to that great magician, damned Glendower, and got one thousand of them killed by the magician whom he was supposed to fight. We also have learned that Mortimer has recently married Glendower’s daughter. Shall our treasury be emptied so that Mortimer can return home again? Shall we aid a traitor? Shall we bargain with the enemy for the return of a traitor? Should I ransom a poor and defeated general who cowardly surrendered? Let him starve in the barren mountains! No one who asks me for even one penny to ransom the traitor Mortimer and bring him home shall ever be my friend.”

“Mortimer a traitor!” Hotspur exclaimed. “He never faltered, my King, except through the fortunes of war. The proof lies in all those wounds — open like mouths — that he received while courageously fighting on the grassy bank of the Severn River. All alone, man against man, Mortimer battled great Glendower for close to an hour. Three times they stopped to catch their breath and three times, by mutual agreement, they drank from the swiftly flowing river. Their blood dripped into the water, which it discolored. As if frightened by its bloody water, the river carried it away and hid it in the reeds by its bank. Never has base and rotten traitorship disguised its treachery with such deadly wounds. Never could the noble Mortimer receive so many wounds, all of them willingly, if he were a traitor. Therefore, let him not be slandered by the title of traitor.”

“You are not telling the truth about Mortimer,” King Henry IV said. “Those are lies. Mortimer never fought Glendower — he would just as soon fight the Devil in single combat as he would Glendower. Aren’t you ashamed to be telling such lies? Boy, from now on let me not hear you talk about Mortimer. And send me your prisoners by the speediest means possible — or else. Lord Northumberland, we order you to return to your Northern home with your son. Hotspur, and send us your prisoners, or you will regret it.”

King Henry IV departed along with Sir Walter Blunt and others.

Hotspur was angry: “If the Devil himself should come and roar for my prisoners, I will not send them to the King. In fact, I will go to the King right now and tell him so. I will feel better after I tell the King what I really think, even if I lose my head by so doing.”

His father, the Earl of Northumberland, said, “Are you drunk with anger? Stay here. Wait awhile. Look, here comes your uncle, the Earl of Worcester.”

Worcester entered the room.

Hotspur was still angry and said, “The King orders me not to speak of Mortimer? I will speak of him, and let my soul lack mercy and not make it to Heaven if I do not join forces with Mortimer and fight on his side. In fighting for Mortimer, I will be willing to empty all my veins and shed my dear blood drop by drop in the dust, but by fighting for Mortimer I will raise the downtrod Mortimer as high in the air as this ungrateful and malignant Henry Bolingbroke, whom people call King Henry IV.”

Northumberland said to Worcester, “Brother, the King has made your nephew mad.”

“What caused this anger after I left?” Worcester asked.

Hotspur replied, “Bolingbroke said that he will indeed have all my prisoners, and when I urged again that he ransom Mortimer, my wife’s brother, then his cheek looked pale, and on my face he turned a fearful look, trembling even at the name of Mortimer.”

Worcester replied, “I cannot blame him for being afraid of the name of Mortimer. Didn’t the late King Richard II proclaim that Mortimer was the heir to the throne?”

“He did,” Northumberland said. “I myself heard the proclamation. Afterward, King Richard II — may God pardon us for our wrongs committed against him when we helped Bolingbroke to overthrow him! — set forth on his Irish expedition, which Richard cut short to return to England, where he was deposed and then murdered.”

“Because of the murder of King Richard II, we Percys are foully spoken of and defamed by the world’s wide mouth. The citizens of England are scandalized by our behavior in helping Bolingbroke and deposing Richard. We are even blamed for the murder of Richard.”

“This news about Mortimer is new to me,” Hotspur said. “Did King Richard II really proclaim Mortimer, my brother-in-law, to be next in line to the throne?”

Northumberland replied, “He did; I myself did hear it.”

Hotspur said, “Then I cannot blame King Henry IV for wanting Mortimer to starve in the barren mountains. But is it right that you who set the crown on the head of Bolingbroke, who forgets the service that you have done for him and for whose sake you have suffered a loss of reputation, should have to suffer a world of curses when you were only the accomplices and means? When a man is hanged, who should be blamed for that man’s death? The rope? The ladder? Or the hangman? Forgive me for using that comparison to show the perilous situation you are in

under this cunning King and the low rank that he assigns to you. Are you willing to have bad things spoken about you now at this time and to have bad things written about you in history books that have yet to be written? Do you want to go down in history as noble and powerful men who did such an unjust deed as both of you — may God forgive you! — have done? You deposed King Richard II, that sweet lovely rose, and then you put on the throne this canker-rose — this ulcer — named Bolingbroke. And are you willing to be shamed by its being recorded that this man for whom you have done so much and for whom you have lost your good reputation should, having fooled you, now discard you? No. Time still remains for you to redeem your reputations and show yourselves to be good people. Get revenge for the jeering and disdain and contempt thrown at you by this proud King, who studies day and night to repay all the debt he owes to you — by killing you! Therefore, I say —”

Worcester interrupted Hotspur, “Be quiet, nephew. Say no more. Allow me to now metaphorically open a secret book so that I can read to your righteous anger and sense of grievance matter deep and dangerous, as full of peril and adventure as is a man who unsteadily walks over a loudly roaring current while using a spear as a bridge. Because of your anger, I am sure that you will be quick to understand me.”

Because Hotspur, who was able to tell that his uncle was going to talk of rebelling against the King, was caught up in his hope of gaining glory on a battlefield, he expressed his opinions out loud instead of allowing his father and uncle to talk.

“If the man falls into the river,” Hotspur said, “then it is a loss — and possibly a death — for him, whether he sinks immediately or swims. Let danger and honor meet and fight

in the center of a battlefield. The blood moves more quickly when hunting a lion than when hunting a hare.”

Northumberland said, “Imagination of some great exploit is making Hotspur lose his self-control.”

Hotspur added, mostly to himself, “By Heaven, I think it would be an easy leap to jump up and pluck bright honor from the pale-faced Moon or to dive to the bottom of the sea, where a fathom-line could never reach the bottom, and pluck up drowned honor by her wet locks of hair. Let the person who rescues honor wear — without a rival — all her favors. Let the hero have *all* the honors — let there be no pathetic sharing of honors!”

“Hotspur is lost in his imagination,” Worcester said to Northumberland. “He is not paying attention to the people who need his attention: you and I, who are in front of him.”

Worcester then said, “Hotspur, please give me your attention.”

“Pardon me,” Hotspur said.

“These noble Scots who are your prisoners —”

Hotspur interrupted, “I’ll keep them all! By God, he shall not have a Scot of them! No, if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not get one from me! I swear that I’ll keep them!”

“You are off and running on your own tangent again and paying no attention to me,” Worcester said. “As I said, you shall keep your prisoners.”

“I certainly will,” Hotspur said. “That’s settled. King Henry IV said that he would not ransom Mortimer. He forbade me to mention Mortimer, but I will go to the King when he is asleep and in his ear I will shout ‘Mortimer!’ I know — I will get a starling and have it taught to speak nothing but the name ‘Mortimer’ and I will give it to the King so that

he will be angry whenever the starling speaks!”

“Hotspur, listen to me for a moment,” Worcester said.

Hotspur ignored Worcester and continued his rant: “From this moment I will think about nothing except how to gall and annoy this Bolingbroke and his son the lowlife Prince of Wales. I would kill Prince Hal with a pot of poisoned ale except that I think his father does not love him and would prefer that he meet with an accident or ‘accident’ that would take away his life. And why wouldn’t he, given the company that Prince Hal keeps.”

“Farewell, Hotspur,” Worcester said. “I will talk to you when you are ready to listen to me.”

Northumberland said to Hotspur, “You are acting as if you were stung by wasps. You are an impatient fool who is behaving like a woman who talks continuously and never stops to listen.”

Hotspur replied, “I am angry. It is as if I were whipped and beaten with sticks, stung by nettles, and stung by ants whenever I hear of this vile politician — this deceitful schemer — Bolingbroke. When King Richard II was still alive — what is that place called? Damn! I can’t remember! It is in Gloucestershire. There I first bowed my knee to this King of Smiles, this Bolingbroke when, my father, you and he came back from Ravenspurgh. You, my father, had gone to take sides with Bolingbroke and fight for him against King Richard II. Richard’s uncle the madcap Duke of York dwelled there.”

“You mean Berkeley castle,” Northumberland said.

“Yes, that’s it,” Hotspur said. “What sugary flattery that fawning greyhound fed to me! He said, ‘The promise of his childhood has come to fruition.’ He called me ‘gentle Harry Percy’ and ‘kind cousin.’ May the Devil take such

flatterers! Well, forgive me for ranting. Good uncle, tell your tale; I have finished.”

“If you have not yet finished, start raving again,” Worcester said sarcastically to him. “We will wait until you are done.”

“I am done. I swear it,” Hotspur said.

“Once more, let us talk about your Scottish prisoners,” Worcester said. “Release your prisoners immediately without requiring a ransom. Mordake, the son of the Earl of Douglas, is one of your prisoners. Use that fact to raise an army of troops from Scotland. You will be given that army for several reasons that I shall write down in a letter and send to you.”

Worcester said to Northumberland, “While Hotspur, your son, is busily employed in Scotland, you will make an ally of the Archbishop, that well-beloved noble prelate.”

“You mean the Archbishop of York, don’t you?” Northumberland asked.

“Yes,” Worcester said. “He begrudges the death of his brother, the Lord Scroop, whom King Henry IV ordered to be executed at Bristol. The Archbishop has thought about rebellion, plotted rebellion, and decided definitely to rebel against the King. He is waiting for the right time to rebel. I say this not as a guess, but as what I know to be fact.”

“I understand what is going on,” Hotspur said. “It is a good plan. It will succeed.”

“Don’t be too hasty,” Northumberland said. “The plot has not yet been set in motion. You don’t want to let your dogs loose until the hunt begins.”

“This plan is a noble plan that shall succeed,” Hotspur said. “An army from Scotland and an army from York in the North of England will join with Mortimer, who will lead an

army from Wales, right?"

Worcester replied, "Yes."

"This rebellion is well planned," Hotspur said.

Worcester said, "We have good reason to set this revolt quickly in motion. We can save our heads only by raising armies. No matter how carefully we act and try to please the King, he will always think that he is in our debt because we helped him to become King. He will also continue to think that we are unhappy because he has not sufficiently rewarded us. Therefore, the King will find a way to solve his problem — by killing us. He has already made us a stranger to any signs of his approval."

"Yes, he has done that," Hotspur said. "We'll be revenged on him."

"Hotspur, farewell," Worcester said. "Don't do anything except what I tell you to do in the letters to you that I shall send. When the time is ripe, which it soon will be, I will secretly go to Glendower and Lord Mortimer. You and the Scot Douglas and our united armies will meet together, and we will bear our fortunes on our own strong arms — our fortunes that are at the present time so uncertain."

Northumberland said to Worcester, "Farewell, good brother. We shall thrive, I trust."

Hotspur said to Worcester, "Farewell, uncle. Let the hours be short until battlefields and the blows and groans of battle applaud our cause!"

CHAPTER 2 (1 Henry IV)

— 2.1 —

A carrier — a transporter of goods — carrying a lantern entered the yard of an inn on the London-Canterbury Road and said, “Heigh-ho! If it isn’t four in the morning, I’ll be hanged. The Big Dipper is over the new chimney and still our horses have not been made ready. Groom!”

From inside the inn, the groom in charge of the horses said, “Coming! Coming!”

The first carrier said to a second carrier who was walking toward him, “Please, Tom, give the saddle of Cut, my horse, a few whacks to make it soft, and put some tufts of wool underneath the pommel of the saddle so that the padding makes the horse more comfortable. The poor nag is chafed by the saddle in between the shoulders.”

Tom, the second carrier, said, “The peas and beans used in the horse feed at this inn are as damp as a dog, and that is a quick way to give the poor nags worms. This stable has gone to Hell since Robin Ostler died.”

The first carrier replied, “Poor fellow, he was never happy since the price of oats rose; it was the death of him.”

Tom said, “I think this is the worst inn in all London road when it comes to fleas: I have been bitten so much that my red spots make me look like the red-spotted fish known as a tench.”

“That’s a good comparison,” the first carrier said. “By God, even though the Christian Kings get the most of everything, no King could surpass the number of flea bites I have received since midnight.”

Tom said, “This inn won’t even give us a chamber pot, and so we pee in the fireplace, and the urine helps the fleas to breed like rabbits.”

The first carrier called, “Groom! Come here! Hurry up, damn it!”

They began to talk about their deliveries.

Tom said, “I have a ham and two roots of ginger that I need to deliver in Charing Cross.”

The first carrier said, “The turkeys in my basket are quite starved — they are thin!”

He yelled for the groom, “Come here! Damn you! Can’t you see me? Can’t you hear me? Taking a drink is good, and so is hitting you on the head. Call me a villain if that is not true. Come here! You have a job to do!”

Gadshill, the highwayman who collected information about people whom he and his friends could rob, walked into the yard of the inn.

“Good morning, carriers,” he said. “What time is it?”

The first carrier was suspicious for good reason: The inn was located in an area noted for robberies. Although he knew that the time was after 4 a.m., he did not want to give this stranger any information that could help him to commit a robbery, especially of the two carriers and their fellow travelers. He worried that this stranger might want information about when they would leave the inn and about where they were traveling.

The first carrier told Gadshill, “I think it is two o’clock.”

“Please lend me your lantern so that I can see my gelding in the stable,” Gadshill said to the first carrier.

The first carrier, afraid that Gadshill would steal the

lantern, replied, “No, by God! My mother did not raise me to be a fool.”

Gadshill then said to Tom, the second carrier, “Please lend me your lantern.”

Tom replied, “When would I lend you my lantern? When it’s a cold day in Hell, that’s when — or the day after you are hanged!”

Gadshill asked, “What time do you think that you will arrive in London?”

Tom kept his answer vague: “Time enough to go to bed with a candle, I promise you.”

Tom said to the first carrier, “Come, neighbor Mugs, let’s talk to the gentlemen. They will accompany us.”

Quietly, so that Gadshill would not hear him, Tom added, “They want to travel in a group because they have a valuable load.”

The two carriers departed, and Gadshill called a confederate in the inn to come out and talk to him: “Chamberlain!”

The chamberlain attended to the bedrooms in the inn and therefore was able to overhear conversations and to learn much about the occupants at the inn.

The chamberlain arrived and said, “As a pickpocket would say, ‘I am so close to you that I could put my hand in your pockets.’”

Gadshill replied, “That is as apt as saying, ‘As a chamberlain would say, ‘I am so close to you that I could put my hand in your pockets.’” You are very much like a pickpocket except the pickpocket does the actual stealing while you gather the information that leads to the theft.”

“Good morning, Mr. Gadshill,” the chamberlain said. “What I told you last night still holds true. A rich farmer from Kent has with him three hundred marks — a unit of money — in gold. I heard him tell it to one of his companions last night at supper: a kind of revenue officer — someone who is also carrying an abundance of valuables, although I do not know specifically what. They are already awake and have ordered eggs and butter for their breakfast. They will depart soon.”

“They have a date to keep with Saint Nicholas’ clerks, aka highwaymen,” Gadshill said. “Traveling thieves are fortunate that Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of travelers, which I presume includes highwaymen. If these two people don’t keep their date with robbers, I will give you my neck.”

“I don’t want your neck,” the chamberlain said. “Please keep it for the hangman. I know that you worship Saint Nicholas as truly as a false man can.”

“You need not talk to me about a hangman,” Gadshill said. “If I hang, I will be part of a fat pair on the gallows because Sir John will hang with me, and you know that he is not starving. But I will work tonight with other highwaymen you do not know and cannot even dream of, people high in society who will rob for the sport of it, who will give robbers some class, and who, if we run into trouble, will — if only to help themselves — make everything for us all right. I will be accompanied by no footloose vagabonds, no people with long staffs who would pull a man from off his horse to steal sixpence from him, no purple-faced alcoholics with big mustaches. I will be accompanied by people of nobility who experience tranquility because they don’t have to work for a living. I will be accompanied by mayors and great ones. I will be accompanied by people who can keep secrets, who are more likely to hit someone

than say ‘Put your hands up!’ and to say ‘Put your hands up!’ than drink and to drink than pray. But I am not speaking entirely the truth. They pray to their country, or rather, they prey on their country. They ride up and down on her, and they walk on her. They treat her as if she were their boots, as well as their source of booty.”

Gadshill exaggerated somewhat: He was expecting Prince Hal and Sir John to be members of his band of robbers, but the others were lowlives without titles — and Sir John was a lowlife with a title.

“They treat their country as if she were their boots!” the chamberlain said. “Will she protect them from water when they walk on muddy roads?”

“She will, indeed,” Gadshill said. “We have greased our way with bribes and made our boots waterproof. We steal in complete security, as if we were in a castle. It is as if we could walk invisibly, like the folk belief says about people who harvest invisible fern seeds and carry around a bag of them in their pockets.”

“Don’t put your trust in fern seeds,” the chamberlain said. “Put your trust in darkness — it can better make you invisible.”

“Shake hands with me,” Gadshill said. “I promise as a honest man that you shall have a share in the booty because of the information you have given to me.”

“I prefer that you promise as a false thief to give me a share of the booty,” the chamberlain said.

“I am both an honest man and a dishonest thief — just not to the same people,” Gadshill said. “I assume that you are the same. Tell the groom to get my gelding out of the stable. Farewell, you dumb joker.”

On the road near Gads Hill, Prince Hal and Poins talked together. Peto and Bardolph were also present.

Poins said, “Let’s hide ourselves. I have taken Falstaff’s horse and hidden it from him, and now he is complaining. His nerves are fraying like cheap velvet.”

Prince Hal said to the others, “Hide yourselves!”

They hid themselves in shrubbery.

Falstaff arrived and said, “Poins! Poins, damn you!”

Prince Hal said, “Be quiet, you fat-kidneyed rascal! What a racket you are making!”

“Where’s Poins, Hal?” Falstaff asked.

“He walked up to the top of the hill. I’ll go and seek him.”

Prince Hal departed.

“I have been cursed — that must be why I rob in the company of Poins!” Falstaff said. “That scoundrel! He has taken my horse and hidden it somewhere — I don’t know where! If I walk even four more feet, I will completely lose my breath. Well, I plan to die a good death despite all this current misery — provided I escape hanging for killing Poins. For every hour of the past twenty-two years, I have sworn to myself that I will drop him as one of my friends, but yet I enjoy his company. I swear that he must have given me a friendship potion.”

Falstaff called, “Poins! Hal!”

No answer came back, and Falstaff said, “Damn you both!” He believed that Prince Hal must also be in on the practical joke.

Falstaff then called, “Bardolph! Peto!”

No answer came back, and Falstaff said, “I prefer to die rather than rob a foot further. Drink is a good thing, and I think that reforming myself and becoming an honest man — and leaving these rogues — would be as good as drink. If it isn’t, then I am the worst scoundrel who ever chewed with a tooth. Walking eight yards of uneven ground on foot for me is the equivalent of walking seventy miles on foot for a person of normal weight. These stonyhearted villains know it well enough. The world must be damned if there is no honor among thieves.”

Falstaff heard a whistle from the others.

He said, “Whew! A plague upon you all! Give me my horse, you rogues — give me my horse, and be hanged!”

Accompanied by Poins, Prince Hal walked up to Falstaff and said, “Be quiet, fat guts! Lie down; put your ear close to the ground and listen. You may be able to hear the tread of travelers.”

Fat Falstaff replied, “Do you have any levers to lift me up again, after I lie down? I think not. I swear that I will not carry my own flesh so far on foot ever again — not even for all the money in your father’s royal treasury! Why are you horsing around and playing a joke on me?”

“No horsing around can take place,” Prince Hal said. “You don’t have a horse.”

“Please, Hal,” Falstaff said. “Please, Prince, help me get my horse back.”

Prince Hal replied, “Why should I help you get on your horse’s back? I am not your groom.”

Falstaff said, “Go and hang yourself in your own heir-apparent garters! After all, you are a member of the Order

of the Garters. I swear, if I am caught robbing I will turn informant and get all of you arrested. I swear that I will have filthy ballads written about all of you and have them sung everywhere. If I don't, let a cup of sack be my poison — I will drink myself to death! This practical joke has gotten out of hand — and left me on foot! I hate it when the game is afoot and I happen to be the game.”

Gadshill, Bardolph, and Peto showed up.

Gadshill joked, “Stand still and put your hands up!”

Falstaff replied, “I am standing — very much against my will.”

Poins said, “I know who this is — I recognize his voice. This is Gadshill, who gets the information we need to rob people and who arranges the robbery.”

Bardolph asked, “Gadshill, do you have any news for us?”

Gadshill replied, “Cover your faces. Put your masks on. Money that belongs to the King is coming down the hill. It's going to the King's treasury.”

“That's a lie,” Falstaff said. “It's going to the King's Tavern, one of my favorite drinking spots.”

Gadshill said, “There's enough money to make us all.”

Falstaff added, “To be hanged.”

Prince Hal took charge. He and Poins stood close together. Prince Hal said to the others, “You four shall encounter them face to face in the narrow lane. Ned Poins and I will approach them from behind. If they flee from you, they will run into Poins and me.”

Peto asked, “How many of them are there?”

“Some eight or ten,” Gadshill replied.

“Damn!” Falstaff said. “Aren’t they more likely to rob us than we are to rob them?”

“Are you a coward, Sir John Paunch?” Prince Hal asked.

“Indeed, I am not John of Gaunt, your grandfather,” Falstaff replied, “but I am no coward, Hal.”

“We will quickly put that to the test,” Prince Hal said.

Poins said to Falstaff, “Your horse is behind that hedge. When you need your horse, that is where you will find him. Farewell. Be brave.”

Poins and Prince Hal left.

Falstaff said, “I am so happy to get my horse back that I won’t take revenge against Poins.”

Hidden from the others, Prince Hal said to Poins, “Ned, where are our disguises?”

“Very near. I will take you to them.”

As the others waited to rob the travelers, Falstaff said, “May happiness and success be our lot. Let each of us attend to our present business.”

The four travelers arrived.

One traveler said, “Come, neighbor. The boy shall lead our horses down the hill. We will walk for a while and stretch our legs.”

The thieves yelled, “Put your hands up!”

The travelers shouted, “Help!”

Falstaff yelled, “Kill them! Cut their throats! They’re nothing but miserable parasites! They are fat, bacon-fed knaves! They hate young people like us. Down with them! Rob them!”

Falstaff, an old man, hoped that the travelers would tell the law officials that young men had robbed them.

In the confusion, the travelers kept shouting, “Help!”

Falstaff shouted, “Go hang yourselves, you potbellied knaves! Are you losing all that you own! I wish that was so! I wish that everything you owned were here so we could take it! You fat misers! You pork bellies! Young men must live, too! Aren’t you the wealthy men who serve as grandjurors! We’ll jure you — we’ll injure you!”

The robbers tied up the four travelers and took their valuables and then departed.

Prince Hal and Poins had watched the robbery from a hidden place.

Prince Hal said to Poins, “The robbers have bound the honest men. If you and I can now rob the robbers and go merrily to London, we will have good conversation for a week, much laughter for a month, and the memory of a good jest forever.”

They followed the thieves to catch up to them.

Poins said, “I can hear them now.”

Falstaff said to Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill, “Let’s divvy up the loot and ride back to London before daybreak. Both Prince Hal and Poins are complete and utter cowards — we have seen plenty of proof of that! Poins has no more courage than can be found in a wild duck.”

The thieves began to divide up the money.

Disguised and wearing masks, Prince Hal and Poins came forward, brandishing swords.

Disguising his voice, Prince Hal shouted, “Give us your money!”

Disguising his voice, Poins shouted, “Or die!”

The thieves ran away, including Falstaff, who screamed and lashed out with his sword once or twice before running away. The thieves left behind their booty.

“That was easy,” Prince Hal said. “Now we will get happily on our horses. The thieves are all scattered and separated from each other. They are so overcome with fear that they dare not meet each other. Each of them will think that the others are officers of the law. Let’s leave, good Ned. Falstaff sweats to death, and he waters the lean earth as he walks. If it weren’t so funny, I would pity him.”

Poins said, “How he roared with fright!”

— 2.3 —

Hotspur stood in a room in his home, Warkworth Castle in Northumberland, as he read a letter.

Hotspur read out loud, “*For my part, my lord, I would be happy to be there because of the respect that I have for your family.*”

He said, “Then why won’t you be there and be a part of our rebellion? He writes that he would be happy to be there, and yet he will not be there. This letter shows that he loves his own barn more than he loves the House of the Percys. Let me read some more.”

Hotspur read out loud, “*The purpose you undertake is dangerous.*”

He said, “That is true: A rebellion against a King is dangerous. It can also be dangerous to catch a cold. People can die from that, and they can die in their sleep or while eating and drinking. If you were here, my lord fool, I would tell you that out of this nettle called danger, we will pluck a flower called safety.”

Hotspur read out loud, "*The purpose you undertake is dangerous. The friends you have named are unreliable, the timing is poor, and your forces too light to defeat so great an opposition.*"

He said, "Do you really think so? If you were here, I would call you a shallow, cowardly menial servant, and I would tell you that you lie. What a lack-brain you are! By the Lord, our plot is as good a plot as ever was laid, and our friends are true and constant. We have a good plot and good friends, and we are full of expectations for victory. Yes, we have an excellent plot and very good friends. What a frosty-spirited rogue is this writer! Why, the Archbishop of York commends the plot and the general course of action. If I were now by the rascally writer of this letter, I could dash out his brains by merely hitting him with his lady's fan! Is there not my father, my uncle, and myself all joined together in this rebellion? And Lord Edmund Mortimer, the Archbishop of York, and Owen Glendower? Don't we also have on our side the Earl of Douglas? Haven't I received letters from all of them to meet me with their armies by the ninth of the next month? Haven't some of them already started their marches? This letter-writer has no faith! He is a pagan rascal! He is an infidel! Ha! Now he — fearful and with a cold heart — will go to the King and tell him about our rebellion. I could split myself in two and kick myself because I contacted this dish of skim milk and tried to get him to join our honorable rebellion! Hang him! Let him tell the King! We are prepared. I will set out tonight to meet Glendower."

Hotspur's wife, Kate, entered the room. She was worried about her husband and her marriage.

Hotspur said to her, "How are you, Kate! I must leave you within the next two hours."

Kate replied, "My husband, why do you insist on being

alone? For what offence have I for the past two weeks been banished from your bed? Tell me, Hotspur, what is it that is troubling you and takes from you your appetite, your pleasure, and your golden sleep? Why do you stare at the ground and why are you so easily startled when you sit by yourself? Why have you lost the ruddiness in your cheeks? Why have you ignored me and not had sex with me? You have not enjoyed my body and you have not allowed me to enjoy your body — a right I have as your wife. Why instead have you been staring at nothing and brooding? While you have slept — lightly, not deeply — I have crept to your bed and have listened to you talk in your sleep. You have murmured tales of iron wars. You have given your bounding steed orders. You have cried ‘Courage’ and ‘To the battlefield!’ And you have talked of sallies and retreats, of trenches and tents, of palisades made of stakes and of parapets made of stone and of other fortifications, of big and small cannon, of prisoners ransomed and of soldiers slain, and of all the occurrences of a violent fight. Your spirit has been so at war that you have thus fought battles in your sleep, and beads of sweat have stood upon your forehead like bubbles in a recently disturbed stream. And in your face strange expressions have appeared such as we see when men stop breathing when they hear suddenly a command of great importance. What portents are these? You are considering some serious business, and you must tell me what it is, or else I will know that you do not love me.”

A servant entered the room and Hotspur asked him, “Has Gilliams departed with the packet of letters?”

“He has been gone for an hour,” the servant replied.

“Has Butler brought those horses from the shire Sheriff?”

“He has just now brought one horse.”

“Which horse? Was it a roan with cropped ears?”

“It is, my lord.”

“That roan shall be by my throne,” Hotspur said. “Well, I will ride him immediately. The Percy family motto is ‘*Esperance!*’ or ‘*Hope!*’ and that is what I have now. Tell Butler to take the roan into the park.”

The servant departed.

Kate said, “Now listen here, husband.”

“What have you got to say, wife?” Hotspur replied.

“What is it that carries you away?”

“Why, my horse, my love, my horse.”

“Stop joking, you mad-headed ape!” Kate said. “Even a weasel is less annoying than you are right now. I swear that I will know your business, husband — that I will! I fear that my brother Mortimer is making a move to become King of England, and he wants you to fight on his behalf and strengthen his armies, but if you go —”

Hotspur joked, “So far afoot, I shall be weary, love.”

Kate said, “Come, come, you parrot, give me the real answer to my question.”

She grabbed the little finger of one of her husband’s hands and threatened, charmingly, “I promise that I’ll break your little finger, Harry, unless you tell me everything I want to know.”

“Away, you trifler!” Hotspur said, not unkindly. “You talked of love. Love! I do not love you, Kate. This is no world to play with dolls and to duel with lips. We must have bloody noses and cracked crowns. That is the currency of our age. Now I must go to my horse!”

Kate grabbed onto Hotspur and did not let go.

Hotspur asked, “What’s wrong, Kate?”

Hotspur had been joking when he had said that he did not love his wife, but for Kate this was serious business.

Upset, she said, “Do you not love me? Do you not, indeed? Is that true? If you do not love me, I will not love myself. Don’t you love me? Tell me whether or not you were joking.”

Hotspur replied, “Will you come with me and see me mount my horse? Once I am on horseback, I will swear to you that I love you always and forever. But, Kate, you must not ask me where I am going or what is the reason for my journey. I must go where I must go, and this evening, gentle Kate, I must leave you. I know that you are wise, but yet you are a wife. I know that you are loyal, but yet you are a woman. As for keeping a secret, no lady is more closed-mouthed than you — because I believe that you will not tell what you do not know. This is as far as I will trust you, Kate.”

“Only that far?” a disappointed Kate said.

“And no further,” Hotspur said. “But, Kate, I promise that you will go where I am going. Today, I will set out on the journey. Tomorrow, you will set out. Will that satisfy you, Kate?”

“It will have to.”

They went to the park, where the roan horse was waiting.

— 2.4 —

Ned Poins was in a room in the Boar’s-Head Tavern in Eastcheap.

Prince Hal entered a room of the Boar’s-Head Tavern, saw

Poins in another room, and called to him, “Ned! Come out of that hot room and laugh with me until Falstaff and the others arrive.”

Poins entered the room that Prince Hal was in and said, “Where have you been, Hal?”

“I have been with three or four blockhead bartenders in the midst of sixty or eighty barrels of wine and ale in the cellar. I have been with some of the lowest members of the working class. Now I am a sworn brother to a trio of bartenders, and I can call them all by their Christian names: Tom, Dick, and Francis. They swear to God that, although I am only the Prince of Wales, yet I am the King of Courtesy. They tell me that I am not a Proud Jack like Falstaff. Instead, I am a Corinthian — a jolly drinking buddy — as well as a lad of mettle and a good man. That’s what they call me. And they say that when I am King of England, all the good lads in Eastcheap will support me. In addition, they have been teaching me their lingo. They call drinking deep ‘dyeing scarlet’ because of the effect that alcoholism has on the color of the alcoholic’s face. When someone pauses to breathe while chugging, they cry, ‘Ahem!’ and bid the drinker to finish off the drink. After spending just fifteen minutes with them, I am so proficient in their lingo that I can drink with any tinker using his own language throughout my life. I tell you, Ned, you have lost out by not being with me during this lesson. But, Ned, to sweeten your life, I give you this pennyworth of sugar, clapped just now into my hand by an apprentice bartender, one who has never spoken any words in his life other than those needed in his job as a bartender: ‘Eight shillings and sixpence’ and ‘You are welcome’ and ‘Coming in a moment, sir’ and ‘Charge a pint of Spanish sweet wine in the Half-Moon Room’ and so on. But, Ned, to pass the time until Falstaff comes, please stand in some neighboring room, while I question the young bartender who gave me

the sugar about how I should use that sugar. Of course, I know that it is to be used to sweeten wine. While I talk to the bartender, you keep calling his name: Francis. This will confuse him and all his conversation will consist of 'Coming!' This will be funny now and set the tone for the fun we will have at Falstaff's expense later."

Poins went into a neighboring room and called, "Francis!"

"That's perfect," Prince Hal said to Poins.

Francis entered the room Prince Hal was in. He called, "Coming!" to Poins, and to a bartender in the room he had just left he called, "Look after the Pomegranate Room, Ralph."

Prince Hal said, "Come here, Francis."

"Yes, my lord. What do you need?" Francis replied.

"How long have you been an apprentice bartender, Francis?"

"Two years, so I have five more years of apprenticeship to serve, and —"

Poins called from the other room, "Francis!"

"Coming!" Francis called back.

"Two years, and five more years to go!" Prince Hal said. "That's a long apprenticeship for the clinking of pewter mugs! Francis, could you be so brave a person as to be a coward when it comes to your apprenticeship and run away from it?"

"I swear on all the Bibles in England that I —"

"Francis!" Poins called.

"Coming, sir!" Francis called.

“How old are you, Francis?” Prince Hal asked.

“Let’s see. At the next Michaelmas — September 29th — I will be —”

“Francis!” Poins called.

“Coming, sir!” Francis called. To Prince Hal, he asked, “Can you wait a moment, sir, and let me take care of that customer?”

Prince Hal replied, “No, but listen, Francis, the sugar you gave me was a penny’s worth, wasn’t it?”

“Lord, I wish that it had been worth two pennies!”

“In return for it, I will give you a thousand pounds,” Prince Hal said. “Ask for it whenever you want it, and you shall get it.”

“Francis!” Poins called.

“At once, sir!” Francis called to Poins.

“You want the thousand pounds at once, Francis?” Prince Hal said. “No, Francis. Not at once, Francis. But tomorrow, Francis; or, Francis, on Thursday; or indeed, Francis, whenever you want it. But, Francis —”

“Yes, my lord?”

Prince Hal said, “If you run away from your apprenticeship, you will rob a leather-jacket-with-crystal-buttons-wearing, short-haired, agate-ring-wearing, wool-socks-with-plain-garters-wearing, unctuous-speaking man with a money pouch of Spanish leather.”

Prince Hal was describing the owner of the tavern, who would lose financially if Francis did not serve the remainder of his apprenticeship. Although not in plain words, Prince Hal was hinting to Francis that if he left his

master, then Prince Hal would find a place for him at the King's palace. Such a place would greatly improve Francis' life — and so be worth at least figuratively a thousand pounds. All Francis had to do was to be clever enough to know what Prince Hal was offering him and to say that yes, he was willing to run away from his master and apprenticeship and to take action to improve his life.

Unfortunately, Francis asked, "Sir, who do you mean?"

"If you don't know who I mean, then you are doomed to have wine stain your white shirts," Prince Hal said.

He added, "In Barbary, sir, it cannot come to so much."

By this, Prince Hal meant that in Barbary — or anywhere but here and now — a penny's worth of sugar would not be worth a thousand pounds or a life-changing job.

Francis, who — like most of us — was not clever enough to respond the right way to Prince Hal's semi-doubletalk, merely asked, "What, sir?"

"Francis!" Poin called.

"Go, Francis," Prince Hal said. "Don't you hear him calling you?"

At the same time, both Prince Hal and Poin called, "Francis!"

Francis stood, mouth open, not knowing what to do.

Francis' master, the innkeeper, entered the room that Prince Hal and Francis were in and said, "Francis, why are you standing still and doing nothing when so many customers are calling you? Go and do your job."

Francis departed.

The innkeeper then said to Prince Hal, "My lord, old Sir

John Falstaff, with half-a-dozen more men, are at the door. Shall I let them in?"

Prince Hal replied, "Let them wait for a few more minutes. I will let you know when to open the door to them."

The innkeeper departed, and Prince Hal called, "Poins."

Poins entered the room, saying, as Francis so often did, "Coming, sir!"

Prince Hal said, "Falstaff and the rest of the thieves are at the door. Are we ready to laugh at them?"

"We shall be as merry as grasshoppers in the summer," Poins said. "But what was the point of your jesting with Francis?"

"The jest with Francis served as the prologue to the upcoming jest with Falstaff," Prince Hal said. "I am now in the mood for humor although I am also ready for any other mood. Jests have been played since the old days of Adam and Eve until this present time: right now at midnight."

Prince Hal thought, *I am in the mood for humor, but I realize that many, many people lack the leisure or the temperament for humor. Some people are over-burdened by work and are unable to participate in fun even when it would be advantageous for them to do so.*

Francis re-entered the room carrying a bottle of wine.

Prince Hal asked him, "What time is it?"

Francis ignored Prince Hal and said, "Coming, sir!" He left the room.

Prince Hal said, "I am amazed that this apprentice bartender should speak fewer words than a parrot and yet he is the son of a woman! His life consists only of running downstairs to get wine and running upstairs to serve it. His

conversation consists only of telling customers the size of their bar bills.”

Prince Hal thought of a person whose life resembled Francis’ in being single-sided. Francis’ life consisted of work. Hotspur’s life consisted of seeking glory and honor. Neither seemed to have any time for fun or to value it.

Prince Hal said, “My mind is not yet like the mind of Hotspur of the north. Hotspur kills some six or seven dozen Scots during breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, ‘I hate this quiet life! I want work.’ She replies, ‘Oh, my sweet Harry, how many have you killed today?’ Hotspur says, ‘Give my roan horse a medicinal drink,’ and then answers his wife, ‘Approximately fourteen.’ An hour later, he calls the number ‘a trifle, a trifle.’”

Prince Hal thought, *Francis and Hotspur are different in one way. Francis works all the time. Hotspur would like more work — he would like more battles in which to kill people.*

He also thought, *I am getting an education about the lower classes. I know a lot about the lowlifes who are robbers: the criminal lower class. Now I know more about the working lower class. Francis is a blockhead, but no wonder — all his time is filled with work. He will be an apprentice for seven years in a job that should require very little time to master. I am fortunate in that I have time for leisure and fun.*

Prince Hal then called to the innkeeper, “Please, let Falstaff in.”

He then said to Poins, “We will have a play extempore. I’ll play Percy, and that damned fat boar Falstaff shall play Hotspur’s wife.”

He looked at the entrance to the room and added,

“‘Yahoo!’ says the drunkard. Here comes Sir Ribs! Here comes Sir Tallow.”

Falstaff, Gadshill, Bardolph, and Peto entered the room. Francis followed them, bringing wine.

Poins said, “Welcome, Jack. Where have you been?”

Falstaff replied, “A plague on all cowards, I say — make that a plague and a vengeance, too! Amen to that! Give me a cup of sack, Francis. Before I lead this life any longer, I’ll sew stockings and mend them and make new bottoms for them, too. A plague on all cowards! Give me a cup of sack, Francis. Isn’t anyone courageous any more?”

Prince Hal said to Poins, “Have you ever seen the Sun, sometimes called Titan by Homer in mythology, kiss a dish of butter? The butter melts and flows just like the wine that is flowing down Falstaff’s throat. Look at Falstaff right now, and you will see the Sun kiss a dish of butter. Falstaff is the Sun, and the sack is the butter that is melting into nothingness.”

Falstaff chugged the wine and then said to Francis, “You rogue, there’s lime in this sack! You added the lime to bad wine to make it seem to be better than it is! Men are villains and rogues and cheats, but a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it. A villainous coward! You may as well end your days and die, old Jack, because manhood, good manhood, has been forgotten upon the face of the earth. If it has not, then I am as skinny as a pole. There live not three good men unhangd in England, and one of them is fat and grows old. God help us all in these bad times! We live in a bad world, I say. I wish I were a Puritan weaver so I could sing psalms at my work. And still I say this: a plague on all cowards!”

“Weaver, huh?” Prince Hal said. “What’s wrong, you huge bale of wool? What are you muttering about?”

“A King’s son, huh?” Falstaff said. “I really ought to get myself a theatrical prop that looks like a dagger and drive you out of the kingdom like the Devil is driven away in old religious plays. While I’m at it, I ought to drive all of your subjects before you like a flock of wild geese! In fact, if I don’t do that, I swear never again to wear hair on my face. You call yourself the Prince of Wales!”

Prince Hal replied, “Why, you fat son of a whore, what’s the matter?”

“Are you not a coward?” Falstaff asked. “Answer me that. And is not Poins there also a coward?”

Poins said, “By God, you fat paunch, if you call me a coward, I’ll stab you.”

“Am I calling you a coward?” Falstaff said. “No, I am not calling you a coward, but — damn you! — I would give a thousand pounds if I could run as fast as you can. You have good posture — you must because you don’t care who sees your back. Do you call what you did backing up your friends? A plague on such backing! Give me friends who will stand face forward and not turn their backs. Give me a cup of sack — I am a rogue if I have drunk today.”

Francis handed him a cup of sack.

“Liar!” Prince Hal said. “Your lips are scarcely wiped since the last time you drank!”

“Yes, and so what?” Falstaff replied.

He drank deeply, and then he said, “I still say this: A plague on all cowards!”

“What’s wrong?” Prince Hal asked.

“What’s wrong!” Falstaff said. “Four of us here stole a thousand pounds early this morning.”

“Where is it, Jack?” Prince Hal asked. “Where is it?”

“Where is it! Taken from us it was! A hundred men set upon the poor four of us.”

Prince Hal pretended to be surprised and exclaimed, “What, a hundred men?”

“I am a rogue, if I were not fighting at close quarters with a dozen of them for two hours. I have escaped only by a miracle. Their swords cut through my shirt eight times and through my trousers four times. My shield has been pierced again and again; my sword is hacked like a handsaw — look at it!”

Falstaff raised his sword so that Prince Hal and Poins could look at its edge, which was jagged as if it had been used in fighting, and then he said, “I never fought better since I became a man, but even my best was not enough. A plague on all cowards!”

Falstaff pointed to Peto and Gadshill and said, “Let them speak: If they speak more or less than the truth, and anything but the truth, they are lowlifes and the sons of darkness.”

Prince Hal asked, “Speak, sirs. What happened?”

Gadshill began to speak, “We four men set upon some dozen —”

Falstaff interrupted, “Sixteen at least.”

Gadshill continued, “And bound them.”

Peto said, “No, no, they were not bound.”

Falstaff interrupted, “You rogue, they were bound, every man of them. If they were not, then I am a Jew — a Hebrew Jew.”

Gadshill continued, "As we were divvying the money, some six or seven fresh men set upon us —"

Falstaff interrupted, "And unbound the rest, and then in came some other men."

Prince Hal asked, "What, fought you with them all?"

Falstaff replied, "All! I know not what you call all; but if I fought with fewer than fifty of them, I am as skinny as spaghetti. If fifty-two or fifty-three people did not fight poor fat old me, then I walk on four legs and not two."

Prince Hal said, "Pray to God that you did not murder any of them."

"It's too late to pray for that," Falstaff replied. "I made it hot for two of them. They have died and gone to Hell. I am sure that two of them are roasting: two rogues in buckram suits. I tell you what, Hal, if I tell you a lie, spit in my face and call me a stupid horse."

Falstaff continued, "You know my style of fighting." He assumed a fencing position and added, "Like this I stood and thus I bore my sword. Four rogues in buckram attacked me —"

"What, four?" Prince Hal said. "You said there were but two just now."

"Four, Hal," Falstaff replied. "I told you four."

To encourage Falstaff to continue lying, Poins took his side: "True. He said four."

"These four attacked me and mightily thrust their swords at me. I did not panic but took the points of their seven swords in my shield."

"Seven men attacked you?" Prince Hal said. "There were just four a moment ago."

“In buckram?” Falstaff asked.

Ned Poins said, “Yes, four, in buckram suits.”

“Seven,” Falstaff said. “I swear by the hilts that form a cross on my sword, or I am a villain else.”

Prince Hal said, “Ned, let him alone. We shall hear about even more fighters soon.”

“Did you hear me, Hal?” Falstaff asked.

“Not only did I hear you, but I am keeping count, too,” Prince Hal replied.

“My tale is well worth paying attention to,” Falstaff said. “These nine fighters in buckram that I told you about —”

“See, two more already,” Prince Hal said to Poins.

“The points of their swords broke against my shield —”

“And they were so afraid they peed their pants,” Poins said.

“They began to back away from me,” Falstaff continued. “I followed them closely, attacked, and as quickly as thought I stabbed seven of the eleven of them.”

Prince Hal exclaimed, “How monstrous! Eleven men in buckram grown out of two!”

Falstaff continued, “But, as the Devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves wearing Kendal green outfits came at my back and let drive at me; for it was so dark, Hal, that you could not even see your hand.”

“These lies are like their father who begets them: huge as a mountain and obvious and easily perceived,” Prince Hal said to Poins.

He said to Falstaff, “Why, you clay-brained guts, you blockheaded fool, you son of a whore, you obscene pan that

that catches the drippings of grease from a roasted bird —”

“What’s wrong?” Falstaff asked. “Are you insane? Is not the truth the truth?”

Prince Hal asked, “Why, how could you know that these men were wearing Kendal green, when it was so dark that you could not see your hand? Come on and tell us how you knew. What do you have to say, Jack?”

“Yes, Jack,” Poins said, “Tell us how you knew.”

“You forgot to say ‘please,’” Falstaff said. “I will not answer the questions of any men who forget to say ‘please’ — I will not answer their questions even if I were being tortured on the rack or if my hands were tied behind me and then I was lifted into the air by my hands. I would not answer your question even if you said ‘please’ now — it’s too late! Give you an answer without you saying ‘please’ — I think not. I am offended by your lack of courtesy, really I am. I will not answer questions upon compulsion.”

Prince Hal said, “I will be no longer guilty of this sin. You are a bloody coward! You are a breaker of beds! You are a breaker of horses’ backs! You are a huge hill of flesh!”

Falstaff gave as good as he got — and more: “You are a starveling! You are the skin of an eel! You are the tongue of an ox! You are the penis of a bull! You are a long, skinny, dried codfish! I wish that I had more breath so that I could mention everything that you resemble! You are the yardstick of a tailor! You are the sheath of a sword! You are the case of a violin bow! You are a vile upright rapier!”

Falstaff started to gasp for breath.

Prince Hal said, “Catch your breath, and then again make your comparisons. When you have tired of comparing me to long, skinny objects, then listen to what I have to say.”

He waited a moment, but Falstaff continued to breathe heavily.

Poins said, "Listen carefully, Jack."

Prince Hal said, "Poins and I saw you, Gadshill, Peto, and Bardolph rob four travelers and tie them up. You had all their money. Listen to the truth about what happened thereafter. Poins and I attacked you — not with swords but with a few words. You cowards ran away, and we took the money. We have it, and we can show it to you in this inn. And, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy and still ran and roared, as ever I heard a bull calf run and bellow. What a base joker you are to hack up your sword as you have done, and then say your sword was damaged in a fight! Now, explain yourself. What trick, what device, what hiding-place can you now find that will protect you from your obvious and apparent shame?"

"Come, Jack," Poins said. "Speak up. What do you have to say for yourself?"

Falstaff replied, "With God as my witness, I say that I knew you as well as He Who made you! I knew that the men who robbed us were you two the whole time!"

He turned to Prince Hal and said, "Was I going to kill the heir apparent? Was I going to attack the true Prince? Of course not! Why, you know that I am as brave as Hercules, but instinct prevails. According to legend, the lion will not harm the true Prince. Instinct is a great matter; I was a coward by instinct. I shall think the better of both of us during my life. I am a valiant lion, and you are a true Prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money!"

Falstaff then tried to change the subject. He turned to a doorway and shouted, "Hostess, shut the doors. We will

party late tonight, and then pray tomorrow.”

The Hostess heard him and went to shut the doors.

Falstaff then said to everyone, “Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! Shall we be merry? Shall we have a play extempore?”

“Good idea,” Prince Hal said, “and the topic of the play shall be your running away in fear.”

“Let us hear no more about that, Hal,” Falstaff said, “if you are my friend.”

The Hostess entered the room and said, “Prince Hal, there is trouble.”

Prince Hal replied, “Hostess, what is going on?”

“My lord, there is a nobleman of the court at the door who wishes to speak with you. He says that he comes from your father the King.”

Prince Hal did not want to talk to him: “He is a noble, and a noble is worth six shillings and eight pence. Give him a royal, which is worth ten shillings. That will make him a royal man, and you can send him to my mother without his talking to me.”

Falstaff knew that Prince Hal’s mother was dead and that he wanted to get rid of the nobleman without speaking to him.

Falstaff asked, “What kind of man is he?”

The Hostess replied, “An old man.”

“I wonder what an old man is doing out of bed so late at night. It’s midnight,” Falstaff said. He asked Prince Hal, “Shall I talk to him?”

“Please do, Jack,” Prince Hal said.

“I’ll send him packing,” Falstaff promised. He left the room.

Prince Hal said to Gadshill, “You fought well.”

He added, “So did you, Peto, and so did you, Bardolph. You are lions, too. You also ran away by instinct — you will not touch the true Prince.”

Bardolph said, “I ran when I saw others run.”

Prince Hal asked, “Tell me the truth. How did Falstaff’s sword come to be so hacked up?”

Peto replied, “He hacked it with his dagger, and he swore that he would make you believe it was done in a fight — in fact, he said that he would swear his lies so strongly that truth would be banished from England — and he persuaded us to do the same thing.”

“That he did,” Bardolph said. “He persuaded us to tickle our noses with spear-grass to make them bleed, and then to beslobber our garments with the blood and swear that it was the blood of true men. I did something that I have not done for seven years: I blushed to hear his monstrous devices.”

“Liar!” Prince Hal said, looking at Bardolph’s face, which was red from his alcoholism and scarred and marred from pimples and pustules and carbuncles and boils. “You stole a cup of sack eighteen years ago, and were caught and so blushed. Ever since, you have drunk sack and acquired a permanent blush. Most people are caught red-handed; you were caught red-complexioned.

“But, Bardolph, you had the fire of your face and you had your sword, and yet you ran away. What instinct of yours made you do that?”

Bardolph pointed to his own face and said, “My lord, do you see these flaming-red meteors that I have had for a long time? Meteors often predict the future.”

“I do see them.”

“What then-coming events do you think they were evidence of?”

“A liver grown hot and a wallet grown empty because of alcoholism.”

“The correct answer, my lord, is choler, or an angry temperament. I am no coward.”

“Given your profession and your alcoholism, I think that they are predicting a collar,” Prince Hal replied. “You will be collared by the officers of the law, and most likely after that you will wear a different kind of collar — a halter, also known as a hangman’s noose.”

Falstaff entered the room.

Prince Hal said, “Here comes lean Jack, here comes bare-bone. How are you, my sweet creature of cotton padding and high-sounding nonsense! How long ago has it been, Jack, since you last saw your own knees?”

“My own knees! Why, when I was about your age, Hal, I was not as large as an eagle’s talon in the waist. I could have slipped into any alderman’s thumb-ring and worn it as a belt. A plague on sighing and grief — it blows a man’s waist up like a balloon!”

He added, “There’s villainous news abroad. The old man at the door was Sir John Bracy, who was sent by your father. You must go to the palace in the morning. There is trouble from that mad fellow of the north, Hotspur, and from the magician of Wales, he who beat with a club the Devil named Amamon and made horns grow on Lucifer by

cuckolding him and forced the Devil to swear to be his servant upon the cross of a Welsh hook — which does not have a cross. What is his name?”

Poins said, “Glendower.”

“Owen Glendower,” Falstaff said. “Yes, that is his name. Also causing trouble is his son-in-law Mortimer, and the old Earl of Northumberland, and that sprightly Scot of Scots: the Earl of Douglas, who runs on horseback up a hill perpendicularly.”

Prince Hal said, “Douglas: He who is supposed to ride at high speed and with his pistol kill a flying sparrow.”

“You have hit the nail on the head,” Falstaff said.

“He never hit the sparrow in the head,” Prince Hal replied.

“Douglas has good metal in his bullets and good mettle — courage — in himself,” Falstaff said. “He will not run.”

“Didn’t you just say that he runs on horseback up a hill perpendicularly?” Prince Hal asked.

Falstaff said, “You are acting like a cuckoo when you repeat my words without distinguishing their meaning. Douglas will run — ride fast — on horseback. But he will not run — flee in fear — on foot. Is this clear? He will run on horseback, but on foot he will not budge an inch. On foot he will not run away.”

“Yes, he will,” Prince Hal, who was still in a mood for humor, said. “He will run away by instinct.”

Falstaff shrugged and said, “Fair enough. He will run by instinct. Anyway, Douglas is causing trouble, as are Mordake and a thousand Scots. People are rebelling against your father the King. The Earl of Worcester is part of the rebellion. He has gone to Wales to meet Glendower. Your

father's beard has turned white with the news. People are worried: You may buy land now as cheap as stinking mackerel. In times of war, people sell cheap what they are afraid they will lose."

Growing serious, Prince Hal said, "It is likely if we still have civil war this coming June, we shall buy maidenheads as carpenters buy hobnails, by the hundreds. Women and girls will be selling their bodies so that they can buy food."

For Falstaff, this was not a dismal prospect: "By God, Hal, that is true. It is likely that we shall have good trading that way."

Falstaff added, "Tell me, Hal. Aren't you horribly afraid? You are the heir apparent. Could anyone pick three worst enemies for you to fight than the fiend Douglas, the brave Hotspur, and that Devil Glendower? Aren't you horribly afraid? Doesn't your blood grow cold with fear?"

Prince Hal answered honestly, "No. I lack some of your instinct."

"When you see your father tomorrow, you will have to face his anger," Falstaff said. "Here's an idea: Why don't we rehearse that meeting so that you can practice what you will say?"

"Good idea," Prince Hal said. "You pretend to be my father the King. Ask me questions about how I am living my life."

"Shall I?" Falstaff, who was very willing to play that part in a play, asked. "Yes. This chair shall be my throne, this dagger shall be my scepter, and this cushion shall be my crown."

"Understood," Prince Hal said. "Your throne is a chair in a tavern, your golden scepter is a lead dagger, and your precious rich crown is a pitiful bald crown."

“If virtue is not completely absent from you, you shall now be moved,” Falstaff said. “Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, so that it may be thought I have wept — I must speak with deep emotion, and I will do it in King Cambyses’ vein with lots of ranting and raving like the bombastic character in Thomas Preston’s bombastic old play.”

“Allow me to bow to you,” Prince Hal said, and he bowed.

“And allow me to speak,” Falstaff said. He asked his audience in the bar to give him a little room: “Stand aside, nobility.”

The Hostess laughed at being called a member of nobility and said, “Oh, Falstaff is so funny!”

Falstaff said to her, “Weep not, sweet Queen; for trickling tears are vain.”

The Hostess laughed and said, “I don’t see how he can keep a straight face!”

Falstaff said, “Lords, escort my tristful Queen a few steps away for tears do fill the flood-gates of her eyes.”

The Hostess, “Oh, he does this character just like one of those rascally real actors!”

“Quiet, my little pot of ale. Quiet, my little Queen with the booze-tickled brain,” Falstaff said to the Hostess.

To Prince Hal, he said, “Harry, I am amazed not only by where you spend your time but also by the company you keep. The more the chamomile plant is trodden down, the faster it grows, but the more youth is wasted, the quicker it disappears. That you are my son, I have partly your mother’s word, partly my own opinion, but chiefly an evil glint in your eye and a silly-looking droop of your lower lip, both of which you inherited from me. If you are my

son, then why, since you are my son, are you so gossiped about and criticized? Shall you, the blessed son of the King, turn out to be a truant and eat blackberries instead of doing your work? This question should not be asked of any heir apparent. Shall the son of the King turn out to be a thief and steal wallets? This question must be asked of this particular heir apparent: you. There is a thing, Harry, that you have often heard of — many in our land know it by the name of pitch, or sticky tar. This pitch, as many ancient writers have stated, makes people dirty — and so does the company you keep, Harry. I am speaking to you now, Harry, not befuddled by alcohol but as one who is weeping, not in pleasure but in sorrow, not just with words but also with woes. Yet, Harry, I have often noticed near you a virtuous man, but I don't know his name.”

“Describe him to me, please, your majesty,” Prince Hal requested.

“He is a handsome, portly man. He is portly in the sense of being stately — and fat. He has a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble way of carrying himself. And I think his age is around fifty.”

Falstaff's audience laughed. Falstaff was much more than fifty years old.

Falstaff continued, “Or perhaps sixty years old. Ah, now I remember — his name is Falstaff. If that man should be evilly inclined, Harry, I am deceived, for I see virtue in his looks. If the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit is known by the tree, then — emphatically I say it — there is virtue in that man. Keep him as your friend, and banish all the rest from your presence. Now, Harry, you naughty boy, tell me where you have been for the past month.”

“Do you think that you sound like my father the King?” Prince Hal said. “Let's switch roles. You play me, and I

will play my father.”

“Are you deposing me?” Falstaff joked. “If you play the King half as well and half as majestically as I did, both in word and bearing, then hang me up by my heels like a baby rabbit sold by a man who sells chicken carcasses.”

Prince Hal sat in the chair and said, “I am ready.”

“As am I,” Falstaff said. “Members of the audience, judge which of us is the better actor.”

Prince Hal said, “Harry, from where have you come?”

“My noble lord, from Eastcheap,” Falstaff replied.

“The complaints I hear about you are grievous.”

“My lord, they are lies,” Falstaff said to Prince Hal. To the members of the audience, he said, “I will play a young Prince who will amuse you.”

“Can you really swear to that, you profane boy?” Prince Hal asked. “From here on, never see me again. You are violently being turned away from all that is good. A Devil who has taken on the appearance of an old fat man is haunting you; your companion is an alcoholic barrel of a man. Why do you talk with that trunk of diseases, that bin of beastliness, that swollen parcel of bodily fluids, that huge jug of sack, that carrying case of guts, that Essex roasted ox with stuffing in its belly, that ancient figure of Vice who leads people into immorality, that grey-haired corrupter of youth, that father ruffian, that aged vanity?”

Prince Hal paused, and then he continued, “For what is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? In which activity is he neat and skillful, but to carve a chicken and eat it? In what is he skillful and cunning, but in crafty deceit? In what is he crafty, but in villainy? In what is he villainous, but in all things? In what is he worthy, but in nothing?”

Falstaff replied, "I do not understand you, my lord. Please explain."

"I am talking about that villainous abominable misleader of youth. He is named Falstaff, and he is an old, white-bearded Satan."

"My lord, this man I know," Falstaff said.

"I know you do."

"But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, would be to say more than I know," Falstaff said.

This line got a big laugh from everyone except Prince Hal.

Falstaff continued, "It is true that he is old, but that is to be pitied — his white hairs do witness that he is old. But to say that he is — I beg your pardon for my language — a whoremaster, that is something I utterly deny. If drinking sack and sugar is a fault, God help the wicked! If to be old and merry is a sin, then many an old host whom I know is damned. If to be fat is to be hated, then the Egyptian Pharaoh's seven lean cattle that prophesied seven years of famine in his dream are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins. But sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, do not banish him from your Harry's company because if you banish plump Jack, then you banish all the world."

Prince Hal said coldly, "I do. I will."

A very loud knocking at the door interrupted the play. The Hostess, Francis, and Bardolph went to see who was knocking.

A panicked Bardolph quickly came running into the room where the impromptu play was being held.

Bardolph said to Prince Hal, “Oh, my lord! The Sheriff and several officers of the law are at the door!”

Falstaff wanted to continue the play. He yelled at Bardolph, “Out, you rogue! Let us finish the play: I have much to say on behalf of Falstaff.”

The panicked Hostess entered the room but could say only, “My lord!”

An unpanicked Prince Hal asked the Hostess, “What’s the matter? What mischief is afoot?”

“The Sheriff and lots of officers of the law are at the door. They have come to search the house. Shall I let them in?”

Hearing that, Falstaff was able to guess immediately why they wanted to search the inn: They were searching for evidence that would convict — and hang — the men who had robbed the travelers of 300 marks.

Falstaff said, “Did you hear that, Hal? What are you going to do? A true piece of gold should never be called a counterfeit. Despite some appearances to the contrary, you are true to your friends and would not turn your friends over to officers of the law so that they can be hanged.”

In the play, Prince Hal had spoken the truth about Falstaff being a corrupter of youth, and he was half-tempted to let Falstaff hang. He said, “You, Falstaff, are a coward by nature, and not by instinct.”

“I deny that I am a coward by nature, although I do not deny that I am a coward by instinct,” Falstaff said. “If you will not let the Sheriff in and so keep him from arresting me, fine. But if you want to let the Sheriff in so that he can arrest me, that is also fine. I can be drawn in a cart to the gallows as well as any other man. Perhaps that has always been my future. I can hang as well as another man.”

Prince Hal decided to be merciful. He ordered, “Falstaff, hide yourself in the little alcove hidden by that wall hanging. All of the rest of you, go upstairs so that you are not seen. Now all of us need honest faces and good consciences.”

“I used to have those two things, but that was long ago,” Falstaff said. “Therefore, I will hide.”

Because the Hostess was still panicked, Prince Hal said to Peto, “Let the Sheriff in.”

Peto opened the door and let in the Sheriff, one of the travelers who had been robbed, and some officers of the law. The traveler did not recognize Peto, who had worn a mask during the robbery.

Prince Hal, whom the Sheriff recognized, asked politely, “How can I help you?”

“First, pardon me, my lord,” the Sheriff said. “We are searching for the men who robbed four travelers recently. Information that we have received has led us to this inn, where we think we will find the men we are seeking.”

“Which men are they?” Prince Hal asked.

The Sheriff replied, “One of them is well known, my gracious lord. He is a massively fat man.”

The traveler said, “As fat as butter.”

Prince Hal replied, “I know the man you mean, but he is not here. I myself have employed the man on an errand.”

This was true, equivocally. Falstaff was not in the room itself, but he was in an alcove in a wall of the room. And Prince Hal had ordered Falstaff to hide, so Falstaff’s errand was to stay hidden until the Sheriff had left.

Prince Hal continued, “Sheriff, I give you my word that by

noon tomorrow I will send him to you so that he can be questioned about anything he is accused of doing. And now let me ask you to leave this inn.”

The heir apparent was a person to be obeyed. The Sheriff said, “I will, my lord.”

But he added, “Four men have been robbed, two of whom — gentlemen — lost three hundred marks in the robbery.”

“I don’t doubt you,” Prince Hal said. “If the fat man has robbed these men, he shall pay the penalty. And now, farewell.”

“Good night, my noble lord,” the Sheriff said.

“I think it is early morning, isn’t it?” Prince Hal asked.

“Yes, my lord,” the Sheriff replied. “I think it is two o’clock.”

The Sheriff, the traveler, and the officers of the law departed, leaving behind Prince Hal and Peto.

Prince Hal said to Peto, “This oily rascal Falstaff is as well known as St. Paul’s Cathedral. Go and call him.”

Peto called, “Falstaff!”

He lifted the wall hanging, looked at Falstaff, and said, “He is fast asleep, and snorting like a horse.”

Prince Hal listened and said, “He snores heavily. He is so fat that he works hard to draw in each breath.”

He then said to Peto, “Search his pockets.”

Peto followed Prince Hal’s order.

“What did you find?”

“Nothing but papers, my lord.”

“Let’s see what they are. Read one of them to me.”

Peto said, “Here is a tavern bill:

“Item, A chicken, 2 shillings, 2 pence.

“Item, Sauce, 4 pence.

“Item, Sack, two gallons, 5 shillings, 8 pence.

“Item, Anchovies and sack after supper, 2 shillings, 6 pence.

“Item, Bread, a half-penny’s worth.

“That’s monstrous!” Prince Hal said. “Only a half-penny’s worth of bread to soak up so much wine! Keep all of Falstaff’s papers. We will read them later. We will let Falstaff sleep. In the morning, I will go to the palace. All of us must go and fight in the war. Peto, I will find a position in the army for you that shall be honorable. I will put this fat rogue Falstaff in charge of a company of foot soldiers, although I think that he will die if he walks 240 yards. The money that all of you stole will be paid back with interest. I will see you again after I see my father. And so, good morning, Peto.”

“Good morning, my lord,” Peto said.

They departed.

CHAPTER 3 (1 Henry IV)

— 3.1 —

At Owen Glendower's castle in Wales, Hotspur, Worcester, Mortimer, and Glendower were holding a meeting.

Mortimer said, "The promises that we have made to each other are fair, the parties in our rebellion are sure, and the beginning of this, our rebellion, is full of promise and hope."

Hotspur said, "Lord Mortimer, and friend Glendower, will you sit down? And you, too, uncle Worcester."

By saying that, Hotspur was breaking a rule of etiquette. The castle belonged to Glendower, so Glendower — the host — should have been the one to invite the others to sit down.

Hotspur then said, "A plague upon it! I have forgotten the map!"

Glendower was better prepared than Hotspur. He said, "No, here it is. Sit, Earl of Worcester; sit, good Hotspur."

He paid Hotspur a compliment, "Whenever King Henry IV, the former Duke of Lancaster, says the name Hotspur, his cheek looks pale and with a heavy sigh he wishes that you were dead and in Heaven. The King of England is afraid of you."

Hotspur returned the compliment: "And whenever the King hears your name, he wishes that you were in Hell."

Glendower, who believed that he had been born to do great things, replied, "I cannot blame him. When I was born, the sky was full of the fiery shapes of burning meteors, and earthquakes made the foundation of the Earth shake like a

coward.”

Hotspur, who lacked the skills of diplomacy as well as the skills of etiquette, was unimpressed: “Why, so the Earth would have done at the same time, if your mother’s cat had but given birth to kittens, even though you yourself had never been born.”

Glendower was angry: “I say the Earth did shake when I was born.”

“And I say the Earth was not of my mind, if you suppose that the Earth shook because it feared you,” Hotspur replied.

“The Heavens were all on fire, and the Earth did tremble,” Glendower said.

“In that case, the Earth trembled because the Heavens were all on fire, and not in fear of your birth,” Hotspur said. “Nature can become ill; that illness is expressed in earthquakes. The Earth sometimes gets gas trapped inside it, and when it releases the gas it shakes so hard that steeples and moss-grown towers fall down. When you were born, the Earth let out a massive fart.”

Glendower said, “Hotspur, I do not bear such insults from many men. Let me tell you again that when I was born the sky was full of fiery shapes, the goats ran from the mountains, and herds of cattle bellowed with fright in the fields. These signs have marked me out as extraordinary, and all the events of my life do show that I am not in the roll of common men. No man in England, Scotland, and Wales has ever taught me anything or had me as a pupil. No man is my master. And show me anyone who knows as much about magic as I do or can keep pace with me in my occult experiments.”

Hotspur said to Mortimer and Worcester, “I think there’s

no man who speaks better Welsh than Glendower. No man speaks better nonsense. I think I'll go and eat dinner."

Mortimer said, "Please, brother-in-law Hotspur, don't make Glendower angry."

Too late. Glendower was angry.

Glendower said, "I can call spirits from the vast and deep underworld."

"Why, so can I, and so can any man," Hotspur said, "but will they come when you call them?"

"Why, I can teach you, Hotspur, to command the Devil."

"And I can teach you, Glendower, to shame the Devil by telling the truth. If you tell the truth, you will shame the Devil. So, if you have the power to raise the Devil, bring him here. I swear that I have the power to shame him and make him leave. Oh, while you live, tell the truth and shame the Devil!"

Mortimer said, "Stop! Let's have no more of these argumentative words."

Glendower continued to speak: "Three times has Henry Bolingbroke — King Henry IV — raised an army to fight against me and my army. Three times from the banks of the River Wye and the sandy-bottomed River Severn have I sent him home and weather-beaten back. It is bootless for him to try to fight me."

"Weather-beaten and bootless?" Hotspur said. "I wonder how the King managed to avoid catching a cold."

Glendower stopped arguing and said, "Here's the map. Let's look at it and make sure that we agree with the way that England has been divided into three parts: one-third for me, one-third for Mortimer, and one-third for Hotspur."

Mortimer said, “The Archdeacon of Bangor has divided it into three parts very equally. England, south and east from the River Trent and the River Severn, is my portion. Beyond the River Severn westward to Wales, and all the fertile land in that territory, goes to Owen Glendower. And, Hotspur, to you goes the territory north of the River Trent. Our three-part agreement has been drawn up. Let’s review it and then have copies made so we can sign them tonight. Tomorrow, Hotspur, you and I and my good Lord of Worcester will set forth to meet your father and the Scottish army, as we agreed, at Shrewsbury. My father-in-law Glendower is not ready yet, but we will not need his help for fourteen days.”

To Glendower, he said, “In that fourteen days, you will have time to assemble your army from the farmers working your land, your friends, and your neighboring allies.”

“I intend to be ready sooner than that,” Glendower said. “When I come to you, Hotspur and Mortimer, with my army, I will also bring your wives to you. Perhaps you should sneak away from them tonight without saying goodbye because they will shed a world of tears when you leave them.”

Hotspur had been looking at the map; he was unhappy.

He said, “I think that my share of the land, north from the town of Burton here, in quantity equals not one of yours. You, Mortimer, and you, Glendower, have received more land than I have. See how this river comes winding into my territory and cuts from the best of all my land a huge half-Moon — a monstrous piece — out. I’ll have the river dammed up here so that the smooth and silver River Trent shall run in a straight course in a new channel. It shall not wind with such a deep indent and rob me of so rich a valley here.”

“You don’t want the river to run there?” Glendower said.
“It shall; it must; you can see that it does.”

Mortimer said to Hotspur, “The river does flow into the valley but look here. It flows into a valley in my territory as much as it flows into the valley in your territory. It takes away from me and gives to you as much it takes away from you and gives to me.”

Worcester was not averse to Hotspur, his nephew, getting more land. He said, “With a little expense, we can move the river into a new course that will add some land to the north of the river and then the river will run straight and evenly.”

“That’s what I will do,” Hotspur said. “It will cost only a little money.”

Glendower, who wanted Mortimer, his son-in-law, to get all the land that was coming to him, said, “I will not allow the course of the river to be altered.”

“Oh, won’t you?” Hotspur said.

“No, I won’t allow you to alter the course of the river.”

“Who will stop me?”

“I will.”

“I prefer not to understand you, so say it to me in Welsh,” Hotspur said.

Glendower replied, “I can speak English, Hotspur, as well as you; for I was brought up in the English court, where, when I was young, I wrote song lyrics and set them to the music of the harp, thus giving the English beautiful poetry. This is something that I doubt that you have ever done.”

You are right,” Hotspur said, “and I am glad of it. I would prefer to be a kitten and cry ‘meow’ than to be one of these ballad-singers. I would prefer to hear the screech of a

bronze candlestick being turned on a lathe that is normally used to make wooden candlesticks. I would prefer to hear a dry wheel grate and squeak on an axle. Would these things set my teeth on edge? Yes, but not as badly as would the sound of affected, high-falutin' poetry — it is like the hobbled gait of a shuffling nag.”

Glendower gave in: “If you want to change the course of the River Trent, do so.”

“No,” Hotspur said. “I really don't care about the land. I'll give three times as much land to any well-deserving friend; but when it comes to making a bargain, understand me well, I'll argue about the ninth part of a hair.”

He added, “Are the three copies of our agreement drawn up? Shall we sign them and leave?”

“The Moon shines brightly,” Glendower said. “You may travel this night. I will go to the copyist and bid him to hurry. I will also tell your wives that you are leaving tonight. I am afraid my daughter will run mad because she loves her Mortimer so much.”

Glendower departed.

Mortimer said, “Hotspur, you have a talent for making Glendower, my father-in-law, angry.”

“I can't help it,” Hotspur said. “Sometimes he makes me angry by telling me about a mole and an ant, about the magician Merlin and his prophecies, about a dragon and a finless fish, about a half-lion and half-eagle griffin with its wings clipped and a raven that has shed its feathers, about a lion resting on its legs and raising its head and a cat rearing up on its hind legs to attack. I think that the terms he used were a ‘couching lion’ and a ‘ramping cat.’ The Percy crest is the lion, the Glendower crest is the dragon, and the Mortimer crest is the wolf, and Glendower says that Henry

IV is a mole and that the lion, the dragon, and the wolf will divvy up the mole's country. He says such things with such a massive amount of mumbo-jumbo and skimble-skamble stuff that he makes me lose my faith in him. I tell you, he bored me last night at least nine hours in reckoning up the names of the many Devils that are his lackeys. I said 'oh' and 'is that so?' but I did not listen to even a single word he said. Glendower is as tedious as a tired horse or a nagging wife. Glendower is worse than a smoky house. I would much prefer to live on cheese and garlic and live in a windmill than to eat delicacies and have him talk to me in any summer-house in the Christian part of the world."

Mortimer replied, "Actually, he is a worthy gentleman. He is very well read, and he is proficient in strange and occult arts. He is as valiant as a lion, and he is wondrously charming and as generous as the mines of India. Let me tell you that he holds you in high respect and he restrains his anger when you do or say something that makes him angry. I tell you that no other man could have done and said the things you do and say and not have been hurt in body or criticized with words. But avoid challenging him in the future, I beg you."

Worcester said to his nephew, "Truly, you are too hot-headed. Ever since you have come here, you have done and said many things to make Glendower angry. You need to learn to fix this fault of yours. Sometimes, plain-speaking can show greatness, courage, and spirit — and yes, you have those positive qualities — but sometimes, it serves only to antagonize others. Plain-speaking can show oneself to be full of harsh rage, to lack etiquette, to display loss of self-control, to be full of pride, haughtiness, and self-conceit, and to have a low opinion of other people. A nobleman who has any of these bad qualities will lose the friendship of other people. Possession of any of these bad qualities stains the person's good qualities and makes those

good qualities difficult to be noticed and praised.”

“Well, you have taught me well,” Hotspur said. “May good manners bring you success.”

Glendower entered the room, bringing with him the wives of Hotspur and Mortimer.

Hotspur said, “Here come our wives. Soon, we will leave them, so let’s say our goodbyes.”

Mortimer said, “What bothers me is that my wife can speak no English, and I can speak no Welsh.”

His marriage to Glendower’s daughter was a political marriage made to seal an alliance. Nevertheless, he and his wife of a short time were happily married.

Glendower said, “My daughter cries. She does not want to be parted from you. She wants to be a soldier and go with you to the war.”

“Father-in-law, please tell her that she and Hotspur’s wife will come with you when you join your army with our armies.”

Glendower spoke to his daughter in Welsh, and she answered him in the same language.

Glendower said to Mortimer, “She is overly anxious to stay with you. She is being a silly girl and is unwilling to listen to reason.”

Mortimer’s wife spoke again, this time to him, in Welsh.

He said, “I understand your looks. Your pretty Welsh tears that pour down from your eyes I understand all too well. Except that I would be ashamed, I would communicate with you in the same way.”

She kissed him and spoke again.

He said, "I understand your kisses and you understand mine. We are able to communicate our emotions. I will study hard and not be a truant until I have learned your language. Your voice makes Welsh as sweet as the most beautifully written lyrics sung by a beautiful Queen in a fine dwelling in summer to a tune played by a lute."

Glendower said to Mortimer, "Don't cry. You will only upset her."

Again, Mortimer's wife spoke to Mortimer in Welsh.

"Oh, I am completely ignorant when it comes to Welsh!" he said.

Glendower translated the content of what she had said: "She wants you to lie on the soft floor covering and to lay your head in her lap, and she will sing to you a song to please you and make you half-asleep and relaxed. You will be midway between waking and sleeping, just like twilight is midway between day and night during the hour before the Sun rises."

Mortimer replied, "With all my heart I will lie here and hear her sing. By the time she is finished, I think, the copies of our agreement will be completed."

"Enjoy," Glendower said. "Musicians shall play to you. Now they float in the air a thousand leagues from here, but immediately they shall arrive here. Lie down, and listen."

Hotspur said to Kate, his wife, "You are perfect at lying down."

She smiled, knowing the kind of lying down he meant.

Hotspur continued, "Sit down, so that I may rest my head in your lap."

"Stop it, you giddy goose," she said, aware that the words

“head in your lap” have a sexual meaning, as well as an innocent meaning.

But she sat down and Hotspur non-sexually rested his head in her lap. He thought about Kate’s threat to break his “little finger” earlier. “Little finger” did not necessarily have to mean a finger of his hand.

Music began to play, and Hotspur said, “Now I know that the Devil understands Welsh. Maybe that is why he is so moody. Still, he is a musician.”

“In that case, you ought to be a good musician because you are so often moody,” Kate said. “Lie still, you thief, and hear the lady sing in Welsh.”

“I had rather hear Lady, my bitch-hound, howl in Irish.”

“Do you want me to break your head?”

“No.”

“Then be quiet.”

“Never. That is a trait of women.”

“God help you,” Kate said.

Hotspur murmured, “To the Welsh lady’s bed.”

Not quite having heard his words, Kate asked, “What did you say?”

Hotspur replied, “Be quiet. She is singing.”

Mortimer’s wife sang a song in Welsh.

Hotspur said, “You shall sing a song next.”

“No, I won’t, for Heaven’s sake.”

“For Heaven’s sake!” Hotspur said. “Kate, you are swearing like the wife of a candymaker. What will you say

next: ‘Darn it’? ‘Gosh’? ‘Golly’? Your swear words are like chiffon. It’s like a preacher has raised you. Swear for me now, Kate, with blood and vigor. Swear the way the wife of Hotspur should swear. Fill your mouth with dirty words. Leave ‘for Heaven’s sake’ and ‘darn it’ and such namby-pamby swearings to those who dress up on Sunday. Sing to me now a mouthful of words spiced with hot peppers.”

“I will not sing,” Kate said.

“Singing a normal song is a good way to become a tailor — tailors are known for singing as they work. It is also a good way to become a teacher of red-breasted songbirds,” Hotspur said, and then he added, “I am going to go and see if the agreements have been copied. If they have been, I will be gone within two hours. Before I leave, come and see me.”

He exited.

Glendower said to Mortimer, “Let’s go now. You are as slow to leave here as Hotspur is on fire to go. By this time, our agreements will have been copied. We will sign them and affix our seals to them, and then we will mount our horses and leave.”

Mortimer said, “I am ready.”

They left to sign the copies of their agreement.

— 3.2 —

In a room in King Henry IV’s palace in London, the King, Prince Hal, and others had been meeting.

King Henry IV said, “Everyone leave except for Prince Hal. The Prince of Wales and I must talk privately, but stay nearby because I shall need to talk to you again soon.”

The others exited from the room.

The King said to Prince Hal, “I think that it is possible that God has secretly judged me because of some sin that I have committed and therefore is using you to punish and to torment me. The way that you are leading your life makes me think that your purpose in life is to give to me the hot vengeance of Heaven and to beat me with the rod of Heaven to punish me for my sins. Explain to me how else you could indulge in such unsuitable and low desires, such vulgar and despicable actions, and such barren pleasures, and how else could such vulgar friends become associated with you, who are the Prince of Wales?”

“Your majesty, my father,” Prince Hal said, “I wish that I could clear myself of all the offenses charged against me as easily and clearly as I am certain that I can clear myself of many of these offenses charged against me. Yet let me ask of you one favor. The ears of great personages often hear false tales made up by smiling busybodies and gossips. If I can clear myself of many of these charges — and I can — I ask that I be forgiven for some youthful indiscretions, provided that I confess those indiscretions honestly.”

“Let God forgive you!” the King said. “Harry, let me tell you that I am amazed at your personal desires, which are not those of your ancestors. Because of your violence, you have lost your place in council. John, your younger brother, now occupies that place. You are now almost absent from the hearts of all the members of my court and of your own relatives. The hopes and expectations that I had of your youth are ruined, and every man prophesies that you will fail. Had I acted the way that you are now acting — constantly appearing in public, showing myself often to the eyes of men who grow used to your presence, which is becoming stale and cheap to the common people — I would never have acquired the good opinion of the people.

Instead, they would have stayed loyal to King Richard II, and I would still be in disgraceful banishment. I would not be King, and I would have no renown or success. I made sure that I was seldom seen in public, so that when I did appear in public I was to the common people like the rare sight of a comet. Men would tell their children, ‘This is he.’ Others would ask, ‘Where? Which one is Bolingbroke?’ I acted as graciously as an angel to the common people, and I acted with great humility. The result was that men pledged their allegiance to me with loud shouts and salutations from their mouths even when Richard was present. In that way, each appearance in public by me was fresh and new and to be wondered at. My presence was like a priest’s ceremonial robe, seldom seen, and when seen, regarded with wonder. My appearances at occasions of state were seldom, but they were sumptuous like a feast. By being rarely seen, I inspired awe when I was seen.

“Richard II was my complete opposite. He was a flighty King, and he skipped and pranced and ambled and kept company with shallow jesters and rash wits who would flare up brightly but briefly and lacked lasting substance. He debased his royal self by mingling with capering fools, who profaned his name with crude jokes. He laughed at the jokes of boys and he allowed youths without beards to insult him, thus losing the majesty that belongs to a King. He became a frequent visitor to the common streets, and he attempted with his presence to make himself popular. Those who saw him soon became surfeited with the sight of him. He was like honey, which is good in small servings but when people have too much of it they begin to hate its sweetness, and even a little is too much. As King, he sometimes needed to present himself officially to the common people, but even at such solemn times, he was like the cuckoo in June — so common that no one bothers to look at it. They hear the cuckoo, but they ignore it. When

people did look at Richard II, they did not look at him as if he were special — they had seen him too often to regard seeing him as anything special. But when a King is seldom seen, then people look at him with an extraordinary gaze — that is what happens when Sun-like majesty shines seldom in admiring eyes. But when Richard showed himself, the common people dozed and their eyelids drooped. They slept right in front of him, not showing him respect, and when they did wake up and look at him it was with such a look as sullen men give to their enemies. He had appeared before them so often that they were glutted, gorged, and full with his presence.

“You, Harry, are now just like he was then. You have lost the respect that should be given to a Prince. Why? Because you associate with base low-lives. Everyone’s eyes are weary of seeing you because they see you so often, except for my eyes, which would like to see you more often. And now my eyes are doing that which I do not want them to do, blinding me with tears of foolish tenderness.”

Prince Hal promised, “From now on, my very gracious father, I will act more like myself — more like a Prince ought to act.”

King Henry IV said, “For all the world, you are now as King Richard II was then. As I was when I traveled out of my exile in France and set foot at Ravenspurgh, so is Hotspur now. I swear by my scepter and by my soul that he has a better claim than you to the throne. His claim to the throne rests on accomplishments; your claim to the throne is a mere matter of birth. Hotspur has no hereditary right to the throne or anything even resembling a hereditary right to the throne, and yet he has filled battlefields with men in armor and he is at the head of an army that is opposed to me, the King. Even though he is the same young age as you, he leads old lords and reverend bishops on to bloody

battles and to violent war. Hotspur earned never-dying honor by fighting against the renowned Douglas! Hotspur's high deeds, hot incursions, and great name in arms have given him a reputation as the supreme and preeminent soldier throughout all of the Christian nations. Three times has the young Hotspur, a Mars in swaddling clothes, an infant warrior, in battles defeated great Douglas. He has captured him once, freed him, and made a friend of him so that Douglas would join the rebellion and shake the peace and security of our throne.

“What have you to say to this? Percy, Northumberland, the Archbishop of York, Douglas, and Mortimer all are rebelling against us and are up in arms. But why am I telling you this? Why, Harry, do I tell you about my foes, when you are my nearest and dearest enemy? You, Harry, are very likely, through being a slave to fear, base inclination, and ill temper, to fight against me. You would accept the pay of a mercenary from Hotspur, you would follow at his heels like a dog, and you would bow to him when he frowns at you. You would do all of these things in order to hurt me by showing me how degenerate you are.”

Prince Hal replied, “Do not think that. It is not true. God forgive those who have so much swayed your majesty's good thoughts away from me! I will redeem all this on Hotspur's head during battle. At sunset of some glorious day, I will be so bold as to tell you that I am your son. On that day, I will wear a garment all covered with blood and my face will be encased in a mask made of blood. This blood, when washed away, shall wash away my shame with it. All of this will happen, I swear, on the day, whenever it occurs, that this child of honor and renown, this gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight, and your own Harry with the bad reputation shall happen to meet in battle. I wish that Hotspur's honors and glories were multiplied many times and that my shames and indignities were doubled because

when he and I meet in battle, I shall make this northern youth — this Hotspur — exchange his honors and glories for my shames and indignities. Hotspur, although he does not know it, will be the means of my redemption. He has accomplished many glorious deeds, but in battle I shall make him give up every glorious deed and every honor, no matter how small. By defeating Hotspur, I shall win for myself greater glory and honor than he has accrued. I swear to God that this shall be so. I shall tear Hotspur's glory and honor from his heart. I pray that God allows this to happen. If He allows it, I beg that your majesty may forgive the long-grown wounds of my intemperate behavior. If God does not allow this to happen, then I will die on the battlefield and my death will cancel all the debts I owe to the living. I swear that I will die a hundred thousand deaths on the battlefield before I break even the smallest part of my vow."

King Henry IV said, "As a result of your vow, a hundred thousand rebels will die! You will have command of troops and my complete trust."

Sir Walter Blunt entered the room.

"How are you, Sir Walter?" King Henry IV asked. "You look serious."

"The news that I have come to tell you is serious," Blunt said. "A Scottish nobleman has sent word that Douglas and the English rebels have joined forces the eleventh of this month at Shrewsbury. If all the rebels keep their promises and show up with their armies, they will have as mighty and fearsome a force as has ever committed foul play in England."

"Our armies are also setting forth," King Henry IV said. "The Earl of Westmoreland and an army set forth today; with him went my son, Lord John of Lancaster. For five

days, I have known about the news you bring. This coming Wednesday, Harry, you shall set forth with an army. On Thursday, I will set forth with an army and go to Bridgenorth. Harry, you will march through Gloucestershire. In twelve days, all of our armies will meet at Bridgenorth. We have much to do. Let's get to work. People who delay grow fat and tired."

— 3.3 —

At the Boar's-Head Tavern in Eastcheap, Bardolph and Falstaff were talking.

Falstaff said, "Bardolph, have I not lost weight since the robbery at Gadshill? Does not my weight decline? Do I not dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an old lady's loose gown. I am withered like a shriveled old apple. Well, I'll repent, and that at once, now that I am in the mood and something still remains of my body. Soon, I will be in a different mood and bodily condition, and then I won't have the strength to repent. If I have not forgotten what the inside of a church looks like, I am withered like a peppercorn or a decrepit horse that belongs to a brewer. Company, villainous company, has been the ruin of me."

Bardolph said, "Sir John, you are so fretful and complain so much that you cannot live long."

"You're right," Falstaff said. "Sing a bawdy song to me to make me merry. I have lived as virtuously as a gentleman needs to be. I have been virtuous enough. I have sworn only a little; gambled not ... more than seven times a week; went to a bawdy-house not more than once ... in a quarter of an hour; paid back money that I borrowed ... three or four times; lived well and in good compass. Now I live out of all order, out of all compass."

"Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must be out of all compass, out of all reasonable compass, Sir John,"

Bardolph said. “Your girth vastly exceeds the average, so any belt that encompasses your belly will greatly exceed the average.”

Falstaff, who was not pleased to hear this, said to the fiery-faced Bardolph, “Fix your face, and I will fix my life. You are a flagship, as we can tell by the lantern, but a flagship has its lantern in the rear, and you bear a lantern in your nose. You are the Knight of the Burning Lamp.”

“Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.”

“You are right, of course,” Falstaff said. “In fact, I make good use of your face. Many men have rings that are engraved with a Death’s-head, and many men keep skulls as a *memento mori* — a reminder of death — for all of us shall die some day. I never see your face but that I think about hell-fire and Dives, the rich man who wore purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If you were in any way virtuous, I would swear by your face. My oath would be ‘By this fire that is God’s angel’ because of all the accounts in the Bible of angels manifesting themselves as fire. Unfortunately, you are altogether given over to evil, and you would be, if not for the light in your face, the son of utter darkness. After the robbery, you ran up Gadshill at night to catch my horse, and I’ll be damned if I didn’t think you were an *ignis fatuus* or fireworks. If that isn’t true, then money won’t buy anything. Oh, you are a perpetual torch-lit procession, an everlasting bonfire-light! You have saved me a thousand marks in lamps and torches as I have walked with you in the night between tavern and tavern; however, the money for sack that you have drunk would have bought me much light at the shop of the most expensive candlemaker in Europe. Salamanders are thought to live in fire. I have maintained that salamander nose of yours with fire — and you with sack to make your nose red — for the past two and thirty years. May God reward me for it!”

Bardolph replied, "I wish that my face were in your belly!"

"Then God have mercy on me," Falstaff said, "because I would be sure to suffer from heartburn."

The Hostess entered the room.

"Hello, Dame Partlet the hen!" Falstaff said. "Have you inquired yet who picked my pockets?"

The Hostess, who was upset at the accusation of Falstaff's pockets being picked in her inn, said, "Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? Do you think I keep thieves in my house? I have searched, I have inquired, and so has my husband, man by man, boy by boy, servant by servant. The tenth part of a hair was never lost in my inn before."

Falstaff replied, "You lie, Hostess. Bardolph was shaved and lost many a hair here, and I swear that my pockets were picked. You are a woman, so you know about deceit."

The Hostess, who knew that Falstaff was capable of making witty insults and so was on guard against being insulted, replied, "Who is a woman? Am I? No! I deny what you said! By God, I was never called that in my own inn before."

"Go on, I know you well enough," Falstaff said.

The Hostess replied, "No, Sir John, you do not know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir John. You owe me money, Sir John, and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it. I bought you a dozen shirts to wear."

"They were made of dowlas, filthy dowlas — cheap linen. I gave them to bakers' wives to make sieves out of them."

"As I am a true woman," the Hostess said, "they were made out of fine linen — holland that cost eight shillings an ell. You also owe money here, Sir John, for your meals and for

your drinks, and for money lent to you — four and twenty pounds.”

Falstaff pointed at Bardolph and said, “He had his part of it; let him pay.”

“He?” the Hostess said, “He is poor; he has nothing.”

“Poor?” Falstaff said. “Look at the red-gold and copper tones of his face. If he turns the red-gold and copper into coins, he will be rich. As for me, I will not pay the tenth part of a penny. Are you trying to treat me like an ignorant youngster? Can’t I even relax in an inn without having my pockets picked? I have lost a seal-ring of my grandfather’s that is worth forty marks.”

“I have heard the Prince say many times that your ring is only copper.”

“Ha!” Falstaff said. “Prince Hal is a rascal. He is a sneak. If he were here, I would beat him like a dog if he were to say that my ring is made of copper.” He grabbed a walking stick and demonstrated.

This speech was badly timed because Prince Hal and Peto entered the room, marching as if going to war. Falstaff pretended that the walking stick was a flute and he accompanied the marchers.

Falstaff said, “What is the news? By your actions, I can guess that we must all march off to war.”

“Yes, we must march,” Bardolph said. “We will march two by two in pairs like prisoners being taken to Newgate Prison.”

The Hostess said to Prince Hal, “My lord, please hear what I have to say.”

“What do you have to say, Mistress Quickly?” Prince Hal

replied. “How is your husband? I much respect him, for he is an honest man.”

The Hostess repeated, “My good lord, listen to me.”

Falstaff knew what she wanted to say, and so he said to Prince Hal, “Ignore her, and listen to me.”

“What have you got to say, Jack?” Prince Hal said to Falstaff.

Falstaff said, “The other night I fell asleep here in the alcove behind the wall hanging and someone picked my pockets. This inn has apparently been turned into a bawdy-house; people pick pockets in whorehouses.”

Prince Hal, who knew exactly what Falstaff had had in his pockets, asked, “What did you lose, Jack?”

“Would you believe it, Hal,” Falstaff replied, “I lost three or four IOUs each worth forty pounds, and I lost a seal-ring that had belonged to my grandfather.”

“The ring was a trifle, worth around eight pennies,” Prince Hal said.

“That’s what I told him,” the Hostess said. “I said that I had heard you say so, and, my lord, he speaks most vilely of you, like the foul-mouthed man he is — he said that he would beat you with a stick.”

“What!” Prince Hal said. “Did he really say that?”

The Hostess replied, “There’s neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in me else.”

Falstaff, who did not want to get in trouble with the Prince, said to her, “There’s no more faith in you than in a stewed prune served in a whorehouse, or more accurately, there’s no more faith in you than in a whore. There is no more truth in you than in a fox that is willing to play every trick

on hunters that it knows in order to get back safe and sound to its lair. As for womanhood, the wanton maid known as Marian is like the virtuous wife of an officer of the law or a preacher in comparison to you. Go away, you thing.”

“Thing?” the Hostess cried. “What kind of thing do you think I am?”

“What thing! Why, a thing to thank God for.”

Afraid that she had been insulted, the Hostess said, “I am no thing to thank God for — I wish you knew that! I am an honest man’s wife, and, even though you are a Knight, you are a knave to call me so.”

“Even though you are a woman, you are a beast to say that,” Falstaff said.

“What kind of beast am I, knave?” the Hostess asked.

“What kind of beast! Why, you are an otter.”

Surprised by the answer, Prince Hal asked, “An otter, Sir John? Why an otter?”

“Why, she’s neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not where to have her.”

Afraid once more that she had been insulted, the Hostess said, “You are wrong when you say that. You or any man knows where to have me, you knave, you!”

The Prince knew the sexual meaning of having a woman; he smiled and said, “Hostess, you say the truth, and Falstaff has slandered you most grossly.”

“He has lied about you, too,” the Hostess replied. “Just the other day he said that you owed him a thousand pounds.”

Prince Hal said to Falstaff, “Creep, do I owe you a thousand pounds?”

Quick-thinking Falstaff replied, “A thousand pounds, Hal? You owe me a million pounds. Your love is worth a million pounds, and you owe me your love.”

The Hostess said, “My lord, he called you a rascal, and he said he would beat you.”

Falstaff asked, “Did I, Bardolph?”

Falstaff expected Bardolph to back him up and say that he had not threatened to beat the Prince, but Bardolph was still sore about the comments that Falstaff had made about his face and replied, “Indeed, Sir John, you said so.”

“Yes, if he said my ring was copper,” Falstaff said.

“I do say that it is made of copper,” Prince Hal said. “Do you dare to be as good as your word now?”

“Why, Hal, you know, as you are a man, I dare. However, you are a Prince, and I fear you as a Prince as I fear the roaring of a lion’s pup.”

“And why not as the lion?”

“The King is to be feared as the lion. Do you think that I would fear you as I fear your father? No, and if I do, I pray to God that my belt will break.”

“If it does, your guts will fall down to your knees,” Prince Hal said. “But there’s no room for faith, truth, or honesty in your bosom — it is all filled up with guts and belly fat. Accuse an honest woman of picking your pockets! Why, you son of a whore, you impudent, swollen-up rascal, if there were anything in your pockets but tavern-reckonings, keepsakes from bawdy-houses, and one poor penny’s worth of sugar-candy to make you long-winded, if your pockets were enriched with anything but these, I am a villain. Yet you continue to pretend that you have been robbed of valuables and you will not admit that you are wrong. Aren’t

you ashamed?”

“But, Hal, Adam fell in the days of innocence in the Garden of Eden, so what can you expect of poor Jack Falstaff in these days of villainy? You can see that I have more flesh than another man, and therefore I have more frailty. You confess then that you picked my pockets?”

“It appears so by my story.”

Falstaff exclaimed, “Hostess, I forgive you. Go and make my breakfast. Love your husband, tend to your servants, and cherish your guests. You shall find me reasonable. As you can see, I am calm and peaceful again. Go now.”

Happy to be forgiven, the Hostess departed to make Falstaff’s breakfast.

Falstaff turned to Prince Hal and asked, “What news do you have? What about the robbery?”

“Oh, my sweet beef,” Prince Hal said, “I am still your guardian angel. The money you robbed has been paid back.”

Falstaff said, “I do not like that paying back; it is a double labor. First comes the stealing, and then comes the paying back.”

Prince Hal said, “My other news is that I am again on good terms with my father. He trusts me again.”

“Use that trust to rob the treasury for me,” Falstaff said. “And don’t bother to stop and wash your hands before you commit the robbery.”

“Please do what Falstaff said,” Bardolph said.

Prince Hal said, “I have procured for you, Jack, a charge of ... foot.”

“I wish it were a charge of cavalry,” Falstaff said. “Where shall I find a competent thief to steal a horse for me? I need a fine thief of the age of two and twenty or thereabouts! I am dreadfully unequipped. Well, God be thanked for these rebels — they offend none but the virtuous. The unvirtuous can always find a way to turn a war to their advantage. I laud the rebels — I praise them.”

“Bardolph,” Prince Hal said.

“Yes, my lord?”

“Go and deliver this letter to Lord John of Lancaster, my brother. Go and deliver this letter to my Lord of Westmoreland.”

Bardolph departed to do his errands.

“Peto, get our horses ready,” Prince Hal said. “You and I have thirty miles to ride before dinnertime.”

Peto departed to do his errand.

To Falstaff, Prince Hal said, “Jack, meet me tomorrow in the temple hall at two o’clock in the afternoon. There you shall get your orders as well as money to pay for your troops’ equipment.”

Prince Hal added, “The land is burning; Hotspur stands on high; and either we or they must lower lie. Many men will soon lower lie in their graves.”

Prince Hal departed.

To himself, Falstaff said, “Those are well-spoken words, and this is a splendid world. I can find ways to profit from war.”

He called, “Hostess, bring me my breakfast!”

Then he said to himself, “I wish I could stay in this tavern

and make a profit while other people fight in the war.”

CHAPTER 4 (1 Henry IV)

— 4.1 —

Hotspur, Worcester, and Douglas were meeting in the rebel camp near Shrewsbury. Hotspur and Douglas, recently become allies, were complimenting each other. Hotspur was taking the advice of Worcester to be more diplomatic.

Hotspur replied to something that the Earl of Douglas, whom Hotspur had defeated in battle three times, had said, “Well said, my noble Scot. If speaking the truth in this fine age were not thought to be flattery, such praise would you, the Earl of Douglas, have that no one who became a soldier in this campaign would have so good a reputation as yours throughout the world. By God, I am incapable of flattery; I hate the tongues of flatterers; but no man has a better place in my heart than you do. If you should ever test my friendship for you, my friendship would prove to be true.”

Douglas replied, “You are the King of Honor. If any man states that you are not, I will fight him.”

“You would do that,” Hotspur said. “Well said.”

A messenger arrived, carrying letters.

Hotspur said, “What letters do you have there?”

The messenger gave Hotspur the letters, and Hotspur said, “Thank you.”

The messenger said, “These letters come from your father, Northumberland.”

“Letters from him!” Hotspur said. “Why hasn’t he come here in person?”

“He cannot come, my lord. He is grievously ill.”

“Damn!” Hotspur said. “How can he have the leisure to be sick in such an exciting and turbulent time? Who leads his army? Who is their general?”

“His letters should tell you that,” the messenger said. “I cannot, my lord.”

Worcester asked, “Is he bedridden?”

“He was unable to get out of bed for the four days before I set forth. At the time of my departure from his castle, his physicians feared that he might die.”

“I wish that this rebellion had been finished before he got sick,” Worcester said. “We have never needed him to be in good health more than now.”

Hotspur read the letters.

“Sick now! Droop now!” Hotspur said. “His sickness infects the very life-blood of our rebellion. His sickness spreads even to our rebel camp. He writes me here that he has some internal sickness ... and that his allies could not be assembled in time by anyone he could delegate. Also, he did not think it wise to allow anyone other than himself to perform so dangerous and important a task. But he also advises us to boldly continue with our small army and fight and see if we win because, he writes, we can’t draw back now because King Henry IV is certainly aware of our rebellion. What do you think of this information?”

Worcester said, “Your father’s sickness deeply hurts us. It is a maim to our rebellion.”

Hotspur replied, “It is a perilous gash! It is a limb cut off!”

He paused, and then he said, “And yet, I believe, it is not. The absence of my father and his army seems more serious than we shall find it. Is it wise to stake all of our resources on one battle? Should we bet everything on one throw of

the dice? Should everything be risked in one hazardous action when such a rich prize is at stake? No. If we were to risk everything we had, that would mean that we had reached the very end of our hopes and the very limits of our resources.”

“You are right,” Douglas said. “We have forces in reserve. It is as if we are expecting an inheritance. We can boldly spend what we have now, knowing that soon we will have more. We have something to fall back on; that is our comfort.”

Hotspur said, “We have a place to go to. We have a refuge in case the Devil and mischance bring us early defeat in our rebellion.”

“Still, I wish that your father were here,” Worcester said. “We must be united in our rebellion. Some people who do not know the reason for your father’s absence may think that his knowledge and wisdom, loyalty to King Henry IV, and dislike of our rebellion has kept him from joining forces with us. Think how such a perception may affect our more timid supporters and make them wonder about the justness of our cause. We who take the offensive in a rebellion must avoid careful evaluations of our cause. We must make sure the eyes of those who would find fault in our rebellion see nothing. Your father’s absence opens a curtain through which our supporters may find reasons to become frightened and not support us.”

“You worry too much,” Hotspur said. “We can look at my father’s absence as being an advantage. It gives our rebellion a brighter and greater renown because our rebellion is now more daring because my father and his army are not here. People will think that if we can raise an army to challenge the King without my father’s help, then once my father’s army joins us, we shall topple Henry IV’s kingdom and depose him. All is still well; our rebellion is

still sound.”

“That’s true,” Douglas said. “In Scotland we don’t know the meaning of the word ‘fear.’”

Sir Richard Vernon walked over to the three leaders of the rebellion.

“Welcome, Vernon,” Hotspur said.

“I hope that my news will be welcome,” Vernon said. “The Earl of Westmoreland, with an army seven thousand strong, is marching here. With him is Prince John.”

“No problem,” Hotspur said. “What other news do you bring?”

“In addition, I have learned that King Henry IV himself in person has either already set forth or will set forth soon and will arrive here with a strong and mighty army.”

“That is also not a problem,” Hotspur said. “Where are his son, the nimble-footed and zany Prince of Wales, and the Prince’s friends, all of whom prefer drinking to anything else in the world?”

“I can report that Prince Hal is with an army, all well-equipped and well-armed. His soldiers are all plumed with ostrich feathers — the emblem of the Prince of Wales — shaking their wings like eagles after a bath, glittering in golden coats of armor like statues, as full of spirit as the month of May, and as gorgeous as the midsummer Sun, as sportive as young goats, and as wild as young bulls. I myself saw young Prince Hal, with his helmet on, his thighs covered with armor, and gallantly furnished with weapons, rise from the ground like the messenger god Mercury with feathered ankles that make him fast. Prince Hal vaulted with such ease into his saddle as if an angel had dropped down from the clouds to ride a fiery Pegasus and

bewitch the world with his noble horsemanship.”

“Stop! Stop!” Hotspur said. “This praise is making me sick — it’s like catching a cold with a change of season. Let them come. They come like beasts for sacrifice in their fine armor. All hot and bleeding we will offer them to Bellona, the fire-eyed maiden of smoky war. The god of war, Mars, shall sit on his altar up to his ears in blood. I am on fire, knowing that this rich prize is so near and is not yet ours. Come, let me mount my horse and feel him underneath me. My horse will carry me like a thunderbolt against the Prince of Wales. Harry Hotspur and Prince Harry shall meet — on one hot horse against another hot horse — and never part until one of us is made a corpse.”

Hotspur paused and then said, “I wish that Glendower were here with his army!”

Vernon said, “I have more bad news. I learned in the city of Worcester, as I rode along, that Glendower was not able to assemble his army.”

Douglas said, “That is the worst news that I have heard yet.”

“Yes,” Worcester said. “This is chilling news.”

Hotspur asked, “How many soldiers does King Henry IV have?”

“Approximately thirty thousand.”

“Let it be forty thousand,” Hotspur said. “My father and Glendower and their armies are not here, but our armies may still bring us victory. Let’s quickly gather our troops. Doomsday is near. If we all will die, let us die merrily.”

“Don’t talk about dying,” Douglas said. “I refuse to be afraid of dying for the next six months. Talk of dying is bad for morale.”

Falstaff and Bardolph were talking in a public road near Coventry. Falstaff's company of men whom he had drafted into military service for King Henry IV were with them.

Falstaff said, "Bardolph, go before me to Coventry. Fill up a bottle of sack for me. Our soldiers shall continue to march. Tonight we will reach Sutton Coldfill."

"Will you give me money to pay for the sack, Captain?" Bardolph asked.

"Use your own money," Falstaff replied.

"This bottle will make your debt ten shillings," Bardolph calculated. "Ten shillings equal an angel, so this bottle will make one angel."

Falstaff pretended that the bottle could actually make angels: "If it makes an angel, keep it in return for your labor. If it makes twenty angels, keep them all. Since they are angels, I am sure that the coinage is good. Tell Lieutenant Peto to meet me at the edge of the town."

"I will, Captain," Bardolph said. "Goodbye."

He departed.

Falstaff said to himself, "If I am not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a pickled fish. I have damnably misused the King's power of drafting citizens to fight in the war. I drafted a hundred and fifty people, but for three hundred and odd pounds, they bribed me to draft other people to be soldiers. I was able to get all this money by drafting no one except people with money. I drafted wealthy property-owners and the sons of wealthy farmers. I inquired about men who were about to be married and drafted them. I drafted people who live comfortably and who would rather hear the Devil than to hear the sound of a military drum. I

drafted wealthy people who love comfort and are more afraid of the sound of a gun than is a wild duck that has been shot. I drafted only weaklings who dine on toast and butter, who have hearts no bigger than the heads of pins. All of these people have paid me not to draft them, and now my company officially consists of lots of ensigns, corporals, lieutenants, and other junior officers. The rich people I drafted I made officers; that entitled them to more pay. The rich people paid me to draft someone else, and I then drafted privates, who don't make much money, and now I keep for myself the difference in pay.

“My company consists of rascals as ragged as Lazarus in scenes on a painted cloth where the glutton's dogs licked Lazarus' sores. These people now in my company were never soldiers: They are servants who were fired because they were dishonest; they are the younger sons of younger brothers, and so they are impoverished; they are apprentice bartenders who ran away from their servitude; and they are unemployed hostlers. They are parasites even when the world is calm and has been long at peace. They are ten times more dishonorably ragged than is an old tattered flag. Such are the kinds of men whom I have drafted to fight in the King's war. Anyone who would look at them would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigal sons recently come from keeping swine and from eating hog swill and garbage. A madcap fellow met me on the road, looked at my men, and told me that I had unloaded all the gibbets and drafted the dead bodies.

“No eye has ever seen such scarecrows. I'll not march through Coventry with them — that's for certain. Coventry has a prison, and my 'soldiers' might be arrested as suspected escaped prisoners because my 'soldiers' march with a wide space between their legs, as if they had fetters on their legs; and indeed I got most of them out of prison — prisoners are sometimes released so they can fight in a

war.

“There’s but a shirt and a half in my entire company. The half-shirt is two handkerchiefs attached together and thrown over the shoulders like the sleeveless coat of a herald. The whole shirt, to say the truth, was stolen from my host at Saint Albans, or from the red-nosed innkeeper at Daventry. But that doesn’t matter. The members of my company can steal shirts that are set out on hedges to dry after being washed.”

Prince Hal and the Lord of Westmoreland rode up to Falstaff and his company.

“How are you, fat Jack! How are you, thickly quilted friend!” Prince Hal said.

“What, Hal! How are you, mad wag!” Falstaff replied. “What the Devil are you doing in Warwickshire?”

He noticed Westmoreland and said, “My good Lord of Westmoreland, pardon me for not greeting you more quickly. I thought that you had already reached Shrewsbury.”

“To be honest,” Westmoreland said, “I ought to be there already, and so should you. But my soldiers are already there. The King, I can tell you, is looking for all of us. We must march all night.”

“Don’t worry about me,” Falstaff said. “I am as vigilant as a cat on the lookout to steal cream.”

“I think that you have already stolen the cream and drunk it, too,” Prince Hal said. “It has been churned in your belly and turned into butter. But tell me, Jack, whose fellows are these behind you?”

“Mine, Hal,” Falstaff said. “They are mine.”

“I never did see such pitiful rascals.”

“Tut, tut,” Falstaff said. “These men are good enough to be stabbed by a bayonet and then tossed aside. They are good enough to be food for gunpowder. They will fill a pit of corpses as well as better men. They are mortal men after all.”

The purpose of war is to kill men, Falstaff thought. Why kill the best men? Why not kill the worst men? Why not kill the men who are not valued?

“True,” Westmoreland said, “but, Sir John, I think that they are exceedingly poor and bare-bone — exceedingly beggarly.”

Westmoreland thought, *These men are inferior and threadbare.*

“They know poverty,” Falstaff said, “but I do not know how they came to learn that. These men are lean, certainly, but they did not learn that from me.”

“No,” Prince Hal said. “They did not learn leanness from you, unless you call three fingers of fat over the ribs lean. But hurry to Shrewsbury. Hotspur is already camped near there.”

“Is the King there, too?” Falstaff asked.

“He is, Sir John,” Westmoreland said. “I fear we shall stay behind too long and miss the battle.”

Prince Hal and Westmoreland departed.

Falstaff said to himself, “I am a dull and sluggish fighter and so I don’t mind showing up at the end of a battle; however, I am a keen and hungry guest and so I always show up at the beginning of a feast.”

Hotspur, the Earl of Worcester, the Earl of Douglas, and Sir Richard Vernon debated battle tactics in the rebel camp near Shrewsbury.

“Let’s fight tonight,” Hotspur said.

“No,” Worcester said. “That’s a bad idea.”

Douglas said, “If we do not fight this night, then we give the King the advantage.”

“That is not true,” Sir Richard Vernon said.

“Why do you say that?” Hotspur asked. “Isn’t the King looking for reinforcements?”

“So are we.”

“The King’s reinforcements are sure to arrive,” Hotspur said. “Our reinforcements may or may not arrive.”

“Hotspur, take my advice,” Worcester said. “Let’s not fight the King tonight.”

“I agree,” Sir Richard Vernon said. “Let’s not fight tonight.”

“This is poor advice,” Douglas said. “It is based on fear and cowardice.”

“Don’t slander me, Douglas,” Sir Richard Vernon said. “I swear on my life, and I will back up what I say with my life, that although I fight after carefully considering what is the best thing to do, I fight with as little fear as you or as any Scot who lives today. Tomorrow we will see which of us is afraid in the battle.”

“Or we will find out tonight,” Douglas said.

“At either time, I will show no fear,” Sir Richard Vernon said.

“I say that we shall fight tonight,” Hotspur said.

“Tonight is a bad time for fighting,” Sir Richard Vernon said. “You, Hotspur, and you, Douglas, are great leaders, and you should be able to see the reasons why we should not fight tonight. We face many problems. Some cavalry led by my kinsman have not arrived. Your uncle Worcester’s cavalry arrived only today, and now their spirit is asleep and their courage is tame and dull because of exhaustion from hard labor. Not a horse is half the half of himself.”

“The same thing is true of the horses in the King’s cavalry,” Hotspur said. “In general, the King’s horses are weary and brought low from travel. The majority of our horses are rested.”

“The number of the King’s horses is greater than ours,” Worcester said. “For God’s sake, Hotspur, let’s wait until all our cavalry have arrived.”

A trumpet sounded to announce a visitor from King Henry IV, and Sir Walter Blunt walked into the rebel camp.

He said, “I come with gracious offers from the King, if you will listen to them.”

“Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt,” Hotspur said with respect. “I wish to God that you were on our side! Some of us respect you very well, but we begrudge you your great honor and good name because you are fighting not on our side but for our enemy.”

“God forbid that I should be on your side as long as you step outside the bounds of decency and oppose your legitimate and anointed majesty,” Sir Walter Blunt replied. “But let me convey to you my message from the King. He wants to know the nature of your grievances and why in this time of civil peace you are stirring up war and

spreading bold hostility, dissent, and rebellion throughout his loyal land. If the King has in any way forgotten your good actions, which he admits are many, he asks you to list your complaints, and he will as quickly as possible meet your demands — with interest. He will also give an absolute pardon to you and to your troops whom you have misled.”

Hotspur replied, “The King is kind, and we know well that the King knows when to promise and when to pay. My father and my uncle and myself did give him that same royalty he wears. We are the ones who made him King. When he had not even twenty-six soldiers supporting him, when the world had a low opinion of him, when he was wretched and low, a poor and forsaken outlaw sneaking home, my father gave him welcome to the shore of England. And when my father heard Henry Bolingbroke swear and vow to God that he had returned to England only to gain his rightful title of Duke of Lancaster, to sue for the return of his lands, and to make peace with King Richard II with tears of innocence and declarations of loyalty, my father, because of his kind heart and because he was moved by pity, swore to help him and delivered that help that he had promised.

“When the lords and barons of the realm perceived that my father, the Earl of Northumberland, supported Henry Bolingbroke, both the higher and the lower classes came and showed their allegiance to him by taking off their caps and bending their knees. They met him in boroughs, cities, and villages, waited for him on bridges, stood in rows and let him pass between them, laid gifts before him, gave him their oaths to support him, gave him their heirs to serve him as pages, and followed at his heels in celebration.

“Henry Bolingbroke presently understood his new power, and he became more ambitious than he was in the vow he

made to my father upon the shore at Ravenspurgh when he, Henry Bolingbroke, was still humble and had little power. He then took on himself to reform certain laws and strict decrees that weighed too heavily on the country. He cried out against abuses, and he pretended to weep over wrongs that hurt England. With this image, this mask that pretended justice, he won the hearts of all whom he wanted to back him. He then proceeded further and cut off the heads of all the deputies whom the absent King Richard II had left behind here in England while he was personally fighting in the war in Ireland.”

“I did not come here to hear this,” Sir Walter Blunt said.

“Allow me to get to the point,” Hotspur said. “Shortly afterward, Henry Bolingbroke deposed King Richard II. Soon after that, he took away the King’s life. Following that, he taxed the entire country. Even worse, he then allowed Mortimer to be held as hostage in Wales, and he refused to ransom him. If Mortimer now held the office that he by rights ought to have, he would be King instead of Henry Bolingbroke. King Henry IV also disgraced me despite my many military victories, sent spies to gather information to be used against me, berated my uncle Worcester and drove him away from the council board, and in rage dismissed my father from the court. He has broken oath on oath and committed wrong on wrong. In conclusion, he has driven us to raise an army to protect ourselves and to question his title to the crown. Henry Bolingbroke is not in the direct line of descent from Richard II, and so we think that his claim to be King is weak and ought not to be endured.”

Sir Walter Blunt asked, “Shall I return this answer to the King?”

“No,” Hotspur said. “We will think over our final answer tonight. Go now to King Henry IV, and ask him to send us

a hostage to ensure the safe return of my uncle Worcester, who will go to the King tomorrow morning and tell him our demands.”

“I wish that you would accept the King’s offer of kindness and respect,” Sir Walter Blunt said.

“Perhaps we will,” Hotspur replied.

“I pray God that you do,” Sir Walter Blunt said.

— 4.4 —

In his palace, the Archbishop of York talked to Sir Michael.

The Archbishop of York said, “Sir Michael, take this sealed message quickly to the lord marshal, this message to my kinsman Scroop, and all the other messages to those to whom they are addressed. If you knew how important these messages are, you would be vigilant and deliver them very quickly.”

“My good lord, I can guess what their content is.”

“I think you can,” the Archbishop of York said. “Tomorrow, Sir Michael, is a day during which ten thousand men will be tested. At Shrewsbury, I understand that the King with a mighty and quickly raised army will fight against Hotspur’s army. Sir Michael, because of the illness of Northumberland, whose army would be huge had he been healthy enough to raise it, and because of the absence of the army of Owen Glendower, who was counted on to provide needed strength but has stayed away because of prophecies, I am afraid that the army of Hotspur is too weak to risk a battle with the King’s army.”

“Why, my good lord, you need not fear,” Sir Michael said. “Hotspur will be aided by Douglas and Lord Mortimer.”

“No, Mortimer is not there.”

“But there is Mordake, Sir Richard Vernon, Hotspur, the Earl of Worcester, and many other gallant warriors and noble gentlemen.”

“That’s true,” the Archbishop of York said, “but the King has gathered the best men of all the land to fight for him: the Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster, the noble Westmoreland, and warlike Sir Walter Blunt; in addition, the King has gathered many other associates and respected men who are skilled in the arts of war.”

“You can be sure, my lord, that they shall be well opposed.”

“I hope so,” the Archbishop of York said, “yet I have reason to fear Hotspur’s defeat in battle. And so, to prevent the worst that can happen, Sir Michael, hurry and deliver these letters. If Hotspur is defeated in battle, King Henry IV will attack us next because he has learned of our part in the rebellion, and it is wise for us to prepare to oppose him as strongly as we can. Therefore make haste. I must write to other friends, and so, farewell, Sir Michael.”

CHAPTER 5 (1 Henry IV)

— 5.1 —

The next morning, on 21 July 1403, King Henry IV, Prince Hal, Lord John of Lancaster, Sir Walter Blunt, and Falstaff met in the King's camp near Shrewsbury

King Henry IV said, "The Sun is red like blood as it begins to appear over that bushy mountain. It seems ill and feverish, and the day is pale in comparison."

Prince Hal said, "The southern wind blows as if it is playing a trumpet and announcing what the Sun means by its appearance. The hollow whistling in the leaves foretells a stormy and windy day."

"Let the weather sympathize with the losers of the upcoming battle," King Henry IV said. "Nothing can seem foul to those who win."

A trumpet sounded.

The Earl of Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon came into the King's camp.

The King said, "How are you, my Lord of Worcester! It is not good that you and I should meet upon such terms as now we meet. You have deceived our trust, and made us take off our comfortable robes of peace so that we could crush our old limbs in ungentle steel armor. This is not as it should be, my lord. What do you say now? Will you untie this ill-tempered knot of hateful war? Will you move again in that obedient orbit where you did give a fair and natural light, and will you cease to be a comet going its own way and showing itself to be a terrifying omen and a sign of evil soon to come? A dutiful subject should revolve around his King in an obedient orbit, but you do not do so."

“Hear me, my liege,” Worcester said. “For my own part, I could be well content to spend the end of my life in peaceful and quiet hours. I have not sought this day of battle.”

“You have not sought it!” the King said. “How has it come, then?”

Falstaff said, “Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.”

Prince Hal said to Falstaff, “Shut up, you chattering fool.”

Worcester said to the King, “It pleased your majesty to turn your looks of favor away from myself and all the Percys, and yet I must remind you, my lord, we were the first and dearest of your friends. For you I broke my staff of office under King Richard II, and I rode swiftly day and night to meet you on the way and kiss your hand, while still you were in position and in reputation not as strong and fortunate as I. It was myself, my brother, and his son who brought you home to England and boldly did face the dangers of the time. You swore to us at Doncaster that you did not intend to challenge the King and that you wanted nothing more than what you had inherited: the Dukedom of Lancaster. We swore that we would help you gain your inheritance.

“But within a short time, good fortune poured on you, and you became ambitious. You had the help of the Percys, and you had the good fortune that King Richard II was absent from England and in Ireland. England was suffering from the abuses of the King, you seemed to have been grievously wronged, and contrary winds kept King Richard II so long in Ireland that everyone in England thought that he was dead.

“You took advantage of these things, and you decided to seize power in your hands. You forgot the oath you made to us at Doncaster. You took advantage of our aid the way that

a cuckoo takes advantage of a sparrow. The cuckoo lays its eggs in the nest of a sparrow, and its offspring grows larger than the sparrow's nestlings and pushes them out of the nest. You grew large and powerful because of our feeding you, and you began to oppress us. You had grown so large and powerful that we, your supporters, dared not go near you because of fear that you would swallow us. We were forced, for the sake of safety, to fly with nimble wing out of your sight and raise this army. We have been forced to do this because of things that you have done. You have treated us badly and unnaturally, you have threatened us, and you have violated all the promises you made to us before you became King."

"These things you have indeed articulated," King Henry IV said. "You have proclaimed them in the centers of marketplaces and had them read in churches to adorn the garment of rebellion with some fine color that might please the eyes of fickle turncoats and poor malcontents who stare with their mouths open and then hug themselves with delight at the news of tumultuous rebellion. You are putting lipstick on a pig. Rebels have always come up with weak justifications for bloody warfare; they have never lacked for supporters such as angry beggars who are hungry for pellmell havoc and confusion."

Prince Hal said, "In both armies are many souls who shall pay very dearly with their lives or with grievous injuries if the armies join in battle. Tell your nephew, Hotspur, that the Prince of Wales joins with the entire world to praise him. Except for this rebellion, I swear, I do not think that a nobler gentleman, more active-valiant or more valiant-young, more daring or bolder, than he is now alive to grace this age with noble deeds. For my part — I speak it to my shame — I have neglected my responsibilities. I hear that Hotspur would agree that this is true. Yet let me say this in front of my father: I am willing, although Hotspur has a

much better reputation in warfare than do I, to fight him in single combat to the death. Whoever wins the single combat wins the war. I am willing to fight him in order to save bloodshed and lives in both armies.”

King Henry IV, who believed that the odds would be against his son, said, “And, Prince of Wales, we would be willing for you to fight Hotspur in single combat, except that infinite reasons are against it. No, Worcester, no, a single combat will not happen.”

He added, “We love our people well. We even love those who are misled and are on the side of Hotspur. If they are willing to accept our pardon, then Hotspur and they and you shall be my friends again and I shall be their friend. Tell Hotspur about the pardon I am offering and bring me word of what he will do. Understand that if he will not stop this rebellion and will not accept the pardon, then I will command rebuke and dreadful punishment to go to him and mete out justice. Go now. We need no longer talk. My offer of pardon to you rebels is fair; I advise you to accept it.”

Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon left the King’s camp.

Prince Hal said, “Your offer of pardon will not be accepted, I swear. Douglas and Hotspur are both confident that they will be victorious in battle.”

“Therefore,” King Henry IV said, “everyone get ready to attack. Once they answer and decline our pardon, we will set on them and start the battle. May God support us because our cause is just!”

Everyone departed except for Prince Hal and Falstaff.

Falstaff said, “Hal, if you see me wounded and down in the battle, bestride me and protect me and save my life. It is what a friend would do.”

“Anyone who bestrides your vast bulk would have to be a colossus,” Prince Hal replied, “so say your prayers. I need to go now.”

“I wish it were bedtime, Hal, and all were well,” Falstaff said.

“Why, you owe God your life, and so you owe God a debt,” Prince Hal said. “The only way to pay God the debt you owe is with your death.”

Prince Hal left to go to his troops and make sure that they were ready for him to lead them into battle.

Falstaff said, “I may owe God a debt, but the debt is not yet due, and I would hate to pay that debt before it is due. God has not appeared before me and demanded that the debt be paid, and I will not go to Him and voluntarily pay the debt. It doesn’t matter. Honor spurs me on to go into battle. Yes, but suppose that honor leads me to be killed or wounded in battle? What then? Can honor set a broken leg? No. Can honor set a broken arm? No. Can honor take away the pain of a wound? No. Does honor have skill in surgery, then? No, it does not. What is honor? It is a word. What is in that word ‘honor’ — what is that honor? It is nothing but the air that we breathe out when we pronounce a word. Who has honor? He who died on Wednesday. Does he feel honor? No. Does he hear it? No. Can it be sensed? Not by the dead. Dead people can have honor, but it is worthless to them. Will honor stay with the living? No. Why not? While people are living, they have detractors — people slander them. Therefore, I’ll have nothing to do with honor. Honor is only a coat of arms that identifies a dead nobleman. I now end my catechism.”

Many people, if they had witnessed this scene, would think, *A catechism is a series of questions designed to elicit a person’s view — for example, about religious matters.*

Falstaff's religion is to look out for himself. Falstaff regards himself as the most important thing that exists — he regards himself as the center of the universe. Other people often regard something or someone or Someone as being more important than themselves. Those people are not Falstaff.

Some people, if they had witnessed this scene, would think, *Falstaff is right, you know. It is better to be a live coward than a dead hero.*

Other people, such as Hotspur and Prince Hal, regard honor as worthwhile and important.

— 5.2 —

In the rebel camp, Worcester said to Sir Richard Vernon, “My nephew Hotspur must not know, Sir Richard, the liberal and kind offer of the King.”

“It were best that he did know,” Sir Richard Vernon replied.

“If he finds out and accepts the offer, then we are ruined,” Worcester said. “I do not believe that it is likely — or even possible — that the King should keep his word and regard us as his friends. He will continue to suspect us of treason and find a time to punish this rebellion at another time and by using some pretext. All our lives he will look at us with suspicion. We raised an army and marched in rebellion against the King. We shall be trusted only as a fox is trusted. A fox may be partially tamed, may be loved, and may be locked up in a cage, but still the fox will retain some of its wildness. No matter how we look, whether we appear to be sad or merry, the King will misinterpret our looks. We shall feed like oxen at a stall; we shall be fattened before we are butchered. My nephew's trespass may be forgotten; Hotspur has the excuse of youth and heat of blood, and with a nickname like Hotspur he may be

forgiven on the basis that such a nickname denotes the brain of a hare and a lack of self-control. This rebellion will not lie on Hotspur's head; it will lie on my head and on the head of Hotspur's father. We are the ones who encouraged Hotspur to rebel; he caught his guilt from us like a disease. We, as the genesis of the rebellion, shall pay for it. Therefore, good kinsman, do not let Hotspur know the liberal and kind offer of the King."

Sir Richard Vernon replied, "Say whatever you want to say. I will back you up and say that you are telling the truth. Look, here is Hotspur now."

Hotspur and Douglas met Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon.

Hotspur ordered, "Prepare to release the Lord of Westmoreland. My uncle has returned from seeing the King, and Westmoreland was the hostage who ensured a safe return for my uncle."

He then said to Worcester, "Uncle, what news do you bring from King Henry IV?"

"The King wishes to go into battle quickly."

Douglas said, "Give the Lord of Westmoreland a defiant message to give to the King."

Hotspur replied, "Lord Douglas, go to the Lord of Westmoreland and give him a defiant message to deliver."

"Indeed, I will, and very willingly," Douglas said.

He left to see the Earl of Westmoreland.

"The King will not show us any mercy," Worcester said.

"Did you beg for mercy?" Hotspur asked. "God forbid that you would!"

“I told him gently about our grievances and about his oath-breaking. He replied by lying that he never lied. He called us rebels and traitors, and he said that he will punish our rebellion with his proud and mighty army.”

The Earl of Douglas returned from talking with the Earl of Westmoreland.

“Arm yourselves, gentlemen,” Douglas said, “and prepare to fight. I have thrown a brave defiance in King Henry IV’s teeth. Westmoreland will deliver the message, and as soon as the King hears it, the battle will start.”

Worcester said to Hotspur, “The Prince of Wales stepped forth before his father the King, and he challenged you to a single fight.”

“I wish that a single fight would decide the victor, and that no one except Prince Hal and I would fight and get out of breath. But tell me what tone he used in his challenge to me. Did he show contempt for me?”

Sir Richard Vernon said, “No, by my soul, he showed no contempt at all for you. I never in my life did hear a challenge urged more modestly, unless a brother should ask his brother to compete in gentle exercise and proof of arms. He gave you all the respect that is due to a man, he praised you with a Princely tongue, he listed your notable qualities in detail like the writer of a history, and he said that praise by itself was not enough to state your true worth. In addition, he did something that showed that he is indeed a Prince: He admitted his faults and regretted his truant youth with such a grace as if he were a teacher teaching a lesson and a student learning one at the same time. He stopped speaking then, but I believe, and I would tell everyone in the world, that if he survives this battle, England has never had a sweeter hope, or one so much misunderstood because of his youthful reckless behavior.”

Hotspur replied, “Sir Richard, I think that you have fallen in love with Prince Hal’s follies. Never have I heard of any Prince who is so wild a libertine. But be he as he will, yet before nightfall I will embrace him with a soldier’s arm, and he shall shrink under my soldier’s affection.”

To everyone, Hotspur said, “Arm yourselves quickly. Fellows, soldiers, friends, think about what we have to do. I do not have the gift of an eloquent tongue, and so you need to motivate yourselves to fight well in battle.”

A messenger arrived and told Hotspur, “My lord, here are letters for you.”

Hotspur replied, “I do not have time to read them now.”

To everyone he said, “Gentlemen, the time of life is short! To spend the shortness of life in a shameful way would make life too long even if it lasted for only an hour. If we survive this battle and continue to live, we will have conquered a King. If we die, we will have a brave death if we can make Princes die with us! We all have good consciences because we bear arms in a fair cause; our motivation for bearing arms is just.”

Another messenger arrived and said, “My lord, prepare to fight. The King is starting to attack.”

“I thank the King because he has stopped my speech,” Hotspur said. “I prefer not to talk, and I say only this: Let each man do his best. Now I draw my sword, which I intend to stain with the best blood that I can meet in the battle we fight this perilous day. *Esperance!* Hope! Let’s go to battle. Sound all the lofty instruments of war, and let us all embrace. By Heaven, we know that some of us never again shall live to embrace friends again!”

They embraced and went off to fight in war.

The battle had started. In the battlefield between the two camps, Douglas encountered Sir Walter Blunt, who was dressed like King Henry IV and acting as a decoy.

Sir Walter Blunt asked, “What is your name, you who in the battle thus accosts me? What honor do you think you’ll gain by fighting me?”

“My name is Douglas, and I have been seeking you out in this battle because some people tell me that you are King Henry IV.”

“They have told you the truth,” Sir Walter Blunt lied.

“The Lord of Stafford has paid dearly today for assuming your likeness because of instead of ending your life, King Henry IV, my sword ended his life. My sword will also end your life, King, unless you surrender to me.”

“I was not born a quitter, proud Scot. I will not surrender; instead, you shall find in me a King who will get revenge for the death of Lord Stafford.”

They fought, and Douglas killed Sir Walter Blunt.

Hotspur ran up to Douglas and said, “If you had fought at Holmedon the way that you are fighting now, you and your Scottish army would have won the battle.”

“The battle we are fighting now is over, and we are victorious,” Douglas said. “Look! I have killed the King.”

“Where is he?” Hotspur asked.

“Here,” Douglas said, pointing at the corpse at his feet.

“No, Douglas,” Hotspur said. “I know this man’s face well. A gallant knight he was, and his name was Sir Walter Blunt. He is dressed as if he were the King.”

Douglas said to the corpse, “Wherever your soul goes, let it take with it the title of Fool. You borrowed the title of King, and it has cost you dearly. Why did you tell me that you were King Henry IV?”

“The King has many decoys,” Hotspur said. “Many of his noblemen are dressed like him and wearing his coats — vests embroidered with a coat of arms and worn over armor.”

“Then I will use my sword to kill all his coats,” Douglas said. “I will murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece, until I meet the real King.”

“Let’s return to the fighting!” Hotspur said. “The battle is going well for us.”

They left.

Falstaff walked onto the scene and stood near Sir Walter Blunt’s corpse.

He said, “In London, I could often escape paying what I owe by skipping out on the bill, but I am afraid that today I may have to pay the debt I owe to God, and that is a payment in full in which I lose my life.”

He noticed the corpse lying nearby: “But who is lying dead here? Sir Walter Blunt. Here is honor! This demonstrates what I said earlier about honor.”

He paused, and then he said, “I am as hot as molten lead, and as heavy as it, too. May God keep lead out of me! I need no more weight than my own intestines.”

He laughed at his own joke, and then he added, “I have led my company of ragamuffins to where they have been peppered with lead bullets. Not three of my hundred and fifty are left alive; and they are mutilated and will spend the rest of their lives at city gates with other beggars to seek

alms.”

Falstaff heard a noise and asked, “Who’s there?”

It was Prince Hal, who had been fighting hard and who had lost his sword in the confusion of battle. This was the day that he had promised himself and his father the King that he would redeem himself, and he was determined to do exactly that.

“Why are you standing here and doing nothing?” Prince Hal said when he saw Falstaff. “Lend me your sword. Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff and dead under the hoofs of horses that bear our boasting enemies. The lives of these dead patriots are not yet avenged. I beg you to lend me your sword.”

Falstaff lied, “Hal, please let me rest awhile and get back my breath. Not even Gregory XIII, that Pope and tyrant who encouraged the killing of many French Protestants in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, ever did such deeds in arms as I have done this day. I have killed Hotspur; I am sure of that.”

“I am just as sure that he is still alive and wants to kill you,” Prince Hal said. “Please, lend me your sword.”

“No,” Falstaff said. “If Hotspur is still alive, then I need my sword to defend myself. But you can have my pistol if you want it.”

“Give it to me,” Prince Hal said. “What! Is it still in your holster?”

“It is hot, Hal,” Falstaff said. “I have fired it so often that it became so hot that I had to put it back in its holster.”

He added, “Look in my holster and you will find something that will sack a city.”

Prince Hal looked and found a bottle of sack. He pulled it out and said, "Is this a time for jokes?" Then he threw the bottle of sack at Falstaff and ran off to find a weapon and start fighting again.

Falstaff said, "Well, if Hotspur Percy is still alive, I'll pierce him. If he comes across me, so be it, but if he doesn't, I have no intention of going out of my way to get in his way. If I were to be so stupid as to willingly seek him out, I would deserve for him to slice me up the way a butcher does a piece of meat to get it ready for broiling. I like not such grinning honor as the late Sir Walter Blunt has. I prefer life. If I can save my life, well and good. If I cannot save my life, then unlooked-for honor comes to me and that is the end of me."

— 5.4 —

In another part of the battlefield a little later were Prince Hal, who was bleeding, King Henry IV, Lord John of Lancaster, and the Earl of Westmoreland.

King Henry IV said to Prince Hal, "Please, Harry, withdraw from the battle. You are bleeding too much to continue fighting. Lord John of Lancaster, go with him."

"No, my lord," John of Lancaster said. "I would not leave the battlefield unless I myself were bleeding."

Prince Hal said to his father the King, "I beg your majesty, advance. If you retreat, you will dismay your troops."

"I will do so," the King said. "My Lord of Westmoreland, lead the Prince of Wales to his tent."

"Come, my lord, I'll lead you to your tent," Westmoreland said.

Prince Hal objected, "Lead me, my lord? I do not need your help. God forbid that a shallow scratch should drive the

Prince of Wales away from such a battlefield as this, where our noble troops are stained with battle and trodden on by soldiers and horses, and the rebels triumph with their massacres!”

“We have rested too long,” Lord John of Lancaster said. “Come, Westmoreland, our duty lies this way. Let us do our duty.”

Lord John of Lancaster and the Earl of Westmoreland left to rejoin the battle.

Prince Hal said about Lord John, his younger brother, “By God, you have deceived me, Lancaster. I did not think that you had such a brave spirit. Before, I loved you as a brother, John; but now, I respect you as I respect my soul.”

King Henry IV said, “I saw John fight Hotspur with his sword. John fought harder and better than I expected such a young warrior to fight.”

“This boy gives courage to us all!” Prince Hal said.

Then he left to rejoin the battle.

Douglas appeared, saw King Henry IV, and said, “Another King! They grow like Hydra’s heads. Each time Hercules fought the mythological creature and cut off one of its heads, two more grew in its place. I am Douglas, fatal to all those who wear those colors on their vests. Who are you, you counterfeiter of the person of the King?”

“I am the King himself, and Douglas, I grieve because you have killed so many of the brave men who are pretending to be me. It would have been much better if you had found me. Two of my sons are seeking Hotspur and you on the battlefield, but since you and I have met, I will fight you, so defend yourself.”

“I fear that you are another counterfeit,” Douglas said, “but

yet you bear yourself like a King. Whoever you are, I will fight you and I will kill you.”

They fought, and Douglas fought better. The King was in danger of being killed when Prince Hal saw the fight and came running to save his father’s life.

“Surrender, vile Scot,” Prince Hal said, “or you will never hold up your head again. The spirits of valiant Stafford, Shirley, and Blunt, all of whom have died on this battlefield, are in my arms. It is the Prince of Wales who threatens you, and I never promise anything but what I intend to do.”

The fought, and Douglas ended up fleeing from Prince Hal, who saved his father’s life.

Prince Hal said to his father, “Be happy, my lord. How are you? Sir Nicholas Gawsey has sent to ask for help. So has Clifton. I am going to Clifton now.”

“Stay, and rest awhile,” the King said. “You have redeemed your bad reputation, and you have shown that you put some value on my life by rescuing me like this.”

“People have done me a great injury by saying that I want you to die,” Prince Hal said. “If that were true, I would have let Douglas kill you, which he would have done as quickly as all the poisons in the world, thus saving any treacherous labor by me, your son.”

“You go and help Clifton,” the King said. “I will go and help Sir Nicholas Gawsey.”

King Henry IV departed.

Hotspur came onto the scene and saw Prince Hal.

Hotspur said, “Unless I am mistaken, you are the Prince of Wales.”

“You speak as if I would deny who I am,” Prince Hal replied.

“My name is Harry Percy. People call me Hotspur.”

“Why, then I see a very valiant rebel,” Prince Hal said. “I truly am the Prince of Wales. Hotspur, do not think to share glory with me anymore. Two planets do not share one orbit, and England cannot endure a double reign of Hotspur and the Prince of Wales.”

“Nor shall it, Prince Hal,” Hotspur replied. “The hour has come in which one of us will die. I wish to God that your reputation in battle were as great as is my reputation.”

“I will make my reputation better than it is before I part from you,” Prince Hal said. “All of the honors that you have gathered I will reap and use to make a garland for my head.”

“I can no longer tolerate your empty boasts,” Hotspur said.

Hotspur and Prince Hal fought.

Falstaff arrived and cheered on Prince Hal: “Well done, Hal. Go to it. You shall find no boy’s play here, I tell you.”

Douglas happened onto the scene, and he began to fight Falstaff, who pretended to have a heart attack and fell down “dead.”

Douglas, who did not recognize the Prince of Wales and who thought that Hotspur was a better warrior than the man he was currently fighting, left, and Prince Hal and Hotspur continued to fight.

Prince Hal dealt Hotspur a mortal blow with his sword, and Hotspur fell and said, “Prince of Wales, you have robbed me of my youth! I better endure the loss of brittle life than I endure the loss of my proud titles that you have taken from

me. Their loss wounds my thoughts worse than your sword wounds my flesh. Our thoughts are dependent on our bodies, and our bodies are dependent on time. And time, which sees all of existence, must come to an end. As a dying man, I can prophesy, but the earthy and cold hand of death lies on my tongue. Hotspur, you have no time to prophesy because you are dust and food for —”

Hotspur died.

Prince Hal finished Hotspur’s last sentence: “For worms, brave Hotspur. Fare thee well, great heart! Misguided ambition, how much have you shrunk! When this body contained a spirit, a kingdom was too small a territory for it, but now two paces of the vilest earth is room enough to make a grave to contain it. This earth on which you lie dead will never bear a living man as valiant as you. If you were capable of hearing me, I would not give you so much praise, but now that you are dead, let me cover your mangled face. On your behalf, I will thank myself for performing this rite of tender duty to the dead. Goodbye, and take my praise of you with you to Heaven! Let your rebellion sleep with you in your grave and not be mentioned in your epitaph.”

Prince Hal saw Falstaff lying “dead” on the ground.

“What, old acquaintance! Could not all this flesh keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell! I could have better spared a better man. I should heavily — in more ways than one — miss you, if I were much in love with frivolity! Death has not struck so fat a deer today, although it has struck many dearer, in this bloody fray. I will see to it that you are quickly disemboweled for embalming. Until then, lie here dead in the blood of this battlefield.”

Prince Hal left.

Falstaff got up off the ground and said, “Disemboweled! If

you disembowel me today, I give you permission to salt me and eat me tomorrow. By God, it was time for me to counterfeit death, or that raging and bloodthirsty Scot had taken my life! But is ‘counterfeit’ the right word? I am no counterfeit. A counterfeit of a man does not have the life of a man. To do as I did — to counterfeit dying so that I could continue living — is to be no counterfeit, but instead to be the true and perfect image of life. The better part of valor is discretion; that is, the most important part of courage is caution. By being cautious and counterfeiting death rather than fighting, I have saved my life.”

Falstaff looked at Hotspur’s corpse and said, “By God, I am afraid of this volatile and easily inflamed Hotspur, although he is dead. What if he is also counterfeiting death and will soon get up? I am afraid that he will prove to be a better actor than I am. Therefore, I will make sure that he is dead, and I will swear that I killed him. Why may not he rise as well as I did? Only a witness could prove that to be wrong, and the only witnesses are my own eyes — nobody sees me.”

Falstaff stabbed Hotspur’s corpse and said, “You now have a new wound in your thigh, and I will take you along with me.”

Falstaff picked up Hotspur’s corpse in preparation of carrying it to someone in authority so that he could get a reward.

Prince Hal and Lord John of Lancaster arrived on the scene.

Prince Hal said, “Brother John, today you have very bravely fought in your first battle and bloodied your sword.”

John of Lancaster saw Falstaff and said, “Who is this? Didn’t you tell me that this fat man was dead?”

“I did say that,” Prince Hal said. “I saw him dead; he was lying breathless and bleeding on the ground.”

Prince Hal said to Falstaff, “Are you alive? Are my eyes imagining things? Please, speak. I will not trust my eyes until I have the evidence of my ears to support them. You cannot be what you seem to be!”

“I am not a ghost — that’s for sure,” Falstaff replied. “But if I am not Jack Falstaff, then I am a rascal.”

Falstaff dropped on the ground the corpse he was carrying and said, “There is Hotspur. If your father the King will reward me, well and good. If he will not, then let him kill the next Hotspur himself. I look to be made either an Earl or a Duke, I can assure you.”

“Why, I killed Hotspur myself and I saw you lying dead,” Prince Hal said.

“Did you?” Falstaff said. “Really? How this world is given to lying! I grant you that I was down and out of breath, and so was Hotspur, but we both rose simultaneously and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. If I may be believed, well and good; if not, let them who should reward courage bear the sin upon their own heads. I swear by my eternal soul that I gave Hotspur this wound in the thigh. If any man alive denies it, I will make him eat a piece of my sword.”

Lord John said, “This is the strangest tale that I ever heard.”

“And this is the strangest fellow, brother John,” Prince Hal said.

He said to Falstaff, “Come, bring your luggage — Hotspur’s corpse — nobly on your back. For my part, if this lie of yours will do you any good, I will not openly

contradict you but will let you get away with it.”

They heard a military trumpet.

Prince Hal said, “The trumpet sounds retreat for the rebels; the day is ours. We have won the battle. Come, brother, let us go to the highest ground on the battlefield to see which of our friends are living, and which are dead.”

Prince Hal and John of Lancaster left, leaving Falstaff alone with Hotspur’s corpse.

“I will follow them so that I can collect a reward,” Falstaff said. “May God reward whoever rewards me! If I am rewarded with a title of greatness such as Earl or Duke, I will grow less because I will repent, go on a diet, stop drinking sack, and live as cleanly as a nobleman should.”

— 5.5 —

King Henry IV, in the presence of Prince Hal, Lord John of Lancaster, and the Earl of Westmoreland, was ready to pass judgment on the captured Earl of Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon.

He said, “Rebellion always ends in shame and disgrace and defeat. Ill-spirited Worcester! Did not we send assurances of mercy, pardon, and expressions of friendship to all of you? And yet you said that I did the opposite! Hotspur trusted you, and you lied to him! Three knights who fought for me are dead today, and so are an Earl and many more people who would still be alive if you had acted like a Christian and had reported truthfully my offer of friendship and pardon.”

Worcester replied, “What I have done I did out of regard for my safety. I await my fate patiently and calmly because I have no way to avoid it.”

“Execute Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon,” King Henry

IV ordered. "I will think about which punishments to give to other rebels."

Guards took Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon away.

King Henry IV asked, "What is happening on the battlefield?"

Prince Hal said, "The noble Scot, Lord Douglas, when he saw that the rebels had lost the battle, that Hotspur had been killed, and that all his soldiers were fleeing in terror, fled with his soldiers. He fell from a crag and hit the ground so hard that he was stunned and then captured. Douglas is in my tent under guard. I ask your grace for permission to decide what to do with him."

"I grant you that permission with all my heart," King Henry IV said. This was a way to reward Prince Hal for saving his life and for the Prince's courage in the battle.

Prince Hal said, "Then, brother John of Lancaster, to you I give the honor of doing this act: Go to Douglas and release him to freely go wherever he will, without having to pay a ransom. The courage he showed in battle against us today has taught us how to cherish such high deeds even though he was our enemy." Prince Hal, like Worcester and Hotspur before him, knew that this was a way to turn an enemy into a friend. He also knew that this was a way to reward his brother John for his courage in the battle.

John of Lancaster said, "I thank your grace for this gracious assignment, and I shall inform Douglas immediately that he is free."

King Henry IV knew that the battle was won, but that the war continued.

He said, "We have more battles to fight. We will divide our army in two. You, son John, and my kinsman

Westmoreland shall take half the army and go towards York as quickly as you can to fight Northumberland and the Archbishop of York — the prelate Scroop — who, I have been informed, are busily raising an army to fight us. I and you, son Harry, will take the other half of the army and go to Wales to fight the army of Glendower and his son-in-law Mortimer, the Earl of March.”

He added, “Rebellion in this land shall lose its sway, when it meets the check of another battle on another day. Our work today has been so well done that we will not quit until this war we have won.”

Chapter XVI: HENRY IV, PART 2

CAST OF CHARACTERS (2 *Henry IV*)

Male Characters

Rumor, the Presenter.

King, and Supporters of the King

King Henry IV.

Henry, son of Henry IV; Prince of Wales; afterwards King Henry V; also known as Prince Hal and as the younger Harry.

Prince Thomas of Clarence, son of Henry IV.

Prince John of Lancaster, son of Henry IV.

Prince Humphrey of Gloucester, son of Henry IV.

Earl of Warwick.

Earl of Westmoreland.

Earl of Surrey.

Gower.

Harcourt.

Sir John Blunt.

Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench.

A Servant of the Lord Chief Justice.

The Rebels

Earl of Northumberland.

Richard Scroop, the Archbishop of York.

Lord Mowbray.

Lord Hastings.

Lord Bardolph.

Sir John Colevile.

Travers and Morton, retainers of the Earl of Northumberland.

Male Eastcheap Characters

Sir John Falstaff.

His Page, a boy.

Bardolph.

Pistol.

Ned Poins.

Peto.

Other Male Characters

Robert Shallow, and Silence, country justices.

Davy, Servant to Robert Shallow.

Ralph Moldy, Simon Shadow, Thomas Wart, Francis Feeble, and Peter Bullcalf, recruits.

Fang and Snare, sheriff's officers.

Female Characters

Lady Northumberland.

Lady Percy, widow of Hotspur, a rebel.

Mistress Quickly, hostess of Boar's Head Inn, a tavern in Eastcheap.

Doll Tearsheet, prostitute.

Other Characters

Lords and Attendants; Porter, Drawers, Beadles, Servants, Strewers of Rushes, etc.

A Dancer, speaker of the epilogue.

Scene: England.

Note: Shakespeare frequently collapses time in his history plays. For example, in *2 Henry IV*, the incident at Gaultree Forest, the Battle of Bramham Moor, and the death of King Henry IV all occur very close in time.

In history, the incident in which the Archbishop of York was tricked occurred in 1405. He died on 8 June 1405.

In history, the Battle of Bramham Moor, in which Northumberland was defeated, occurred on 19 February 1408.

In history, the death of King Henry IV occurred on 20 March 1413.

INTRODUCTION (2 *Henry IV*)

At Warkworth, in front of the castle of the Earl of Northumberland, the figure of Rumor, dressed in a cloak on which were painted many tongues, appeared.

Rumor said, “Open your ears; for who of you will block the vent of hearing when loud Rumor speaks? I, from the Eastern orient to the West where the Sun droops and sets, making the wind my horse to make rumors travel widely and quickly from post to post, continually unfold and disclose and spread ‘news’ of the actions commenced on this ball called Earth. Slanders continually ride upon my tongues. In every language I pronounce these slanders, stuffing the ears of men with false reports. I speak of peace, while hidden hatred that disguises itself as smiling safety wounds the world.

“And who but Rumor — who but only I — causes gatherings of soldiers and preparations for defense because of fear when the pregnant year is thought to be with child by the stern tyrant war, although that is not true, and the year is swollen because of some other grief.

“Rumor is a pipe — a wind instrument — blown by surmises, jealousies, and conjectures. This pipe has well-defined holes with which to produce the musical notes, and it can be so easily played that the blunt monster with uncounted heads — the always discordant and wavering multitude of people — can play upon it.

“But why should I anatomize my well-known body to you? You know this already.

“So why is Rumor here? I run before King Henry IV’s victory. In a bloody field by Shrewsbury, the King and his army have beaten down the young rebel Hotspur and his

troops, quenching the flame of bold rebellion with the rebels' blood.

“But why am I telling you the truth right now, here at the beginning? My job is to spread misinformation. My job is to noise abroad the ‘news’ that Harry Monmouth — Prince Hal, heir to the throne — fell under the wrath of noble Hotspur’s sword, although in truth Prince Hal killed Hotspur at the Battle of Shrewsbury on 21 July 1403. My job is to noise abroad the ‘news’ that King Henry IV fell before the rage of the Scottish nobleman Archibald, Earl of Douglas. I am spreading the false news that the King’s anointed head stooped as low as death before the Douglas.

“These falsehoods I have rumored through the peasant towns that lie between that royal field of Shrewsbury and this worm-eaten hold of ragged stone at Warkworth, where Hotspur’s father, the aged Earl of Northumberland, lies crafty-sick — he feigns illness as an excuse for not bringing an army to the Battle of Shrewsbury, preferring to let others do the hard and dangerous work of fighting.

“Exhausted, the messengers come riding hard to bring him news, and not a man of them brings news other than what they have learned from me. From Rumor’s tongues — my tongues — they bring untrue good news. This false news raises hopes that will be dashed. Hearing false news of good things is worse than hearing true news of bad things — it is better to know the worst immediately than to have your hopes raised and then dashed.”

CHAPTER 1 (2 Henry IV)

— 1.1 —

At Warkworth, in front of the castle of the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Bardolph, a rebel, approached the gate and called, “Who guards the gate here?”

The porter opened the gate, and Lord Bardolph asked, “Where is the Earl of Northumberland?”

The porter asked him, “Who shall I say you are?”

“Tell the Earl of Northumberland that the Lord Bardolph wishes to speak to him.”

“His lordship is walking in the garden. If it pleases your honor, go and knock at the garden gate, and he himself will answer the knock.”

The Earl of Northumberland walked toward the porter and Lord Bardolph, who saw him and said, “Here comes the Earl.”

The porter departed and Northumberland asked, “What is the news, Lord Bardolph? Every minute now should be the father of some violent deed. The times are wild, and contention, like a horse that is full of over-rich feed, madly has broken loose and tramples everyone in its path.”

“Noble Earl, I bring you true and certain news from Shrewsbury.”

“Good news, I hope, if God wills it!”

“It is news as good as your heart can wish,” Lord Bardolph said. “King Henry IV is wounded and near death. As for Hotspur, your son, he has slain Prince Hal. The Douglas has killed both Blunts: Sir Walter Blunt and Sir John

Blunt.”

This was another of Rumor’s lies. Sir Walter Blunt had been killed, yes, but Sir John Blunt still lived.

Lord Bardolph continued, “Young Prince John and Westmoreland and Stafford fled from the battlefield.”

This was another of Rumor’s lies. Stafford died on the battlefield, and Prince John and Westmoreland were victorious and did not flee.

Lord Bardolph continued, “Hotspur took prisoner Prince Hal’s brawny friend, the fattened boar known as Sir John Falstaff. He is as big as the hulk of a large merchant ship.

“Oh, such a day and such a battle, so fought, so followed, and so fairly won, has not so dignified the times since the days of Julius Caesar!”

“How do you know this?” the Earl of Northumberland asked. “Did you see the battlefield? Have you come from Shrewsbury?”

“I spoke with one, my lord, who came from Shrewsbury. He is a gentleman who is well bred and of good name, and he freely told me this news and said that it is true.”

Northumberland looked up and said, “Here comes my servant Travers, whom I sent last Tuesday to listen for news.”

“My lord, I rode past him on the way here,” Lord Bardolph said. “He can have no news other than the news that I have brought to you.”

Northumberland said, “Now, Travers, what good tidings come with you?”

Travers said, “My lord, I met Sir John Umfrevile, who talked to me and gave me joyful tidings. I therefore turned

back to return here. Sir John Umfrevile had a better horse than I had, and so he rode quicker than I. After Sir John had outdistanced me, another horseman came spurring hard. He was a gentleman, almost exhausted because of his speedy riding, and he stopped by me to let his bloodied horse rest. He asked me for directions to Chester; and I demanded to know what news he was bringing from Shrewsbury. He told me that the rebellion had had bad luck and that young Harry Percy's spur was cold. With that, he gave his able horse the head, and bending forward he struck his spurs against the panting sides of his poor nag up to the rowel-head, and they seemed in running to devour the road, and he stayed no longer to answer questions."

Northumberland said, "Tell me again: Did he say that young Harry Percy's spur was cold? Is Hotspur now Coldspur? Did he say that the rebellion had met ill luck?"

Surprised by the news, Lord Bardolph said, "My lord, I'll tell you this: If my young lord, Hotspur, your son, has not won the battle, then I swear upon my honor that I will trade all my land for a silken lace that is used to tie clothing such as stockings. Do not talk about defeat."

Northumberland asked, "Why then did that gentleman who rode by Travers speak about defeat?"

"Who, he?" Lord Bardolph said. "He was some worthless and base fellow who had stolen the horse he was riding, and, I swear upon my life, he spoke without a foundation of fact."

Lord Bardolph looked up and saw Morton coming toward them. He said, "Look, here comes more news."

Northumberland looked at Morton and said, "This man's brow is like a title page that reveals much information about the tragedy written inside the book."

Title pages occasionally reveal much information. For example, this is written on the title page of the 1597 edition of *Richard III*: “The Tragedy of King Richard the third. Containing, His treacherous Plots against his brother Clarence: the pittiefull murder of his innocent nephewes: his tyrannicall usurpation: with the whole course of his detested life, and most deserved death.”

Northumberland said, “By looking at Morton’s brow, I can see that he has bad news. His brow looks like the shore on which a powerful flood has left signs of its devastation. His brow is furrowed.”

He then said, “Say, Morton, did you come from Shrewsbury?”

Morton replied, “I ran from Shrewsbury, my noble lord. At Shrewsbury, hateful death put on his ugliest mask to frighten our party of rebels.”

“How are my son and my brother?” Northumberland asked, “You tremble, and the whiteness in your cheek is more able than your tongue to tell your errand. A man like you, as faint, as spiritless, as dull, as dead in look, as woebegone, drew back the bed-curtain of Priam, King of Troy, and would have told him that half of his sacked city was burning, but Priam saw the fire before the man could move his tongue. I know that Hotspur, my son, is dead even before you can speak to me. I know that you would tell me, ‘Your son did thus and thus; your brother did thus and thus; the noble Douglas fought and did thus and thus.’ You would fill my greedy ears with their bold deeds, but in the end, you would sigh and say something that will blow away all this praise: ‘Your brother, your son, and all are dead.’”

Morton said, “Douglas is living, and your brother is still alive so far, but as for your son, Hotspur —”

“Why, he is dead,” Northumberland said. “See what a

ready tongue suspicion has! A man who fears something and does not wish it to be true, can by instinct learn from seeing another's eyes that what he feared would happen has in fact happened. Yet speak, Morton. I am an Earl, and I outrank you, but tell me that I am wrong. I will take my being wrong as a sweet disgrace and make you a rich person for doing me such wrong."

"You are too great to be lied to by me," Morton said. "Your instinct is too correct, your fears too certain."

Northumberland said, "Yet, for all this, do say not that Hotspur, my son, is dead."

He looked at Morton and added, "I see a strange confession in your eye. You shake your head, and you are afraid to speak the truth or you think that it is a sin to speak the truth. If Hotspur has been slain, say so. The tongue that truthfully reports his death does not offend. The person who sins is the person who tells me that my son is still alive when he is really dead. The person who tells me that a dead person is dead and not alive does not sin. Yet it is true that the first bringer of unwelcome news has a thankless task. Ever afterward, his voice will sound like a sullen and sad funeral bell; his voice will be remembered for tolling the death of a friend."

"I cannot think, my lord, that your son is dead," Lord Bardolph said.

"I am sorry that I should force you to believe that which I wish to God I had not seen," Morton said, "but these eyes of mine saw him in a bloody state, only faintly fighting back, wearied and out of breath, as he faced Prince Hal, whose swift wrath beat down the never-daunted Percy to the earth, from whence he never again sprung up alive. Briefly, the death of Hotspur, whose spirit lent a fire even to the dullest peasant in his camp, becoming known,

immediately took fire and heat away from the best-tempered courage in his troops. By Hotspur's metal and mettle, the rebels were steeled. Once Hotspur died and his mettle abated and his metal weakened, all the remaining rebels turned back and fled, like a weak sword made of dull and heavy lead that bends and turns back onto itself. A heavy thing such as a heavy-duty arrow can swiftly fly when force is applied to it. Our rebel warriors were heavy with sadness at Hotspur's death, and this heaviness combined with their fear lent so much lightness to their feet that arrows fled not swifter toward their aim than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety, fly from the field.

“During the retreat, the noble Worcester — your brother — was too soon taken prisoner; and that furious Scot, the bloody Douglas, whose well-laboring sword had three times slain noblemen who dressed like Henry IV to serve as decoys, began to lose his courage and did grace the shame of those who turned their backs by joining them in flight, and in his flight, stumbling in fear, he was captured.

“The summary of all is that King Henry IV has won the Battle of Shrewsbury, and he has sent out a fast-moving army to encounter you, my lord. This army is under the command of both young Prince John of Lancaster and the Earl of Westmoreland. This is very important news.”

“For this I shall have time enough to mourn,” Northumberland said. “In poison there is physic, aka medicine; and this news, which if I had been well would have made me sick, has instead made me, a sick person, to some degree well. A wretch can have fever-weakened joints that are like useless hinges and buckle under him, but when he has a fit, he breaks like a fire out of his keeper's arms. Just like that, my limbs, weakened with grief, have now enraged with grief, and are three times stronger than they were before.”

He threw his cane to the side and said, “Go hence, therefore, you effeminate crutch! A gauntlet with joints of steel and overlapping metal pieces must now be the glove for this hand.”

He threw his nightcap to the side and said, “Go hence, you sickly invalid’s cap! You are a guard too effeminate for my head — a head that Princes, having turned living soldiers into corpses during their victory in the Battle of Shrewsbury, aim to hit. Now bind my brows with an iron helmet, and let approach the roughest hour that time and spite dare to bring to frown upon the enraged Northumberland!”

He then called for the subversion of order: “Let the Heavens crash and kiss the Earth! Now let not Nature’s hand keep the wild flood confined — let the waters flood the land! Let order die! And let this world no longer be a stage to feed contention and battle in a lingering, long-lasting act. Instead, let the spirit of Abel-killing Cain, the first murderer, reign in all bosoms. That way, each heart will set itself on bloody and murderous courses, and the rude and violent scene will end, and darkness will bury the dead!”

Lord Bardolph said, “This too-strong emotion does you ill, my lord.”

“Sweet Earl, divorce not wisdom from your honor,” Morton said to Northumberland. “Do not overreact with extreme emotion. The lives of all your faithful accomplices rest on your health. If you give yourself over to stormy passion, your health must and will decay.

“You thought about the outcome of the war, my noble lord, and you thought about the chances of victory before you said, ‘Let us gather an army.’ You knew that it was a possibility that, in the exchange of blows, your son might

drop and die. You knew that he walked over perils as if he were walking on the edge of a cliff and that he was more likely to fall off than to reach safety. You knew that his flesh was capable of receiving wounds and scars and that his courageous spirit would take him where the most danger ranged. Yet you told him, ‘Go forth.’ None of this, although you definitely understood it to be a possibility, could restrain the deliberately carried out battle. What then has happened? What has this bold enterprise brought forth? Only what you knew was likely to happen.”

Lord Bardolph said, “All of us who suffered this loss knew that we ventured on such dangerous seas that it was ten to one against us that we would stay alive, and yet we ventured to rebel against King Henry IV because our possible gain outweighed our likely defeat. We have suffered a defeat, but let us venture again. Come, we will all put forth, body and goods. Let us continue our rebellion. We will risk our lives and our possessions.”

“This is the appropriate time for rebellion,” Morton said. “My most noble lord, I hear for certain, and I do speak the truth, that the well-born and noble Archbishop of York is rebelling and has raised well-equipped armies. He is a man who with a double surety binds his followers: He has both temporal and spiritual authority, and so his soldiers will follow him both bodily and spiritually. Hotspur, your son, had only the bodies — the shadows and mere appearances — of his men fighting for him. The word ‘rebellion’ affected his soldiers. It separated the action of their bodies from their souls, and they fought only with queasiness, not all out; they were like men who were drinking medicine. Their weapons seemed to be on our side, but the word ‘rebellion’ froze their spirits and souls like fish freezing in an icy pond. But now the Archbishop of York makes insurrection a religion; rebellion has become a holy act. He has the reputation of being sincere and holy in his thoughts,

and so he is followed both with the body and with the mind. He gathers support for the rebellion by using the blood of fair King Richard II, who was murdered at the castle in Pomfret — the King’s blood was scraped from Pomfret stones. The Archbishop of York has made Heavenly his quarrel and his cause. He tells his followers that this land is bleeding and gasping for life under King Henry IV, and both high-born and low-born flock to follow him.”

“I knew of this before,” Northumberland said, “but, to say the truth, my present grief had wiped it from my mind. Go in with me; and let every man come up with ideas on how best to get safety and revenge. We will get messengers to carry our letters, and we will make new allies quickly. Never have we had so few soldiers, and never have we had more need for soldiers.”

— 1.2 —

On a street in London, Sir John Falstaff and his page, a boy who acted as his servant, stood and talked. Falstaff’s page was carrying his sword and small, round shield. Prince Hal had assigned the page to serve Falstaff.

Falstaff said to the boy who was his page, “You giant, what says the doctor about my urine?”

Falstaff had given a urine sample to a doctor.

The page replied, “He said, sir, the urine itself was a good healthy urine, but that the person who gave the urine sample might have more diseases than he could tell.”

“Men of all sorts take pride in mocking me,” Falstaff said. “The brain of this foolish compound of clay, man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter, more than I invent or more than is invented on me. I am not only witty in myself, but I am also the cause of the wit that is in other

men. I do here walk before you like a sow that has crushed all her litter but you, her remaining piglet. If the Prince put you into my service for any other reason than to annoy me, why then I have no intelligence. You whoreson mandrake, you are fitter to be worn in my cap than to wait at my heels. You are no bigger than a brooch — an agate stone set in silver or gold — that can be worn as a decoration on a cap. I was never served by an agate stone until now, but I will inset you neither in gold nor silver; instead, I will place you in vile clothing, and send you back again to your master, Prince Hal, as a jewel — I will give you back to the juvenal — the juvenile — who is the Prince your master, whose chin is not yet covered with down. I will sooner have a beard grow in the palm of my hand than he shall get one on his cheeks, and yet he will not hesitate to say that his face is a face-royal. God may finish his face when He will by letting Prince Hal grow a beard. So far, Prince Hal's face does not have a single hair amiss. Prince Hal may keep his face-royal because the face of his royal father, King Henry IV, appears on the face of the coin known as a royal, and Prince Hal need not spend that coin by getting a shave from a barber — no barber shall ever earn sixpence out of Prince Hal's royal. And yet Prince Hal crows and boasts as if he had been a full-grown man ever since his father was a bachelor and Prince Hal was not yet born. He may keep his own royal grace, but he's almost out of my grace, I can assure him. Yes, he can keep his title of Prince of Wales, but he is almost out of my favor, I can assure him."

Falstaff hesitated and then asked his page, "What did Master Dombledon say about the satin for my short cloak and my wide breeches?"

"He said, sir, you should procure him better assurance of being paid than Bardolph can provide," the page replied. "He would not take his word and he said that he would not take yours; he wants better assurance of being paid."

Falstaff greatly wanted to wear extravagant clothing; he much less wanted to pay for it.

“Let him be damned, like the glutton!” Falstaff said. “I pray to God that his tongue grow hotter!”

Falstaff was referring to the parable of the rich man and the pauper in Luke 16:19-31. The pauper died and went to Heaven; the rich man died and went to Hell. The rich man wanted the pauper to dip his finger in water so that he could shake some drops onto the rich man’s tongue, but Abraham, who was in Heaven, pointed out that this is not permitted.

Falstaff continued, “He is a whoreson Achitophel!”

Now Falstaff was referring to Achitophel, a counselor to King David. When Absalom rebelled against David, Achitophel supported Absalom. This story is told in 2 Samuel 15. Say what you will about Falstaff, he knew much about the content of the Bible.

Falstaff continued, “He is a rascally yea-forsooth good-for-nothing! He hints that an answer of ‘yes’ is forthcoming when he does not mean it. He encourages a gentleman to hope for credit, and then he asks for security. These whoreson shopkeepers wear short hair and high shoes and have bunches of keys at their girdles; and if a man has made an honest agreement with them, then they insist upon a guarantee of payment. I would just as soon they would put rat poison in my mouth as put guarantee of payment in it. I expected that he would send me twenty-two yards of satin, as I am a true knight, and instead he sends me notice that I must guarantee that I will pay him so that payment is secure. Well, he may sleep in security because he has the horn of abundance. He has the horn of plenty, and he has the horns of a cuckold, and the heels of his wife are light when she raises them in the air when she sleeps with other

men, and he does not see that although he has his own lantern — a lantern whose light shines through thin sheets of horn — to provide light for him.”

He paused and then asked, “Where’s Bardolph?”

This Bardolph was an alcoholic crony and most definitely was not the rebel Lord Bardolph.

The page replied, “He’s gone into Smithfield to buy your worship a horse.”

Falstaff said, “I hired Bardolph in St. Paul’s, and he’ll buy me a horse in Smithfield. If I could get myself a wife from the brothels, I would be manned, horsed, and wived.”

Unemployed men used to hang around St. Paul’s Cathedral, hoping to find work. Horses that were bought in Smithfield had the reputation of being nags. Most men would not think that a prostitute would make a good wife. A then-current proverb stated, “Who goes to Westminster for a wife, to Paul’s for a man, or to Smithfield for a horse, may meet with a whore, a good-for-nothing, and a jade.” Many brothels were in Westminster.

The Lord Chief Justice and his servant walked toward Falstaff and his page. Falstaff was not a fan of officials who enforced the law. Earlier, Prince Hal had gotten angry at the Lord Chief Justice, who was punishing one of Prince Hal’s friends for committing a crime. Prince Hal struck the Lord Chief Justice, who, acting under the authority of Prince Hal’s father, King Henry IV, threw him in jail.

The page said, “Sir, here comes the nobleman who committed Prince Hal to jail when the Prince struck him during an argument.”

“Wait nearby,” Falstaff said. “I will pretend that I do not see him.”

The Lord Chief Justice saw Falstaff, thought that he recognized him, and asked his servant, “Who is that man walking away from us?”

“He is Falstaff, if it please your lordship.”

“That man who was more than a suspect in the robbery on Gad’s Hill?”

“Yes, my lord,” the servant replied, “but he has since done good service at the Battle of Shrewsbury, and I hear that he is now going with some charge of soldiers to fight in the army of Prince John of Lancaster.”

“What? He is going to fight the Archbishop of York?” the Lord Chief Justice said. “Call him to come over to me.”

“Sir John Falstaff!” the servant called.

Falstaff said to his page, “Boy, tell him I am deaf.”

The page said, “You must speak louder; my master is deaf.”

The Lord Chief Justice said, “I am sure he is, when it comes to the hearing of anything involving justice.”

He said to his servant, “Go and pluck him by the elbow; I must speak with him.”

The servant obeyed his orders and said loudly, “Sir John!”

Falstaff said to the Lord Chief Justice’s servant, whom he pretended was a slacker and a beggar, “What! A young good-for-nothing, and begging! Are there not wars? Is there not employment? Doesn’t the King lack subjects to fight for him? Don’t the rebels need soldiers? Though it is a shame to be on any side but one — the side of King Henry IV — it is worse shame to beg than to be on the worst side — the side of the rebels, assuming that anything can be worse than rebellion.”

The servant said, "You are mistaken about me, sir."

Falstaff said, "Why, sir, did I say you were an honest man? Setting aside my knighthood and my soldiership, both of which make it likely that I am telling the truth, I would have lied in my throat if I had said that you are an honest man."

"Please, sir, then set aside your knighthood and your soldiership," the servant said, "and give me leave to tell you that you lie in your throat, if you say that I am anything other than an honest man."

"Me give you leave to tell me that!" Falstaff said. "Me set aside that which belongs to me! If I give you leave, then hang me. If you take leave, then hang yourself! When you hunt, you go in the wrong direction — away from your prey — and now you are confronting the wrong man. Leave! Go away!"

The servant said, "Sir, my lord wants to speak with you."

The Lord Chief Justice said, "Sir John Falstaff, I want to have a word with you."

"My good lord!" Falstaff said. "May God give your lordship a good day. I am glad to see that your lordship is out and about. I had heard that your lordship was sick, and so I hope your lordship goes abroad by the advice of a doctor. Your lordship, though you are not clean past your youth, you have yet some taste of age in you, some relish of the maturity of time; and I must humbly beg your lordship to take care of your health."

"Sir John, I sent for you so I could talk to you officially before your expedition to Shrewsbury," the Lord Chief Justice said.

"If it please your lordship," Falstaff said. "I hear his

majesty has returned with some discomfort and ill health from Wales.”

“I am not talking about his majesty,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “You would not come when I sent for you.”

Falstaff continued, “And I hear, moreover, his highness has fallen into this same whoreson paralysis.”

Falstaff was subtly threatening the Lord Chief Justice. One day King Henry IV would die, and Prince Hal would become King Henry V. Falstaff thought that things would then go badly for the Lord Chief Justice. After all, the Lord Chief Justice had once thrown Prince Hal in jail, and Falstaff would have the ear of King Henry V.

The Lord Chief Justice declined to be intimidated, saying, “Well, may God heal King Henry IV! Please, let me speak with you.”

“This paralysis is, as I take it, a kind of lethargy, if it please your lordship; it is a kind of sleeping in the blood, a whoreson tingling.”

“Why are you telling me about it?” the Lord Chief Justice asked. “Let it be as it is.”

“This paralysis has its origin from much grief, from study and perturbation of the brain,” Falstaff said. “I have read the cause of its effects in the medical treatise written by the ancient Greek physician Galen. It is a kind of deafness.”

“I think that you have the same disease,” the Lord Chief Justice said, “because you are not hearing anything that I say to you.”

“Very well, my lord, very well,” Falstaff said. “In fact, if it please you, I have the disease of not listening, the malady of not paying attention. That is the malady that troubles me.”

“I can very easily cure your disease of not paying attention when I speak to you,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “All I have to do is put your feet in a pair of stocks and immobilize you and expose you to the scorn of passersby. I would rather enjoy being your physician.”

“I am as poor as Job, my lord, but not as patient as Job,” Falstaff replied. “Your lordship may minister the potion of imprisonment to me because I am poor and so cannot pay a fine, but that I should be your patient and follow your prescriptions, some wise men may take some slight exception — they may have part of a scruple about it or even a whole scruple.”

Falstaff thought, *I have a high friend — Prince Hal — who visits low places, such as taverns in Eastcheap. The Lord Chief Justice, if he is wise, should remember that.*

The Lord Chief Justice said, “I sent for you, when there were matters against you that could cost you your life, to come speak with me. You were accused — and definitely identified by eyewitnesses — of being involved in the robbery on Gad’s Hill, and that is a capital offense.”

“As I was then advised by my learned counsel in the laws of my military service, I did not come,” Falstaff said. “Because I was doing military service, I was immune from your civilian summons.”

“Well, the truth is, Sir John, you have a bad reputation,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “You live in great infamy.”

Falstaff, who had an enormous beer — or wine — belly, said, “Anyone who buckles himself in my belt cannot live in less than greatness.”

“Your financial means are very slender, and your waste is great,” the Lord Chief Justice said.

Falstaff replied, "I wish it were otherwise; I wish my financial means were greater, and my waist slenderer."

"You have misled the youthful Prince."

"The young Prince has misled me," Falstaff said. "I am the fellow with the great belly, and he is my dog that walks in front of me."

"Well, I am loath to pick at a newly healed wound: Your day's service at the Battle of Shrewsbury has a little gilded over your night's exploit on Gad's Hill," the Lord Chief Justice said. "You may thank this unquiet time of rebellion against the King for your quietly not being punished for that robbery."

"My lord?" Falstaff said.

"But since all is well, keep it so," the Lord Chief Justice said. "Wake not a sleeping wolf."

"To wake a wolf is as bad as to smell a fox," Falstaff said.

"To smell a fox" was proverbial for "To be suspicious."

The Lord Chief Justice was unhappy at hearing this remark. He was not suspicious that Falstaff had committed a robbery; he was certain that Falstaff had committed a robbery.

"What! You are like a candle, more than half of which has burned," the Lord Chief Justice said. "Anyone can smell the smoke rising from you."

"I might be a wassail candle, my lord, made of all tallow," Falstaff said. "A wassail candle is a large candle that is meant to burn all night, and you can see that I am large. Wassail candles are also made of tallow, aka animal fat, and you can see that I am largely made of animal fat. If I were to say, however, that I were made of wax, my growth

would make some people think that I was telling the truth: My waist waxes; it does not wane.”

“There is not a white hair on your face but should have its effect of gravity,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “A white beard denotes old age, which should denote seriousness.”

“Each white hair on my face denotes gravy, gravy, gravy,” Falstaff said.

“You follow the young Prince Hal up and down, like his evil angel.”

“That is not true, my lord,” Falstaff replied. “Lucifer was an angel of light, but anyone who looks at me can see that I am not light. Angels are coins that can be trimmed by cutting off the edges and so removing some of the precious metal. The only way to see whether they are good angels is to weigh them; if they are light angels, then they are bad angels. Anyone who looks at me need not weigh me to determine that I am not light.

“Yet, in some respects, I grant, I cannot go and I cannot tell. I cannot pass current: I am out of step with modern times. Virtue is of so little regard in these petty-shopkeeper times that a man of true valor takes a lowly job as a keeper of tame bears, a man of true wit takes a job as a tapster and wastes his quickness of intellect by not speaking except to tell customers how much they owe, and all the other gifts that are pertinent to man are not worth a gooseberry, according to the malice of this age that determines what is to be regarded as valuable.

“You who are old do not value the capacities of us who are young; you measure the heat of our lives with the bitterness of your lives, and we who are in the front lines of our youth, I must confess, are wags, too. We who are young have spirit.”

The Lord Chief Justice was surprised to hear Falstaff speak as if he were a young man — Falstaff was obviously old.

The Lord Chief Justice said, “Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth? Your name, Falstaff, has been written down in the scroll of the old — you have all the characteristics of old age. Have you not a moist eye? A dry hand? A yellow cheek? A white beard? An unsteady leg? An increasing belly? Is not your voice broken? Is not your wind short? Is not your chin double? Is not your wit single? Is not every part of you blasted with antiquity and old age? And will you yet call yourself young? For pity, Sir John!”

The Lord Chief Justice was a good man who made very few mistakes, but he did make a mistake here. Falstaff’s chin was double, but his wit was not single. Falstaff was a master of the pun, in which a word has a double meaning — or more. Falstaff’s wit was most definitely double.

Falstaff replied, “My lord, I was born about three of the clock in the afternoon, with a white-haired head and something of a round belly.”

Falstaff was telling the truth. He was a fictional character created by William Shakespeare, and the play he was performing in often was performed in the afternoon.

He continued, “As for my voice, I have lost it with hallooing and the singing of anthems. I will not give more evidence of my youth. The truth is that I am only old in judgment and understanding; I have the wisdom of old age. But if anyone wants to compete against me in a dancing contest for a thousand marks — a lot of money — then let him lend me the money, and let us compete!

“As for the box on the ear that Prince Hal gave you, he gave it like a rude Prince, and you took it like a sensible lord. I have rebuked him for it, and the young lion repents. True, he does not repent in ashes and sackcloth; instead, he

repents in new silk and with old wine.”

“Well, may God send the Prince a better companion!” the Lord Chief Justice said.

“May God send the companion a better Prince!” Falstaff said. “I cannot get rid of Prince Hal.”

“Well, King Henry IV has separated you and Prince Harry,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “I hear that you are going with Prince John of Lancaster to fight against the Archbishop of York and the Earl of Northumberland. King Henry IV and Prince Hal are going elsewhere.”

“Yes, I thank your pretty sweet wit for it,” Falstaff said. He thought that the Lord Chief Justice had persuaded the King to keep Prince Hal and Falstaff separate.

He added, “But all of you who stay at home and kiss my Lady Peace, please remember to pray that the opposing armies do not join in battle on a hot day because, by the Lord, I am taking only two shirts with me, and I hope not to sweat extraordinarily. If the battle occurs on a hot day, and I brandish anything but a bottle, I hope that I will never spit white again. Spitting red is the result of suffering from tuberculosis or being wounded in battle.

“There is not a dangerous action that peeps out his head but I am thrust upon it. If a battle needs to be fought, I have to go to the battle. Well, I cannot last forever, but it has always been the custom of our English nation that if they have a good thing, they make it too common by using it continually. If you must say that I am an old man, you should give me rest. I wish to God that my name were not as terrible and frightening to the enemy as it is. I would prefer to be rusted to death than to be worn down to nothing through perpetual work.”

The Lord Chief Justice replied, “Well, be honest, be honest;

and God bless your expedition!”

Falstaff, who was accustomed to borrow but not to repay money, asked, “Will your lordship lend me a thousand pounds to equip myself for the expedition?”

“Not a penny, not a penny,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “You are too impatient to bear crosses: You are too quick to borrow coins stamped with a cross. Fare you well, and commend me to my kinsman Westmoreland.”

The Lord Chief Justice and his servant exited.

“If I do, hit me with a three-man beetle,” Falstaff said.

A three-man beetle is a hammer or battering ram so big and heavy that it takes three men to use it to drive stakes or to flatten paving stones.

He added, “A man can no more separate old age and covetousness than he can part young limbs and lechery. The gout galls the old, and the pox — venereal disease — pinches the young. Both stages of life anticipate my curses. I am greedy for money. In addition, I am suffering either from the gout or from the pox — venereal disease.”

Falstaff then called, “Boy!”

“Sir?”

“How much money is in my wallet?”

The page replied, “Seven groats and two pence. A groat is worth four-pence, and so you have thirty pence.”

Because he was Falstaff’s page, the boy carried Falstaff’s wallet and money.

Falstaff complained, “I can get no remedy against this consumption of my wallet. Borrowing increases the amount of time that I have money to spend, but quickly the contents

of my wallet are again consumed. This kind of consumption is an incurable disease.

“Go, and take this letter to my Prince John of Lancaster; take this letter to Prince Hal, and take this letter to the Earl of Westmoreland.”

Because everyone falsely believed that Falstaff had killed Hotspur during the Battle of Shrewsbury, he had a military reputation that he did not deserve, and he was a figure of some importance. Prince Hal had killed Hotspur, but he allowed Falstaff to take the credit.

Falstaff added, “Take this letter to old Mistress Ursula, whom I have weekly sworn to marry ever since I perceived the first white hair on my chin.

“Go now. You know where to find me when you have finished your errands.”

The page left to deliver the letters.

Falstaff said to himself, “A pox on this gout! Or, a gout on this pox! The one or the other plays the rogue with my big toe and makes it painful. But it does not matter if I limp. I march under the colors of a battle flag, and those colors can cover the real reason for my limp — I will pretend that I was injured in the war, and that will make my being paid a pension seem more reasonable. A good intelligence can make good use of anything; I will turn my diseases into profit.”

— 1.3 —

The Archbishop of York and the lords Hastings, Mowbray, and Bardolph were meeting at the Archbishop’s palace.

“Now you know the reasons for our rebellions and you know the resources we have,” the Archbishop of York said. “Please, my most noble friends, speak plainly your

opinions of our hopes. Is this rebellion likely to succeed? Lord Mowbray, you speak first. What is your opinion?"

"I agree that we have adequate reasons to rebel," Lord Mowbray said, "but given the resources we have, I would like to be better satisfied that we can be strong enough to confidently face the power and puissance of King Henry IV."

Lord Hastings said, "According to our records, our present muster consists of twenty-five thousand picked troops. Our hope of reinforcements lies largely in the great Earl of Northumberland, whose bosom burns with an incensed fire of injuries. He is angry because his son and his brother died at Shrewsbury."

Lord Bardolph said, "The question then, Lord Hastings, is this: Will our twenty-five thousand troops be enough to defeat Henry IV's troops without reinforcements from Northumberland?"

"If we receive reinforcements from Northumberland, we can defeat King Henry IV," Lord Hastings said.

"Yes, we can, by Mother Mary," Lord Bardolph said, "but we need to ask whether we will be too weak to defeat the King without Northumberland's help. In my opinion, we ought not to fight the King until we are sure that Northumberland will fight with us. In a matter as bloody-faced and as serious as this, we ought not to rely on conjecture, expectation, surmise, and false hopes. We must be sure that we will have reinforcements."

"You speak very truly," the Archbishop of York said. "We remember what happened to Hotspur at Shrewsbury. He expected reinforcements from his father, Northumberland, but those reinforcements never came."

"My lord, Hotspur fed himself with false hope," Lord

Bardolph said. “He ate the air, which contained nothing more than promises of reinforcements. He flattered himself that an army was coming to help him, but that army was much smaller than the smallest of his thoughts: It was nonexistent. And so, with the great imagination that is proper to madmen, he led his troops to their death and he closed his eyes as he leapt to his destruction.”

Lord Hastings said, “But, by your leave, it does not hurt to think about the likelihood of good things happening.”

Lord Hastings was an optimist; Lord Bardolph was a realist.

“Yes, it does hurt,” Lord Bardolph said. He was a practical man. At the Battle of Shrewsbury, Northumberland had not arrived with reinforcements; would he arrive at a future battle? Lord Bardolph wanted to know what he could count on for sure, and what he could count on for sure was 25,000 troops — 25,000 troops that might never be augmented.

“If this war we are engaged in, this battle we are planning, this fight against the King, is based only on hope, then it does hurt us — it can get us killed the way that it got Hotspur killed,” Lord Bardolph said. “If we base our plans and actions on hope, then we are like a farmer who sees buds on his orchard trees in early spring. Should the farmer simply hope that the buds will become ripe fruit, or should he be aware of the likelihood that frosts will kill the buds and destroy the potential fruit? In such a case, despair is more appropriate than hope.

“When we mean to build a house, we first survey the plot, and then we draw up the plan of the house. When we see the plan of the house, then we must estimate the cost of its construction. If we find that the house will cost more to build than we can afford to pay, what do we then but draw up a new plan for the house, one with fewer rooms — or

we decide not to build the house.

“What we are planning now is much bigger and more important than a house. The great work in front of us is to tear one Kingdom down and then set up a new Kingdom. Given the importance of this work, we must carefully consider the situation and the plan, we must make sure that we have a firm foundation, we must question surveyors and architects and get expert opinions, we must know our resources and how likely we are to succeed in undertaking this work, and we must consider opposing evidence and arguments that we shall not succeed.

“If we do not do this, then we invest our lives in paper and in written figures, and we invest our lives in the names of men instead of in men. We allow our lives to depend on reinforcements that exist only in hope and not in reality. We will be like a man who draws the plan of a house that is beyond his ability to build it. We will be like a man who, halfway through building the house, is forced to give up and leave his partly created and costly house exposed to the weeping and rainy clouds; his house is turned by the tyranny of churlish winter into waste.”

“Let us suppose that we have no hope of receiving reinforcements from Northumberland, although in my opinion we do have good hopes of receiving the reinforcements,” Lord Hastings said. “Let us suppose that our army is now at its largest and strongest. I think we have an army strong enough, right now, to fight the King on equal terms.”

“What, does the King’s army consist of only twenty-five thousand troops?” Lord Bardolph asked.

Lord Hastings replied, “No more troops than that will oppose us, Lord Bardolph. In fact, not even that many troops will oppose us. The King’s soldiers, in these violent

times, have been divided into three armies. One army opposes the French. One army opposes Glendower and his Welsh soldiers. That leaves the third army to oppose us. The King is unfirm and weak, and his soldiers are divided into three armies. In addition, his treasury echoes with the sound of hollow poverty and emptiness.”

The Archbishop of York said, “We need not dread that King Henry IV will gather his three armies together and come against with us with full force.”

Lord Hastings said, “If he were to do that, he would leave his back unarmed, and the French and Welsh soldiers would be biting his heels. We need never fear that the King will come against us with all his troops.”

“Who is likely to lead his forces against us?” Lord Bardolph asked.

“Prince John of Lancaster and the Earl of Westmoreland,” Lord Hastings said. “King Henry IV and his son, Prince Hal, will fight Glendower and his Welsh troops. I am not sure who will lead the King’s troops against the French.”

The Archbishop of York said, “Let us continue our rebellion and fight the King’s soldiers.” Although he was not a military man, he was making the decision to fight the King’s soldiers.

He continued, “We will publicly proclaim the reasons for our rebellion. The citizens of the commonwealth are sick of their own choice; they chose Henry IV instead of Richard II. Their over-greedy love has stuffed them, and they are sick of King Henry IV.

“Whoever builds on the hearts of the common people has a house that is giddy, foolish, and unsure; it is as if he built his house on sand rather than granite. Oh, you foolish many, with what loud applause did you beat the sky with

your blessings of Bolingbroke, before he became what you would have him be: Henry IV! And now you have him, and you, beastly feeders, are so full of him, that you provoke yourselves to vomit him up. You common dogs disgorged your glutton bosom of the royal Richard II, and now you want to eat your dead vomit up, and you howl as you try to find it. What trust can be found in these times? Those who, when Richard II lived, wanted him to die, are now enamored of him although he is now in his grave. You, who threw dust upon Richard II's goodly head when through proud London he came sighing as he followed the admired heels of Bolingbroke, you now cry, 'Oh, earth, give us King Richard II again, and you take King Henry IV!' Oh, thoughts of accursed men! To you, the past and the future seem best; the present seems worst."

Lord Mowbray asked, "Shall we assemble our soldiers and march?"

Lord Hastings said, "We are time's subjects, and time bids us be gone. It is time to march."

CHAPTER 2 (2 Henry IV)

— 2.1 —

On a street in London, Mistress Quickly met Fang, a police sergeant. Following behind him was his assistant, Snare.

“Master Fang, have you filed my lawsuit?” Mistress Quickly asked. She often gave people titles higher than the ones they actually had. Such was the case with “Master” Fang now.

“I have filed it,” Fang said.

“Where’s your yeoman — your assistant?” Mistress Quickly asked. “Is he a lusty, strong yeoman? Will he stand up for me?”

Anyone who knew Mistress Quickly knew that she was often unintentionally bawdy. “Stand up for me” could be interpreted as referring to a male body part that could at times be erect. That male body part could be referred to as a weapon.

Fang looked to each side and did not see his assistant. He said to himself, “Where’s Snare?”

Mistress Quickly called, “Master Snare!”

Snare walked up behind them and said, “Here I am; here I am.”

“Snare, we must arrest Sir John Falstaff,” Fang said.

“Yes, good Master Snare,” Mistress Quickly said. “I have filed a lawsuit against him.”

“It may perhaps cost some of us our lives,” Snare said, “because he will stab.”

“Then it will be a bad day!” Mistress Quickly said. “Be careful around Falstaff; he stabbed me in my own house, and that most beastly. Truly, Falstaff does not care what mischief he does. If his weapon is out, he will thrust it like any Devil; he will spare neither man, woman, nor child.”

A person with a bawdy sense of humor could laugh at the thought of Falstaff stabbing Mistress Quickly with his “weapon.”

“If I can get close enough to him to grab him,” Fang said, “I won’t care about his thrust.”

“No, and I won’t either,” Mistress Quickly said. “I’ll be at your elbow.”

“If I can hit him once,” Fang said, “if he comes within my grasp —”

“I am undone by his going to fight in the war,” Mistress Quickly said. “He will leave without paying me what he owes me. I promise you, he owes me an infinitive amount of money on his tab.”

By “infinitive,” Mistress Quickly meant “infinite.”

She continued, “Good Master Fang, be sure to restrain him. Good Master Snare, let him not escape. He comes continually to Pie Corner — saving your manhoods — to buy a saddle.”

By “continually,” Mistress Quickly meant a combination of “continuously” and “incontinently.” By “saving your manhoods,” she was apologizing for bringing up an unsavory topic. “Pie Corner” was known for its squealing pigs and its smell of food cooking. It also had shops that sold cattle, and other places where women rented their “pies.” Falstaff was going to war, but he already had a saddle, and he had no need to go to Pie Corner

“continuously” and “incontinently” to buy saddles, except that men such as Falstaff rode prostitutes and “saddle” was slang for female genitals and for a prostitute.

She continued, “Falstaff is indited to dinner with Master Smooth’s the silkman at the Lubber’s Head on Lumbert Street.”

By “indited,” she meant “invited.” By “the Lubber’s Head,” she meant “The Leopard’s Head.” A “lubber” is a big and clumsy fellow.

She continued, “Please, since my exion is entered [action, aka lawsuit, has been filed] and my case so openly known to the world, let Falstaff be brought in to answer.”

Again, Mistress Quickly was unintentionally bawdy. A woman’s “case” is a good place in which to sheath a penis, and she had said that her case is “so openly known to the world.” By the way, the Latin word ‘*vagina*’ means “sheath.”

She added, “A hundred marks is a long one for a poor lone woman to bear.” Falstaff’s tab had a hundred marks on it and it was a long tab and he owed Mistress Quickly a hundred marks — marks are units of money.

She continued, “I have borne, and borne, and borne, and have been fubbed off, and fubbed off, and fubbed off, from this day to that day, that it is a shame to be thought on. Falstaff will not pay me the money he owes me. There is no honesty in such dealing; unless a woman should be made an ass and a beast, to bear every good-for-nothing’s wrong.”

She looked up, saw Falstaff, and said, “Yonder he comes; and that errant malmsey-nose good-for-nothing, Bardolph, with him. Malmsey is a red wine, and Bardolph has a red nose from drinking so much wine. Do your offices, do your

offices, Master Fang and Master Snare. Do me, do me, do me a favor and do your offices.”

An eavesdropper might have laughed after hearing Mistress Quickly urge Fang and Snare to “do me, do me.”

Falstaff and Bardolph walked over to Mistress Quickly, Fang, and Snare. Falstaff’s page was with him.

“How are you?” Falstaff asked. They were looking at him at him oddly, so he asked, “Whose mare’s dead?” This was a way of asking, “What’s the fuss?”

He added, “What’s the matter?”

Fang said, “Sir John, I arrest you at the suit of Mistress Quickly.”

Falstaff resisted arrest: “Go away, varlets! Draw your sword, Bardolph, and cut off this villain’s head for me, then throw the harlot in the gutter.”

“Throw me in the gutter!” Mistress Quickly said. “I’ll throw you in the gutter. Would you do that? Would you? You bastardly rogue!”

“Bastardly” was Mistress Quickly’s combination of “Bastard” and “Dastardly.” “Dastardly” means “cowardly.”

She cried, “Murder, murder! Ah, you honeysuckle villain! Will you kill God’s officers and the King’s? Ah, you honey-seed rogue! You are a honey-seed, a man-queller, and a woman-queller.”

Mistress Quickly had mixed up her words again. By “honeysuckle” and “honey-seed,” she meant “homicidal” — she was accusing Falstaff of being a man-killer and a woman-killer.

“Keep them away from me, Bardolph,” Falstaff ordered.

Fang shouted, “A rescue! A rescue!”

Often, when a man was being arrested for debt, his friends would come and rescue him and help him flee from the officers of the law.

Mistress Quickly, who thought that Fang was calling for reinforcements, asked the people around her, “Good people, bring a rescue or two.”

She said to Falstaff, “You will, will you? You will, will you? Do, you rogue! Do, you hemp-seed!”

Hangmen’s ropes were made of hemp, and Mistress Quickly was saying that Falstaff would someday become intimately acquainted with a hangman’s noose.

Falstaff shouted, “Go away, you scullion — you lowly kitchen servant! Go away, you rampallion — you ramping strumpet! Go away, you fustilarian — you fustilug, aka fat, frowsy woman! I’ll tickle your catastrophe — I’ll whip your posterior!”

The Lord Chief Justice and some of his men arrived on the scene.

“What is the matter?” the Lord Chief Justice said. “Keep the peace here!”

“My good lord, be good to me,” Mistress Quickly said. “I beg you to stand up for me.”

The Lord Chief Justice recognized Falstaff and said, “How are you, Sir John? Why are you brawling here? Does this become your place, your time, and your business? You should have been well on your way to York by now.”

He said to Fang, “Stand back and away from him, fellow. What are you charging him with?”

Mistress Quickly said, “Oh, most worshipful lord, if it

please your grace, I am a poor widow of Eastcheap, and Falstaff is being arrested at my suit.”

As she often did when talking to people, she addressed him by a better title than he had earned. Royalty, Dukes, and Archbishops are called “grace.”

The Lord Chief Justice could guess that the dispute was over money that Falstaff had borrowed but not paid back. He asked, “For what sum?”

“It is more than for some, my lord; it is for all — all I have,” Mistress Quickly replied. “He has eaten me out of house and home; he has put all my substance into that fat belly of his.”

She said to Falstaff, “But I will have some of it out again, or I will ride you of nights like the mare.”

Falstaff knew that she meant “nightmare,” but he punned, “I think I am as likely to ride the mare, if I have any vantage of ground to get up.”

Being able to get a leg up is an advantage when it comes to riding a mare — or a woman. And when someone weighs as much as Falstaff, it helps to stand on higher ground while climbing onto a saddle.

“How comes this to be, Sir John?” the Lord Chief Justice said. “For pity! What man of good temper would be able to endure this tempest of exclamation? Are you not ashamed to force a poor widow to undertake such a drastic action as a lawsuit in order to get what is owed to her?”

Falstaff asked Mistress Quickly, “What is the gross sum that I owe you?”

Mistress Quickly replied, “By Mother Mary, if you were an honest man, you would know that you owe me yourself and the money, too. You swore to me upon a partly gilded

goblet, while you were sitting in the Dolphin room of my inn, at the round table, by a coal fire, on Wednesday of Whitson week, when Prince Hal broke your head for comparing his father to a singing-man of Windsor who was an imposter and a pretender to the throne, you swore to me then, as I was washing your wound, to marry me and make me my lady your wife. Can you deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly? She came in to borrow some vinegar, and she told us that she had some good prawns. You wanted to eat some, but I told you that they were bad for a fresh wound. And did you not, when she was gone downstairs, tell me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying that before long they should call me madam?"

Words about social classes are important when social classes are important. If Mistress Quickly were to marry Sir John Falstaff, a knight, she would be called "lady" and "madam" instead of such familiar terms as "goodwife" and "gossip," aka friend and neighbor. By the way, although Mistress Quickly may have frequently misused words, she had a large multi-syllable vocabulary. By "familiarity," she meant "familiar."

She continued, "And did you not kiss me and ask me to bring you thirty shillings? I put you now to your book-oath: Put your hand on the Bible, and deny that what I had said is true, if you can."

Falstaff said to the Lord Chief Justice, "My lord, this is a poor mad soul; and she says up and down the town that her eldest son looks just like you. She has been wealthy, but the truth is that poverty has made her insane. As for these two foolish officers, I beg you that I may have redress against them — they have committed a wrong against me by attempting to arrest me."

"Sir John, Sir John, I am well acquainted with your manner

of wrenching the true cause the false way,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “You want to make it appear that you have been wronged when, in fact, you have wronged this woman. It is not a confident brow — your false appearance of innocence — nor the throng of words that come with very much more than impudent sauciness from you, that can keep me from forming an unbiased judgment. You have, as it appears to me, manipulated the easily manipulated spirit of this woman, and made her serve your uses both in purse and in person.”

“Yes, that is true, my lord,” Mistress Quickly said.

“Please, be quiet,” the Lord Chief Justice said to her.

He then said to Falstaff, “Pay her the debt you owe her, and unpay the villany you have done her. Make things right. You can pay her the debt you owe her with money, and you can unpay the villany you have done her with sincere apology and repentance.”

“My lord, I will not undergo this sneap — this snub — without reply,” Falstaff replied. “You mistake honorable boldness for impudent sauciness. You believe that a man who bows before you and says nothing is a virtuous man, but no, my lord, with all due respect, I will not bow down before you. I say to you that I desire deliverance from these officers. They ought not to arrest me because I must quickly attend to the business that King Henry IV wants me to do.”

“You speak as if you have the power to do wrong — to commit a crime and get away with it,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “You have a certain status and reputation. Live up to your status and reputation, and make things right with this woman. No one should be above the law.”

“Come here, hostess,” Falstaff said to Mistress Quickly. They talked together quietly.

Gower, who was carrying a message, walked up to the Lord Chief Justice, who said, “Now, Master Gower, what is the news you have for me?”

Gower replied, “The King, my lord, and Harry the Prince of Wales are nearby. This message tells the rest of the news.”

Falstaff said to Mistress Quickly, “I swear as a gentleman. Come. Agree to lend me some money. Let us talk no more about this.”

“By this Heavenly ground I tread on, I will have to pawn both my plate and the tapestries in my dining rooms,” Mistress Quickly said. She had combined two well-known expressions, “By this Heavenly light” and “By this ground I tread on.”

“Glasses, glasses is the only material to use for drinking,” Falstaff said. “Glass is replacing plate — metal such as pewter. As for your walls, you can replace your tapestry with a comic painting, or a depiction of the parable of the Prodigal Son, or a German boar-hunting scene painted on imitation tapestry. One of those is worth a thousand of these cheap bed-curtains and these fly-bitten tapestries. Let me borrow ten pounds, if you can. Come, if it were not for your moods, there would not be a better wench than you in all of England. Go, wash your face, and withdraw your lawsuit. Come, you must not be mad at me. Don’t you know me better than that? Come, come, I know that someone persuaded you to do this.”

“Please, Sir John, let the loan be only twenty nobles.”

A noble was a gold coin worth about a third of a pound.

She continued, “Truly, I am loath to pawn my plate, so help me.”

Falstaff said, "Forget about it. I will find somebody else. You will always be a fool."

"Well, you shall have the money," Mistress Quickly said, "even if I have I pawn my gown. I hope you'll come to supper. You'll pay me back all you owe me?"

"Will I live?" Falstaff said.

He whispered to Bardolph, "Go with her. Follow her closely, and make sure that she does not change her mind."

"Will you have Doll Tearsheet meet you at supper?" Mistress Quickly asked.

"Yes, but let's have no more talking," Falstaff said. "Invite her to dinner."

Mistress Quickly, Bardolph, Fang and Snare, and the page left.

The Lord Chief Justice said to Gower about the King's campaign in Wales, "I have heard better news."

Falstaff asked, "What's the news, my lord?"

Ignoring Falstaff, the Lord Chief Justice asked Gower, "Where did the King sleep last night?"

Gower replied, "At Basingstoke, fifty or so miles from London, my lord."

"I hope, my lord, all's well," Falstaff said. "What is the news, my lord?"

Continuing to ignore Falstaff, the Lord Chief Justice asked, "Did all the King's forces come back?"

"No," Gower replied, "fifteen hundred foot soldiers and five hundred soldiers on horseback are marching to join Prince John of Lancaster and fight against Northumberland

and the Archbishop of York.”

The Archbishop of York and other leaders of the rebellion had not anticipated that soldiers who had been delegated to fight the Welsh would be reassigned to fight the rebels in the North of England.

“Is the King coming back from Wales, my noble lord?” Falstaff asked.

Continuing to ignore Falstaff, the Lord Chief Justice said to Gower, “You shall receive letters to deliver from me quickly. Come, let’s go, good Master Gower.”

Falstaff shouted, “My lord!”

The Lord Chief Justice asked, “What’s the matter?”

Ignoring the Lord Chief Justice, Falstaff said, “Master Gower, will you have dinner with me?”

“I must serve my good lord here,” Gower replied, “but I thank you, good Sir John.”

“Sir John, you loiter here too long,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “You are supposed to be busy recruiting soldiers as you travel to join Prince John of Lancaster and the Earl of Westmoreland.”

Ignoring the Lord Chief Justice, Falstaff said, “Will you dine with me, Master Gower?”

“What foolish master taught you these manners, Sir John?” the Lord Chief Justice asked.

Ignoring the Lord Chief Justice, Falstaff said, “Master Gower, if my manners do not become me, he was a fool who taught them to me.”

He meant that he had learned his manners — ignoring someone who spoke to him — from the Lord Chief Justice.

He said to the Lord Chief Justice, “This is the right fencing style, my lord — tap for tap, and tit for tat — and so we are even.”

“Now may the Lord lighten you — enlighten you and make you lighter!” the Lord Chief Justice said. “You are a great big fool.”

— 2.2 —

Prince Hal and one of his Eastcheap friends, Ned Poins, talked together on a street in London.

Prince Hal, who had just traveled from Wales, said, “By God, I am exceedingly weary.”

“Are you really?” Poins asked. “I would have thought weariness would not have dared to take into custody one who is born as highly as you.”

“Truly, weariness has attached itself to me,” Prince Hal said. “I admit it although it discolors the complexion of my greatness to acknowledge it. I now have the pallor of weariness. Does it not reflect badly on me to want to drink small — thin and weak — beer right now?”

“Why, a Prince should not be so loosely studied as to remember so weak a composition,” Poins said.

Poins was capable of wit. He was punning on “loosely studied,” which means both “badly educated” and “versed in immoral — that is, loose — matters.” In addition, he was punning on “weak composition,” which means both “a badly written work” and “watered down and low in alcoholic content.”

“It is likely then that my appetite was not Princely got,” Prince Hal said, “for, truly, I do now remember and desire to drink the poor creation that we call small beer. But, indeed, these humble considerations distance me from my

greatness. I am a Prince and a future King, but I do not act like it, and I do not have the tastes of a nobleman.

“What a disgrace is it to me to remember your name! Or to remember and know your face tomorrow! The high and mighty do not recognize the faces of the common people. What a disgrace is it to me to know how many pairs of silk stockings you own! You have one pair that you are wearing now, and you have a pair that were peach-colored! What a disgrace is it to me to know the inventory of your shirts! You have the shirt you are wearing now, and you have one more shirt. But the proprietor of the tennis courts knows how many shirts you have better than I because when you lack shirts you do not play tennis because sweating requires one or more changes of shirts. You have not played tennis for a long time because your low countries — your nether regions — have eaten up your Holland — your shirts that were made of cloth manufactured in Holland. You pawned one or more shirts in order to go to one or more bawdy houses. You may have lost possession of your shirts, but the world has gained in population — you have fathered bastards. God knows whether those infants who bawl out from the ruins of your linen shall inherit His Kingdom, but the midwives say the children are not at fault for being bastards. They are not responsible for the sins of their parents. Because of fornication in bawdy houses, the population of the world increases, and families are mightily strengthened with the addition of members.”

“How ill it follows, after you have labored so hard in Wales, that you should talk so idly!” Poinc said. “Tell me, how many good young Princes would do so when their fathers are as sick as yours is at this time?”

“Shall I tell you something, Poinc?” Prince Hal asked.

“Yes, you may — and let it be an excellent good thing.”

“It shall serve among wits of no higher breeding than your own.”

“Go on and tell me,” Poins said. “I can stand whatever your something is that you will tell me. I can take whatever you say to me, so speak frankly to me and I will speak frankly to you.”

“By Mother Mary, I will tell you,” Prince Hal said. “It is not fitting that I should be sad, now that my father is sick. However, let me tell you, because you are a person whom, for want of a better man, I call my friend, that I could be sad because of my father’s illness — very sad, indeed.”

“That does not seem likely,” Poins said. He was thinking that when Henry IV died, Prince Hal would become Henry V, and who would not want to be King?

“I swear by my hand that you think that I am as far in the Devil’s book as you and Falstaff are for obduracy and stubbornness and persistency: Let the end try the man. But I tell you that my heart bleeds inwardly because my father is so sick. Unfortunately, my keeping such vile company as you has necessarily taken from me all show of sorrow.”

“What is the reason that you cannot show sorrow for your father’s illness?” Poins asked.

“What would you think of me, if I should weep?”

Poins spoke frankly: “I would think you are a most Princely hypocrite.”

“Everyone would think the same thing,” Prince Hal said, “and you are blessed to think as every man thinks: No one’s thoughts have ever cleaved more to popular opinion than your thoughts. Every man would think that I am a hypocrite indeed. And what induces your most worshipful thought to think that?”

“Why, because you have been so loose-living and so closely attached to Falstaff.”

“And to you,” Prince Hal said.

Poins replied, “I swear by God’s light that people speak well of me; I can hear it with my own ears. The worst that they can say of me is that I am a second brother and that I am a proper fellow with my hands. Because I am a second brother, I will not inherit my father’s estate, and being good with my hands, I can fight well. Those two things, I confess, I cannot help. At times, I need to fight.”

He looked up and said, “By the Mass, here comes Bardolph.”

Bardolph, accompanied by Falstaff’s page, walked over to Prince Hal and Poins. The page was dressed in an odd-looking uniform that Falstaff had given to him.

Prince Hal said, “Coming with Bardolph is the boy whom I sent to Falstaff to be his page. When I sent the boy to Falstaff, he was dressed like a Christian. Look at the boy now: Falstaff has dressed him in the costume of a performing monkey.”

Bardolph said, “May God save your grace!”

Prince Hal replied, “And may God save you, most noble Bardolph!”

Poins, making fun of Bardolph’s face, which was red because of his alcoholism, said to him, “Come, you virtuous ass, you bashful fool, must you be blushing? Why are you blushing now? What a maidenly soldier have you become! Is it such a blushing matter to take the maidenhood of — to drink up and empty — a pottle-pot that holds two quarts of beer or wine?”

The page also made fun of Bardolph’s face: “Just now, my

lord, he called to me from the other side of the red lattice of a window at the inn, and I could not tell what was his face and what was the window. At last I spied his eyes, and I thought that he had made and peeped through two holes in the badly reputed ale-wife's new red petticoat."

Prostitutes were known for wearing red petticoats.

"Has not the boy profited from being around Falstaff?" Prince Hal said sarcastically to Poins.

Bardolph, who was sensitive about his face, said to the page, "Go away, you whoreson upright rabbit, go away!"

The page replied, "Go away, you rascally Althaea's dream, go away!"

"Instruct us, boy," Prince Hal said. "Teach us. What dream are you referring to, boy?"

"My lord, Althaea dreamed that she gave birth to a firebrand. Bardolph's face is red like a firebrand, and therefore I call him her dream."

Prince Hal knew that Falstaff's page was mixing up two dreams. Althaea was the mother of the ancient Greek hero Meleager. Shortly after he was born, she dreamed that he would live as long as a piece of wood on the fire remained unburned. She woke up, removed the piece of wood from the fire and kept it safe. But after the adult Meleager killed her brothers, Althaea placed the piece of wood on a fire. It burned up, and Meleager died. The second dream was that of Hecuba, wife of King Priam of Troy. She dreamed that she gave birth to a firebrand. The son she gave birth to was Paris, who ran away with King Menelaus of Sparta's wife, Helen, and fled with her back to Troy. Helen became Helen of Troy, and Menelaus and a Greek army fought a war with the Trojans to get her back.

Prince Hal said to the boy, “That is a crown’s worth of good interpretation. Here, take this crown — this coin — boy.”

Poins could also be generous, despite his poverty. He said, “I hope that this good blossom — this page — can be kept from cankers — from things that would hurt him! Well, here is sixpence to preserve you.”

Bardolph said, “If this boy does not end up being hanged someday, the gallows shall have been wronged and deprived of its rightful prey.”

“Bardolph, how is your master, Falstaff?”

“He is well, my lord,” Bardolph replied. “He heard of your grace’s coming to town. His page has a letter for you.”

The page handed a letter to Prince Hal, and Poins said, “You have delivered the letter with the proper ceremony.”

Poins then asked Bardolph, “And how is the Martlemas, your master?”

In calling Bardolph’s master “Martlemas,” Poins referred to the fattened pigs and cattle that were slaughtered on November 11 — the feast of St. Martin — to be provisions for the winter. In other words, he was calling Falstaff a fat cow or a fat pig.

Bardolph, who understood to whom Poins was referring, replied, “His body is healthy, sir.”

Poins said, “By Mother Mary, it is his immortal part that needs a physician, but Falstaff does not care. Although his soul is sick, it will not die.”

Prince Hal, who had glanced at Falstaff’s letter to him, said, “I allow this wen — this wart, this lump — to be as familiar with me as my dog; and he insists on being formal

and reminding me of his rank — look how he writes.”

He gave Poins the letter, and Poins read out loud, “*John Falstaff, knight.*”

Poins then commented, “He reminds everyone that he is a knight as often as he has opportunity. He is like men who are kin to the King: Every time they prick their finger, they say, ‘There’s some of the King’s blood spilt.’ Someone who pretends not to know what they meant asks, ‘How is that?’ The answer is as ready as a borrower is ready to hold out his hat for a lender to place money in it: ‘I am the King’s poor cousin, sir.’”

“True,” Prince Hal said. “They will be kin to us, even if they have to trace their kinship all the way back to Japhet, the Biblical ancestor of all Europeans.”

He took the letter from Poins and read out loud: “*Sir John Falstaff, knight, to the son of the King, nearest his father, Harry Prince of Wales, greeting.*”

Poins said, “Why, this is written as if Falstaff were a King addressing his inferiors. In ordinary letters, the name of the person being written to comes before that of the writer.”

“Quiet!” Prince Hal said. He then read out loud, “*I will imitate the honorable Romans in brevity.*”

Poins said, “He must mean brevity in breath — being short-winded. His letter is wordy.”

Prince Hal read out loud, “*I commend me to you, I commend you, and I leave you.*”

Falstaff was imitating Julius Caesar’s “I came, I saw, I conquered.” He meant this: I present my regards to you, I approve of you, and I say goodbye to you.

Prince Hal continued reading the letter out loud: “*Be not*

too familiar with Poins; for he misuses your favors so much that he swears that you will marry Nell, his sister. Repent at idle times as you may; and so, farewell. Yours, by yea and no, which is as much as to say, as you use him — I return good for good, and ill for ill. I am JACK FALSTAFF with my familiars, JOHN with my brothers and sisters, and SIR JOHN with all Europe.”

Poins said, “My lord, I’ll soak this letter in wine and make him eat it.”

Prince Hal said, “If you do, you will make him eat twenty of his words. But do you say this about me, Ned? Am I to marry your sister?”

Poins said, “I wish that God would send my sister no worse fortune than that! But I never said that you would marry my sister.”

“Well, thus we play fools by wasting the time, and the spirits of the wise — the angels — sit in the clouds and mock us for being so wasteful,” Prince Hal said.

He asked Bardolph, “Is Falstaff, your master, here in London?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Where does he eat his meals? Does the old boar feed in the old, usual sty?”

“He eats at the old place, my lord, in Eastcheap.”

“With whom does he eat?”

The page replied, “With Ephesians, my lord, of the old church.”

These “Ephesians” were his boon companions. These “Ephesians” resembled the Ephesians of the New Testament before their conversion; they frequently

indulged in wine.

“Do any women dine with him?” Prince Hal asked.

“None, my lord, but old Mistress Quickly and Mistress Doll Tearsheet,” the page replied.

“What pagan may she be?” Prince Hal asked. He was referring to Doll Tearsheet because he already knew Mistress Quickly. He also knew that any woman who dined with Falstaff would likely not be known for Christian virtue.

The page identified both women, referring first to Mistress Quickly: “A proper gentlewoman, sir, and a kinswoman of my master’s.”

“Kinswoman, huh?” Prince Hal said. “She will be such kin as the parish heifers are to the town bull.”

The town bull, which was kept at the expense of the parish or town, was used to service — that is, impregnate — many cows.

Prince Hal asked Poins, “Shall we sneak upon them, Ned, while they are eating supper?”

“I am your shadow, my lord,” Poins said. “I will follow you.”

Prince Hal said, “You, boy, and you, Bardolph, don’t tell Falstaff that I have returned to London. Here is some money to pay you for your silence.”

He gave them some money, and Bardolph said, “I have no tongue, sir.”

The page added, “And as for mine, sir, I will keep it silent about this topic.”

“Fare you well,” Prince Hal said. “You may go now.”

Bardolph and the page left.

Prince Hal said, “This Doll Tearsheet must be a prostitute who is as commonly used as a road.”

“I will bet you that she is as commonly used as the heavily travelled road between Saint Alban’s and London,” Poins said.

Prince Hal asked Poins, “How can we see Falstaff tonight in his true colors, acting the way he really acts in accordance with his true nature, and not have him recognize us?”

“We can put on two leather jackets and aprons, the kind that tapsters wear, and wait upon him at his table as his tapsters.”

“Jove, King of the gods of men, transformed himself from a god to a bull in order to run away with and sleep with the mortal woman Europa. That transformation was a serious declension. Now I will transform myself from a Prince to an apprentice tapster. That is a low transformation! I shall do this folly because I have a fun purpose for doing it. In everything the purpose must counterbalance the folly.”

He added, “Follow me, Ned,” and they left.

— 2.3 —

At Warkworth, in front of the castle of the Earl of Northumberland, the Earl himself and his wife, Lady Northumberland, were talking. With them was Lady Percy, the widow of Hotspur, Northumberland’s son. He had died during the Battle of Shrewsbury, in part because the reinforcements that he had expected from his father had not shown up. Hotspur ended up fighting with an army that was much smaller than he had expected to fight with.

Northumberland said, “Please, loving wife, and gentle

daughter-in-law, support me as I do what I must do, difficult as it may be. Do not look troubled. These troubled times are already too troublesome to me.”

His wife, Lady Northumberland, replied, “I give up. I will speak no more. Do what you will; let your wisdom be your guide.”

“Sweet wife, my honor has been pawned, and the only way for me to redeem my honor is to go to war.”

Lady Percy, Hotspur’s widow, said, “For God’s sake, do not go and fight in this rebellion! The time was, father-in-law, that you broke your word, when you were more bound to it than now. Your own son, my heart’s dear Hotspur, threw many a look northward, hoping to see his father bring his army, but he longed in vain for the reinforcements you were supposed to bring to him. Who then persuaded you to stay at home? At the Battle of Shrewsbury, two honors were lost: yours and your son’s. Your son also lost his life. As for your honor, may the God of Heaven brighten it! As for Hotspur’s honor, it stuck upon him like the Sun is stuck in the blue vault of the sky, and Hotspur’s light moved all the chivalry of England to do brave acts: He was indeed the mirror that the noble youth used to dress themselves: They imitated him. Everyone except those who had no legs imitated the way that Hotspur walked. Hotspur spoke loudly and quickly and his words were thickly gathered together. This was a blemish in his speech, but valiant youth imitated his speech. Those who could speak low and slowly would abuse their own perfect speech so that they would seem like Hotspur. In speech, in gait, in diet, in recreations, in military rules, in temperament, he was the target and mirror, example, and rulebook that others imitated.

“And Hotspur — oh, wondrous Hotspur! Oh, miracle of men! You left Hotspur, who was second to none, without

reinforcements and without support from you. Hotspur looked upon the hideous god of war when he, Hotspur, was at a disadvantage and had to fight from a position of weakness. He had to fight in a battlefield where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name seemed to be able to stand up against Henry IV's forces. You left him, and you allowed him to do this.

“Never — oh, never — do Hotspur's ghost the wrong to value your honor with others as being more valuable than your honor with him. Let the others fight alone! The Lord Marshal Mowbray and the Archbishop of York are strong: Had my sweet Hotspur had but half their number of soldiers, today might I, hanging on Hotspur's neck, have talked about Prince Hal's grave.”

Northumberland said, “Damn, fair daughter-in-law, you dishearten me by newly lamenting ancient oversights. But I must go and meet with danger by fighting with the troops of the Lord Marshal Mowbray and the Archbishop of York, or danger will seek me in another place and find me less prepared to defend myself against it.”

His wife advised, “Flee to Scotland, and wait until the noble rebels and the armed common soldiers have gotten a little taste of their strength in battle.”

Lady Percy agreed that that was a good plan: “If they gain ground against and get the advantage of the King, then you can join with them, like a rib of steel, to make their strength stronger; but if you love us, first let them fight by themselves without your reinforcements. Your son, Hotspur, did that. You allowed him to do that. That is how I became a widow. I shall never live long enough to shed enough tears upon rosemary, the plant of remembrance, to make it grow and sprout as high as Heaven, and be the memorial that my noble husband deserves.”

Northumberland said, “Come, come, go in with me. My mind is like a tide that has reached its full height and neither wanes nor waxes: It is at a standstill, running neither way. Eagerly would I go to meet the Archbishop of York and his troops, but many thousand reasons hold me back. I will go to Scotland and stay there until the right time and the right opportunity for me to fight present themselves.”

— 2.4 —

At the Boar’s Head Tavern in Eastcheap, two drawers, aka tapsters or bartenders, were talking. They were preparing a room for the arrival of Sir John Falstaff and others.

The first drawer said, “What the Devil have you brought there? Apple-johns? You know that Sir John cannot endure an apple-john.”

Apple-johns were apples that were eaten after they had become shriveled and withered. Saint John’s Day was June 24, and the apples, which were harvested after that date, kept until then.

“By the Mass, you are saying the truth,” the second drawer said. “Prince Hal once set a dish of apple-johns in front of Falstaff, and told him here were five more Sir Johns, and, putting off his hat, the Prince said, ‘I will now take my leave of these six dry, round, old, withered knights.’ It angered Falstaff to the heart, but he got over it and has forgotten it.”

“Why, then, cover the table with a cloth, and set the apple-johns down,” the first drawer said, “and see if you can locate Sneak’s noise; Mistress Tearsheet would like to hear some music.”

A group of geese on the ground is a gaggle. A group of hens is a brood. A noise of musicians is a band.

He continued, "Hurry! The room where they dined is too hot; they'll come in here soon."

The second drawer replied, "Also coming in here soon will be the Prince and Master Poin. They will put on two of our jackets and aprons. Sir John must not know about it. Bardolph told me this."

"By the Mass, here will be good times," the first drawer said. "It will be an excellent joke and like the eighth day of a festival."

"I'll see if I can find Sneak," the second drawer said, and then both drawers departed.

Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet entered the room. Doll Tearsheet's name suited her; she was a prostitute.

Mistress Quickly said to Doll Tearsheet, who had been ill, "Truly, sweetheart, I think now that you are in an excellent good temporality [temper]: your pulsidge [pulse] beats as extraordinarily as any heart would desire; and your color, I warrant you, is as red as any rose, truly! But, truly, you have drunk too much canaries [wine from the Canary Islands]; and that's a marvelously intoxicating wine, and it perfumes [pervades] the blood before one can say, 'What's this?' How do you feel now?"

"Better than I did," Doll Tearsheet said, and then she coughed.

"Why, that's well said," Mistress Quickly said. "A good heart is worth gold. Look, here comes Sir John."

Falstaff entered the room, singing, "When Arthur first in court."

He called, "Empty the jordan. Empty the chamberpot!"

Then he sang, "And was a worthy King."

He asked, “How are you now, Mistress Doll?”

Mistress Quickly replied, “Sick of a calm, truly.”

She meant “quail,” but Falstaff pretended that she really had meant “calm.”

“So is all her sect,” Falstaff said. “Anytime a prostitute is in a calm and not furiously working, they are sick.”

Doll Tearsheet said, “You muddy rascal, is that all the comfort you give me?”

“You make fat rascals, Mistress Doll. You make rascals fat.”

“I make them fat! Gluttony and diseases make them fat; I do not make them fat.”

“If the cook helps to make gluttony, then you help to make the diseases, Doll. We catch venereal diseases from you, Doll. We catch them from you. Grant that, my poor virtue, grant that.”

“You do the catching,” Doll Tearsheet replied. “You catch at and steal our necklaces and other jewelry.”

Falstaff sang, “Your brooches, pearls, and gems.”

He then said, “All of the ‘jewels’ we receive from such as you are sores on our genitals. People who serve bravely in battle limp off the battlefield. Those of us who use your services come away from the breach in your wall — the opening in your body — with our pikes bravely bent. We then bravely go to the doctor to get our venereal disease cured, and then we again bravely mount our attack and discharge our weapons against you —”

Doll Tearsheet said, “Go hang yourself, you muddy conger eel, go hang yourself!”

“Truly,” Mistress Quickly said, “this happens every time you two meet. You two never meet without having an argument. You are both, truly, as rheumatic [she meant to say choleric, aka easy to anger] as two pieces of dry toast grating against each other. You cannot bear the other’s conformities [infirmities]. What the Devil! One must bear, and that must be you, Doll Tearsheet. You are the weaker vessel, as they say — you are the emptier vessel.”

“Can a weak empty vessel bear such a huge full barrel of a man as Falstaff?” Doll Tearsheet asked. “There is a whole cargo of Bordeaux wine in him; you have not seen a merchant ship better stuffed with a cargo of wine.”

She added, “Come, I’ll be friends with you, Jack. You are going to the wars; and whether I shall ever see you again or not, there is nobody who cares.”

The first drawer walked into the room, which was on the second story, and said to Falstaff, “Sir, Ancient Pistol’s downstairs, and he wants to speak to you.”

An Ancient is a standard-bearer in the military; he is an Ensign.

Doll Tearsheet knew and loathed Pistol: “Hang him, the swaggering rascal! Don’t let him in here. He is the most foul-mouthed rogue in England.”

“If he is a swaggerer, let him not come in here,” Mistress Quickly said. “No, by my faith. I must live among my neighbors, and I want to be on good terms with them. I’ll have no swaggerers here. I have a good name and a good reputation — it is among the very best. Shut the door; there are no swaggerers allowed in here. I have not lived all this while, to have swaggering now — shut the door, please.”

“Did you not hear, hostess?” Falstaff asked Mistress Quickly.

“Please, be quiet, Sir John,” Mistress Quickly said.
“Swaggerers are not allowed in here.”

“Did you not hear? He is my Ancient.”

“Tilly-fally and fiddle-faddle and fiddlesticks, Sir John,” Mistress Quickly said. “Don’t tell me. Your Ancient the swaggerer is not allowed inside my doors. I was made to appear before Master Tisick, the deputy [deputy] in charge of keeping the peace, the other day; and, as he said to me — it was no longer ago than last Wednesday — ‘Truly, neighbor Quickly,’ says he; Master Dumbe, our minister, was nearby then; ‘neighbor Quickly,’ says he, ‘receive those who are civil because,’ said he, ‘you have an ill name.’ He said that, and I know the reason why he said that. Says he, ‘You are an honest woman, and well thought of; therefore take heed what guests you receive.’ Says he, ‘Receive no swaggering companions.’ There comes none here. You would bless yourselves to hear what he said. No, I’ll allow no swaggerers in here. I don’t want any troublemakers.”

Mistress Quickly had contradictory parts in her story. According to her, the deputy had told her both that she had “an ill name” and that she was “well thought of.”

“He’s no swaggerer, hostess,” Falstaff said, “He is a tame cheater, a petty gamester who cheats a little, truly. You may stroke him as gently as a puppy greyhound. He will not even swagger with a Barbary hen, if her feathers turn back in any show of resistance.”

As events would soon show, this was not true. Pistol was happy to swagger in front of a Barbary hen.

A Barbary hen is a guinea fowl; in slang, a Barbary hen is a prostitute.

Falstaff ordered, “Bring him in here, drawer.”

The first drawer left to get Pistol.

“He is a cheater, you say?” Mistress Quickly asked.

She meant “escheator,” or royal treasury officer. Many of them had bad reputations, and from this term we get our word “cheat.”

She added, “Cheater, call you him? I will bar no honest man from my house, nor no cheater, but I do not love swaggering, to say the truth. I feel ill when I hear the word ‘swagger.’ Masters, feel and look at how I am shaking.”

“So you are, hostess,” Doll Tearsheet said.

“Am I?” Mistress Quickly said. “Yes, truly I am. I am shaking as if I were a leaf on an aspen tree. I cannot bear swaggerers.”

Pistol, Bardolph, and Falstaff’s page entered the room.

Pistol said loudly, “May God save you, Sir John!”

“Welcome, Ancient Pistol,” Falstaff said. “Here, Pistol, I charge you with a cup of wine. I want you to discharge upon my hostess.”

As you expect with Falstaff, the puns flowed like wine. “To charge” means “to drink a toast to” and “to put on a tab” and “to load a pistol.” “To discharge” means “to drink a toast to another person,” “to shoot,” and “to ejaculate.”

“I will discharge upon her, Sir John, with two bullets,” Pistol replied.

The two bullets hung by his trouser-snake.

“She is Pistol-proof, sir,” Falstaff replied. “You shall hardly offend her.”

Mistress Quickly was beyond the age of bearing children,

and she was unable to bear swaggerers such as Pistol. She said, “Come, I’ll drink no proofs nor no bullets. I’ll drink no more than will do me good, for no man’s pleasure.”

Pistol said, “Then I will charge you, Mistress Dorothy.”

“Charge me!” Doll Tearsheet said. “I scorn you, scurvy fellow. What! You are a poor, base, rascally, cheating, lack-linen mate! You own very few shirts. Go away, you moldy rogue, go away! I am meet for Falstaff, your master.”

Anyone hearing Doll Tearsheet might think that she had said that she was meet for Falstaff rather than meet, aka fitting.

“I know you, Mistress Dorothy,” Pistol said. “I know all about you.”

“Go away, you cut-purse, pickpocketing rascal!” Doll Tearsheet shouted.

She pulled out a knife and said, “You filthy purse-snatcher, go away! I swear by this wine, I’ll thrust my knife in your moldy cheeks, if you try to play saucy tricks on me. Go away, you bottle-ale, boozy rascal! You are a basket-hilt stale juggler, you! I don’t even think you fight with a real sword — you fight with a wooden cudgel that has a hilt made of strips of metal woven like a basket. You are like a performer fighting with wooden cudgels as entertainment at a country fair! Since when are you good enough for me, I ask you, sir? By God’s light, you have two points on your shoulder! Are those laces for securing armor or have you sewn together two handkerchiefs to make yourself a half-shirt?”

“May God not let me live unless I murder your ruff for this!” Pistol shouted.

Prostitutes such as Doll Tearsheet wore a large ruff — a projecting starched frill — around their neck. Drunken bullies sometimes tore these ruffs and assaulted the prostitutes.

“No more of this, Pistol,” Falstaff said, and then he punned “I would not have you go off in here. Discharge yourself of our company, Pistol.”

“Good Captain Pistol,” Mistress Quickly said, giving him a military title he had not earned, “do not go off in here, sweet Captain.”

“Captain!” Doll Tearsheet exclaimed.

She said to Pistol, “You abominable damned cheater, aren’t you ashamed to be called Captain? If Captains were of my mind, they would truncheon you out of their ranks — they would beat you with a truncheon for taking their title before you have earned it. You a Captain! You slave, for what action have you earned that title? For tearing a poor whore’s ruff in a bawdy house?”

She continued, “He a Captain! Hang him — he is a rogue! He lives upon moldy stewed prunes and day-old cakes that he gets at bawdy houses and pastry-cook shops. A Captain! By God’s light, these villains will make the word ‘Captain’ as odious as the word ‘occupy,’ which was an excellent word before it was used to refer to fornication. Therefore, real Captains need to make sure that people such as Pistol do not steal the title of Captain.”

Falstaff was a real Captain.

“Please, go downstairs and leave, good Ancient,” Bardolph said to Pistol.

“Listen to me, Mistress Doll,” Falstaff said.

Pistol shouted, “Leave! Not I! I tell you what, Corporal

Bardolph, I could tear Doll Tearsheet to pieces! I'll be revenged on her!"

"Please, go downstairs and leave," the page said to Pistol.

"I'll see her damned first!" Pistol shouted. He loved extravagant language of the kind he heard in action-filled plays. "She shall be damned to the Underworld, to Pluto's damned lake, by this hand, to the infernal deep, with Erebus and tortures vile, also. Hold hook and line, say I. Down, down, dogs! Down, traitors! Have we not Hiren here?"

Hiren was a woman's name that Pistol had given to his sword, possibly because his sword was made of iron.

"Good Captain Peesel [Pistol], be quiet," Mistress Quickly pleaded. "It is very late, truly: I beseech [beseech] you now, aggravate [she meant to say "moderate"] your choler [anger]."

Pistol loved extravagant language so much that he did not care if it made sense or was appropriate to the situation. He shouted, "These be good humors, indeed! Shall packhorses and hollow pampered jades of Asia, which cannot travel but thirty miles each day, compare with Caesars, and with Cannibals, and with Trojant Greeks? Nay, rather damn them with King Cerberus; and let the welkin roar."

Pistol sometimes mixed up his literary references. Cerberus was not a King; Cerberus was the three-headed dog that served as a guard dog in Hell. When referring to the "hollow pampered jades of Asia" and how much they could travel in a day, he was misquoting some lines from Christopher Marlowe's play *Tamburlaine* — according to that play, the jades could draw a chariot only twenty miles a day. His reference to Cannibals may have been a mistake for Hannibals; Hannibal was the great Carthaginian general who crossed the Alps with his elephants to make war on the

Romans in Italy. Apparently, by “Trojant Greeks,” he meant the Greeks who besieged Troy.

Pistol continued, “Shall we fall foul for toys? Shall we fight over toys?”

He was referring to Doll Tearsheet.

Mistress Quickly said, “Truly, Captain, these are very bitter words.”

“Leave here, good Ancient,” Bardolph said. “This will grow into a brawl soon.”

“Die men like dogs! Give crowns like pins! Have we not Hiren here?”

When Pistol shouted, “Give crowns like pins!” he was thinking of Tamburlaine, who gave away Kingdoms as if they were valueless pins.

Mistress Quickly misunderstood the word “Hiren,” which was the name of Pistol’s sword. She thought that he was referring to a woman — probably a prostitute — whom he believed was at the tavern.

“On my word, Captain,” she said, “there’s no such woman here. What the Devil? Do you think that I would deny she was here if she really was here? For God’s sake, be quiet.”

“Then feed, and be fat, my fair Calipolis!” Pistol shouted. “Come, give me some wine. *Si fortune me tormente, sperato me contento.*”

The motto’s garbled Spanish and Italian meant, “If fortune torments me, hope comforts me.”

He continued, “Fear we broadsides? No, let the fiend give fire. Give me some wine.” He placed his sword on a table and said, “Sweetheart, lie you there. Come we to full points here; and are etceteras no thing?”

A full point is a period at the end of a sentence. Pistol was saying, "Have we come to an end here? Are we done shouting?"

Pistol could be bawdy. By "etceteras," he meant vaginas, and a thing is a penis. Therefore, an etcetera is no thing.

"Pistol, I wish that you would be quiet," Falstaff said.

"Sweet knight, I kiss your fist," Pistol said. "What! We have seen the seven stars."

This was true. Falstaff and Pistol had seen the seven stars of the Big Dipper together. They had stayed up late at night.

"For God's sake, throw him downstairs," Doll Tearsheet said. "I cannot endure such a worthless rascal."

"Throw him — me! — downstairs! Know we not Galloway nags?"

Galloway nags were small high-stepping horses bred in Ireland. A nag was also slang for a prostitute. Doll Tearsheet's job was to be ridden.

"Quoit him down, Bardolph, and while you are at it, quiet him down, Bardolph," Falstaff said. "Quoit him down like a shove-groat shilling."

"To quoit him down" meant to throw him downstairs. A quoit was an iron ring that was thrown in a game similar to horseshoes. A shove-groat shilling was used as a puck in a game similar to shuffleboard.

Falstaff added, "If Pistol does nothing but speak nothing, he shall be nothing here. He is talking nonsense, and I will not allow him to stay here."

"Come, let's get you downstairs," Bardolph said to Pistol.

“What!” Pistol shouted. “Shall we make incisions in each other’s bodies? Shall we imbrue our blades with blood?”

He grabbed his sword and said, “Then death rock me asleep; abridge and shorten my doleful days! Why, then, let grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds untwine the Sisters Three! Come, Atropos, I say!”

The Three Sisters are the Three Fates. Clotho spun the thread of life. Lachesis measured the string of life. Atropos cut the thread of life; when she cut your thread of life, you died. “To untwine” means to remove by unwinding. Grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds might untwine the thread of life and get it cut, but they would never untwine the Sisters Three.

“Here’s ‘goodly’ stuff coming!” Mistress Quickly said. “This fight will be bad for the reputation of my tavern!”

“Give me my rapier, boy,” Falstaff said.

The page handed Falstaff his sword, which was in a sheath.

“Please, Jack,” Doll Tearsheet said. “Please do not draw your sword.”

She liked — even loved — him, and she did not want him to get hurt.

Falstaff drew his sword and said to Pistol, “Get yourself downstairs.”

Mistress Quickly said, “Here’s a ‘goodly’ tumult! I’ll forswear keeping a tavern, before I’ll be in these terrors [terrors and fits] and frights. Murder! I can just see it happening now! Heavens! Put up your naked weapons! Put up your naked weapons!”

Pistol was no fighter. After Falstaff and he exchanged a few thrusts of their swords, he fled. Bardolph pursued him

downstairs and out of the tavern.

Falstaff pretended to continue to fight with his sword.

“Please, Jack, relax and be quiet,” Doll Tearsheet said, putting away her knife. “The rascal’s gone. Ah, you whoreson little valiant villain, you!”

Mistress Quickly asked Falstaff, “Did he hurt you in the groin? I thought he made a shrewd thrust at your belly.”

Bardolph returned, and Falstaff asked him, “Have you thrown him out of doors?”

“Yes, sir,” Bardolph said. “The rascal’s drunk. You have wounded him, sir, in the shoulder.”

“He is a rascal!” Falstaff said. “I can’t believe that he dared to challenge me! I am his superior officer, and he should have left the first time I told him to!”

“Ah, you sweet little rogue, you!” Doll Tearsheet said. “Oh, poor ape, how you are sweating! Come, let me wipe your face; come on, you whoreson fat-cheeks! Oh, you are a rogue! Truly, I love you: You are as valorous as Hector of Troy, you are worth five of Agamemnon, and you are ten times better than the Nine Worthies. Oh, you are a villain!”

This was high praise. Hector was the leader of the Trojans in the Trojan War. He was the bravest Trojan, and when he died, everyone knew that Troy was doomed to fall to the Greeks. Agamemnon was the leader of the Greeks in the Trojan War. The Nine Worthies were nine heroes: three were pagan, three were Jewish, and three were Christian. The three pagan heroes were Hector, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar. The three Jewish heroes were Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabaeus. The three Christian heroes were King Arthur, Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon, who was one of the leaders of the

First Crusade.

“Pistol is a rascally slave!” Falstaff said. “I will toss the rogue in a blanket.”

This was regarded as a suitable punishment for a coward.

Doll Tearsheet replied, “Do it, if you dare to risk your life. If you do it, I will toss you between a pair of sheets.”

She regarded this as a suitable reward for her hero.

Sneak and some other musicians entered the room.

Seeing them, the page said to Falstaff, “The music has come, sir.”

“Let them play,” Falstaff said.

He said to the musicians, “Play, sirs,” and then he requested, “Sit on my knee, Doll.”

She sat on his knee, and the musicians began playing.

He added, “Pistol is a rascally bragging slave! The rogue fled from me like quicksilver — like Mercury, the fleet messenger of the gods!”

Doll Tearsheet said, “Truly, he did.”

She joked, “And you followed him as quickly as if you were a church building.”

She added, more seriously, “You whoreson little tidy Bartholomew boar-pig, when will you stop fighting during the days and thrusting during the nights, and when will you begin to patch up your old body for Heaven?”

A Bartholomew boar-pig was a roast pig served at the Bartholomew Fair, which was held in London annually on August 24.

“Please, good Doll,” Falstaff requested, “please do not speak to me as if you were a death’s-head, a skull, a *memento mori*, a reminder that one day we will die. Please do not ask me to think about my death.”

Prince Hal and Poins entered the room; they were wearing the jackets and aprons of drawers to hide their identities.

Doll Tearsheet recognized them and knew that they wanted to play a joke on Falstaff, their sometimes companion.

Doll Tearsheet asked Falstaff, “What is Prince Hal like?”

“He is a good shallow young fellow,” Falstaff replied. “He would have made a good pantryman; he would have chipped bread well.”

One of the jobs of a pantryman was to chip, or cut, the burned parts off loaves of bread.

“They say Poins has a good wit,” Doll Tearsheet said.

“He a good wit?” Falstaff said. “Hang him; he is a baboon! He is utterly stupid, and his wit is as thick as Tewksbury mustard. I can only wish that his wit were as sharp as the flavor of Tewksbury mustard. He has no more invention, imagination, and wit in him than a mallet or hammer has.”

“Why does the Prince regard Poins as a good friend, then?”

“Because their legs are both of an attractive quality and look good in stockings, and because he plays a good game of quoits, and because he eats conger eels — which are reputed to make eaters stupid — seasoned with fennel. Poins has a good appetite and a dull wit. In addition, he is good at drinking games. If you float some small pieces of lit candles in an alcoholic beverage, he can manage to drink the alcohol without being badly burnt. He is also able to play boyish games well, and to become boisterous and jump up on bar stools, and he swears with a good talent,

and he wears his boots very tight to show off his attractive legs, which are like the boots and legs on a sign that advertises a boot maker. He also breeds no anger when he tells his discreet stories — he does not tell secrets. He has other playful qualities that show that he has a weak mind and an able body. Because of these qualities, Prince Hal allows Poins to be in his presence. Prince Hal is just like Poins. If you put them in a pair of scales, the scales would be exactly even.”

Prince Hal whispered to Poins, “Shouldn’t this nave of a wheel have his ears cut off?”

The nave of a wheel is the round hub of a wheel. Having one’s ears cut off was the punishment for defaming a member of the royal family.

“Let’s beat him in front of his whore,” Poins said.

“Look,” Prince Hal said. “The withered elder is getting his poll clawed like a parrot.”

Doll Tearsheet was scratching the top of Falstaff’s head.

“Is it not strange that sexual desire should by so many years outlive sexual performance?” Poins asked.

He believed that Falstaff, because of his advanced age and immense obesity, was impotent.

“Kiss me, Doll,” Falstaff requested.

She obliged.

“Saturn and Venus are this year in conjunction!” Prince Hal said. “I wonder what the almanac says about that!”

Saturn was the planet of old age, and Venus was the planet of love. If Poins were wrong about Falstaff being impotent, it seemed that soon Saturn and Venus, aka Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet, would be in conjunction. Almanacs then and

now concern themselves with astrology.

“And look, the fiery Trigon, Falstaff’s man, is lipping words of love to his master’s old tables, his notebook, his counsel-keeper, his confidant, his keeper of secrets,” Poins said. “To speak plainly, fiery-faced Bardolph is whispering sweet nothings to Mistress Quickly.”

The signs of the Zodiac are divided into four groups of three, each of which is called a Trigon. Each Trigon is associated with water, air, earth, or fire. The three astrological signs associated with fire are Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius.

“You are giving me flattering kisses,” Falstaff said.

“Truly, I kiss you with a most constant and faithful heart,” Doll Tearsheet replied.

“I am old. I am old,” Falstaff mourned.

“I love you better than I love any scurvy young boy.”

“Of which material do you want a kirtle made?” Falstaff asked. “I shall receive money on Thursday. I will give you a cap tomorrow.”

A woman wore a kirtle between her petticoats and her gown.

The musicians were still playing, and Falstaff said, “This is a merry song. Come, it is growing late; let’s go to bed.”

He paused and then said to Doll Tearsheet, “You’ll forget me when I am gone.”

He may have been talking about going to war; he may have been talking about dying.

“Truly, you’ll make me cry, if you say that,” Doll Tearsheet replied, “I will not dress in fine clothing until

you return from the war. Well, wait and see. We will see what will happen.”

“Bring us some wine, Francis,” Falstaff said to Prince Hal, who was pretending to be a drawer. Francis was one of the drawers at the Boar’s Head Tavern.

Prince Hal responded the way that a drawer would: “Anon, anon, sir. Right away, right away, sir.”

He then came forward and faced Falstaff so that Falstaff could recognize him. Poins did the same thing.

Falstaff, who did recognize them, said, “Ha! Are you a bastard son of the King’s? And aren’t you Poins’ brother?”

“Why, you globe of sinful continents!” Prince Hal said. “You are a huge and round mass of sinful contents! What a life you lead!”

“I lead a better life than you,” Falstaff said. “I am a gentleman; you are a drawer.”

“Very true, sir,” Prince Hal said, “and I come to draw you out of this room by your ears.”

“Oh, may the Lord preserve your good grace!” Mistress Quickly said. “Truly, welcome to London. Now, may the Lord bless that sweet face of yours! Oh, have you come from Wales?”

Falstaff said to Prince Hal, “You whoreson mad compound of majesty,” and then he added, referring to Doll Tearsheet, “by this light flesh and corrupt blood, you are welcome.”

A light woman was a woman who engaged in fornication.

“You fat fool!” Doll Tearsheet shouted, getting off Falstaff’s lap. “I scorn you!”

Poins said to Prince Hal, “My lord, he will drive you out of

your mood for getting revenge on him for what he said about you, and he will turn everything into a merry joke, unless you strike while the iron is hot.”

Prince Hal said to Falstaff, “You whorson candle-mine, you mine of tallow fat, you! How vilely did you speak of me just now before this honest, virtuous, civil gentlewoman!”

“May God bless your good heart!” Mistress Quickly said. “She really is an honest, virtuous, civil gentlewoman!”

“Did you hear what I said about you?” Falstaff asked Prince Hal.

“Yes, I did, and I am sure that you will say that you recognized me although I was in disguise, as you did when you ran away following the robbery at Gad’s Hill. You will say this: You recognized me just now, and you said those bad things about me on purpose just to test my patience.”

“No, no, no,” Falstaff said. “That is not true; I did not think you were within hearing distance.”

“I shall drive you then to confess that you willfully showered words of abuse on me,” Prince Hal said, “and then I will know how to handle you and what punishment to give to you.”

“There was no abuse, Hal,” Falstaff said. “On my honor, there was no abuse.”

“You claim that you did not insult me and call me a pantryman and a bread-chipper and I know not what else?”

“There was no abuse, Hal.”

“No abuse?” Ned Poins asked.

“No abuse, Ned, in the world,” Falstaff said. “Honest Ned, there was none. I dispraised Prince Hal before the wicked,

so that the wicked might not fall in love with him. By so doing, I have done the part of a careful friend and a true subject, and Hal's father the King ought to give me thanks for it. So, you can see that there was no abuse, Hal. There was none, Ned, none. No, truly, boys, there was none."

"Let us see now," Prince Hal said, "whether your pure fear and entire cowardice has made you wrong this virtuous gentlewoman so you can make peace with us. Is she — this woman who was just now sitting on your lap — one of the wicked? Is your hostess here — Mistress Quickly — one of the wicked? Is the boy who is your page one of the wicked? Or honest Bardolph, whose zeal can be seen burning in his nose — Puritans praise burning zeal — one of the wicked?"

"Answer him, you dead elm-tree trunk, answer him," Poins said.

"The fiend we know as Satan has written Bardolph's name among those whose souls are irrecoverable," Falstaff said. "His red face is Lucifer's kitchen, aka Hell, where he does nothing but roast malt-worms — alcoholics. As for the boy, there is a good angel about him, but the Devil has blinded the boy so that he cannot see the good angel."

"What about the women?" Prince Hal asked.

"As for one of them, she is in Hell already, and she burns poor souls."

Falstaff was referring to Doll Tearsheet, who infected men with venereal disease and made them burn when they urinated.

"As for the other, I owe her money, and whether she has been damned for that, I don't know."

"I have not been damned for that, I assure you," Mistress Quickly said.

“I think that you are right and you have not been damned for that,” Falstaff said. “I think you have avoided being damned for that.”

Puritans regarded the lending of money — usury — as a sin. But since Falstaff had no intention of paying back the money he had borrowed from Mistress Quickly, was she really engaging in usury?

Falstaff continued, “But by Mother Mary, there is another indictment against Mistress Quickly.”

He said to her, “You allow flesh to be sold and consumed in your house, contrary to the law; for which sin I think you will howl in Hell.”

Eating houses were not allowed by law to serve meat during Lent.

Mistress Quickly said, “All keepers of eating houses do that; what’s a joint of mutton or two in a whole Lent?”

Falstaff had in mind a different kind of selling and consuming flesh; he was referring to the flesh of prostitutes. “Mutton” was a slang word used to refer to prostitutes.

Prince Hal said to Doll Tearsheet, “You, gentlewoman —”

He hesitated.

Doll Tearsheet asked, “What do you want, your grace?”

Falstaff said, “His grace says that which his flesh rebels against.”

He was punning again. He knew that Prince Hal knew that Doll Tearsheet was not a gentlewoman. One meaning of Falstaff’s sentence was that Prince Hal was saying something that he knew was not true. Another meaning was that as Prince Hal called Doll Tearsheet a gentlewoman, a

part of his body that knew what she really was, was rebelling in an uprising — that is, rising up (and becoming erect).

Knocking sounded on the door downstairs.

“Who is knocking so loudly?” Mistress Quickly said. “Go and see who is at the door, Francis.”

Peto, another of Prince Hal’s Eastcheap friends, walked upstairs.

Prince Hal saw him and said, “Peto, how are you! What news have you brought to me?”

Peto replied, “The King, your father, is at Westminster. Twenty weak and weary messengers have come from the North with important news, and as I was coming here, I met and overtook a dozen Captains, who were bare headed, sweating, knocking at the tavern doors, and asking everyone for the location of Sir John Falstaff.”

“By Heaven, Poin,” Prince Hal said, “I feel myself much to blame, so idly to profane and waste the precious time. Now a storm of war, like the South wind blowing black clouds, begins to melt and drop tears upon our bare unhelmeted heads. Bring me my sword and cloak.”

He then said, “Falstaff, good night.”

Prince Hal, Poin, Peto, and Bardolph left the room.

Falstaff said, “Now comes in the sweetest morsel of the night, and we must go from here and leave it unpicked.”

Knocking sounded on the door downstairs.

Bardolph came into the room and Falstaff said to him, “What’s the matter?”

Bardolph replied, “You must leave here and go to court, sir,

immediately; a dozen Captains are waiting at the door for you.”

Falstaff said, “Pay the musicians.”

He then said, “Farewell, hostess; farewell, Doll. You see, my good wenches, how men of merit are sought after. The undeserver may sleep when the man of action is called on to go to work. Farewell, good wenches. If I am not sent away to war immediately, I will see you again before I go.”

“I cannot speak,” Doll Tearsheet said. “My heart is ready to burst. Well, sweet Jack, take care of yourself.”

“Farewell, farewell,” he said.

Falstaff and Bardolph went downstairs.

Mistress Quickly said as Falstaff left, “Well, fare you well. I have known you these past twenty-nine years, come peascod-time — come the time when the pods form peas. But an honest and truer-hearted man — well, fare you well.”

Bardolph called from downstairs, “Mistress Tearsheet!”

“What’s the matter?” Mistress Quickly called back.

Bardolph called, “Good Mistress Tearsheet, come to Falstaff, my master.”

Mistress Quickly, who had gone to the door of the room, said, “Oh, run, Doll, run; run, good Doll. Come.”

Crying with sadness at Falstaff’s departure, Doll Tearsheet stood up.

Mistress Quickly repeated, “Come, Doll.”

Doll Tearsheet ran downstairs.

Say what you will about Falstaff, at least two women loved

him.

CHAPTER 3 (2 Henry IV)

— 3.1 —

In a room of the palace at Westminster at night, King Henry IV, wearing night clothing, said to his young servant, “Go and call the Earls of Surrey and of Warwick to come to me, but tell them to read these letters and carefully consider their content before they come. Hurry.”

His young servant left to do the errands.

King Henry IV said to himself, “How many thousands of my poorest subjects are at this hour asleep! Sleep, gentle Sleep, Nature’s soft nurse, how have I so frightened you that you will no longer weigh my eyelids down and steep my senses in forgetfulness? Why, Sleep, do you prefer to lie in smoky hovels, stretching yourself upon uncomfortable straw mattresses and being sung to by buzzing night insects as you go to your slumber, rather than to lie in the perfumed chambers of the nobility, under costly canopies, and lulled to slumber with the sound of sweetest melodies?

“Oh, you dull god, why do you lie with the lowly born in loathsome beds, and allow me, the King, to lie in my Kingly bed as if I were the mechanism in a watch case? The mechanism keeps on moving and is ready to raise an alarm, but the watch case is still and does not move.

“Sleep, you seal shut the eyes of the ship-boy who is in the crow’s nest at the top of the high and giddy mast, although his brains are rocked by the rude imperious surge of a tossing sea and by the visitation of the winds that take the ruffian waves by their tops, curling their monstrous heads and hanging them with such a deafening clamor in the slippery clouds that the noise wakes up Death itself.

“How can you, partial Sleep, give your repose to the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude and violent and noisy, and yet in the calmest and stillest night deny your repose to a King who has everything that is needed to make Sleep comfortable?”

“Then happy lowly born, lie down! Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

Warwick and Surrey entered the room.

“May your majesty enjoy many happy mornings!” Warwick said.

“Is it morning, lords?” King Henry IV asked.

“It is past one o’clock,” Warwick said.

“Why, then, good morning to you all, my lords. Have you read over the letters that I sent you?”

“We have, my liege,” Warwick replied.

“Then you perceive how foul the body of our Kingdom is. You understand with what danger rank diseases grow near the heart of our Kingdom. You understand how serious the rebellion is.”

“The Kingdom is like a body that is ill, but that can be restored to its former health with good advice and a little medicine,” Warwick said. “My Lord Northumberland will soon be cooled and his rebellion stopped.”

“I wish to God that I could read the Book of Fate, and see the passage of time and the process of change that make mountains level, and the continent, which becomes weary of solid firmness, melt itself into the sea! And I would like to see, at other times, how the beaches grow and become so big that tides can no longer wash over them. The beaches are the belt of the sea-god Neptune, and they can grow until

they become too large for his hips and so parts of the beaches are no longer touched by sea-tides. I would like to see the ironic tricks played by chance occurrences upon men, and how changes fill the cup of alteration with many different liquors!

“If it were possible to see these things in a book, the happiest youth, viewing the course of his life — what perils he would encounter, and what crosses he would bear — would shut the book and then sit down and die.

“Not ten years have passed since Richard II and the Earl of Northumberland, who were then great friends, feasted together. Two years after they were feasting together, they were at war against each other. Only eight years ago, Northumberland was the man nearest my soul. Like a brother, he toiled for me and he laid his love and life under my foot — he submitted himself to me. For my sake, he even defied King Richard II.

“But which of you was there? If I remember correctly, you were present, Warwick, when Richard II, with his eyes brimful of tears, rebuked and berated by Northumberland, spoke these words that are now proved to be a prophecy: ‘Northumberland, you are the ladder by which my cousin Henry Bolingbroke — King Henry IV — ascends to my throne.’

“However, God knows that I then had no such intent of ever becoming King. But necessity so bowed the state that a new King was needed, and therefore greatness and I were compelled to kiss.

“Richard II continued, ‘The time shall come that foul sin, gathering head, growing to a boil and raising an army, shall break into corruption.’ He continued to speak, foretelling this same time’s condition and the division of our amity. He foretold that Northumberland would rebel against my

rule.”

“There is a history in all men’s lives,” Warwick replied, “that tells what happened in the past. Observing the past, a man may identify with a high degree of accuracy the things that are most likely to happen. These things that have not yet occurred have their seeds and weak beginnings stored in the past as if they were in a treasury.

“Such things hatch and become the brood of time. And by knowing the necessary pattern of cause and effect, King Richard II might create a guess — which turned out to be accurate — that great Northumberland, who was then false to him, would from that seed grow to a greater falseness that could find no ground to take root upon, except on you.”

“Are these things then necessities?” King Henry IV asked. “Then let us meet them like necessities although that same word ‘necessities’ cries out against us. I hate to think that these things had to happen.

“They say the Archbishop of York and the Earl of Northumberland have an army of fifty thousand soldiers.”

“That cannot be, my lord,” Warwick replied. “Rumor does double, like the voice and echo, the numbers of the feared. That number is exaggerated. May it please your grace to go to bed. I swear upon my soul, my lord, that the armies that you already have sent forth shall bring this prize in very easily. Your armies shall stop the rebellion.

“To comfort you the more, let me now tell you that I have received verified information that Glendower is dead.

“Your majesty has been ill for the past two weeks, and these late hours will worsen your illness.”

“I will take your advice,” King Henry IV said. “Once this

rebellion has been stopped, we wish, dear lords, to go on a Crusade to the Holy Land.”

— 3.2 —

In front of Justice Shallow’s house, Justice Shallow and Justice Silence met. A few servants were also present. The two justices were waiting for Sir John Falstaff to show up. He was headed North to fight, drafting soldiers into his company as he went.

Justice Shallow said, “Come on, come on, come on, sir. Give me your hand, sir; give me your hand, sir. You are an early riser, by the cross! And how is my good cousin Silence doing?”

Justice Silence said, “Good morning, good cousin Shallow.”

“And how is my cousin, your bedfellow?” Justice Shallow said. By “bedfellow,” he meant wife.

He added, “And how is your fairest daughter and mine, my goddaughter Ellen?”

“Unfortunately, she is a blackbird, cousin Shallow.”

At that time in England, dark hair and dark skin were unfashionable. English men at that time preferred light hair and light skin.

“I dare say that my cousin William has become a good scholar,” Justice Shallow said. “He is at Oxford still, isn’t he?”

“Indeed he is, sir, to my cost.”

“He must, then, be admitted to the Inns of Court to study law shortly. I was once a student at Clement’s Inn, where I think they still talk of crazy Shallow.”

“You were called ‘lusty Shallow’ then, cousin,” Justice Silence said.

“Lusty” can mean lively and merry as well as filled with lust.

“By the Mass, I was called anything, and I would have done anything, too — and thoroughly and eagerly done anything, too.

“There was I, and little John Doit of Staffordshire, and black George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, a Cotswold man,” Justice Shallow said.

“Shallow” is a good name for a shallow man. “Doit” is a good name for an insignificant man; a doit was a coin of very little value. “Barnes,” aka barns, is a good name for a man who has country wealth. “Pickbone” is a good name for a miser. “Squele” is a good name for someone who tattles, or for someone who squeals when frightened.

Justice Shallow continued, “You will not see four such swinge-bucklers, aka swashbucklers, in all the Inns of Court again, and I may say to you, we knew where the bona-robas — the best girls — were and we had the best of them all at our beck and call. At that time Jack Falstaff, who is now Sir John, was a boy; he served as the page of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.”

“Is he the Sir John, cousin, who is coming here soon to see about drafting soldiers?”

“He is the same Sir John, the very same,” Justice Shallow said. “I saw him break Skogan’s head at the court-gate, when he was a boy not thus high, and on the very same day I fought Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray’s Inn. Jesus, Jesus, the mad days that I have spent! And to see how many of my old acquaintances are dead!”

“We shall all follow them in death, cousin,” Justice Silence said.

“That is certain, that is certain,” Justice Shallow said.
“Very sure, very sure. Death, as the Psalmist says, is certain to happen to us all; all of us shall die. How much does a good yoke of bullocks sell for at Stamford Fair?”

“I don’t know. I was not there,” Justice Silence said.

“Death is certain. Is old Double of your town still living?”

“He is dead, sir.”

“Jesus, Jesus, dead!” Justice Shallow said. “He drew a good bow, and he is now dead! He shot arrows well. John of Gaunt greatly respected him and bet a lot of money on his archery prowess. Dead! He could hit a target at twelve score yards — two hundred and forty yards. He also could shoot an arrow in a straight line for fourteen score or fourteen and a half score yards — two hundred and eighty or two hundred and ninety yards. It did a man’s heart good to see him do that. How much is a score of ewes now?”

“It depends on their quality,” Justice Silence said. “A score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds.”

“And is old Double really dead?”

Justice Silence looked up and said, “Here come two of Sir John Falstaff’s men, I think.”

Bardolph and another man walked up to the two justices.

Justice Shallow said, “Good morning, honest gentlemen.”

Bardolph asked, “Please, which of you is Justice Shallow?”

“I am Robert Shallow, sir; I am a poor esquire of this county, and I am one of the King’s justices of the peace.”

An esquire was a social rank just below that of a knight.

He continued, "How can I help you?"

"My Captain, sir, commends himself to you," Bardolph replied. "My Captain, Sir John Falstaff, is a brave and valiant gentleman, by Heaven, and he is a most gallant leader."

Justice Shallow replied, "Sir John greets me well, sir. I knew him back in the day to be a good backsword man. He used to fence with a fencing stick. How is the good knight? May I ask how his wife is doing?"

"Pardon me, sir," Bardolph replied, "but a soldier is better accommodated than with a wife. Falstaff is not married."

Justice Shallow took delight in the word "accommodated," which was a new word to him.

"It is well said, truly, sir," he said, "and it is well said indeed, too. Better accommodated! It is good; yes, indeed, it is. Good phrases are surely, and ever were, very commendable. 'Accommodated!' This word comes from *accommodo*, Latin for "I adapt," and it is very good; it is a good phrase."

"Pardon me, sir," Bardolph said. He was unsure about the meaning of the word "phrase," which meant expression. "I have heard the word. 'Phrase' you called it? By this good day, I do not know the phrase, but I will maintain the word with my sword to be a soldier-like word, and a word of exceedingly good command, by Heaven.

"Accommodated: the meaning of the word is, when a man is, as they say, accommodated; or when a man is, being, whereby he may be thought to be accommodated — which is an excellent thing."

"It is very just," Justice Shallow said.

Sir John Falstaff walked up to the group, and Justice Shallow said, "Look, here comes good Sir John. Give me your good hand, give me your worship's good hand. Truly, you are thriving well and you bear your years very well. Welcome, good Sir John."

"I am glad to see that you are well, good Master Robert Shallow," Falstaff replied. He looked at the other justice and asked, "Aren't you Master Surecard?"

"No, Sir John," Justice Shallow said. "This is my cousin Silence, who has a commission as Justice of the Peace, as do I."

"Good Master Silence," Falstaff said, "your name is very fitting for a Justice of the Peace."

"You are welcome," Justice Silence said.

Falstaff fanned himself and said, "This is hot weather, gentlemen. Have you provided me here with half a dozen fit and able men for me to look over and see if they should serve in the King's army?"

"Yes, we have, sir," Justice Shallow said. "Will you sit down?"

Falstaff replied, "Let me see them now, please."

The possible recruits walked over to them.

"Where's the roll? Where's the roll? Where's the roll?" Justice Shallow said. "Let me see, let me see, let me see. So, so. Yes, sir! Ralph Moldy! Let them come forward as I call their names; let them do so, let them do so. Let me see; where is Moldy?"

Moldy, who was on the verge of middle age, replied, "Here I am, if it please you."

"What do you think, Sir John?" Justice Shallow asked.

“Isn’t he a good-limbed fellow: young, strong, and from a good family?”

“Is your name Moldy?” Falstaff asked.

“Yes, if it please you.”

“It is time that you were used.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” Justice Shallow laughed. “That jest was most excellent, truly! Things that are moldy lack use. That was a very good jest! Truly well said, Sir John, very well said.”

“Prick him,” Falstaff said.

Justice Shallow was carrying a wax tablet in which the names of the possible recruits were listed. He used a stick to prick a mark by Moldy’s name. That meant that Moldy had been drafted into the King’s army.

Moldy complained, “I was pricked well enough before, so you could have let me alone.”

He meant that he was already provided with — had been born with — a prick.

Moldy continued, “My old lady — my wife — will be undone now.”

With Moldy gone to the war, his wife would have no one to “do” her.

Moldy continued, “She will have no one to do her husbandry and her drudgery.”

Husbandry involves the planting of seeds. With Moldy gone to the war, his wife would have no one to plant seeds — semen — in her womb. Also, she would have no one to do the work that is less fun than the planting of those seeds.

Moldy continued, “You need not to have pricked me; there

are other men fitter to go to the war than I am.”

“Stop complaining,” Falstaff said. “Be quiet, Moldy. You shall go to the war. Moldy, it is time that you were spent.”

“Spent!” Moldy said.

“To spend” means “to ejaculate semen.” It can also mean “to come to an end,” which is that happens to many men’s lives in wartime.

“Be quiet, fellow, be quiet,” Justice Shallow said. “Stand aside. Do you know where you are and to whom you are talking?”

Moldy stepped back.

Justice Shallow paused and then he said, “As for the others, Sir John, let me see.”

He looked at the roll and then called, “Simon Shadow!”

Falstaff joked, “I should draft him into the army so that I can sit under him. He is likely to be a cold soldier.”

“Where’s Shadow?” Justice Shallow asked.

Shadow stepped forward and said, “Here, sir.”

“Shadow, whose son are you?” Falstaff asked.

“My mother’s son, sir.”

“Your mother’s son! That is likely enough, and you are your father’s shadow: The son of the female is the shadow of the male. It is often so, indeed; but I wonder how much of the father’s substance is in you!”

Falstaff was joking that perhaps Shadow’s mother had committed adultery and so there was little of her husband’s substance in her son.

“Do you like him, Sir John?” Justice Shallow asked. “Do you think that he will make a good soldier?”

“Shadow will serve for the summer,” Falstaff said. “Prick him, for we have a number of shadows to fill up the muster-book.”

“Shadow” was a term for a soldier who was nonexistent but whose name was in the roll. Falstaff had a number of shadows in the roll so that he could collect their pay and keep it.

Shadow stepped back.

“Thomas Wart!” Justice Shallow called.

“Where’s he?” Falstaff asked.

Wart stepped forward and said, “Here, sir.”

“Is your name Wart?” Falstaff asked.

“Yes, sir.”

“You are a very ragged Wart,” Falstaff said.

This was true. Wart’s clothing consisted of rags pinned together.

“Shall I prick him down, Sir John?” Justice Shallow asked.

“It would be superfluous,” Falstaff said, “for his apparel is built upon his back and the whole frame stands upon pins. He is like a building that is held together by pins. He is already being pricked by the pins holding his clothing together, so let us prick him no more.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” Justice Shallow said. “You can do it, sir; you can do it. You can make a joke! I commend you well.”

Wart stepped back and Justice Shallow called, “Francis Feeble!”

Feeble stepped forward and said, "Here, sir."

"What trade are you in, Feeble?" Falstaff asked.

"I am a woman's tailor, sir."

"Shall I prick him, sir?" Justice Shallow said.

"You may," Falstaff said, "but if he had been a man's tailor, he would have pricked you with one or more of his pins."

He asked Feeble, "Will you make as many holes in an enemy's front line as you have made in a woman's petticoat?"

"I will do my best, sir," Feeble said. "You can have no more than that."

"Well said, good woman's tailor!" Falstaff replied. "Well said, courageous Feeble! You will be as valiant as the wrathful dove or most stout-hearted mouse."

He added, "Prick the woman's tailor well, Master Shallow; prick his name deeply, Master Shallow."

"I wish Wart might have been drafted, sir," Feeble said.

"I wish that you were a man's tailor," Falstaff said, "so that you might mend his clothing and make him fit to go. I cannot draft Wart as a private because he is the leader of so many thousands — of lice. Let that answer be enough for you, most forcible Feeble."

"It shall suffice, sir," Feeble said, stepping back.

"I am bound to you, reverend Feeble," Falstaff said.

He asked Justice Shallow, "Who is next?"

"Peter Bullcalf from the village green!" Justice Shallow called.

“Yes, let’s see Bullcalf,” Falstaff said.

Bullcalf, who was a strong young man, stepped forward and said, “Here, sir.”

“By God, here is a likely fellow!” Falstaff said. “Come, prick Bullcalf until he roars again.”

Bull calves were known for bellowing, and when a bull was pricked in a bullfight, it would bellow.

Bullcalf, who did not want to go to war, said, “Oh, Lord! My good Captain —”

“What, are you roaring before you have been pricked?” Falstaff said.

“Oh, Lord, sir! I am a diseased man.”

“What disease do you have?” Falstaff asked.

“A very bad cold, sir, a cough, sir, which I caught as I rang the bells to celebrate the anniversary of King Henry IV’s coronation day, sir.”

“Come, you shall go to the wars in an invalid’s gown,” Falstaff said. “We will take away your cold with us, and I will leave orders for my friends to ring the bells for you.”

Unhappy, Bullcalf stepped back.

Falstaff asked Justice Shallow, “Is this everybody?”

“To give you a choice of the best men, here are two more than the number you must draft,” Justice Shallow said. “You must draft four soldiers from here, sir, and you have seen everybody. Therefore, please go in and have dinner with me.”

“I will go drink with you,” Falstaff said, “but I cannot stay for dinner. I am truly glad to see you, Master Shallow.”

“Oh, Sir John, do you remember when we lay all night in the windmill in Saint George’s field?” Justice Shallow asked. He was remembering the wild times of his youth again: drinking, staying up all night, and whoring.

“No more of that, good Master Shallow, no more of that,” Falstaff said. He still did the things that Justice Shallow had given up decades ago.

“Ha! It was a merry night,” Justice Shallow said. “And is Jane Nightwork still alive?”

Since her last name was “Nightwork,” no one needs to guess at Jane’s occupation.

“She is still alive, Master Shallow.”

“She could never stand me.”

“Never, never,” Falstaff agreed. “She would always say she could not stand Master Shallow.”

“By the Mass, I could anger her to the heart,” Justice Shallow said. “She was then a fine-looking woman. Does she hold her own well?”

“She is old, old, Master Shallow.”

“She must be old now,” Justice Shallow said. “She cannot choose but be old; it is certain that she’s old. She had her son, Robin Nightwork, by old Nightwork before I came to Clement’s Inn.”

“That’s fifty-five years ago,” Justice Silence said.

“Ha, cousin Silence,” Justice Shallow said. “I wish that you had seen the things that this knight and I have seen! Ha, Sir John, isn’t that the truth!”

“We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow,” Falstaff replied.

“That we have, that we have, that we have,” Justice Shallow said. “Truly, Sir John, we have. Our motto was ‘Hem, boys! Clear your throat, and down the hatch!’ Come, let’s go to dinner; come, let’s go to dinner. Jesus, the days that we have seen! Come, come.”

Falstaff and the two justices departed.

Bullcalf saw a chance to get out of military service. He said, “Good Master Corporate Bardolph, be my friend, and take these four Harry ten shillings in French crowns. They are worth one pound. Truly, sir, I had rather be hanged, sir, than go to war, and yet, for my own part, sir, I do not care; but rather, because I am unwilling, and, for my own part, I have a desire to stay with my friends; else, sir, I did not care, for my own part, so much.”

Of course, he cared greatly — he did NOT want to go to war. However, he did not want to confess to cowardice.

“I see,” Bardolph said. “Stand over there.”

Moldy was especially worried about fighting in the army. He said to Bardolph, “And, good master Corporal Captain, for my old wife’s sake, be my friend. She has nobody to do anything about her when I am gone; and she is old, and cannot help herself: You shall have forty shillings, sir. They are worth two pounds.”

“I see,” Bardolph said. “Stand over there.”

Feeble witnessed what was happening. An honorable man, he said, “Truly, I do not wish to avoid my military service through dishonest means. A man can die but once, and we owe God a debt that can be paid only with our death. I will not act dishonorably. If it is my destiny to die in battle, so be it; if it is not my destiny to die in battle, so be it. No man is too good to serve his Prince. So let me die in battle or not die in battle. A man who dies this year owes no death the

following year.”

“Well said,” Bardolph replied. “You are a good man.”

This did not mean that Bardolph would not accept the bribes of Bullcalf and Moldy.

“Truly, I will do nothing dishonorable,” Feeble declared.

Falstaff and the two justices returned.

“Come, sir, which men shall I have?” Falstaff said.

“Whichever four you want,” Justice Shallow replied.

Bardolph said to Falstaff, “Sir, may I have a word with you.” He whispered, “I have been offered three pounds not to draft Moldy and Bullcalf.”

“I see,” Falstaff said. “Good!”

“Come, Sir John, which four will you have?” Justice Shallow said.

“You choose for me,” Falstaff said.

Justice Shallow chose the men that most men would agree would make the best soldiers: “Moldy, Bullcalf, Feeble, and Shadow.”

“Moldy and Bullcalf!” Falstaff said. “As for you, Moldy, old man, stay at home until you are past service: and as for you, Bullcalf, youngster, grow until you come of age to be of service. I want neither of you.”

Falstaff was saying — falsely — that Moldy was too old for military service and that Bullcalf was too young for military service.

“Sir John, Sir John, do not yourself wrong,” Justice Shallow objected. “They are the men likeliest to be good soldiers, and I want you to have the best men you can get.”

“Will you tell me, Master Shallow, how to choose a man for military service?” Falstaff said. “Care I for the body, the strength, the height, the bulk, and the overall physical bigness of a man! Give me the spirit, Master Shallow.

“Here’s Wart; you see what a ragged appearance he has, and yet he shall charge at you and discharge a light musket with the motion of a pewterer’s hammer that rapidly taps-taps-taps metal into shape. He will run to the front, fire his weapon, and then run back to reload faster than a man gulps the contents of a brewer’s beer bucket.

“And look at this half-faced fellow, Shadow. He is so thin and narrow that you can’t even see his face unless he is standing sideways. Give me this man: He presents no target to the enemy. The enemy may as accurately aim at the edge of a penknife. And as for a retreat; how swiftly will this Feeble the woman’s tailor run away!

“Oh, give me the spare, thin men, and spare me the great ones.

“Put a light musket into Wart’s hand, Bardolph.”

Bardolph gave Wart a light musket and then ordered, “March! Hut! Hut! Hut!”

“Come, show me what you can do with your light musket,” Falstaff said. “Good. Very good. Go on. Very good. Exceedingly good. Oh, give me always a little, lean, old, dried-up, bald gunman. Well done, truly, Wart; you are a good scab. Wait, here’s sixpence for you.”

Falstaff gave Wart a coin.

“He has not mastered marching,” Justice Shallow said. “He is not marching correctly. I remember at Mile-end Green, when I was staying at Clement’s Inn — I was then playing Sir Dagonet, King Arthur’s fool, in the exhibition of

archery dedicated to Arthur. I remember a nimble little fellow who really knew how to handle a musket. He would do this, and this, and this —”

Justice Shallow demonstrated the various maneuvers.

“— and he would say ‘rah, tah, tah,’ imitating the loading of the musket, and then he would run in front of the front line, and then he would say ‘boom,’ imitating the discharge of the musket, and he would retreat and then come forward again. I shall never again see such a fellow.”

“These fellows I have drafted will also do well, Master Shallow,” Falstaff said. “May God keep you well, Master Silence. I will not talk your ear off. Fare you well, both of you gentlemen. I thank you. I must travel a dozen miles tonight.”

He then said, “Bardolph, give the soldiers uniforms.”

“Sir John, may the Lord bless you!” Justice Shallow said. “May God prosper your affairs! May God send us peace! At your return, visit our house; let our old acquaintance be renewed; perhaps I will go with you to the court.”

“I swear to God that I wish you would, Master Shallow,” Falstaff said.

“Good,” Justice Shallow said. “I was not kidding. May God keep you well.”

“Fare you well, gentle gentlemen,” Falstaff said.

The two justices departed.

“Forward, Bardolph,” Falstaff ordered, “lead the men away.”

Everyone left except Falstaff, who said to himself, “When I return, I will take advantage of and cheat these justices. I can see the bottom of Justice Shallow — I can see through

him. Lord, Lord, how susceptible we old men are to this vice of lying! This same starved, skinny justice has done nothing but prate to me about the wildness of his youth, and the feats he once did about Turnbull Street, a favorite gathering place for thieves and whores, and every third word he has spoken is a lie that he pays to the hearer quicker than a Turk pays tribute to the Sultan — who punished those who paid tribute late by killing them.

“I remember Shallow when he was at Clement’s Inn. He looked like a man who had been carved from a piece of cheese left after supper. When he was naked, he was, for all the world, like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife. He was so skinny and wretched that his dimensions to any imperfect sight were invincible: He would have been good in a battle because no one with less than perfect sight could see and shoot him — to an enemy soldier with bad eyesight, he would be invisible. He was the very embodiment of famine; yet he was as lecherous as a monkey, and the whores called him a mandrake because it is supposed to be an aphrodisiac.

“He always adopted fashionable things just after they went out of fashion, and he sang tunes to the worn-out whores that he had heard the wagon drivers whistle, and he would swear that they were his own fanciful musical compositions and serenades. And now this Vice’s dagger — this skinny piece of wood — has become a squire, and talks as familiarly of John of Gaunt as if he had been sworn brother to him; and I’ll be sworn that he never saw John of Gaunt except once at a jousting tournament, where John of Gaunt hit him on the head for crowding among the Marshal’s men. I saw it, and I told John of Gaunt that he had beaten his own name because you could have thrust Shallow and all his apparel into a long, skinny eel-skin. The case for a long, skinny treble oboe — the smallest oboe — was a mansion for Justice Shallow, it was an entire court, and

now he owns land and cattle. Well, I will seek his company, if I return, and I won't forgive myself if I don't make him a philosopher's two stones to me. I intend to make him a source of profit for myself — as profitable as if I had the philosopher's stone that will turn base metal into gold and the philosopher's stone — or *elixir vitae*, aka elixir of life — that will keep a man forever young.

“If a young and small fish can be a bait — a temptation and a food — for the old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature why I may not snap at him. The great fish eat the small. Time will tell, and I have nothing more to say.”

CHAPTER 4 (2 Henry IV)

— 4.1 —

At the rebel camp in Gaultree Forest in Yorkshire, the Archbishop of York, Mowbray, Lord Hastings, and others were meeting in an open area.

The Archbishop of York asked, “What is this forest called?”

Hastings replied, “It is Gaultree Forest, if it shall please your grace.”

“Let us stand here, my lords,” the Archbishop of York said, “and send out scouts to learn the numbers of our enemies.”

“We have sent them out already,” Hastings said.

“That is well done,” the Archbishop of York said. “My friends and brethren in these great affairs, I must tell you that I have received letters recently from Northumberland. This is their cold intent, tenor, and substance: He says that he wishes that he could be here with such an army as someone of his rank and position ought to have, but he could not raise such an army, and therefore he has gone to Scotland to increase his power, and he concludes with hearty prayers that you and your armies may survive the hazard and fearful meeting of the armies that oppose them.”

“Thus do the hopes we have in him touch bottom like a ship and dash themselves to pieces,” Hastings said. “We will receive no reinforcements from Northumberland.”

A messenger arrived and Hastings asked, “What news do you bring?”

“West of this forest, scarcely a mile away, in well-ordered formation marches the enemy,” the messenger said. “And,

by the ground they hide, I judge their number to be approximately thirty thousand.”

“That is exactly the number of opposing soldiers that we thought the opposing army would have,” Mowbray said. “Let us move on and face them in the field.”

Seeing someone from the enemy approaching, the Archbishop of York asked, “Who is the leader in full military regalia coming toward us?”

Mowbray replied, “I think it is the Lord of Westmoreland.”

Westmoreland rode up to them and said, “Health and fair greetings from our general: Prince John.”

“Speak in peace, Lord of Westmoreland,” the Archbishop of York said. “What do you have to say to us?”

“My lord,” Westmoreland replied, “I chiefly address my speech to you. If rebellion came like it truly is, in base and abject routs, led on by bloody youth, trimmed with rags, and escorted by Rage, and approved by boys and beggars — I say, if damned rebellion were to so appear in its true, native, and most proper shape, you, reverend father, and these noble lords would not be here to dress the ugly form of base and bloody insurrection with your fair honors. You are lending dignity to undignified rebellion. You, Lord Archbishop, whose diocese is maintained by a civil peace, whose silver beard the hand of peace has touched, whose learning and good letters have been tutored by peace, whose white robes symbolize innocence, the dove and very blessed spirit of peace, why do you so badly translate yourself out of the speech of peace that bears such grace, transforming it to the harsh and boisterous tongue of war? Why are you transforming your books into graves, your ink into blood, your pens into lances, and your divine tongue into a trumpet and call to war?”

“Why do I do this?” the Archbishop of York said. “That is your question to me. Briefly, this is the answer: We are all diseased, and with our gluttonous and overindulgent and wanton hours we have brought ourselves into a burning fever, and we must bleed because of it. Our late sovereign, King Richard II, being infected with this disease, died.

“But, my most noble Lord of Westmoreland, I do not take on me here the role of a physician who makes men bleed, or do I as an enemy to peace troop here in the throngs of military men. Instead, I am making a show of fearful war in order to cure minds that are sick because of overindulgence and in order to purge the obstructions that begin to stop our very veins of life.

“Hear me more plainly. I have in equal and unbiased balance justly weighed what wrongs our arms may do against what wrongs we suffer, and I have found that our griefs are heavier than our offences. The rough torrent of occasion and the present rough circumstances have forced us away from the quiet we enjoyed. We have the summary of all our griefs written down so that we can reveal them at the proper time. Long ago, we offered this document to King Henry IV, but we were not allowed to see him and give him the document. We are denied access to the King by those men who have most done us wrong.

“The dangers of the days but newly gone, whose memory is written on the earth with still visible blood, and the bad events that happen every minute now, have made us put on this seemingly unbecoming armor.

“We do not wish to disrupt the peace or any part of it; instead, we wish to establish here a peace — one that is worthy of the name.”

Westmoreland replied, “When has your appeal ever been denied? How have you been oppressed by the King? What

lord has been ordered to harm you? What has been done to you that you should seal this lawless bloody book of forged rebellion with a divine seal and consecrate the bitter edge of rebellion?"

"I am here with the rebellion because of my brothers general and my brother born. My brothers general are the citizens in this commonwealth who suffer. They are my brothers because they are my fellow citizens. King Henry IV had my birth brother, Lord Scroop, executed, and that is my personal and particular reason for being involved with this rebellion. My brother died without even being allowed to receive the final sacrament."

"There is no need of any such redress — reparation and compensation — as you are demanding," Westmoreland said, "and if there were, the redress would not go to you."

Mowbray replied, "Why shouldn't the redress go to him in part because of the murder of his brother, and to us all who feel the bruises of these days and suffer the condition of these times that lay a heavy and unequal hand upon our honors? We have suffered wrongs."

"My good Lord Mowbray," Westmoreland said, "this is a time of war, and some things are necessary to do in times of war. Consider the times, and you shall say indeed that it is the times, and not the King, that are doing you injuries."

"Yet for your part, it does not appear to me that you have any inch of any ground — any reason — on which to build a grief against either King Henry IV or the times," Westmoreland said. "The estates of your father, the noble and very well remembered Duke of Norfolk, were taken from him, but haven't they been restored to you?"

Thomas Mowbray, the Duke of Norfolk, was a rival of Henry Bolingbrook, now King Henry IV. King Richard II had banished Thomas Mowbray, the Duke of Norfolk. His

son was also named Thomas Mowbray — he was the Thomas Mowbray who now was speaking.

Mowbray replied, “What thing, in honor, had my father lost that now needs to be revived and animated in me? King Richard II respected him, but because of circumstances was forced to banish him.

“At Coventry, Harry Bolingbroke and my father intended to fight a duel. They had mounted their horses and were eager to face each other. Their neighing coursers waited excitedly for the spurs that would order them to charge. The beavers of the dueling men’s helmets were down. Their eyes of fire sparked through sights of steel, and the loud trumpet blew that it was time for them to charge each other. Then, then, when there was nothing that could have stopped my father from attacking the breast of Bolingbroke, King Richard II threw down his staff of command and stopped the duel. His own life hung upon the staff he threw down. When he threw down his staff of command, at the same time he threw down his own life and all the lives of those who have died because of Bolingbroke’s indictments and wars. If the duel had been allowed to continue, my father would have killed Bolingbroke and there would be no King Henry IV.”

“Lord Mowbray, you don’t know what you are saying,” Westmoreland said. “Bolingbroke was then reputed to be the most valiant gentleman in England. Who knows on whom fortune would then have smiled? Who knows who would have won the duel? But if your father had been victor there, he would never have made it alive out of Coventry because everyone there hated him, and they gave all their prayers and love to Bolingbrook, whom they loved and blessed and graced more than they did King Richard II.

“But this is mere digression from my purpose in coming here. I have come here from Prince John, our general, to

learn your grievances and to tell you from his grace that he will give you audience; and if it should appear that your demands are just, they shall be met. Of course, he will not agree to any demands that make him think that you are enemies of the King.”

“But he has forced us to compel him to make this offer to us,” Mowbray said. “And he is making this offer from political considerations, not from any respect for us. This is a cold, calculated political maneuver.”

“Mowbray, you are presumptuous to think that,” Westmoreland said. “This offer comes from mercy, not from fear. Look! Our army is within our sight. Upon my honor, I swear that our army is much too confident to give a single thought to fear. Our army has many more men of military renown than yours, our men are better trained in the use of arms, our armor is at least as strong, our cause is the best. You should be thinking that we are making this offer because our heart is good, not because we are forced to make it.”

“Well, I say we shall admit no parley,” Mowbray said. “We will not have a conference with Prince John of Lancaster.”

“That is evidence that you are in the wrong,” Westmoreland said. “A rotten case abides no handling. A rotten container falls apart when it is touched, and a rotten cause falls apart when it is examined.”

Hastings asked, “Has Prince John full authority, as a plenipotentiary of his father, King Henry IV, to listen to our grievances and to come to a legal agreement with us?”

“Obviously, he does,” Westmoreland said. “The King made the Prince the general of this army. I am surprised that you would ask such a question.”

The Archbishop of York said, “Then take, my Lord of

Westmoreland, this document; it contains a list of our general grievances. If each of the several different grievances herein is redressed, and if all the members of our rebellion, both here and elsewhere, that strengthen and form a part of our rebellion, are given a true and substantial and legal pardon and immediate satisfaction of our requests, we will again return to our boundaries and will return to peace. We will no longer be like a flooding river but will instead return to within the peaceful banks of the river.”

“I will show Prince John, our general, this document,” Westmoreland said. “If you agree, lords, we can meet in the middle of the no-man’s-land in between our armies. Within sight of our armies, we can either make an agreement that ends in peace, if God is willing, or we can make an agreement to do battle against each other.”

“My lord, we will meet Prince John,” the Archbishop of York said.

Westmoreland departed, carrying the document.

Mowbray said, “I have a feeling in my heart that no conditions of our peace can stand. Even if we agree to a peace, there will be no peace.”

“Don’t think that,” Hastings said. “If we can make our peace with such large and absolute terms as we shall insist on, then our peace shall stand on ground as firm as rocky mountains.”

“Yes, but the King shall be suspicious of us. He will regard us in such a way that every supposed slight and every false accusation and every idle, petty, and frivolous fault shall remind the King of this rebellion. Even if we were as devoted to the King as martyrs, we shall be winnowed with so rough a wind that even our corn shall seem as light as chaff. He will hold us to a standard that no one can attain,

and he will not see the good things that we will do. He will see only bad even when we do good.”

“No, no, my lord,” the Archbishop of York said. “Note this; the King is weary of dainty and trifling grievances. He has learned that to end one danger by killing the offender results in reviving two greater dangers among those who are still alive. Killing one supposed enemy results in the creation of two real enemies. Therefore, King Henry IV will wipe the tablet clean and will forget anything that would bring to mind what has happened here. He knows very well that he cannot weed this land of just anyone whom he suspects of being an enemy. His foes are so enrooted with his friends that, when he plucks an enemy to remove him, he ends up hurting a friend. He is in the situation of a husband who has been so enraged that he wants to strike his wife. He raises his arm so that he can hit her, but she hold his infant up, and he stops his arm before it lashes out at her.”

“Besides,” Hastings said, “King Henry IV has wasted all his rods on recent offenders, and he now lacks the instruments of chastisement. He is like a fangless lion: He can threaten to hurt someone, but he cannot hurt anyone.”

“That is very true,” the Archbishop of York said. “And therefore be assured, my good Lord Marshal Mowbray, if we do now well make our atonement, our peace will be like a broken bone that has mended. It has grown stronger after being broken.”

“I hope that you are right,” Mowbray said. “I see that Westmoreland is returning now.”

Westmoreland arrived and said, “Prince John is near. Does it please you to meet him at an equal distance between our armies? Does it please you to meet him in no-man’s-land? If it does, Archbishop of York, move forward.”

“Go ahead of us and greet Prince John,” the Archbishop of York said. “Tell him that we are coming to meet him.”

— 4.2 —

In no-man’s-land, at an equal distance between the two armies, the two opposing sides met. On one side were the Archbishop of York, Hastings, Mowbray, and others; on the other side were Prince John of Lancaster, Westmoreland, and others.

“It is good to see you, Mowbray,” Prince John of Lancaster said. “Good day to you, gentle Archbishop of York, and also to you, Lord Hastings, and to all.

“My Lord Archbishop of York, you acted better and more honorably when your flock, assembled after hearing the church bell, encircled you to hear with reverence your exposition on the holy text: the Bible. You acted better then than you do now. You are now an iron man. You are encased in armor, and you are cheering a rout of rebels with the drum of your words. You are turning the word to sword and turning life to death.

“That man who sits within a monarch’s heart, and ripens in the sunshine of the King’s favor, why would he abuse the support of the King? What mischiefs might he open and set abroad in the shadow of such greatness!

“You, Archbishop of York, are doing that. Who has not heard it spoken how deeply learned you were within the books of God and how much you were in God’s favor? To us you were the Speaker in God’s celestial Parliament; we imagined that you spoke for God himself! To us you were the interpreter of God’s grace and the sanctities of Heaven, and you were the messenger who brought a Godly perspective to our dull imaginings.

“Who shall believe anything other than that you misuse the

reverence of your position as Archbishop and employ the appearance of Heavenly favor as you do dishonorable deeds, the way that a false and traitorous favorite misuses his Prince's name as he does dishonorable deeds?

“Under the counterfeited zeal of God, you have taken up the subjects of his deputy, my father, King Henry IV; against both the peace of Heaven and the peace of my father's Kingdom, you have made his subjects swarm up like angry bees in rebellion. You profess a false zeal for God, and you pretend that you are acting with God's approval and seal.”

“My good Prince John of Lancaster, I am not here against your father's peace,” the Archbishop of York said, “but, as I told Westmoreland, the mistempered times do, as everyone knows, crowd us and crush us and force us to do this abnormal act of rebellion in order to protect our safety.

“I sent your grace a document listing the detailed particulars of our grievances, a document that previously has been with scorn shoved from the court. As a result of that scornful action, this Hydra — this many-headed — son of war is born, whose dangerous eyes may well be charmed asleep if the King grants us our most just and right desires. If he does that, this mad rebellion will be cured, and his truly obedient subjects will once more bow tamely at the foot of his majesty.”

“If these wrongs are not righted,” Mowbray said, “we are ready to try our fortunes in battle to the last man.”

“And even if we here fall down,” Hastings said, “we have reinforcements to second our attempt. If they miscarry, their reinforcements shall second them. And so generation after generation of rebels shall be born, and heir from heir shall continue this rebellion as long as generations are born in England.”

“You are too shallow, Hastings, much too shallow, to sound the bottom of the after-times,” Prince John of Lancaster said. “You are unable to peer very far into the future.”

“Does it please your grace to answer these men directly,” Westmoreland asked, “and tell them whether you will make right their grievances?”

“I have read the articles in their document, and I will make right all their grievances,” Prince John of Lancaster said. “I swear here and now, by the honor of my blood, that my father’s purposes and actions have been misunderstood, and some of the people acting under his orders have misinterpreted his meaning and misused their authority.

“Archbishop of York, these grievances shall quickly be redressed — upon my soul, they shall. If this may please you, discharge your soldiers and allow them to return to their different counties, and we will do the same thing. Here in between the two opposing armies let us drink together as friend and embrace each other, so that all their eyes may carry home those tokens of our restored respect and amity.”

“I take your Princely word for these redresses,” the Archbishop of York said.

“I give it to you, and I will maintain my word,” Prince John of Lancaster said, “and now I will drink to your grace.”

Hastings said, “Go, Captain, and deliver to the rebel army this news of peace. Let them have their pay, and let them depart. I know it will well please them. Hurry, Captain.”

The Captain left to carry out his orders.

The Archbishop of York made a toast: “To you, my noble Lord of Westmoreland.”

“I pledge your grace,” Westmoreland replied, “and, if you knew what pains I have taken to breed this present peace, you would drink freely. But my respect for you shall show itself more openly hereafter.”

“I do not doubt you,” the Archbishop of York replied.

“I am glad to hear it,” Westmoreland replied.

Westmoreland proposed a toast: “Health to Mowbray.”

“You wish me health at a very good time,” Mowbray said, “for suddenly I feel ill.”

“When evil is coming, men are always merry,” the Archbishop of York said. “When men feel sad, it is a harbinger of good things.”

“Therefore be merry, Archbishop,” Westmoreland said, “since sudden sorrow serves to say this: ‘Some good thing will happen tomorrow.’”

“Believe me, I am very light in spirit,” the Archbishop of York said.

“That is a bad thing,” Mowbray said, “if you were right when you said, ‘When evil is coming, men are always merry.’”

They heard some shouting.

“The news of peace has been given to the soldiers,” Prince John of Lancaster said. “Listen to how they shout!”

“This noise would have been cheerful after a victory,” Mowbray said.

“A peace is of the nature of a conquest and a victory,” the Archbishop of York said. “For then both parties are nobly subdued, and neither party is the loser.”

“Go, my lord,” Prince John of Lancaster said, “and let our army be discharged, too.”

Westmoreland departed.

Prince John of Lancaster said to the Archbishop of York, “And, my good lord, if it pleases you, let our armies march by us so that we may see the men who would have fought each other in battle.”

The Archbishop of York said, “Go, good Lord Hastings, and, before they are dismissed, let them march by us.”

Hastings departed.

Prince John of Lancaster said, “I hope, lords, that we shall stay together in the same camp tonight.”

Westmoreland came back.

Prince John of Lancaster asked him, “Why is our army still here?”

“The leaders, because they have orders from you to stay here, will not leave until you personally order them to leave.”

“They know their orders and their duty,” Prince John of Lancaster said.

Hastings returned and said to the Archbishop of York, “My lord, our army has been dispersed. Like youthful steers who have been unyoked, they take their courses East, West, North, South. They are like students leaving school; each hurries toward his home and playground.”

“That is good news, my Lord Hastings,” Westmoreland said. “I now arrest you, traitor, for high treason. I also arrest you, Archbishop of York, and you, Lord Mowbray. I arrest both of you for high treason, which is punishable by death.”

“Is this proceeding just and honorable?” Mowbray asked.

“Is your rebellion just and honorable?” Westmoreland replied.

“Will you thus break your faith?” the Archbishop of York said to Prince John of Lancaster.

“I did not promise you a pardon,” Prince John of Lancaster said. “I promised you redress of these grievances that you complained about, and, by my honor, I will perform that redress with a most Christian care.

“But as for you, rebels, look to taste what is due to rebellion and such acts as yours.

“Most shallowly did you begin this rebellion. You foolishly brought your soldiers, and you foolishly sent them home.”

He ordered, “Strike up our drums, and pursue the scattered stragglers among the rebels. God, and not we, has safely fought today.

“Someone guard these traitors and take them to the block of death, which is treason’s true bed and yielder up of breath. There they shall be beheaded.”

— 4.3 —

Prince John of Lancaster’s soldiers were pursuing the rebels and killing or capturing as many of them as they could. Falstaff was one of the soldiers doing the pursuing.

Falstaff saw a rebel and asked, “What’s your name, sir? Please tell me your rank, and where you are from.”

“I am a knight, sir, and my name is Colevile of the Dale.”

A dale is a low, deep place — a valley.

“Well, then, Colevile is your name, a knight is your rank,

and your place is the dale,” Falstaff said. “Colevile shall still be your name, a traitor will be your rank, and your place will be in a dungeon. That is a low, deep place, and so you shall still be Colevile of the Dale.”

“Aren’t you Sir John Falstaff?” Colevile asked.

“I am as good a man as he, sir, whoever I am,” Falstaff replied. “Do you surrender, sir? Or shall I sweat as I fight you? If I sweat, my drops of sweat will be the drops that fall from the eyes of your friends as they mourn your death; therefore, rouse your fear and trembling, and do homage to me by kneeling before me.”

Colevile knelt and said, “I think that you are Sir John Falstaff, and therefore I surrender.”

Sir John Falstaff was thought to have killed Hotspur at Shrewsbury, and that had given him an undeserved reputation as a mighty warrior.

“I have a whole school — a large number — of tongues in this belly of mine,” Falstaff said, “and not a tongue of them all speaks any other word but my name. People look at my huge belly and immediately know my identity. If I had a belly of normal size, I would be the most energetic — but anonymous — fellow in Europe. My womb, my womb, my womb — my belly — undoes me.”

He looked up and said, “Here comes our general.”

Prince John of Lancaster, Westmoreland, and Sir John Blunt came over to Falstaff and Colevile.

Prince John of Lancaster said, “The time for urgency of action is past; let us no longer pursue the rebels. Call back our soldiers, good Westmoreland.”

Westmoreland left to carry out this order.

Prince John of Lancaster said, "Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while? When everything is over and done, then you show up. These tardy tricks of yours will, I swear by my life, result in your sometime or other breaking some gallows' back. You will be hung, and because you are so heavy, you will break the gallows."

"I am sorry, my lord, that you should think that way," Falstaff said. "I have never known yet when rebuke and threat were not the reward of valor. Do you think that I am a swallow, an arrow, or a bullet? Do you think that I can travel as quickly as a swallow, an arrow, or a bullet? Do I have, in my poor and old motion, the ability to cover ground as quickly as thought? I have speeded hither with the very quickest speed possible; I have exhausted more than one hundred and eighty horses traveling here from post to post, and here, stained by travel as I am, I have with my pure and immaculate valor captured Sir John Colevile of the Dale, a most furious knight and valorous enemy. Isn't that worthy of praise? He saw me, and he yielded. I may justly say, with the hook-nosed fellow of Rome, Julius Caesar, that 'I came, saw, and overcame.'"

"Your capturing him was more his doing than your own," Prince John of Lancaster said. He thought, *Sir John Colevile of the Dale surrendered to you instead of fighting you.*

"I don't know about that," Falstaff said. "Here he is, and here I give him to you, and I beg your grace, let this be recorded with the rest of this day's notable deeds. By the Lord, if it is not, I will have printed a ballad about my valor, with my own picture on the top of it, showing Colevile kissing my foot. If I am forced to do that, and if you do not all look like gilded counterfeits compared to me, and if I in the clear sky of fame do not outshine you as much as the full Moon outshines the cinders of the element,

aka the stars in the sky, which appear to be like the shiny heads of pins compared to the Moon, then do not believe the word of noble men. Therefore, let me have the credit that is rightfully mine, and let my just rewards mount high.”

“Yours is too heavy to mount,” Prince John of Lancaster said. He meant that Falstaff’s belly was too heavy for him to ascend or climb high.

“Let it shine, then,” Falstaff replied.

“Yours is too thick to shine,” Prince John of Lancaster said. He meant that Falstaff’s belly was too thick for light to shine through. Thick can also mean dense, and Prince John of Lancaster, who did not like Falstaff, was saying — falsely — that Falstaff’s intellect was too dense for his wit to shine.

“Let it do something, my good lord, that may do me good, and call it what you will,” Falstaff said.

Prince John of Lancaster asked the prisoner, “Is your name Colevile?”

“It is, my lord.”

“You are a famous rebel, Colevile.”

“And a famous and true subject took him,” Falstaff said.

“I am, my lord, like my superiors are who led me here,” Colevile said. “If they had been ruled by me and I had been their leader, you would not have won the day so easily. This victory would have cost you.”

“I do not know how your fellow rebels sold themselves,” Falstaff said, “but you, like a kind fellow, gave yourself away gratis — free — and I thank you for it.”

Westmoreland returned.

Prince John of Lancaster asked him, “Now, have you ordered that the pursuit of the rebels cease?”

“Our soldiers have retreated, and they have stopped pursuing the rebels.”

“We will send Colevile with his confederates to York for immediate execution,” Prince John of Lancaster said. “Blunt, lead him hence; and see that you guard him well.”

He added, “And now we will hurry home to the court, my lords. I hear that the King my father is very sick. Our good news shall go before us to his majesty.”

He said to Westmoreland, “You shall bear this good news to comfort my father, and we with sober and temperate speed will follow you.”

“My lord Prince John of Lancaster, please give me permission to go home through Gloucestershire,” Falstaff requested, “and, when you arrive at your father’s court, speak well of me in your report.”

“Fare you well, Falstaff,” Prince John said. “I, as Prince, shall speak better of you than you deserve.”

Everyone departed except Falstaff, who said to himself, “I wish that you had wit, Prince John of Lancaster. Wit is worth more than your Dukedom. Truly, this young sober-blooded boy does not like me, and no man can make him laugh, but that’s no marvel — he never drinks wine.

“None of these demure boys ever come to any good because weak beer, which very thoroughly cools their blood, and the many meals they make of fish cause them to fall into a kind of male green-sickness — the anemia that is usually suffered by young girls — and then when they marry, they give birth to girls, not boys. They are generally fools and cowards. Some of us would be fools and cowards,

too, except for the inflammation wrought by intoxication.

“A good sherry wine has a two-fold effect on its drinker. The first effect of your excellent sherry wine is that it ascends into the brain and gets rid of all the foolish and dull and curdled thoughts that inhabit it. Wine makes the brain quick in understanding, full of nimble fiery and delectable thoughts, which, delivered over to the tongue, which gives birth to the voice, becomes excellent wit.

“The second effect of your excellent sherry wine is the warming of the blood. Before intoxication, the blood is cold and settled, white and pale — the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice. But the sherry wine warms the blood and makes it move from the insides to the outermost parts. It brightens the face, which like a beacon gives warning to all the rest of this little Kingdom, man, to take up weapons and be ready to fight. The vital and not-so-vital spirits report to their Captain, the heart, which, great and puffed up with this retinue, does any deed of courage, and this valor and courage comes from sherry wine. Skill in the handling of weapons is nothing without wine because wine puts that knowledge of weapons to work. Learning by itself is like a hoard of gold guarded by a Devil — the gold cannot be used. But sherry wine sets the learning free and allows it to be used in action. The learning graduates and ceases to be theoretical knowledge and instead becomes practical knowledge.

“That is why Prince Hal is valiant. He naturally inherited cold blood from his father, but he has cultivated his cold blood, like one would cultivate lean, sterile, and bare land. He has manured, aka fertilized, husbanded, and tilled his cold blood with the excellent endeavor of drinking well a good quantity of fertile sherry wine, and by so doing, he has become very hot and valiant.

“If I had a thousand sons, the first human and secular

principle I would teach them would be to never drink weak beer and to instead addict themselves to sherry wine.”

Say what you will about Falstaff, his opinions were often interesting and contrary to conventional thinking.

Bardolph walked over to Falstaff, who asked him, “What is the news?”

Bardolph replied, “The army has been discharged, and all of the soldiers are gone.”

“Let them go,” Falstaff said. “I’ll travel home by way of Gloucestershire; there I will visit Master Robert Shallow, esquire. I have him already softening like wax between my finger and my thumb, and shortly I will seal with him some kind of agreement that will be advantageous to me.

“Let’s go.”

— 4.4 —

In the Jerusalem Chamber in the palace at Westminster, King Henry IV was meeting with two of his sons: Prince Thomas of Clarence and Prince Humphrey of Gloucester. Warwick and others were also present.

Using the royal plural, King Henry IV said, “Now, lords, if God gives a successful end to this civil war that bleeds at our doors, we will lead our youthful soldiers on to higher fields and draw no swords but those that will be sanctified in a Holy Crusade.

“Our navy is ready, our army has been collected, our deputies who will rule England in my absence have been well selected, and everything lies in accordance to our wish. However, we are lacking a little personal strength, and we must pause until these rebels, which are now afoot, come underneath the yoke of government.”

Warwick said, "We doubt not but your majesty shall soon enjoy the revival of your strength and the defeat of the rebels."

"Humphrey, my son of Gloucester," Henry IV said, "where is Prince Hal, your brother?"

Prince Humphrey of Gloucester replied, "I think he has gone to hunt, my lord, at Windsor."

"And who is accompanying him?"

"I do not know, my lord."

"Isn't his brother, Prince Thomas of Clarence, with him?"

"No, my good lord; Prince Thomas of Clarence is here."

Prince Thomas of Clarence asked, "What does my lord and father want?"

"Nothing but good to you, Prince Thomas of Clarence," Henry IV said. "How does it happen that you are not with Prince Hal, your brother? He loves you, and you are neglecting him, Thomas. You have a better place in his affection than all your brothers. He likes you better than his other brothers. Cherish this, my boy, and you may be able to do noble deeds of mediation, after I am dead, between his greatness — he will be King Henry V then — and your other brothers.

"Therefore, do not neglect him; do not do anything to blunt his love for you, nor lose the good advantage of his grace by seeming cold or careless of his will. Prince Hal is gracious, if he is respected. He has a tear with which to show pity, and he has a hand as open as day for giving charity. However, when he is incensed and angry, he is like flint, as changeable as winter and as sudden as icy squalls at dawn. His temper, therefore, must be well observed: Chide him for faults, and do it reverently, when you

perceive his blood inclined to mirth. But if he is moody, give him time and scope, until his passions, like a whale grounded on a beach, exhausts and kills itself by struggling to return to the sea. Learn this, Thomas, and you shall prove to be a shelter to your friends. You will be a hoop of gold to link and bind your brothers, so that the united vessel of their blood, even when confronted by the poisonous venom of rumor and criticism, as, no doubt, will happen, shall never be harmed, though the forces against their union are as strong as poisonous wolf's bane or rash and impetuous gunpowder."

"I shall watch out for him with all my care and love," Prince Thomas of Clarence said.

"Why aren't you at Windsor with him, Prince Thomas of Clarence?"

"He is not there today," Prince Thomas of Clarence said. "He dines in London."

"And who are his companions? Can you tell me that?"

"He is with Poin, and all his other usual companions."

"Weeds grow best in the richest soil," Henry IV said. "Prince Hal, the noble image of my youth, is run over with them; therefore, my grief stretches itself beyond the hour of my death. The blood weeps from my heart when I imagine the days of misrule and rotten times that you shall look upon when I am dead and sleeping with my ancestors. For when Prince Hal's headstrong riot has no curb, when rage and hot blood are his counselors, when means and opportunity and licentious manners meet together, with what wings shall his natural propensities fly towards the danger and downfall confronting him!"

"My gracious lord," Warwick said, "you misunderstand him. Prince Hal is studying his base companions the way

he would study a foreign language. To learn the language, it is necessary for him to look upon and learn even the most immodest words. Once he has learned those immodest words, he will then use them no further but will instead hate them. I hope that your highness realizes that Prince Hal will eventually cast off his gross companions the way that students cast off gross words. Their memory shall live on as a pattern or a measure by which he will judge the lives of others. By so doing, he will turn past evils to advantages.”

“Seldom do bees leave dead carrion that contains their honeycombs,” King Henry IV said. “Bees will sometimes make a hive and store honey in the carcass of a wild beast. Once they do that, they will seldom leave the honey. Prince Hal has found sweetness in the companionship of lowlifes, and it is unlikely that he will leave that sweetness when he becomes King.”

Westmoreland entered the room with news from Prince John of Lancaster.

King Henry IV asked, “Who is here? Westmoreland?”

“Health to my sovereign, and may new happiness be added to the good news that I am able to deliver to you!” Westmoreland said. “Your son Prince John kisses your grace’s hand. Mowbray, the Archbishop of York, Hastings, and all the other rebels are brought to the punishment of your law. There is not now a rebel’s sword unsheathed: Peace puts forth her olive branch everywhere. How this has happened is recounted in detail in this letter, which you may read at your leisure, your highness.”

“Oh, Westmoreland, you are a summer bird, which always at the latter end of winter sings to celebrate the increasing hours of daylight.”

Harcourt entered the room.

King Henry IV saw him and said, "Look, here's more news."

Harcourt said, "May Heaven keep your majesty safe from your enemies, and when they rise against you, may they fall as have those about whom I have come to tell you news! The Earl of Northumberland and the Lord Bardolph, who had a great army of English and of Scots, have been overthrown by the Sheriff of Yorkshire. You can read about the manner and true order of the battle in this letter, if you wish."

"Why should such good news make me sick?" Henry IV said. "Will fortune never come with both hands full? Instead, she writes her fair words always in the foulest letters! Good never comes only with good, for always some evil is mixed with it. Fortune either gives a person an appetite and no food; such is the case with the poor, who are healthy. Or else Fortune gives a person a feast but takes away their appetite; such is the case with the rich, who have abundance but do not enjoy it. I should rejoice now at this happy news; but instead my eyesight is now failing, and my brain is cloudy. Come here and help me! I am very ill!"

"Take care, your majesty!" Prince Humphrey of Gloucester said.

"Oh, my royal father!" Prince Thomas of Clarence said.

"My sovereign lord, cheer yourself up, look up," Westmoreland said.

The King fainted.

"Be patient, Princes," Warwick said. "You know that these fits are very common with his highness. Stand back and away from him. Give him air; he'll soon be well."

"No, no, he cannot long hold out against these pangs of

pain and illness,” Prince Thomas of Clarence said. “The incessant care and labor of his mind has worn the wall — the body — that should contain his life so thin that life looks through and will break out of his body.”

“The people frighten me,” Prince Humphrey of Gloucester said, “for they observe unfathered heirs and loathsome births of nature. They have witnessed children whose fathers are supernatural beings, and they have witnessed monstrous births of nature. The seasons have changed their characters; it is as if the year had found some months asleep and leaped over them.”

“The Thames River has thrice flooded with no ebb in between floods,” Clarence said, “and the old folk, time’s doting chronicles, say the Thames did so a little time before our great-grandfather King Edward III grew ill and died.”

“Speak lower, Princes,” Warwick said, “because the King is recovering.”

“This apoplexy will certainly be his end — his death,” Prince Humphrey of Gloucester whispered.

King Henry IV regained consciousness and said, “Please, lift me up, and carry me away from here into some other room. Do it quietly, please.”

— 4.5 —

King Henry IV lay in a bed in another room. With him were his sons Prince Thomas of Clarence and Prince Humphrey of Gloucester. Also with him were Warwick and some others.

“Let there be no noise made, my gentle friends,” King Henry IV said, “unless some kindly hand will whisper sleep-inducing music to my weary spirit. Let soft music play.”

“Call the musicians in the other room to come here,” Warwick said.

“Set my crown upon my pillow here,” Henry IV said.

“His eye is hollow, and his color is changing,” Prince Thomas of Clarence whispered. “He is growing pale.”

“Less noise, less noise!” Warwick said.

Prince Hal entered the far side of the room and asked, “Has anyone seen Prince Thomas of Clarence?”

Prince Thomas replied, “I am here, brother, and I am full of heaviness and sorrow.”

“What!” Prince Hal said. “Rain within doors, and none abroad! Your tears are raindrops that fall inside this palace. How is the King?”

“Exceedingly ill,” Prince Humphrey of Gloucester said.

“Has he heard the good news yet?” Prince Hal asked. “Tell it to him.”

“He altered much upon hearing it,” Prince Humphrey of Gloucester said. “Although it was good news, he fell ill.”

“If he is sick with joy, he’ll recover without medical attention,” Prince Hal said.

“Don’t make so much noise, my lords,” Warwick said. “Sweet Prince, speak low and softly. The King your father wants to sleep.”

“Let us withdraw into the other room,” Prince Thomas of Clarence said.

Warwick asked Prince Hal, “Will it please your grace to go along with us?”

“No; I will sit and watch here by the King,” Prince Hal

said.

Everyone departed, leaving Prince Hal alone with his father.

Prince Hal said to himself, “Why does the crown lie there upon my father’s pillow? The crown is so troublesome a bedfellow! Oh, polished perturbation! Oh, golden care! You keep the ports of slumber — the eyes — open wide throughout many a watchful night! Father, you are sleeping with the crown now, yet you do not sleep as soundly or half as deeply sweet as he whose head is covered with a homely nightcap as he snores throughout the watch of night. Oh, majesty! When you pinch your bearer, you sit like expensive armor worn in the heat of day; the armor grows hot and scalds the wearer as it keeps the wearer safe.

“By my father’s gates of breath — his lips and nose — there lies a downy feather that does not move. If my father were breathing, that light and weightless downy feather must necessarily move. My gracious lord! My father! This sleep is sound indeed; this is a sleep that has divorced and separated so many English Kings from this golden ring the crown.

“Your due from me is tears and heavy sorrows, and my nature, love, and filial tenderness shall, dear father, pay them plenteously to you.

“My due from you is this imperial crown, which as your first-born son and heir, I inherit.”

He put the crown on his head and said, “Lo, here it sits, and God shall guard it. Even if the world’s whole strength were gathered into one giant arm, that giant arm would not be able to take this inherited honor from me. You left this crown to me, and I will leave it to my son.”

Wearing the crown, Prince Hal went into another room.

King Henry IV was not dead yet; he had been breathing shallowly.

He woke up and called, “Warwick! Prince Humphrey of Gloucester! Prince Thomas of Clarence!”

The three men and others hurried into the room.

“Does the King call us?” Prince Thomas of Clarence asked.

“What does your majesty want?” Warwick asked. “How is your grace?”

“Why did you leave me here alone, my lords?” King Henry IV asked them.

“We left my brother Prince Hal here, my liege,” Prince Thomas of Clarence said. “He wanted to sit and watch by you.”

“The Prince of Wales!” Henry IV said. “Where is he? Let me see him. He is not here.”

“This door is open,” Warwick said. “He has gone this way.”

“He did not pass through the chamber where we stayed,” Prince Humphrey of Gloucester said.

“Where is the crown? Who took it from my pillow?”

“When we withdrew, my liege, we left it here,” Warwick replied.

“Prince Hal has taken it away from here,” Henry IV said. “Go, and seek him out. Is he so hasty to be King that he thinks that my sleep is my death? Find him, my Lord of Warwick; rebuke him and bring him here.”

Warwick left to carry out his errand.

King Henry IV said, “This act of his joins forces with my

disease, and it helps to end my life. See, sons, what things you are! How quickly nature falls into revolt when gold becomes her goal! A son ceases to love his father when the son begins to love gold. For this the foolish over-careful fathers have broken their sleep with thoughts, their brains with care, and their bones with industry. For this they have engrossed and piled up the rusty, tarnished, and morally corrupt heaps of strangely acquired gold. For this they have been thoughtful to instruct their sons in the arts and in martial exercises. When, like the bee, culling from every flower the virtuous sweets, our thighs packed with wax, our mouths filled with honey, we bring it to the hive, and, like the bees, we fathers are murdered for our pains. The gold and treasures that the father has gathered yield a bitter taste to him as he lies dying.”

Warwick entered the room.

Henry IV asked him, “Now, where is he who will not wait even until his friend sickness has killed me?”

“My lord, I found Prince Hal in the next room,” Warwick said, “washing with kindly tears his gentle cheeks, with such a demeanor steeped in great and deep sorrow that a tyrant, who never drank anything but blood, would, by beholding him, have washed his knife with gentle tears. Prince Hal is coming here.”

“But why did he take away the crown?” Henry IV asked.

Carrying the crown, Prince Hal entered the room.

King Henry IV said, “Look, here he comes. Come here to me, Harry.”

He said to the others in the room, “Depart from this chamber; leave us here alone.”

They left the room.

“I never thought to hear you speak again,” Prince Hal said.

“Your wish was father, Harry, to that thought.” Henry IV said. “I stay too long by you; I weary you. You think that I live too long. Do you so hunger for my empty throne that you need to give yourself my honors before your hour is ripe and you lawfully inherit them? Foolish youth! You seek the greatness that will overwhelm you. Wait only a little while. My cloud of dignity is held from falling with so weak a wind that it will quickly drop: My day is dim. My Earthly greatness is as insubstantial as a cloud and will quickly dissipate, just as my breath is shallow and will soon stop. You have stolen that — my crown — which after some few hours would be yours without offence; and at my death you have sealed up my expectation and confirmed what I expected. Your life has shown that you do not love me, and your action just now will have me die entirely sure that you do not love me.

“You are hiding a thousand daggers in your thoughts, which you have sharpened on your stony heart, to stab at half an hour of my life. What! Can you not wait for half an hour and allow me to die of natural causes? Then leave and dig my grave yourself and order the merry bells to ring to your ears that you are crowned, not that I am dead. Let all the tears that should bedew my hearse be drops of balm — consecrated oil that will anoint you when you are crowned King — to sanctify your head. Only mix me with forgotten dust — give to the worms my body that gave you life.

“Pluck down my officers, and break my decrees. For now a time has come to mock at law and order. Harry the Fifth is crowned. Up with you, vanity! Down with everything good, royal state! All you wise counselors, go away! And to the English court assemble now, from every region, apes of idleness and fools with every kind of vice! Now, neighboring countries, purge yourself of your scum. Do

you have a ruffian who swears, drinks to excess, dances wildly, revels throughout the night, robs, murders, and commits the oldest sins in the newest kind of ways? Be happy because that ruffian will trouble you no more; England shall double gild his treble guilt, and England shall give him office, honor, and might because the fifth Harry plucks from curbed license the muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog shall sink his teeth in every innocent, getting a taste of what shall be its prey.

“Oh, my poor Kingdom, sick with civil blows! Throughout my reign, my careful rule could not stop your riots. I tried my best to keep my Kingdom peaceful. What will my Kingdom do when riot is your caregiver? What will my Kingdom do when your King, who is supposed to be your caregiver, is himself a rioter? Oh, you will be a wilderness again; you will be peopled with wolves, your old inhabitants!”

“Oh, pardon me, my liege!” Prince Hal said. “Only my tears, the moist impediments that stopped my speech, kept me from stopping this heartfelt and deep rebuke before you with grief had spoken and I had heard the course of it so far.”

Prince Hal placed the crown on a pillow by his father, knelt, and said, “There is your crown; and may He who wears the crown immortally — God — long guard it as your crown, not mine.

“If I value the crown as anything more than as your honor and as your renown, let me no more from this kneeling position rise. My most inward true and duteous spirit teaches me to kneel and bow to you.

“May God be my witness that when I here came in and found no sign that your majesty was breathing, cold struck my heart! If I am lying, let me in my present wildness die

and never live to show the incredulous world the noble change that I have planned!

“Coming to look at you, and then thinking that you were dead, I was almost dead myself, my liege, to think that you were dead. I spoke to this crown as if it were sentient, and I thus upbraided it: ‘The worry that you cause has fed upon the body of my father; therefore, you — the best of gold — are actually the worst of gold. Other gold, less fine in carat, is more precious. Potions containing gold are good medicine. But you, gold most fine, most honored, and most renowned, have eaten the King who wears you.’ Thus, my most royal liege, accusing it, I put it on my head, to combat and fight with it, as with an enemy who had in front of me murdered my father — this is the battle faced by a true inheritor.

“But if wearing the crown did infect my blood with joy, or swell my thoughts to pride; if any rebel or vain spirit of mine did in the least welcome the crown’s power, then let God forever keep it from my head and make me as the poorest vassal is who with awe and terror kneels to it!”

“My son, God put it in your mind to take it from here,” King Henry IV said, “so that you could win the more your father’s love by pleading so wisely in excuse of your taking the crown!

“Come here, Harry, and sit by my bed, and hear, I think, the very last advice that I shall ever breathe.”

Prince Hal arose from his kneeling position and sat by his father.

Henry IV said, “God knows, my son, by what by-paths and indirect crooked ways I met and achieved this crown, and I myself know well how troublesome it has sat upon my head. To you it shall descend with better quiet, better reputation, and better right to its possession because all the

stain of the achievement of the crown goes with me into the earth. It seemed in me only as an honor snatched with boisterous and violent hands, and many living people kept reminding me that they had assisted me as I won the crown. These people eventually quarreled with me and rebelled and caused bloodshed, wounding the peace. You can see that I have with peril put down all these bold dangers and rebellions. All my reign has been like a play that is only about disagreements and rebellion and battles.

“Now my death changes the mood of people’s minds. I acquired the crown through deposing King Richard II, but you, Harry, will inherit the crown. That is how the people think that a crown ought to be acquired.

“However, although your claim to the crown is better than was my claim and has a firmer foundation, your claim is still not firm enough, since griefs are green and raw — the rebellion has only recently been put down. All my ‘friends,’ whom you must make your friends, have only recently had their stings and teeth taken out. By these friends’ pernicious actions, I was first advanced to the crown. I was afraid that these friends’ power could take the crown away from me. To prevent them from doing that, I cut them off and stopped their rebellion; and I had intended to lead many soldiers to the Holy Land in a crusade, lest their inactivity might make them look too closely at how I achieved the crown.

“Therefore, my Harry, make sure to keep giddy minds busy with foreign wars so that this warfare will wear away the memory of the former days. You do not want people to remember the deposition of King Richard II.

“I want to say more, but my lungs are so wasted that I do not have the strength to speak. How I came by the crown, may God forgive me, and may God grant that the crown will live with you in true peace!”

Prince Hal replied, “My gracious liege, you won the crown, wore it, kept it, and gave it to me; therefore, clear and plain and rightful must my possession be. I will rightfully maintain my possession of the crown with more than common care and pains against all the world.”

Prince John of Lancaster entered the room.

Henry IV said, “Look, here comes my son Prince John of Lancaster.”

“Health, peace, and happiness to my royal father!” Prince John of Lancaster said.

“You bring me happiness and peace, son John,” Henry IV said. “But health, unfortunately, with youthful wings has flown away from this bare withered trunk. Now that I have seen you, my worldly business has come to an end.”

He then asked, “Where is my Lord of Warwick?”

Prince Hal called, “My Lord of Warwick!”

Warwick and others entered the room.

“Does the room where I fainted have a particular name?” Henry IV asked Warwick.

“It is named Jerusalem, my noble lord.”

“Praise be to God!” Henry IV said. “There my life must end. It was prophesied to me many years ago that I should die nowhere but in Jerusalem, which vainly I supposed to be the Holy Land. Carry me to that chamber. There I’ll lie; in that Jerusalem shall Harry die.”

CHAPTER 5 (2 Henry IV)

— 5.1 —

Falstaff was visiting Justice Shallow in his house in Gloucestershire. With them were Falstaff's page and Bardolph.

Justice Shallow said to Falstaff, "I swear by cock and pie, sir, you shall not go away from here tonight. I want you to be my guest tonight."

He called for a servant to come to him: "Davy!"

"You must excuse me, Master Robert Shallow," Falstaff replied.

Justice Shallow would not take no for an answer: "I will not excuse you; you shall not be excused; excuses shall not be admitted; there is no excuse that shall serve to excuse you; you shall not be excused."

He moved to the door and shouted, "Davy!"

Davy entered the room and said, "Here I am, sir."

"Davy, Davy, Davy, Davy, let me see, Davy; let me see, Davy; let me see," Justice Shallow said. "Tell William the cook to come here. Sir John, you shall not be excused."

Davy wanted Justice Shallow to make some business decisions. He showed him some papers and said, "Those legal writs cannot be served. Also, sir, shall we sow the headland with wheat?"

The headland is the strip of land where the plow turns. It cannot be sown until the rest of the field is sown.

"Sow it with red wheat," Justice Shallow replied.

Red wheat is a variety of wheat that is sown later than other varieties of wheat.

Justice Shallow said, "About William the cook: Are there any young pigeons that can be cooked?"

"Yes, sir," Davy replied. "Here is the blacksmith's bill for shoeing horses and for the plow blades."

"Add the figures, double-check them, and pay the bill," Justice Shallow said.

He added, "Sir John, you shall not be excused."

Davy said, "Now, sir, a new chain for the bucket is needed. Also, sir, do you mean to dock William's wages for the wine he lost the other day at Hinckley Fair?"

"Yes, dock his wages," Justice Shallow said. "Davy, tell William to cook some pigeons, a couple of short-legged hens because hens with short legs have more meat, a joint of mutton, and some pretty little tiny delicacies."

"Will the man of war — the Captain — stay all night, sir?"

Davy was referring to Falstaff. A man of war is a large ship, and Falstaff is a large man.

"Yes, Davy," Justice Shallow said. "I will treat him well: A friend in the court is better than a penny in the purse."

He whispered, "Treat his men well, Davy; they are arrant good-for-nothings, and will backbite."

"They will backbite no worse than they are backbitten, sir," Davy whispered back, "because they have marvelously foul linen and lice bite their backs."

"Well jested, Davy," Justice Shallow said. "Now go about your business, Davy."

“Please, sir,” Davy said, “show favor to William Visor of Woncot in his lawsuit against Clement Perkes of the hill.”

“There are many complaints, Davy, against that William Visor,” Justice Shallow said. “That Visor is an arrant good-for-nothing — this I know.”

“I grant your worship that he is a good-for-nothing, sir,” Davy said, “but yet, God forbid, sir, that a good-for-nothing should not have some strings pulled at his friend’s request. An honest man, sir, is able to speak for himself when a good-for-nothing is not. I have served your worship truly, sir, this eight years; and if I cannot once or twice in a quarter support a good-for-nothing against an honest man, I have only a very little credit with your worship. The good-for-nothing is my honest friend, sir; therefore, I beg your worship, show him some favor.”

“I tell you that he shall suffer no wrong,” Justice Shallow replied. “Go about your business, Davy.”

Davy departed to do his duties.

“Where are you, Sir John?” Justice Shallow asked, looking around. Seeing Falstaff, he moved toward him and said to him, “Come, come, come, off with your boots.”

He added, “Give me your hand, Master Bardolph.”

He shook hands with Bardolph, who said, “I am glad to see your worship.”

“I thank you with all my heart, kind Master Bardolph,” Justice Shallow said. Then he said to the page, who was only a boy, “Welcome, my tall fellow.”

He added, “Come, Sir John.”

“I’ll follow you, good Master Robert Shallow,” Falstaff said.

He added, “Bardolph, look after our horses.”

Bardolph and the page left to look after the horses, leaving Falstaff alone.

Falstaff said to himself, “If I were sawed into lengths, I would make four dozen bearded hermits’ walking staffs — Justice Shallow is exactly the size of one such walking staff. It is a wonderful thing to see the close correspondence of his men’s spirits and his. By observing him, his servants learn how to act like foolish justices. By talking to his servants, he learns to act like a justice-like servant. Their spirits are so alike because of their close partnership that they act like so many wild geese that fly together in close formation. If I needed a favor from Master Shallow, I would court his servants by pretending to be friends with their master. If I needed a favor from his servants, I would curry favor with Master Shallow by flattering him by saying that no man could better command his servants.

“It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another. If you wish to be wise, seek the company of the wise. If you wish to be foolish, seek the company of the foolish. Men need to take heed of their company. As a man is, so is his company. I will get so much comedic material from observing this Shallow that I will keep Prince Harry continually laughing for the length of time that it takes six fashions to go out of fashion. That length of time is one year, which is the length of four terms held at the Inns of Court, or of two legal actions, and Prince Hal shall laugh without intermissions.

“A lie told with a slight oath that it is true and a jest told with a straight face will do much to cause laughter in a young fellow who has never had a backache! Prince Hal will laugh until his face wrinkles like a wet cloak that was carelessly rolled up into a ball and allowed to dry!”

Justice Shallow called, “Sir John!”

“I am coming, Master Shallow,” Falstaff called back. “I am coming, Master Shallow.”

— 5.2 —

Warwick and the Lord Chief Justice talked together in the palace at Westminster. The Lord Chief Justice expected trouble after the death of King Henry IV. Prince Hal would become King Henry V, and Prince Hal and the Lord Chief Justice had earlier had a serious disagreement. Prince Hal had wanted one of his lowlife friends to escape being punished for a crime, the Lord Chief Justice had refused to be less than just, Prince Hal had struck the Lord Chief Justice, and the Lord Chief Justice had ordered Prince Hal to be put in prison.

“How are you now, Lord Chief Justice?” Warwick asked. “Where are you going?”

“How is the King?” the Lord Chief Justice asked.

“Exceedingly well; his cares are now all ended.”

“He is not dead, I hope.”

“He has walked the way of nature, and in our human world he lives no more,” Warwick said. “Now he lives in another world.”

“I wish that his majesty had called me to go with him,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “The service that I truly and faithfully did for him during his life has left me open to many injuries.”

“Indeed I think that the young King — Henry V — does not like you.”

“I know that he does not, and I am preparing myself to meet the condition and temper of the times, which cannot

look more hideously upon me than I have imagined.”

Three of the Kings’ sons — Prince John of Lancaster, Prince Thomas of Clarence, and Prince Humphrey of Gloucester — entered the room. So did Westmoreland and some others.

“Here come the grieving sons of dead Harry,” Warwick said. “I wish that the living Harry — the new Henry V — had the character of the worst of these three gentlemen! How many nobles then should hold their places of respect instead of bowing down to people of vile character, the way that a honest ship is forced to lower its sails to pirates.”

“I am afraid that law and order will be overturned in our country!” the Lord Chief Justice said.

Prince John of Lancaster said, “Good morning, cousin Warwick, good morning.”

Prince Thomas of Clarence and Prince Humphrey of Gloucester said, “Good morning, cousin.”

Prince John of Lancaster said, “We meet like men who have forgotten how to speak.”

“We remember how to speak,” Warwick said, “but the topic of our conversation is much too sad and serious to allow for much talking.”

“Well, may peace be with him who has made us mourn,” Prince John of Lancaster said.

“May peace be with us, lest we mourn more than we do now!” the Lord Chief Justice said.

“My good Lord Chief Justice,” Prince Humphrey of Gloucester said, “you have lost a friend indeed, and I dare to swear that you are not borrowing that face that shows sorrow. I am sure that you feel real sorrow for my father’s

death.”

“Though no man knows what will happen to him as a result of having a new King,” Prince John of Lancaster said, “you have the most reason to expect to be badly treated. I am sorry about that; I wish that it were otherwise.”

“Well, you must now speak only good things about Sir John Falstaff,” Prince Thomas of Clarence said. “I know that this goes entirely against your character. You know Sir John’s many and great faults.”

“Sweet Princes, what I did, I honorably did,” the Lord Chief Justice said. “I was led by the impartial conduct of my soul. I will never beg for a ragged pardon that I know will not be granted to me. If the truth and my upright innocence fail me, I will go to the King my master who is dead, and tell him who has sent me after him.”

“Here comes the Prince,” Warwick said.

Prince Hal, who was very soon to be crowned King Henry V, entered the room with some of his attendants.

The Lord Chief Justice said, “Good morning, and may God save your majesty!”

Prince Hal, who knew that people were concerned about his future rule because he had been so wild as a young man, said, “This new and gorgeous garment, majesty, sits not so easily on me as you must think. Brothers, you mix your sadness about my father’s death with some fear about my future rule. This is the English, not the Turkish court; an Amurath is not succeeding another Amurath. Instead, a Harry is succeeding another Harry.”

Prince Hal was referring to cruel Turkish rulers. When Murad II, aka Amurath, had succeeded his father as Emperor of the Turks, he had all of his brothers killed so

that they could not challenge him for the throne. Mahomet III, who succeeded him, did the same to his brothers for the same reason.

Prince Hal said to the men, who were wearing black in mourning, "Yet be sad, good brothers, because, truly, it very well becomes you. Sorrow appears so royally in you that I will in deadly earnest put the fashion on and wear sorrow in my heart. Therefore, be sad and mourn, but be aware, good brothers, that the reason for your — and my — sadness and grief is one that is a joint burden laid upon us all. Do not be sad and grieve because I will be King. By Heaven, I assure you that I'll be your father and your brother, too. Let me bear your love, and I will also bear your cares. Yet weep because Harry is dead; and so will I. But another Harry — me — lives, and he shall convert those tears into hours of happiness. Each tear you shed now shall result in an hour of happiness later."

"We hope for no less from your majesty," the three Princes said.

"You all are looking strangely at me," Prince Hal said.

He then said to the Lord Chief Justice, "You are looking at me most strangely of all. You are, I think, convinced that I do not like you."

"I am convinced that if I am judged rightly," the Lord Chief Justice said, "your majesty has no just cause to hate me."

"No!" Prince Hal said. "How might a Prince of my great hopes of ascending the throne forget the great indignities that you laid upon me? What! You berated, rebuked, and roughly sent to prison the immediate heir of the King of England! Is this easy to forget? May this be washed in Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in the afterlife, and forgotten? Do you expect me to wash myself in Lethe and forget that you ever did these things to me?"

“When I did those things,” the Lord Chief Justice said, “I used the authority given to me by your father. I was the representative of the King. The image of his power lay then in me, and I had his authority to administer his law. While I was busy working for the commonwealth, your highness was pleased to forget my position, and the majesty and power of law and justice — the image of the King whom I represented. You struck me on my head — my very seat of judgment. Therefore, you were an offender to your father — by offending me, his representative, you offended your father. Therefore, I boldly used my authority and my power to commit you to prison.

“If you regard my deed as ill, then I hope that you, who will now wear the crown, will be happy to have a son who will regard your decrees as worthless, who will pluck down justice from your bench that should inspire awe, who will trip the course of law and blunt the sword that guards the peace and safety of your person. Nay, more, I hope that you, who will now wear the crown, will be happy to have a son who will spurn your most royal image and mock your workings in a second body. I hope that you, who will now wear the crown, will be happy to have a son who mocks you and mocks your representative, both of whom are responsible for bringing justice to your Kingdom.

“Pretend that you are now the father and imagine that you have a son. Hear your own son greatly profane your dignity. See your most important laws greatly slighted. Behold yourself being so disdained by a son. And then imagine me taking your part and using the power that you have invested in me to quietly silence and correct your son. Carefully think about this, and then pronounce a sentence against me. And, in your position as King, tell me what I have done that misbecame my place, my person, or my liege’s sovereignty. Tell me, in your position as King, what I have done wrong.”

“You are right, Lord Chief Justice,” Prince Hal said, “and you weigh this matter well. You have carefully thought about what is right for you to do. Therefore, continue to bear the balance and the sword of justice. And I wish that your honors may increase, until you live to see a son of mine offend you and then obey you, as I did. I want you to treat my son as you treated me. If you do that, I shall live to speak my father’s words: ‘Happy am I, who have a man so bold, who dares give justice to my own son; and I am not less happy in having a son who would deliver up his greatness into the hands of justice.’ My father wanted a son who would obey the laws despite his being King. You sent me to prison. Because you did what was right and just, I commit into your hand the sword — unstained by any perversion of justice — that you have been bearing. I do this with this proviso: that you continue to act with the same bold, just, and impartial spirit that you have used to give the younger, wilder me the justice I deserved. Here is my hand.”

They shook hands.

Prince Hal continued, “You shall be like a father to my youth. My voice shall say the words that you whisper in my ear, and I will stoop and make myself humble and act in accordance with your well-practiced wise directions.”

He then said to his brothers, “And, all you Princes, believe me, please. My father has gone wildly and excitedly into his grave, because in his tomb lie my violent and wild desires. My ignoble desires have been buried with my father’s body. But my father’s serious spirit lives on in me. I will use that serious spirit to mock the expectation of the world, to frustrate prophecies and to raze out rotten opinion, which has judged me according to the wildness I showed in my youth. Everyone expects me to be a wild and bad King who does not respect justice, but I will show the

world that those people are wrong. The tide of blood in me has proudly flowed in vanity until now. Now it turns and ebbs back to the sea, where it shall mingle with the mighty ocean and flow henceforth in formal majesty.

“Now we will call our high court of Parliament, and we will choose such limbs of noble counsel, that the great body of our state — England — will rank among the best-governed nations. I want England to be prepared for war, or peace, or both at once; I want them to be things acquainted and familiar to us so that we will know how to deal well with them. In my government, you, Lord Chief Justice, will have a foremost hand.

“Once our coronation has been done, we will summon, as I previously mentioned, all the members of our Parliament, and, if God endorses my good intentions, no Prince nor peer shall have just cause to say, ‘May God shorten Harry’s happy life by even one day!’”

— 5.3 —

In Justice Shallow’s orchard in Gloucestershire were Falstaff, Justice Shallow, Justice Silence, Davy, Bardolph, and the page. They had eaten the evening meal, and now Justice Shallow wanted his guests to talk together and eat snacks in his orchard.

Justice Shallow said to Falstaff, “No, you must and shall see my orchard, where, in an arbor, we will eat a last year’s pippin of my own grafting, with a dish of delicacies made with caraway seeds, and so forth.”

Last year’s pippins were apples that were eaten after they had been stored for a year.

He added, “Come, cousin Silence, and after we eat and drink, we will go to bed and sleep.”

“By God,” Falstaff said, “you have here a good and rich dwelling.”

“It is poor, poor, poor,” Justice Shallow replied. “We are beggars all, beggars all, Sir John. But at least we have good air. Spread the tablecloth, Davy; spread it out.”

Davy put the tablecloth on the table and started setting out utensils and glasses and dishes of food.

“Well done, Davy,” Justice Shallow said.

“This Davy serves you well,” Falstaff said. “He is your serving-man and your steward.”

“He is a good servant, a good servant, a very good servant, Sir John,” Justice Shallow said. “By the Mass, I have drunk too much wine at supper. Davy is a good servant. Now sit down; now sit down. Come, Justice Silence.”

Justice Silence sang, “Do nothing but eat and enjoy ourselves.

“And praise God for the merry year;

“When flesh is cheap and females dear,

“And lusty lads roam here and there

“So merrily,

“And all the while so merrily.”

“There’s a merry heart!” Falstaff said. “Good Master Silence, I’ll drink to you and wish you health soon.”

“Give Master Bardolph some wine, Davy,” Justice Shallow said.

“Sweet sir, sit,” Davy said. “I’ll be with you soon. Most sweet sir, sit.”

Davy said to Falstaff's page, who was with Bardolph, "Master page, good master page, sit. *Proface!* What you want in meat, we'll have in drink. What you lack in food, we will make up in drink. You must endure it; what is in the heart is everything. Good wishes count for much."

Davy exited to get more refreshments.

Proface comes from the Italian *Buon pro vi faccia*, which means, "May it do you good."

"Be merry, Master Bardolph; and, my little soldier page there, be merry," Justice Shallow said.

Justice Silence sang, "Be merry, be merry, my wife has everything.

"For women are shrews, both short and tall.

"It is merry in hall when beards wag all,

"And welcome merry Shrove-tide.

"Be merry, be merry."

Shrove-tide is a time of merry-making before the beginning of Lent, during which many Christians practice self-denial.

Falstaff said to Justice Shallow, "I did not think Master Silence had been a man of this mettle. I did not think that he was a merry-maker."

Justice Silence heard him and said, "Who, I? I have been merry twice and once before now. This is the fourth time in my life that I have made merry."

Davy put some apples on the table and said to Bardolph, "There's a dish of leather-coats for you."

The apples were russet apples, whose rough skins resembled leather.

Davy was treating Bardolph well — very well.

“Davy!” Justice Shallow said.

“Your worship!” Davy replied. “I’ll be with you right away.”

He asked Bardolph, “A cup of wine, sir?”

Justice Silence sang, “A cup of wine that’s brisk and fine.

“And drink unto thee, leman mine;

“And a merry heart lives long-a.”

A leman is a sweetheart.

“Well done, Master Silence,” Falstaff said.

Justice Silence sang, “And we shall be merry,

“Now comes in the sweetest part of the night.”

“Health and long life to you, Master Silence,” Falstaff said in a toast.

Justice Silence sang, “Fill the cup, and let it come;

“I’ll pledge you a mile to the bottom.”

In the song, Judge Silence pledged to drink a toast in its entirety even if the cup of wine was so deep that it was a mile to its bottom.

“Honest Bardolph, you are welcome,” Justice Shallow said.

“If you want anything, and you will not call for it, then do without because all you have to do is ask for it.”

He added, “Welcome, page, my little tiny thief — and welcome indeed, too. I’ll drink to Master Bardolph, and to all the gallants — the Spanish *caballeros* — about London.”

“I hope to see London once before I die,” Davy said.

“If I might see you there, Davy —” Bardolph began.

Justice Shallow interrupted, “By the Mass, you’ll empty a goblet containing a quart of wine together, won’t you! Won’t you, Master Bardolph?”

“Yes, sir, we will share a pottle-pot,” Bardolph said.

Bardolph had doubled the quantity that he and Davy would drink. A pottle-pot held two quarts of wine.

“By God’s eyelids, I thank you,” Justice Shallow said. “The rascal Davy will stick by you, I can assure you that. He will not drop out when you drink; he is true bred and true blue.”

“And I’ll stick by him, sir,” Bardolph replied.

“Why, spoken like a King,” Justice Shallow said. “Lack for nothing; be merry.”

They heard knocking.

“See who is at the door!” Justice Shallow said. “Who is knocking?”

Davy exited.

Seeing Justice Silence drinking, Falstaff said to him, “Why, now you have done me right.”

Justice Silence sang, “Do me right,

“And dub me knight: Samingo.”

Samingo was Monsieur Mingo, a character in a French drinking song. *Mingo* is Latin for “I urinate.”

Justice Silence asked, “Isn’t that right?”

Falstaff replied, “That’s right.”

“Is that so?” Justice Silence said. “Well, then, say an old man can do something.”

Davy returned and said to Justice Shallow, “If it please your worship, a man named Pistol has come from the court with news.”

“From the court!” Falstaff said. “Let him come in.”

Pistol walked into the orchard.

“How are you, Pistol?” Falstaff said.

“Sir John, may God save you!” Pistol replied.

“What wind blew you here, Pistol?” Falstaff said.

“Not the ill wind that blows no man to good,” Pistol said. “Sweet knight, you are now one of the greatest men in this realm.”

Justice Silence, who understood “greatest” to mean “fattest,” said, “By Mother Mary, I think he is, except for the good Puff of Barson.”

“Puff!” Pistol shouted, “Puff in your teeth, you most forsworn and base coward!”

He added, “Sir John, I am your Pistol and your friend, and helter-skelter have I rode to you, and tidings do I bring and lucky joys and golden times and happy news of value.”

“Please, tell me your news as if you were an ordinary man of this world and not a hero in a play,” Falstaff said.

Pistol continued to use extravagant language: “A *foutre* for the world and worldlings base! I speak of Africa and golden joys.”

“*Foutre*” was French for “f**k.”

Imitating Pistol’s extravagant language, Falstaff said, “Oh,

base Ass-syrian knight, what is your news? Let King Cophetua know the truth thereof.”

Cophetua was a King who married a beggar; a popular song told this tale.

Justice Silence sang, “And let Robin Hood, Will Scarlet, and Friar John know the truth.”

Pistol shouted, “Shall dunghill curs confront the Helicons? And shall good news be baffled? Then, Pistol, lay your head in Furies’ lap.”

As usual, Pistol’s knowledge of mythology was somewhat muddled.

The Muses resided on Mount Helicon; Pistol thought that “Helicons” was an alternate name for the Muses. Most people would not think of laying their head on the lap of the Furies, who were terrifying goddesses of vengeance.

“Honest gentleman, I do not know your social status,” Justice Shallow said.

“Why then, lament therefore,” Pistol said.

“Pardon me, sir,” Justice Shallow said. “If, sir, you come with news from the court, I take it that there are only two things you can do. You can either tell your news, or you can not tell your news. I have, sir, under the King, a position of some authority.”

“Under which King, Besonian?” Pistol shouted. “Speak, or die.”

By “Besonian,” Pistol meant the Italian “*bisogno*” or “*bisognoso*,” a beggar with no redeeming features, either physical or mental.

“Under King Harry,” Justice Shallow replied.

“Harry the Fourth? Or the Fifth?”

“Harry the Fourth.”

“A *foutre* for your office!” Pistol shouted at Justice Shallow.

Now that King Henry IV was dead, Justice Shallow might lose his position of Justice of the Peace.

Pistol said, “Sir John, your tender lambkin — Prince Hal — now is King! Harry the Fifth’s the man! I speak the truth: When Pistol lies, do this” — he made an obscene gesture — “and fig me, like the bragging Spaniard.”

The fig of Spain was an obscene gesture in which the thumb was thrust between the index and the middle finger.

“What! Is the old King dead?” Falstaff asked.

“He is as dead as a nail in a door,” Pistol replied. “The things I speak are true.”

Falstaff’s dream had come true. King Henry IV was dead. His mind flooded with thoughts about what was to follow that death. His companion, Prince Hal, would become King Henry V. With such a powerful friend, Falstaff could run wild, breaking every law and looting the royal treasury.

He shouted, “Let’s go, Bardolph! Saddle my horse!”

He added, “Master Robert Shallow, choose whatever office you want in England — it will be yours. Pistol, I will double-charge you with dignities. I intend to reward all my friends by giving them power and prestige.”

“Oh, joyful day!” Bardolph said. “I would not take a knighthood for my future fortune!”

“See! I do bring good news!” Pistol said.

Meanwhile in London, Prince Hal was mourning the death of his father.

Having drunk too much wine, Justice Silence had fallen asleep.

“Carry Master Silence to bed,” Falstaff ordered. “Master Shallow, my Lord Shallow — be whatever you want to be; take whatever title you want; I am Fortune’s steward and will provide — put on your boots! We’ll ride all night! Oh, sweet Pistol! Saddle the horses, Bardolph!”

Bardolph left to get everything ready for them to ride all night back to London.

Falstaff said, “Come, Pistol, tell me more, and think about what you want me to give to you. Put on your boots, Master Shallow. I know that the young King wants to see me. Let us take any man’s horses; the laws of England are at my commandment.”

Falstaff wanted to take any man’s horses. He meant that he wanted to press them in the King’s service and avoid paying money for them. His belief that “the laws of England are at my commandment” was shocking because no one, not even the Prince of Wales or the King, ought to be above the law.

Falstaff shouted, “Blessed are they who have been my friends, and woe to the Lord Chief Justice!”

Pistol shouted, “Let vile vultures seize on his lungs also!”

Pistol was willing for the Lord Chief Justice to suffer torments such as Prometheus of antiquity had suffered. Prometheus had given human beings fire and the knowledge to control it. As punishment for Prometheus’ good deed to Humankind, Zeus, the Greek King of the gods, chained him and sent two vultures each day to eat his

liver.

Pistol said, “Where is the life that late I led?’ say they. Why, here it is; welcome these pleasant days!”

— 5.4 —

On a street in London, some Beadles — officers of the law who handled and punished petty offences — had arrested Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet, who were not happy about being arrested.

“No, you arrant good-for-nothing,” Mistress Quickly shouted at a Beadle. “I wish to God that I would die, so that I might have you hanged for causing my death. You have dislocated my shoulder!”

The first Beadle said, “The Constables have delivered her — Doll Tearsheet — over to me; and she shall be whipped soon enough, I promise her. She will get a bellyful of whipping. There has been a man or two lately killed about her.”

Apparently, he meant that two men had been fighting over Doll Tearsheet, and one man had killed the other. Also apparently, the murder had taken place in Mistress Quickly’s tavern. Whipping was a common punishment for prostitutes.

“Nut-hook, nut-hook, you lie!” Doll Tearsheet said.

A nut-hook was a slang term for a Beadle. Nut-hooks were used to hook the branches of a nut tree and pull them down so that the nuts could be harvested. Nut-hooks caught the branches, and Beadles caught petty criminals.

Doll Tearsheet continued to shout: “Come on! I will tell you what, you damned sallow-faced rascal, if the child I am pregnant with miscarries, you will wish that you had hit your own mother instead of harassing me, you paper-faced

villain!”

“Oh, Lord,” Mistress Quickly said, “I wish that Sir John were here! He would make this a bloody day for somebody.”

Mistress Quickly thought that Falstaff would be a powerful man in England now Prince Hal was King. So did Falstaff.

Mistress Quickly added, “But I pray to God that the fruit of her womb does miscarry!”

The first Beadle replied, “If it does miscarry, you shall have a dozen cushions again; you have only eleven now.”

The Beadles — and Mistress Quickly — knew that Doll Tearsheet was not pregnant. She had stuffed a cushion under her dress in order to appear pregnant. She was hoping for better treatment and a lesser punishment from the Beadles.

The first Beadle added, “Come, I order you both to go with me; for the man is dead that you and Pistol beat in your midst.”

“I’ll tell you what, you thin man in a censer,” Doll Tearsheet shouted, “I will have you soundly beaten for this — you blue-bottle rogue, you filthy famished correctioner. If you are not beaten, I’ll forswear skirts.”

The first Beadle was a very thin man. By “thin man in a censer,” Doll Tearsheet was referring to a figure engraved on a perfuming pan. By “blue-bottle rogue,” she meant that the first Beadle was a rogue wearing a blue coat — police officers wore blue. A “correctioner” was an officer in charge of whipping prostitutes.

“Come, come, you she-knight-errant, come,” the Beadle ordered.

Doll Tearsheet was a female night-errant. She committed sins at night.

“Oh, God, that right should thus overcome might!” Mistress Quickly mourned.

She frequently erred in her speech; she meant to bewail might overcoming right. However, her statement really did have some degree of accuracy — right was winning.

Mistress Quickly added, “Well, of sufferance comes ease. Suffering builds character.”

“Come, you rogue, come,” Doll Tearsheet said to the first Beadle. “Take me to a justice.”

“Yes, come, you starved bloodhound,” Mistress Quickly added.

“You are death! You are bones!” Doll Tearsheet said to the first Beadle.

Mistress Quickly added, “You are a skeleton!”

“Come, you thin thing,” Doll Tearsheet said. “Come, you rascal.”

“Very well,” the first Beadle said, and he led them to a Justice of the Peace.

— 5.5 —

In a public street near Westminster Abbey, two men were strewing rushes, plants that were usually used as floor coverings, on the street. King Henry V was being crowned, and he would be traveling on this street soon.

The first man said, “More rushes, more rushes.”

The second man said, “The trumpets have sounded twice.”

The first man said, “It will be two o’clock before they come

from the coronation. Hurry! Hurry!”

They left, and Falstaff, Justice Shallow, Pistol, Bardolph, and the page arrived.

Falstaff said, “Stand here by me, Master Robert Shallow; I will make the King show favor to you. I will look him directly in the face as he goes by. Watch the facial expression he will give to me.”

Falstaff expected a good reception from the King; however, he did not plan to show the King the respect that was due to the King. Citizens on the street were expected to bow their heads respectfully as the King went by. Falstaff believed that he need not do that. He expected the new King — the former Prince Hal — to allow him to do whatever he wanted to do. Falstaff wanted wealth and honor for himself and his friends, and he wanted to punish the Lord Chief Justice.

“God bless your lungs, good knight,” Pistol said. He expected Falstaff to shout to the King so that the King would see him.

“Come here, Pistol,” Falstaff said. “Stand behind me.”

He then said to Justice Shallow, “Oh, if only I had had time to have ordered new clothing to be made for myself in honor of the King, I would have spent the thousand pounds I borrowed from you. But it does not matter; the travel-stained clothing I am wearing shows how eager I was to see the new King. It implies the zeal I had to see him.”

“That is true,” Justice Shallow said.

“It shows my earnestness of affection and how much I love him —” Falstaff said.

“That is true,” Justice Shallow said.

“My devotion —” Falstaff said.

“That is true, true, true,” Justice Shallow said.

“It shows that I rode day and night,” Falstaff said, “and it shows that I did not think, remember, or have enough patience to pause and change into clean clothing —” Falstaff said.

“That is best, no doubt,” Justice Shallow said.

“So here I stand stained with travel, and sweating with desire to see him,” Falstaff said. “It shows that I am thinking of nothing else, I am putting all other affairs aside, as if there were nothing else to be done except to see him.”

Pistol said, “It is *semper idem*, for *obsque hoc nihil est*; it is all in every part.”

Pistol knew a little Latin. *Semper idem* means “always the same.” By *obsque* Pistol meant *absque*; *absque hoc nihil est* means “apart from this, there is nothing.”

“That is true, indeed,” Justice Shallow said.

“My knight, I will inflame your noble liver and make you rage,” Pistol said. “I will tell you something that will make you angry. Your Doll Tearsheet, who is the Helen of Troy of your noble thoughts, is suffering base imprisonment in a pestilential prison. She was haled thither by a most working-class and dirty hand. Rouse up revenge from ebon den — dark Hell — with fell and dangerous Alecto’s snake, because your Doll Tearsheet is in jail. Pistol speaks nothing but the truth.”

Alecto was one of the Furies, goddesses of vengeance. Her hair was snakes.

“I will deliver her,” Falstaff said confidently. “I will make sure that she is set free.”

Trumpets sounded; the new King — Henry V — was coming.

“There roared the sea, and trumpet-clangor sounds,” Pistol said.

King Henry V and several other men, including the Chief Lord Justice, arrived.

Falstaff and Pistol did not behave the way that the King’s loyal subjects ought to behave. They should have bowed their heads respectfully; instead, they looked at and shouted at the King as if they were in a bar carousing together.

“God save your grace, King Hal!” Falstaff shouted. “My royal Hal!”

“The Heavens guard and keep you, most royal imp of fame!” Pistol shouted.

“God save you, my sweet boy!” Falstaff said.

King Henry V knew that he had to reject Falstaff; otherwise, Falstaff would flout law and order and would rob the royal treasury. However, he was not looking forward to it and preferred to do it in private. He hoped that the Lord Chief Justice could take care of the situation for now.

King Henry V said, “My Lord Chief Justice, speak to that vain and foolish man and make him behave properly.”

The Lord Chief Justice said to Falstaff, “Have you lost your wits? Don’t you know to whom you are speaking?”

Falstaff shoved the Lord Chief Justice aside and shouted at Henry V, “My King! My Jove! I speak to you, my heart!”

This was the moment that King Henry V had to choose between the rule of law and the no rule of disorder. Who would be his chief counselor? Would it be the Lord Chief

Justice, who would advise him well and obey the laws of England and do what was best for England? Or would it be Falstaff, who would advise him ill and disobey the laws of England and do what was best for Falstaff? Falstaff was forcing the King to make this decision on a public street with many witnesses.

King Henry V looked at Falstaff and said, “I know thee not, old man. Fall to your knees and pray. How ill white hairs become a fool and jester! I have long dreamed of such a kind of man as you — very swelled by eating to excess, very old, and very profane. But, now that I am awake, I despise my dream. Henceforward, make your body less in size, and work to strengthen your virtue. Stop gormandizing; know that the grave gapes for you three times wider than for other men.”

Like Falstaff, King Henry V knew the Bible. When he said, “*I know thee not*,” he was referencing Matthew 25:1-13. These were words the Lord spoke to the foolish virgins.

Falstaff opened his mouth to speak, but Henry V cut him off: “Reply not to me with a fool-born jest. You were born a fool, and only fools can bear your jests. Presume not that I am the thing I was; for God knows, and soon the world will perceive, that I have turned away and rejected my former self. So will I turn away and reject those who kept me company.

“When you hear that I am as I was used to be, approach me, and you shall be what you used to be — the tutor and the feeder of my riotous behavior. Until then, I banish you, on pain of death, as I have done the rest of my misleaders. Do not come as close to our royal person as ten miles — if you disobey this command, you will die.

“I will allow you to receive a pension so that you can pay for the necessities of life; that way, lack of means will not

force you to do evil. And, when and if we hear that you have reformed yourselves, we will, according to your strengths and qualities, give you advancement.”

King Henry V said to the Lord Chief Justice, “It is your task, my lord, to see that what I just said is carried out. Let’s go.”

King Henry V, the Lord Chief Justice, and the King’s attendants exited.

Falstaff said, “Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds.”

“Yes, you do,” Justice Shallow said, “and I beg you to let me have it so that I can take it home with me.”

“That can hardly be, Master Shallow,” said Falstaff, who had not yet spent the money. “Do not grieve at this; I shall be sent for in private to go to the King. Look, he must seem to reject me in public; he will treat me differently in private. Do not be afraid that I will not use my influence to get advancements for you; I will yet be the man who shall make you a great man.”

Justice Shallow joked, “I cannot see how you can make me a great man, unless you should give me your jacket and stuff it with straw. I beg you, good Sir John, let me have five hundred of my thousand pounds.”

Say what you will about Falstaff, he was not the kind of man to whom you ought to lend money — or allow to advise you how to run a country.

Ignoring the request, Falstaff said, “Sir, I will be as good as my word. This that you heard was only a color — a pretense.”

Justice Shallow joked, “A color that I fear you will die in, Sir John. You will die with a hangman’s collar — a noose

— around your neck.”

Justice Shallow had actually made a double pun. “Die” also meant “dye” — Falstaff would die in a hangman’s collar while wearing a dyed color.

“Fear no colors,” Falstaff punned back. “Colors” are the flags of the enemy, and so Falstaff was saying, “Fear no enemy.”

He added, “Come with me and let us go to dinner. Come, Lieutenant Pistol; come, Bardolph. I shall be sent for soon, at night.”

Falstaff had verbally given Ancient, aka Ensign, Pistol a promotion to Lieutenant; he was still hopeful of being a great man in England with the patronage of King Henry V.

Prince John of Lancaster, the Lord Chief Justice, and several officers of the law came over to Falstaff and the others. King Henry V was thinking ahead. He knew that Falstaff would still try to be his advisor, and he wanted to make it very clear to Falstaff that that was not going to happen. Or perhaps it was the Lord Chief Justice or Prince John of Lancaster who was thinking ahead.

The Lord Chief Justice ordered the law officers, “Arrest and take Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet Prison and detain him there. Take all his company along with him.”

“My lord, my lord —” Falstaff started to say.

The Lord Chief Justice cut him off: “I cannot speak to you now. I will hear your case soon.”

He said to the law officers, “Take them away.”

Pistol said one of his mottos: “*Si fortune me tormenta, spero contenta.* [If fortune torments me, hope comforts me.]”

The law officers took Falstaff and his companions to prison, leaving behind Prince John of Lancaster and the Lord Chief Justice.

Prince John of Lancaster said, "I like this fair proceeding of the King's. He intends that his former companions shall all be very well provided for, but he has banished all of them until their conversations appear more wise and modest to the world."

"They are definitely banished," the Lord Chief Justice said.

"The King has called his Parliament, my lord," Prince John of Lancaster said.

"Yes, he has."

"I will lay odds that, before the end of this year, we will bear our swords that have been used in civil wars and our native fire as far as France. I heard a bird so sing, whose music, I think, pleased the King.

"Come, shall we go?"

They went to the Parliament.

EPILOGUE (2 Henry IV)

Note: In the Epilogue, a person would appear after a play was over and speak to the audience, usually to ask for applause, but sometimes to convey information. This epilogue contains three paragraphs, but probably never would all three paragraphs be spoken together. A particular performance of *2 Henry IV* would have an epilogue of one or two of the paragraphs below, but probably never all three. Sometimes, a dance performance would follow the end of a play.

Paragraph #1: Possibly Spoken by the Playwright:

“First I will tell you what my fear is, then I will bow to you with courtesy, and last I will make my speech. My fear is your displeasure and your dislike of this play; my courtesy is my duty to you; and the purpose of my speech is to beg your pardons. If you look for a good speech now, you undo me because what I have to say is of my own making; and what indeed I should say will, I fear, prove my own marring. But to the purpose, and so to the venture. As you very well know, I was lately here on stage at the end of a play that displeased the audience, and I asked for your forgiveness for it and I promised you a better play. I meant indeed to repay you with this play, which, if it is like a business venture that goes badly, I will break my promise and go bankrupt, and you, my gentle creditors, will lose what I promised you. Here I promised you that I would be, and here I commit my body to your mercies. Forgive me some of my debt and I will pay you some of what I owe you and, as most debtors do, I will promise you infinitely and over and over to pay back the rest of what I owe you someday. I now kneel down before you to pray for the Queen.”

Paragraph #2: Spoken by a Dancer:

“If my tongue cannot entreat you to acquit me, will you command me to use my legs? Yet that would be only a light payment, to lightly dance out of your debt. But a good conscience will make any possible satisfaction, and so would I. All the gentlewomen here have forgiven me: if the gentlemen will not forgive me, then the gentlemen do not agree with the gentlewomen, which has never been seen before in such an assembly.”

Paragraph #3: Spoken by a Dancer:

“One word more, I beg you. If you are not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story in another play, *Henry V*, with Sir John Falstaff in it, and make you merry with fair Katharine of France. In France, for all I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless he is already killed with your hard opinions. Oldcastle died a martyr, and Falstaff is not Oldcastle. My tongue is weary; when my legs are weary, too, I will bid you good night.”

Chapter XVII: HENRY V

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Henry V*)

On the Side of the English

KING HENRY THE FIFTH (1387-1422).

DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, Brother to the King.

DUKE OF BEDFORD, Brother to the King.

DUKE OF EXETER, Uncle to the King.

DUKE OF YORK, Cousin to the King.

EARL OF SALISBURY.

EARL OF WESTMORELAND, Cousin by marriage to the King, and Brother-in-Law to the Duke of Exeter.

EARL OF WARWICK.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

BISHOP OF ELY.

RICHARD, EARL OF CAMBRIDGE, conspirator against King Henry V.

HENRY, LORD SCROOP OF MASHAM, conspirator against King Henry V.

SIR THOMAS GREY OF NORTHUMBERLAND, conspirator against King Henry V.

SIR THOMAS ERPINGHAM, loyal to King Henry V.

GOWER, an English Captain.

FLUELLEN, a Welsh Captain.

MACMORRIS, an Irish Captain.

JAMY, a Scottish Captain.

JOHN BATES, Soldier in King Henry V's army.

ALEXANDER COURT, Soldier in King Henry V's army.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS, Soldier in King Henry V's army.

PISTOL, NYM, BARDOLPH, Soldiers in King Henry V's army, and former friends of Prince Hal.

Boy.

A Herald.

On the Side of the French

CHARLES THE SIXTH, King of France.

ISABEL, Queen of France.

LEWIS, the Dauphin.

KATHERINE, Daughter to Charles and Isabel.

ALICE, Lady attending on the Princess Katherine.

DUKES OF BURGUNDY, ORLEANS, and BOURBON.

The CONSTABLE OF FRANCE, the chief military officer of France.

RAMBURES and GRANDPRÉ, French Lords.

MONTJOY, a French Herald.

Governor of Harfleur.

Ambassadors to the King of England.

Other Characters

Hostess of the Boar's Head Tavern, formerly Mistress Nell Quickly, and now married to Pistol.

Chorus, consisting of one male.

Lords, Ladies, Officers, French and English Soldiers,
Citizens, Messengers, and Attendants.

Nota Bene

Scene: England and France.

Time: 1414-1420.

Religion: Catholic. The Protestant Reformation does not start until 1517, when Martin Luther's "95 Theses" become public. In 1534 the Church of England separated from the Roman Catholic Church because of a dispute over the annulment of the marriage of King Henry VIII to Catherine of Aragon. Pope Clement VII excommunicated King Henry VIII.

It is a good idea to remember this quotation by L.P. Hartley: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there."

PROLOGUE (*Henry V*)

Imagine that the year is 1599, and a single male character takes the stage in a round theater in England. This character is known as the Chorus, and he will introduce the play the way a single male character known as the Prologue would, and he will also appear at the beginnings of Acts 2-5 to comment on the action of the play and the way that he hopes the audience will react to it; he will also appear as the Epilogue at the end of the play.

The Chorus strides onto the stage and says, “I wish that I could be inspired by a Muse of fire. Of the four elements — fire, water, air, and earth — that people of my time think make up all that exists, fire is the element that rises highest. Anyone who wishes to tell the story that is told in this play must be mightily inspired and capable of the best poetic creation.

“I also wish that this small stage were an entire Kingdom, and I wish that the actors were Princes, and the members of the audience were Kings who would watch this majestic scene!

“If my wishes would become reality, then the warlike Harry — King Henry V of England — would be like himself. He would be like the real Harry as Harry really existed and he would take on himself the bearing of Mars, the Roman god of war. At Harry’s heels would appear famine, swords, and fire — the instruments of war — that would be tied to a single leash held in Harry’s hand. These three instruments of war would crouch like hounds waiting for Harry’s command to go into action.

“But forgive us, all you gentlemen and gentlewomen. We on stage here are not spirits of the great and mighty dead who have been raised out of their graves. We have not been

raised from the graves; we are dull and uninspired actors — and a playwright — who have dared to portray great men and great events on this platform that is called a stage. Can this small stage hold the vast battlefields of France? Can we cram within this wooden O — this round theater made out of wood — the actual helmets that frightened the air at Agincourt, where in 1415 King Henry V defeated the French although he and his soldiers were vastly outnumbered?

“Please pardon us for our presumption! A zero is a curved figure of arithmetic. A zero is naught, but if you add it to the weakest position of a number — the far right — it can turn the number 100,000 into the number 1,000,000! We actors are also naught, but while we are on stage acting as great people doing great acts, let us affect your imaginations so that you visualize the scene as it ought to be seen.

“Imagine that within the surroundings of the walls of this theater are now confined two mighty Monarchies — the English and the French Kingdoms — who challenge each other. They have high, soaring, and close-to-each-other fronts that the perilous narrow ocean — the English Channel — keeps apart: The English cliffs of Dover and the French cliffs of Calais challenge each other.

“Use your imaginations to improve on and mend our imperfections. Thousands of soldiers fought in the war; a few actors will ‘fight’ on this stage. Use your imagination to take one ‘fighting’ actor and turn that single actor into a thousand fighting soldiers who fight a huge and dangerous battle in front of you.

“When we actors talk about horses, imagine that you see them stamping on the soil and leaving their hoofprints behind them.

“We need your imaginations to properly equip our Kings, to move them from country to country and battlefield to battlefield, and place to place, and to jump over years so that the events of 1414-1420 can take place on this stage in only a couple of hours that can easily be measured by a two-hour hourglass.

“I, the Chorus, will help you to leap over the years — I will, occasionally, let you know when years have passed.

“But now, let me, like a Prologue, ask you humbly for your humble patience. Please listen to this play with gentle courtesy, for hearing and seeing are both important, and please judge this play with kindness.”

CHAPTER 1 (Henry V)

— 1.1 —

In an antechamber in King Henry V's palace — the Palace of Westminster in London — the Archbishop of Canterbury said to the Bishop of Ely, "My lord, I'll tell you something important: that same bill is now being proposed that in 1410 — the eleventh year of the reign of our last King, Henry IV, was likely to have been passed, and indeed it would have been passed except that the violent and unruly times turned people's attention to other, more urgent matters."

"But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?" the Bishop of Ely asked.

"We must think about how to resist this bill," the Archbishop of Canterbury replied. "If it passes against our wishes, we — the Church — lose more than half of our possessions. This bill, if passed into law, would strip away all the temporal and secular lands that devout men in their wills have given to the Church. These lands are valuable. The people who would strip these lands away from us believe that the lands' value would pay for, to the King's honor, fifteen Earls and fifteen hundred Knights, and also six thousand and two hundred good esquires; in addition, their value would maintain a hundred well-supplied almshouses to support lazars — the word comes from Lazarus the beggar and refers to chronically ill people who cannot work — and weak old people who cannot work with their bodies. Also, these lands' value would add a thousand pounds annually to the treasury of the King. All of that wealth would be taken from the Church, which is exempt from paying taxes on its lands and wealth."

"If our lands and wealth were a cup filled with wine, this

bill would drink deep,” the Bishop of Ely said.

“This bill would drink all the wine from the cup,” the Archbishop of Canterbury exaggerated.

“How can we prevent this bill from passing and becoming law?”

“The King is full of grace and fair regard,” the Archbishop of Canterbury said. “He has Christian goodness, and he is respected.”

“He is a true lover of the Holy Church.”

“He is a good man, but his behavior when he was youthful was undisciplined and reckless and showed no promise of future excellence,” the Archbishop of Canterbury said. “At that time, he was commonly known by common men as Prince Hal. However, when the breath left the body of his father, King Henry IV, immediately Prince Hal’s wildness, subdued by him, seemed to die and leave his body. As soon as Prince Hal’s father the King died, spiritual contemplation and careful thought and awareness of his position came to the Prince. This spiritual contemplation, like an angel, came to the Prince and whipped the offending Adam out of him. Adam committed the first sin, and sin now departed from Prince Hal’s body. With sin gone, his body was like a paradise, one that could envelop and contain celestial spirits. It was like an angel took possession of the body of the person who then became King Henry V.

“Never has such a scholar so suddenly been made; Prince Hal immediately changed from a dissolute youth to a sober and serious King — one with a knowledge of theology. Never has reformation come in such a flood; the rush of flowing water scrubbed away Prince Hal’s faults. The thoroughness of the cleaning process was like that of Hercules cleaning the Augean stables. King Augeas had

over a thousand cattle, and his stables had not been cleaned for over 30 years. Hercules cleaned the stables in a single day by diverting the course of a river so that it flowed through the stables and washed away the manure.

“Prince Hal had been filled with willfulness and with unworthy desires that he repeatedly satisfied. Never so quickly has Hydra-headed willfulness departed as it departed from the body of this King Henry V. The Hydra was a nine-headed serpent-like sea monster. Each time one head was cut off, two more heads sprung up in its place. Hercules was able to kill the Hydra with the help of his nephew Iolaus, who used a fire-torch to cauterize the stump left behind each time a head was cut off. Unworthy desires are like the heads of the Hydra. Each time a person gives in to one unworthy desire, two more unworthy desires spring up. King Henry V was able to kill each unworthy desire the way that Hercules killed the heads of the Hydra.”

“We are blessed in the change,” the Bishop of Ely said.

“Listen to King Henry V discuss matters of divinity, and you will admire his thoughts,” the Archbishop of Canterbury said. “You will even have an inward wish that the King would be made a prelate — a bishop or holder of some other high ecclesiastical office. Listen to him discuss the affairs of state, and you would say that he has long been making a deep study of government. Listen to him discuss warfare, and you shall hear a discourse that is so well spoken that it is like music. Ask him about any judicial argument involving politics, and he will know the pros and the cons and the intricacies. Even if the argument is like the Gordian knot — a knot so intricate that people thought that it was impossible to untie — King Henry V will untie that knot as easily as he unties the knot of his garter that keeps his stocking up. Alexander the Great ‘untied’ the Gordian knot by cutting it in two with his sword, but King Henry V

is the superior of Alexander the Great. When King Henry V unties the Gordian knot of a political controversy, the air, which is free to go wherever it pleases, is still. The ears of men are filled with quiet wonder as they closely listen to his sweet and honeyed sentences.

“Practical life experience is more important than theory — he could not speak so wisely about these matters unless he applied such wisdom to his own life. We must wonder where King Henry V acquired such wisdom. After all, he filled his youth with inclinations toward foolish behavior. As a youth, he enjoyed companions who were uneducated and ignorant, without manners, and frivolous. He filled his hours with riotous revels, banquets, and entertainments. No one ever saw him engage in study, retire from company, and enjoy privacy so that he could reflect upon important matters. No, Prince Hal was always in public and in crowds of the common people.”

“Perhaps he is like the fruit of strawberry plants,” the Bishop of Ely said. “Our culture believes that most plants are affected by the plants of other species that grow near them. Therefore, we do not allow onions and garlic to grow near most fruit bushes. However, such plants as onions and garlic do not negatively affect strawberry bushes. Strawberry bushes grow underneath the nettle, and their wholesome strawberries thrive and ripen best when the bushes’ neighbors are vegetables of baser quality. Like the strawberry bushes, Prince Hal hid the seriousness of his thoughts; he kept them secret. In his case, the veil was one of wildness. But like summer grass, which grows fastest by night, Prince Hal’s seriousness and wisdom, although unseen by others, yet grew because it is their nature to grow.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury said, “What you say must be correct because otherwise we would have to say that the

change of Prince Hal's character to the character of King Henry V is the result of a miracle, and the only true miracles are those that are recorded in the Bible. Therefore, we have to find a natural cause for the change in his character and how he has been brought to perfection."

"My good lord, what can we do now to stop or mitigate the effects of the bill that has been put forward to the House of Commons? We do not want to have more than half of the Church's wealth seized by the government. Does his majesty favor this bill, or not?"

"He seems impartial," the Archbishop of Canterbury said. "Or, rather, I should say that he leans more toward us than toward the people who support this bill. He leans more toward us because I have made an offer to his majesty, following my meeting with other clergy. This offer relates to important matters concerning France that are of concern now. To his grace the King, I have offered to give a greater sum than ever at one time the clergy has given to any of his predecessors."

"What does King Henry V think about this offer?"

"He regards it favorably," the Archbishop of Canterbury said. "However, there was not time enough then for him to hear, as I perceived his grace would have liked to have heard, the particular facts and the indisputable arguments that prove that he has true claims to particular Dukedoms in France and indeed to the crown and throne of France. Henry V, King of England, ought to also be the King of France; Henry V is directly descended from his great-grandfather, King Edward III of England, and this gives him a claim to be King of France. The mother of Edward III is the daughter of King Philip IV of France, and so Henry V of England is directly descended from King Philip III through the female line."

“What happened to interrupt your conversation with King Henry V?” the Bishop of Ely asked.

“The French ambassador arrived and asked for an audience with the King to be scheduled. The hour, I think, has come for us to go and listen to the King. Is it four o’clock?”

“Yes, it is.”

“Then let us go into the King’s presence so that we can hear the French ambassador’s message. I can guess the content of that message even before the Frenchman speaks a word of it.”

“I will go with you,” the Bishop of Ely said. “I long to hear the French ambassador’s message.”

— 1.2 —

At the Palace of Westminster in London, several people entered the King’s Presence Chamber, the large room in which King Henry V received official visitors. Those people were King Henry V himself, the Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Exeter, the Earl of Warwick, the Earl of Westmoreland, and several attendants.

King Henry V asked, “Where is my gracious Lord of Canterbury?”

Exeter replied, “He is not here in the Presence Chamber.”

“Send for him, good uncle,” King Henry V said.

“Shall we call in the ambassador, my liege?” Westmoreland asked.

“Not yet, my cousin,” King Henry V replied. He then used the royal plural when he said, “Before we hear him, we want to have some doubts resolved about some matters of importance that burden our thoughts, concerning us and

France.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely entered the King’s Presence Chamber.

The Archbishop of Canterbury said to the King, “May God and his angels guard your sacred throne and may you long grace it with your presence!”

“Surely, we thank you,” King Henry V replied. “My learned lord, please proceed and justly and religiously explain why the Salic Law — the law that bars women from inheriting the throne — that they have in France either should, or should not, bar us in our claim to the throne of France.

“And God forbid, my dear Lord of good Christian faith, that you should deliberately misinterpret, wrest, or distort your reading, or lay a burden on your soul — a soul that understands the difference between good and evil — by using sophistry to raise illegitimate claims to the throne. Such illegitimate claims clash with the truth. I wish to know whether my claim to the French throne is legitimate or illegitimate because God knows how many men who are now healthy shall drop their blood in support of what your reverence shall incite us to do. If my claim is illegitimate and you make me believe that it is legitimate, many men shall die for an unjust cause. Should my claim be legitimate, many of our men shall still die, but they will die for a just cause. Therefore take heed how you influence our person and how you awaken our sleeping sword of war. We command you, in the name of God, to take heed because never did two such Kingdoms contend in war against each other without much fall of blood, whose guiltless drops are every one a woe and a sore complaint against him whose wrongdoing gives edge unto the swords that take short human lives and make them shorter. If men die, they should not die for an unjust cause. Their lives should not be

wasted. Under this solemn appeal, speak, my lord. We will hear and note what you say and believe in our heart that what you speak is in your conscience as pure as sin after it has been washed with baptism. We will believe that what you say is the truth whether you say that our claim is legitimate or illegitimate.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury did not mention Isabella, the daughter of King Philip IV of France, but it is on her that King Henry V’s claim to the French throne rested.

King Philip III of France fathered King Philip IV of France, who fathered Isabella, who lived the longest of King Philip IV’s four children. If females could inherit the throne, she would have inherited it.

Isabella married King Edward II of England, and they became the parents of King Edward III of England.

King Edward III of England fathered John of Gaunt, who was the Duke of Lancaster.

John of Gaunt fathered Henry Bolingbroke, who became King Henry IV of England.

King Henry IV of England fathered King Henry V of England, who now wondered whether his claim to the French throne was legitimate or illegitimate. He was directly descended from King Philip III of France, but through the *female* line.

The then-present King of France, Charles VI, could claim direct descent from King Philip III of France through the *male* line.

King Philip III of France fathered King Philip VI of France, who fathered King John II of France.

King John II of France fathered King Charles V of France, who fathered the then-present King of France, Charles VI.

Of course, many people were Kings of France in between King Philip III of France (reigned 1270-1285) and the then-present King of France, Charles VI, whose reign began in 1380:

King Philip III of France reigned 1270-1285. He was also known as Philip III the Bold.

King Philip IV of France reigned 1285-1314. He was also known as Philip the Fair.

King Louis X of France reigned 1314-1316. He was also known as Louis the Quarreler.

King John I of France reigned in 1316. He was alive for only five days and is also known as John the Posthumous.

King Philip V of France reigned 1316-1322. He was also known as Philip the Tall.

King Charles IV of France reigned 1322-1328. He was also known as Charles the Fair.

King Philip VI of France reigned 1328-1350. He was also known as Philip VI the Fortunate.

King John II of France reigned 1350-1364. He was also known as John the Good.

King Charles V of France reigned 1364-1380. He was also known as Charles V the Wise.

The reign of Charles VI of France began in 1380. He was also known as Charles VI the Mad.

The year in which King Henry V of England was inquiring into the legitimacy of his claim to the throne of France was 1414. His claim would be legitimate if the throne could be inherited through the female line; after all, a later age saw England ruled by Queen Elizabeth I. However, his claim would be illegitimate if the throne could NOT be inherited

through the female line.

The Bishop of Canterbury said, “Listen to me, gracious sovereign, and you peers, who owe yourselves, your lives, and your services to this imperial throne. I say ‘imperial’ because you, Henry V, ought to be the King of more than one country. There is no bar against your highness’ claim to France except for this, which the French produce from Pharamond, King of the Salian Franks, a Germanic people: *‘In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant.’* This is Latin for ‘No woman shall succeed in the Salic land.’ In other words, no woman shall inherit the throne in the Salic land.’ The French incorrectly and unjustly interpret ‘Salic land’ to be the realm of France, and they regard King Pharamond as the founder of this law and female bar to the throne. Yet their own French authors affirm that the Salic land is in Germany, between the Sala and the Elbe rivers, where Charlemagne, aka Charles the Great, having subdued the Saxons, left behind and settled certain Frenchmen, who, holding in disdain the German women because of the women’s unchaste conduct, established then this law: To wit, no female should inherit the throne in the Salic land.

“As I said before, the Salic land lies in between the Sala and the Elbe rivers. Today in Germany the land is called Meissen. Therefore, it is certain that the Salic law was not devised for and does not apply to the realm of France.

“In addition, the French did not possess the Salic land until 379 years after the death of King Pharamond, who was falsely supposed to be the founder of this law. King Pharamond died in 426 A.D., and Charlemagne subdued the Saxons and colonized the Salic land with Frenchmen in the year 805 A.D.

“I will now refer to a number of French Kings:

“King Chlothar I, King of the Franks, who reigned 511-

561.

“King Childeric III, King of the Franks, who reigned 743-751 or 743-752.

“King Pepin, King of the Franks, who reigned 751-768 or 752-768. He was also known as Pepin the Short and as Pepin the Younger.

“King Charlemagne, aka Charles the Great, who reigned 768-814.

“King Louis I, who reigned 814-840. He was also known as Louis the Pious.

“King Charles II, aka Charles the Bald, who reigned 840-877. He also called himself ‘the Great,’ which has led people to confuse him with Charlemagne. He was King of the Franks (840-877), King of Western Francia (840-877), and the Holy Roman Emperor (875-877).

“King Hugh Capet, King of the Franks, who reigned 987-996.

“King Louis IX, who reigned 1226-1270. He is also known as Saint Louis IX.

“The French writers state that King Pepin, who deposed King Childeric III, was heir general, which means that he inherited the throne — whether through the male or the female line did not matter. As heir general, he made claim and title to the crown of France because he was descended from Blithild, who was the daughter of King Chlothar I. As you can see, the French have used the female line to help determine who shall be King.

“In addition, let us consider Hugh Capet, who usurped the crown that should have belonged to Charles the Duke of Lorraine, who was sole male heir of the true line and stock of Charles the Great, aka Charlemagne. Hugh Capet, to

improve his claim to the title of King with some shows of truth, although, to be honest, his claim to the title of King was corrupt and worthless, pretended to be heir to the Lady Lingare, who was the daughter of King Charles II, aka Charles the Bald, who was the son of Louis the Pious. Louis the Pious was also known as King Louis I, King of the Franks, and as Holy Roman Emperor Louis I. Louis the Pious was the son of Charlemagne, with whom he was co-Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. As you can see, the French have used the female line to help determine who shall be King.

“In addition, let us consider King Louis IX, who was the sole heir to the usurper Hugh Capet. King Louis IX felt guilty wearing the crown of France until he was satisfied that beautiful Queen Isabel, his grandmother, was directly descended from the Lady Ermengare, who was the daughter of Charles the Duke of Lorraine. By the marriage of Isabel to his grandfather, King Philip II, the line of Charles the Great, aka Charlemagne, was reunited to the crown of France. As you can see, the French have used the female line to help determine who shall be King.

“This information may be hard to follow, but if you follow it, it will be as clear as the summer Sun that King Pepin’s title, and King Hugh Capet’s claim, and King Lewis IX’s satisfaction, all appear to hold in right and title of the female line. All of them have used the female line to justify their being on the throne of France, and the same is true of other French Kings until this present day. Nevertheless, they use the Salic law to prevent your highness from claiming the throne of France from the female line. Instead, they choose to try to hide their own actions in a net through whose holes they can easily be seen. They choose to try to hide their own actions rather than openly acknowledge that their titles are crooked and stolen from you and your ancestors.”

King Henry V asked, “May I with justice and a clear conscience make this claim to the throne of France?”

“Yes, dread sovereign,” the Archbishop of Canterbury said. “Should there be any sin, let it fall on my head! I can say that because I know that your claim is not sinful. For in the book of Numbers is written that when the man dies with no male heirs, let the inheritance descend unto the daughter. To be specific, Numbers 27:8 states, ‘*And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.*’ Gracious lord, stand up for your own rights; unfurl your flag although it means going to war and shedding blood, and remember your mighty ancestors.

“Go, my dread lord, to the tomb of your great-grandfather, King Edward III, from whom arises your claim to the throne of France. Invoke his warlike spirit, and invoke the warlike spirit of your great-uncle, Edward the Black Prince, the son of Edward III. He was called the Black Prince because of his black armor. In 1346, on a French battlefield, he played the role of a hero as he and his soldiers defeated the entire French army in the Battle of Crécy. His most mighty father — a lion, a Monarch — on a hill stood smiling as he beheld his lion’s whelp glut himself on the blood of French nobility. We English were noble on that day! We fought the entire French army with only half of the English army and defeated it. The other half of our army was on the hill with King Edward III. Our soldiers there stood laughing as they watched the battle. They had no work to do and were cold because they needed not exert themselves!”

King Henry V thought, *Actually, two-thirds of the English army were fighting. Only one-third of the English army was on the hill with my great-grandfather. The patriotism of the Archbishop of Canterbury has understandably led*

him to exaggerate.

The Bishop of Ely said, “Remember all these valiant dead and with your powerful arm renew their feats. You are their heir; you sit upon their throne; the blood and courage that made them renowned runs in your veins; and you, my thrice-powerful liege, are in the May morning of your youth — you are ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises. You are triply powerful because you are the heir of these warriors, you sit upon the throne of England, and you have the courage of your warrior ancestors.”

Exeter said, “Your brother Kings and Monarchs of the earth all expect that you will rouse yourself and seek what is rightfully yours, as did the former lions of your blood.”

Westmoreland said, “They know that your grace has a just cause, enough wealth, and enough military strength, as in fact your highness has. Never has any King of England had richer nobles and more loyal subjects, whose hearts have left their bodies here in England and instead are metaphorically inside military tents on the battlefields of France.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury said, “Let their bodies follow their hearts, my dear liege, to win the throne of France, which is rightfully yours, with bloodshed and sword and fire. To aid you in pursuing your claim to the throne of France we of the Church will raise for your highness such a mighty sum as never have the clergy at one time given to any of your ancestors.”

King Henry V said, “We must not only arm to invade France, but we must also calculate the number of troops needed to defend England against the Scots, who will attack our country when they believe it is advantageous for them to do so.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury said, “Those people who

live in the Marches — the land bordering Scotland — will serve as a wall that is sufficient to defend the rest of our country from the pilfering borderers. The lords of the Marches have armed men.”

“I am not referring only to the fast-galloping Scottish raiders,” King Henry V said. “I fear the armed invasion of the Scots as a whole. They have always been dangerous and unreliable neighbors to us. You can read in histories that Edward III, my great-grandfather, never went with his armed forces into France without the Scots pouring into his defenseless England like the tide waters pour onto a beach. The Scots would attack with great forces at their full strength the English land whose soldiers had been gleaned from its fields, and they would surround and lay a grievous siege on castles and towns. England was defenseless because so many of its soldiers were fighting in France, and so the English citizens left behind in England shook and trembled because Scotland is such a bad neighbor.”

“England has been more frightened than it has been harmed, my liege,” the Archbishop of Canterbury objected. “Look at English history. When all of England’s chivalrous nobles were in France, and England was like a widow mourning the loss of the nobles, England not only has well defended itself but also captured and imprisoned the King of Scotland as if he were a stray beast. In 1346, while Edward III was in France, King David II of Scotland was captured, and it was thought that he was taken to France and given to Edward III so that his fame could be swelled by making prisoners of the Kings of foreign lands. In addition, the capture of King David II of Scotland has helped to make England’s history as rich with praise as is the oozy bottom of the sea rich with sunken wrecked ships and with immeasurable wealth.”

Westmoreland, who was Warden of the northern Marches,

knew much about the military threat of Scotland. He said to the King, “Remember this very old and true saying, ‘If you want to win France, / Then with Scotland first begin.’ Once the eagle warriors of England leave to seek prey, to England’s unguarded nest the weasel Scot comes sneaking and so breaks into and sucks the protein out of her Princely eggshells. The Scot plays the mouse when England the cat is absent, acting in accordance with the proverb ‘While the cat’s away, the mice will play.’ Like mice, the Scots will break into and ruin more food than they can eat.”

“It follows then the cat must stay at home,” Exeter said, “but yet that is distorted logic — that particular conclusion does not necessarily follow. After all, we have locks to safeguard necessities, and we have ingenious traps to catch the petty thieves. While the armed hand fights abroad, the cautious and prudent head defends itself at home. Government and society are like music. Government has high and low and lower positions and social classes, and music has high and low and lower notes and harmonies. If the parts of government and society work together properly, and the parts of the music work together properly, the result is harmonious and agreeable. If all of the citizens remaining in England work together while Henry V is in France with his army, England shall be safe.”

“That is why Heaven has divided the body politic of Humankind into different positions performing different functions,” the Archbishop of Canterbury said. “Human effort is continual, and it has as its target obedience to the will of God and the will of their King.

“Look at how the honeybees work. They have an instinctive government that can teach us, the citizens of a human Kingdom, orderly action. Honeybees have a King — actually, a Queen — bee. Honeybees also have various kinds of officers. Some bees are like magistrates who

administer justice at home. Other bees are like merchants who venture to trade abroad. Other bees are like soldiers, and their stings are their weapons. They plunder the summer's velvet buds, and they merrily march with their plunder home to the royal tent of their Emperor, who busily surveys the singing masons as they build roofs of gold, the civil citizens molding the cells of the honeycombs, the poor working bees crowding in with their heavy burdens at his narrow gate, the serious-eyed justice with his surly hum or hmm as he hands over to threatening executors the lazy yawning drone.

“I infer from all of this that many people, all of whom work toward one target, may work at various jobs to achieve a single goal.

“They are like many arrows, shot by many archers standing in different places, that fly toward one target.

“They are like many roads around one town that go toward and meet in that town.

“They are like many fresh-water streams that flow toward and run into the same salt sea.

“They are like the lines of a Sun-dial that all run toward and meet in the center of the Sun-dial.

“So may a thousand actions done by different groups of people, once begun, end by achieving one goal with great success and without defeat.

“Therefore, go to France, my liege. Divide your happy English soldiers into four armies. Take one army with you to France, and with them you shall make all France shake. If we, with three such armies left at home, cannot defend our own doors from the dog of war, let us be torn to pieces and let our nation lose its reputation for hardiness and statesmanship.”

King Henry V said, “Call in the messengers sent from the Dauphin, who is the son of the King of France and the supposed heir to the throne.”

A few attendants exited the Presence Chamber.

King Henry V said, “Now the doubts we had concerning our claim to the throne of France have been resolved, and I have decided to pursue our claim. By God’s help, and yours, you nobles who are the noble sinews of our power, France being ours because of our legitimate claim to the throne, we will bend France so that it respects the authority of England, or if it will not bend, we will break it all to pieces. Either we will sit on the throne of France and rule with complete sovereignty both it and all her almost Kingly Dukedoms, or these bones of mine will lie in an unworthy grave, without a monument, with no memorial inscription over them. Either our history — the biography of King Henry V — shall with full mouth speak freely of our acts in acquiring the throne of France and ruling as King of France, or else our grave will be like a Turkish slave whose tongue has been cut out to stop the spreading of state secrets. Unless we become King of France, our grave shall have a tongueless mouth and lack accomplishments to boast about. Unless we become King of France, our grave shall not even be honored with an epitaph made of perishable wax.”

The French ambassadors entered the King’s Presence Chamber.

King Henry V said, “Now we are well prepared to know what our fair kinsman the Dauphin has to say to us, for we hear that this greeting is from him, not from the King of France.”

In fact, King Henry V and the Dauphin were kinsmen; they were distantly related.

The first ambassador asked, “Will your majesty give us permission to state clearly the message we bring to you from the Dauphin, or shall we use diplomatic language to indirectly and tactfully state what the Dauphin wants us to tell you?”

“We are no tyrant; instead, we are a Christian King,” King Henry V replied. “I keep even my strongest emotions under control; they are under control as much as are the wretched inmates of our prisons. Therefore with frank and uncurbed plain language, tell us the Dauphin’s message to us.”

The first ambassador said, “Briefly and with few words, I say this: Your highness recently sent ambassadors to France to claim some certain Dukedoms, which you believe are yours because of your great predecessor King Edward III. In answer to your claim, the Dauphin our master says that you have not yet grown out of your youth, that you are still the immature youth that you were, and he tells you that there is nothing in France that can be won by performing the fast and nimble dance that is known as the galliard. You cannot revel yourself into any French Dukedoms. The Dauphin therefore sends you something that he thinks is more suitable for you, this container of treasure. He insists that you accept the treasure and give up your claim to the French Dukedoms. This is the message that the Dauphin required us to bring to you.”

King Henry V said to Exeter, “What is the treasure, uncle?”

“A container of tennis balls, my liege.”

The tennis balls were made of leather and stuffed with horsehair. The game of royal tennis was played on a paved oblong court that was surrounded by walls. Between the two longer walls, a rope or low net was stretched. The two shorter walls had holes that were called hazards; a ball hit into a hazard scored a point. A point was also scored when

a ball bounced twice before the opposing player could hit it. The opposing player would chase after the ball to hit it with a stringed racket.

King Henry V said to the French ambassadors, “We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us, and we thank you for his present and your pains.

“When we have marched our rackets to these balls, we will, in France, by God’s grace, play a set that shall strike the Dauphin’s father’s crown into the hazard. Tell the Dauphin he has made a match with such a wrangler that all the courts of France will be disturbed with chases.

“We intend to march our army to the place from where these tennis balls came: France. There, the game that we will play is called war. We intend to play so well that we will strike the Dauphin’s father’s crown from off his head and onto ours. Tell the Dauphin he has made a match with such a warrior that all the noble courts will be disturbed by English soldiers chasing fleeing French nobles.

“We admit that we well understand the Dauphin’s reference to our younger, wilder days. He does not understand how useful they were to us. When we were young, we never valued this poor seat — the throne — of England; therefore, living away from the court, we gave ourself to barbarous license and behaved riotously, as is common: Men are merriest when they are away from home.

“But tell the Dauphin that I will keep my throne and I will act like a King and show my sail of greatness — my military banners and coat of arms — when I rise up out of my throne in France.

“So that in the future I could appear to be more glorious, in my youth I set aside my majesty and plodded like a working man, but I will rise from my throne in France with so full a glory that I will dazzle all the eyes in France. I will

strike the Dauphin blind when he attempts to look at me.

“Tell the pleasant Prince — the Dauphin — this joke of his has turned his tennis balls into cannonballs. His soul shall be charged with the wasteful vengeance that shall fly with the cannonballs — his joke will create many thousands of widows. He will fail to cheat me out of my French throne, but he will succeed in cheating many French wives out of their dear husbands and he will succeed in cheating many French mothers out of their sons. He will be responsible for the deaths of thousands and for the tearing down of French castles. Some are not yet begotten and not yet born who shall have cause to curse the Dauphin’s scorn.

“But all this lies within the will of God, to Whom I do appeal, and in Whose name you shall tell the Dauphin I am coming to get revenge — I will put forth my effort in a righteous cause that is approved by God. So leave from here in peace and tell the Dauphin that his jest will be shown to be of only shallow wit when thousands more weep at it than ever laughed at it.”

Henry V said to some attendants, “Escort these French ambassadors away from here. Give them safe conduct.”

He said to the French ambassadors, “Fare you well.”

Some English attendants and all the French ambassadors exited.

Exeter said, “This was a merry message.”

Henry V replied, “We hope to make the sender blush at it. We want to make the Dauphin ashamed of it, and we want his cheeks and face to be red with blood.”

He added, “Therefore, my lords, take every opportunity to advance our expedition against France. For we have now no thought in us but thoughts about France, save those

thoughts we have about God — our thoughts about God are more important than any other business.

“Therefore, let our army for these wars be soon collected and gathered together and all things thought upon that may with reasonable swiftness add more feathers to our wings. We wish to start this action in France quickly.

“With God to guide us, we will chide this childish Dauphin at his father’s door.

“Therefore, let every man now employ his thoughts in setting our noble enterprise into action.”

CHAPTER 2 (Henry V)

Prologue

The Chorus walked on stage and said, “Now all the youth of England are on fire to go to war in France, and the silken clothing needed to court the ladies is laid away in the wardrobe to be replaced by metal armor. Now thrive the armorers, and only thoughts of gaining honor reign in the breast of every man: They sell land now to buy a horse to ride to war. They wish to follow Henry V, the exemplar of all Christian Kings, into battle. They are as eager to quickly follow the King as they would be if they were as fast as Mercury, the messenger of the gods — a messenger whose winged heels and winged helmet flew him quickly through the air.

“Now the expectation of winning glory in war is everywhere, and men think of a sword that is hidden from the hilt to the point with the crowns of Emperors who rule more than one country, the crowns of Kings who rule a single country, and the coronets worn by nobles. These emblems of rule have been promised to Harry and his followers.

“The French, advised by good intelligence of this most serious preparation for dreadful war that causes them to shake with fear, attempt to foil the English invasion with a treacherous plot.

“Oh, England! You are a small country, but you have greatness within you. You are like a great heart enclosed in a small body. What great things you would accomplish, what honor you would earn, if all your citizens were kind and obeyed natural law and respected your King!

“But see your fault! France has found in you a nest of

hollow bosoms. Three Englishmen lack patriotism and loyalty to their King, and France fills the pockets of these three treacherous men with coins.

“These three corrupted men — Richard, Earl of Cambridge; Henry, Lord Scroop of Masham; and Sir Thomas Grey, Knight, of Northumberland — accepted the guilt of France and so bear the guilt of treason. They have formed a conspiracy with France, which fears the English King and army, and have agreed to kill this model of Kingship: King Henry V.

“If Hell and treason keep their promises, they will kill Henry V in Southampton before he sets sail for France.

“Be patient, audience, and we will help you to cope with the great distances that must be traveled on our stage.

“Now the traitors have received the bribe that France promised them, now the King is traveling from London to Southampton, and soon he will set sail to France.

“Audience, sit in your seats in the theater, and we will safely convey you soon to France, and safely bring you back, too. We will charm the English Channel so that you can gently travel both ways. If we are able to, we will not make even one audience member seasick or disgusted with our play.

“But before we join the King in Southampton, let us enjoy a scene set in London.”

— 2.1 —

On a street in London, Corporal Nym and Lieutenant Bardolph were speaking together. Soon to join them was Pistol, who was an Ensign, aka sub-Lieutenant. Bardolph was the highest ranking of the three, and Nym was the lowest ranking. All three were low-lives living in Eastside.

Nym's name came from "nim," which means "a thief" or "to steal." Pistol's name was pronounced "pizzle," which also meant "penis." The Chorus had said that every Englishman is thinking about gaining honor on the battlefield, but Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol were exceptions. The Chorus had also said that the men of England are as eager to quickly follow the King as they would be if they were as fast as winged Mercury, but perhaps we ought to remember that Mercury is, among other things, the god of thieves.

"Good to see you, Corporal Nym," Bardolph said.

"Good morning, Lieutenant Bardolph," Nym replied.

"Are Ensign Pistol and you friends yet?"

"For my part, I do not care whether we are friends. I say little, but when the time comes for me to smile, I will smile, perhaps to pretend that I am friends with him or perhaps because I have gotten my revenge on him, but that shall be as it may. I dare not fight, but I will bluster. I will close my eyes and hold out my iron sword. It is a simple sword, but so what? I can use it to toast cheese on its point, and I can draw it and let it grow cold while another man's sword does the same, and there's an end to another man and an end to my discourse."

Nym liked to think that he said little, spoke mysteriously, and kept his thoughts to himself. Much of what he said and thought made little sense.

Bardolph replied, "I will buy you two breakfast if that will make you friends again. Let all of us be three sworn brothers as we go to France. Be friendly again with Pistol, good Corporal Nym."

"Truly, I will live as long as I may, that's certainly the truth, and when I cannot live any longer, I will do as I may;

that is my final bid, and that is the last resort of it.”

“It is certain, Corporal, that Pistol is married to Nell Quickly,” Bardolph said, “and certainly she did you wrong. She was legally bound to marry you.”

“I cannot tell where the truth lies,” Nym said. “Things must be as they may: Men must sleep, and they must have their throats about them at that time, and some people say that knives have sharp edges. It must be as it may: Though patience be a tired mare, yet she will plod — patience will reach success in the end. There must be conclusions. Well, I cannot tell.”

Pistol and Nell Quickly, the hostess of the Boar’s Head Inn in Eastcheap, walked up to Bardolph and Nym.

Bardolph said, “Here comes Ensign Pistol and his wife. Good Corporal Nym, control yourself here. We are on a public street.”

Nym said, “How are you, host Pistol!”

Pistol, who liked to use extravagant language, was outraged. He was a superior officer to Nym, who should have referred to him by his military title: Ensign. Of course, by marrying Nell Quickly, the hostess of an inn, Pistol had become the host of that inn.

Pistol said, “Base mongrel, are you calling me your host? Now, by my hand, I swear that I scorn the term. I also swear that my Nell shall not keep lodgers in her inn.”

Nell Quickly said, “Truly, I shall keep no lodgers. It is impossible for us to give room and board to a dozen or fourteen gentlewomen who live honestly by the prick of their needles. Why? Because everyone will think that they make their living by a different sort of prick, and everyone will think that we are keeping a bawdy house.”

Thinking that it was time for him to bluster, Nym drew his sword. Pistol did the same.

Nell Quickly said, “Heavens! Look! He has drawn his sword! We shall see willful adultery and murder committed.”

As usual, Nell Quickly had mixed up her words. Adultery is always willfully committed; she had probably meant to say that murder would be willfully committed. And why bring up adultery? Did she believe that Pistol would be the murder victim and she would go back to Nym?

Bardolph said, “Good Lieutenant! Good Corporal! Do not fight in a public street!”

Nym said scornfully to Pistol, “Pish!”

Pistol scornfully replied, “Pish for you, Iceland dog! You are a shaggy-haired dog and a prick-eared cur of Iceland!”

Nell Quickly said, “Good Corporal Nym, show your valor, and put up your sword.”

She had spoken more wisely than she knew. Usually, to show one’s valor, a man would draw his sword and fight, but Nym had no valor, so to show his (lack of) valor, he should sheathe his sword.

Both Nym and Pistol sheathed their swords, but they would soon draw them again. No matter. The only way either of them would die in this fight would be for one of them to trip and accidentally fall on his own sword.

The shaggy-haired Nym said to Pistol, “Will you amscray and shove off with me to a place where we can fight without interruption? I would have you *solus*.”

Not knowing that *solus* is Latin for “alone,” Pistol thought that he had been insulted: “*Solus*, outrageous dog? Oh, vile

viper! I will shove that *solus* in your most marvelous face. I will shove that *solus* in your teeth, and in your throat, and in your hateful lungs, and yes, in your stomach, by God, and, which is worse, within your nasty mouth! I will shove that *solus* all the way to your bowels. For I can take fire and grow angry, and Pistol's cock is up, and flashing fire will follow."

Later, people would listen to accounts of the "fight," and they would laugh when they heard "Pistol's cock is up."

"You sound as if you were a conjuror performing an incantation for an exorcism," Nym said, "but it won't work on me. I am not the son of Barba, a fiend who fought fiercely after assuming the shape of a lion. I have the humor — am in the mood — to beat you rather well. Once fired, pistols are foul and dirty, and they need to be cleaned and scoured with a ramrod. If you use foul language against me, Pistol, I will scour you with my rapier, to put it as decently as I can. If you would walk with me to a place out of sight of the public, I would prick your guts a little, to put it as decently as I can, and that's how I feel about it."

"You are a vile braggart and a damned furious creature!" Pistol shouted. "Your grave gapes, and doting death is near and desirous of taking you, and therefore prepare to exhale your final breath."

Some of Pistol's extravagant language came from the action-filled, bombastic plays he enjoyed watching and listening to.

Bardolph drew his sword and said to Nym and Pistol, "Hear me, listen to what I say: He who strikes the first stroke, I'll run him through with my sword up to the hilt, I swear on my profession as a soldier."

Pistol replied, "This is an oath of mickle — much — might; and so my fury shall abate."

He sheathed his sword, then Nym sheathed his sword, and finally Bardolph sheathed his sword.

Pistol said to Nym, “Give me your fist; give me your forepaw. I have to admit that your spirit is very brave.”

Nym replied, “I will cut your throat at one time or another, to put it as decently as I can, and that’s how I feel about it.”

Pistol replied in bad French and a lack of knowledge about how many words make up a word, ““*Couple a gorge!*” That is the word.”

He had meant to say, “*Coupez la gorge,*” which means “Cut his throat.”

He added, “I defy you, Nym, again. Oh, hairy hound of Crete, did you think that you could get my spouse? That is not going to happen. No, instead, make your way to the hospital and find yourself a woman. Look in the powdering tub of infamy — the heated tub in which ill people sit in order to sweat out venereal disease, and find Doll Tearsheet — who is just like Cressida, a loose woman who suffers from the pox — and promise to marry her. I have”

Pistol stopped and thought and then said, “I have, and I will hold, the *quondam* Quickly. Once she was Miss Quickly and now she is Mrs. Pistol, and she is the only woman for me — *pauca*, there’s enough. Go to.”

Pistol knew a few words of Latin, although people who really knew Latin knew that Pistol knew fewer Latin words than he thought he did. *Quondam* meant “former,” and “Quickly” was his wife’s maiden name. *Pauca* was short for *pauca verba* and meant “few words.”

A boy — Sir John Falstaff’s page, aka young servant — arrived and said, “My host Pistol, you must come to my master, Falstaff, and you, hostess, must come, too. Falstaff

is very sick, and he wants to go to bed.”

The boy looked at Bardolph, whose face was fiery-red from his alcoholism, and joked, “Good Bardolph, put your fiery-red face between his sheets so that you can warm them up like a warming-pan.”

He added, “Truly, Falstaff is very ill.”

“Go away, you rogue!” Bardolph, who could be sensitive about his face, yelled at the boy.

Nell Quickly said about the precocious boy, “Indeed, one of these days he will be hung and his hanging carcass will provide a feast for crows.”

She then said about Falstaff, “The King has killed his heart.”

She was referring to when Prince Hal had been crowned as King Henry V. Falstaff had not treated him like a King, calling him by the familiar name “Hal.” Falstaff should have bowed before his sovereign. Instead, he had challenged Henry V to reject him. If Henry V had not rejected him, Falstaff would have looted the treasury. Fortunately for England, King Henry V had rejected Falstaff and never again saw him. Nell Quickly thought that Falstaff’s heart had broken because the King had rejected him, but Falstaff’s heart had broken because he could not loot the treasury. He had hoped to run wild in England when Prince Hal was crowned King Henry V.

Nell Quickly said to Pistol, “Good husband, go home as soon as you can.”

Nell Quickly and the boy left to go to Sir John Falstaff.

Bardolph said to Nym and Pistol, “Come, shall I make you two friends? We must go to France together, so why the Devil should we keep knives to cut one another’s throats?”

Pistol said, "Let our friendship last until the rivers overflow their banks and flood the land and until the Devils in Hell howl in fury because they do not have enough evil souls to torment!"

Nym was willing to be friends again — provided a proviso was met: "You'll pay me the eight shillings I won from you at betting?"

Pistol, who was uneager to fulfill this request, replied, "Base is the slave who pays."

Nym said, "That money I must have now, and that's the long and the short of it."

Pistol said, "Let courage decide. Let's fight over that money."

Both Pistol and Nym drew their swords.

Bardolph drew his sword and said, "By this sword, I will kill the first man who makes the first thrust. I swear by this sword that I will kill him."

Pistol said, "He swore by his sword, and that is an oath, and a soldier's oath is an oath that must be kept."

Pistol sheathed his sword.

Bardolph said, "Corporal Nym, if you will be friends with Pistol, then be friends, but if you will not be friends with Pistol, why, then, be enemies with me, too. Please, sheathe your sword."

Nym asked Pistol, "Shall I have the eight shillings I won from you at betting?"

Pistol said, "Yes," and Nym sheathed his sword, and then Bardolph sheathed his sword.

Pistol said to Nym, "I shall give you a noble, a coin that is

worth a little less than eight shillings. I will pay you the rest with liquor. That way, we will be friends, and brothers, too. I'll live by Nym, and Nym shall live by me. Is not this just? I can make back the money I pay to you. I will be a sutler to the camp of soldiers — I will supply the soldiers with provisions — and that will give me ample opportunity to make some profits, some of them by honest means — profits will accrue. Give me your hand and let's shake on it.”

Nym asked again, “I shall have my noble?”

Pistol replied, “Yes — in cash most justly and honestly paid.”

Nym replied, “Well, then, that's the long and the short of it.”

Nell Quickly returned and said to them, “If you were born of woman, come quickly and see Sir John. Poor man! He is so shaken from a burning quotidian tertian fever. He has one fever that visits him every day, and another fever that visits him every other day. He is in a piteous predicament, and seeing him will rouse your pity. Sweet men, go and see him.”

Nym said, “The King has caused Sir John's melancholy — that's the plain truth of it.”

Pistol said, “Nym, you have spoken the truth; Sir John's heart has been fracted and corroborated — broken and confirmed to be broken.”

Nym replied, “The King is a good King, but we must say it because it is true — he has some strange moods and does some strange things. As King, he can indulge his thoughts and do whatever he wishes.”

Pistol said, “Let us go and condole Sir John Falstaff. The

Knight will die, but we, lambkins, will continue to live.”

— 2.2 —

In a council chamber in Southampton, Exeter, Bedford, and Westmoreland were discussing three traitors whose treason had not yet been openly revealed. King Henry V and the English army were in Southampton because they would sail from there to France. The three lords were there because they expected to receive commissions to rule England in the King’s absence.

Bedford said, “I swear to God that his grace is rash to trust these three traitors.”

Exeter replied, “The traitors will be arrested soon.”

“How confidently they bear themselves!” Westmoreland said. “They are good actors. They act as if they were completely dutiful and faithful and loyal to the King.”

Bedford said, “The King has complete knowledge of their treason and of all that they intend to do. The traitors do not at all know that their plans have been revealed to the King.”

“The worst traitor is Henry, Lord Scroop of Masham, the man with whom the King was most friendly,” Exeter said. “In our society, friends of the same sex sometimes sleep in the same bed. Nothing sexual occurs, and no one thinks anything negative about it. A man who once shared the King’s bed is now a traitor, although the King has surfeited his appetite with gracious favors. I cannot imagine why Scroop would sell his King’s life for money. Scroop has formed a plan to treacherously kill the King.”

Trumpets sounded, and King Henry V and his attendants, and the three traitors — Richard, Earl of Cambridge; Henry, Lord Scroop of Masham; and Sir Thomas Grey, Knight, of Northumberland — entered the council

chamber.

King Henry V said, “The wind is fair, and we will soon board our ship.”

He then said to the three traitors, “My Lord of Cambridge, and my kind Lord of Masham, and you, my noble Knight, tell me your thoughts. Do you think that the army we have brought with us will be able to cut their passage through the army of France? Will they be able to execute the work that I have planned for them and for which I have assembled them?”

Scroop replied, “No doubt, my liege, they can if each man does his best.”

“I don’t doubt that each man will do his best,” King Henry V said. “We are absolutely convinced that each man who goes with us from here to France is in perfect agreement with us, and we are absolutely convinced that we will not leave behind any man who does not wish us success and conquest.”

“Never has there been a Monarch more feared and loved than is your majesty,” Cambridge said. “I doubt that you have a single subject who has a heavy and uneasy heart; all of your subjects sit in the sweet shade of your government.”

Grey said, “That is true. Once, your father had enemies, but those enemies are now your friends. They steeped their bitter gall in sweet honey and now they serve you with hearts that are dutiful and zealous to obey you.”

“We therefore have great cause to be thankful,” Henry V said. “We would prefer not to be able to use our hand than to neglect to reward people of desert and merit in accordance with their weight and worthiness.”

“Your people are all the more eager to serve you and work energetically with sinews of steel because of their hope to be rewarded for their incessant service,” Scroop said.

“We think that you are correct,” Henry V replied.

The King then said, “Uncle Exeter, set free the man who was arrested yesterday because he railed against our person. We are taking into consideration that he was drunk and that the excess of wine made him rail against us. Now that he has sobered up and is regretting what he did, we pardon him.”

Scroop said, “You are being merciful but rash in pardoning him. Let him be punished, sovereign, lest his bad example breed — because it has not been punished — more of the same kind.”

Henry V replied, “Although that is a possibility, I am inclined to be merciful.”

Cambridge said, “Your highness can be merciful and yet punish him, too.”

Grey said, “Your highness, you will be merciful if you allow him to live after he has been severely punished.”

King Henry V said, “You three care about me so much that you strongly encourage me to punish this poor wretch! But if we cannot close our eyes so we do not notice little faults that occur because of the distemper of alcohol, how will we be able to open our eyes wide enough to show our astonishment when serious crimes, capital crimes punishable by death and that have been chewed, swallowed, and digested — with malice aforethought — appear before us?”

“We will still set free that man, although Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, because they dearly care about the

tender preservation of our person, would have him punished.

“But now let us turn to our business in France: Who are the recently appointed regents who will govern England in our absence?”

“I am one of them, my lord,” Cambridge said. “Your highness told me to ask for my written commission today.”

“You told me the same thing, my liege,” Scroop said.

“As you did me, my royal sovereign,” Grey said.

“Then, Richard, Earl of Cambridge, there is your written commission,” Henry V said, handing him one of the three scrolls he was carrying. “There is yours, Lord Scroop of Masham; and, Sir Knight, Grey, of Northumberland, this one is yours. Read them, and realize that I know your true worth.”

He added, “My Lord of Westmoreland, and Uncle Exeter, we will board the ships tonight.”

The three traitors looked at their papers and turned pale with fear. The papers informed them that the King knew about their treason and their plot to murder him.

Henry V said to them, “Why, how are you now, gentlemen! What words do you see in those papers that make you lose so much color in your faces? Look, everyone, how their faces have changed! Their cheeks are white like paper. Why, what words did you read there that have turned you into cowards and chased your blood away from your cheeks? Red blood is the sign of courage, and you have no red blood in your cheeks.”

Cambridge knelt and said, “I do confess my fault, I am guilty, and I beg your highness for mercy.”

Grey and Scroop both knelt and said, “We also appeal to your highness for mercy.”

King Henry V said, “The mercy that was alive in us just now has been suppressed and killed because of the advice that you gave to me. You must not dare, for shame, to talk of mercy because your own words turn against you, as dogs can turn upon their masters, and bite you.

“Look, my loyal Princes, and my loyal noble peers, at these English monsters!

“Look at my Lord of Cambridge here. All of you know how our respect for him made us want to give him all things appropriate to his honor. Yet Cambridge has, for a few crowns of light weight, for treacherous money, lightly and readily conspired and sworn to join the plot of France to kill us here in Southampton.

“This Knight also swore the same thing that Cambridge did although he was also indebted to me, the King, for the good things I have given to him.

“What shall I say to you, Lord Scroop? You cruelly ungrateful, savage, and inhuman creature! You knew all my secrets, you knew the deepest part of my soul, you almost might have used me as your own minter and maker of money. How is it possible that a foreign bribe could extract from you even enough evil to harm one of my fingers? This is so strange and unexpected that even though the truth of it appears as clearly as black and white, my eye will scarcely see it. My eyes scarcely believe what is clearly visible in front of them!

“Treason and murder have ever kept company together; they are like two Devils yoked together and sworn to help each other achieve the other’s goals. The two Devils openly work together in what for them is a natural cause. That is expected, and it causes no astonishment.

“But you, against all natural order, brought in astonishment to accompany treason and murder. No one could have expected you to conspire to take my life. You have no good reason to do so.

“Whatever cunning fiend — whatever Devil — it was that worked upon you and got you to act so perversely has been applauded in Hell for its excellence. All other Devils that suggest and tempt men to commit treason do so by unskillfully patching up and cobbling together reasons and veneers and ideas that seem to be ethical and pious but really are not. These Devils tempt people to do damnable things by convincing them that they are doing the right thing. But the Devil that persuaded you to do damnable actions simply told you to stand up and rebel without giving you a reason why you ought to commit treason.”

King Henry V looked at Scroop, who was kneeling before him the way that a man would kneel before the King who would Knight him — dubbing a person Knight means giving that person the title of Knight — by touching his shoulder with a sword and saying, “I dub thee Knight. Arise, Sir —”

He then said, “The only reason a Devil could have given you for why you should commit treason is so that you could be dubbed ‘Traitor.’”

King Henry V remembered 1 Peter 5:8: “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*” and he said, “If that same demon that has gulled you in this way should with his lion gait walk throughout the whole world, he might return to vast Hell and tell the legions of angels, ‘I can never win a soul as easily as I won the soul of that Englishman.’”

“You Scroop, have infected the sweetness of trust with

suspicion. You make it hard for me to trust anyone ever again. What evidence can I now seek to determine whether men are good? Do men seem to be dutiful? Why, so did you. Do men seem to be grave and learned? Why, so did you. Do men come from a noble family? Why, so did you. Do men seem to be religious? Why, so did you. Are men moderate in their diet? Are men free from excessive emotions, whether of mirth or anger? Are men constant in spirit, not excessively changing their minds? Are they furnished with and display good personal characteristics and courtesy? Do they not only look but also listen, and use their best judgment to evaluate evidence and arrive at the truth? You seemed to be such a man, a man whose evil had been purged out of him, and thus your fall has left a kind of blot — now, even a man whose excellent character is fully loaded with the best virtues is regarded by me with some suspicion.

“I will weep for you because this revolt of yours, I think, is like another fall of man: the fall of Adam, who ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.”

He said to Exeter, “The faults of these three traitors are manifest and open and revealed. Arrest them in accordance with the law, and God forgive them for their evil deeds!”

Exeter said to the three traitors, “I arrest you for high treason, Richard, Earl of Cambridge. I arrest you for high treason, Henry, Lord Scroop of Masham. I arrest you for high treason, Thomas Grey, Knight, of Northumberland.”

Scroop said, “Our evil plot God justly has uncovered, and I regret my sin more than I regret my death. I beg your highness to forgive my sin, although my body will pay the price of it.”

Cambridge said, “As for me, the gold of France did not seduce me, although I admit it was a motive to do sooner

the treason that I had already intended to commit. But I thank God that I have been prevented from carrying out my plan. I will rejoice at this prevention even as I endure my punishment, and I beg God and you to pardon me.”

Grey said, “Never has a faithful subject rejoiced more at the discovery and prevention of most dangerous treason than I rejoice at this hour even though it is my own dangerous treason that has been revealed. I have been stopped from carrying out a damned plot. Pardon my sin — but not my body — sovereign.”

King Henry V said, “May God in His mercy forgive you! Now hear your sentence. You have conspired against our royal person. You have joined forces with a known enemy to our country and have received golden money to murder me. In doing this, you would have sold and sentenced your King to slaughter, you would have sold and sentenced his Princes and his peers to servitude, you would have sold and sentenced his subjects to oppression and contempt, and you would have sold and sentenced his whole Kingdom to desolation. As far as our own life is concerned, we seek no revenge, but we must so cherish our Kingdom’s safety — safety that you have sought to ruin — that we deliver you to her laws. Therefore, poor miserable wretches, go to your death. May God give you the fortitude to endure your death and give you true repentance for all your serious offences!”

He ordered the guards, “Take them away.”

The three traitors got to their feet, and the guards led them to the place of execution.

King Henry V then said, “Now, lords, let us turn our attention to France. This enterprise in France shall be as glorious to you as it is to us. We do not doubt that this war shall be successful and with good fortune to us since God so graciously has brought to light this dangerous treason

that was lurking in our way to kill us and stop the war before it started. We doubt not now but that every obstacle has been removed that stood in our way. So let us go forth, dear countrymen. Let us deliver our army into the hand of God, and let us get started immediately. Let's go cheerfully to sea and see the signs of war advance. I will not be King of England unless I can also be King of France.”

— 2.3 —

In front of a tavern in London, Pistol, Nell Quickly, Nym, Bardolph, and the boy who had been Sir John Falstaff's page were standing and talking about the death of Sir John, which had occurred just after midnight.

Nell Quickly said to Pistol, “Please, honey-sweet husband, let me accompany you to Staines, a town on the way to Southampton.”

“No, because my manly heart yearns — it is grieving,” Pistol replied.

He said to the others, “Bardolph, be blithe. Nym, rouse your vaunting veins. Boy, bristle your courage up. Falstaff is dead, and therefore we must yearn — we must grieve.”

Anyone overhearing Pistol might laugh. The verb “yearn” means to want someone. To want someone means either to grieve for someone or to feel sexual desire for someone. Some other words could be understood in more than one way. Someone overhearing Pistol could think that he was saying this:

“My manly heart feels sexual desire. Bardolph, do something to make yourself very, very happy. Nym, rouse your vaunting veins — the ones that are in the appendage that hangs below your waist. Boy, make your ‘courage’ — the appendage that hangs below your waist — bristle and rise up. Falstaff is dead, but we live, and therefore we must

feel sexual desire.”

Bardolph said, “I wish that I were with Falstaff, wherever he is, whether in Heaven or in Hell!”

Nell Quickly said, “I am sure that he’s not in Hell; instead, he’s in Arthur’s bosom, if ever man went to Arthur’s bosom.”

Nell Quickly meant Abraham’s bosom rather than the bosom of King Arthur, famous in part for his Knights of the round table.

She added, “Falstaff made a finer end than the one that would have sent him to Hell. He died as if he had been a christom child — a child who died sinless and baptized in its first month of life. He died just between twelve and one — as the old belief states, his life ebbed with the tide. After I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with the flowers lying on the bed and smile because his fingers were not obeying his commands, I knew that he was dying because of these signs and other signs: His nose was as sharp as a pen, and he babbled about green fields. I tried to comfort him and to give him good advice: ‘How are you, Sir John?’ I asked, and said, ‘Be cheerful!’ He cried out ‘God, God, God!’ three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, advised him that he should not think of God; I said that I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So he told me to lay more clothes on his feet because they were cold. I put my hand under the sheets and felt his feet, and they were as cold as any stone; then I felt up to his knees, and they were as cold as any stone, and so upward and upward, and all the parts of his body were as cold as any stone.”

Nell Quickly was being unintentionally bawdy as she spoke. One meaning of “stone” is “testicle,” so we have an image of Nell Quickly moving her hands from Falstaff’s

feet higher and higher on his body until she felt his testicles.

Falstaff's death was similar to the death of Socrates as recounted in Plato's *Phaedo*. Socrates drank hemlock, as required by the jurors of Athens when he was found guilty at his trial. As the poison worked, Socrates' body grew colder and colder, starting with his feet and working upward.

Falstaff's reference to "green fields" may have been a reference to this famous Biblical passage (Psalm 23, King James Version):

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Nym said, "They say he cried out against alcohol."

Nell Quickly said, "Yes, he did."

Bardolph added, "And he cried out against women."

Nell Quickly said, "No, he did not."

The boy said, "Yes, he did. He said that women were Devils incarnate."

The word "incarnate" reminded Nell Quickly of another word: "He could never abide carnation; it was a color he never liked."

The boy said, “Falstaff said once that the Devil would have his soul because he pursued women.”

Nell Quickly said, “Falstaff did, occasionally, touch on the topic of women.”

The boy thought, *He also occasionally touched women.*

Nell Quickly continued, “But when he talked about women, he was rheumatic, and talked of the whore of Babylon.”

The boy thought, *Falstaff was not rheumatic; Nell probably means lunatic. On his deathbed, Falstaff was in and out of his right mind. This is something that sometimes happens to alcoholics when they die. Falstaff's nose grew “sharp as a pen,” as Nell Quickly said. The faces of the dying sometimes grow thinner and their noses seem to grow sharper.*

The boy asked, “Do you remember when he saw a flea light upon Bardolph’s nose, and he said that it was a black soul burning in Hell-fire?”

Bardolph said, “Well, the fuel is gone that maintained that fire. The consumption of alcohol is what made my nose red, and Falstaff bought that alcohol for me. That is the way that he paid me for my services to him.”

The dying Falstaff was not like the living Falstaff. The living Falstaff enjoyed sack, and he enjoyed women. His testicles were hot, not cold. He enjoyed laughing and making people laugh. When he prayed, he prayed as a joke. He was in his right mind, although that mind was evil.

At the end of Falstaff’s life, he was trying to pray or to recite a Biblical Psalm. He was afraid of being damned to Hell. He was also repenting his sins of drunkenness and fornication.

As evil as Falstaff’s life had been, he may have died well.

According to Christian theology, an evil man who sincerely repents on his deathbed will be accepted into Paradise.

Nym asked, “Shall we amscray and shove off? The King will soon sail from Southampton.”

Pistol said, “Come, let’s leave.”

He said to his wife, Nell Quickly, “My love, give me your lips. Kiss me. Look after my property and prevent it from being stolen. Keep on the alert; remember these words of wisdom: ‘Cash down, no credit.’ Trust no one; oaths are like straws, and men’s promises are like thin wafer-cakes. Promises and pie crusts are easily broken. Promises are good, but deeds are better. A dog named ‘Brag’ is good, but a dog named ‘Steadfast’ is better, my love. Therefore, let *Caveto* be your counselor.”

If anyone who knew Latin had been present, he or she would have thought, *Pistol means Cavete — Be careful. This is the imperative plural.*

Pistol added, “Go, clear your crystals — wipe the tears from your eyes. Yoke-fellows in arms, let us go to France. We will be like leeches that attach themselves to horses, my boys, and suck and suck and suck the blood of the French!”

The boy said, “Blood is an unhealthy food, they say.”

Pistol said, “Touch my wife’s soft mouth — kiss her — and let’s march.”

Bardolph said, “Farewell, hostess,” and kissed Nell Quickly.

Nym said, “I cannot kiss her, that is the long and short of it; but I say, *adieu*.”

Pistol said to his wife, “I command you to practice good

household management and stay out of trouble.”

His wife replied, “Farewell; *adieu*.”

The males left.

— 2.4 —

In the French King’s palace, several men were meeting: the French King, the Dauphin, the Dukes of Berri and Bretagne, the Constable, and others. The Constable of France was the commander-in-chief of the army in the absence of the King.

The King of France said, “Now comes the English King and his army upon us with England’s full power, and we must be extra careful to put up a first-class defense. Therefore, the Dukes of Berri and of Bretagne, of Brabant and of Orleans, shall go forth, and you, too, Prince Dauphin, as swiftly as you can, to strengthen and reinforce our fortifications with men of courage and with defensive equipment. The King of England’s hostile approach is as fierce as a whirlpool that violently sucks in waters. We ought, therefore, to be as provident in making preparations for the future as fear has taught us to be as a result of recent battles in which the English soldiers whom we had fatally neglected left many French dead upon our battlefields. We ought to remember the English victories in the Battle of Crécy in 1346 and in the Battle of Poitiers in 1356.”

The Dauphin said, “My most redoubted — formidable and respected — father, it is certainly fitting that we arm ourselves against the foe. Peace should not dull a Kingdom and make it lazy; even when no war has been declared and no reason for war is known to exist, defenses should be maintained, armies should be assembled, and other preparations should be made as if a war were expected. Therefore, I say that it is fitting we all go forth to view the sick and feeble parts of France. Let us do so with no show

of fear; let us show no more fear than if we had heard that the English were busying themselves with a traditional Whitsun Morris dance. After all, my good liege, England is badly Kinged; the scepter of England is so fantastically borne by a vain, giddy, shallow, capricious youth that no one needs to fear England.”

The Constable said, “That is not the case, Prince Dauphin! You are too much mistaken about King Henry V. Talk to and question the ambassadors that you sent to his court. They will tell you about the great dignity with which he heard your message to him, how well supplied with noble counselors, how modest in raising objections, and how altogether terrifying he was in staying committed to his resolutions. You will conclude that the King of England’s former frivolities were like the slow-wittedness of the Roman Lucius Junius Brutus, who faked being slow-witted in order to lull the tyrant Lucius Tarquinius Superbus and his son into not fearing him. The ruse worked, and Brutus — the name means ‘Dullard’ — drove them out of Rome. Brutus covered his intelligence with a coat of folly; this is similar to gardeners spreading manure over the ground in which are planted the flowers that bloom earliest and are the most beautiful.”

“I disagree, my lord High Constable,” the Dauphin said, “but although I disagree it does not matter. In cases of defense, it is best to believe that the enemy is mightier and more powerful than he seems. By doing that, we will ensure that forces required for defense are sufficient. If we were to underestimate the enemy, we might not be able to defend ourselves against him; we would be like a miser who ruins his new coat by not giving his tailor enough cloth to make a good coat.”

The King of France said, “We believe that King Harry and his army are strong; therefore, Princes, make sure that you

strongly arm to meet him on the battlefield. When training a hawk or hound to kill game animals, it is traditional to flesh the hawk or hound — to give it some of the meat of the game it hunted and killed. Henry V's relatives have earlier been fleshed upon French soldiers. Henry V has been bred out of that bloody race who persistently pursued us in our native paths. For evidence, remember our too-much-memorable shame when at Créssy, Edward the Black Prince of Wales — a black name! — killed and killed again and took captive all our Princes. The Black Prince's father, King Edward III, immovable as a mountain, stood on a mountain high in the air, crowned with the golden Sun, and watched the heroic actions of his son and smiled as he watched him mangle and deface and cut to pieces 20-year-old French soldiers — the work of nature and God and French fathers. Henry V is a branch of that victorious family; therefore, let us fear his natural mightiness and destiny.”

A messenger entered the room and said, “Ambassadors from Harry, King of England, request to be admitted into your majesty's presence.”

“We will see them immediately,” the King of France said. “Go, and bring them here.”

The messenger and some lords exited.

The King of France said, “It is as if we are being hunted by Henry V. He is eagerly chasing us.”

The Dauphin said, “We should not turn tail and run away; instead, let us turn head and face the enemy. Cowardly dogs bark the loudest — they most spend their mouths — when what they seem to threaten is running far ahead of them. My good sovereign, give the English ambassadors short shrift — treat them curtly. Let them know of what kind of a Monarchy you are the head. Self-love, aka pride,

my liege, is not so vile a sin as self-neglecting. Have pride, and do not undervalue yourself.”

The French lords reentered the room with the English ambassador — Exeter — and his attendants.

The King of France asked, “Have you come from our brother the King of England?”

Of course, the two Kings were not literally brothers; this was simply a polite way of referring to another King.

“Yes, we have come from him,” Exeter said, “and he greets your majesty by desiring you, in the name of God Almighty, to divest yourself and lay aside the borrowed glories that by gift of Heaven, by law of nature, and by the law of nations — that is, by all laws, whether divine, natural, or human — belong to him and to his heirs. Namely, he desires you to divest yourself of and lay aside the crown of France and all the far-reaching honors and titles that pertain by customs and by laws to the crown of France. That you may know that this is no irregular or illegitimate claim that has been fraudulently picked out of old, worm-eaten books or searched out — as with a rake — from the dust of long-forgotten manuscripts or dredged up with bad faith and technicalities, he sends you this very memorable family tree in which his ancestors are listed.”

He handed the King of France a document, and then he added, “King Henry V’s direct line of descent from King Philip III of France and from King Edward III of England is very clearly shown. When you have looked over this document and seen his ancestry, he directs you then to resign your crown and Kingdom. You hold them fraudulently and are keeping them from him, the natural — by right of birth — and true challenger.”

The King of France asked, “What happens if I do not resign my crown and Kingdom?”

“War and blood will happen,” Exeter said. “Even if you were to hide the crown in your heart, Henry V will search for it there. To gain his rightful crown, he is coming in fierce tempest, in thunder, and in earthquake, like a Jove, the Roman King of the gods. If politely requesting the crown fails to get him the crown, then he will take it by force, and so he asks you, in all compassion, to give him his crown and to take mercy on the poor souls against whom this hungry war will open its vast jaws. On your head will fall the responsibility for the widows’ tears for dead husbands, the orphans’ cries for dead fathers, the pining maidens’ groans for their dead betrothed lovers, and for the dead men’s blood that war shall swallow in this dispute. This is his claim, his threatening, and all of my message to you, but if the Dauphin is in the Presence Chamber here, I also have a message especially for him.”

The King of France said, “As for us, we will consider this matter further. Tomorrow you shall bear our full reply back to our brother the King of England.”

The Dauphin said, “As for the Dauphin, I stand here for him. What is the message you bring for him from the King of England?”

Exeter replied, “The King of England sends the Dauphin scorn and defiance, slight regard, contempt, and anything that is negative yet does not reflect badly on him, the mighty sender; this is how little he values you. Thus says my King, and he adds that if your father the King of France does not grant all his demands in full and thereby sweeten the bitter mock — the joke of tennis balls — you sent his majesty, he will call you to so hot an answer for it that caves and womb-like vaulted passages of France shall chide your trespass and return your mockery by echoing with the sound of his cannon.”

“Tell King Henry V that if my father sends him a fair reply,

it is against my will,” the Dauphin said, “for I desire nothing but conflict with England. For that purpose, and because it was an appropriate gift — because it matched his youth and vanity — I presented him with the Parisian tennis balls.”

Exeter replied, “Because of your gift to him, Henry V will make your Parisian royal palace — the Louvre — shake, as he would even if it were the foremost palace — or tennis court — in all of Europe. Be assured that you will find a difference, as we his subjects have in wonder found, between the lack of promise that he showed in his greener, younger, and immature days and the great promise that he has mastered now. Now he uses his time wisely, even to the last second, and you will learn that this is true by studying your own losses, if Henry V stays with his army in France.”

The King of France replied, “Tomorrow you shall know in full what we have decided.”

Exeter said, “Send us back to Henry V quickly lest he come here himself to find out the reason for our delay — he has already landed on French soil.”

“You shall soon be sent back to him with our reply and reasonable terms for peace. A night is only a small pause and a short delay when it comes to forming replies of this importance.”

CHAPTER 3 (Henry V)

Prologue

The Chorus walked onto stage and said, “Thus with wings of the imagination our swift scene flies in motion of no less velocity than that of thought.

“Imagine that you have seen the well-equipped King of England at Southampton pier go onboard ship and resemble the young Sun-god as the King sails with his fleet with their streaming silken banners. Use your imagination, and you will see ship-boys climbing on ropes made of hemp. You will hear the shrill whistle that gives orders and brings order to the noisy confusion. You will see the sails, moving with the invisible and creeping wind, draw the huge hulls of the ships through the furrowed sea, breasting the lofty surge.

“Imagine that you are standing upon the shore and seeing a city dancing on the inconstant billows because this majestic fleet appears to be a city headed directly for Harfleur, a port in northern France. Follow the ships, follow them. Fix as with grapping irons your minds to the sterns of this navy, and leave your England, as deadly still as at midnight, guarded by grandsires, babies, and old women, all of whom are either past or not arrived at bodily strength and power. What male with a chin that is enriched with even one visible hair will not follow these hand-picked and specially selected Knights to France?

“Work, work your thoughts, and in your minds see a siege; look at the cannons mounted on their frames, with their fatal mouths open and pointing at walled and fortified and besieged Harfleur.

“Now imagine that the ambassador Exeter comes back

from the French King and tells Harry that the King offers him his daughter Katherine, and with her, for a dowry, some petty and unprofitable Dukedoms. The offer displeases Henry V, and so the nimble gunner touches the Devilish cannon with a lighted match—”

The sound of a cannon is heard.

“— and part of the French wall collapses.

“Always, members of the audience, be kind, and add to our performance with your mind.”

— 3.1 —

At Harfleur, King Henry V was rallying his troops, who had retreated from an assault upon the breach in the wall but were regrouping. With Henry V were Exeter, Bedford, and Gloucester. Some of the soldiers present carried scaling-ladders that would help them climb over the wall.

King Henry V said, “Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more. Let us attack again and burst through and over the wall or let us close the breach in the wall with the corpses of English soldiers. In peacetime nothing so becomes a man as modest quietness and humility. But when the blast of war blows in our ears, then we ought to imitate the action of the fierce tiger; we should stiffen our sinews, summon up our red blood and courage, disguise our handsome features with hard-featured rage. So let us now glare with our eyes through the portholes of our head like the brass cannon of warships. Let our brows hang over our eyes as fearsomely as a cliff juts out over its eroding base that is violently washed by the wild and wasteful ocean. Now let us set our teeth and flare our nostrils wide, hold hard our breath and bend up our spirit to its full height.

“Fight on, you noblest of the English whose blood is

inherited from fathers who have proven themselves in war — fathers who, like so many great Alexanders who conquered the world and mourned that nothing was left to conquer.

“Fight on, you nobles whose fathers fought on French soil from morning until evening and sheathed their swords only when no one was left to oppose them. Do not dishonor your mothers by making it possible for the enemy to say that your mothers cuckolded your fathers; prove by your brave fighting here that those whom you call fathers did in fact beget you. Be examples now to men of grosser blood and teach them how to fight in war.

“And you, good yeomen, you who farm your own land, whose limbs were made in England, show us here the mettle of your pasture and the quality of the country in which you were born. Let us swear that you are worth your breeding, which I do not doubt, because none of you is so humble and lowly by birth that you do not have noble luster in your eyes. I see you stand like greyhounds held back by the leash, straining against the leash in anticipation of the moment it is let loose and you can hunt your prey.

“The game is afoot — seek your prey! Follow your spirit, and as we charge cry, ‘God for Harry, England, and Saint George, the patron saint of England!’”

They charged.

— 3.2 —

Nym, Bardolph, Pistol, and the boy who was their servant were at Harfleur.

Bardolph cried, “Charge! Charge! To the breach! To the breach!”

Nym objected, “Please, Corporal, wait. The blows of battle

are too severe and dangerous. Speaking for myself, I do not have a pair of lives, but only one. The heat of this battle is too hot — this is plainly true and without ornamentation, just like a plain-song is the plain, simple melody without fancy variations.”

Bardolph, formerly a Lieutenant, had been demoted to Corporal.

Pistol said, “The use of ‘plain-song’ is a most just.”

He meant a *mot juste*, French for “exactly the right word.”

He added, “The plain truth is that the blows of battle abound in this battle.”

He sang, “*Blows come and go; God’s servants drop and die; and sword and shield, in this bloody field, do win immortal fame.*”

The boy said, “I wish that I were in an alehouse in London! I would trade all my chances for fame and glory for a pot of ale and safety.”

Pistol said, “So would I.”

He sang, “*If wishes would prevail with me,*

“*My purpose — my desire for ale — should not fail with me,*

“*But thither — to an alehouse — would I hurry.*”

Pistol’s singing voice was poor, and his desire to stay out of the battle was dishonorable.

The boy sang in answer to Pistol, “*You sing as surely and as honorably, but not as well, as a bird without honor sings on a bough.*”

On his horse, Fluellen, a Welsh Captain serving Henry V,

came toward Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol, outraged that they were not fighting in the battle. The boy was too young to fight, but he was supposed to stay in the English camp and guard the tents.

Fluellen shouted, “Up to the breach, you dogs! Hurry, you gonads!”

Fluellen drove Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol forward.

Moving forward as slowly as Fluellen would allow him, Pistol pleaded, “Be merciful, great Duke, to men of mold. We are made of clay, just as the Bible says. Abate your rage, abate your manly rage — abate your rage, great Duke!”

As he did so frequently, Pistol was using his poor knowledge of Latin poorly. By “Duke,” he meant *Dux*, which is Latin for “leader.”

Pistol continued to plead, “Good and fine fellow, abate your rage; be lenient, good lad!”

Nym said to Fluellen, “This is a poor change of mood! We were in a good mood, but you are putting us in a bad mood!”

Fluellen used his whip to make the three men race to the front, leaving the boy behind.

The boy said to himself, “As young as I am, I have closely observed these three swashers and swaggerers: Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol. I am boy — that is, a young servant — to all three of them, but all three of them, if they should ever serve me, could not be man — a grown-up male servant — to me because all these three clowns put together do not amount to a single man.

“As for Bardolph, he is white-livered and red-faced — he is a cowardly alcoholic. Because he has a red face, people

think that he is hot-tempered, and so he outfaces his opponents in battles and quarrels, but he does not fight. He prefers to act like a fighter rather than actually fight.

“As for Pistol, he has a killing tongue and a quiet, peaceful sword. He prefers to brag big and fight not even a little. He breaks his words, and he keeps his weapons whole. The battles he fights are verbal, and he does not keep his promises, and his sword is never broken because he does not use it in battle.

“As for Nym, he has heard that men of few words are the best men; he has heard the proverb *vir sapit qui pauca loquitur* — ‘a wise man is one who does not talk much.’ Therefore, Nym is scornful of and does not say his prayers, lest he should be thought a coward. However, his few bad words are matched with as few good deeds and deeds of valor. He never broke any man’s head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk.

“These three men will steal anything, and call it a purchase. Bardolph stole a lute-case, carried it for 36 English miles, and then sold it for a penny and a half. Nym and Bardolph are sworn brothers in filching, aka stealing, and in a town they stole a fire shovel. I knew by that piece of work that the men would carry coals. To carry coals is figurative language for to do degrading, humiliating, and insulting work and to submit to degrading, humiliating, and insulting treatment.

“They would have me as familiar with men’s pockets as the men’s gloves or handkerchiefs. They want me to become a pickpocket and become familiar with the inside of other people’s pockets. This goes much against my sense of what it is to be a man. If I should take something from another person’s pocket so that I can put it into my pocket, it would be a plain pocketing up of wrongs. To pocket up wrongs is figurative language for to be guilty of stealing and to

submit to insults — such as being called a thief. I must leave these three men, and seek some better service with some better men. These three men's villainy goes against my weak stomach, and therefore I must throw it — my job and the contents of my stomach — up.”

The boy returned to the English camp.

Meanwhile, Fluellen and Gower, who was an English Captain, were talking. Fluellen, the Welsh Captain, had a heavy accent. He sometimes pronounced the letter *b* like the letter *p*, the letter *f* like the letter *v*, and the letter *j* like the letters *ch*. He also tended to use fancy words, frequently use synonyms, and repeat the unnecessary phrase “look you.” The Irish Captain, Macmorris, and the Scottish Captain, Jamy, also had heavy accents.

Captain Gower had been searching for Fluellen. Having found him, he said, “Captain Fluellen, you must come immediately to the tunnels that we are building under the besieged city's walls so that we can use explosives to blow them up. The Duke of Gloucester needs to speak with you.”

“You want me to go to the tunnels!” Fluellen said. “Tell the Duke that it is not so good for me to come to the tunnels because, look you, the tunnels have not been constructed according to the disciplines of the war: The concavities [hollowness] of the tunnels are not sufficient [good enough], for, look you, the athversary [adversary], you may discuss this with the Duke, look you, has himself dug tunnels four yards underneath the tunnels we have dug. By Cheshu [Jesu, aka Jesus], I think he will plow [blow] up all our tunnels, if better orders are not given.”

Captain Gower replied, “The Duke of Gloucester, to whom the plan of action of the siege has been given, is being advised by an Irishman who is truly a very valiant gentleman.”

“He is Captain Macmorris, isn’t he?”

“I think that is him.”

“By Cheshu [Jesu, aka Jesus], he is an ass, as much an ass as any ass in the world. I will verify as much in his beard [I will tell him that to his face]. He has no more directions in [knowledge of] the true disciplines of the wars, of the Roman disciplines, look you, than does a puppydog.”

Captain Macmorris, the Irish Captain, accompanied by Jamy, the Scottish Captain, rode up on their horses.

Captain Gower said, “Here he comes; and the Scots Captain, Jamy, is with him.”

Captain Fluellen said, “Captain Jamy is a marvelous falourous [valorous] gentleman, that is certain; and he is of great expedition [quick action] and has great knowledge of the aunchient [ancient] wars, as I know from my particular and personal knowledge of his orders. By Cheshu, he will maintain his argument [keep up his part in a discussion] in a conversation about the disciplines of the pristine [flawless and perfectly executed, and ancient] wars of the Romans as well as any military man in the world.”

Captain Jamy, the Scottish Captain, said, “I say gud-day [good day], Captain Fluellen.”

Captain Fluellen replied, “God-den [Good evening] to your worship, good Captain James.”

Captain Gower asked, “How are you, Captain Macmorris! Have you quit the digging of the tunnels? Have the pioneers — the diggers of the tunnels — stopped their work?”

Captain Macmorris replied, “By Chrish [Christ], la! T’ish [It is] ill done: the work ish give over [is given up], the trompet [trumpet] sounds the order to retreat. By my hand,

I swear, and by my father's soul, the work ish [is] ill done; it ish give over [we have given it up]. If the trumpet had not sounded the order to retreat, I would have blowed [blown] up the town, so Chrish save me — la! — in an hour. Oh, t'ish ill done! T'ish ill done; I swear by my hand, t'ish ill done!”

Captain Fluellen said, “Captain Macmorris, I beg you now, will you voutsafe [vouchsafe, aka grant] me, look you, a few disputations [discussions] with you, as partly touching [regarding] or concerning the disciplines of the war, the Roman wars, in the way of argument, look you, and friendly communication; partly to satisfy my opinion, and partly for the satisfaction, look you, of my mind, as touching the direction of the military discipline; that is the point.”

Captain Jamy, the Scot, said, “It sall [shall] be vary gud [very good], in gud faith [in good faith, aka truly], gud [good] Captains bath [both]: and I sall 'quit [shall requite, aka answer] you with gud leve [with good leave, aka with your permission], as I may pick occasion [as I have the opportunity] that sall [shall] I, marry [by Mother Mary].”

Captain Macmorris said, “It is no time to discourse [This is not a time for conversation], so Chrish [Christ] save me: The day is hot, and the weather, and the wars, and the King, and the Dukes, everyone is busy fighting, and it is no time to discourse. The town is beseeched [besieged], and now the trumpet calls on us to go on attack at the breach; and we talk, and, by Chrish [Christ], we do nothing. It is a shame for us all, so God sa' [save] me, it is a shame to stand still; it is a shame, I swear by my hand because there are throats to be cut, and works to be done; and there ish [is] nothing done, so Chrish sa' [save] me, la!”

Captain Jamy said, “By the mess [Mass], ere theise [before these] eyes of mine take themselves to slomber [slumber;

that is, before I go to sleep tonight] ay'll [I'll] do gud [good] service, or ay'll lie i' the grund for it [or I'll lie in my grave]. Ay [I] owe Got [God] a death; and ay'll [I'll] pay it as valorously as I can, that sall [shall] I surely do, that is the breff [brief] and the long [aka the long and the short of it]. Marry [By Mother Mary], I wad full fain hear [I would very much like to hear] some question [discussion] between you tway [two].”

Captain Fluellen said, “Captain Macmorris, I think, look you, under your correction [correct me if I'm wrong], there are not many of your nation —”

Captain Macmorris was quick to take offense, and he misunderstood Fluellen and took offense too quickly as Fluellen had said nothing wrong: “Of my nation! What ish [is] my nation? Ish [You are] a villain, and a bastard, and a knave, and a rascal. What ish [is] my nation? Who talks of [about] my nation?”

Captain Fluellen replied, “Look you, if you take the matter otherwise than is meant, Captain Macmorris, peradventure [perhaps] I shall think you do not use [treat] me with that affability as in discretion you ought to use [treat] me, look you, since I am as good a man as yourself, both in the disciplines of war, and in the derivation of my birth, and in other particularities.”

Captain Macmorris said, “I do not know that you are so good a man as myself. Chrish [Christ] save me, I will cut off your head.”

Captain Gower said, “Gentlemen, both of you are misunderstanding each other.”

Captain Jamy said, “A! [Aye! aka Yes!] That's a foul fault.”

A trumpet sounded, blowing the notes for a parley — a

meeting between the leaders of the opposing forces.

Captain Gower said, “That is a trumpet from the town. The leader of Harfleur has ordered a trumpeter to sound a parley.”

Captain Fluellen said, “Captain Macmorris, when there is more better opportunity to be required [when a better time presents itself], look you, I will be so bold as to tell you I know the disciplines of war; and there is an end.”

— 3.3 —

The Governor of Harfleur and some citizens of the town stood on the gates. Below them, in front of the gates, stood King Henry V and his soldiers.

King Henry V asked, “What have you, the Governor of Harfleur, resolved to do? This is the last parle we will agree to, so either surrender or fight. Surrender, and hand yourselves over to our best mercy, or like men excited by destructive war the way that a bitch is excited when she is in heat, defy us and tell us to do our worst. I swear that as I am a soldier — a name that I think becomes me best — if I begin the assaults against your town once again, I will not leave the half-conquered Harfleur until she lies buried in the ashes of her buildings. The gates of my mercy shall be all shut up, and my soldiers, rough and hard of heart and having already tasted your blood, with complete freedom given to their bloody hands shall go throughout your town with consciences that can commit any deed applauded in Hell, and shall mow down your fresh, fair virgins and your flowering, growing infants.

“If you continue to fight me, then what is it to me if civil war — a war in which you fight your rightful King — arrayed in flames like the Prince of Fiends, Lucifer, and with his complexion begrimed by smoke from the firing of gunpowder, results in all manner of deadly feats linked

together with waste and desolation?

“If you continue to fight me, then what is it to me, when you yourselves are the cause of all the evil deeds that will make you victims, if your pure maidens fall into the hands of soldiers who will eagerly and violently rape them?

“What reins can stop licentious wickedness when it fiercely gallops down a steep hill? We may as uselessly give our vain commands to the enraged soldiers as they rape and murder and loot as send an order to the sea-monster Leviathan to come ashore. Our enraged soldiers busily engaged in the act of sacking your city will obey my commands just as much as will the whale Leviathan.

“Therefore, you men of Harfleur, take pity on your town and on your people, while my soldiers still obey my commands, and while the cool and temperate wind of human kindness still blows away the filthy and contagious clouds of intoxicating murder, spoil, and villainy.

“If you will not take pity on your town and on your people, why, in a moment look to see the reckless and blind-to-mercy bloody soldiers with their foul hands defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters as they drag them away to be raped. Look to see the reckless and bloody soldiers with their foul hands take your fathers by their silver beards and dash their most reverend heads against the walls. Look to see your naked infants spitted upon pikes as if they were to be roasted in a fireplace while their mad mothers with their confused howls scream into the clouds as their tears fall like a cloudburst just like the Jewish mothers did when Herod’s bloody-hunting slaughtermen killed all the Jewish boys who were two years old or younger.

“What do you say? Will you surrender, and avoid rape, murder, the deaths of infants, and looting, or — guilty because you defend yourselves against your rightful King

— be destroyed?”

The Governor of Harfleur replied, “Our hopes have this day come to an end. The Dauphin, from whom we entreated armies to relieve us, has sent us a message that his armies are not yet ready to raise a siege as great as this. Therefore, great King, we surrender our town and lives to your soft mercy.

“Enter our gates, and do what you want with us and what and who are ours, for we are no longer capable of mounting a defense.”

Henry V ordered, “Open your gates.”

Some citizens of Harfleur began to open the gates.

Henry V then said, “Uncle Exeter, go and enter Harfleur; there remain, and fortify it strongly against the French. Show mercy to all the citizens of Harfleur. As for us, dear uncle, winter is coming on and many of our soldiers are suffering from sickness. Therefore, we will march to Calais, a seaport in France under our control. Tonight in Harfleur we will be your guest; tomorrow we will begin the march.”

The gates now open, King Henry V, Exeter, and the English army entered Harfleur.

— 3.4 —

The French had suffered a major defeat when Harfleur fell.

Katherine had been offered as a bride to Henry V, along with some Dukedoms, earlier, but the English King had rejected the offer and had invaded France. Now it looked as if Katherine might still marry Henry V and that he might become the King of France. Katherine decided to start learning English in a room of the French palace with the help of Alice, a gentlewoman who was somewhat older

than she.

Katherine said, "*Alice, tu as ete en Angleterre, et tu parles bien le langage.*"

[Katherine said, "Alice, you have been in England, and you know the language well."]

Alice replied, "*Un peu, madame.*"

[Alice replied, "A little, madame."]

Katherine said, "*Je te prie, m'enseignez: il faut que j'apprenne a parler. Comment appelez-vous la main en Anglois?*"

[Katherine said, "Please, teach me the language. I need to learn it. What is the English for *la main*?"]

Alice replied, "*La main? Elle est appelee de hand.*"

[Alice replied, "*La main? It is called de hand.*"]

Katherine said, "De hand. *Et les doigts?*"

[Katherine said, "De hand. And the fingers?"]

Alice replied, "*Les doigts? Ma foi, j'oublie les doigts; mais je me souviendrai. Les doigts? Je pense qu'ils sont appeles de fingres; oui, del.*"

[Alice replied, "*Les doigts? By my faith, I have forgotten the English for les doigts, but I will remember. I think that they are called de fingres; yes, de fingres.*"]

Katherine said, "*La main, de hand; les doigts, de fingres. Je pense que je suis le bon ecolier; j'ai gagne deux mots d'Anglois vitement. Comment appelez-vous les ongles?*"

[Katherine said, "*La main is de hand; les doigts is de fingres. I think that I am a good scholar; I have learned already two words of English. What do you call les*

ongles?”]

Alice replied, “*Les ongles? Nous les appelons de nails.*”

[Alice replied, “*Les ongles? We call them de nails.*”]

Katherine said, “De nails. *Ecoutez; dites-moi, si je parle bien: de hand, de fingres, et de nails.*”

[Katherine said, “De nails. Listen, and tell me if I am speaking correctly: de hand, de fingres, and de nails.”]

Alice replied, “*C’est bien dit, madame; il est fort bon Anglois.*”

[Alice replied, “It is well said, madame; it is very good English.”]

Katherine said, “*Dites-moi l’Anglois pour le bras.*”

[Katherine said, “Tell me what is the English for *le bras.*”]

Alice replied, “De arm, madame.”

Katherine asked, “*Et [And] le coude?*”

Alice replied, “De elbow.”

Katherine said, “De elbow. *Je m’en fais la repetition de tous les mots que vous m’avez appris des a present.*”

[Katherine said, “De elbow. I will now repeat all the words you have taught me up until the present.”]

Alice replied, “*Il est trop difficile, madame, comme je pense.*”

[Alice replied, “That is too difficult, madame, I think.”]

Katherine replied, “*Excusez-moi, Alice; écoutez: de hand, de fingres, de nails, de arma, de bilbow.*”

[Katherine replied, “Excuse me, Alice, but you are wrong.

Listen: de hand, de fingres, de nails, de arma, de bilbow.”]

Alice said, “De elbow, madame.”

Katherine said, “*O, Seigneur Dieu, je m’en oublie! De elbow. Comment appelez-vous le col?*”

[Katherine said, “Oh, Lord God, I forgot! De elbow. What do you call *le col?*”]

Alice replied, “De neck, madame.”

Katherine said, “De nick. *Et le menton?*”

Alice replied, “De chin.”

Katherine said, “De sin. *Le col* is de nick; de *menton* is de sin.”

Alice replied, “*Oui. Sauf votre honneur, en verite, vous prononcez les mots aussi droit que les natifs d’Angleterre.*”

[Alice replied, “Yes. Saving your reverence, truly you pronounce the words as straight as do the natives of England.”]

Katherine said, “*Je ne doute point d’apprendre, par la grace de Dieu, et en peu de temps.*”

[Katherine said, “I have no doubt that I shall learn English, by the grace of God, and in only a short time.”]

Alice asked, “*N’avez vous pas deja oublie ce que je vous ai enseigne?*”

[Alice asked, “Haven’t you already forgotten what I taught you?”]

Katherine replied, “*Non, je reciterai a vous promptement: de hand, de fingres, de mails —*”

[Katherine replied, “No, I shall repeat it for you right now:

de hand, de fingres, de mails —”]

Alice said, “De nails, madame.”

Katherine said, “De nails, de arm, de ilbow.”

Alice said, “*Sauf votre honneur*, de elbow.”

[Alice said, “If it please your honor, de elbow.”]

Katherine said, “*Ainsi dis-je*: de elbow, de nick, *et* de sin. *Comment appelez-vous le pied et la robe?*”

[Katherine said, “That’s what I said: de elbow, de nick, and de sin. What do you call *le pied* and *la robe*?”]

Alice replied, “De foot, madame; *et* [and] de coun.”

This shocked Katherine. The English word “foot” sounds similar to the French word “*foutre*,” which means “f**k.” Alice’s word “coun,” by which she meant the English word “gown,” sounds similar to the French word “*con*,” which means “c*nt.”

Katherine said, “De foot *et* de coun! *O Seigneur Dieu! ce sont mots de son mauvais, corruptible, gros, et impudique, et non pour les dames d’honneur d’user: je ne voudrais prononcer ces mots devant les seigneurs de France pour tout le monde. Foh! Le foot et le coun! Neanmoins, je reciterai une autre fois ma lecon ensemble: de hand, de fingres, de nails, de arm, de elbow, de nick, de sin, de foot, de coun.*”

[Katherine said, “De foot and de coun! Oh, Lord God! These words are evil, corrupting, gross, and shameless, and not for an honorable lady to use! I would not say these words in front of French gentlemen for the entire world. Oh! Le foot and le coun! Nevertheless, I will recite all of my lesson again: de hand, de fingres, de nails, de arm, de elbow, de nick, de sin, de foot, de coun.”]

Alice said, “Excellent, madame!”

Katherine replied, “*C’est assez pour une fois. Allons-nous a diner.*”

[Katherine replied, “That is enough for one lesson. Let’s go to dinner.”]

— 3.5 —

In a room of the French palace, the King of France, his son the Dauphin, the Duke of Bourbon, the Constable of France, and other high-ranking officials were meeting to discuss King Henry V’s victory at Harfleur and his tactical withdrawal to Calais.

The King of France said, “It is certain that he has passed the Somme River.”

The Somme River is halfway between Harfleur and Calais.

The Constable said, “If we don’t fight him, my lord, let us not live in France; let us all give up and give our vineyards to a barbarous people.”

The Dauphin said, “*Oh, Dieu vivant!* [Oh, living God!] These Englishmen are a few sprays — offshoots and ejaculations — of us French. They shot up from what our fathers emptied out of their lustful bodies when they — our Norman ancestors — invaded and conquered England in 1066. These Englishmen are our ancestors’ scions — they are sprigs that were grafted onto wild and savage stock. Shall they shoot up so suddenly into the clouds and look down on us, who are descended from the people who grafted them?”

Bourbon said, “They are Normans, they are only the bastards of the Normans who conquered them and then slept with their women, they are Norman bastards! *Mort de ma vie!* [Death of my life!] If they march along without our

engaging them in battle, I will sell my Dukedom and buy a wet and slimy farm in that misshapen isle of Albion, aka England, Scotland, and Wales.”

The Constable said, “*Dieu de batailles!* [God of battles!] Where has the English army gotten this courage and spirit? Is not their climate foggy, raw, and dull, and does not the Sun, as if in despite, look pale as it looks down on them and kills their fruit with frowns? Can ale, their barley-broth, which is no better than boiled water, and which is a medicinal drink for hard-ridden horses of inferior breed, infuse and warm up their cold blood to such valiant heat? And shall our quick blood, spirited with wine, seem frosty? Hot blood is courageous blood. Oh, for the honor of our land, let us not be like icicles hanging from our houses’ roofs, while a more frosty people are ready to sweat drops of gallant youth in our rich fields of battle! But we should call our fields poor because of the lack of quality in the lords they have bred.”

The Dauphin said, “By my faith and honor, our ladies mock us, and plainly say that our spirit has been bred out of us and that therefore they will give their bodies to the lust of English youth to newly restock France with bastard warriors.”

Bourbon said, “They tell us to go to the English dancing-schools and teach the high jumps in the lavolta dances and the swift running steps in the coranto dances; they say that our grace is only in our heels, and that we are most lofty runaways — they say that we are nobly born men who swiftly run away from battles.”

“Where is Montjoy the herald?” the King of France asked. “Bring him here quickly. Let him greet the King of England with our sharp defiance. Up, Princes, and with your honorable spirit of honor more sharply edged than your swords, hurry to the battlefield! Charles Delabreth,

High Constable of France; you Dukes of Orleans, Bourbon, and of Berri, Alençon, Brabant, Bar, and Burgundy; Jaques Chatillon, Rambures, Vaudemont, Beaumont, Grandpré, Roussi, and Fauconberg, Foix, Lestrade, Bouciqualt, and Charolois; high Dukes, great Princes, Barons, lords and Knights, for the sake of your great positions and family-seats, clear yourselves of great shames. Stop Harry England, who sweeps through our land with battle flags and streamers painted with the blood of the French soldiers at Harfleur. Rush against his army just like the melted snow avalanches upon the valleys, whose low vassal seat the Alps spit and empty their phlegm upon. Go against him — you have power enough — defeat and capture him, and bring him as your prisoner in a captive’s military carriage to the city of Rouen.”

The Constable said, “This command is appropriate for your greatness, King of France. I am sorry that the number of Henry V’s soldiers is so few and that his soldiers are sick and famished in their march because I am sure that when Henry V sees our French army, he will drop his heart into his stomach out of fear and offer us a ransom not to attack his army and him.”

The King of France replied, “Therefore, Lord Constable, order Montjoy to quickly go and let him say to Harry England that we send to know what ransom he will willingly give to us.”

He added, “Prince Dauphin, you shall stay with us in Rouen.”

The Dauphin objected, “Please, no, your majesty.”

“Be patient, for you shall remain with us,” the King of France ordered.

He then ordered, “Now go forth, Constable and all you Princes, and quickly bring us word that Henry V’s pride

has fallen without a battle or that his army has fallen in battle.”

— 3.6 —

In the English camp at Picardy in northern France, Gower, the English Captain, and Fluellen, the Welsh Captain, met and talked about a battle that had occurred when the English soldiers took possession of a bridge over the Ternoise River. The English soldiers needed to cross this bridge on their march to Calais.

Captain Gower said, “How are you, Captain Fluellen! Have you come from the bridge?”

Captain Fluellen replied, “I assure you, there have been very excellent services committed at the bridge.”

“Is the Duke of Exeter safe?”

“The Duke of Exeter is as magnanimous and great in heart as Agamemnon, Commander-in-Chief of the Greek soldiers allied to fight the Trojans. Exeter is a man whom I love and honor with my soul, and my heart, and my duty, and my life, and my living, and my uttermost power. He is not — God be praised and blessed! — at all hurt in the world; instead, he keeps the pridge [bridge] most valiantly, with excellent discipline.

“There is an Aunchient [Ancient, aka Ensign] Lieutenant there at the pridge [bridge]. I think in my very conscience that he is as valiant a man as Mark Antony, who after the death of his friend Julius Caesar attempted to seize control of Rome, and he is a man of no estimation or reputation in the world, but I did see him do as gallant service as any soldier.”

Captain Gower asked, “What do you call him? What is his name?”

Captain Fluellen replied, "He is called Aunchient Pistol."

"I don't know him."

Pistol now came walking toward the two Captains.

Captain Fluellen said, "Here is the man himself."

Pistol said to Fluellen, "Captain, I beg you to do me a favor. The Duke of Exeter well respects you."

Captain Fluellen replied, "That is true, and I praise God because of it. I have merited and earned some respect from Exeter."

Pistol said, "Bardolph, a soldier, firm and sound of heart, and of vigorous and sturdy valor, has, by cruel fate, and by unstable Fortune's furious fickle wheel ... the wheel of that blind goddess who stands upon the rolling restless stone —"

The goddess Fortune was often shown blindfolded and turning the Wheel of Fortune to determine whether a person's fortune would be good or bad, and was often depicted as standing on a round and rolling stone. Sometimes the goddess Fortune was depicted doing both at the same time.

Captain Fluellen explicated the two images of the goddess Fortune: "Excuse me, Aunchient Pistol, for interrupting you. Fortune is painted blind, with a bandage before her eyes, to signify to you that Fortune is blind; and she is painted also with a wheel, to signify to you, which is the moral of it, that she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability, and variation: and her foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone, which rolls, and rolls, and rolls. Truly, the poet makes a most excellent description of it — in a letter written while he was in exile, Ovid wrote about 'the goddess who admits by her unsteady wheel her

own fickleness; she always has its apex beneath her swaying foot.’ Fortune is an excellent symbolical figure.”

Pistol replied, “Fortune is Bardolph’s foe, and frowns on him; for he has stolen a pax, and he has been sentenced to be hanged — a damned and shameful death!”

A pax was a religious item: a tablet depicting the Crucifixion. The priest and church members taking communion passed around and kissed the pax. *Pax* is Latin for “peace,” and King Henry V had turned the *pax* of England and France into war by invading France.

Pistol continued, “Let gallows gape for dog — dogs are executed for their offences — but let man go free and let not a rope made of hemp suffocate his windpipe. But Exeter has given the doom of death for a pax of little price. Therefore, go and speak to Exeter: The Duke will hear your voice. Do not let Bardolph’s vital thread of life be cut with the edge of a hangman’s cheap rope and with vile reproach. Speak, Captain, to save Bardolph’s life, and I will repay you.”

Captain Fluellen was not the type of man to be bribed. He said, “Aunchient Pistol, I do partly understand your meaning.”

Pistol’s verbose verbiage was difficult to understand — and so was Captain Fluellen’s.

“Why, then, let us rejoice therefore. A man’s life has been saved.”

Captain Fluellen replied, “Not so fast, Aunchient, it is not a thing to rejoice at, because, if, look you, Bardolph were my brother, I would still desire the Duke to use his good pleasure and do what he wants to do, and put him to execution; for discipline ought to be used. I am all for discipline, and King Henry V has made it clear that soldiers

are not allowed to loot churches on pain of death.”

Angry, Pistol said, “Die and be damned! — and here is something for your friendship!”

Pistol made an obscene gesture with one middle finger.

Captain Fluellen said, “It is well.”

Pistol said, “Let me double that!”

Pistol made two obscene gestures with both of his middle fingers and then exited.

Captain Fluellen said, “Very good.”

Captain Fluellen believed in discipline, but he was not a hothead and he was not a coward. He had more important things to do than discipline Pistol right now — he had to give Captain Gower and King Henry V news about the bridge. He was also willing to cut Pistol some slack right now because 1) he believed that Pistol had done deeds of courage at the bridge, and 2) Pistol was upset about the soon-to-occur death of a friend. However, at a later time, when the time was right, he would deal with Pistol — no Aunchient should talk that way to a Captain.

Captain Gower recognized Pistol, however, and said, “Why, he is an arrant counterfeit rascal; I remember him now; he is a bawd, aka pimp, and a cutpurse, aka pickpocket.”

Captain Fluellen said, “I’ll assure you that he uttered as brave words at the bridge as you shall see in a summer’s day. But it is very well; what he has spoken to me, that is well, but I tell you, when the time is right —”

Captain Gower interrupted, “Why, he is a stupid oaf, a fool, a rogue, who now and then goes to the wars, to put on airs and magnify himself at his return to London in the guise of

a soldier. And such fellows are perfect in memorizing the names of the great commanders. They memorize where battles were fought, at such and such a fortification, at such a breach, with such a military escort; who came off bravely, who was shot, who was disgraced, what terms the enemy accepted; and all this they learn perfectly in military language, which they trick up and embellish with freshly coined oaths. What a beard trimmed like a general's and what some well-worn military clothing will do among foaming bottles and ale-washed wits is wonderful to be thought on. People such as he tell great lies so they can get treated in bars. Captain Fluellen, you must learn to know such slanderers of this age, or else you may be marvelously mistook and believe that a coward is a hero."

Captain Fluellen had been listening closely to Captain Gower, and he believed what Captain Gower had told him about Pistol. True, Pistol had spoken well at the bridge, and at first Captain Fluellen had believed what Pistol had said, but impressive words did not necessarily translate into impressive deeds. Also, he now remembered that Pistol was in a group of three men that he had had to force to go and fight at the breach of the wall of Harfleur.

Captain Fluellen said, "I tell you what, Captain Gower; I do perceive that Pistol is not the man whom he would gladly pretend to the world he is. If I find the right opportunity, I will tell him what I think of him."

They heard the sound of a drum.

Captain Fluellen said, "Listen, the King is coming, and I must speak with him from [about] the pridge [bridge]."

King Henry V, Gloucester, and some soldiers came over to Captain Fluellen and Captain Gower.

Captain Fluellen said, "God pless [bless] your majesty!"

King Henry V said, "How are you, Fluellen! Have you come from the bridge?"

"Ay, so please your majesty. The Duke of Exeter has very gallantly maintained the pridge. The French soldiers have gone off, look you; and there have been gallant and most prave [brave] passages of arms and fighting. By Mother Mary, the athversary [adversaries] had possession of the pridge; but he was forced to retire, and the Duke of Exeter is master of the pridge. I can tell your majesty that the Duke is a prave man."

"What men have you lost, Fluellen?" King Henry V asked.

"The perdition of the athversary [adversary] has been very great, reasonably great, by Mother Mary, but as far as I know, I think that the Duke has lost not a single man, except for one who is likely to be executed for robbing a church, one Bardolph, if your majesty know the man. You may remember seeing him: His face is all bubukles [abscessed carbuncles; Fluellen had combined words meaning "abscess" and "carbuncle"], and pistules and pimples, and knobs, and flames of fire, and his lips blows at his nose [his lower lip jutted out and his breath was like a bellows inflaming his nose], and it is like a coal of fire, sometimes plue [blue] and sometimes red; but by now his nose is executed and his fire's out."

Of course, although Captain Fluellen did not know it, King Henry V knew Bardolph from before he became King; Bardolph had been one of his low-life friends in Eastcheap.

Henry V said, "We would have the breath of all such offenders so cut off. We give express orders that in our marches through the country that there be nothing taken by force from the villages, nothing taken except what is paid for, and none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language because when lenity and cruelty play

for a Kingdom, the gentler gambler is the soonest winner.”

A trumpet announced the arrival of Montjoy, the herald sent by the King of France to deliver a message to King Henry V.

A distinctive trumpet call sounded, and Montjoy came over to Henry V. Montjoy was wearing the distinctive clothing — a tabard coat emblazoned with the arms of the King of the France — that identified him as the King of France’s herald. As a herald, Montjoy could not be ethically harmed by his enemy.

Montjoy said, “You know who I am by my tabard coat.”

Henry V replied, “Well, then, I know you. What shall I learn from you?”

Montjoy replied, “My master’s mind.”

“Reveal it.”

“Thus says my King,” Montjoy said. “Say you to Harry of England: Though we seemed dead, we only slept. Advantage is a better soldier than rashness: He was rash to invade France, but now we have the advantage of him. Tell him we could have rebuked him at Harfleur, but that we thought it was not good to squeeze the pus from an abscess before the right time. Now is the right time. We speak now, and our voice is imperial. The King of England shall repent his folly, see his weakness, and wonder at our patience. Bid him therefore consider what ransom he can offer us in payment of the injuries that he has inflicted on France. This ransom must be in proportion to the losses we have borne, the subjects we have lost, and the disgrace we have digested and endured. To make complete compensation for these injuries, the ransom would weigh so much that his weak pettiness would bow under the heavy load. For our losses, his entire wealth is too poor; for the shedding of our

blood, the entire roll call of the soldiers of his Kingdom too small a number; and for our disgrace, his own person, kneeling at our feet, would be only a weak and worthless satisfaction. To this, add defiance, and tell him, in conclusion, that he has betrayed his followers, whose condemnation is pronounced. So says my King and master; I have performed my duty in telling you his words.”

King Henry V answered, “What is your name? I know your profession and ability.”

“Montjoy.”

“You do your office fairly and well,” Henry V said. “Go back to your King and tell him that I do not seek him now to fight him. Instead, I prefer to march on to Calais without any opposition. To say the truth, although it is not wise to confess so much to a crafty enemy who has the advantage over us, my soldiers are much enfeebled because of sickness, the numbers of my soldiers are greatly lessened because of battles and disease, and those few soldiers I have are almost no better than so many French. But when my soldiers were healthy, I tell you, herald, I thought one pair of English legs could defeat in battle three pairs of French legs. But, forgive me, God, for bragging like this! Your air of France and your heir of the King of France have blown that vice of bragging into me, as it has into all Frenchmen. I must repent.

“Go, therefore, and tell your master that here I am; my ransom is this frail and worthless trunk that is my body — I do not offer him a trunk that is filled with treasure. My army is only a weak and sickly guard. But tell your King that we will continue on our way with God leading us, even if the King of France himself and another neighbor just like him stand in our way.”

Henry V gave Montjoy some money, as was traditional,

and said, “There’s for your labor, Montjoy. Go tell your master to consider matters carefully. If we may continue our journey without opposition, we will; but if your army hinders us, we shall discolor your tawny ground with your red blood.

“Therefore, Montjoy, fare you well. The sum of all our answer is only this: As we are, we will not seek a battle; nor, as we are, we will not shun it. Tell your master this.”

“I will tell him. Thanks to your highness.”

Montjoy exited.

The Duke of Gloucester, Henry V’s brother, said to him, “I hope they will not come after us and battle us now.”

“We are in God’s hand, brother, not in theirs,” Henry V said. “We will march to the bridge; it is nearing night. Tonight beyond the river we and our army will camp, and tomorrow we will march away.”

— 3.7 —

At the French camp, near Agincourt, the Constable of France, the Lord Rambures, Orleans, the Dauphin, and others were talking. In the morning they would fight the English army in the Battle of Agincourt on that day of 25 October 1415. The French vastly outnumbered the English, and the French were confident — make that overconfident — of victory, and they were joking with and insulting each other.

The Constable said in the middle of a discussion about armor and horses, “Ha! I have the best armor in the world. I wish it were morning so that we could begin the battle!”

Orleans said, “You have excellent armor, but give my horse his due.”

The Constable said, "It is the best horse of Europe."

"Will it never be morning?" Orleans complained.

The Dauphin said, "My Lord of Orleans, and my lord High Constable, are you talking about horses and suits of armor?"

Orleans replied, "You are as well provided with both as any Prince in the world."

"What a long night is this!" the Dauphin complained. "I would not exchange my horse for any that treads the earth on four legs. Ha! My horse bounds from the earth, as if his entrails were as light as hairs. What horse do I have? *Le cheval volant* [The flying horse], the Pegasus, who flew *chez les narines de feu* [in the nostrils of fire]! He flew bearing a hero to battle the fire-breathing Chimera. When I bestride him, I soar and I am a hawk. He trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes. My horse runs quickly and seldom touches the earth; when it does touch the earth, its hoofs create a musical sound."

Pegasus was a winged horse that came into existence when the ancient Greek hero Perseus cut off the head of Medusa, a Gorgon. Medusa's blood spouted, and Pegasus came into existence from that blood.

Orleans said, "He's of the color of the nutmeg: brown."

The Dauphin added, "And of the heat of the ginger. My horse is a beast for Perseus. My horse is made of the purer, nobler elements of air and fire; and the duller and baser elements of earth and water never appear in him, except when he touches the earth patiently and stillly while his rider mounts him. My horse is indeed a horse, and all other jades you may call beasts."

The Dauphin was not good with words. He had just said that his horse was not affected by the baser elements except when he — the Dauphin — mounted him. The Dauphin had also implied that his horse was better than he was, and he had said that his horse was a jade — a nag.

The Constable said, “Indeed, my lord, it is a most absolute and excellent horse.”

The Dauphin said, “It is the Prince of palfreys; his neigh is like the bidding of a Monarch and his countenance enforces homage.”

Again, the Dauphin had not spoken well. If his horse was the Prince of palfreys, it was the best of palfreys, but a palfrey was not a battle horse — it was a smaller, lighter horse, the kind that was often ridden by ladies.

Aware that the Dauphin was unknowingly making a fool of himself, Orleans said, “Speak no more, cousin.”

“No,” the Dauphin replied, “a man has no wit if he cannot, from the rising of the lark in the morning to the taking of shelter by the lamb at night, state varied and deserved praise on my palfrey. It is a theme as fluent and flowing as the sea. It can turn each grain of sand into an eloquent speaker. My horse is theme enough for them all to talk about. My horse is a fitting subject for a sovereign to talk about, and for a sovereign’s sovereign to ride on; and for the citizens of the world, whether familiar to us or unknown to us to stop doing their jobs and wonder at him. I once wrote a sonnet in his praise and began it in this way: ‘Wonder of nature —’”

Orleans interrupted and said, “I have heard a sonnet written to a man’s mistress that began in that way.”

The Dauphin said, “Then the writer of that sonnet imitated the sonnet that I composed to my courser, for my horse is

my mistress.”

Here the Dauphin had used the correct word for a warhorse: a courser.

Orleans said, “Your mistress bears well.”

He thought, *That is a good joke. His mistress — the horse — bears his weight well when he rides it. His mistress — a woman — bears his weight well when he rides her.*

The Dauphin said, “You should say, ‘bears *me* well.’ That is the prescribed praise and perfection of a good and particular mistress. A mistress should be mistress to only one man.”

The Constable said, “I thought that yesterday your mistress shrewdly shook your back.”

He thought, *That is a good joke. A mistress that shrewdly shakes one’s back is not a good mistress. A mistress — a horse — that shrewdly shakes one’s back provides a rough ride. A mistress — a woman — that shrewdly shakes one’s back may be good in bed but is still a shrew — an evil-tongued woman. Such women can be punished by putting a bridle in their mouth.*

The Dauphin replied, “So perhaps did yours.”

“Mine was not bridled.”

The Dauphin said, “In that case, she was probably old and gentle; and you rode your mistress like a kern of Ireland — a barefoot Irish peasant pressed into service as a soldier — with your French hose off, and in such tight trousers that you might as well have been barelegged.”

The Dauphin thought, *Yes, you would have ridden your mistress while half-stripped for ease of action.*

“You have good judgment in horsemanship,” the Constable

said.

He thought, *You have good judgment in whoresmanship.*

“Be warned by me,” the Dauphin said. “People who ride their mistresses like that and ride without caution fall into foul bogs.”

The Dauphin thought, *That is a really dirty joke. If the mistress is a woman, the foul bog is the dirtiest hole in the part of a woman’s body that she is least proud of.*

The Dauphin added, “I had rather have my horse as my mistress.”

The Constable said, “I prefer to have my mistress be a jade.”

A jade could be either a tired old horse or a tired old woman.

The Dauphin replied, “I tell you, Constable, my mistress wears his own hair.”

The Dauphin thought, *That is a pretty good insult. I am implying that the Constable’s mistress — a woman — has lost her hair. Why do women lose their hair? Sometimes it is the result of venereal disease.*

The Constable replied, “I could make as true a boast as that even if I had a sow as my mistress.”

The Dauphin replied, “Remember 2 Peter 2:22: ‘*Le chien est retourne a son propre vomissement, et la truie lavee au borbier*’ [‘The dog returns to its own vomit, and the washed sow returns to the mire’]. You would make use of anything.”

He thought, *That is a major insult. I said that the Constable would make use of anything ... to score a point, but the phrase “make use of” also means “to sleep with.”*

The Constable said, “Yet do I not use my horse for my mistress, or any such proverb so little apt to the purpose. Your Biblical quotation has little relevance to the topic of our conversation.”

He thought, *That is a pretty good insult: “use [sexually] my horse for my mistress.” I am implying that the Dauphin has sex with his horse.*

Rambures wanted to change the topic of conversation; these insults were major.

He asked, “My Lord Constable, the armor that I saw in your tent tonight, are those stars or Suns upon it?”

“Stars, my lord.”

The Dauphin said, “Some of them will fall tomorrow, I hope.”

The Constable replied, “And yet my sky shall not want. Even if I lose a few stars, I will have plenty more.”

The Dauphin said, “That may be, for you bear too many stars, and it would make more honor for you if you were to lose some in battle.”

He thought, *That is a major insult. I am telling the Constable that it would be a good thing if his armor showed some signs of having been used.*

The Constable replied, “The stars I bear on my armor are similar to the boasts your horse bears when it bears you on its back. My armor is fine as it is, and your horse would trot just as well if some of your brags dismounted.”

The Dauphin replied, “I wish that I could load my horse with all the praises it deserves!”

He added, “Will it never be day? I will trot tomorrow for a mile, and I will pave that mile with English corpses and

faces.”

The Constable said, “I will not say what you said because if I were you, I would be worried about being faced out of my way — I would be worried about being put to shame and turned from my way. But I wish that it were morning because I would like to be about the ears of the English.”

Rambures said, “Will anyone gamble with me for the stake of twenty English prisoners?”

The Constable said, “You must first put yourself in danger in the battle tomorrow, before you have them.”

The Dauphin said, “It is midnight; I’ll go arm myself.”

He departed.

Orleans said, “The Dauphin longs for morning.”

Rambures said, “He longs to eat the English.”

“I think he will eat all he kills,” the Constable said. “In other words, I do not think that he will kill anyone.”

“By the white hand of my lady, the Dauphin is a gallant Prince,” Orleans said.

“Swear by her foot, so that she can stamp out your oath,” the Constable said. “You will find that you will wish that you had not made that oath.”

Orleans said, “The Dauphin is absolutely the most active gentleman of France.”

The Constable replied, “Doing is activity; and he will always be doing.”

He thought, *The Dauphin will always be busy, and always be accomplishing little.*

Orleans still defended the Dauphin, “He never did harm

that I heard of.”

“He will do no harm to the enemy tomorrow,” the Constable said. “He will still keep that good name.”

Orleans was persistent: “I know him to be valiant.”

The Constable replied, “I was told that by a person who knows him better than you.”

“Who told you?”

“He told me so himself; and he said he cared not who knew it.”

“He does not need to brag about his valor; it is not a hidden virtue in him.”

“I disagree, sir,” the Constable said. “No one has ever seen the Dauphin’s courage except for his footman: The Dauphin is brave enough to give orders to his footman. The Dauphin’s valor is hooded; when the need for his valor appears, it will ’bate.”

He thought, *That is a pretty major insult. We keep hawks hooded during the hunt until it is time to release them and let them kill their prey. When the hood is taken off the hawk so that it can hunt, it will bate — spread — its wings. I have said that when the time comes for the Dauphin to show his valor, it will ’bate — that is, it will abate, and shrivel up and die.*

Orleans said, “According to the proverb, ill will never said well. Obviously, you do not like the Dauphin.”

The Constable said, “I will top your proverb with this proverb: There is flattery in friendship.”

“And I will respond with this proverb: Give the Devil his due.”

“Well answered,” the Constable said. “Your friend the Dauphin is standing in for the Devil. I respond with this proverb that aims straight at the heart of your proverb: A pox on the Devil.”

“You are better than I am at proverbs the way that a fool is better at quickly shooting replies than a wise man is. Remember this proverb: A fool’s bolt, aka blunted arrow, is soon shot. Foolish archers do not wait for the proper time to shoot in battle; they shoot quickly. A wise archer waits for the proper time to shoot.”

“You have shot over the target,” the Constable said. “Your proverb is not a suitable answer to my proverb — you have missed your target.”

“You say that I have shot over the target,” Orleans said. “I say that this is not the first time you have overshot — the things that you have said to the Dauphin tonight were way out of line.”

A messenger arrived.

The messenger said, “My lord High Constable, the English are camped within fifteen hundred paces of your tents.”

“Who has measured the ground?”

“The Lord Grandpré.”

“He is a valiant and most expert gentleman,” the Constable said. “I wish that it were day! Alas, poor Harry of England! He does not long for the dawn as we do.”

Orleans said, “What a wretched and tiresome fellow is this King of England, to blunder aimlessly with his fat-brained, thick-witted followers so much farther from England than he would have gone if he had had even average intelligence!”

“If the English had any intelligence, they would run away,” the Constable said.

“They lack intelligence,” Orleans said. “Their skulls are so thick that they have no room for brains.”

Rambures said, “That island of England breeds very valiant creatures; their mastiffs are of unmatched courage. We know that from their performance at bear-baiting — they are very competent at tormenting chained bears.”

Orleans said, “English mastiffs are foolish curs that run with their eyes closed into the mouth of a Russian bear and have their heads crushed like rotten apples! You may as well say that that’s a valiant flea that dares to bite the lip of a lion and drink its breakfast of blood there.”

“True,” the Constable said, “and the men resemble the mastiffs in robust and rough comings-on, leaving their brains behind with their wives. If you then give them great meals of beef and iron and steel, they will eat like wolves and fight like Devils.”

“True,” Orleans said, “but these English soldiers are cruelly out of beef.”

“Then we will find tomorrow that they have only stomachs to eat and none to fight,” the Constable said. “Now it is time to arm. Come, shall we arm?”

Orleans said, “It is now two o’clock, but, let me see, by ten o’clock, we shall each have taken prisoner a hundred Englishmen.”

CHAPTER 4 (Henry V)

Prologue

The Chorus walked on stage and said, “Now open your minds and imagine a time when creeping murmur and the poring dark fills the wide vessel of the universe. The soldiers talk quietly and strain their eyes trying to see in the dark. The hum of either army quietly sounds, so that the sentinels at their posts almost can hear the secret whispers of each army’s watch. Watchfires rise up on both sides, and through their pale flames the soldiers of each army see the other army’s soldiers’ highlighted yet shadowed faces. Steed threatens steed with high and boastful neighs that pierce the night’s dull ear, and from the tents the armorers, fitting the Knights into their armor, busily use hammers to close up the rivets, fastening the helmet to the cuirass. These sounds give dreadful note of preparation for the upcoming battle. The country cocks crow, the clocks toll, and both announce the third hour of drowsy morning.

“Proud of their numbers and sure of forthcoming victory, the confident and arrogant French gamble with dice, using the despised English soldiers they expect to soon take prisoner as their stakes. The French soldiers chide the crippled slow-gaited night that, like a foul and ugly witch, limps so tediously away.

“The poor condemned English, like animals waiting patiently to be sacrificed, by their watchful fires sit patiently and inwardly ruminate about the danger that will come with the morning. Their melancholy bearing, lean cheeks, and war-worn coats make the gazing Moon regard them as so many horrible ghosts.

“Whoever will now behold the royal Captain of this ruined band of English soldiers walking from watch to watch,

from tent to tent, let him cry, ‘Praise and glory on his head!’ For forth King Henry V goes and visits all his soldiers. He bids them good morning with a modest smile and calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen. Upon his royal face there is no sign of how dread an army has surrounded him, nor does he sacrifice even one little bit of color to the weary night throughout which he stays awake. Instead, he looks fresh and suppresses his weariness with a cheerful appearance and sweet majesty.

“Every unhappy soldier, tormented by anxiety and pale in face, who sees him plucks comfort from his looks. His generous eye gives to everyone a universal gift just like the Sun by shining gives a gift to everyone on earth. Harry’s looks thaw cold fear, and men of mean origins and men of noble origins all behold, as my unworthy words declare, a little touch of Harry in the night.

“And so our theatrical scene must to the battle fly, where — it is such a pity! — we shall much disgrace the name of Agincourt by trying to present that battle on stage with four or five most vile and ragged blunted swords, very evilly wielded in a ridiculous brawl more suited for a tavern than a battlefield.

“Yet sit and see, and imagine what the real battle was like as you watch our mere imitation of battle.”

— 4.1 —

King Henry V, Bedford, and Gloucester talked together in the English camp.

“Gloucester, it is true that we are in great danger,” Henry V said. “The greater therefore should our courage be.”

He added, “Good morning, brother Bedford.

“God Almighty! There is some quality of goodness hidden

even in evil things, if only men would seek to find it. Here's an example: Our bad neighbors — the French soldiers — make us early stirrers, which is both healthy and good time management. In addition, they are our outward consciences, and preachers to us all, because they admonish us that we should prepare ourselves fairly for our end and be prepared to die in such a condition that we will go to Paradise. Thus may we gather nectar and honey from the weed, and learn a moral maxim even from the Devil himself.”

Erpingham walked over to the group.

“Good morning, old Sir Thomas Erpingham,” Henry V said. “A good soft pillow for that good white head would be better than a churlish turf of France.”

“Not so, my liege,” Erpingham replied. “I like this lodging better, because now I can say, ‘I live like a King.’”

“It is good for men to have an example of how they can embrace their present pains,” Henry V said. “It eases and lightens a heavy spirit. When the mind is quickened, and released from doubt, the bodily organs, although they were defunct and dead before, end their drowsy sleep and again agilely move. They are like a snake that was sluggish until it sloughed its skin and began to move again with nimbleness and agility.

“Lend me your cloak, Sir Thomas.”

Sir Thomas gave his cloak to the King.

“Brothers both, commend me to the Princes in our camp,” Henry V said. “Give my greetings to them, and tell them to meet me soon at my tent.”

Gloucester replied, “We shall, my liege.”

“Shall I go with and attend your grace?” Erpingham asked.

“No, my good Knight,” Henry V said. “Go with my brothers to my lords of England. I and my heart must commune for a while, and I want no other company.”

Erpingham replied, “The Lord in Heaven bless you, noble Harry!”

Everyone except the King left.

Henry V said to himself, “God bless you, old heart! You speak cheerfully.”

Pistol walked over to Henry V, who was disguised by Erpingham’s cloak and the darkness.

Pistol asked, “*Qui vous là?*”

This was bad French. Pistol should have asked, “*Qui va là?*” This means, “Who goes there?”

Henry V replied, “A friend.”

“Discuss unto me —” Pistol began.

His language was too fancy and not accurate. He should have simply said, “Tell me—”

He continued, “Are you an officer? Or are you of low birth, a common soldier, and an ordinary man?”

“I am a gentleman of a company.”

The King’s words meant, “I am a person of good birth serving in the King’s army.”

“Do you trail the puissant pike behind you as you walk?” Pistol asked.

Pikes were wooden spears twelve feet or so in length, and often the soldier would grip a pike behind the spearhead and let the other end of the pike trail — that is, drag — behind him on the ground.

“Yes, I do,” Henry V said. “Who are you?”

Pistol replied, “As good a gentleman as the Holy Roman Emperor.”

“Then you are higher in rank than the King,” Henry V said.

Pistol spoke highly — but overly familiarly — of the King: “The King’s a good lad and a heart of gold. He is a lad of life and a lucky and renowned Devil. He comes from good parents, and his fist is most valiant. I kiss his dirty shoe, and from the bottom of my heart I love the lovely young fellow.”

As usual, Pistol spoke using over-emphatic language. “I kiss his dirty shoe” meant “I respect him.”

Pistol was capable of ordinary, correct language. He asked, “What is your name?”

Henry V replied, “Harry le Roy.”

Le roi is French for “the King,” so Henry V was telling Pistol the truth.

“Leroy!” Pistol said. “That is a Cornish name. Are you one of the soldiers who came from Cornwall?”

“No, I am a Welshman,” Henry V replied.

“Do you know Fluellen?”

“Yes.”

“Tell him that I’ll knock his leek against his head on Saint Davy’s Day.”

A leek is an edible vegetable related to the onion. Saint David is the patron saint of Wales, and his annual feast day — Pistol called it “Saint Davy’s Day” — is March 1. The leek is Saint David’s personal emblem, and many Welch

wear a leek on their clothing on Saint David's Day. Fluellen wore a leek in his cap on that day to celebrate his being from Wales.

Henry V replied, "Don't wear your dagger in your cap on that day, or Fluellen will knock your dagger against your head."

"Are you his friend?"

"Yes, and his kinsman, too."

"Here is a middle finger for you, then," Pistol said, making the (in)appropriate gesture.

"I thank you," Henry V said politely. "May God be with you!"

Leaving, Pistol called back over his shoulder, "My name is Pistol."

Alone, King Henry V said to himself, "Your name, Pistol, fits your fierceness."

Captain Fluellen and Captain Gower now approached separately. Unnoticed, Henry V stood quietly in the shadows.

Captain Gower called, "Captain Fluellen!"

Captain Fluellen replied, "In the name of Jesu Christ, speak lower. It is the greatest admiration of the universal world [Everyone is amazed] when the true and aunchient prerogatifes [ancient prerogatives, or rules] and laws of the wars are not kept. If you would take the pains to examine the wars of the ancient Roman general Pompey the Great, you shall find, I promise you, that there is no tiddle toddle [tittle-tattle, aka chattering] nor pibble pabble [bibble-babble, aka babbling] in Pompey's camp. I promise you that you shall find the ceremonies of the wars, and the cares

of it, and the forms of it, and the sobriety [seriousness] of it, and the modesty [decency] of it, to be otherwise.”

“Why, the enemy is loud,” Captain Gower said. “You hear the enemy soldiers all night.”

“If the enemy is an ass and a fool and a prating idiot, is it fitting, think you, that we should also, look you, be an ass and a fool and a prating idiot? Do you really believe that?”

Realizing that Captain Fluellen was right, Captain Gower said, “I will speak lower.”

Captain Fluellen replied, “I hope that you will.”

The two Captains exited, and King Henry V said to himself, “Although it may appear to be a little unconventional and eccentric, there is much care, prudence, and valor in this Welshman.”

Three common soldiers — John Bates, Alexander Court, and John Williams now came near the King. The three common soldiers were worried about the nearing battle.

Alexander Court asked, “Friend John Bates, isn’t that the morning breaking yonder?”

“I think that it might be,” John Bates replied, “but we have no great cause to desire the approach of day.”

John Williams said, “We see yonder the beginning of the day, but I think that we shall not stay alive long enough to see the end of this day.”

He heard a noise and said, “Who goes there?”

Henry V, still in disguise, said, “A friend.”

John Williams asked, “Under which Captain do you serve?”

“Under Sir Thomas Erpingham.”

“He is a good old commander and a most kind gentleman,” John Williams said. “Please tell us, what does he think of our chances?”

“He thinks that our chances are like those of men shipwrecked on a sandbar who believe that they will be washed off it during the next high tide.”

John Bates asked, “Has he said that to the King?”

“No,” the disguised Henry V said, “nor is it fitting that he should say that to the King. Although I say this to you in confidence, I think the King is only a man, as I am. The violet smells to him the way it does to me. The sky appears to him the way it does to me. All his senses are only human senses. With his symbols of state laid aside, in his nakedness he appears only as a man, and although his emotions are higher mounted than ours, soaring like a hawk, yet, when they swoop downwards, also like a hawk, they swoop downwards swiftly and far. Therefore, when the King sees reason to fear, as we do, his fears, no doubt, are of the same relish as ours are, and so, reason tells us, no man should appear fearful in front of the King, lest the King, by showing fear, would dishearten his army.”

John Bates said, “He may show what outward courage he will, but I believe, even on as cold a night as this is, he would prefer to be in the Thames River in London up to his neck, and I wish that he were there, and me beside him, no matter the consequences, as long as we were finished here. I would rather be in serious trouble in London than be here.”

“I will tell you what I truly think about the King,” Henry V said. “I truly believe that he would not wish himself anywhere but where he is.”

John Bates said, “Then I wish that he were here alone; his life is sure to be ransomed, and many poor men’s lives would be saved.”

“I dare say that you respect him more than to wish that he were here alone,” Henry V said. “I think that you are saying this to find out what other men think. I think that I could not die anywhere so contented as in the King’s company, as long as his cause is just and his war is honorable.”

“Just? Honorable? That’s more than we know,” John Williams said.

“Yes,” John Bates said, “and it is more than we should seek to know. We know enough, if we know that we are the King’s subjects. If his cause is wrong and he is fighting this war for a bad reason, our obedience to the King wipes the crime of it out of us.”

“But if the cause is not good, the King himself has a heavy reckoning to make,” John Williams said. “On the Judgment Day, all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in battle, shall join the rest of their body and cry, ‘We died at such a place. Some of us were swearing, some of us were crying for a surgeon, some were crying because their wives were left impoverished behind them, some were crying because of the debts they owe, some were crying because of their children left behind without a father to provide for them.’”

“I am afraid that few die well who die in a battle; for how can they dispose of anything — including their souls — with Christian charity when they are busily engaged in killing? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the King who led them to it; to disobey the King is contrary to every requirement of being the subject of a King. Subjects must obey their King. Isn’t it true that

whatever a man causes to be done, it is as if that man did that thing himself?”

King Henry V replied, “So, if a son who is sent by his father to do business abroad dies in a state of sin upon the sea, the responsibility for wickedness of the son, according to your reasoning, should be upon the father who sent him abroad. Or if a servant, obeying his master’s command to transport a sum of money, is assailed by robbers and dies with many unrepented sins, you would call the business of the master the author of the servant’s damnation, but this is not true.

“The King is not bound to take responsibility for the individual endings of his soldiers. The father is not bound to take responsibility for the individual ending of his son. The master is not bound to take responsibility for the individual ending of his servant. Why not? Because they do not intend these deaths when they send these people to do these undertakings.

“Besides, there is no King, no matter how spotless and without fault his cause is, who can use only spotless soldiers when it comes to war. Some soldiers perhaps are guilty of premeditated murder. Some soldiers perhaps are guilty of seducing virgins with broken promises of marriage. Some soldiers perhaps are guilty of going to war in order to escape being held accountable for goring the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery.

“However, even if these men have defeated the law and outrun punishment at home, even though they can outstrip men, they have no wings to fly from God. War is the beadle — the police officer — of God. War is just vengeance — for their previous breach of the King’s laws at home, men are punished in the King’s war abroad. At home, they were afraid of being hung for their crimes; here, where they thought that they would be safe, they are killed. Therefore,

if they die without being spiritually prepared, the King is no more guilty of their damnation than he was guilty of those crimes that they committed back home and for which they are punished here.

“Every subject’s duty is the King’s, but every subject’s soul is his own. Therefore, every soldier in the wars should do what every sick man should do in his bed. He should wash every stain of sin out of his conscience. If he does that and then dies, death will be to him a benefit. If he does not die, the time that he spent washing every stain of sin out of his conscience was blessedly spent in achieving such good preparation for death. If a man does escape dying, it would not be a sin to think that, by making God so generous a gift of his soul, God let him outlive that day to see His greatness and to teach others how they should prepare for death.”

John Williams said, “It is certain that when a man dies in a state of sin, the sin is upon his own head — the King is not responsible for it.”

John Bates said, “I do not desire that the King should be responsible for me, yet I am determined to fight vigorously for him.”

Henry V said, “I myself heard the King say that he would not allow himself to be ransomed.”

John Williams was cynical: “Yes, he said so, to make us fight cheerfully, but after our throats are cut, he may be ransomed, and we will be never the wiser.”

Henry V said, “If I live to see that happen, I will never trust the King’s word afterward.”

“Will you punish him for breaking his word?” John Williams asked, sarcastically. “All you can do at best is to shoot at the King with a child’s toy gun. The King is the

King; a poor person with a private grievance against the King is unable to get any satisfaction or revenge. You may as well use a peacock's feather to fan the Sun and cool it so much that it turns to ice. You say that you'll never trust the King's word afterward! Admit that it is a foolish thing to say."

"Your reproof of me is definitely too blunt," Henry V said. "I would fight you, if the time were convenient."

"Let it be a quarrel between us, if you live," John Williams said. "We can fight after the battle."

"I welcome your challenge," Henry V said.

"It's dark, so I can't see you very well," John Williams said. "How shall I know you again?"

"Give me something of yours such as a glove that I can attach to my helmet or cap," Henry V said. "After the battle, if you acknowledge that the glove is yours, I will fight you."

"Here's my glove," John Williams said. "Give me one of your gloves."

"Here."

"I will also wear your glove on my helmet or cap," John Williams said. "If you come to me and say, after the battle, 'This is my glove,' then I swear that I will hit you on your head."

"If I live to see your glove, I will challenge you," the King said.

"You may as well make being hanged your goal."

"I will fight you, even if I do it in the King's presence."

"Keep your word," John Williams said. "Fare you well."

“Be friends, you English fools, be friends,” John Bates said. “We have lots of French soldiers to fight. You would know that we are greatly outnumbered if you could count.”

“Indeed, the French may lay twenty French crowns to one that they will beat us; for they bear their crowns on their shoulders,” Henry V said, “but it is no English treason to cut French crowns, and tomorrow the King himself will be a clipper.”

Dishonest people used to cut or clip the edges of the coins called crowns. This was a crime because the value of the coin resided in its metal, but as King Henry V had said, to crush the crown — the top of the head — of an enemy in battle was no crime.

The three common soldiers departed, leaving Henry V alone.

The King said to himself, “Upon the King! ‘Let us lay our lives, our souls, our debts, our worried wives, our children, and our sins on the King!’ We must bear all. Ours is a hard condition; responsibility is born a twin to greatness. Kings must bear much responsibility for the Kingdom. Kings are subject to the critical breath of every fool who is conscious of nothing other than his own problems.

“Kings must do without the infinite heart’s-ease that private men — those who are not rulers — enjoy! What do Kings have that private men do not have other than ceremonial display and status? Of what worth are you, you idle ceremony? What kind of god are you, you who suffer more mortal griefs than do your worshippers? What are your rents? What is your income? Oh, ceremony, show me your wealth! What! Is the essence of ceremony merely adoration? Are you anything other than public position, rank, and ritual, things that create awe and fear in other men?

“A King is less happy in being feared than are his subjects who fear him. What does a King often drink instead of sweet homage? The King drinks poisoned flattery.

“Oh, be sick, you great greatness, you great King, and order your ceremony to cure you! Do you think that the fiery fever will go out because adulation blows honorable titles at you? Will the fiery fever dissipate because courtiers kneel and bow low to you? Can you, when you command the beggar to kneel to you, also command the health of the beggar’s knee to come to your unhealthy knee? No.

“You proud dream called ceremony, you who play so cunningly with a King’s repose, I am a King who exposes and judges you, and I know that the orb, the scepter and the ball, the sword, the mace, the imperial crown, the robe interwoven of gold and pearl, the pompous and long-winded titles that are pronounced before the name of the King, the throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp that beats upon the high shore of this world — no, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony, not all these, laid in a majestic bed — none of these can sleep as soundly as the wretched slave, who with a filled stomach and a vacant mind goes to bed, crammed with food that he has worked hard to get. He never sees the horrible night, the child of Hell, but, like a footman running beside the Sun-chariot, as soon as the day breaks and light appears in the sky before Sunrise, the wretched slave rises and helps Hyperion, the father of the Sun-god, to his horse, and so he does all through the ever-running years, doing profitable labor, until he reaches his grave.

“Except for ceremony, such a wretch, spending his days in toil and nights in sleep, has a better position than and the advantage over a King. The slave, a member of the country’s peace, enjoys that peace, but the unthinking slave little knows what watch the King keeps to maintain the

peace — a peace that the peasant is able to enjoy more than the King who works to achieve it for others.”

Erpingham walked over to Henry V and said, “My lord, your nobles, who are worried about your absence, go throughout your camp to find you.”

“Good old Knight,” Henry V said, “bring all of them to my tent. I’ll be there before you.”

“I shall do it, my lord,” Erpingham said and departed.

Alone, King Henry V said, “Oh, God of battles! Steel my soldiers’ hearts; do not let them be afraid. Take from them now the ability to count if the numbers of French soldiers opposing them will pluck their courage from them. Today, Lord, do not think about the sin that my father committed when he got possession of the crown! I have had Richard II’s body brought to Westminster and honorably interred there, and on his tomb I have bestowed contrite tears greater in number than the drops of blood that fell from his body when he was murdered. Five hundred almsmen I pay to pray twice a day with their withered hands held up to Heaven to pardon Richard II’s murder. I have also built two chantries, where the serious and solemn priests sing continually for Richard II’s soul. I will do more, although everything that I can do is not enough. More important than the doing of good works is penitence. I am penitent, and I am implore the pardon of God.”

Still at a distance from the King but coming closer, Gloucester said, “My liege!”

Henry V said, “My brother Gloucester’s voice? Yes. I know your message: You want me to go to my tent. I will go with you. The day, my friends, and all things wait for me.”

In the French camp, the Dauphin, Orleans, Rambures, and other soldiers were preparing for the battle.

Orleans shouted, “The Sun is making our armor shine. Mount up, my lords!”

The Dauphin shouted, “*Montez à cheval!* [Mount your horses!] My horse! Varlet! Bring me my horse!”

Orleans said, “Oh, brave spirit!”

The Dauphin said, “*Via! Les eaux et la terre!* [We will go across water and land!]”

Orleans responded, “*Rien puis l’air et la feu?* [And not across air and fire?]”

“*Ciel* [The Heavens], kinsman Orleans,” the Dauphin said.

He saw the Constable arriving and called, “Is it time now, my Lord Constable?”

The Constable replied, “Listen at how our steeds neigh! They are ready to go immediately to the battle.”

“Mount them,” the Dauphin said, “and dig your spurs into their sides so that their blood will spurt into English eyes, and blind them with the horse’s excessive red blood, the sign of courage.”

“What, will you have the English soldiers weep our horses’ blood?” Rambures asked. “How shall we, then, behold their natural tears?”

A messenger arrived and said, “The English are in formation for battle, you French peers.”

“To horse, you gallant Princes!” the Constable shouted, rallying his troops. “Immediately mount your horses! If you only look at yonder poor and starved band of English soldiers, your fair show shall suck away their souls, leaving

them only the shells and husks of men. There is not work enough for all our soldiers; there is scarcely enough blood in all their sickly veins to give each of our unsheathed swords a stain. Many of our French gallants shall today draw out their swords and then sheathe them again because of a lack of English soldiers to kill. Let us but blow on the English soldiers, and the vapor of our valor will send them sprawling.

“Doubtless, lords, our superfluous servants and our peasants, who unnecessarily swarm around our square battle formations, are enough to purge this field of such a contemptible foe, though we upon this nearby mountain’s foot stood inactively looking on, but our honor will not allow us to be mere onlookers.

“What’s left to say? Let each of us do a very little, and all will be done. So let the trumpets sound the note to mount and to march. Our approach shall so much dismay the English soldiers that they shall crouch down in fear and surrender. We will be like hunting hawks that fly overhead and make the birds that are prey quiver so fearfully that they may be easily captured.”

Grandpré arrived and said, “Why do you stay so long, my lords of France? Yonder corpses-to-be from the British island, who have no hope of saving their bones, ill befit — and disgrace — the battlefield this morning. Their ragged banners, hanging in the air, make a poor show. Our air shakes them very scornfully. Big Mars — the King of England — looks like a bankrupt in his beggarly army and faintheartedly peeps through his helmet’s rusty faceguard. The English horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks with torches in their hands — they look like inanimate objects, not like men of spirit. Their poor jades hang their heads and lower their hides and hips, with the gummy discharge from their as-pale-as-if-they-were-dead eyes hanging down in

long strings. In each jade's pale dull mouth, the jointed bit is dirty with chewed grass, completely motionless. And the knavish crows — the executors who will claim the corpses of the English soldiers and horses after the battle — fly over them, all impatient for their hour. Description cannot clothe itself in words in such a way to adequately describe the life of such an army that is so lacking in life."

The Constable said, "They have said their prayers, and they are waiting to die."

The Dauphin asked, sarcastically, "Shall we go send them dinners and fresh suits of clothing and give their fasting horses provender, and only afterward fight with them? That might make it more of a fair fight."

The Constable said, "I am waiting for my pennant, but let's go to the battlefield. To save time, I will take the banner from a trumpet and use it as my pennant. Come, come, let's go! The Sun is high, and we are wasting the daylight."

— 4.3 —

In the English camp were standing Gloucester, Bedford, Exeter, Erpingham, Salisbury, and Westmoreland, among others.

Gloucester asked, "Where is the King?"

Bedford replied, "The King himself has ridden to view the French army's battle formation."

"The French have sixty thousand fighting men," Westmoreland said.

"They outnumber us five to one," Exeter said. "In addition, the French troops are all fresh."

"May God's arm strike with us!" Salisbury said. "Those are fearful odds. God be with you, Princes. I am going to my

troops. If we meet no more until we meet in Heaven, then we will meet joyfully. My noble Lord of Bedford, my dear Lord Gloucester, and my good Lord Exeter, and my kind kinsmen, warriors all, *adieu!*”

“Farewell, good Salisbury,” Bedford said, “and may good luck go with you!”

“Farewell, kind lord,” Exeter said. “Fight valiantly today, and yet I do you wrong to tell you that because you are made of the firm truth of valor.”

Salisbury departed.

Bedford said, “He is as full of valor as of kindness; he is Princely in both.”

King Henry V arrived, but many people were present and he was not immediately noticed.

The date was 25 October 1415, and it was a feast day in England. On 25 October 286, two twin brothers who were later named saints, Crispin and Crispinian, were martyred.

Westmoreland said, “I wish that we now had here just ten thousand of those men in England who do no work today!”

Henry V asked, “Who is he who wishes that? My kinsman Westmoreland? No, my fair kinsman. If we are marked to die, we are enough to do our country loss; and if we are marked to live, the fewer the men fighting in this battle, the greater share of honor each man of us will have.

“By God’s will, I hope that you will not wish for even one man more. By Jove, I am not covetous for gold, nor do I care who eats at my expense, and it does not grieve me if other men wear my clothing — such material things do not dwell among my desires. But if it is a sin to covet honor, I am the most offending soul alive.

“No, by my faith, my kinsman, do not wish that even a single man from England could be added to our army here. By God’s peace, I would not lose as much honor as one man more, I think, would take from me for the best hope I have — the hope for my salvation. That is how covetous I am for honor and glory. Oh, do not wish for even one man more!

“Instead, proclaim, Westmoreland, throughout my army, that he who has no stomach for this fight is permitted to depart. He shall be given a letter to allow him passage through foreign lands, and crowns to pay for his journey shall be put into his purse. We do not want to die in the company of a man who fears to die with us in brotherhood.

“This day is the feast day of Saint Crispinian. Any soldier who outlives this day, and returns safely home to our island, will proudly stand tall when this day is named, and raise himself up at the name of Crispinian.

“He who shall outlive this day, and see his old age, will yearly on the eve of this day feast his neighbors and say, ‘Tomorrow is Saint Crispinian’s feast day.’ Then will he roll up his sleeves and show his scars and say, ‘These wounds I earned on Saint Crispinian’s feast day.’

“Old men forget, yet when everything else shall be forgotten, he’ll remember — with embellishments — what feats he did on this day. At that time our names, as familiar in his mouth as household words — Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter, Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester — shall be freshly remembered as men drink their flowing cups.

“This story shall the good man teach his son, and the feast day of Saint Crispin and Saint Crispinian shall never go by, from this day through the ending of the world, without us being remembered — we few, we happy few, we band of

brothers.

“For he today who sheds his blood with me shall be my brother. No matter how lowly he was born, this day shall raise his status. Gentlemen in England who are now in bed shall think themselves cursed because they were not here, and they will be ashamed and think that they lack courage as they listen to anyone who fought with us upon Saint Crispin and Saint Crispinian’s day.”

Salisbury arrived and said, “My sovereign lord, quickly prepare yourself for the battle. The French are splendidly set in their battle formations, and they will soon with all convenient speed charge on us.”

Henry V said, “All things are ready, if our minds are ready.”

Westmoreland said, “Perish the man whose mind is backward now!”

Henry V asked, “You do not wish for more help from England, kinsman?”

“No, by God!” Westmoreland said. “My liege, I wish that you and I alone, without help, could fight this royal battle!”

“Why, now you have wished that we had five thousand fewer men,” Henry V said. “I prefer that to your wishing that we had one more man.”

He said to everyone present, “You know your places: God be with you all!”

A trumpet sounded to announce the arrival of Montjoy, the French envoy, who said, “Once more I come to learn from you, King Harry, whether you will make a bargain for your ransom before this battle that you will certainly lose. Right now, you are so near the abyss of danger that danger will swallow you. In addition, because he is merciful, the

Constable asks you to remind your soldiers to repent their sins so that when they die today their souls will make a peaceful and sweet journey away from this battlefield where, poor wretches, their bodies will lie and fester.”

“Who has sent you now?” Henry V asked.

“The Constable of France.”

“Please, take back to him the same answer that I previously gave to you. Tell the French soldiers to defeat and take me and then sell my bones.

“Good God! Why should they mock poor fellows thus? A man once sold the skin of a lion while the beast still lived — that man was killed while hunting the lion.

“Many of our bodies shall no doubt find native graves back home on our native islands. This day’s work shall be witnessed in the brass funeral monuments that will mark their graves.

“Others will leave their valiant bones in France. They will die like men, though they will be buried in your dunghills. They shall be famed; for even there the Sun shall greet them, and draw their honors like steam up to Heaven, leaving their earthly reeking, decomposing bodies behind to choke your environment: The smell of their corpses shall breed a plague in France.

“You will see then the abundant valor in our English soldiers, who despite being dead, are similar to a cannonball’s breaking into pieces and causing a second course of death and destruction, despite its own destruction.

“Let me speak proudly. Tell the constable that we are only warriors for the working day; we look like we are wearing workingmen’s clothing. Our fancy and gilded clothing is all muddy because we have marched through rain to finally get

to this battlefield. There's not a piece of feather to serve as a helmet-plume in our army — a sign, I hope, that no one will fly away from the battle — and time has worn us into scruffiness.

“But, by the Mass, our hearts are still trim and in perfect condition, and my poor soldiers tell me that before this night comes that either they will be wearing fresher robes in Paradise or they will pluck the gay new coats over the French soldiers' heads and dismiss them from military service.

“If they do this — as, if God is willing, they shall — whatever ransom I ask from you will easily be collected because we will seize your French treasure. Herald, save your labor. Do not come here any more to ask me for a ransom, gentle herald.

“You French shall receive no ransom, I swear, but these my joints. I intend to die before I allow you to take them, and therefore this ransom will yield you little value. Tell the Constable that.”

Montjoy replied, “I shall, King Harry. And so fare you well. You shall never hear from me any more.”

As Montjoy exited, Henry V called after him, “I'm afraid that you will return to ask me what ransom I demand from you French.”

York came over to Henry V, knelt, and said, “My lord, most humbly on my knee I beg you to allow me to command the vanguard — the troops at the front.”

Henry V replied, “Take their command, brave York. Now, soldiers, march away, and to whomever You wish, God, give the victory!”

On the battlefield, Pistol was ferociously taking a frightened French soldier prisoner. The Boy was with them.

Pistol shouted, "Surrender, you dog!"

The French soldier replied, "*Je pense que vous etes gentilhomme de bonne qualite.* [I think you are a gentleman of good quality and high rank.]"

Pistol replied, "*Qualtitie calmie custure me!*"

Pistol, who was poor in French, wanted to know the French soldier's quality, aka social class. If the French soldier were highborn, then Pistol would be able to get a high ransom for him. Pistol had meant to say, "*Quel titre comme accoster me!*" This is French, more or less, for, "What title as accost me?" It asks, more or less, what Pistol was most interested in learning the answer to; of course, Pistol being Pistol, he mispronounced the words, of which he had little understanding.

He added in English, "Are you a gentleman? What is your name? Discuss."

"*Seigneur Dieu!* [Lord God!]" the French soldier replied.

Thinking that the French soldiers had stated his name, Pistol said, "Signieur Dew must be a gentleman. Perpend my words, Signieur Dew, and note them: Signieur Dew, you will die at the end of my sword, unless, Signieur, you give to me egregious ransom."

As usual, Pistol was using extravagant language.

"*Prenez misericorde! Ayez pitie de moi!* [Have mercy! Take pity on me!]" the French soldier said.

Hearing *moi* and thinking that it was perhaps a French coin or a French version of the word "moiety," which means a lesser share, or sometimes half, Pistol said, "*Moy* shall not

serve. I will have forty *moys*, or I will reach down your throat, grab your insides, and pull them out through your throat along with drops of crimson blood.”

“*Est-il impossible d’échapper la force de ton bras?* [Is it impossible to escape the force of your arm?]

” the French soldier said.

Hearing *bras*, French for arm, and thinking that it meant a brass coin, Pistol said, “Brass, you dog! You damned and overly sexed mountain goat, are you offering to give me brass coins as a ransom?”

“*Pardonnez moi!* [Forgive me!]”

“What are you saying?” Pistol asked. “A tun [barrel] of *moys*?”

He then said to the Boy, “Come here, Boy. Ask this slave in French what his name is.”

The Boy said, “*Ecoutez: comment etes-vous appele?* [Listen to me: What is your name?].”

“*Monsieur le Fer.*”

Fer is French for “iron.”

The Boy said, “He says his name is Master Fer.”

“Master Fer!” Pistol said. “I’ll fer him, and firik [beat] him, and ferret [torment] him. Discuss the same in French to him.”

“I do not know the French for ‘fer,’ and ‘ferret,’ and ‘firik.’”

Pistol replied, “Tell him to prepare to die because I will cut his throat.”

The French soldier asked the Boy, “*Que dit-il, monsieur?* [What is he saying, Master?]”

The Boy replied, “*Il me commande de vous dire que vous faites vous pret; car ce soldat ici est dispose tout a cette heure de couper votre gorge.* [He is ordering me to tell you to prepare to die because he intends to cut your throat right now.]”

Pistol said, “*Owy, cuppele gorge, permafoy.*”

Owy is Pistol’s bad French for *oui*, or “yes.” *Cuppele gorge* is Pistol’s bad French for *couper la gorge*, or “cut the throat.” *Permafoy* is Pistol’s French for *per ma foi*, or “on my faith.”

Pistol added, “Peasant, unless you give me crowns, brave crowns, I will mangle you with my sword.”

The French soldier said, “*Je vous supplie, pour l’amour de Dieu, me pardonner! Je suis gentilhomme de bonne maison: gardez ma vie, et je vous donnerai deux cents ecus.* [I beg you, for the love of God, pardon me! I am a gentleman of good family: Save my life, and I will give you two hundred crowns.]”

Pistol asked the Boy, “What are his words?”

“He begs you to save his life. He says that he is a gentleman of a good house, and for his ransom he will give you two hundred crowns.”

“Tell him my fury shall abate, and I his crowns will take.”

“*Petit monsieur, que dit-il?* [Little man, what did he say?]” the French soldier asked.

The Boy replied, “*Encore qu’il est contre son jurement de pardonner aucun prisonnier, neanmoins, pour les ecus que vous l’avez promis, il est content de vous donner la liberte, le franchisement.* [Although it is against his oath not to pardon any prisoners, he is nevertheless willing to accept the crowns you have offered him and to give you your

liberty, your freedom.]”

The French soldier said, “*Sur mes genoux je vous donne mille remerciemens; et je m’estime heureux que je suis tombe entre les mains d’un chevalier, je pense, le plus brave, vaillant, et tres distingue seigneur d’Angleterre.* [On my knees, I thank you a thousand times, and I consider myself fortunate to have been captured by a gentleman whom I believe is the bravest, most valiant, and most distinguished nobleman of England.]”

“Expound what he said to me, boy,” Pistol ordered.

“He gives you, upon his knees, a thousand thanks,” the Boy said, “and he esteems himself happy that he has fallen into the hands of a man who he thinks is the bravest, most valorous, and worthiest Signieur of England.”

“As I suck blood, I will show some mercy to him,” Pistol said.

Pistol spoke truly. He had come to France to suck blood like a leech. He had come to France to make money, not to gain honor.

Pistol said to his prisoner, “Follow me!”

The Boy said to the prisoner, “*Suivez-vous le grand capitaine.* [Follow the great Captain.]”

Pistol and his prisoner departed, leaving the Boy alone, who said to himself, “I have never known so loud a voice to come from so empty a heart — Pistol is a coward. But this saying is true: ‘The empty vessel makes the greatest sound.’ Bardolph and Nym had ten times more courage than Pistol, who is like the roaring Devil in the old morality plays. The Devil roars, and yet in the plays everyone is able to cut his fingernails with a wooden dagger. Although Bardolph and Nym had ten times more courage than Pistol,

they are both hanged. Pistol would also be hanged if he dared to steal anything with any kind of spirit at all — he is the pettiest of petty thieves.

“I must stay with the other servants with the baggage in our camp. The French soldiers would have an easy time attacking the camp if they were to do it because there is no one to guard the camp except us boys.”

— 4.5 —

In another part of the battlefield, the Constable, Orleans, Bourbon, the Dauphin, and Rambures were shocked by how well the English army was fighting. Despite being heavily outnumbered, the English army was routing the French army.

The Constable said, “*Oh, Diable!* [Oh, Hell!]”

Orleans said, “*Oh, Seigneur! Le jour est perdu, tout est perdu!* [Oh, Lord God! The day is lost — everything is lost!]”

The Dauphin said, “*Mort de ma vie!* [Death of my life!] All is confounded, all! Reproach and everlasting shame sit mocking in the plumes of our helmets! *Oh, merchant fortune!* [Oh, evil fortune!]”

He added, “Do not run away.”

The Constable said, “Why, all our ranks are broken.”

“Oh, everlasting shame,” the Dauphin said. “Let’s stab and kill ourselves. Can these be the wretches that we used as stakes when we gambled with dice?”

“Is this the King we sent a herald to, to ask about his ransom?” Orleans said.

“Shame and eternal shame, nothing but shame!” Bourbon said. “Let us die with honor. Let us go back to fight once

more. And anyone who will not follow Bourbon and fight now, let him go from here, and with his cap in his hand, like a base panderer, let him stand by the bedroom door while his most beautiful daughter is raped by a slave who has no better ancestors than my dog!”

“Disorder, which has ruined us, be our friend now!” the Constable said. “We were disorganized and so we lost the battle. Now let us go into the disorder of the battle among the heaps of dead and lose our own lives.”

“We have enough soldiers yet living in the battlefield that we could smother and defeat the English soldiers with our throngs of men,” Orleans said, “if we could bring any order to our troops.”

“The Devil take order now!” Bourbon said. “I’ll go to the throng of men, fight, and die. Let my life be short, or else shame will live too long.”

They returned to the battle.

— 4.6 —

In another part of the battlefield, King Henry V, Exeter, some English soldiers, and others were meeting. They knew that the battle was going well, but they did not know how well. Exeter had news to give to the King.

Henry V said, “We have fought well, most valiant countrymen, but we are not yet done fighting. The French army is still on the battlefield.”

Exeter said, “The Duke of York commends him to your majesty.”

“Is he still alive, good uncle?” Henry V asked. “Three times within this hour I saw him down; three times I saw him rise up again and fight, although he was bloody from his helmet to his spurs.”

Exeter replied, “And in such bloody garb just as you described him, that brave soldier lies and enriches the ground with his blood, and by his bloody side, with similar wounds that give him honor, the noble Earl of Suffolk also lies. Suffolk died first, and York, hacked all over, went to him, where he lay soaked in blood and lifted his head and kissed the bloody gashes that opened wide in his face, and cried aloud, ‘Wait, dear kinsman Suffolk! My soul shall keep your soul company as we journey to Heaven. Wait, sweet soul, for my soul, and then we can fly to Heaven side by side just as in this glorious and well-fought battle we kept together as brother-Knights!’

“Hearing these words, I went to him and comforted him. He smiled at me, reached his hand out to me, and, with a feeble grip, said, ‘My dear lord, commend my service to my sovereign.’

“He then turned and over Suffolk’s neck he threw his wounded arm and kissed Suffolk’s lips, and knowing that he was married to death, with his red blood he sealed a final testament of noble-ending love. His final act as he died a noble death was to confirm the love he had for Suffolk.

“The noble and sweet manner of his final act forced those waters from me that I would have stopped — I cried. I had not so much of man and stoical masculinity in me as would have stopped those tears. Instead, all the emotions I inherited from my mother welled up in my eyes and tears trickled down my cheeks.”

“I don’t blame you for crying,” Henry V said, “because, hearing your story, I am forced to wipe my eyes, or tears will also trickle down my cheeks.”

War trumpets sounded.

Hearing them, King Henry V said, “What new call to arms

is this? The French have reinforced and organized their scattered men. I now give the order for every English soldier to kill his French prisoners. Communicate this order to my soldiers.”

King Henry V was afraid that he did not have enough soldiers both to fight the French army and to guard the French prisoners. He believed that it was necessary to kill the French prisoners so that more English soldiers would be available to fight the French army.

— 4.7 —

As the Boy had said, the French soldiers were able to easily raid the English camp because only boys were guarding it. However, the French soldiers had done more than loot the belongings of the English soldiers; they had killed the boys who were supposed to be guarding it. The Boy was now dead.

Captain Fluellen said to Captain Gower, “Kill the poys [boys] and the luggage! It is expressly against the law of arms [code of military conduct]. It is as arrant [complete] a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offered. In your conscience, now, don’t you agree?”

Captain Gower replied, “It is certain there’s not a boy left alive, and the cowardly rascals who ran from the battle have done this slaughter; in addition, they have burned and carried away all that was in the King’s tent. For this reason, the King, most deservedly, has caused every soldier to cut his prisoner’s throat. Henry V is a gallant King!”

Captain Gower was wrong about Henry V’s reason for cutting the French prisoners’ throats.

Captain Fluellen said, “Ay, Henry V was born [born] at Monmouth, Captain Gower. What call you the town’s name where Alexander the Pig [Big] was born!”

You mean Alexander the Great,” Captain Gower replied.

“Why, let me ask you, is not pig [big] the same thing as great?” Fluellen said, “The pig [big], or the great, or the mighty, or the huge, or the magnanimous, are all one reckonings [all the same thing], except the phrase is a little variations [except the wording is a little different].”

Captain Gower said, “I think Alexander the Great was born in the country of Macedon; his father was called Philip of Macedon, as I remember it.”

Fluellen agreed: “I think it is in Macedon where Alexander is born [born]. I tell you, Captain, if you look in the maps of the world, I warrant you shall find, in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in Macedon, and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth: It is called Wye at Monmouth; but it is out of my prains [brains; it is out of my brains = I can’t remember] what is the name of the other river; but it is all one — the two rivers are as alike as my fingers are to my fingers, and there is salmon in both rivers.

“If you look at Alexander’s life well, Harry of Monmouth’s life follows it very closely; for there are comparisons and parallels in all things.

“Alexander, God knows, and you know, in his rages, and his furies, and his wraths, and his cholers, and his moods, and his displeasures, and his indignations, and also being a little intoxicated in his prains [brains], did, in his ales and his angers [while intoxicated and angry], look you, kill his best friend, Cleitus.”

“Our King is not like him in that,” Captain Gower said. “He never killed any of his friends.”

Bardolph was dead, hung after disobeying one of Henry V’s orders, but Captain Gower did not regard Bardolph as

the King's friend.

Fluellen replied, "It is not well done, look you, now to take the tale out of my mouth before it is made and finished. I speak only about the figures and comparisons of it: Just as Alexander killed his friend Cleitus, being in his ales and his cups; so also Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and his good judgments, turned away the fat Knight with the great belly-doublet — his belly stuffed his jacket. His fat friend was full of jests, and gipes [gibes], and knaveries, and mocks; I have forgotten his name."

"Sir John Falstaff," Captain Gower said.

"That is he," Captain Fluellen said. "I'll tell you there is good men porn [born] at Monmouth."

"Here comes his majesty," Captain Gower said.

King Henry V and several soldiers arrived, along with Warwick, Gloucester, Exeter, and others.

Henry V, who had just heard about the boys at the English camp being murdered, said, "I was not angry since I came to France until I became angry at this instant. Take a trumpet, herald, and ride to the French horsemen on yonder hill. If they are willing to fight with us, tell them to come down from the hill and fight. If they are not willing to fight, tell them to leave the battlefield because they offend our sight.

"If they'll neither fight nor leave, we will come to them, and make them scurry away as swiftly as the stones forcibly thrown from the ancient Assyrians' slings. In addition, we will cut the throats of these new prisoners we have taken, and not a man of them whom we shall defeat shall taste our mercy. Go and tell them so."

An English herald exited.

Montjoy, the main French herald, entered.

Exeter said, "Here comes the herald of the French, my liege."

Gloucester observed, "His eyes are humbler than they used to be."

"Well!" Henry V said. "What do you want, herald? You already know that I named as my ransom these bones of mine. Have you come to me again to ask me to ransom myself?"

"No, great King," Montjoy said. "I come to you for charitable and Christian permission for we French to wander over this bloody battlefield to look for our dead, and then to bury them. We want to sort our nobles from our common men because many of our Princes — so many! — lie drowned and soaked in the blood of soldiers we paid to fight for us. Our common soldiers drench their peasant limbs with the blood of Princes; and their wounded steeds fret fetlock deep in gore and with wild rage kick out their armed heels at their dead masters, killing them twice. Oh, give us leave, great King, to view the field in safety and dispose of our soldiers' dead bodies!"

Henry V said, "I tell you truly, herald, that I do not know whether we have won the battle or not because many of your horsemen still gallop over the battlefield."

"The day is yours," Montjoy said. "You have won the battle."

"Praised be God, and not our strength, for it!" Henry V said. "What is the name of this castle that stands nearby?"

"They call it Agincourt," Montjoy replied.

"Then we call this the battlefield of Agincourt," Henry V said. "We have fought and won the Battle of Agincourt on

the feast day of Saint Crispin and Saint Crispinian.”

Captain Fluellen said to the King, “Your great-grandfather of famous memory, if it please your majesty, and your great-uncle Edward the Plack [Black] Prince of Wales, as I have read in the chronicles, fought a most prave pattle [brave battle] here in France.”

“They did, Fluellen.”

“Your majesty says very truly,” Fluellen said. “If your majesty is remembered of it, the Welshmen did good service in a garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their knitted round caps from Monmouth, Wales — leeks, your majesty knows, to this hour are an honorable badge of the service because they are worn by many soldiers, and I do believe your majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek upon Saint Tavy’s [Davy’s, aka David’s] day.”

Henry V thought, “... *did good service in a garden where leeks did grow*” sounds like the Welshmen ate a lot in the garden, but Fluellen means that the Welshmen did good military service.

Henry V said, “I wear the leek for a memorable honor because I am Welsh, you know, good countryman.”

“All the water in Wye River cannot wash your majesty’s Welsh plood [blood] out of your pody [body], I can tell you that: God pless [bless] it and preserve it, as long as it pleases His grace, and his majesty, too!”

“Thanks, my good countryman.”

“By Jeshu [Jesus], I am your majesty’s countryman,” Fluellen said. “I care not who knows it; I will confess it to all the world: I need not be ashamed of your majesty, praised be God, as long as your majesty is an honest man.”

“May God keep me honest!” Henry V said.

John Williams walked up to the group. He was one of the common soldiers whom Henry V, while incognito, had talked to before the battle. John Williams had criticized him, and the two had exchanged tokens — gloves. The two men were supposed to attach the gloves to their caps after the battle, if they survived. If either man were to recognize his glove, the two men had pledged to fight each other. John Williams had attached the King's glove to his cap. But Henry V had not attached John Williams' glove to his cap.

King Henry V ordered some of his men, "Our heralds will now go with Montjoy. Bring me accurate numbers of the dead of both armies."

The English heralds and Montjoy departed.

Henry V noticed John Williams, pointed to him, and said, "Call yonder man here."

Exeter said to John Williams, "Soldier, you must come to the King."

When John Williams had come closer, Henry asked him, "Soldier, why are you wearing that glove in your cap?"

"If it please your majesty, it is the gage of one whom I will fight, if he is still alive now that the battle has ended. I am wearing his glove, and if he dares to acknowledge that it is his, then he and I will fight."

"An Englishman?" the King asked.

"If it please your majesty, he is a rascal who swaggered and blustered and quarreled with me last night; and if he is alive and dares to acknowledge that this glove is his, I have sworn to hit him on the ear. Or if I can see my glove in his cap, which he swore, as he was a soldier, he would wear if he were still alive after the battle, I will knock it off."

“What do you think, Captain Fluellen?” Henry V asked. “Is it fitting that this soldier keep his oath?”

“He is a craven coward and a villain else, if it please your majesty, according to my conscience,” Fluellen replied.

“Perhaps his enemy is a high-ranking gentleman who because of his status cannot fight a common soldier,” Henry V said.

“Though he be as good a gentleman as the Devil is — and the Devil is thought to be in some sense a gentleman — as good a gentleman as Lucifer and Beelzebub himself, it is necessary, look your grace, that he keep his vow and his oath,” Captain Fluellen said. “If he perjures himself, see you now, his reputation is as arrant a villain and a Jack Sauce [saucy Jack, or saucy fellow, aka rascal and saucebox], as ever his black shoe trod upon God’s ground and his earth, in my conscience.”

The King told John Williams, “Then keep your vow, young man, when you meet the man whose glove you are wearing.”

“So I will, my liege,” John Williams said. “I am alive, I survived the battle, and I will keep my promise to fight him.”

“Under whom do you serve?” Henry V asked.

“Under Captain Gower, my liege.”

“Captain Gower is a good Captain, and he has a good knowledge of and is well read in military history,” Captain Fluellen said.

Henry V said to John Williams, “Go to him and tell him to come to me, soldier.”

“I will, my liege.”

He departed.

King Henry V then said, "Here, Fluellen; wear this token — this glove — for me. Attach it to your cap."

Henry V handed him John Williams' glove.

He then added, "When the Duke of Alençon and I were fighting, I plucked this glove from his helmet. If any man recognizes this glove and wants to fight you, he is a friend to the Duke of Alençon and he is an enemy to our person. If you encounter any such person, arrest him, if you support me."

"Your grace does me as great honors as can be desired in the hearts of his subjects," Fluellen said. "I would like to see any man with two legs who shall think himself aggrieved by this glove — that is all I can say. I would like to see it once, if it please God of His grace that I might see him."

"Do you know Captain Gower?" Henry V asked.

"He is my dear friend, if it please you," Fluellen said.

"Please, go and find him, and bring him to my tent," Henry V said.

"I will fetch him."

Fluellen departed to find Captain Gower.

Henry V then said, "My Lord of Warwick, and my brother Gloucester, follow Fluellen closely at his heels. The glove that I have just given him may perhaps get him a blow on his ear. This glove belongs to the soldier John Williams. According to the agreement I made with him, I should wear it myself, but I want to play a joke. I have arranged it so that Fluellen and John Williams will meet at my tent.

"Follow Fluellen, good kinsman Warwick. If the soldier

John Williams strikes him, as I judge by his blunt bearing he will keep his word to do so, some sudden harm — bloodshed — may arise from it because I know that Fluellen is valiant, and when he is touched by anger the way that a cannon is touched by a match that fires it, then he is as hot as gunpowder, and he will quickly pay back an insult. Follow Fluellen and see that no harm comes to him and the common soldier.”

He then said, “Come with me, uncle of Exeter. Let’s go to my tent and witness the fun.”

— 4.8 —

Captain Gower and John Williams were speaking in front of the tent of the King.

John Williams said to Captain Gower, “I think that the King wants to see you in order to make you a Knight.”

In search of Captain Gower, Captain Fluellen, who also believed that the King was going to Knight Captain Gower, arrived and said to him, “By God’s will and His pleasure, Captain, I ask you now to come quickly to the King; there is more good coming to you perhaps than is in your knowledge to dream of.”

John Williams saw the glove displayed on Captain Fluellen’s hat and recognized that it was his glove. He understandably assumed that Captain Fluellen was the man with whom he had quarreled the previous night. He held up the glove that the King had given to him the previous night and said to Captain Fluellen, “Sir, do you recognize this glove?”

“Recognize the glove!” Fluellen said. “I recognize that the glove is a glove.”

“I recognize the glove that you are wearing in your cap,”

John Williams said. "I accept your challenge to fight."

He then hit the glove, which was over Fluellen's ear. In doing so, he also hit Fluellen.

"By God's blood!" Fluellen cursed. "You are as arrant a traitor as any traitor in the universal world, or in France, or in England!"

Captain Gower was shocked that one of the soldiers serving under him would hit a Captain. He said to John Williams, "What are you doing? Sir, you are a villain!"

John Williams said to Captain Fluellen, "Did you think that I would break my oath to fight you if I saw you with my glove?"

Fluellen said, "Stand back, Captain Gower; I will give this traitor his deserved payment in plows [blows], I promise you."

John Williams replied, "I am no traitor."

"That's a lie in your throat," Captain Fluellen said. He told the soldiers who had gathered around, "I charge you in his majesty's name, apprehend him: He's a friend of the French Duke Alençon's."

Warwick and Gloucester now entered the scene.

"What is going on?" Warwick said. "What's the matter?"

Captain Fluellen replied, "My Lord of Warwick, here is — praised be God for it! — a most contagious and pestilential treason come to light, look you, as you shall desire to see in a summer's day."

He looked up and saw King Henry V approaching and added, "Here is his majesty."

Henry V and Exeter approached the group of men.

Henry V asked, “What’s the matter?”

Captain Fluellen replied, “My liege, here is a villain and a traitor, that, look your grace, has struck the glove that your majesty took off of the helmet of the Duke of Alençon.”

John Williams said, “My liege, this is my glove; here is the other one; and he to whom I gave it in exchange for a glove of his promised to wear it on his cap, and I promised to strike him, if he did. I just now met this man with my glove on his cap, and I have been as good as my word.”

“Your majesty hear now, saving your majesty’s manhood, what an arrant, rascally, beggarly, lousy knave this man is,” Captain Fluellen said. “I hope your majesty will appear on my behalf and give testimony and witness, and will give avouchment, that this is the glove of Alençon, that your majesty is give me, in your conscience, now.”

“Give me your glove, the one you are wearing on your cap, soldier,” Henry V said to John Williams. “Look, here is the fellow of it. These are my gloves. It was I, indeed, whom you promised to strike, and you criticized me with the most bitter terms.”

Captain Fluellen said, “If it please your majesty, let his neck answer for it — hang him — if there is any martial law in the world.”

John Williams was surprised and dismayed. The King could easily give the order to have him hanged, and if the King did give the order, that order would be quickly obeyed. Striking the King — or threatening to strike the King — was definitely cause enough for hanging.

The King asked him, “How can you make things right with me?”

“All offences, my lord, come from the heart,” John

Williams said. "Never has anything come from my heart that might offend your majesty."

"It was ourself you did abuse with language," the King said.

"Your majesty came not like yourself," John Williams, now kneeling, said. "You did not look like the King. You appeared to me only as a common man such as myself. Remember that it was night, and that you wore a worn cloak, and you appeared to be a lowly, common soldier. Whatever words your highness suffered while you were in disguise, I beg you take it for your own fault and not mine because if you had been the common soldier whom I took you for, I would have committed no offence; therefore, I beg your highness to pardon me."

The King gave a glove to Exeter and said, "Here, uncle Exeter, fill this glove with gold coins, and give it to this man."

He then said to John Williams, who stood up, "Keep this glove, soldier; and wear it in your cap to show others that you have challenged the King himself."

He joked, "Wear this glove on your cap until I answer the challenge."

He said to Exeter, "Give him the crowns."

Finally, he said to Captain Fluellen, "Captain, you must become friends with this soldier."

Captain Fluellen said, "By this day and this light, the fellow has mettle and courage enough in his belly. Wait, here is twelve pence more for you; and I pray you to serve Got [God], and keep yourself out of prawls [brawls], and prabbles [brabbles, aka petty arguments] and quarrels, and dissensions, and, I warrant you, it is the better for you."

“I want none of your money,” John Williams said.

“I give it to you with a good will,” Captain Fluellen said. “I can tell you, it will serve you to mend your shoes. Come, take the money. Why should you be so pashful [bashful]? Your shoes is not so good: it is a good silling [shilling], I warrant you, or I will exchange it for one that is good.”

John Williams took the money.

An English herald arrived.

Henry V asked him, “Now, herald, have the dead been counted?”

“Here is the number of the slaughtered French,” the herald said, handing the King a piece of paper.

Looking at the paper, the King asked Exeter, “What prisoners of noble birth have we taken, uncle?”

Exeter replied, “Charles Duke of Orleans, nephew to the King; John Duke of Bourbon, and Lord Bouciqualt. Of other lords and Barons, Knights and squires, in total fifteen hundred, besides common men.”

Henry V said, “This paper tells me that ten thousand French soldiers lie slain in the field. Of this number, Princes and nobles bearing banners with a coat of arms, there lie dead one hundred and twenty-six. In addition, the number of Knights, esquires, and gallant gentlemen who lie dead are eight thousand and four hundred — five hundred of these men were only yesterday dubbed Knights. In these ten thousand men they have lost, there are only sixteen hundred paid soldiers; the rest are Princes, Barons, lords, Knights, squires, and gentlemen of good birth and breeding.

“Here are the names of their nobles who lie dead: Charles Delabreth, High Constable of France; Jaques of Chatillon,

admiral of France; the master of the cross-bows, Lord Rambures; the Great Master of France, the brave Sir Guichard Dolphin, John Duke of Alençon; Anthony Duke of Brabant, the brother of the Duke of Burgundy; and Edward Duke of Bar.

“Here are the names of their powerful Earls who lie dead: Grandpré and Roussi, Fauconberg and Foix, Beaumont and Marle, Vaudemont and Lestrale.

“Here was a royal fellowship of death!

“Where is the number of our English dead?”

The herald gave him another paper.

Henry V read, “The Duke of York, the Earl of Suffolk, Sir Richard Ketly, and Davy Gam, esquire — no one else of high rank, and the other casualties number only twenty-five.”

Before the battle, Henry V had sent Davy Gam to scout the number of enemy soldiers. Davy Gam had reported, “May it please you, my liege, there are enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away.”

Henry V said, “Oh, God, Your arm was here; and not to us, but to Your arm alone, we owe this victory!

“When, without stratagem, but in straight attack, army against army, and with fair play in battle, was ever known so great loss on one part and so little loss on the other? Take all the credit for this victory, God, because it belongs to You!”

King Henry V was modest here. The English longbows had proved to be superior weapons in the battle, and the King had devised stratagems to make very effective use of his archers.

“This victory is wonderful!” Exeter said.

“Come, let’s make a procession to the village near the castle of Agincourt. I now order — on pain of death — all of our soldiers to not boast about this victory. The credit for this victory belongs to God, and only to God, and I will not have any soldier take the praise that belongs only to God.”

Captain Fluellen asked, “Isn’t it lawful and permitted, if it please your majesty, to tell how many soldiers have been killed?”

“Yes, it is, Captain Fluellen,” Henry V said, “but only with this acknowledgement: God fought for us.”

“Yes, by my conscience, He did us great good,” Captain Fluellen said.

Henry V said, “Let us perform all the religious rites. Let the psalms ‘*Non Nobis*’ and ‘*Te Deum*’ be sung. We will enclose the dead in clay — bury them — with Christian charity, and then we will go to Calais and then to England. Never from France have happier men come to England.”

CHAPTER 5 (Henry V)

Prologue

The Chorus walked on stage and said, “Be kind to those who have not read the biography of King Henry V, and allow me to recap some events of his life. To those of you who have read his biography, I apologize for leaving out of our play events that their length of time, the numbers of people involved, and their magnitude make impossible to cover here on this stage.

“Imagine the King traveling to Calais. Imagine that he has arrived there, and now use your winged thoughts to imagine him traveling across the English Channel. Behold now the English beach fenced in by men, women, and boys — like a wall the throngs of people hold back the sea. The shouts and claps of all these people out-voice the deep-mouthed sea.

“The sea acts like a mighty whiffler — an official who clears a path for the King — and prepares his way to land.

“Having landed, the King journeys on to London.

“So swift a pace has thought that even now you may imagine him at Blackheath, on the road from Dover to London. There his lords try to persuade him to carry his bruised and dented helmet and his bent and hacked sword in a procession in London. Henry V forbids this because he is free from vainness and self-glorious pride; instead, he gives all the tokens and emblems and displays of victory to God, not to himself.

“But now behold in the quick forge and working-house of your thought how London pours out her citizens! The mayor and all his brethren — the aldermen of London — in

civil array, similar to the senators of ancient Rome, with the plebeians swarming at their heels, go forth and fetch their conquering Caesar in.

“Imagine a general returning from abroad after putting down a threat to your country. How many citizens would leave the peaceful city so that they could go out and welcome him!

“Many more citizens than that, who had much more cause to rejoice, left London to welcome this Harry.

“Now in London place the King. The French mourn their dead while Henry V stays at home, the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund visits England to try to arrange peace between England and France, and other events occur that we must omit.

“But now Harry is back in France, so know that he is there.

“I have performed my job of filling in — all too briefly — the gaps. Tolerate my overly brief summary of historical events, and send your thoughts and your eyes to France to see the King.”

As the Chorus had said, he had very briefly summarized events. The Battle of Agincourt occurred in 1415, and King Henry V returned to France for the signing of the Treaty of Troyes in 1420.

— 5.1 —

In the English camp, Captain Gower asked Captain Fluellen, “Why are you wearing a leek on your cap today? Saint Davy’s day is past.”

Captain Fluellen replied, “There is occasions and causes why and wherefore in all things. I will tell you, ass [as] my friend, Captain Gower: The rascally, scald [scurvy], beggarly, lousy, praggling [bragging] knave, Pistol, whom

you and yourself and all the world know to be no petter [better] than a fellow, look you now, of no merits, he is come to me and prings [brings] me pread [bread] and salt yesterday, look you, and bid me eat my leek. This happened in a place where I could not fight him, but I will be so bold as to wear a leek in my cap until I see him once again, and then I will tell him a little piece of my desires [mind].”

Pistol walked toward them.

Captain Gower said, “Why, here he comes, swelling like a turkey-cock.”

“It is no matter for his swellings nor his turkey-cocks,” Captain Fluellen said. “God pless [bless] you, Aunchient [Ancient, aka Ensign] Pistol! You scurvy, bitten-by-louses knave, God pless [bless] you!”

“Ha! Are you bedlam?” Pistol asked. “Are you mad? Do you thirst, base Trojan and hooligan, to have me fold up Parca’s fatal web?”

Captain Gower thought, *Pistol is only partially educated, if that. The Parcae — plural — are the Fates, and they cut the thread of life instead of folding up the web of life.*

Pistol blustered, “Hence! Go away! I am qualmish and nauseous at the smell of leek.”

Captain Fluellen replied, “I peseech [beseech] you heartily, scurvy, lousy — literally — knave, at my desires, and my requests, and my petitions, to eat, look you, this leek: Because, look you, you do not love it, nor your affections and your appetites and your digestions do not agree with it, and so I would desire you to eat it.”

Pistol replied, “Not for Cadwallader and all his goats.”

The seventh-century Cadwallader was the last Welsh King

to rule Britain. Wales is a mountainous country that is known for its goats, and Pistol was insulting the Welsh by calling them goats.

Captain Fluellen hit Pistol on the head with a cudgel and said, “There is one goat for you.”

He then said, “Will you be so good, scauld [scurvy] knave, as to eat this leek?”

“Base Trojan, you shall die,” Pistol blustered.

“You say very true, scauld knave. I will die when it is God’s will for me to die,” Captain Fluellen replied. “I will desire you to live in the meantime, and eat your victuals. Come, here is sauce for it.”

Captain Fluellen struck Pistol on the head hard enough with his cudgel for Pistol’s blood to flow.

He then said, “You called me yesterday a mountain-squire — a squire of mountainous land of little value — but I will make you today a squire of low degree. I pray you, fall to and eat this meal. If you can mock a leek, you can eat a leek.”

“Enough, Captain Fluellen, you have astonished and stunned him,” Captain Gower said.

“I say, I will make him eat some part of my leek, or I will peat [beat] his pate [head] four days,” Captain Fluellen replied.

He said to Pistol, “Bite, I pray you; it is good for your raw wound and your ploody [bloody] coxcomb, aka foolish head.”

Fools, aka jesters, wore a hat resembling a coxcomb.

Pistol asked him, “Must I bite into this leek?”

“Yes, certainly, and out of doubt and out of question, too, and no ambiguities.”

Pistol replied, “By this leek, I swear that I will get most horrible revenge —”

Captain Fluellen hit Pistol again with the cudgel and Pistol quickly took a bite of the leek and said, “I’m eating! I’m eating!”

He then muttered, “I swear —”

Captain Fluellen hit him again and said, “Eat, I pray you. Will you have some more sauce for your leek? There is not enough leek to swear by.”

“Quiet your cudgel,” Pistol said. “You can see that I am eating.”

“It will do you much good, scurvy knave — eat heartily. Nay, pray you, throw none away; the skin is good for your broken coxcomb. When you take occasions to see leeks hereafter, I pray you, mock at ’em — I would like to see you do that, really I would.”

“You win.”

“Ay, leeks is good,” Captain Fluellen said. “Wait, here is a groat — fourpence — to heal your pate.”

“A whole groat just for me!” Pistol said sarcastically.

“Yes, verily and in truth, you shall take it — or I have another leek in my pocket for you to eat.”

“I take your groat as a down payment for my revenge.”

“If I owe you anything, I will pay you in cudgels,” Captain Fluellen said. “You shall be a seller of wood, and buy nothing from me but wooden cudgels. God be with you, and keep you, and heal your pate.”

Captain Fluellen departed.

Pistol said, “All Hell shall stir for this.”

Captain Gower said, “No, it won’t. You are a false and cowardly knave. Will you mock at an ancient tradition, begun for an honorable reason? The leek is worn on caps as a memorable symbol commemorating long-ago bravery. You have mocked this tradition, but you have not made good with your actions any of your words.

“I have seen you gibing and scoffing at this gentleman, Captain Fluellen, twice or thrice. You thought, because he could not speak English as well as a native Englishman, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel. You have found out otherwise; and henceforth let a Welsh correction teach you good English behavior. Fare you well.”

Captain Gower exited.

Alone, Pistol said to himself, “Does Fortune play the hussy with me now and give me only bad luck? I have received news from England that my doll — my wife, Nell — has died in a hospital of the malady of France: venereal disease. No doubt Doll Tearsheet is also dead by now. The inn is lost to me, and therefore I have no refuge. Old do I grow, and from my weary limbs honor is cudged. Well, I’ll turn pimp, and I will also become a pickpocket with quick hands — I will use a knife to cut the strings of other people’s moneybags. I will also get bandages for these cudged scars that Fluellen gave to me, and in England I will swear that I got these scars on French battlefields.”

— 5.2 —

At the royal palace in France, the English and the French met to establish terms of peace and to sign a peace treaty. In the treaty, Henry V had made many conditions for peace, including his marriage to Katherine, daughter of the French

King. He wanted to ensure that his descendants would rule France.

The English people present included King Henry V, Exeter, Bedford, Gloucester, Warwick, Westmoreland, and other Lords. The French people present included the French King, Queen Isabel, the Princess Katherine, Alice (Katherine's attendant, who is older than she), and other ladies. Also present was the mediator, the Duke of Burgundy, and his train. Everyone was very polite and almost everyone was very formal. The highest-ranking royals referred to their counterparts on the other side as close relatives. The Kings also used the royal we.

King Henry V said, "Peace to this meeting — peace is why we have met! To our brother the King of France, and to our sister the Queen of France, I wish health and a good morning. I wish joy and good wishes to our most fair and Princely cousin Katherine. And, as a branch and member of this royalty, by whom this great assembly has been achieved, we do salute you, Duke of Burgundy. Finally, French Princes and peers, health to you all!"

The King of France replied, "Right joyous are we to behold your face, most worthy brother, King of England. You are welcome here, as are all of your English Princes, every one."

"May the outcome of this good day and of this gracious meeting, brother King of England," the Queen of France said, "be happy, as happy as we are now glad to behold your eyes today. Previously, your eyes have opposed the French, who met them in their line of fire. Your eyes were like the fatal eyeballs of murdering basilisks that kill with their looks, and your eyes were like killing cannonballs. Your looks, we sincerely hope, have lost their venomous quality, and we sincerely hope that this day shall change all griefs and quarrels into love."

“I say ‘amen’ to that,” King Henry V said. “That is the reason all of us are here today.”

“You English Princes all, I do salute and welcome you,” the Queen of France said.

The Duke of Burgundy said, “My duty is to both of you, equally, great Kings of France and England! That I have labored with all my wits, my pains, and my strong endeavors to bring your most imperial majesties to this court of justice and summit conference, your mightiness on both sides best can witness. Since my office has so far prevailed that face to face and royal eye to eye you have greeted each other, let it not disgrace me, if I demand, before this royal view, to know what obstacle or what impediment there is to keep the currently naked, poor, and mangled Peace, that dear nurse of arts and joyful births, from showing her lovely face in this best garden of the world — our fertile France.

“Sadly, Peace has from France too long been chased away. As a result, the crops of France lie in disorder, in heaps, and rotting. France’s vines, which produce wine, the merry cheerer of the heart, die from lack of pruning and lack of care. France’s formerly trimmed hedges are like prisoners with wildly overgrown hair; they put forth disordered twigs. France’s arable land now lies unplowed, and on it grows only weeds such as the darnel, hemlock, and rank fumitory. The plows that should uproot such wild and savage weeds rust. The level meadows that formerly brought sweetly forth desirable plants such as the freckled cowslip, burnet, and green clover now lack the farmers who wield the scythe. Because the meadows lack horticultural care, they are all uncultivated and rank; in them wild weeds grow, and nothing breeds except hateful dock-leaves, rough thistles, dry hollow stalks, and burs, none of which have beauty or utility.

“And just as our vineyards, arable land now lying fallow, meadows, and hedges, defective in their natures, grow wild, our families and ourselves and our children have forgotten, or do not learn because of lack of time, the sciences that should civilize our country; instead, they become like savages — as soldiers will who do nothing except think about bloodshed. They swear and give stern looks, wear ragged clothing, and are accustomed to everything that seems unnatural.

“Therefore, you are here today so that we can bring Peace and the blessings of Peace back and we can return to the good things that we once had. I ask you to let me know why gentle Peace should not expel these evils that I have mentioned and bless us again.”

King Henry V said, “If, Duke of Burgundy, you would have the Peace you want, whose lack gives growth to the imperfections that you have cited, you must buy that Peace by getting full agreement to all our just demands, whose general aims and specific details are briefly summarized in the document you are holding in your hands.”

The Duke of Burgundy replied, “The King of France has heard your demands, but he has not yet replied to them.”

King Henry V said, “Well, then, whether there shall be Peace, which you have been advocating, lies in his answer to our demands.”

The King of France said, “I have only cursorily glanced over your demands. If it pleases your grace to appoint some of your council immediately to sit and meet with us once more, so that we can with better heed consider your demands, we will quickly let you know to which Articles of Peace we agree.”

“Brother, we shall do that,” Henry V said. “Go, uncle Exeter, and brother Clarence, and you, too, brother

Gloucester, Warwick and Huntingdon, go with the King of France. And take with you complete power to ratify, augment, or alter our demands, as your wisdoms best shall see advantageous for our dignity. We will sign what you agree to.”

He then said to the Queen of France, “Will you, fair sister, go with the Princes, or stay here with us?”

“Our gracious brother, I will go with them. Perhaps a woman’s voice may do some good, when arguments over the Articles of Peace are unnecessarily made.”

Henry V requested, “Allow our cousin Katherine to stay here with us. My marriage to her is our capital demand; it is among the first things listed in the treaty.”

“She has permission to stay,” the Queen of France replied.

Everyone except King Henry V and Katherine — and Alice, her attendant and chaperone — exited.

Henry V and Katherine were going to be married; Henry V knew it, and Katherine knew it. That is why Katherine had been learning to speak English. But simply telling a woman that you are going to marry her so that your heirs can become King of France is no way to treat a lady, and so Henry V wooed Katherine, although she spoke little English and he spoke little French.

Henry V said, “Lovely and most beautiful Katherine, will you be so kind as to teach a soldier terms such as will enter a lady’s ear and plead his love to her gentle heart?”

“Your majesty shall mock at me,” Katherine said. “I cannot speak your England.”

“Oh, lovely Katherine, if you will love me soundly with your French heart, I will be glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your English tongue. Do you like me, Kate?”

“*Pardonnez-moi* [Pardon me], I cannot tell vat is ‘like me.’”

“An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.”

Katherine asked Alice, her attendant and chaperone, “*Que dit-il? Que je suis semblable a les anges?* [What did he say? That I am like the angels?]

Alice replied, “*Oui, vraiment, sauf votre grace, ainsi dit-il.* [Yes, really, begging your grace’s pardon, that is what he said.]”

“I said so, lovely Katherine,” Henry V said, “and I must not blush to affirm it.”

Katherine said, “*Oh, bon Dieu! Les langues des hommes sont pleines de trumperies!* [Oh, good God! The tongues of men are full of deceits!]”

Henry V asked Alice, “What says she, fair one? That the tongues of men are full of deceits?”

Alice replied, “*Oui* [Yes], dat de tongues of de mans is be full of deceits: dat is say de Princess.”

“The Princess is the better Englishwoman because she prefers plain speaking,” Henry V said. “Truly, Kate, my wooing is fit for your understanding: I am glad you can speak no better English; for, if you could, you would find me such a plain King that you would think I had been a farmer and had sold my farm to buy my crown. I know no ways to mince it in love — to speak like a courtier — so instead I will directly and openly say, ‘I love you.’ If you press me any farther than to reply, ‘Do you truly love me?’ then I have no fancy words to say and so my courtship is over. Give me your answer. Please, do. Say you will marry me and we will shake hands and so make a bargain. What have you to say, lady?”

Katherine replied, “*Sauf votre honneur* [Saving your grace], me understand vell.”

Henry V said, “By the Virgin Mary, if you want me to write love verses or to dance to court you, Kate, why, then you undo me. As far as writing poetry is concerned, I have neither words nor meter, and as far as dancing is concerned, I have no strength in measuring dance steps, yet I have a reasonable measure of strength. If I could win a lady by playing leapfrog, or by vaulting into my saddle with my armor on my back, I can say without bragging that I should quickly leap into a wife.”

He thought, *And leap onto a wife in bed.*

He continued, “Or if I could fist-fight for my love, or if I could make my horse leap for her favors, I would hit like a butcher felling a beast before butchering it and I would sit on a horse like a specially trained ape and never fall off. But, before God, Kate, I cannot look like a love-sick youth or gasp out eloquent love-talk — I have no skill in professing my love for you. I have only downright oaths, which I never make until urged to, and which I never break even when urged to.

“If you can love a fellow of this temper, Kate, whose face is not worth being sunburned because it is already brown and cannot become uglier, who never looks in his mirror because of love of anything he sees there, let your eye be your cook — let it make me appear to be the way that you want me to be. Garnish me to make me more attractive than I am.

“I speak to you like a plain soldier. If you can love me for this — what I am — take me. If you will not marry me, to say to you that I shall die is true, but I will not die because I lack your love, by God. Yet it is true that I love you.

“While you live, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and

natural constancy because he must do you right, because he has not the gift to woo in other places: These fellows of infinite tongue, who can talk well and make rhymes and win the love of many women, end up talking themselves out of love again.

“Listen! A speaker is only a prattler; a rhyme is only a song that will not be long remembered. A good leg will waste away; a straight back will stoop; a black beard will turn white; a pate with curled hair will grow bald; a fair face will wither; a full eye will grow hollow. But a good heart, Kate, is the Sun and the Moon; or, rather, it is the Sun and not the Moon because it shines brightly and never changes, but keeps its course truly. If you would have such a one, then take me. If you take me, you will take a soldier, and if you take a soldier, then you take a King. And what do you say now to my love? Speak, my lovely lady, and give me the answer I want to hear, please.”

Katherine replied, “Is it possible dat I sould [should] love de enemy of France?”

“No, it is not possible that you should love the enemy of France, Kate,” Henry V said, “but, in loving me, you would love the friend of France because I love France so well that I will not part with even one village of it. I will have all of France, and, Kate, when France is mine and I am yours, then France is yours and you are mine.”

“I cannot tell vat is dat,” Katherine replied.

“No, Kate?” Henry V said. “I will tell you in French, which I am sure will hang upon my tongue like a new-married wife about her husband’s neck, hardly to be shook off.

“*Je quand sur le possession de France, et quand vous avez le possession de moi* [I still on the possession of France, and when you have possession of me] — let me see, what then? Saint Denis, patron saint of France, help me! — *donc*

votre est France et vous etes mienne [so yours is France and you are mine].

“It is as easy for me, Kate, to conquer the Kingdom of France as it would be to speak so much more French. I shall never move you in French, unless it be to move you to laugh at me.”

Katherine replied, “*Sauf votre honneur, le Francois que vous parlez, il est meilleur que l’Anglois le quel je parle.* [With respect, the French you speak is better than the English I speak.]”

“No, truly, it is not, Kate,” Henry V said, “but your speaking in my tongue, and I in yours, most truly-falsely — true in meaning but incorrect in grammar — must be granted to be very much at the same skill level. But, Kate, do you understand as much English as will allow you to understand and answer this question — can you love me?”

“I cannot tell.”

“Can any of your neighbors tell, Kate? I’ll ask them. Come, I know you love me. At night, when you go into your bedroom, you’ll question this gentlewoman — Alice — about me, and I know, Kate, to her you will criticize those parts in me that you love with your heart. But, good Kate, mock me mercifully; do this, gentle Princess, because I love you terribly.

“If ever you are mine, Kate, as I have faith that you will be, I will get you with struggling as if I were in a battle, and you will therefore prove to be the mother of good soldiers. Shall not you and I, with the help of Saint Denis and Saint George, create a boy, half French and half English, who shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard in a Crusade? Shall we not? What have you to say about that, my fair flower-*de-luce* [he meant *fleur-de-lis*, aka the French heraldic lily]?”

“I do not know dat,” Katherine said.

“No,” Henry V said, “you do not know that now. Hereafter you shall know, but now is the time to promise.”

Henry V thought, *The Biblical “knowing” will occur after we are married. We will have a son. We need to produce an heir.*

He added, “Promise me now, Kate, that you will endeavor to do your part in producing the French part of such a boy; as for my English moiety, aka half, take the word of a King and a bachelor. What is your answer, *la plus belle Katherine du monde, mon tres cher et devin deesse* [the most beautiful Katherine in the world and my very dear and divine goddess]?”

“Your majestee ’ave *fausse* [false, inaccurate, deceiving] French enough to deceive de most *sage demoiselle* [wise lady] dat is en France,” Katherine replied.

“A plague upon my false French!” Henry V said. “By my honor, in true English, I love you, Kate. By my honor, I dare not swear you love me, yet my passion begins to flatter me that you do, notwithstanding the poor and discouraging effect of my looks.

“Curse my father’s ambition! He was thinking of civil wars when he got my mother pregnant with me. My father’s thoughts when I was conceived had an effect on me. Because of my father’s thoughts, I was created with a stubborn outside, with an aspect or appearance of iron, with the result that, when I attempt to woo ladies, I frighten them.

“But, truly, Kate, the older I grow, the better I shall appear. My comfort is that old age, which badly treats beauty, can do nothing more to spoil my face — I am already ugly.

“You will have me, if you will have me, at the worst, and you will see that I will grow better and better the longer you have and enjoy me.

“Therefore, tell me, most lovely Katherine, will you have me? Will you marry me? Put away your maiden blushes; instead, give expression to the thoughts of your heart with the looks of an Empress. Take me by the hand, and say to me, ‘Harry of England, I am yours.’

“As soon as you say those blessed words to me, I will tell you out loud, ‘England is yours, Ireland is yours, France is yours, and Harry Plantagenet — me — is yours.’

“Harry Plantagenet is a person who, though I speak it to his face, if he is not fellow with — that is, equal to — the best King, you shall find that he is the best King of good fellows.

“Come, tell me your answer in broken music; for your voice is music and your English is broken; therefore, Queen of all, Katherine, tell your mind to me in broken English; will you have me and marry me?”

“Dat is as it sall [shall] please de *roi mon pere* [the King my father].”

“It will please him well, Kate,” Henry V said. “It shall please him, Kate.”

Henry V knew that the King of France would sign the peace treaty.

“Den it sall also please me.”

“Hearing that, I now kiss your hand, and I call you my Queen.”

Henry V took her hand so that he could kiss it.

Katherine replied, “*Laissez, mon seigneur, laissez, laissez!*”

Ma foi, je ne veux point que vous abaissiez votre grandeur en baisant la main d'une de votre seigneurie indigne serviteur! Excusez-moi, je vous supplie, mon tres-puissant seigneur.”

[Katherine replied, “Let go, my lord, let go, let go! On my word, I would never wish you to lower your dignity by kissing the hand of an unworthy servant of your majesty! Pardon me, I beg you, my most mighty lord.”]

“Then I will kiss your lips, Kate.”

Katherine replied, “*Les dames et demoiselles pour etre baisees devant leur noces, il n'est pas la coutume de France.*”

[Katherine replied, “It is not the custom for women and maidens to be kissed before they are married.”]

Those of you who understand that *baisees* means both “kissed” and, colloquially, “f**ked” may laugh now.

Henry V asked Alice, “Madam my interpreter, what is she saying?”

“Dat it is not be de fashion pour les ladies of France — I cannot tell vat is *baiser* en Anglish.”

“To kiss,” Henry V said.

Alice replied, “Your majesty *entendre bettre que moi* [understands better than me].”

You may now laugh at the word “*entendre.*”

“Does she say that it is not a fashion for the maidens in France to kiss before they are married?” Henry V asked.

Alice replied, “*Oui, vraiment.* [Yes, really.]”

Henry V said, “Overly strict customs bow before great

Kings. Dear Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak rules of a country's fashion. We are the makers of manners, Kate, and the liberty that comes with high positions stops the mouth of all find-faults. You have upheld the overly strict fashion of your country by denying me a kiss, and therefore I will stop your mouth with a kiss. Therefore, be patient and yielding."

He kissed her and said, "You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate. There is more eloquence in a sugar-sweet touch of your lips than in the tongues of the French council; and your lips should sooner persuade Harry of England than a petition of all the Kings in the world."

He heard a noise and said, "Here comes your father."

The King and Queen of France, Burgundy, and other lords entered the room.

"God save your majesty!" Burgundy said, "My royal cousin, are you teaching our French Princess English?"

"I would have her learn, my fair kinsman, how perfectly I love her," Henry V said, "and that is good English."

"Is she not eager and willing to learn?" Burgundy asked.

"Our English tongue, aka language, is rough, kinsman, and my behavior is not smooth," Henry V said, "so that, having neither the voice nor the heart of flattery about me, I cannot conjure up the spirit of love in her so that the spirit of love will appear in his true likeness."

Burgundy, who enjoyed bawdy puns and humor, said, "Pardon the frankness of my jokes as I give you advice for your problem. If you would conjure in her, you must make a circle."

Henry V thought, *To conjure is to raise, and in the act of sex the part of a man that is raised must make a circle as it*

penetrates a vagina.

Burgundy continued, “If you conjure up Love, aka Cupid, in her in his true likeness, he must appear naked and blind because in art Cupid usually appears blindfolded and naked.”

Henry V thought, *A penis is naked and blind when it penetrates a vagina, whose inside is dark.*

Burgundy continued, “Can you blame her then, being a maid yet rosed over with the virgin crimson of modesty — a blush — if she deny the appearance of a naked blind boy in her naked seeing self?”

Henry V thought, *Many virgins blush when a naked penis approaches a naked and exposed-to-light c*nt.*

Burgundy continued, “It were, my lord, a hard condition for a maiden to yield to.”

Henry V thought, *Yes, the penis must be in a hard condition in such a situation.*

He said to Burgundy, “Yet maidens do close their eyes and yield, as love is blind and enforces.”

Burgundy thought, *“Enforces” is a good word here because the penis forces, aka pushes, its way into a vagina, where the penis is blind in the dark.*

Burgundy said, “They are then excused, my lord, when they see not what they do.”

Henry V thought, *They — maidens and vaginas — are excused because they see not what they do.*

He said to Burgundy, “Then, my good lord, teach your cousin Katherine to consent and wink.”

Burgundy thought, *“Consent” means to consent to love*

and marry him, and it means to consent to have sex with him. The word “wink” can mean to close one’s eyes.

Burgundy said, “I will wink at Katherine to let her know that she should consent, my lord, if you will teach her to know my meaning.”

Henry V thought, “*Teach her to know my meaning” means to teach her about sex.*

Burgundy continued, “Virgins, well summered, aka well taken care of, and with warm blood, are like flies on Saint Bartholomew’s Day — August 24. They are blind, though they have their eyes; and then they will endure handling, which before would not abide looking on.”

Henry V thought, *Flies are supposed to be so sluggish on Saint Bartholomew’s Day that it is as if they were blind and so they can be easily caught. In late summer, virgins who have warm blood — are in heat — close their eyes and allow themselves to be caught and handled.*

Henry V said, “This moral ties me over to time and a hot summer; and so I shall catch the fly, your cousin, in the latter end and she must be blind, too.”

Burgundy thought, *The marriage of Henry V and Katherine will take place in summer. She will close her eyes, and he will “catch” her end.*

Burgundy said, “Blind, as love is, my lord, before it loves. Love is blind, my lord, before it begins truly to love.”

Henry V said, “That is true, and you may, some of you, thank love for my blindness. I cannot see many a fair French city because of one beautiful French maiden — Katherine — who stands in my way.”

The King of France said, “My lord, you see the fair French cities, but you see them from a different perspective than is

usual. For you, the cities are turned into a maiden because they are all girdled with maiden walls that war has never entered.”

Henry V thought, *Enough sex puns and metaphors.*

He asked the King of France, “Shall Kate be my wife?”

“Yes, if you want to marry her.”

“I do,” Henry V said, “as long as the maiden cities you talk about will serve as her dowry. That way, the maiden who stood in the way of what I wish shall be the way for me to get what I wish.”

The King of France said, “We have consented to all reasonable terms.”

Henry V asked, “Is that true, my lords of England?”

Westmoreland replied, “The King has granted every Article of Peace. He has granted his daughter first, and then following that he has granted all the rest of the things that you definitely wanted.”

Exeter said, “There is one thing that he has not agreed to.

“Your majesty demanded that the King of France, when he has any occasion to write to you about grants of land and titles, shall refer to your highness in this way and with this title in French: *Notre trescher fils Henri, Roi d’Angleterre, Heritier de France* [Our very dear son Henry, King of England and Heir to France].

“You also wanted him when writing you to refer to your highness in this way and with this title in Latin: *Praecarissimus filius noster Henricus, Rex Angliae, et Haeres Franciae* [Our very dear son Henry, King of England and Heir to France].”

The King of France said, “I am also willing to agree to this,

brother, if you request me to do so.”

Henry V said, “I request you then, in love and dear alliance, to agree to that article along with the rest, and thereupon give me your daughter.”

“Take her, fair son,” the King of France said, “and have children with her so that the contending Kingdoms of France and England, whose very shores — and white cliffs — look pale with envy of each other’s happiness, may cease their hatred, and this dear conjunction of English King and French Princess may plant neighborliness and Christian-like accord in the sweet bosoms of the English citizens and the French citizens, so that never again will war advance its blood-dripping sword between England and fair France.”

Everyone present said, “Amen!”

Henry V said, “Now, welcome, Kate: and all of you bear witness that here and now I kiss her as my sovereign Queen.”

The Queen of France said, “May God, Who is the best maker of all marriages, combine your hearts in one, and your realms in one! As man and wife, being two, are one in love, so let there be between your Kingdoms such a marriage that never may wrongdoing, or cruel jealousy, which trouble often the bed of blessed marriage, thrust in between the compact of these Kingdoms, to separate their union in one body. May the Englishmen be Frenchmen, and may the Frenchmen be Englishmen, and may they so treat each other. May God say ‘Amen!’ — ‘So be it!’ — to this.”

Everyone present said, “Amen!”

Henry V said, “Now we will prepare for our marriage — on which day, my Lord of Burgundy, we’ll take your oath, and all the peers’ oaths, for security of our alliance. Then I shall

swear to Kate —” he looked at her “— and Kate to me; and may our oaths well kept and prosperous be!”

EPILOGUE (*Henry V*)

The Chorus appeared and said, “Thus far in history, with rough and all-unable and all-unskilled pen, our author, bending over his writing desk, has pursued this story, confining important people such as the King of England and the King of France in a little book and on a little stage, mangling in fits and starts the full course of their glory.

“This star of England — King Henry V — lived only a short time, but in that short time he most greatly lived and accomplished much. Good fortune followed him in war, by which he conquered France, the world’s best garden, and he left France to his imperial son.

“His infant son, Henry VI, was crowned King of England and King of France. But so many people were involved in managing the young King’s affairs that they lost France and made his England bleed with civil war. Our stage has often told this tale in productions of the three plays of *Henry VI*.

“For the sake of those three plays, we hope that you will kindly receive — and applaud — this play.”

Chapter XVIII: HENRY VI, PART 1

CAST OF CHARACTERS (1 Henry VI)

English Male Characters

King Henry VI.

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, uncle to the King, and Lord Protector. The Lord Protector, aka Protector of the Realm, is the individual ruler of England while the King is still a minor.

Duke of Bedford, uncle to the King, and Regent of France. The Regent rules France while the King is still a minor.

Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, great-uncle to the King.

Henry Beaufort, great-uncle to the King, Bishop of Winchester, and afterwards Cardinal of Winchester.

John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset.

Richard Plantagenet, son of Richard, late Earl of Cambridge; afterwards Duke of York.

Earl of Warwick.

Earl of Salisbury.

Earl of Suffolk.

Lord Talbot, afterwards Earl of Shrewsbury.

John Talbot, his son.

Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March.

Sir John Fastolfe.

Sir William Lucy.

Sir William Glansdale.

Sir Thomas Gargrave.

Mayor of London.

Woodville, Lieutenant of the Tower of London.

Vernon, of the White-Rose, aka York faction.

Basset, of the Red-Rose, aka Lancaster faction.

A Lawyer.

Mortimer's jail keepers.

French Male Characters

Charles, Dauphin, and afterwards King of France. The Dauphin is the eldest son of the King of France; in this play/book, the person who is King of France is disputed.

Reignier, Duke of Anjou, and titular King of Naples.

Duke of Burgundy. His sister Anne married the Duke of Bedford, one of King Henry VI's uncles. King Henry VI refers to the Duke of Burgundy as an uncle.

Duke of Alençon.

Bastard of Orleans, aka Jean du Dunois, the illegitimate son of Louis I, the Duke of Orleans.

Governor of Paris.

Master Gunner of Orleans, and his Son.

General of the French forces in Bordeaux.

A French Sergeant.

A Porter.

An old Shepherd, father to Joan la Pucelle.

Female Characters

Margaret, daughter to Reignier, afterwards married to King Henry VI.

Countess of Auvergne, a Frenchwoman.

Joan la Pucelle, commonly called Joan of Arc; “Pucelle” means “Maiden” or “Virgin”; her father’s name is Jacques d’Arc.

Minor Characters

Lords, Warders of the Tower, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and Attendants.

Fiends appearing to Joan la Pucelle.

Scene: England and France.

Nota Bene:

King Henry V was born on 9 August 1386 and died on 31 August 1422.

King Henry VI (born 6 December 1421; died 21 May 1471) began his reign in 1422, but he was deposed on 1461; he briefly returned to the throne in 1470-1471.

The Hundred Years War, which lasted from 1337-1453 (116 years), was not fought continuously. The Edwardian War took place in 1337-1360; the Caroline War took place in 1369-1389; the first phase of the Lancastrian War took place in 1415-1420, and the second phase of the Lancastrian War took place in 1420-1453.

After the Hundred Years War, the Wars of the Roses took place from 1455-1487. In those wars, the Yorkists and the Lancastrians fought for power in England in the famous Wars of the Roses. The emblem of the York family was a white rose, and the emblem of the Lancaster family was a red rose.

We read Shakespeare for drama, not history. He invents scenes and changes the ages of historical personages in his plays. He also changes the order in which historical events occur.

CHAPTER 1 (1 Henry VI)

— 1.1 —

King Henry V died on 31 August 1422. His son, who would become King Henry VI, was born on 6 December 1421. The Duke of Gloucester, young Henry's uncle, was named Protector of the Realm because of Henry's extreme youth.

The funeral of King Henry V was being held at Westminster Abbey. As funeral music played, pallbearers carried the coffin of the King. Present were the Duke of Bedford, who was also the Regent of France; the Duke of Gloucester, who was also the Lord Protector; the Duke of Exeter, the Earl of Warwick, the Bishop of Winchester, heralds, and attendants.

The Duke of Bedford said, "Let the Heavens be hung with black, and let day yield to night! Comets, predicting change of times and states, brandish your crystal-bright tresses in the sky, and with them scourge the bad mutinous stars that have consented to Henry's death!"

When a comet comes close to the Sun, it heats up and its gases form a tail. Because of that, comets were known in earlier ages as longhaired stars. The Greek word *kometes* means "longhaired."

He continued, "King Henry V was too famous to live long!"

A proverb stated, "Those whom God loves do not live long."

He continued, "England has never lost a King of so much worth."

The Duke of Gloucester said, “England never had a true King until the time of Henry V. Virtue, courage, and ability he had, and he deserved to command. His brandished sword blinded men with its reflected beams of Sunlight. His arms spread wider than a dragon’s wings. His sparking eyes, replete with wrathful fire, dazzled and drove back his enemies more than the mid-day Sun fiercely turned against their faces. What should I say? His deeds exceed all speech; words fail me. He never lifted up his hand without conquering.”

The Duke of Exeter said, “We mourn while wearing black. Why don’t we mourn while covered in blood? Henry V is dead and never shall revive and come back to life. Upon a wooden coffin we attend, and Death’s dishonorable victory we with our stately presence glorify, like captives bound to a triumphant chariot.”

The ancient Romans held triumphal processions for conquering heroes. The conqueror would ride in a chariot with important captives bound and walking behind the chariot. In the Duke of Exeter’s image, Death was the conqueror and the lords were the captives trailing behind Death’s triumphal chariot.

He continued, “Shall we curse the planets of mishap — planets that plotted thus our glory’s overthrow?”

This society believed in astrology, which held that planets had an effect on Earth and its inhabitants. Some planets were malignant and could cause bad things — such as the death of King Henry V — to occur.

He continued, “Or shall we think the subtle-witted, cunning French are conjurers and sorcerers, who because they were afraid of him have contrived his end by the use of magic verses?”

This society also believed in magic that could be malignant

and cause death. Since the English and the French were enemies, each side regarded the other side as employing conjurers and sorcerers.

The Bishop of Winchester said, “He was a King blessed by the King of Kings. The dreadful Judgment Day will not be as dreadful to the French as was the sight of him. The battles of the Lord of Hosts he fought; the church’s prayers made him so prosperous.”

Isaiah 13:4 states, “*The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle*” (King James Version).

To “muster troops” means to “assemble troops.” A “host” is an army.

“The church!” the Duke of Gloucester exclaimed. “Where is it? If churchmen had not prayed, his thread of life had not so soon decayed.”

He believed that the churchmen had disliked King Henry V and had prayed for his death; he believed that they had preyed on him. He also was referring to the three Fates when he mentioned the thread of life. The three Fates spun the thread of life, measured it, and cut it. When an immortal Fate cut the thread of life, the mortal human died.

He continued, “You like none except an effeminate, weak, controllable Prince, whom, like a schoolboy, you may overawe.”

All too often, people engage in power struggles. Many churchmen are not exempt from engaging in power politics. The reign of King Henry VI would be marked by many such political struggles, including this one between the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester.

The Bishop of Winchester replied, “Duke of Gloucester, whatever we like, you are the Lord Protector and you intend to command both the Prince and the realm. Your wife is proud; she makes you afraid of her more than God or religious churchmen can make you afraid.”

“Don’t talk about religion, for you love the flesh,” the Duke of Gloucester said, “and never throughout the year do you go to church except to pray against your foes.”

The Duke of Bedford said, “Stop! Stop these quarrels and rest your minds in peace. Let’s go to the altar. Heralds, wait on us. Instead of gold, we’ll offer up our weapons, since weapons are of no use to us now that King Henry V is dead. Posterity, expect wretched years, during which babes shall suck at their mothers’ moist eyes, our isle shall be made a nurse of salt tears, and none but women shall be left to wail the dead.

“Henry V, your ghost I call upon. Make this realm prosper, keep it from civil broils, combat the malignant planets in the Heavens! A far more glorious star your soul will make than Julius Caesar or bright —”

In mythology, after Julius Caesar’s death, his soul became a star.

A messenger entered Westminster Abbey and interrupted the Duke of Bedford: “My honorable lords, good health to you all! Sad tidings I bring to you from France, tidings of loss, of slaughters and utter defeat. The French cities of Guienne, Champagne, Rheims, Orleans, Paris, Guysors, and Poitiers are all quite lost.”

“What are you saying, man, in front of dead King Henry V’s corpse?” the Duke of Bedford asked. “Speak softly, or the loss of those great towns will make him burst out of his lead-lined coffin and rise from death.”

“Is Paris lost? Has Rouen surrendered?” the Duke of Gloucester asked. “If Henry V were recalled to life again, this news would cause him once more to yield the ghost and die.”

“How were they lost?” the Duke of Exeter asked. “What treachery was used?”

“No treachery,” the messenger said, “but lack of men and money led to their loss. The soldiers mutter among themselves that here you maintain several factions, and while a field — an army and a battle — should be dispatched and fought, you are disputing about your Generals. One would have lingering wars with little cost. Another would fly swiftly, but lacks wings. A third thinks, with no expense at all, peace may be obtained by the use of guileful, pretty words.

“Awake, awake, English nobility! Don’t let sloth dim your newly begotten honors — those French cities that King Henry V won for you! Cropped are the flower-de-luces in your arms; one half of England’s coat of arms is cut away.”

Flower-de-luces were French heraldic lilies; King Henry V and his son both had a claim to the French throne, and so one half of the coat of arms of the King of England displayed French lilies, the royal symbol of France.

The Duke of Exeter said, “If we lacked tears for this funeral, these tidings would call forth their flowing tides.”

“These losses are my concern,” the Duke of Bedford said. “I am the Regent of France: I rule there in the absence of the King of England. Give me my steeled coat of armor. I’ll fight to regain France.

“Away with these disgraceful wailing robes! I will lend the French wounds, instead of eyes, to weep their intermittent miseries. Let their wounds cry bloody tears.”

The miseries were intermittent because England and France fought intermittently. The Hundred Years War, which lasted from 1337-1453 (116 years), was not fought continuously. The Edwardian War took place in 1337-1360; the Caroline War took place in 1369-1389; the first phase of the Lancastrian War took place in 1415-1420, and the second phase of the Lancastrian War took place in 1420-1453.

After the Hundred Years War, the Wars of the Roses took place from 1455-1487.

Another messenger arrived and said, "Lords, view these letters full of bad mischance. Except for some petty towns of no importance, France has quite revolted from the English. Charles the Dauphin has been crowned King of Rheims. The Bastard of Orleans has joined with him. Reignier, Duke of Anjou, is on the Dauphin's side. The Duke of Alençon also flies to his side."

"The Dauphin has been crowned King of Rheims!" the Duke of Exeter exclaimed. "All fly to join him! Oh, where shall we fly from this disgrace?"

"We will not fly anywhere, except to our enemies' throats," the Duke of Gloucester said. "Duke of Bedford, if you are slack, I'll fight it out."

"Duke of Gloucester, why do you doubt my zeal to fight the French?" the Duke of Bedford asked. "I have mustered in my thoughts an army with which France is already overrun."

Another messenger arrived and said, "My gracious lords, to add to your laments, with which you now bedew with tears King Henry's hearse, I must inform you of a dismal fight between the brave, valiant Lord Talbot and the French."

The Bishop of Winchester said, "Talbot conquered the

French, right?”

“Oh, no,” the messenger replied. “In the battle Lord Talbot was defeated. I’ll tell you the details at some length. On the tenth of August this dread-inspiring lord, retiring from the siege that we English were making of Orleans, having barely six thousand troops, was surrounded by twenty-three thousand French troops and set upon. He had no time to form his soldiers into battle formations. He lacked defensive ironbound pikes to set in the ground before his archers to protect them; instead, he used sharp stakes plucked out of hedges and set them in the ground confusedly and erratically to keep the enemy horsemen from breaking in and attacking the archers.

“The fight continued more than three hours, during which time valiant Talbot beyond what humans think possible enacted wonders with his sword and lance. Hundreds he sent to Hell, and none dared to face him. Here, there, and everywhere, he flew enraged. The French exclaimed that the Devil was fighting them. All the army stood and stared at him. His soldiers spying his undaunted spirit shouted forcefully the rallying cry ‘To Talbot! To Talbot!’ and rushed into the bowels — the midst — of the battle.

“Here the English would have fully defeated the French, if Sir John Fastolf had not played the coward. He, placed just behind the front ranks with orders to relieve and follow them, instead cowardly fled, without having struck even one stroke.

“Henceforth grew the general destruction and massacre. Their enemies surrounded them. A base Belgium soldier, to win the French Dauphin’s grace, thrust a spear into the back of Talbot, whom all the French soldiers with their finest assembled troops dared not look even once in the face.”

“Has Talbot been slain?” the Duke of Bedford asked. “If he has, then I will slay myself for living idly here in pomp and ease while such a worthy leader, lacking aid, was betrayed to his despicable enemy.”

“Oh, no, he lives,” the messenger said, “but he was taken prisoner, along with Lord Scales and Lord Hungerford. Most of the rest were slaughtered or were also taken prisoner.”

“His ransom none but I shall pay,” the Duke of Bedford said. “I’ll drag the Dauphin headlong from his throne. The Dauphin’s crown shall be the ransom of my friend. Four of their lords I’ll exchange for one of ours. For each English soldier killed, I’ll four French soldiers.

“Farewell, my masters; to my task I go. I intend to make bonfires in France without delay in order to keep our great Saint George’s feast that customarily follows great military victories. Ten thousand soldiers I will take with me, and their bloody deeds shall make all Europe quake with fear and awe.”

The messenger said, “You need to do that. We are besieging the city of Orleans, which the French are holding. The English army has grown weak and faint. The Earl of Salisbury craves reinforcements and is hardly able to keep his men from mutinying since they, who are so few, look out over such a multitude of enemy soldiers.”

“Remember, lords, your oaths you swore to King Henry V when he was on his deathbed,” the Duke of Exeter said. “If the Dauphin rebelled, you swore either to utterly conquer him or to bring him in obedience to your yoke.”

“I remember,” the Duke of Bedford said, “and I here take my leave to go about my preparation for war.”

He exited.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “I’ll go to the Tower of London with all the haste I can to view the artillery and munitions, and then I will proclaim young Prince Henry our new King. He will be King Henry VI.”

He exited.

The Duke of Exeter said, “I will go to Eltham, the royal residence, where the young King is. I have been appointed his special governor and am in charge of his education, and I’ll make the best arrangements I can devise for his safety there.”

He and everyone except the Bishop of Winchester exited.

Alone, the Bishop of Winchester said to himself, “Each of the other important persons has his place and function to attend, but I am left out; for me nothing remains. But not for long will I be Jack-out-of-office and have no influence on national and international affairs. I intend to steal the King from Eltham and sit at the chiefest stern of public weal. I intend to be the most important man in England.”

— 1.2 —

Before the city of Orleans in France, Charles the Dauphin, the Duke of Alençon, and Reignier talked. Some soldiers, a drummer, and some attendants were present.

Charles the Dauphin said, “Mars’ true moving, even as in the Heavens so in the Earth, to this day is not known.”

This culture did not understand the motions of Mars the planet; to this culture, Mars seemed to move erratically in the night sky. Similarly, Mars the god of war seemed to erratically favor one side in a war and then the other side.

Charles the Dauphin continued, “Recently Mars shone and smiled on the English side. Now we are victors; upon us he smiles. We have all of the towns of any importance. At our

pleasure we lie here near Orleans. Occasionally, the famished English, like pale ghosts, faintly and feebly besiege us one hour in a month.”

The Duke of Alençon said, “The English lack their meat and vegetable stew and their fat bull-beef. Either they must be fed like mules and have their provender tied to their mouths in feed bags or else they will look piteous, like drowned mice.”

Reignier said, “Let’s raise the siege; let’s put an end to it. Why do we live idly here? Talbot, whom we were accustomed to fear, has been captured. There remains no English military leader except the mad-brained Earl of Salisbury, and he may well spend his gall in fretting because he has neither men nor money to make war.”

“Sound, sound the call to battle!” Charles the Dauphin said. “We will rush on them. Now for the honor of the forlorn French! I forgive any man who kills me when he sees me go back one foot or flee the battle.”

The French and the English fought, and the English badly defeated the French.

“Who ever saw the like?” Charles the Dauphin said. “What ‘men’ I have! Dogs! Cowards! Dastards! I would never have fled except that they left me in the midst of my enemies.”

Reignier said, “The Earl of Salisbury is a desperate homicide; he is a killer of men. He fights as if he were weary of his life. The other lords, like lions lacking food, rush hungrily upon us as if we were their prey.”

The Duke of Alençon said, “Froissart, a 14th-century historian and countryman of ours, records that England bred only Olivers and Rowlands — great warriors — during the reign of King Edward III. More truly now this

may be verified because England sends forth none but Samsons and Goliaths to skirmish with us. One Englishman to ten Frenchmen! The English are lean, raw-boned rascals! Who would ever suppose they had such courage and audacity?"

Literally, a rascal is a lean, inferior deer.

"Let's leave this town of Orleans," Charles the Dauphin said, "because the English are hare-brained slaves, and hunger will force them to be more fierce and eager to fight. Of old I know them; they would prefer to tear down the wall with their teeth rather than forsake the siege."

Reignier said, "I think that by some odd mechanical joints or device their arms are set like clocks so that they continually strike blows; otherwise, they could never hold out as they do. I agree that we should let them completely alone."

"Let it be so," the Duke of Alençon said.

The Bastard of Orleans arrived. He was the illegitimate son of Louis, the Duke of Orleans. He was also the nephew of King Charles VI, to whom Charles the Dauphin was the oldest surviving son.

The Bastard of Orleans said, "Where's the Prince Dauphin? I have news for him."

"Bastard of Orleans, you are thrice welcome to us," Charles the Dauphin said.

"I think your looks are sad and your face appalled and pale," the Bastard of Orleans said. "Has the recent defeat brought about this harm? Don't be dismayed, for succor is at hand. I have brought a holy virgin here with me; she is ordained by a vision sent to her from Heaven to raise this tedious siege and drive the English from the territory of

France. The spirit of deep prophecy she has, exceeding the nine Sibyls — prophetesses — of old Rome. What's past and what's to come she can descry. Speak; shall I call her in? Believe my words, for they are certain and infallible.”

“Go and call her in,” Charles the Dauphin said.

The Bastard of Orleans exited.

Charles the Dauphin then said, “But first, to test her skill and knowledge, Reignier, you pretend to be me the Dauphin. Question her proudly and with dignity as a man of royalty would and let your looks be stern. By this means we shall find out what skill she has.”

The Bastard of Orleans returned. With him was Joan la Pucelle — Joan the Virgin. History knows her as Joan of Arc.

Reignier asked, “Fair maiden, is it you who will do these wondrous feats?”

Joan la Pucelle replied, “Reignier, is it you who think to trick me? Where is the Dauphin?”

Seeing him behind some other people, she said, “Come, come out from behind them. I know thee well, though I have never seen thee before.”

Joan la Pucelle's use of “thee” when talking to Charles the Dauphin was remarkable. “Thee” was used when talking to people of lower rank and when talking to friends and family and children. She did not lack confidence.

She continued, “Be not amazed, there's nothing hidden from me. In private I will talk with thee apart from the others.

“Stand back, you lords, and leave us alone awhile.”

Reignier said, “She takes upon her bravely at first dash. She

splendidly takes the initiative on first encountering the Dauphin.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd’s daughter, and my mind is untrained in any kind of art. Heaven and our gracious Lady — the Virgin Mary — have been pleased to shine on my contemptible state. While I took care of my tender lambs and displayed my cheeks to the Sun’s parching heat, God’s mother deigned to appear to me and in a vision full of majesty willed me to leave my base and lowborn vocation and free my country from calamity. She promised her aid and assured success. In complete glory she revealed herself, and although I was tanned and swarthy before, she used clear rays to infuse on me that beauty that I am blessed with and which you see. Ask me whatever questions you can possibly ask, and I will answer them unpremeditatedly. Test my courage by combat, if you dare, and you shall find that I surpass my sex. Be certain of this: You shall be fortunate if you accept me as your warlike companion.”

Using the familiar “thou,” Charles the Dauphin replied, “Thou has astonished me with your high terms and lofty utterance. Only this test I’ll make of your valor: In single combat you shall buckle with me, and if you vanquish me, I will know your words are true, but if I vanquish you, I will renounce all confidence in you.”

The word “buckle” meant “grapple.” A bawdy-minded observer might think that the Dauphin and Joan grappling together might be a sexual “battle.”

“I am prepared,” Joan la Pucelle said. “Here is my keen-edged sword, decorated with five flower-de-luces on each side. I chose this sword at Touraine, in Saint Katharine’s churchyard, out of a great deal of old iron.”

“Then come and fight me, in God’s name,” Charles the

Dauphin said. "I fear no woman."

"And while I live, I'll never flee from a man," Joan la Pucelle said.

A bawdy-minded observer might laugh after hearing this. Maidens sometimes fled from men to avoid being seduced or raped, but Joan would never flee from a man.

The two fought, and Joan la Pucelle defeated Charles the Dauphin.

"Stop! Stop fighting!" Charles the Dauphin pleaded. "You are an Amazon and you fight with the sword of Deborah."

The Amazons were mythological warrior women, and Deborah was a Jewish prophet, judge, and successful military commander; her story is told in Judges 4-5.

"Christ's mother helps me, else I would be too weak," Joan la Pucelle said.

"Whoever helps thee, it is you who must help me," Charles the Dauphin said. "Impatiently I burn with desire for thee. My heart and hands you have at once subdued. Excellent Pucelle, if that is your name, let me be your lover and not your sovereign. It is the French Dauphin who is saying this to thee."

"I must not yield to any rites of love, for my vow is consecrated from above," Joan la Pucelle said. "When I have chased all your foes from hence, then I will think about a recompense."

"In the meantime look gracious on your prostrate thrall," Charles the Dauphin said.

Joan la Pucelle was still sitting on him after vanquishing him, but in a moment they stood up.

"My lord, I think, is very long in talk," Reignier said.

“They have been talking for a very long time.”

“Doubtless he shrives this woman to her smock,” the Duke of Alençon said. “Otherwise he could never protract his speech so long.”

“To shrive” means “to hear confession”; a smock is a woman’s undergarment. The Duke of Alençon was saying that Charles the Dauphin was hearing Joan la Pucelle’s most intimate confessions.

“Shall we disturb him, since he keeps no mean?” Reignier asked. “He is observing no moderation, no mean between extremes.”

“He may mean more than we poor men know,” the Duke of Alençon said. “These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues.”

“My lord, where are you?” Reignier asked. “What are you planning? Shall we give Orleans over to the enemy, or no?”

“Why, I say no, distrustful cowards!” Joan la Pucelle said, taking the enormous liberty of answering a question directed to Charles the Dauphin. “Fight until the last gasp; I will be your guardian.”

“What she says I’ll confirm,” Charles the Dauphin said. “We’ll fight it out.”

“I am assigned to be the scourge of the English,” Joan la Pucelle said. “This night I’ll assuredly raise the siege and drive the English out of Orleans. Expect Saint Martin’s summer, halcyon days, since I have entered into these wars.”

She was saying to expect good times after the recent and current bad times. Saint Martin’s Day is November 11, and good weather is especially welcome when it occurs in Europe on that date. The halcyon is a mythological bird

identified with the kingfisher. This culture believed that the halcyon built nests on the sea, which remained calm until the nestlings were able to fly.

She continued, “Glory is like a circle in the water, a circle which never ceases to get bigger until by broad spreading it disperses to nothing. With King Henry V’s death, the English circle ends; dispersed are the glories it included. Now I am like that proud insulting ship that bore Julius Caesar and his fortune at one and the same time.”

Julius Caesar once needed to go to Brundisium, so in disguise he boarded a ship that encountered bad weather. The Captain of the ship was afraid, but Julius Caesar revealed his identity and told him not to be afraid because the ship carried both Caesar and Caesar’s good fortune. Unfortunately for Joan’s analogy, the ship was unable to complete the journey — it was forced to return, according to the Greek biographer Plutarch.

“Was Mahomet inspired by a dove?” Charles the Dauphin said. “If he was, then thou are inspired by an eagle.”

A dove was said to thrust its beak into the prophet Muhammad’s ear and reveal sacred knowledge to him. Non-believers thought that this was a trick, that Muhammad put crumbs of bread in his ear for the dove to eat.

This culture regarded the eagle as a nobler bird than the dove.

Charles the Dauphin continued, “Not even Saint Helena, the mother of great Constantine, nor yet Saint Philip’s daughters, were like thee.”

Saint Helena converted the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great to Christianity; in 313 C.E. he ordered that Christianity be tolerated rather than persecuted throughout

the Roman Empire. A vision reputedly led Saint Helena to Calgary, where she discovered the cross on which Christ had been crucified.

Saint Philip's daughters were prophets. According to Acts 21:9, "*And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy*" (King James Version).

Charles the Dauphin continued, "Bright star of Venus, fallen down on the Earth, how may I reverently worship thee enough?"

This was ominous. God ought to be worshipped, not Joan la Pucelle. Also, Venus is a pagan goddess, not connected with Christianity the way that Saint Helena and Saint Philip's daughters are. Furthermore, Venus is both the evening star and the morning star. Lucifer is the name given to Satan before he fell to Earth and into Hell — thought by this culture to be located at the center of the Earth — after rebelling against God in Heaven; "Lucifer" means "morning star."

"Leave off delays, and let us raise the siege," the Duke of Alençon said. "Let's get started."

"Woman, do what you can to save our honors," Reignier said. "Drive the English from Orleans, and be immortalized."

Apparently, Reignier thought less of Joan la Pucelle than Charles the Dauphin did, since he called her "Woman" rather than "Bright star of Venus."

"We'll try immediately to raise the siege," Charles the Dauphin said. "Come, let's go and get started. I will trust no prophet, if Joan la Pucelle proves to be a false prophet."

— 1.3 —

In London, before the Tower of London, the Duke of

Gloucester stood. With him were some serving men, dressed in blue coats; blue was the color traditionally worn by serving men. The Tower of London was a fortress, a prison, and the main armory of London.

The Duke of Gloucester said, "I have come to survey the Tower of London this day. Since King Henry V's death, I fear, weapons have been stolen from the armory. Where are the guards who ought to be here? Open the gates. It is the Duke of Gloucester who is calling to be admitted."

The first guard said from inside, "Who's out there who knocks so imperiously?"

The first serving man replied, "It is the noble Duke of Gloucester."

The second guard said, "Whoever he is, you may not be let in."

The first serving man replied, "Villains, do you answer that way to the Duke of Gloucester, who is the Lord Protector?"

The first guard said, "May the Lord protect him! That is how we answer him. We do no otherwise than we are ordered to do."

"Who ordered you to keep me out?" the Duke of Gloucester asked. "Whose orders ought you to take but mine? There's no Protector of the Realm other than me."

He ordered his serving men, "Break up the gates; I'll be your warranty. Shall I be flouted thus by dunghill grooms?"

Dunghill grooms were servants who cleared away the dung left by horses and other animals.

The Duke of Gloucester's serving men rushed at the Tower Gates.

Lieutenant Woodville spoke from inside the Tower of

London, “What noise is this? What traitors have we here?”

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Lieutenant Woodville, is it your voice I hear? Open the gates. I am the Duke of Gloucester, and I want to enter.”

“Be calm, noble Duke,” Lieutenant Woodville said. “I may not open the gates. The Cardinal of Winchester forbids me to do so. From him I have the explicit command that neither you nor any of your servants shall be let in.”

“Faint-hearted Woodville, do you value him more than you value me? Do you value the arrogant Bishop of Winchester, that haughty prelate, whom Henry V, our late sovereign, never could endure?”

Henry Beaufort was the Bishop of Winchester. The Pope had made him also the Cardinal of Winchester, but the late King Henry V had refused to allow him to be installed as Cardinal. Now that Henry V was dead, the Bishop of Winchester was wearing the red clothing of a Cardinal, although he would not wear it while at court — yet. Later, King Henry VI would allow him to be installed as Cardinal of Winchester and so he would be addressed that way by everyone and he would wear the red robes of a Cardinal openly.

The Bishop of Winchester and the Duke of Gloucester were related. The Duke of Gloucester’s father was King Henry IV. The Bishop of Winchester was King Henry IV’s half-brother. When the Bishop of Winchester was born, his parents were not married, but they married afterward. John of Gaunt is the Bishop of Winchester’s father and the Duke of Gloucester’s grandfather.

The Duke of Gloucester said to Lieutenant Woodville, using “thou,” which was used when speaking to men of inferior social status, “Thou are no friend to God or to the King. Open the gates, or I’ll shut thee out shortly.”

“Shut thee out” may have meant to shut him out of the Tower of London or to remove him from his job, or both.

The Duke of Gloucester’s serving men said, “Open the gates for the Lord Protector, or we’ll burst them open, if you don’t quickly obey.”

The Bishop of Gloucester arrived at the Tower gates. Accompanying him were his attendants, who wore tawny clothing.

“Greetings, ambitious Humphrey!” the Bishop of Winchester said to the Duke of Gloucester, whose given name was Humphrey. “What does all this commotion mean?”

“Peeled priest, do you command me to be shut out of the Tower of London?” the Duke of Gloucester asked.

A peeled priest was a tonsured priest. A priest of the time would shave the top of his head.

“Peeled” sounded like “pilled,” which meant “threadbare.” Priests were supposed to be humble, but the Bishop of Winchester was wearing the magnificent red robes of a Cardinal.

The Bishop of Winchester replied, “I command you to be shut out of the Tower of London, you most usurping proditor, and not Protector, of the King and realm.”

“Proditor” is an unusual word that means “traitor.”

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Stand back, you manifest conspirator, thou who contrived to murder our dead lord, King Henry V, when he was an infant — thou who gives whores indulgences to sin. I’ll toss thee in your broad Cardinal’s hat as if it were a canvas sheet if you proceed in this insolence of yours.”

The Bishop of Winchester was known for having land on which brothels stood, and so part of his income came from madams and pimps. An indulgence was a sheet of paper that supposedly gave forgiveness of sin in return for a good deed, which usually consisted of a donation to the Catholic Church.

The Bishop of Winchester replied, “No, you stand back. I will not budge a foot. This can be Damascus, and you can be cursed Cain here to slay Abel, your brother, if you want.”

In this culture, people believed that the city of Damascus was built on the location where Cain murdered Abel, his brother.

“I will not slay thee, but I’ll drive thee back,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Thy scarlet robes as a child’s bearing-cloth I’ll use to carry thee out of this place.”

A bearing-cloth was a christening cloth. The baby was carried in it to the location where it would be baptized.

“Do whatever you dare to do,” the Bishop of Winchester said. “I beard thee to your face.”

“To beard someone” meant “to grab his beard and pull it” — this was a calculated and major insult.

“What!” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Am I dared and bearded to my face? Draw your swords, men, despite this being a privileged place.”

Some places, such as the Tower of London and royal residences, were privileged. Drawn swords and violence were forbidden in those places.

He continued, “Blue coats against tawny coats. Priest, look after your beard because I mean to tug it and to beat you soundly.”

He then stamped his feet and said, “Under my feet I stamp your Cardinal’s hat in spite of Pope or dignities of church. Here I’ll drag thee up and down by your bearded cheeks.”

“Duke of Gloucester, you will answer for this before the Pope,” the Bishop of Winchester said.

“Winchester goose, I cry, ‘A rope! A rope!’” the Duke of Gloucester said.

A Winchester goose was a swelling in the groin that was caused by venereal disease; it also meant a prostitute in the area where the Bishop of Winchester owned much land. Parrots were taught to cry “A rope! A rope!” as a kind of joke. The parrot was supposedly calling for a rope to be used to hang someone.

The Duke of Gloucester ordered his serving men, “Now beat them away from here. Why do you let them stay?”

He then said to the Bishop of Winchester, “Thee I’ll chase away from here, you wolf in sheep’s clothing.

“Get out, tawny coats! Get out, scarlet hypocrite!”

The two groups of men fought, and the Duke of Gloucester’s men beat back the Bishop of Winchester’s men. While the fighting was going on, the Mayor of London and his officers arrived.

“Bah, lords!” the Mayor of London shouted, “It’s a disgrace that you, who are supreme magistrates, thus contumeliously — disgracefully and contemptuously — should break the peace!”

“Be calm, Mayor!” the Duke of Gloucester said. “You know little about my wrongs: Here’s Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, who respects neither God nor King; he has here seized the Tower of London for his own use.”

The Bishop of Winchester said to the Mayor, “Here’s the Duke of Gloucester, a foe to citizens, a man who always proposes war and never peace, who overcharges your generous purses with large taxes and levies, who seeks to overthrow religion because he is Protector of the Realm, and who would take the armor here out of the Tower of London and use it to crown himself King and suppress the Prince who is supposed to be crowned King Henry VI.”

“I will not answer thee with words, but with blows,” the Duke of Gloucester said.

He hit the Bishop of Winchester.

“Nothing remains to be done by me in this tumultuous strife but to make open proclamation,” the Mayor said.

He ordered, “Come, officer; as loudly as you can, cry out the open proclamation.”

As the officer knew, part of the Mayor’s duty was to keep the peace.

The officer shouted, “All manner of men assembled here in arms this day against God’s peace and the King’s, we charge and command you, in his highness’ name, to go to your separate dwelling places, and we charge and command you not to wear, handle, or use any sword, weapon, or dagger, henceforward, upon pain of death.”

“Cardinal, I’ll be no breaker of the law,” the Duke of Gloucester said to the Bishop of Winchester. He used the word “Cardinal” as a gesture to show the Mayor that he would keep the peace.

He added, “But we shall meet, and break our minds at large. We will have words and thoroughly let each other know what we think.”

The Bishop of Winchester replied, “Duke of Gloucester, we

will meet — to your cost, you can be sure. I will have thy heart's blood for this day's work.”

“I'll call for clubs, if you will not go away,” the Mayor said.

If he were to have the officer call for clubs, the city's apprentices would come running, carrying clubs that they would use to separate two groups who were fighting.

The Mayor then said to himself, “This Cardinal's more haughty than the Devil.”

“Mayor, farewell,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “You are only doing your job.”

“Abominable Gloucester, guard your head,” the Bishop of Winchester said, “because I intend to have it before long.”

The Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester exited in two separate directions, along with all their men.

The Mayor ordered, “See that the coast is cleared, and then we will depart.”

He then said to himself, “Good God, I can't believe that these nobles should bear such anger! I myself have fought not even once in forty years.”

— 1.4 —

A French Master Gunner and his son stood on the wall of Orleans beside a cannon.

The Master Gunner said to his son, “Sirrah, you know how Orleans is besieged by the English, and how the English have won the suburbs surrounding the city.”

Fathers called their sons “sirrah,” a form of address that people of high status used to address males of lower status.

“Father, I know,” the boy said, “and I often have shot at them; however, unfortunately I have always missed my target.”

The Master Gunner said, “But now you shall not miss.”

He meant that the boy would not now fire the cannon; however, the boy, as will be seen, would disobey that order.

The Master Gunner continued, “Do what I tell you to do. I am the Chief Master Gunner of this town, and I must do something that will bring me honor. The ruler’s spies have informed me that the English, who are closely entrenched in the suburbs, are accustomed, through a secret grate of iron bars in yonder tower, to look out over the city, and from there discover how with most advantage they may vex us with shot, or with assault.”

The English had captured a high tower that had been built at the end of a bridge crossing the Loire River. The Master Gunner and his son were in the high tower at the end of the bridge closest to Orleans.

The Master Gunner continued, “To prevent this inconvenience, I have placed opposing that tower this piece of ordnance, and for the past three days I have watched to see if the English lords would appear there. Now I want you to watch because I can stay here no longer. If you see any English lords, run and bring the information to me; you shall find me at the governor’s.”

“Don’t worry, father,” the boy said.

The Master Gunner exited.

His son said to himself, “Father, I promise you that you don’t need to worry that I will bother you with any news. I’ll never trouble you, if I may see any English lords.”

He meant that he would fire the cannon and get the glory

for himself.

On the tower, some English lords now arrived: the Earl of Salisbury, as well as Lord Talbot, Sir Thomas Gargrave, and Sir William Glansdale, and others. From the tower, they were able to look down on Orleans and plan where to attack next. But first they talked together and got news from Lord Talbot, who had recently been a prisoner.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Lord Talbot, my life, my joy, returned again to us! How were you treated when you were prisoner? By what means were you released? Tell us, please, while we are here on this tower’s top.”

Lord Talbot replied, “The Duke of Bedford had a prisoner called the brave Lord Ponton de Santrailles. I was exchanged and ransomed for him. But to show contempt for me, my captors would once have bartered me for a baser man of arms by far. This I, disdainingly, scorned. I craved death rather than be so vilely esteemed as to be exchanged for such a base, lowly born man. To conclude, I was redeemed as I desired.

“But the treacherous Fastolfe wounds my heart. I would execute and kill him with my bare fists, if I now had him brought within my power.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “You haven’t yet said how you were treated when you were a prisoner.”

Lord Talbot replied, “I was treated with scoffs and scorns and contumelious taunts. They displayed me in the open marketplace and made me a public spectacle to all. Here, they said, is the terror of the French, the scarecrow that frightens our children so. Then I broke away from the officers who led me, and I dug with my fingernails stones out of the ground to hurl at the beholders of my shame. My menacing countenance made others flee. None dared come near me for fear of sudden death.

“Even within iron walls they deemed me not safely secured. Such great fear of my name had spread among them that they supposed I could break bars of steel, and kick into pieces posts made of the hardest material. Therefore I had as guards their best marksmen, who walked around me at intervals, and if I only moved out of my bed, they were ready to shoot me in the heart.”

The Master Gunner’s son lit a gunner’s match and placed it in a linstock, a piece of wood with a fork at one end into which the match was placed. That way, the cannon could be fired from a short, but safer, distance.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “I grieve to hear what torments you endured, but we will be revenged sufficiently. Now it is supertime in Orleans. Here, through this grate, I can count each Frenchman and view how the Frenchmen fortify the city. Let us look at the city; the sight will much delight you.

“Sir Thomas Gargrave, and Sir William Glansdale, let me have your carefully considered opinions about the best place to make our next attack.”

Sir Thomas Gargrave said, “I think we should make our attack at the north gate because lords are standing there.”

Sir William Glansdale said, “And I think we should make our attack here, at the bulwark of the bridge.”

Lord Talbot said, “From what I can see, we must starve the citizens of this city as a military strategy, or weaken it with light skirmishes.”

The Master Gunner’s son shot the cannon.

The Earl of Salisbury and Sir Thomas Gargrave both fell, mortally wounded.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Oh, Lord, have mercy on us

wretched sinners!”

Sir Thomas Gargrave said, “Oh, Lord, have mercy on me, a woeful man!”

“What mischance is this that has suddenly crossed us?” Lord Talbot said. “Speak, Earl of Salisbury; at least, if you can speak, tell us how you are, you mirror and paragon of all martial men? One of your eyes and your cheek’s side have been struck off! Accursed tower! Accursed fatal hand that has contrived this woeful tragedy!

“The Earl of Salisbury conquered in thirteen battles. He was the first who trained King Henry V in warfare. While any trumpeter sounded, or any drummer struck, his sword never stopped striking in the battlefield.

“Are you still living, Earl of Salisbury? Though your speech fails, you still have one eye to look to Heaven for grace and mercy. The Sun with its one eye views the entire world.

“Heaven, be gracious to no one who is alive, if the Earl of Salisbury lacks mercy at your hands!

“Sir Thomas Gargrave, do you have any life left? Speak to me, or look up at me.”

Sir Thomas Gargrave was dead.

Lord Talbot ordered, “Carry his body away; I will help to bury it.”

He then said, “Earl of Salisbury, cheer your spirit with this comfort. You shall not die while —.”

He did not finish his sentence, but instead said about the Earl of Salisbury, “He beckons with his hand and smiles at me like a man who would say, ‘When I am dead and gone, remember to avenge me on the French.’ Plantagenet, I

will.”

The Earl of Salisbury’s family name was not Plantagenet, but he was related to the Plantagenets.

Lord Talbot continued, “And I will, like you, Roman Emperor Nero, play on the lute as I watch the towns burn. Wretched and fearful shall the French be if they only hear my name.”

The Roman Emperor Nero was said to have played music while watching Rome burn.

A battle call sounded, and lightning flashed and thunder rumbled.

Lord Talbot asked, “What commotion is this? What tumult is in the Heavens? From where comes this call to battle and this noise?”

A messenger arrived and said, “My lord, my lord, the French have gathered a fighting force. The Dauphin, who has joined with one Joan la Pucelle, a newly risen holy prophetess, has come with a great army to raise the siege.”

The Earl of Salisbury raised himself up on one arm and groaned.

Lord Talbot said, “Hear, hear how the dying Salisbury groans! It irks his heart that he cannot be revenged. Frenchmen, I’ll be a Salisbury to you. Pucelle or puzel, dolphin or dogfish, your hearts I’ll stamp out with my horse’s heels, and I’ll make a quagmire of your mingled brains.”

A “puzel” was a whore. The dolphin was a highly regarded creature of the sea, while a dogfish — a species of small shark — was a lowly regarded creature of the sea.

Lord Talbot ordered, “Convey the Earl of Salisbury for me

into his tent, and then we'll try what these dastardly Frenchmen dare. We will fight these cowardly French soldiers."

— 1.5 —

The battle began. Lord Talbot fought Charles the Dauphin and drove him back. Joan la Pucelle fought some English soldiers and drove them back.

Lord Talbot said to himself, "Where is my strength, my valor, and my force? Our English troops retreat, and I cannot stop them. A woman clad in armor chases them."

Joan la Pucelle approached him.

Lord Talbot said to himself, "Here, here she comes."

He then said to Joan la Pucelle, "I'll have a bout with thee. Devil or devil's dam, I'll conjure thee. Blood will I draw on thee, for you are a witch, and without delay I will give your soul to him — the Devil — whom you serve."

People in this culture believed that if you drew blood from a witch, you could gain control over her.

"Come, come," Joan la Pucelle said. "It is only I who must disgrace thee."

They fought.

"Heavens, can you suffer Hell so to prevail?" Lord Talbot said in a brief break from fighting. "My breast I'll burst with the straining of my courage and I'll crack my arms asunder, but I *will* chastise this high-minded strumpet."

They fought again.

"Talbot, farewell," Joan la Pucelle said. "Your hour to die has not yet come. I must go and provide Orleans with provisions immediately."

She and her soldiers prepared to go into the town.

She then said to Lord Talbot, “Attack me, if you can; I scorn your strength. Go, go, cheer up your famished men who are dying of hunger. Help the Earl of Salisbury to make his testament. This day is ours, as many more shall be.”

She and the French soldiers exited.

Lord Talbot said to himself, “My thoughts are whirled like a potter’s wheel. I don’t know where I am, nor what I am doing. A witch, using fear, not force, like Hannibal, drives back our troops and conquers as she wishes. Similarly, bees with smoke and doves with noisome stench are driven away from their hives and houses. The French called us for our fierceness English dogs. Now, like puppies, we run away, crying.”

Hannibal was a Carthaginian General who crossed the Alps and entered Roman territory, where he terrorized the Romans while roaming up and down the Roman territory at will.

A military trumpet sounded.

Lord Talbot said, “Hark, countrymen! Either renew the fight, or tear the lions out of England’s coat. Renounce your soil, give sheep in lions’ stead: Sheep run not half as treacherously from the wolf, or horse or oxen from the leopard, as you fly from your often-subdued slaves.”

To flee the enemy can be treacherous. Not only is the battle lost, but great loss of life can occur during an unorganized retreat. Lord Talbot was saying that the English soldiers needed to regroup and fight well, or they might as well replace the lions in the English flag with sheep.

A military trumpet sounded and a short fight took place.

Lord Talbot said, “A victory for us will not be. Retire into your trenches. You all consented to the Earl of Salisbury’s death, for none of you would strike a stroke with your swords in his revenge. Joan la Pucelle has entered Orleans, in spite of us or anything that we could do. I wish that I would die with the Earl of Salisbury! The shame of his death will make me hide my head.”

— 1.6 —

On the wall of Orleans stood Joan la Pucelle, Charles the Dauphin, Reignier, the Duke of Alençon, and some soldiers.

Joan la Pucelle said, “Advance our waving battle flags on the wall; we have rescued Orleans from the English. Thus Joan la Pucelle has performed what she gave her word she would do.”

Charles the Dauphin said to her, “Divinest creature, Astraea’s daughter, how shall I honor thee for this success?”

Astraea is a mythological Greek goddess of justice. When she left Earth, the Iron Age began. When she returns to Earth, a new Golden Age will begin.

He continued, “Thy promises are like Adonis’ gardens that bloomed one day and gave fruit the next day.”

Adonis was a figure in various ancient Greek mystery religions; the plants in his garden grew quickly.

Charles the Dauphin then said, “France, triumph in your glorious prophethess! The town of Orleans has been recovered. A more blessed event never befell our state.”

Reignier said, “Why not order the bells to be rung aloud throughout the town? Dauphin, command the citizens to make bonfires and feast and banquet in the open streets to

celebrate the joy that God has given us.”

The Duke of Alençon said, “All France will be replete and satisfied with mirth and joy when they shall hear how we have played the roles of men and fought bravely.”

“It is by Joan, not we, that the day is won,” Charles the Dauphin said. “Because of this victory, I will divide my crown with her, and all the priests and friars in my realm shall in procession sing her endless praise. A statelier pyramid to her I’ll rear than Rhodope’s pyramid at Memphis ever was.”

Rhodope was a 6th-century B.C.E. Greek courtesan who became very wealthy from her profession and was said to have built a pyramid at Memphis, Egypt. She was also said to have eventually married the King of Egypt.

Charles the Dauphin continued, “In memory of her when she is dead, her ashes, in an urn more precious than the richly jeweled coffer of Darius, shall be transported at high festivals before the Kings and Queens of France.”

When Alexander the Great conquered the city of Gaza, among the spoils was a richly jeweled coffer that had belonged to the Persian King Darius, who had unsuccessfully tried to conquer Greece but was defeated in 490 B.C.E. in the Battle of Marathon. Alexander used the coffer to carry his most precious possession: the epic poems of Homer.

Charles the Dauphin continued, “No longer on Saint Denis, the patron saint of France, will we cry, but Joan la Pucelle shall be France’s saint. Come in, and let us banquet royally, after this golden day of victory.”

CHAPTER 2 (1 Henry VI)

— 2.1 —

On the wall protecting Orleans, which was now controlled by the French, a Sergeant gave orders to two sentinels who would guard the city: “Sirs, take your places and be vigilant. If you hear any noise or see any enemy soldier near the wall, by some evident sign let us have knowledge at the guardhouse.”

“Sergeant, you shall,” the first sentinel said.

The Sergeant exited.

The first sentinel said, “Thus are poor servitors — common soldiers — compelled to watch in darkness, rain, and cold, while others sleep upon their quiet beds.”

Lord Talbot, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Burgundy, and some soldiers arrived. They were carrying scaling ladders. A drummer beat quietly on a muffled drum as the soldiers marched. The Duke of Bedford was the Regent of France; he ruled France in King Henry VI’s stead. The Duke of Burgundy was French, but he sided with England.

The Lord Talbot said, “Lord Regent, and feared Duke of Burgundy, by whose arrival the regions of Artois, Wallon, and Picardy are now friends to us, this fortunate night the Frenchmen are unsuspecting and overconfident after having all day caroused and banqueted. We therefore embrace this opportunity as being best fit to repay their deceit contrived by magical art and baleful sorcery. They defeated us with witchcraft.”

“Coward of France!” the Duke of Bedford said, referring to the Dauphin of France. “How much he dishonors his fame and reputation by despairing of his own arm’s fortitude and

joining with witches and using the help of Hell!”

The Duke of Burgundy said, “Traitors never have other company, but who’s that Pucelle whom they term so pure?”

“She is a maiden — a virgin — they said,” Lord Talbot replied.

“A maiden!” the Duke of Bedford said. “And yet she is so martial!”

The Duke of Burgundy said, “Pray to God that she proves not to be masculine before long, if underneath the standard of the French she continues to carry armor as she has begun.”

The Duke of Burgundy felt that if Joan were to turn out to be a man under her armor, then things would go even worse for the English; therefore, he wanted the Duke of Bedford to pray to God that Joan really was a woman. One way for her to be proven to be female would be for her to become pregnant.

His words contained wordplay. The “standard of the French” could be a French battle flag or a French penis, since a standard is a thing that can stand up. For Joan to carry armor could mean for her to wear armor or for her to bear, aka carry, the weight — during sex — of a man, such as the Dauphin, who wears armor.

Lord Talbot said, “Well, let them practice and converse with spirits.”

His words also contained wordplay. In this culture, the words “practice” and “converse” both had the meaning of “have sex with.”

He continued, “God is our fortress, and in His conquering name let us resolve to scale the flinty bulwarks of the French.”

“Ascend, brave Talbot,” the Duke of Bedford said, “We will follow you.”

“Let’s not all climb up the same scaling ladder together,” Lord Talbot said. “It’s far better, I guess, that we make our entrance in several places, so that if it happens that one of us fails, then the others may rise against the French force.”

“I agree,” the Duke of Bedford said. “I’ll go to yonder corner.”

“And I will go to this corner,” the Duke of Burgundy said.

Lord Talbot said, “And here will I, Talbot, mount and climb high, or make my grave. Now, Earl of Salisbury, for you, and for the right of English Henry VI, shall this night show how much in duty I am bound to both. I am doing this for both the Earl of Salisbury and King Henry VI.”

They started the attack, and the French sentinels cried, “Arm yourselves! Arm yourselves! The enemy is making an assault on us! The English are attacking us!”

The English soldiers attacked while shouting out such rallying cries as “St. George” and “To Talbot!”

The French were surprised, and some leaped over the wall in their night clothing.

The Bastard of Orleans, the Duke of Alençon, and Reignier, all of whom were in disarray and wearing only part of their armor, which they had hastily put on, appeared.

The Duke of Alençon said, “How are all of you now, my lords! Are all of us so unready to fight back?”

“Unready!” the Bastard of Orleans exclaimed. “Yes, we are, and we are glad we escaped so well. At least we are still alive.”

Reignier said, "It was time, I thought, for us to wake up and leave our beds since we were hearing battle calls outside our chamber doors."

The Duke of Alençon said, "Of all exploits since I first followed arms, I have never heard of a warlike enterprise more adventurous or risky than this."

The Bastard of Orleans said, "I think this Talbot is a fiend of Hell."

Reignier said, "If he is not a creature of Hell, then the Heavens surely favor him."

"Here comes Charles the Dauphin," the Duke of Alençon said, looking up. "I wonder how he sped. I wonder how he got on during the attack."

The Bastard of Orleans said, "Tut, holy Joan was his defensive guard."

He may have meant that Joan la Pucelle was in bed with Charles the Dauphin when the attack started. If so, "holy Joan" meant "Joan, who has a hole."

Charles the Dauphin and Joan la Pucelle went over to them.

Charles the Dauphin said to Joan la Pucelle, "Is this your cunning, you deceitful dame? Did you at first, to flatter us, make us partakers of a little gain, so that now our loss might be ten times as much?"

"Why is Charles the Dauphin impatient with his friend?" Joan la Pucelle said. "Do you think that my power is at all times alike? Must I always prevail whether I am asleep or awake, and if I do not will you blame me and lay the fault on me?"

"Improvident soldiers! If your watch had been good, this sudden evil misfortune never could have happened."

Charles the Dauphin said, “Duke of Alençon, this was your fault because as Captain of the watch this night, you took no better care for that weighty responsibility.”

The Duke of Alençon said to the others, “Had all your quarters been as safely kept as that whereof I had the command, we would not have been thus shamefully surprised.”

“The part under my command was secure,” the Bastard of Orleans said.

“And so was mine, my lord,” Reignier said.

Charles the Dauphin said, “And, as for myself, for the most part of all this night, within Joan la Pucelle’s quarters and my own precinct I was employed in passing to and fro and in relieving the sentinels. Therefore how or in which way did the English first break in?”

Joan la Pucelle said, “Discuss, my lords, no further about the case, how or in which way this misfortune happened. It is certain that they found some place only weakly guarded, and that is where the breach was made. And now there remains nothing to do but this: We must gather our soldiers, who are scattered and dispersed, and form new plans to damage the English army.”

A military trumpet sounded, and an English soldier ran onto the scene, crying “To Talbot! To Talbot!” The French fled, leaving behind pieces of armor and weapons they had been carrying.

The English soldier said, “I’ll be so bold as to take what they have left behind. The cry of ‘To Talbot!’ serves me like a sword for I have loaded myself with many spoils, using no other weapon but his name.”

The English had taken the town of Orleans. Inside the town, Lord Talbot, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Burgundy, a Captain, and some others were standing.

The Duke of Bedford said, “The day begins to break, and it now has fled the night, whose pitch-black mantle over-veiled the Earth. Here we will sound retreat and cease our hot pursuit.”

The retreat sounded.

Lord Talbot said, “Bring forth the body of the old Earl of Salisbury, and here raise it in the marketplace, the middle center of this cursed town. Now I have paid the vow I made to his soul; for every drop of blood that was drawn from him, at least five Frenchmen have died tonight. And so that future ages may behold what devastation happened in revenge of him, within their most important temple — the cathedral — I’ll erect a tomb in which his corpse shall be interred. Upon the tomb so that everyone may read it shall be engraved the sack of Orleans, the treacherous manner of his mournful death, and what a terror he had been to France.

“But, lords, in all our bloody massacre, I wonder that we did not meet with his ‘grace’ the Dauphin, his newly come champion — the ‘virtuous’ Joan of Arc — or with any of his false confederates.”

The Duke of Bedford said, “It is thought, Lord Talbot, that when the fight began, roused suddenly from their drowsy beds, amongst the troops of armed men they leapt over the wall in order to find refuge in the fields.”

The Duke of Burgundy said, “As for myself, as far as I could well see through the smoke and dusky vapors of the night, I am sure I scared the Dauphin and his slut; they both came swiftly running arm in arm as if they were a pair of loving turtledoves that could not live apart day or night.

After things are set in order here, we'll follow them with all the power we have."

A messenger arrived and said, "All hail, my lords! Which of this Princely train do you call the warlike Talbot because of his acts throughout the realm of France that are so much applauded?"

Lord Talbot said, "Here is the Talbot. Who wants to speak with him?"

The messenger replied, "The virtuous French lady, the Countess of Auvergne, with modesty admiring your renown, by me entreats, great lord, you to agree to visit her poor castle where she lives, so that she may boast she has beheld the man whose glory fills the world with loud acclamation."

The Duke of Burgundy said, "Is that so? So, then, I see that our wars will turn into a peaceful comic sport, when ladies crave to be encountered with."

One meaning of "to encounter" was "to have sex."

He added, "You may not, my lord, despise her gentle request. You must see her."

"Never trust me if I despise her gentle request," Lord Talbot said, "for when a world of men could not prevail with all their oratory and rhetoric, yet a woman's kindness has prevailed, and therefore, messenger, tell her that I return great thanks to her and as she requests I will visit her."

He then asked the other lords, "Will not your honors bear me company when I visit her?"

"No, truly," the Duke of Bedford said. "It is more than manners demand, and I have heard it said that uninvited guests are often most welcome when they are gone."

“Well then I will go alone, since there’s no remedy,” Lord Talbot said. “I mean to try this lady’s courtesy.”

He then said, “Come here, Captain.”

He whispered to the Captain and then asked, “Do you understand your orders?”

The Captain replied, “I do, my lord, and I will obey them.”

— 2.3 —

The Countess of Auvergne and her porter were in her castle, preparing for Lord Talbot’s visit. Porters take care of gates and entrances.

She said, “Porter, remember what I ordered you to do, and when you have done that, bring the keys to me.”

“Madam, I will,” the porter said, and then he exited.

Alone, the Countess of Auvergne said to herself, “The plot is laid. If all things fall out right, as a result of this exploit I shall become as famous as the Scythian Tomyris became by Cyrus the Great’s death.”

Tomyris, the Queen of the Scythians, sought revenge for the death of her son, who committed suicide after being captured by the Persian King Cyrus the Great’s army. Queen Tomyris led an army against Cyrus the Great’s army, and her army was triumphant and killed Cyrus the Great. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, she had Cyrus the Great’s body decapitated and then took his head and shoved it into a wineskin filled with human blood, saying as she did so, “I warned you that I would quench your thirst for blood!”

The Countess of Auvergne continued, “Great is the rumored reputation of this dreaded knight, and his achievements are of no less account. My eyes and my ears

would gladly witness him so that they can criticize and judge these rare reports.”

The messenger entered the room, accompanied by Lord Talbot, who was carrying a horn.

The messenger said, “Madam, just as your ladyship desired, and by message craved, so has Lord Talbot come to visit you.”

“And he is welcome,” the Countess of Auvergne said. “What! Is this the man?”

“Madam, he is,” the messenger said.

“Is this man the scourge of France?” the Countess of Auvergne asked. “Is this the Talbot, who is so much feared abroad that with his name mothers quiet their babes? I see that the reports about him are fabulous and false. I thought that I should have seen some Hercules, a second Hector, for his grim aspect, and the large size of his strongly knit and muscular limbs. Alas, this is a child, a feeble dwarf! It cannot be true that this weak and wrinkled shrimp strikes such terror in his enemies.”

Hercules was an enormously strong PanHellenic hero, famous for the labors he performed in the ancient world. Hector was the greatest Trojan warrior during the Trojan War.

“Madam, I have been bold to trouble you,” Lord Talbot said. “But since your ladyship is not at leisure, I’ll arrange some other time to visit you.”

He turned to leave.

“What is he doing?” the Countess of Auvergne asked. “Go and ask him where he is going.”

“Stay, my Lord Talbot,” the messenger said, “for my lady

wants to know the reason for your abrupt departure.”

“I want to show her that she is mistaken,” Lord Talbot said.
“I go to certify to her that Talbot is here.”

The Countess of Auvergne thought that Lord Talbot was unimpressive. He was leaving to show her that he in fact was a man who was in control.

The porter came back. He had done his job of locking the gate to the courtyard.

The Countess of Auvergne said, “If you are Talbot, then you are a prisoner.”

“A prisoner!” Lord Talbot said. “To whom?”

“To me, bloodthirsty lord,” the Countess of Auvergne said.
“That is the reason I lured you to my house. For a long time your shadow — your appearance — has been a captive to me, for in my gallery your picture hangs. But now the substance — the real man — shall endure the same captivity, and I will chain these legs and arms of yours that have by tyranny these many years wasted our country, slain our citizens, and sent our sons and husbands into captivity.”

Lord Talbot laughed.

“Are you laughing, wretch?” the Countess of Auvergne said. “Your laughing shall change to moaning.”

Lord Talbot said, “I laugh to see that your ladyship is so foolish as to think that you have anything other than Talbot’s shadow on which to practice your cruelty.”

“Why, aren’t you Talbot?” the Countess of Auvergne asked.

“I am indeed.”

“Then I have your substance as well as your shadow.”

“No, no,” Talbot said. “I am only the shadow of myself. You are deceived; my substance is not here, for what you see in front of you is only the smallest part and least proportion of manhood. I tell you, madam, that if the whole frame were here, it is of such a spacious lofty height, your roof were not sufficiently high to contain it.”

He meant that although he was the leader of the English army, he was only a small part of that army. He may have been the head of the army, but the army was the body. His army was much too large for the Countess of Auvergne’s castle to contain.

The Countess of Auvergne said, “This man is a purveyor of riddles for the occasion. Talbot is here, and yet he is not here. How can these contradictory facts agree?”

“I will show you that right now,” Lord Talbot said.

He blew his horn. Military drums started playing, and a cannon fired a cannonball through the courtyard gate. Armed English soldiers rushed into the room.

“What do you say now, madam?” Lord Talbot said. “Are you now persuaded that Talbot is only a shadow of himself? These are his substance, sinews, arms, and strength with which he yokes and makes submit your rebellious necks, razes your cities, and destroys your towns and in a moment makes them desolate.”

“Victorious Talbot!” the Countess of Auvergne said. “Pardon my deception. I find that you are no less than your fame and reputation have proclaimed you to be and that you are more than may be gathered by your shape. Let my presumption not provoke your wrath, for I am sorry that I did not treat you with reverence as you are.”

“Be not dismayed, fair lady,” Lord Talbot said. “And do not misconstrue the mind of Talbot, as you misconstrued

the outward composition of his body. What you have done has not offended me, and I do not crave other satisfaction except only, with your permission, that we may taste your wine and see what delicacies you have, for soldiers' stomachs always serve them well."

The Countess of Auvergne replied, "With all my heart, and believe that I am honored to feast so great a warrior in my house."

— 2.4 —

In a garden with rose bushes, some bearing red roses and some bearing white roses, near the Middle and Inner Temples in London, the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Suffolk, and the Earl of Warwick stood, along with Richard Plantagenet, Vernon, and another lawyer: six people in all. The Temples were areas devoted to the study and practice of law, and Richard Plantagenet and the Duke of Somerset had been disputing a point of law.

Richard Plantagenet and the Duke of Somerset were both members of royal families, being descended from King Edward III, but Richard Plantagenet was a member of the York family and the Duke of Somerset was a member of the Lancaster family.

King Henry V died on 31 August 1422. In future years, from 1455-1487, the Yorkists and the Lancastrians would fight for power in England in the famous Wars of the Roses. The emblem of the York family would be a white rose, and the emblem of the Lancaster family would be a red rose.

Richard Plantagenet asked, "Great lords and gentlemen, what means this silence? Dare no man answer in a case of truth?"

The Earl of Suffolk said, "Within the Temple Hall we

would have been too loud. The garden here is more suitable for our discussion.”

Richard Plantagenet replied, “Then say at once whether I maintained the truth, or wrangling Somerset was in the wrong.”

This was a version of “Heads I win, tails you lose.”

The Earl of Suffolk replied, “Truly, I have been a truant in the law and have been neglectful in my study of it. I have never been able to frame — that is, train — my will to study law, and therefore I frame — that is, adapt — the law to my will.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “My Lord of Warwick, then, you judge between us.”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “Between two hawks, which flies the higher height; between two dogs, which has the deeper bark; between two sword blades, which bears the better temper; between two horses, which carries himself best; between two girls, which has the merriest eye, I have perhaps some shallow spirit of judgment, but in these precise and sharp hair-splitting quibbles of the law, I have to say in good faith that I am no wiser than a jackdaw.”

A jackdaw was reputed to be a foolish bird.

“Tut, tut, here is a mannerly forbearance,” Richard Plantagenet said. “This is a well-mannered refusal to get involved and commit oneself, but the truth appears so naked on my side that any half-blind eye may see it.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “And on my side the truth is so well appareled, so clear, so shining, and so evident that it will glimmer through a blind man’s eye and he will see it.”

Richard Plantagenet said to the men being asked to judge the dispute, “Since you are tongue-tied and so loath to

Speak, proclaim your thoughts in silent symbols. Let him who is a true-born gentleman and stands upon the honor of his birth pluck a white rose with me from off this rose brier if he thinks that I have pleaded the truth.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “Let him who is no coward and who is no flatterer, but who dares to maintain the party of the truth, pluck a red rose from off this rose brier with me.”

The Earl of Warwick, knowing that white was not considered a color, said, “I love no colors, and without all color — appearance — of base, low, fawning flattery, I pluck this white rose with Richard Plantagenet.”

The Earl of Suffolk said, “I pluck this red rose with young Somerset and say by doing so I think he is in the right.”

Vernon said, “Wait, lords and gentlemen, and pluck no more roses, until you decide that he upon whose side the fewest roses are cropped from the bushes shall yield to the other and say that he has the right opinion.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “Good Master Vernon, it is a good idea. If I have fewer roses plucked in support of me, I will agree that the other person — Richard Plantagenet — is in the right and I will be silent and no longer object.”

Richard Plantagenet said, “I will do the same.”

Vernon said, “Then for the truth and plainness of the case, I pluck this pale and maiden blossom here, giving my verdict on the white-rose side.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “Don’t prick your finger as you pluck the white rose off the bush, lest by bleeding on it you paint the white rose red and thereby fall on my side against your will.”

Vernon replied, “If I, my lord, bleed for my opinion, aka my judgment, then opinion, aka my reputation, which is

based on my character, shall be the surgeon to my injury and keep me on the side where I still am.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “Well, well, come on. Who else needs to pluck a rose?”

The lawyer said, “Unless my study and my books are mistaken, the argument you held was wrong in you, and in sign thereof I pluck a white rose, too.”

Four people held white roses: Richard Plantagenet, the Earl of Warwick, Vernon, and the lawyer.

Only two people held red roses: The Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Suffolk.

Richard Plantagenet said, “Now, Duke of Somerset, where is your argument?”

“Here in my scabbard, thinking about doing something that shall dye your white rose a bloody red,” the Duke of Somerset replied.

Richard Plantagenet said, “In the meantime your cheeks imitate our white roses because they look pale with fear, as if they were witnessing that the truth is on our side.”

“No, Plantagenet,” the Duke of Somerset said, “my cheeks are not pale because of fear but because of anger, and your red cheeks blush for pure shame to imitate our roses, and yet your tongue will not confess your error.”

“Doesn’t your rose have a cankerworm eating it, Duke of Somerset?”

“Doesn’t your rose have a thorn, Plantagenet?”

“Yes,” Richard Plantagenet said, “and the thorn is sharp and piercing, to protect its truth, while your consuming cankerworm eats its falsehood.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “Well, I’ll find friends to wear my bleeding roses, and they shall maintain what I have said is true where false, perfidious Plantagenet dare not be seen.”

Richard Plantagenet replied, “Now, by this maiden — white — blossom in my hand, I scorn thee and your fashion, peevish boy.”

Richard Plantagenet insultingly used the word “thee” to refer to the Duke of Somerset. The words “peevish” and “boy” were also insulting.

The Earl of Suffolk, who supported the Duke of Somerset, said, “Don’t turn your scorns this way, Plantagenet.”

The Earl of Suffolk’s name was William de la Pole.

Richard Plantagenet said to him, “Proud Pole, I will, and I scorn both him and thee.”

“I’ll turn my part of that scorn into your throat,” the Earl of Suffolk said.

“Let’s go, let’s go, good William de la Pole!” the Duke of Somerset said. “We show grace to the yeoman by conversing with him.”

Calling Richard Plantagenet a “yeoman” was another insult. A “yeoman” was not a noble. Richard Plantagenet came from a noble family, but his father had been executed for treason by order of King Henry V and as a result Richard Plantagenet had lost his land and his noble titles.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Now, by God’s will, you wrong him, Duke of Somerset. His grandfather was Lionel, Duke of Clarence, who was the third son to Edward III, King of England. Do crestless yeomen spring from so deep a root?”

A crest is a part of a heraldic display and sits on top of the helmet.

Richard Plantagenet said, “He knows about this place’s privilege — no violence is allowed here. If not for that, he would not dare, for all his cowardly heart, to say this.”

“By Him Who made me, on any plot of ground in Christendom I’ll maintain my words are true,” the Duke of Somerset said. “Wasn’t your father, Richard, Earl of Cambridge, executed for treason in the reign of our late King Henry V? And, because of his treason, don’t you stand tainted, deprived of your titles, and excluded from ancient gentry — long-established high rank? His trespass — his treason — yet lives on guilty in your blood, and until you are restored to your titles, you are a yeoman, a commoner.”

Richard Plantagenet replied, “My father was arrested, not attainted. He was condemned to die for treason, but he was no traitor. And I will prove that in a trial of combat on better men than you, Duke of Somerset, when I have the opportunity.”

He meant that his father had been arrested and executed for treason by the order of King Henry V; this had not been done by a full bill of attainder in Parliament and so his father had not been attainted. A bill of attainder is a legislative bill declaring a person or a group of people guilty of crime and ordering punishment for the crime.

Richard Plantagenet continued, “As for your associate William de la Pole and you yourself, I’ll note you in my book of memory so that I remember to scourge you for this opinion. Look to see it happen and say you are well warned.”

The Duke of Somerset replied, “Ah, you shall find us ready for thee always, and you will know us by these colors —

we will wear the red rose — for your foes, for my friends shall wear the red rose in defiance of thee.”

Richard Plantagenet said, “And, by my soul, this pale and angry rose, as a sign of my bloodthirsty and blood-drinking hate, I and my faction will forever wear, until it withers with me in my grave or it flourishes to the height of my rank and standing.”

The Earl of Suffolk said, “Go forward and be choked with your ambition! And so farewell until I meet thee next.”

The Earl of Suffolk, aka William de la Pole, exited.

The Duke of Somerset said, “I’ll go with you, William de la Pole. Farewell, ambitious Richard.”

The Duke of Somerset exited.

Richard Plantagenet said, “How I am defied and insulted and must necessarily endure it!”

The Earl of Warwick said, “This blot that they object against your house shall be wiped out in the next Parliament, which has been called to make a truce between the Bishop of Winchester and the Duke of Gloucester. If you are not then made the Duke of York, I will not live to be considered the Earl of Warwick. You are as likely not to gain the title of Duke of York as I am to lose my title. In the meantime, as a sign of my love and friendship for you, and in opposition to the proud Duke of Somerset and William de la Pole, I will as a part of your faction wear this white rose. And here I prophesy: This brawl today, grown to this factious quarrel in the Temple garden, shall send between the red rose and the white rose a thousand souls to death and deadly night. Many, many people will die as a result of this quarrel that happened tonight.”

Richard Plantagenet said, “Good Master Vernon, I am

bound to you because on my behalf you plucked a white rose.”

“On your behalf I will always wear a white rose,” Vernon said.

“And so will I,” the lawyer said.

“Thanks, gentle sir,” Richard Plantagenet said. “Come, let us four go to dinner. I dare say that this quarrel will drink blood some day.”

— 2.5 —

In the Tower of London, Edmund Mortimer, the Earl of March, sat in a chair. With him were some of his jail keepers. He had a claim to the throne, and so King Henry IV had imprisoned him, and King Henry V had continued to imprison him. Now he was old and dying.

Mortimer said, “Kind keepers of my weak, decaying age, let dying Mortimer here rest himself.”

The keepers were both jail keepers and caregivers.

He continued, “Just like the limbs of a man recently dragged from off the rack, so fare my limbs with long imprisonment. And these grey locks of hair, the pursuivants — the heralds — of death, argue the arrival of the end of Edmund Mortimer, who is Nestor-like aged in an age of care.”

Nestor was the old, wise advisor to the Greek commander Agamemnon and the Greek army during the Trojan War.

Mortimer continued, “My eyes, like lamps whose wasting oil is spent, grow dim, as drawing to their end. My weak shoulders, overborne with burdensome grief, and my pithless, feeble, strengthless arms are like a withered vine that droops its sapless branches to the ground. Yet these

feet, whose strengthless support is paralyzed, are unable to support this lump of clay, which is swift-winged with desire to get a grave, as if they know I have no other comfort.

“But tell me, keeper, will my nephew come?”

The first jailer said, “Richard Plantagenet, my lord, will come. We sent to the Temple, to his chamber, and the answer was returned that he will come.”

“Good. That is enough,” Mortimer replied. “My soul shall then be satisfied. Poor gentleman! The wrong done to him equals mine. Since King Henry V, who was born at Monmouth, first began to reign, before whose glory I was great in arms, this loathsome imprisonment I have endured, and ever since then has Richard Plantagenet been living in obscurity, deprived of honor and inheritance. But now the arbitrator of despair — just death, the kind umpire of men’s miseries — with sweet release dismisses me from here. I wish Richard Plantagenet’s troubles likewise were ended so that he might recover what was lost.”

Richard Plantagenet entered the room.

The first jailer said, “My lord, your loving nephew now has come.”

“My friend, has Richard Plantagenet come?” Mortimer asked.

Richard Plantagenet answered, “Yes, noble uncle, thus ignobly used, your nephew, the recently despised and insulted Richard, has come.”

Mortimer said to the jailers, “Guide my arms so that I may embrace his neck and on his bosom expend my last gasp. Oh, tell me when my lips touch his cheeks, so that I may affectionately give one fainting kiss.”

With the help of his jailers, Mortimer was able to hug and kiss his nephew.

To Richard Plantagenet, he said, “Now declare, sweet branch from York’s great tree, why did you say that recently you were despised?”

Richard Plantagenet was a member of the York family while Kings Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI were members of the Lancaster family, being descended from John of Gaunt, first Duke of Lancaster. Richard Plantagenet’s grandfather was Edmund Langley, Duke of York (1341-1402).

Richard Plantagenet replied, “First, lean your aged back against my arm, and with you in that comfortable position, I’ll tell you about my trouble.

“This day, in an argument about a case, some words were exchanged between the Duke of Somerset and me. During the argument he used his lavish tongue to say words that upbraided me with my father’s death. This reproach set bars before my tongue, or else with similar abuse I would have requited him. Therefore, good uncle, for my father’s sake, in honor of a true Plantagenet and for the sake of kinship, tell me the reason my father, the Earl of Cambridge, was beheaded.”

“He was beheaded for the same reason, fair nephew, that imprisoned me and has detained me during all of my flowering youth within a loathsome dungeon, where I pine and grieve. That reason was the cursed instrument of his decease.”

“Tell me in more detail what reason that was,” Richard Plantagenet said, “because I am ignorant of it and cannot guess.”

He knew the reason, but he wanted to hear Mortimer say it.

Mortimer replied, “I will, if my fading breath permits me and if death does not approach me before my tale is done. King Henry IV, grandfather to this King, Henry VI, deposed his cousin Richard II, who was Edward the Black Prince’s son, the first-begotten and lawful heir of King Edward III, the third of that descent as well as the third Edward. During King Henry IV’s reign, the Percy family of the north, finding his usurpation most unjust, endeavored to advance me to the throne, hoping to make me King. These warlike lords were moved to attempt to do that because — young King Richard II thus removed, leaving no heir begotten from his body — by birth and parentage, I was the next in line to be King, for by my grandmother I am descended from Lionel, who was both the Duke of Clarence and the third son of King Edward III, whereas he — King Henry IV — gets his pedigree from John of Gaunt. But John of Gaunt was only the fourth son of that heroic line, and so I ought to have been made King.

“But listen carefully. In this lofty, high-minded attempt, the Percy family labored to plant the rightful heir, but I lost my liberty and they lost their lives.

“Long after this, when King Henry V, succeeding his father Henry Bolingbroke, aka King Henry IV, reigned, your father, the Earl of Cambridge, again because of pity for my hard distress levied an army, hoping to rescue me and install me in the throne and have me wear the crown. Your father, who was descended from famous Edmund Langley, Duke of York, had married my sister, who became your mother. But, like the rest, your noble father, the Earl of Cambridge, fell and was beheaded. Thus the Mortimers, in whom the title rested, were suppressed.”

“Of the Mortimers,” Richard Plantagenet said, “you, your honor, are the last.”

“True,” Mortimer said, “and you see that I have no children

and that my fainting words assure you that I am dying. You are my heir; the rest I wish you to gather.”

The word “gather” meant both to “infer” and to “collect.” Richard Plantagenet could infer that he ought to be King of England, and he could decide to gather an army and collect the crown.

Mortimer continued, “But always be wary in your studious care.”

Attempting to become King of England would be dangerous.

Richard Plantagenet said, “Your grave admonishments prevail with me, but still, I think, my father’s execution was nothing less than bloody tyranny.”

“Be shrewd, nephew,” Mortimer said. “Be shrewd with silence. Strongly fixed is the House of Lancaster — Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI were and are Lancastrians — and like a mountain, not to be moved. But now your uncle is dying and thereby removing from here as Princes do their courts, when they are cloyed and satiated with long continuance in a settled place.”

“Oh, uncle, I wish some part of my young years might redeem the passage of your age!” Richard Plantagenet said. “I wish I could use some of my years of life to buy back for you some of your years.”

Mortimer said, “You would then wrong me, as that slaughterer does who gives many wounds when one will kill. Don’t mourn, unless you feel sorrow for my good.”

The last sentence is ambiguous. It can mean 1) Don’t mourn unless you mourn because the good in me is dying, and 2) Don’t mourn unless you use your sorrow to do me good — to get revenge for the wrong done to me.

He continued, “Only give the order and make the arrangements for my funeral, and so farewell, and may all your hopes be fair and may your life be prosperous in peace and war!”

Mortimer died.

Richard Plantagenet said, “And may peace, and no war, befall your parting soul! In prison you spent a pilgrimage and like a hermit passed your days. Well, I will lock his counsel in my breast, and what I am planning — let that rest.

“Keepers, convey him from here, and I myself will see that his burial is better than his life. I will make sure that he receives the honor at his funeral that he was denied during his life.”

The jailers carried away Mortimer’s corpse.

Richard Plantagenet said, “Here dies the dusky, extinguished torch of Mortimer, choked by the ambition of those who are inferior to him. As for those wrongs and those bitter injuries that the Duke of Somerset has offered to my family, I don’t doubt that I will with honor redress them.

“Therefore I now hasten to the Parliament. Either I will be restored to my blood, aka my privileges of noble rank and noble birth that I lost when my father was executed, or I will make my ill the advantage of my good — that is, I will make the injuries done to me fuel my ambition to advance.”

CHAPTER 3 (1 Henry VI)

— 3.1 —

At the Parliament House in London, several people were meeting: King Henry VI, the Duke of Exeter, the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Warwick, the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Suffolk, the Bishop of Winchester, Richard Plantagenet, and others. The Duke of Gloucester attempted to present an indictment listing accusations against the Bishop of Winchester to the King, but the Bishop of Winchester grabbed it and tore it up.

The Bishop of Winchester said to the Duke of Gloucester, “Have you come with a carefully considered list of accusations you have written in advance? Have you come with studiously devised written documents, Humphrey, you Duke of Gloucester? If you can accuse me or intend to make charges against me of anything, do it without premeditation, do it extempore, as I with unpremeditated and extemporal speech intend to answer whatever you accuse me of.”

“Presumptuous priest!” the Duke of Gloucester said. “This place commands my patience and so I have to remain peaceful, or you would find out from my reaction that you have dishonored me. Don’t think that although in writing I presented the manner of your vile, outrageous crimes, I have therefore forged lies or am not able verbally to relate the thesis of my pen. No, prelate. Such is your audacious wickedness and your wicked, pestilent, quarrelsome, and malicious deeds that even children prattle about your pride.

“You are a most pernicious usurer, perverse by nature, an enemy to peace; you are lascivious and wanton, more than is well suitable for a man of your profession and degree, and as for your treachery, what’s more evident? You laid a

trap to take my life at London Bridge as well as at the Tower of London.

“Besides, I am afraid that if your thoughts were carefully examined, the King, your sovereign, is not quite exempt from the spiteful malice of your pride-swollen heart.”

The Bishop of Winchester said, “Duke of Gloucester, I defy you. Lords, agree to hear what I shall reply to these charges. If I were covetous, ambitious, or perverse, as he says I am, how is it that I am so poor?”

Actually, the Bishop of Winchester was rich. Some of his income came from usurious loans; some of it came from rent charged to brothels that operated on land he owned.

He continued, “Or how does it happen that I don’t seek to advance or raise myself, but keep my wonted calling?”

Actually, the Bishop of Winchester wanted to be installed officially as the Cardinal of Winchester. Earlier, he had been wearing the red robes of a Cardinal despite not being officially installed as Cardinal.

He continued, “And as for dissension, who prefers peace more than I do? Unless I am provoked.

“No, my good lords, these are not the real reasons for our disagreement. These are not the real reasons that the Duke of Gloucester is incensed.

“He is incensed because he believes that no one should rule the country except for himself. He believes that no one but he should be around King Henry VI. This is what engenders thunder in his breast and makes him roar forth these accusations. But he shall know I am as good —”

The Duke of Gloucester interrupted: “— as good! You bastard of my grandfather!”

John of Gaunt was the Duke of Gloucester's grandfather and the Bishop of Winchester's father. When Catherine Swynford gave birth to the Bishop of Winchester, she and John of Gaunt were not married, although they married later.

"Yes, lordly sir," the Bishop of Winchester said, "but what are you, I ask, other than one acting imperiously in another's throne?"

"Am I not the Lord Protector, saucy priest?"

"And am not I a prelate of the church?"

"Yes, as an outlaw dwells in a castle and uses it to maintain his thievery," the Duke of Gloucester said.

"Irreverent Gloucester!" the Bishop of Winchester said.

"You are reverent when it comes to your spiritual function — your profession — but not when it comes to your life."

"The Pope shall make you pay for this," the Bishop of Winchester said. "Rome shall remedy this."

"Roam thither, then," the Duke of Gloucester said.

In the quarrel, the Earl of Warwick took the side of the Duke of Gloucester, and the Duke of Somerset took the side of the Bishop of Winchester.

"Bishop of Winchester, my lord, it is your duty to forbear and control yourself," the Earl of Warwick said.

"Yes," the Duke of Somerset said, "as long as the Bishop of Winchester is not borne down and bullied by superior force. I think my lord the Duke of Gloucester should be religious and know and respect the office that belongs to such as are religious."

"I think his lordship the Bishop of Winchester should be

humbler,” the Earl of Warwick said. “It is not suitable for a prelate to contend in debate in this way.”

“Yes, it is, when his holy state is affected so directly,” the Duke of Somerset said. “His ecclesiastical status is under attack.”

“Whether his state is holy or unhallowed, so what?” the Earl of Warwick said. “Isn’t his grace the Duke of Gloucester Lord Protector to the King?”

Richard Plantagenet thought, *Plantagenet, I see, must hold his tongue, lest it be said, “Speak, sirrah, when you should; must your bold verdict enter talk with lords?” Otherwise, I would fling words at the Bishop of Winchester.*

Richard Plantagenet knew that his social status was not high enough for him to be allowed to speak up and express his opinion in this quarrel.

King Henry VI, who was young, said, “Uncle of Gloucester and great-uncle of Winchester, you two are the special watchmen of our English commonwealth. I would prevail, if prayers might prevail, and join your hearts in love and amity. Oh, what a scandal it is to our crown that two such noble peers as you should quarrel!

“Believe me, lords, my tender years can tell that civil dissension is a venomous snake that gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth.”

People in this culture incorrectly believed that vipers were born by gnawing their way out of the body of their mother.

Someone shouted outside the room, “Down with the tawny-coats!”

King Henry VI asked, “What disturbance is this?”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “It is an uproar, I dare guess,

that has begun through the malice of the Bishop of Winchester's men."

Someone shouted outside the room, "Stones! Stones!"

The Mayor of London entered the room and said, "Oh, my good lords, and virtuous Henry, pity the city of London. Pity us! The Bishop of Winchester's men and the Duke of Gloucester's men, who were recently forbidden to carry any weapons, have filled their pockets full of small stones. Banding themselves into opposing sides, they throw stones so hard at each other's heads that many have had their giddy, angry brains knocked out. Our windows and shutters are broken in every street, and out of fear we are compelled to shut our shops."

Some serving men with bloody heads, fighting, entered the room. Some were wearing blue coats; some were wearing tawny coats.

Using the royal plural, King Henry VI said, "We order you, on your allegiance to ourself, to restrain your slaughtering hands and keep the peace.

"Please, uncle Duke of Gloucester, pacify this strife."

The first serving man, who served the Duke of Gloucester, said, "If we are forbidden to fight with stones, we'll use our teeth as weapons."

The second serving man, who served the Bishop of Winchester, replied, "Do whatever you dare to do, for we are as resolute as you."

The serving men fought again.

The Duke of Gloucester said, "You who are of my household, leave this foolish disturbance and set this unusual fight aside."

The third serving man said, “My lord, we know your grace to be a man who is just and upright, and as for your royal birth, it is inferior to none but to his majesty. Therefore, before we will suffer such a Prince as yourself, so kind a father of the commonwealth, to be disgraced by an inkhorn mate — the Latin-writing Bishop of Winchester — we and our wives and children all will fight and have our bodies slaughtered by your foes.”

The first serving man said, “Yes, and the very parings of our nails shall be sharp stakes to be used to fortify a battlefield when we are dead.”

The two groups of serving men started fighting again.

“Stop! Stop, I say!” the Duke of Gloucester said. “If you love me, as you say you do, let me persuade you to stop fighting for awhile.”

“Oh, how this discord afflicts my soul!” the young King Henry VI said. “Can you, my Lord of Winchester, see my sighs and tears and yet you will not at once relent? Who should take pity on me, if you do not? Who would endeavor to prefer peace to war if holy churchmen take delight in quarrels?”

The Earl of Warwick advised both sides to make peace: “Yield, my Lord Protector, Duke of Gloucester; yield, Bishop of Winchester. Yield and make peace, unless you intend with an obstinate refusal to make peace to slay your sovereign and destroy the realm. You see what evil and what murder, too, have been enacted through your enmity; so then, be at peace unless you thirst for blood.”

“He shall submit, or I will never yield,” the Bishop of Winchester said.

“Compassion for the King compels me to stoop,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Otherwise, I would see the Bishop of

Winchester's heart out of his body, before the priest should ever get that privilege of me."

"That privilege of me" was ambiguous. The sentence it appears in could mean 1) "Otherwise, I would see the Bishop of Winchester's heart out of his body, before the priest should ever get my heart out of my body" or 2) "Otherwise, I would see the Bishop of Winchester's heart out of his body, before the priest should ever get me to humble myself first."

The Earl of Warwick said, "Look, my Lord of Winchester, the Duke of Gloucester has banished his moody, discontented fury, as is shown by his smoothed forehead. Why do you still look so stern and sorrowful?"

"Here, Bishop of Winchester, I offer you my hand," the Duke of Gloucester said, holding out his hand.

The Bishop of Winchester, whose name was Henry Beaufort, did not take it.

"Shame on you, great-uncle Beaufort!" King Henry VI said. "I have heard you preach that malice is a great and grievous sin, and now you will not maintain the thing you teach, but instead you will show yourself to be a chief offender in the same?"

The Earl of Warwick said, "Sweet King! The Bishop of Winchester has received a suitable rebuke! For shame, my lord of Winchester, relent! What, shall a child teach you how to act?"

The Bishop of Winchester said, "Well, Duke of Gloucester, I will yield to you. Love for your love and hand for your hand I give."

They shook hands.

The Duke of Gloucester thought, *Yes, but I am afraid that*

you are shaking my hand with a false heart. You don't really mean to make peace with me.

He said out loud, "See here, my friends and loving countrymen, this handshake serves as a flag of truce between ourselves and all our followers. So help me, God, I am not lying!"

The Bishop of Winchester thought, *So help me, God, I don't intend there to be peace between the Duke of Gloucester and me!*

King Henry VI said, "Oh, loving uncle, kind Duke of Gloucester, how joyful I am made by this contract of peace!"

He said to the serving men who had been quarreling, "Go away, my masters! Trouble us no more, but join in friendship, as your lords have done."

The first serving man said, "I am happy with this peace agreement. I'll go now to see a doctor."

The second serving man said, "And so will I."

The third serving man said, "And I will see what 'medicine' I can get at the tavern."

The serving men and the Mayor of London exited.

The Earl of Warwick gave a document to King Henry VI and said, "Accept this scroll, most gracious sovereign, which in support of the claim of Richard Plantagenet we give to your majesty so that you may consider it."

The Duke of Gloucester said, "Well urged, my Lord of Warwick, because, sweet King, if your grace notes every detail, you have great reason to do Richard Plantagenet right, especially for those reasons I told your majesty at Eltham Place."

“And those reasons, uncle, were very persuasive,” King Henry VI said. “Therefore, my loving lords, our pleasure is that Richard Plantagenet be restored to his hereditary rights and title.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “As the King said, let Richard Plantagenet be restored to his hereditary rights and title. In this way, his father’s wrongs shall receive recompense.”

The Bishop of Winchester said, “What the other lords want, so also do I, the Bishop of Winchester, want.”

King Henry VI said, “If Richard Plantagenet will be loyal, not just that alone will I give to him, but also all the whole inheritance that belongs to the House of York, from whence you spring by lineal descent.”

Richard Plantagenet pledged his loyalty to the King: “Your humble servant vows obedience and humble service until I reach the point of death.”

King Henry VI replied, “Stoop then and set your knee against my foot, and in recompense for that duty you have just performed, I gird you with the valiant sword of York. Rise, Richard, like a true Plantagenet, and rise as the newly created and Princely Duke of York.”

Richard Plantagenet, now the Duke of York, said, “And may I, Richard, thrive as your foes fall! May your enemies die and I thrive! And as my duty flourishes, so may they who think even one complaining thought against your majesty die!”

All said, “Welcome, high Prince, the mighty Duke of York!”

The Duke of Somerset thought, *Perish, base Prince, ignoble Duke of York!*

The Duke of Gloucester said to King Henry VI, “Now will

it best avail your majesty to cross the seas and to be crowned in France. The presence of a King engenders love among his subjects and his loyal friends as it dismays his enemies.”

King Henry V had made a treaty that made the King of England the next King of France. Because the then-King of France died two months after King Henry V had died, King Henry VI of England was regarded — by the English — as the King of France.

Of course, Charles the Dauphin and Joan la Pucelle disagreed.

King Henry VI replied, “When the Duke of Gloucester says the word, King Henry to France goes, for friendly counsel cuts off many foes.”

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Your ships are already prepared for the journey.”

Everyone except the Duke of Exeter left the room.

Alone, the Duke of Exeter said to himself, “Yes, we may march in England or in France, not seeing what is likely to ensue. This recent dissension grown between the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester burns under feigned ashes of forged love and will at last break out into a flame.”

The Duke of Exeter was aware that the quarrel between the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester had not been truly resolved. It was like the coals of a fire burning under ashes; the coals could soon burst into open flame.

He continued, “As festering limbs rot bit by bit until bones and flesh and sinews fall away, so will this base and envious discord grow. And now I fear that fatal prophecy which in the time of King Henry V was in the mouth of

every sucking babe: Henry born at Monmouth — that is, Henry V — would win all, and Henry born at Windsor — that is, Henry VI — would lose all. King Henry V won many cities in France, and according to the prophecy, King Henry VI will lose all of those cities. The truth of this prophecy is so plain that I, the Duke of Exeter, wishes that his days may end before that hapless time. I hope to die before I see the prophecy come true.”

— 3.2 —

The English held the city of Rouen, but Joan la Pucelle had a plan to enable the French army to retake the city. She and four French soldiers stood in front of one of the entrances into the city. Joan and the soldiers were carrying sacks of wheat on their backs.

Joan la Pucelle said, “These are the city gates, the gates of Rouen, through which we must make a breach by use of a stratagem. Take heed, and be wary how you express your words. Talk like the vulgar sort of market men who come to gather money for their wheat. If we have entrance, as I hope we shall, and if we find the slothful watch weak, I’ll by a sign give notice to our friends that Charles the Dauphin may kill the watchmen and enter the city.”

The first soldier said, “Our sacks shall be a means by which we can sack the city, and we will be lords and rulers over Rouen. Therefore we’ll knock.”

The first soldier knocked.

An English watchman asked, “*Qui la?*”

“*Qui la?*” means “Who there?”

The English watchman knew a little French, but not enough to know to say, “*Qui est la?*”

“*Qui est la?*” means “Who is there?”

Joan la Pucelle said, "*Paysans, pauvres gens de France.*"

This means "Peasants, the poor tribe of France."

Realizing that English watchman did not know much French, Joan la Pucelle added this sentence in English: "Poor market folks who come to sell their wheat."

The English watchman said, "Enter, go in; the market bell has been rung."

Joan la Pucelle said to herself, "Now, Rouen, I'll shake your bulwarks to the ground."

She and the four disguised French soldiers went through the gate into the city.

Charles the Dauphin, the Bastard of Orleans, the Duke of Alençon, Reignier, and some soldiers arrived and stood outside the gate.

Charles the Dauphin said, "May Saint Denis bless this happy stratagem and make it successful! If he does, once again we'll sleep securely in Rouen."

The Bastard of Orleans said, "Pucelle and her co-conspirators entered the city here through this gate. Now she is there, how will she specify where is the best and safest passage in?"

Reignier replied, "By thrusting out a torch from yonder tower. Once the torch is discerned, it will show that her meaning is that no entrance to the city is weaker than this one through which she entered."

Joan la Pucelle appeared on the tower and displayed a burning torch.

She said, "Behold, this is the happy wedding torch that joins Rouen to her countrymen, but this torch's burning is fatal to the Talbonites!"

The word “Talbonites” meant “the followers of Talbot”; the word used a Latinization of “Talbot.”

She exited.

The Bastard of Orleans said, “See, noble Charles, the beacon of our friend. The burning torch in yonder tower stands.”

Charles the Dauphin said, “Now let it shine like a comet of revenge, a portent prophesying to us the fall of all our foes!”

“Waste no time,” Reignier said. “Delays have dangerous ends. Enter, and cry ‘The Dauphin!’ immediately, and then kill the watchmen.”

A battle trumpet sounded and they entered the city and began fighting.

Talbot appeared and said, “France, you shall rue this treason with your tears, if I, Talbot, can survive your treachery.”

To the English, King Henry VI was also King of France, and so the French who were battling to take the city of Rouen were traitors.

Talbot continued, “Pucelle, that witch, that damned sorceress, has wrought this Hellish and wicked deed without warning, so that only with difficulty did we escape the haughty power of France.”

Then he began to fight again.

As the fighting continued, the Duke of Bedford was carried in a chair to a place where he could watch the fighting. The Duke of Bedford was ill; in fact, he was dying.

The French took the city. Talbot and the Duke of Burgundy left the city and stood together outside by the Duke of

Bedford. On the wall of Rouen stood Joan la Pucelle, Charles the Dauphin, the Bastard of Orleans, the Duke of Alençon, and Reignier.

Joan la Pucelle taunted the English: “Good morning, gallants! Do you want wheat for bread?”

She threw grains of wheat at the English.

She added, “I think the Duke of Burgundy will fast before he’ll buy again at such a rate. It was full of darnel; do you like the taste?”

Darnel is a weed that commonly grows among stalks of wheat.

The Duke of Burgundy said, “Scoff on, vile fiend and shameless courtesan! I trust before long to choke you with your own wheat and make you curse the harvest of that wheat.”

Charles the Dauphin said, “Your grace may starve perhaps before that time.”

The Duke of Bedford said, “Let no words, but deeds, revenge this treason!”

“What will you do, good grey-beard?” Joan la Pucelle said, “Break a lance, engage in a jousting match, and charge at death while you sit in a chair?”

Talbot said, “Foul fiend of France, and hag of all malice and spite, you are surrounded by your lustful paramours! Does it become and suit you to taunt the Duke of Bedford’s valiant age and twit in a cowardly way a man who is half dead? Damsel, I’ll have a bout with you again, or else let Talbot perish with this shame.”

The word “bout” could mean a bout of fighting or a bout of sex.

Punning on the word “hot” as meaning “angry” and “horny,” Joan la Pucelle said, “Are ye so hot, sir? Yet, Pucelle, hold your peace. If Talbot do but thunder, rain will follow.”

The English whispered together in a council.

Joan la Pucelle said, “May God speed the Parliament! Who shall be the Speaker of the Parliament?”

“Do you dare to come forth and meet us on the battlefield?” Talbot asked, challenging them to a battle.

Joan la Pucelle said, “It is likely that your lordship takes us then for fools who are willing to fight a risky battle to get what they have already won.”

Talbot said, “I speak not to that railing Hecate — that witch — but to you, Duke of Alençon, and to the rest. Will you, like soldiers, come and fight it out?”

Hecate was an ancient Greek goddess who protected witches.

The Duke of Alençon replied to Talbot, “Signior, no.”

“Signior, hang!” Talbot shouted. “Base muleteers of France! Like peasant footboys they keep behind the wall and dare not take up arms and fight like gentlemen.”

“Let’s leave, Captains!” Joan la Pucelle said. “Let’s get away from the wall, for Talbot means us no goodness by his looks.”

She shouted to Talbot, “May God be with you, my lord! We came here only to tell you that we are here.”

Joan la Pucelle and the others departed from the wall.

Talbot said, “And there will we be, too, before long, or else may reproach be Talbot’s greatest fame! If we don’t retake

the city, and soon, let me be remembered as a loser.

“Vow, Duke of Burgundy, by the honor of your house, pricked on by public wrongs sustained in France either to get the town again or die.”

The Duke of Burgundy was French, but he supported the English.

Talbot continued, “And I, as sure as English Henry VI lives and as sure as his father, Henry V, was conqueror here, and as sure as in this recently betrayed town great Coeur-de-lion’s heart was buried, as sure as these things I swear to get the town or die.”

King Henry V had captured the town of Rouen in 1418.

King Richard I, known as Coeur-de-lion or Lionheart, had willed that his heart be buried in Rouen because he so loved and respected the town. He died in 1199 in France, and the rest of his body was buried in Fontevrault.

The Duke of Burgundy said, “My vows are equal partners with your vows. I vow the same thing you do.”

“But, before we go, let’s take care of this dying Prince, the valiant Duke of Bedford,” Talbot said. “Come, my lord, we will take you to some better place that is fitter for sickness and for infirm old age.”

The Duke of Bedford replied, “Lord Talbot, do not dishonor me so. Here I will sit before the wall of Rouen, and I will be partner of your weal or woe.”

The Duke of Burgundy said, “Courageous Duke of Bedford, let us now persuade you —”

The Duke of Bedford interrupted, “— not to be gone from hence, for once I read that brave Uther Pendragon, the father of King Arthur, while sick was carried in a litter to

the battlefield and vanquished his foes. I think my being here should revive the soldiers' hearts because I always identified with them."

Talbot said, "You have an undaunted spirit in a dying breast! Then so be it. May the Heavens keep the old Duke of Bedford safe! And now no more ado, brave Duke of Burgundy, but we will gather our forces out of hand and set upon and fight our boasting enemy."

All exited except for the Duke of Bedford and some attendants.

The battle began. Sir John Fastolfe and a Captain came into view. True to his last name, which was similar to Fast-off, Sir John was running away.

The Captain asked, "Where are you going, Sir John Fastolfe, in such haste?"

"Where am I going?" Sir John Fastolfe said. "To save myself by flight. We are likely to be defeated again."

"What!" the Captain said. "Will you flee, and leave Lord Talbot?"

"Yes," Sir John Fastolfe replied. "I would leave all the Talbots in the world in order to save my life!"

He ran away.

"Cowardly knight!" the Captain said. "May ill fortune follow you!"

The Captain exited.

The battle continued, and the French lost. Joan la Pucelle, the Duke of Alençon, and Charles the Dauphin fled.

The Duke of Bedford, seeing their flight, said to himself, "Now, quiet soul, depart when it pleases Heaven, for I have

seen our enemies' overthrow. What is the trust or strength of foolish man? They who recently were daring with their scoffs are now glad and happy by flight to save themselves."

The Duke of Bedford died, and his attendants carried him away in his chair.

Lord Talbot, the Duke of Burgundy, and others met and discussed their victory.

Lord Talbot, elated, said, "Lost, and recovered again on the same day! This is a double honor, Burgundy. It is an honor for you and for me. Yet the Heavens have the glory for this victory!"

The Duke of Burgundy replied, "Warlike and martial Talbot, I, the Duke of Burgundy, enshrine you in my heart and there erect your noble deeds as monuments of valor."

"Thanks, gentle Duke," Talbot said. "But where is Joan la Pucelle now? I think her old familiar is asleep."

Witches have familiars: attendant spirits in the form of an animal.

Talbot continued, "Now where are the Bastard's boasts and Charles' insults? Are the Bastard and Charles the Dauphin all dejected and downcast?"

He said sarcastically, "Rouen hangs her head for grief because such a 'valiant' company has fled."

He added, "Now we will make arrangements to restore some order in the town, placing therein some expert officers, and then depart to go to Paris and see the King, for in Paris young King Henry VI is staying with his nobles."

The Duke of Burgundy said, "Whatever Lord Talbot wants pleases me, the Duke of Burgundy."

Talbot said, “But yet, before we go, let’s not forget the recently deceased noble Duke of Bedford — let’s see that his funeral rites are fulfilled in Rouen. A braver soldier never brought his lance down to the attack position, a gentler heart never governed in court, but Kings and the mightiest potentates must die, for that’s the end of human misery.”

— 3.3 —

On the plains near Rouen, Charles the Dauphin, the Bastard of Orleans, the Duke of Alençon, and Joan la Pucelle talked. Some soldiers were present.

Joan la Pucelle said, “Princes, don’t be dismayed at this event, nor grieve that Rouen has been recovered like this. Care — that is, grief — is no cure, but instead it is corrosive, for things that are not to be remedied. Let wildly enraged Talbot triumph for a while and like a peacock sweep and flaunt his tail; we’ll pull his plumes and take away his train — his peacock tail and his army — if Charles the Dauphin and the rest will just take my advice.”

Charles the Dauphin said, “We have been guided by you hitherto, and we did not mistrust your cunning. One sudden setback shall never breed distrust. We will continue to trust in you.”

The Bastard of Orleans said, “Search your mind for secret stratagems, and we will make you famous throughout the world.”

The Duke of Alençon said, “We’ll set up your statue in some holy place and have you revered like a blessed saint. Therefore, sweet virgin, devote yourself to our good.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “Then thus it must be; this is Joan’s plan: By fair persuasive arguments mixed with sugared words, we will entice the Duke of Burgundy to leave the

Talbot and to follow us.”

Charles the Dauphin said, “Yes, indeed, sweet thing, if we could do that, France would be no place for Henry’s warriors, nor would England boast to us that France belongs to it, but instead the English would be rooted out from our provinces.”

The Duke of Alençon said, “The English would be expelled forever from France and not have the possession of an Earldom here.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “Your honors shall perceive how I will work to bring this matter to the wished-for end.”

Drums sounded. They were drums first of Talbot’s army and second of the Duke of Burgundy’s army.

Joan la Pucelle said, “Listen! By the sound of the drums, you may perceive that their armies are marching toward Paris.”

The drums of Talbot’s army sounded as the English soldiers marched past.

Joan la Pucelle said, “There goes the Talbot, with his flags unfurled, and all the troops of English soldiers after him.”

The drums of the Duke of Burgundy’s army sounded as the French soldiers in his army marched near Joan and the others.

Joan of Pucelle said, “Now in the rearward come the Duke of Burgundy and his soldiers. Lady Fortune favors us and makes him lag behind. Summon a parley; we will talk with him.”

Trumpets sounded a parley.

Charles the Dauphin called, “We wish to have a parley with the Duke of Burgundy!”

The Duke of Burgundy asked, “Who craves a parley with the Burgundy?”

Joan la Pucelle replied, “The Princely Charles of France, your countryman.”

“What do you have to say, Charles?” the Duke of Burgundy asked, “I am marching away from here.”

“Speak, Pucelle,” Charles the Dauphin said, “and enchant him with your words.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “Brave Burgundy, undoubted hope of France! Wait, let your humble handmaid speak to you.”

“Speak on,” the Duke of Burgundy said, “but don’t be over-tedious. Don’t be too talkative.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “Look on your country; look on fertile France, and see the cities and the towns defaced by the wasting ruination wrought by the cruel foe. Just like the mother looks on her lowly babe when death closes his tender, dying eyes, see, see the pining malady of France. Behold the wounds, the most unnatural wounds, which you yourself have given her woeful breast. Oh, turn your edged sword another way! Strike those who hurt France, and do not hurt those who help France. One drop of blood drawn from your country’s bosom should grieve you more than streams of foreign gore. Return therefore to the side of France with a flood of tears, and wash away your country’s stained spots.”

“Either she has bewitched me with her words, or natural feelings make me suddenly relent,” the Duke of Burgundy said to himself.

Joan la Pucelle continued, “Besides, all the French and all France exclaim to you, doubting your birth and lawful descent. Who have you joined with but a lordly nation who

will not trust you except for the sake of profit? When Talbot has once established firm footing in France and made you a tool of evil, who then but English Henry VI will be lord? You will then be thrust out like a fugitive! We remember, and you should note this as good evidence — wasn't the Duke of Orleans your foe? And wasn't he held prisoner in England? But when they heard he was your enemy, they set him free without his ransom paid, to spite you, Duke of Burgundy, and all your friends. See, then, you are fighting against your countrymen and you have joined with those who will be your slaughterers.

“Come, come, return; return, you wandering lord. Charles the Dauphin and the others will take you in their arms.”

“I am vanquished,” the Duke of Burgundy said. “These high-minded words of hers have battered me like roaring cannon-shot, and made me almost yield upon my knees.

“Forgive me, country and sweet countrymen; lords, accept this hearty, heartfelt, kind embrace. My forces and my army of men are yours.

“So farewell, Talbot; I'll no longer trust you.”

Joan la Pucelle thought, cynically, *Done like a Frenchman; turn, and turn again! First he fights on one side, and then he fights on the other side!*

“Welcome, brave Duke of Burgundy!” Charles the Dauphin said. “Your friendship invigorates us.”

The Bastard of Orleans said, “And it begets new courage in our breasts.”

“Joan la Pucelle has bravely played her part in this, and she deserves a coronet of gold,” the Duke of Alençon said.

“Now let us continue on, my lords, and join our armies,” Charles the Dauphin said, “and seek how we may injure the

foe.”

— 3.4 —

At the palace in Paris were King Henry VI, the Duke of Gloucester, the Bishop of Winchester, the Duke of York, the Earl of Suffolk, the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Warwick, the Duke of Exeter, Vernon, Basset, and others. Lord Talbot was also present, with some soldiers.

Lord Talbot said, “My gracious King, and honorable peers, hearing of your arrival in this realm, I have for awhile given truce to my wars, so that I may express my homage to my sovereign. In sign of that duty, this arm, which has reclaimed to your obedience fifty fortresses, twelve cities, and seven walled towns of strength, besides five hundred prisoners of high rank, lowers the sword it is holding before your highness’ feet, and with submissive loyalty of heart I ascribe the glory of the conquests I have gotten first to my God and next unto your grace.”

Lord Talbot knelt.

King Henry VI asked, “Uncle Duke of Gloucester, is this the Lord Talbot who has been so long resident in France?”

The Duke of Gloucester replied, “Yes, it is, my liege.”

“Welcome, brave Captain and victorious lord!” King Henry VI said to Lord Talbot. “When I was young — I still am not old — I remember how my father said that a braver champion than you never handled a sword. For a long time, we have been aware and completely convinced of your loyalty, your faithful service, and your toil in war, yet never have you tasted our reward, or been recompensed with so much as thanks, because until now we never saw your face. Therefore, stand up, and for these good and worthy deeds of yours, we here make you Earl of Shrewsbury, and in our coronation you will take a place.”

Everyone exited except for Vernon and Basset. Vernon was wearing a white rose in support of Richard Plantagenet, the Duke of York; Basset was wearing a red rose in support of the Duke of Somerset. The two men were enemies.

Vernon said to Basset, “Now, sir, to you, who were so hot and angry at sea, insulting this white rose that I wear in honor of my noble Lord of York, do you dare to maintain the former words you spoke?”

“Yes, sir,” Basset replied, “as well as you dare to defend the envious barking of your saucy tongue against my lord the Duke of Somerset.”

“Sirrah, I honor your lord as he is,” Vernon said.

In this context, the word “sirrah” was an insult.

“Why, what is he?” Basset said. “He is as good a man as the Duke of York.”

“Listen carefully,” Vernon said. “He is not as good a man as the Duke of York.”

He struck Basset and said, “As testimony thereof, take that.”

Basset said, “Villain, you know the law of arms is such that the penalty is immediate death for whoever draws a sword here, or else this blow should set to flowing your dearest blood.”

The law of arms referred to two things: 1) Drawing a sword in the residence of the King was a mortal offense, and 2) For two soldiers in the English army to draw swords and fight each other in wartime was a mortal offense.

Basset continued, “But I’ll go to his majesty, and request that I may have the liberty to avenge this wrong. When you shall see me next time, I’ll meet you to your cost.”

“Well, miscreant, I’ll be there before the King as soon as you,” Vernon said, “and after the King grants us permission to fight, I will meet you sooner than you wish.”

CHAPTER 4 (1 Henry VI)

— 4.1 —

In a hall of state in Paris, the coronation of King Henry VI as King of France was being held. Present were King Henry VI, the Duke of Gloucester, the Bishop of Winchester, the Duke of York, the Earl of Suffolk, the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Warwick, Lord Talbot, the Duke of Exeter, the Governor of Paris, and others.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Lord Bishop of Winchester, set the crown upon his head.”

The Bishop of Winchester set the crown on Henry VI’s head and said, “God save King Henry, of that name the sixth!”

“Now, governor of Paris, take your oath,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Swear that you acknowledge no other King but him. Esteem as your friends none but such as are his friends, and esteem as your foes but none such as shall intend malicious intrigues against his state: Swear that this shall you do, so help you righteous God!”

Sir John Fastolfe entered the room and interrupted the ceremony, saying to King Henry VI, “My gracious sovereign, as I rode from Calais to hasten to your coronation, a letter was delivered to my hands. It was written to your grace by the Duke of Burgundy.”

Lord Talbot recognized Sir John Fastolfe — the cowardly knight who had fled from battle earlier. Upset by that and by the interruption of the ceremony, he said, “Shame to the Duke of Burgundy and to you! I vowed, base knight, that when I next met you, I would tear the garter from your coward’s leg.”

Sir John Fastolfe was a member of the Order of the Garter, the highest order of knights. They wore a garter just below the left knee. Of course, Lord Talbot did not think that such a cowardly knight should be a member of the Order of the Garter.

Lord Talbot removed Sir John's garter and said, "Now I have done that because you were unworthily installed in that high degree.

"Pardon me, King Henry VI, and the rest of you. This coward, at the battle of Patay, when my army was in all only six thousand strong and we were outnumbered by the French almost ten to one, even before we met or a single stroke of the sword was given, like a 'trusty' contemptible fellow this man ran away. In that battle we lost twelve hundred men. I myself and several other gentlemen besides me were there surprised and taken prisoner.

"So then judge, great lords, if I have done anything amiss in tearing away this fellow's garter. Decide whether such cowards ought to wear this ornament of knighthood — yes or no."

The Duke of Gloucester said, "To say the truth, this fellow's deed was infamous and ill beseeming any common man; this deed is even more ill beseeming a knight, a Captain, and a leader."

Lord Talbot said, "When this order was first ordained, my lords, knights of the garter were of noble birth, valiant and virtuous, and full of high-minded courage. They were such as earned good reputations in the wars; they did not fear death, nor recoil because of distress, but instead they were always resolute in the direst situations.

"A man who lacks those honorable virtues yet calls himself a knight does nothing but usurp the sacred name of knight; he profanes this most honorable order of knighthood, and

he should, if I were worthy enough to be his judge, be quite degraded, like a hedge-born swain who presumes to boast that he has noble blood.”

A “hedge-born swain” is a peasant born under a hedge.

King Henry VI believed everything that Lord Talbot had said, so he said to Sir John Fastolfe, “Stain and disgrace to your countrymen, you hear your judgment! Be off, therefore, you who were a knight. From this time on we banish you, on pain of death.”

Disgraced, John Fastolfe, who had previously been Sir John Fastolfe, exited.

King Henry VI then said, “And now, Duke of Gloucester, my Lord Protector, view the letter sent from our uncle the Duke of Burgundy.”

One of King Henry VI’s uncles was the Duke of Bedford, who had married Anne, the sister of the Duke of Burgundy, and so King Henry VI and the Duke of Burgundy were related by marriage.

The Duke of Gloucester first looked at how the letter was addressed. Normally it would acknowledge Henry VI as King of France as well as of England and Wales, and it would include an acknowledgement that Henry VI was the writer’s sovereign.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “What does his grace mean, that he has changed his style? Nothing more but, plainly and bluntly, ‘*To the King!*’ Has he forgotten that Henry VI is his sovereign? Or does this churlish address portend some alteration in good will?

“What’s written here in the letter?”

He then read the letter out loud:

“I have, upon special cause, moved with compassion for my country’s destruction, together with the pitiful complaints of such people as your oppression feeds upon, forsaken your pernicious faction and joined with Charles, the rightful King of France.”

The Duke of Gloucester then said, “Oh, monstrous treachery! Can this be true? Can it be that in alliance, amity, and oaths, there should be found such false dissembling and deceitful guile?”

“What!” King Henry VI said. “Is my uncle Burgundy rebelling against me?”

“He is, my lord,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “He has become your foe.”

“Is that the worst of the news that this letter contains?” King Henry VI asked.

“It is the worst, and it is all, my lord, that he writes,” the Duke of Gloucester replied.

“Why, then, Lord Talbot there shall talk with him and chastise him for this abuse,” King Henry VI said.

He then asked Lord Talbot, “What do you say, my lord? Are you willing to do this?”

“Willing, my liege!” Lord Talbot said. “Yes, I am. If you had not already given me this duty, I would have begged you to give it to me.”

King Henry VI ordered, “Then gather strength and march against him immediately. Let him perceive how ill we endure his treason and what an offence it is to flout and abuse his friends.”

“I go now, my lord,” Lord Talbot said. “In my heart I desire always that you may see the destruction of your

foes.”

Lord Talbot exited.

Vernon and Basset entered the room. Vernon was wearing a white rose, and Basset was wearing a red rose.

Vernon asked King Henry VI, “Grant me the right of combat, gracious sovereign. Grant me the right of trial by duel.”

Basset said, “And, my lord, grant me the combat, too.”

The Duke of York said about Vernon, “This is my retainer. Hear what he has to say, noble King.”

The Duke of Somerset said about Basset, “And this is my retainer. Sweet Henry, show him favor. Give him what he wants.”

“Be patient, lords,” King Henry VI said, “and allow them to speak.”

“Say, gentlemen, what makes you thus exclaim? And why do you crave combat? And with whom?”

Vernon pointed to Basset and said, “With him, my lord; for he has done me wrong.”

Basset said about Vernon, “And I with him, for he has done me wrong.”

“What is that wrong whereof you both complain?” King Henry VI said. “First let me know, and then I’ll give you your answer to your request.”

Basset said, “Crossing the sea from England into France, this fellow here, with a malicious, carping tongue, upbraided me about the red rose I wear, saying that the blood-red color of the leaves represented my master’s blushing cheeks when my master stubbornly rejected the

truth about a certain question in the law argued between the Duke of York and him. Vernon also used other vile and ignominious terms. In rebuttal of that rude and ignorant reproach and in defense of my lord's worthiness, I beg the benefit and legal privilege of fighting a duel."

"And that is also my petition, noble lord," Vernon said. "For although he seems with counterfeit and cunning ingenuity to give an attractive appearance to his bold intention, yet you should know, my lord, I was provoked by him, and he first took exceptions at this badge, this white rose, saying that the paleness of this flower revealed the faintness of my master's heart."

The Duke of York asked, "Won't this malice, Somerset, cease?"

The Duke of Somerset replied, "Your private grudge, my Lord of York, will out and be known, no matter how cunningly you try to cover it up."

King Henry VI said, "Good Lord, what madness rules in brainsick men, when for so slight and frivolous a cause such factious conflicts shall arise! York and Somerset, you are good kinsmen both to yourselves and to me, so quiet yourselves, please, and be at peace."

The Duke of York said, "Let this dissension first be tried by fight, and then your highness shall command a peace."

The Duke of Somerset said, "The quarrel concerns none but us alone. Between ourselves let us decide it then."

The Duke of York threw down his white rose and said, "There is my pledge; accept it, Somerset. Pick it up, and let's duel."

Vernon said, "Nay, let the fight rest where it began at first."

He meant that only Basset and he should fight; the Duke of

York and the Duke of Somerset ought not to duel each other.

Basset said, "Confirm it so, my honorable lord. Let Vernon and I fight a duel."

"Confirm it so!" the Duke of Gloucester said. "Confounded be your strife! And may you two perish, with your audacious prattle! Presumptuous vassals, aren't you ashamed with this immodest clamorous outrage of yours to trouble and disturb the King and us?"

"And you, my lords York and Somerset, I think you aren't doing well to allow them to make their perverse accusations, much less for you two to take the opportunity from their mouths to raise a civil disturbance between yourselves. Let me persuade you to take a better course of action."

The Duke of Exeter said, "This quarrel grieves his highness. My good lords, be friends."

King Henry VI said, "Come here, Vernon and Basset, you who would be combatants. From henceforth I order you, as you love our favor, entirely to forget this quarrel and its cause.

"And you, my lords York and Somerset, remember where we are. We are in France, in the midst of a fickle and wavering nation. If they perceive dissension in our looks and if they perceive that among ourselves we disagree, how will their resentful feelings be provoked to willful disobedience and rebellion!

"Besides, what infamy will there arise when foreign Princes shall be informed that for a toy, a thing of no regard, King Henry VI's peers and chief nobility have destroyed themselves and lost the realm of France!

“Think upon the conquest of my father and think upon my tender years, and let us not forego for a trifle that which was bought with blood. Let me be the umpire in this disquieting dispute.”

He got a red rose, the emblem of the Lancastrians, and wore it and said, “I see no reason, if I wear this rose, that any one should therefore be suspicious I incline more to Somerset than to York. Both are my kinsmen, and I love them both. People may as well upbraid me for wearing my crown because, in fact, the King of Scots also wears a crown.”

King Henry VI and the Duke of Somerset were both members of the House of Lancaster. Henry VI’s father, Henry V, held the title of Duke of Lancaster. Once he became King Henry V, the title of Duke of Lancaster and his other titles became merged in the crown.

King Henry VI continued, “But your discretions can better persuade than I am able to instruct or teach. And therefore, as we came here in peace, so let us always continue to co-exist in peace and love.

“Kinsman of York, we appoint your grace to be our Regent in these parts of France.

“And, my good Lord of Somerset, unite your troops of horsemen with the Duke of York’s bands of soldiers.

“York and Somerset, like true subjects, sons of your progenitors, go cheerfully together and expend your angry choler on your enemies.

“We ourself, my Lord Protector, and the rest of us after some respite will return to Calais. From thence we will go to England, where I hope before long to be presented, as a result of your victories, with Charles the Dauphin, the Duke of Alençon, and that traitorous rabble.”

Everyone exited except for the Duke of York, the Earl of Warwick, the Duke of Exeter, and Vernon.

The Earl of Warwick said, “My Lord of York, I assure you I thought that the King prettily played the orator.”

“And so he did,” the Duke of York said, “but yet I don’t like his wearing the badge — the red rose — of Somerset.”

“Tush, that was but his fancy, so don’t blame him; I dare presume, sweet Prince, that he thought no harm,” the Earl of Warwick said.

“If I knew for sure that he did — but let it rest,” the Duke of York said. “Other affairs must now be managed.”

Everyone exited except for the Duke of Exeter, who said to himself, “You did well, Richard, the Duke of York, to suppress your voice and opinion because if the passions of your heart had burst out, I am afraid that we should have seen there more rancorous spite and more furious raging quarrels than yet can be imagined or supposed. Nevertheless, no common man who sees this jarring discord of nobility, this jostling of each other in the court, this partisan verbal strife of their supporters, can think other than that it presages some ill event.

“It is a serious matter when scepters are in children’s hands, but it is a much more serious matter when malice breeds unnatural separation and division among members of the same family. When that happens, there comes the rain — there begins confusion and destruction.”

A proverb stated, “Woe to the land whose King is a child.”

Despite their hatred of each other, the Duke of York and the Duke of Somerset were both descended from King Edward III.

Lord Talbot, accompanied by a trumpeter and a drummer, stood outside the wall of the French city of Bordeaux and ordered, “Go to the gates of Bordeaux, trumpeter. Summon their General to the wall.”

The trumpet sounded, and the French General and some others arrived and stood on the wall of the city.

Lord Talbot said, “English John Talbot, who is a servant in arms to Harry, King of England, calls you Captains forth, and this is what I want: Open your city gates, be humble to us, call my sovereign yours, and do him homage as obedient subjects. If you do these things, I’ll withdraw both my bloodthirsty army and myself. But if you frown upon this proffered peace, then you tempt the fury of my three attendants — lean famine, quartering steel, and climbing fire — who in a moment shall lay your stately and air-defying towers level with the earth if you forsake the offer of their love.”

“Quartering steel” referred to steel weapons that could dismember and quarter — cut into four pieces — bodies.

The French General replied, “You ominous and fearful owl of death, you who are our nation’s terror and their bloody scourge! The end of your tyranny approaches.”

In this culture, the screech of the owl was thought to prophesy death.

The French General continued, “You cannot enter into our city except by dying first, for I assure you, we are well fortified and are strong enough to issue out of the city and fight you. If you retreat from the city, Charles the Dauphin, who has a well-armed army, stands by with the snares of war to entangle you. On either side of you are squadrons who are ready for combat and who will wall you away from the liberty of flight. You can turn to no place for help. Every place you look you will find death in front of you

with plainly evident slaughter, and pale destruction will meet you face to face. Ten thousand Frenchmen have taken the sacrament and sworn to make their dangerous artillery explode upon no Christian soul but English Talbot.

“Lo, there you stand, a breathing valiant man with an invincible and unconquered spirit! This is the latest and last glory of your praise that I, your enemy, will endow you with, for before the hourglass, which now begins to run, finishes the progression of its sandy hour, these eyes that see you now well colored and in ruddy good health shall see you withered, bloody, pale, and dead.”

Drums sounded in the distance.

The French General continued, “Listen! Listen! The Dauphin’s drum is a warning bell that sings heavy, serious music to your timorous soul, and my soul shall ring your dire departure — your horrible death — out.”

The French General and the people with him exited from the wall.

Lord Talbot said, “He is not telling a fable; he is not lying. I hear the enemy’s drums.”

He ordered, “Go out, some lightly armed horsemen, and spy on their flanks.”

He then said, “Oh, negligent, careless, and heedless military discipline! We are parked and bounded in a pale, an area bounded by a fence. We are like a little herd of England’s timorous, fearful deer, amazed and bewildered by a yelping kennel of French curs!

“But if we be English deer, then let us be in blood. Let us be in full vigor and not like rascals — weak deer that will fall down after suffering a mere nip from a dog. Let us instead be moody-mad, furiously angry, and desperate

stags. Let us turn on the bloody hounds with heads of steel — hard antlers, or steel weapons — and make the cowards stand aloof at bay.”

The French would have Lord Talbot and his army at bay; Lord Talbot and his army would be like a deer making a last stand after being surrounded by hunting dogs. But Lord Talbot and his army would make the enemy stand aloof — stand back and be afraid to fight for a while, despite their advantage.

Lord Talbot continued, “If every Englishman sells his life as dearly as I intend to sell mine, then the Frenchmen shall find dear deer of us, my friends.

“By God and Saint George, Talbot, and England’s right, may our battle flags prosper in this dangerous fight!”

— 4.3 —

On a plain in Gascony, a messenger met the Duke of York. With the Duke of York were a trumpeter and many soldiers.

The Duke of York asked, “Have the speedy scouts who dogged and tracked the mighty army of the Dauphin returned again?”

The messenger said, “They have returned, my lord, and they report that the Dauphin and his army have marched to Bordeaux to fight Lord Talbot. As the Dauphin and his army marched along, your spies saw two mightier armies than that the Dauphin led; these two armies joined with him and also marched for Bordeaux.”

The Duke of York said, “May a plague fall upon that villain the Duke of Somerset, who thus delays my promised supply of horsemen who were levied for this siege! Renowned Talbot expects my aid, but I am treated with

contempt by a traitor villain and cannot help the noble chevalier. May God comfort and help him in this difficulty! If he suffers death, farewell to wars in France.”

Sir William Lucy arrived and said to the Duke of York, “You Princely leader of our English strength, never were you so needed on the soil of France. Spur to the rescue of the noble Talbot, who now is girdled with a waist of iron and hemmed about with grim destruction: A belt of enemy warriors encircles him. Go to Bordeaux, warlike Duke! Go to Bordeaux, York! If you do not, then farewell, Talbot, France, and England’s honor.”

The Duke of York said, “Oh, God, I wish that the Duke of Somerset, whose proud heart prevents the departure of my troops of cavalry and will not allow them to come to me, were in Talbot’s place! If that were so, we would save a valiant gentleman — Lord Talbot — by forfeiting the Duke of Somerset, who is a traitor and a coward. Mad ire and wrathful fury make me weep because we die like this, while remiss, careless traitors sleep.”

Sir William Lucy pleaded, “Oh, send some succor to the distressed lord!”

The Duke of York said, “He — Talbot — dies, and we lose; I break my warlike word — my word as a soldier. We mourn, and France smiles. We lose, but they daily gain. All of this happens because of this vile traitor Somerset.”

Sir William Lucy said, “Then may God have mercy on brave Talbot’s soul, and on young John, his son whom two hours ago I met as he traveled toward his warlike, valiant father! For the past seven years, Talbot has not seen his son, and now they meet where both their lives are done. They meet only to die together.”

The Duke of York said, “Alas, what joy shall noble Talbot have to bid his young son welcome to his grave? Leave!

Vexation and grief almost stop my breath, seeing that separated relatives should greet each other in the hour of death. Sir William Lucy, farewell; my fortune is that I can do no more than curse the reason — the Duke of Somerset — why I cannot aid the Talbot.

“Maine, Blois, Poitiers, and Tours are won away from England, all because of the Duke of Somerset and his delay in sending me my troops of cavalry.”

The Duke of York and his trumpeter and soldiers exited.

Alone, Sir William Lucy said to himself, “Thus, while the vulture of sedition feeds in the bosom of such great commanders, sleeping neglect betrays to loss the conquest of our scarcely cold conqueror of France, that man who forever lives in our memory: Henry V. While the Duke of York and the Duke of Somerset thwart and cross each other, lives, honors, lands, and all hurry to loss.”

— 4.4 —

On another plain in Gascony was the Earl of Somerset’s army. The Earl of Somerset talked with one of Lord Talbot’s Captains.

The Earl of Somerset said, “It is too late; I cannot send them now. The Duke of York and Lord Talbot too rashly planned this expedition. Our whole army might be engaged and fought with in a sudden attack by the town’s own garrison. The over-daring Talbot has sullied all his gloss of former honor by this heedless, desperate, wild adventure. The Duke of York set him on to fight and die in shame, so that once Talbot is dead, the Duke of York might bear a greater name.”

The Captain looked up and said, “Here comes Sir William Lucy, who with me set forth from our overmatched forces for aid.”

“How are you now, Sir William!” the Earl of Somerset asked. “Whither were you sent?”

“Whither” means “to which place.” Sir William Lucy had been sent to the Duke of York, but he did not want to mention that because it was off-topic. Sir William Lucy had more important things to say. He realized that any reinforcements would arrive after the battle. But he wanted to test the Duke of Somerset and see if he would agree immediately to send reinforcements, and especially if he would not, Sir William Lucy wanted the Duke of Somerset to know the consequences of his actions. The Duke of Somerset should have already sent reinforcements; he should have sent them immediately when the Captain who had arrived before Sir William Lucy had asked for them.

“Whither, my lord?” he said. “I have come from Lord Talbot, who has been bought and sold and betrayed. He, ringed about with bold adversity, cries out for reinforcements from noble York and Somerset, to beat assailing death away from his weak legions, and while the honorable Captain Talbot there drops bloody sweat from his war-wearied limbs, and uses an advantageous military position to draw out and continue the battle while looking for rescue, you, his false hopes, the trust of England’s honor, stay away, aloof with worthless rivalry.

“Don’t allow your private discord to keep away the mustered reinforcements who should lend him aid, while he, a renowned noble gentleman, yields his life while fighting against immense odds. Orleans the Bastard, Charles the Dauphin, the Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Alençon, and Reignier surround him, and Talbot perishes because of your failure to do your duty.”

“York set him on,” the Duke of Somerset said. “York should have sent him aid.”

“And York as quickly blames your grace, swearing that you are withholding his levied cavalry who were mustered for this expedition.”

“York lies,” the Duke of Somerset said. “He might have sent a request to me and had the cavalry. I owe him little duty, and less love. I think that it would be a foul disgrace to fawn on him by sending the cavalry to him without him first asking for them.”

He was ignoring the earlier words of King Henry VI: “And, my good Lord of Somerset, unite your troops of horsemen with the Duke of York’s bands of soldiers.”

Sir William Lucy said, “The faithlessness of England, not the military might of France, has now entrapped the noble-minded Talbot. Never to England shall he bear his life; instead, he dies, betrayed to fortune by your strife.”

“Come, let’s go,” the Earl of Somerset said. “I will dispatch the horsemen immediately. Within six hours they will be at his aid.”

Sir William Lucy said, “Too late comes the rescue. He is either captured or slain. He could not flee and escape even if he wanted to, if it were possible for him to flee, and Talbot would never flee and escape, even if it were possible.”

“If he is dead, then brave Talbot, *adieu!*” the Earl of Somerset said.

“His fame lives on in the world, but the shame of his death lives on in you,” Sir William Lucy said.

— 4.5 —

Lord Talbot and John, his son, talked together in the English camp near Bordeaux.

Lord Talbot said, "Oh, young John Talbot! I sent for you so I could tutor you in the strategy of war, so that the name of Talbot might be revived in you when sapless, feeble old age and weak, incapable limbs would bring your drooping father to his chair in his retirement.

"But, oh, malignant and ill-boding stars! Now, my son, you have come to a feast of death, a terrible and unavoidable danger. Therefore, dear boy, mount my swiftest horse, and I'll direct you how you can escape by sudden flight. Come, don't dally, be gone and leave immediately."

John Talbot asked, "Is my name Talbot? And am I your son? And shall I flee? Oh, if you love my mother, don't dishonor her honorable name by making a bastard and a slave of me! The world will say, 'He is not Talbot's blood, not if he basely fled when noble Talbot stood his ground.'"

"Flee, so you can revenge my death, if I am slain," Lord Talbot said.

"He who flees so will never return again," John Talbot said. "He who flees once will continue to flee."

"If we both stay, we both are sure to die," Lord Talbot said.

"Then let me stay; and, father, you flee," John Talbot said. "If you die, the loss to our country will be great, so your regard for your life should be great. My worth is unknown, and if I die, our country will feel no loss. If I die, the French can little boast about it. If you die, the French will greatly boast. If you die, our country's hopes are all lost. Flight cannot stain the honor you have won, but if I flee, flight will stain my honor; I have done no noble exploits, and flight is all I will be remembered for. If you flee, everyone will swear that you made a strategic retreat for military advantage. But if I flee, they'll say it was out of fear. There is no hope that I ever will stay and fight, if in the first hour of battle I shrink and run away."

He knelt and said, "Here on my knee I beg mortality, rather than life preserved with infamy."

"Shall all your mother's hopes lie in one tomb?" Lord Talbot asked. "Shall her husband and her progeny all lie in one tomb, with no one left alive?"

"Yes, for that is preferable to my shaming my mother's womb," John Talbot replied.

"After I give you my blessing, I command you to go," Lord Talbot said.

"I will go to fight, but not to flee the foe," John Talbot said.

"Part of your father may be saved in you," Lord Talbot said. "If you stay alive, some part of me will continue to live."

"No part of you, my father, but only shame will be in me."

"You have never had renown, and therefore you cannot lose it."

"I have your renowned name: the name of Talbot. Shall flight dishonor and abuse it?" John Talbot said.

"Your father's order to you to flee shall clear you from that stain."

"You cannot be a witness for me, once you are slain. If death is so unavoidable and so apparent, then both of us should flee."

"And leave my followers here to fight and die?" Lord Talbot said. "My life has never been tainted with such shame."

"And shall my youth be guilty of such blame?" John Talbot said. "No more can I be severed from your side than you can divide yourself in two. Stay, go, do whatever you want

to; whatever you decide to do, I will do it, also. I will not live, if my father dies.”

“Then here I take my leave of you, fair son, you were born to eclipse and extinguish your life this afternoon.”

He helped his son rise from the ground and added, “Come, side by side together we will live and die. And soul with soul from France to Heaven we will fly.”

— 4.6 —

The battle started, and the English fought bravely. At one point, the Frenchmen came close to killing John Talbot, but Lord Talbot rescued him.

“Saint George and victory!” Lord Talbot shouted. “Fight, soldiers, fight! The Regent of France — the Duke of York — has broken his word to me, Lord Talbot, and left us to the rage of France’s swordsmen.

“Where is John Talbot?”

Seeing him, he said, “Pause, and take your breath; I gave you life, and I rescued you from death.”

“Oh, twice my father, twice am I your son!” John Talbot said. “The life you gave me first was lost and done, until with your warlike sword, in spite of fate, to my allotted time of life you gave me a new, later date to die.”

“When from the Dauphin’s crest on his helmet your sword struck fire, it warmed your father’s heart with proud desire of bold-faced victory. Then I, despite my leaden age, quickened with youthful spirits and warlike rage, beat down the Duke of Alençon, the Bastard of Orleans, and the Duke of Burgundy, and from the pride — the best soldiers — of Gallia, aka France, rescued you.

“The angry Bastard of Orleans, who drew blood from you,

my boy, and had the maidenhood — the first blood — of your first fight, I soon encountered, and exchanging blows with him I quickly shed some of his bastard blood, and insultingly said to him, ‘I am spilling your contaminated, base, and misbegotten blood, which is mean, ignoble, and very poor, for that pure blood of mine that you forced from Talbot, my brave boy.’ Then, as I moved to destroy the Bastard and end his life, strong reinforcements came in to rescue him.

“Speak, your father’s care and concern. Aren’t you weary, John? How do you fare? Will you now leave the battle, boy, and flee, now that you are sealed and confirmed to be the son of chivalry?”

“Flee in order to revenge my death when I am dead. The help of one person stands me in little stead — one person can help me very little. Too much folly is it, well I know, to hazard all our lives in one small boat!”

“If I don’t die today from the Frenchmen’s rage, tomorrow I shall die with great old age. The Frenchmen gain nothing by my death if I stay: It is only the shortening of my life by one day. If you die, your mother dies, as does our household’s name, my death’s revenge, your youth, and England’s fame. All these and more we hazard by your stay; all these are saved if you will flee away.”

John Talbot replied, “The sword of the Bastard of Orleans has not made me smart, but these words of yours draw life-blood from my heart. To gain those benefits, bought with such a shame, would save a paltry life and slay bright fame. Before young Talbot from old Talbot flees, may the coward horse that bears me fall and die! And compare me to the peasant boys of France, to be shame’s scorn and subject of mischance! Surely, by all the glory you have won, if I flee, I am not Talbot’s son. So then, talk no more of flight, it does no good. If I am Talbot’s son, I will die at Talbot’s

foot.”

Lord Talbot said, “Then follow your desperate sire of Crete, you Icarus.”

Icarus was the son of Daedalus, who designed the labyrinth at Crete to house the Minotaur, the half-bull, half-human man-eating monster. After Daedalus and his son were imprisoned on the island of Crete, Daedalus designed wings made of feathers and wax so that he and his son could fly over the sea to freedom. The wings worked, but Icarus flew too close to the Sun, the heat of which melted the wax, causing the feathers to molt. Icarus fell into the sea and drowned. Icarus could have lived, but his exuberance caused his death.

Lord Talbot continued, “Your life to me is sweet. If you must fight, then fight by your father’s side, and now that you have proven yourself to be commendable, let’s die proudly and with honor.”

— 4.7 —

The battle continued. A servant helped Lord Talbot, exhausted by age and combat, to walk.

Lord Talbot asked, “Where is my other life? My own life is gone. Where’s young Talbot? Where is valiant John? Triumphant Death, smeared with the blood of slain captives, young Talbot’s valor makes me smile at you. When young Talbot saw me shrink down on my knee, he brandished his bloody sword over me, and like a hungry lion, he began to perform rough deeds of rage and stern impatience. But when my angry guard stood alone, tending to my ruin and assailed by none, dizzy-eyed fury and great rage of heart suddenly made him run from my side into the clustering battle of the French, and in that sea of blood my boy drenched his mounting-too-high spirit, and there died my Icarus, my blossom, in his pride.”

The servant said, "My dear lord, look, your son is being borne here!"

Some soldiers arrived, carrying the corpse of John Talbot.

Lord Talbot said, "You grinning jester Death, who laughs at and scorns us here, soon, away from your insulting tyranny, coupled in bonds of perpetuity, two Talbots, winging through the yielding sky, shall spite you and escape mortality."

He then said to his son's corpse, "Oh, you, whose honorable wounds make handsome even the appearance of ugly death, speak to your father before you yield your breath! Defy death by speaking, whether or not he will allow you to speak. Imagine that Death is a Frenchman and your foe.

"Poor boy! He smiles, I think, as one who would say, 'Had Death been French, then Death would have died today.'"

He then ordered, "Come, come and lay him in his father's arms. My spirit can no longer bear these harms."

The soldiers brought John Talbot's corpse over to Lord Talbot, who hugged it and said, "Soldiers, *adieu!* I have what I want, now that my old arms are young John Talbot's grave."

Lord Talbot died.

Fighting broke out, and the servant and soldiers exited, leaving the two corpses behind.

After the battle was over and the French had won, Charles the Dauphin, the Duke of Alençon, the Duke of Burgundy, the Bastard of Orleans, Joan la Pucelle, and some soldiers entered the scene.

Charles the Dauphin said, "If the Duke of York and the

Duke of Somerset had brought in reinforcements for the English, this would have been a bloody day for us.”

The Bastard of Orleans marveled, “How the young whelp of Talbot’s, raging-mad, fleshed his puny sword in Frenchmen’s blood!”

He referred to John Talbot’s sword as “puny” because its wielder had been untested in battle before this day.

Joan la Pucelle said, “Once I encountered him, and I said to him, ‘You maiden — virgin — youth, be vanquished by a maiden.’ But, with a proud and majestically high scorn, he answered, ‘Young Talbot was not born to be the pillage of a giglot — harlot — wench.’ Then, rushing into the midst of the French, he left me proudly, considering me unworthy for him to fight.”

The Duke of Burgundy said, “Doubtless he would have made a noble knight. Look at him. On the ground he lies, as if in a coffin, in the arms of the most bloodthirsty nurser of his harms!”

He felt that Lord Talbot had nursed — encouraged — his son to inflict wounds. In doing so, Lord Talbot had also made it possible for his son to suffer wounds.

The Bastard of Orleans said, “Hew them to pieces, hack their bones asunder. Their life was England’s glory, and Gallia’s wonder — France’s object of astonishment.”

Charles the Dauphin said, “No! Don’t! Those whom during their life we have fled, let us not wrong them once they are dead.”

Sir William Lucy arrived with some attendants. Walking in front of him was a French herald.

Sir William Lucy, who had arrived too late to participate in the battle, said, “Herald, conduct me to the Dauphin’s tent,

so I can learn who has obtained the glory of the day.”

“On what submissive message have you been sent?” Charles the Dauphin asked. He expected Sir William Lucy to be carrying a message that what was left of the English army was surrendering to him.

“Submission, Dauphin!” Sir William Lucy said. “It is entirely a French word; we English warriors don’t know what it means.”

Sir William Lucy was aware that the English army had lost, but he was putting up a bold and brave front as he sought to learn the fate of Lord Talbot.

He added, “I have come to learn what prisoners you have taken and to survey the bodies of the dead.”

“You ask about prisoners?” Charles the Dauphin said. “Our prison is Hell. We kill our prisoners. But tell me whom you seek.”

Sir William Lucy asked, “Where’s the great Alcides — Hercules — of the battlefield, valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, who was given many titles as a reward for his rare success in arms? He is the great Earl of Washford, Waterford, and Valence. He is Lord Talbot of Goodrig and Urchinfield, Lord Strange of Blackmere, Lord Verdun of Alton, Lord Cromwell of Wingfield, Lord Furnival of Sheffield, the thrice-victorious Lord of Falconbridge; knight of the noble order of Saint George, a worthy of Saint Michael and the Golden Fleece. He is also the great commander-in-chief to King Henry VI in all his wars within the realm of France. Where is he?”

“Here is a silly stately style indeed!” Joan la Pucelle said, mocking the list of titles. “The Sultan of Turkey, who has fifty-two Kingdoms, does not write as tedious a style as this. He whom you magnify with all these titles lies

stinking and fly-blown here at our feet.”

Already flies were buzzing around Lord Talbot’s corpse.

Sir William Lucy said, “Has Lord Talbot been slain, the Frenchmen’s only scourge, your kingdom’s terror and black Nemesis?”

Nemesis was an ancient goddess who punished humans who were guilty of pride and arrogance against the gods.

He continued, “I wish that my eyeballs would turn into bullets so that I in rage might shoot them at your faces! I wish that I could call these dead English warriors to life! It would be enough to frighten the realm of France. Even if only Lord Talbot’s picture were left among you here, it would terrify the proudest of you all. Give me their bodies, so that I may bear them away from here and give them burial as befits their worth.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “I think this upstart is old Talbot’s ghost — he must be because he speaks with such a proud commanding spirit. For God’s sake let him have the bodies; if we kept them here, they would only stink and putrefy the air.”

Charles the Dauphin said, “Go and take their bodies away from here.”

“I’ll bear them away,” Sir William Lucy said, “but from their ashes shall be reared a phoenix that shall make all France afraid.”

In the Arden Shakespeare edition of *King Henry VI, Part I*, editor Edward Burns writes, “According to myth there is only ever one phoenix bird at any one time, but it regenerates itself from the ashes of its funeral pyre, in the deserts of Arabia, so it is an emblem of the survival of individual worth in defiance of the logic of natural

survival.”

Charles the Dauphin replied, “As long as we are rid of them, do with them what you will.”

He then said to the others, “And now to Paris, in this conquering vein. All will be ours, now bloodthirsty Talbot’s slain.”

CHAPTER 5 (1 Henry VI)

— 5.1 —

In the palace in London, King Henry VI was meeting with the Duke of Gloucester and the Duke of Exeter.

He asked the Duke of Gloucester, “Have you perused the letters from the Pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the Earl of Armagnac?”

“I have, my lord,” the Duke of Gloucester replied, “and their purpose is this: They humbly petition your excellence to have a godly peace brought into existence between the realms of England and of France.”

“How does your grace like their proposal?”

“I like it well, my good lord, and I think it is the only way to stop the spilling of our Christian blood and establish peace on every side.”

“Yes, that is true, by the Virgin Mary, uncle,” King Henry VI said, “for I always thought it was both impious and unnatural that such inhuman, atrocious savagery and bloody strife should reign among professors of one faith. The English and the French are Christian.”

“In addition, my lord, the sooner to effect and the surer to bind this knot of amity, the Earl of Armagnac, who is closely related to Charles the Dauphin and who is a man of great authority in France, offers his only daughter to your grace in marriage, along with a large and sumptuous dowry. This is a marriage that will advance peace between England and France.”

“Marriage, uncle!” King Henry VI said. “Alas, my years are young! And it is more suitable for me to devote myself

to my study and my books than to engage in wanton dalliance with a paramour.

“Yet call the ambassadors, and as you please, let every one of them have their answers. I shall be well content with any choice that tends to God’s glory and my country’s well-being.”

The Bishop of Winchester had officially become the Cardinal of Winchester. Dressed in the clothing of a Cardinal, he entered the room, along with the three ambassadors representing the Pope, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the Earl of Armagnac. The ambassador representing the Pope was a Papal Legate.

Seeing the Cardinal of Winchester, the Duke of Exeter said to himself, “Has my Lord of Winchester been officially installed as a Cardinal and been given a Cardinal’s rank? Then I perceive that what King Henry V once prophesied will be verified as true: ‘If once Winchester comes to be a Cardinal, he’ll make his Cardinal’s cap equal to the crown.’”

King Henry VI said, “My lords ambassadors, your several petitions have been considered and debated. And therefore we are for certain resolved to draft the conditions of a friendly peace, which we intend shall be transported immediately to France by my Lord of Winchester.”

The Duke of Gloucester said to the ambassador of the Earl of Armagnac, “And as for the offer to my lord from your master, I have informed at length his highness of it, and as he likes the lady’s virtuous gifts, her beauty, and the value of her dowry, he intends that she shall be his wife and the Queen of England.”

King Henry VI said, “As evidence and proof of this marriage contract, take to her and give her this jewel as a pledge of my affection, and so, my Lord Protector, see

them safeguarded and safely brought to Dover, where after they board a ship, commit them to the fortune of the sea.”

Everyone exited except for the Cardinal of Winchester and the Papal Legate.

“Wait, my lord Legate,” the Cardinal of Winchester said. “You shall first receive the sum of money that I promised would be delivered to his holiness for clothing me in these grave ornaments — this habit of a Cardinal.”

“I will attend upon your lordship’s leisure,” the Papal Legate said. “I am ready when you are ready.”

The Cardinal of Winchester said to himself, “Now I, Winchester, will not submit, I think, or be inferior to the proudest peer. Duke of Gloucester, you shall well perceive that, neither in birth nor in authority, I the Bishop will be put down or overruled by you. I’ll either make you stoop and bend your knee to me, or sack this country with a mutinous rebellion.”

Although he had become a Cardinal, he had not ceased being a Bishop.

— 5.2 —

On the plains of Anjou, France, Charles the Dauphin was meeting with the Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Alençon, the Bastard of Orleans, Reignier, and Joan la Pucelle. Soldiers were present. Charles the Dauphin held a letter in his hand.

Charles the Dauphin said, “This news, my lords, may cheer our drooping spirits. It is said that the brave Parisians are revolting against the English and are turning again into the warlike French.”

The Duke of Alençon said, “Then march to Paris, royal Charles of France, and don’t keep back your armies in

dalliance.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “May peace be among the Parisians, if they turn to us and join us; otherwise, let devastation battle against their palaces!”

A scout arrived and said, “Success to our valiant General, and happiness to his accomplices!”

“What news do our scouts send?” Charles the Dauphin said. “Please, speak.”

The scout said, “The English army, which was divided into two parties, is now joined into one, and it intends to fight you soon.”

“Somewhat too sudden, sirs, the warning is,” Charles the Dauphin said, “but we will soon provide for them.”

The Duke of Burgundy said, “I trust that the ghost of Lord Talbot is not there. Now that he is gone, my lord, you need not fear.”

“Of all base passions, fear is the most accursed,” Joan la Pucelle said. “Command the conquest, Charles, it shall be yours. Let Henry VI fret and all the world complain.”

She sounded positive that the French would defeat the English.

“Then let’s go on, my lords,” Charles the Dauphin said, “and may France be fortunate!”

— 5.3 —

The battle was taking place before Angiers.

Joan la Pucelle, alone, said, “The Regent — the English Duke of York — conquers, and the Frenchmen flee. Now help, you magic spells and amulets and you excellent spirits who forewarn me and give me signs of future events.”

Thunder sounded as the fiends came closer.

Joan la Pucelle said, “You speedy helpers, who are subordinates of the lordly monarch of the north, appear and aid me in this enterprise.”

Lucifer is “*the lordly monarch of the north*,” according to Isaiah 14:12-14 (King James Version):

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

The fiends arrived.

Joan la Pucelle said, “This speedy and quick appearance argues proof of your accustomed diligence to me. You have always served me well. Now, you familiar spirits, who are culled out of the powerful regions under the earth, help me this once so that France may gain control of the battlefield.”

The fiends walked around; they did not speak to Joan la Pucelle.

She said, “Oh, don’t hold me here with your silence very long! I used to be accustomed to feed you with my blood, but now I’ll lop a limb off and give it to you as a down payment of a further benefit — if you condescend to help me now.”

In this culture, witches were thought to have an extra nipple

that they used to feed the witches' human blood to attendant fiends.

The fiends hung their heads.

Joan la Pucelle said, "I have no hope to have help? My body shall pay the recompense, if you will grant my request for help."

The fiends shook their heads.

She said, "Can't my body or my blood-sacrifice persuade you to give me your usual help? Then take my soul, my body, soul and all, before England defeats the French."

The fiends exited.

She said, "See, they forsake me! Now the time has come that France must cast down her lofty-plumed crest and let her head fall into England's lap. My ancient incantations are too weak, and Hell is too strong for me to fight. Now, France, your glory droops to the dust."

The battle continued.

The Duke of York and the Duke of Burgundy fought, the French fled, and the Duke of York took Joan la Pucelle captive.

The Duke of York said, "Damsel of France, I think I have you fast. Unchain your spirits now with incantatory charms and see if they can gain for you your liberty. You are a splendid prize, fit for the Devil's respect! Look at how the ugly wench bends her brows and frowns, as if like Circe she would change my shape!"

Circe is an enchantress who in Homer's *Odyssey* changes Odysseus' men into swine.

"Changed into a worse shape you cannot be," Joan la Pucelle said.

“Charles the Dauphin is a proper man,” the Duke of York said. “No shape but his can please your dainty eye.”

“May a plaguing misfortune light both on Charles and on you!” Joan la Pucelle said. “And may both of you be suddenly surprised by bloody hands as you lie sleeping in your beds!”

“Cruel, cursing hag, enchantress, hold your tongue!” the Duke of York said.

“I ask you to give me permission to curse for awhile,” Joan la Pucelle said.

“Curse, miscreant, when you are tied to the stake and burned,” the Duke of York said.

He dragged her away.

The battle continued, and the Earl of Suffolk, aka William de la Pole, captured Margaret, the daughter of Reignier, and held her by the hand.

“Whoever you are, you are my prisoner,” he said.

Looking at her, he said, “Oh, fairest beauty, do not fear or flee, for I will touch you only with reverent hands. I kiss these my fingers as a pledge of eternal peace, and lay them gently on your tender cheek. Who are you? Tell me, so that I may honor you.”

She replied, “Margaret is my name, and I am daughter to a King — the King of Naples — whoever you are.”

“I am an Earl, and I am called Suffolk,” he said. “Don’t be offended, nature’s miracle, you were destined to be captured by me. So does the swan her downy cygnets — her offspring — protect, keeping them prisoner underneath her wings. Yet, if this servile usage should offend you, go and be free again, as Suffolk’s friend.”

She began to leave.

“Wait!” he said. “Stay here! I have no power to let her leave. My hand would free her, but my heart says no. Just like the sunshine plays upon the smooth, mirrory streams, twinkling another counterfeited, reflected, mirrored beam, so seems this gorgeous beauty to my eyes. She is as beautiful as sunshine gleaming on a smooth stream of water. I would like to woo her, yet I dare not speak. I’ll call for pen and ink, and write my mind.

“Stop, de la Pole! Don’t disparage yourself! Don’t you have a tongue? Isn’t she here in front of you? Will the sight of a woman daunt you?

“Yes, beauty’s Princely majesty is such that it confuses the tongue and makes the senses rough.”

Margaret said, “Tell me, Earl of Suffolk — if that is your name — what ransom must I pay before I can leave? For I perceive that I am your prisoner.”

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, “How can you know that she will deny my wooing of her, before you make a trial of her love?”

Margaret said, “Why don’t you speak? What ransom must I pay?”

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, “She is beautiful, and therefore to be wooed. She is a woman, and therefore to be won.”

Margaret said, “Will you accept a ransom? Yes, or no?”

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, “Foolish man, remember that you have a wife. How then can Margaret be your paramour?”

Margaret said to herself, “It is best for me to leave him, for

he will not hear what I say to him.”

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, “There all is marred; there lies a cooling card.”

A cooling card is something that cools all your hopes.

Margaret said to herself, “He talks at random; surely, the man is mad.”

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, “And yet a dispensation may be had.”

The dispensation he meant was an annulment of his marriage.

Margaret said to herself, “And yet I wish that you would answer me.”

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, “I’ll win this Lady Margaret. For whom? Why, for my King! Tush, that’s a wooden thing!”

The wooden — stupid and insane — thing was the action of winning Margaret for someone other than himself.

Margaret said to herself, “He talks of wood. He is some carpenter.”

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, “Yet even so my fancy for her may be satisfied, and peace can be established between these realms. But there remains a difficulty in that, too, for although her father is the King of Naples, as well as the Duke of Anjou and Maine, yet he is poor, and our English nobles will scorn the match. She can bring King Henry VI no dowry.”

“Can you hear me, Captain?” Margaret asked. “Aren’t you at leisure? Don’t you have time to speak to me?”

She was angry, and so she called him by the lower military

title “Captain” rather than the higher noble title “Earl.”

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, “A marriage between King Henry VI and Margaret shall take place, no matter how much our English nobles disdain it. Henry is young and will quickly agree to the marriage.”

He then said to Margaret, “Madam, I have a secret to reveal.”

Margaret ignored him and said to herself, “What though I am a captive? He seems to be a knight, and he will not in any way dishonor me.”

The Earl of Suffolk said, “Lady, please listen to what I have to say.”

Margaret ignored him and said to herself, “Perhaps the French shall rescue me, and then I need not beg his courtesy.”

The Earl of Suffolk said, “Sweet madam, give me a hearing in a cause —”

Margaret ignored him and said to herself, “Tush, women have been made captives before now.”

The Earl of Suffolk said, “Lady, why do you talk so?”

“I beg your pardon,” Margaret said, “but it is Quid for Quo. You ignored me as I tried to talk to you, and so now I ignored you as you tried to talk to me.”

“Tell me, gentle Princess, would you not suppose that your bondage is happy, if you were to be made a Queen?”

Margaret replied, “To be a Queen in bondage is more vile than to be a slave in base servility, for Princes, Princesses, and nobles should be free.”

“And so shall you, if happy England’s royal King is free.”

Was King Henry VI free? Or was he in bondage to the many people who wanted to manipulate him?

“Why, what concern is his freedom to me?” Margaret asked. “What does his freedom have to do with me?”

“I’ll undertake to make you King Henry VI’s Queen, put a golden scepter in your hand, and set a precious crown upon your head, if you will agree to be my —”

He paused.

Margaret asked, “What?”

The Earl of Suffolk said, “*His* love.”

Margaret replied, “I am unworthy to be King Henry VI’s wife.”

“No, gentle madam; I am unworthy to woo so fair a dame to be his wife and have no portion in the choice myself.”

“The choice” is the thing chosen, aka Margaret. The Earl of Suffolk felt that he was worthy of having a share of Margaret; to woo her and *not* have a share of her was beneath him.

He added, “What do you say, madam? Does this content you? Are you happy with what I have said?”

“If it pleases my father, then it pleases me.”

“Then let’s call our Captains and our battle flags forth. And, madam, at your father’s castle wall we’ll crave a parley, so we can confer with him.”

A parley sounded. Reignier appeared on the castle wall.

The Earl of Suffolk said, “Look, Reignier, look, your daughter has been taken prisoner!”

“To whom is she prisoner?” Reignier asked.

“To me,” the Earl of Suffolk replied.

“Earl of Suffolk, why do you tell me this? I am a soldier, and I am not suited to weep or to complain about Lady Fortune’s fickleness.”

“There is a remedy for this situation your daughter is in, my lord,” the Earl of Suffolk said. “Consent, and for your honor give consent, that your daughter shall be wedded to my King. You will benefit from the marriage. Your daughter I have taken pains to woo, and I have won her for King Henry VI. And this she easily endured imprisonment has gained your daughter Princely liberty.”

“Is the Earl of Suffolk saying what he really thinks to be the truth?” Reignier asked.

If Margaret were to marry King Henry VI of England, she would be marrying out of her league.

The Earl of Suffolk replied, “Fair Margaret knows that I, the Earl of Suffolk, do not flatter, make a false face, or feign.”

“Upon your noble guarantee of my safety, I will descend to give you the answer to your just question,” Reignier said.

The Earl of Suffolk nodded to assure Reignier that he would be safe, and he said, “Here I will await your coming.”

Reignier came down from his castle wall.

Reignier said, “Welcome, brave Earl of Suffolk, into our territories. Command in Anjou whatever your honor pleases.”

“I thank you, Reignier. You are happy and fortunate to have so sweet a child, a child suitable to be made marital companion to a King. What answer does your grace make

to my petition?”

“Since you deign to woo her little worth to be the Princely bride of such a lord, my daughter shall be Henry VI’s, if he wants her, on the condition that I may quietly enjoy what is my own, the territories of Maine and Anjou, free from oppression or the stroke of war.”

From the English perspective, the territories of Maine and Anjou actually belonged to England, not to Reignier.

“That is her ransom,” the Earl of Suffolk said. “I release her to you, and I will make sure that your grace shall well and quietly enjoy those two territories.”

“And in Henry VI’s royal name, I again give her hand to you, who are acting as that gracious King’s deputy. This action is a sign of plighted faith, a sign that the two are engaged to be married.”

The Earl of Suffolk replied, “Reignier of France, I give you Kingly thanks because this business has been performed for a King.”

He thought, *And yet, I think, I could be well content to be my own attorney in this case; I would like to woo Margaret for myself and make her mine.*

He said, “I’ll go over then to England with this news, and make this marriage solemnized. So farewell, Reignier. Set this diamond — your daughter — safe in golden palaces that are suitable for it.”

“I embrace you, as I would embrace the Christian Prince, King Henry VI, if he were here,” Reignier said.

Margaret said to the Earl of Suffolk, “Farewell, my lord. You, Earl of Suffolk, shall always have good wishes, praise, and prayers from me, Margaret.”

Reignier left, and Margaret started to go after him, but the Earl of Suffolk said, "Farewell, sweet madam, but listen, Margaret, have you no noble greetings for my King?"

"Tell him such greetings from me as are suitable for a maiden, a virgin, and his servant to say to him."

"These are words sweetly placed and modestly directed," the Earl of Suffolk said, "But madam, I must trouble you again. Have you no loving token for his majesty?"

"Yes, my good lord, I send to the King a pure unspotted heart, never yet affected by love."

"Also send him this," the Earl of Suffolk said, kissing her.

"That you yourself can send him," Margaret said. "I will not be so presumptuous as to send such peevish, silly, foolish tokens to a King."

Margaret exited.

The Earl of Suffolk said to himself, "Oh, I wish that you were mine! But, Suffolk, stop. You must not wander in that labyrinth; there Minotaurs and ugly treasons lurk."

The labyrinth was where the mythological Minotaur of Crete was kept. The Cretan Princess Pasiphaë had sex with a bull and gave birth to the half-human, half-bull monster known as the Minotaur. Such sex was illicit, and the Earl of Suffolk, attracted as he was to Margaret, knew that sex with her would be illicit, and since she would be married to King Henry VI, his having an affair with her could be regarded as treason.

He continued, "This is what I will do: Solicit Henry with praise of her wonders. Think about her virtues that outshine the virtues of others. Think about her natural graces that eclipse art. Remember the image of these good qualities of hers often on the seas. I will do all these things so that,

when I come to kneel at Henry VI's feet, I may dispossess him of his wits as he is astonished with wonder at Margaret."

— 5.4 —

At the military camp of the Duke of York at Anjou, the Duke of York and the Earl of Warwick talked. Others were present.

The Duke of York said, "Bring forth that sorceress who is condemned to burn at the stake."

Some guards brought Joan la Pucelle to him. A shepherd also came.

The shepherd said, "Ah, Joan, this kills your father's heart outright! I have sought you in every region far and near, and now that it is my fortune to find you, must I behold your untimely and cruel death? Ah, Joan, sweet daughter Joan, I'll die with you!"

Joan la Pucelle said, "Decrepit and miserable creature! Base, lowly born, ignoble wretch! I am descended from a nobler blood. You are no father and no friend of mine."

"No! No!" the shepherd said. "My lords, if it pleases you, what she says is not true. I did beget her, as all in the parish know. Her mother is still alive, and she can testify that Joan was the first fruit of my bachelorship."

In this culture, the word "bachelorship" had two meanings: 1) apprenticeship, and 2) time as a bachelor, aka unmarried man.

The Earl of Warwick said to Joan la Pucelle, "You are without grace. Will you deny your parentage? Will you reject your own father?"

The Duke of York said, "This argues what her kind of life

has been. It has been wicked and vile; and so her death concludes her life.”

“Don’t, Joan,” the shepherd said. “Why will you be so stubborn! God knows you are a piece of my flesh, and for your sake I have shed many a tear. Don’t deny that I am your father, I request, gentle Joan.”

“Peasant, avaunt!” Joan la Pucelle said. “Leave! Get lost!”

She then said to the Duke of York, “You have bribed this man for the purpose of obscuring my noble birth.”

Prisoners of noble birth were treated better than other prisoners; often, they would be ransomed and allowed to live.

The shepherd said, “It is true that I gave a noble — a coin — to the priest the morning that I was wedded to her mother.

“Kneel down and take my blessing, my good girl. Will you not stoop for my blessing? Now cursed be the time of your nativity! I wish that the milk your mother gave you when you sucked her breast had been a little rat poison for your sake! Or else, when you shepherded my lambs in the field, I wish that some ravenous wolf had eaten you! Do you deny that I am your father, cursed slut?

“Oh, burn her, burn her! Hanging is too good for her.”

Hanging is a quicker and less painful way of dying than being burned at the stake.

The shepherd exited.

The Duke of York said, “Take her away, for she has lived too long and used that time to fill the world with vicious qualities.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “First, let me tell you whom you have

condemned to die. I am not one begotten by a shepherd peasant; instead, I issued from the progeny of Kings. I am virtuous and holy, chosen from above, by inspiration of celestial grace, to do work exceedingly exceptional on Earth. I never had to do with wicked spirits.”

The word “do” has a sexual meaning. The sentence also meant this: “I never had anything to do with wicked spirits.”

She continued, “But you, who are polluted with your lusts, who are stained with the guiltless blood of innocents, who are corrupt and tainted with a thousand vices, because you want the grace that others have, you judge it straightaway a thing impossible to accomplish wonders except by the help of devils.

“No, misconceived!”

By “misconceived,” Joan la Pucelle may have meant that the Duke of York was wrong, or that he was illegitimate, or both.

She continued, “Joan of Arc has been a virgin from her tender infancy, chaste and immaculate in every thought, and her blood, thus cruelly spilled, will cry out for vengeance at the gates of Heaven.”

“Yes, yes,” the Duke of York said, impatiently. “Take her away to be executed!”

The Earl of Warwick said to the men who would burn her at the stake, “Listen, sirs, because she is a maiden, use plenty of wood; let there be enough to burn quickly and hotly. Place barrels of pitch leaning on the fatal stake, so that the torture of her death may be shortened.”

The barrels of pitch would produce a thick smoke, suffocating Joan and killing her. This was a quicker and

less painful death than dying from being burned.

“Will nothing change your unrelenting hearts?” Joan la Pucelle said. “Then, Joan, reveal your infirmity that law assures will give you the privilege of not yet being killed. I am with child, you bloodthirsty murderers. I am pregnant. Don’t murder the fruit within my womb, although you eventually drag me to a violent death.”

The Duke of York said, “Now Heaven forbid! The holy maiden is with child! This virgin is pregnant!”

The Earl of Warwick said to Joan, “This is the greatest miracle that you ever wrought. Has all your strict morality come to this?”

“She and the Dauphin have been juggling,” the Duke of York said. “I wondered what would be her last defense, her last attempt to escape death.”

“Juggling” meant “playing tricks.” In this context, it also had a sexual meaning.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Bah, we’ll allow no bastards to live, especially since Charles must be the father of it.”

Joan la Pucelle said, “You are deceived; my child is not his. It was the Duke of Alençon who enjoyed my love.”

“The Duke of Alençon!” the Duke of York said. “That notorious Machiavel!”

A Machiavel is a schemer. The word comes from Niccolò Machiavelli, author of *The Prince*, a pragmatic book that acknowledges that many Princes use immoral means to achieve their purposes.

The Duke of York added, “The bastard dies, and it would die even if it had a thousand lives.”

“Oh, pardon me!” Joan la Pucelle said. “I have deceived

and deluded you: It was neither Charles nor the Duke I named. Instead, it was Reignier, King of Naples, who prevailed.”

“A married man!” the Earl of Warwick said. “That’s most intolerable.”

“Why, what a girl is here!” the Duke of York said. “I think she doesn’t know well whom she may accuse of making her pregnant because she has had sex with so many men.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “It’s a sign she has been promiscuous and free.”

“And yet, truly, she is a ‘pure virgin,’” the Duke of York said sarcastically, adding, “Strumpet, your words condemn your brat and you. Don’t beg for mercy, for it is in vain.”

“Then lead me away,” Joan la Pucelle said. “With all of you I leave my curse. May the glorious Sun never cast its beams upon the country — England — where you make your abode; instead, may darkness and the gloomy shade of death surround you, until catastrophe and despair drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves!”

The Duke of York said to her as the guards took her away, “May you break into pieces and be consumed by fire until you are ashes, you foul accursed minister of Hell!”

The Cardinal of Winchester arrived; with him were some attendants.

He said to the Duke of York, “Lord Regent, I greet your excellence with letters of commission from the King. For you should know, my lords, that the rulers of Christendom, moved with regret and sorrow for these outrageous, violent battles, have earnestly implored that a general peace be made between our nation of England and the aspiring French, and here at hand the Dauphin and his retinue are

approaching in order to confer about some business.”

“Is all our travail turned to this effect?” the Duke of York said. “Is this the result of all our effort and trouble? After the slaughter of so many peers, and so many Captains, gentlemen, and soldiers who in this quarrel have been overthrown and sold their bodies for their country’s benefit, shall we at last conclude with an effeminate, unmanly peace? Haven’t we lost because of treason, falsehood, and treachery the greater part of all the towns that our great progenitors such as King Henry V had conquered?”

“Oh, Warwick, Earl of Warwick! I foresee with grief the utter loss of all the realm of France.”

“Be patient, Duke of York,” the Earl of Warwick said. “If we arrange a peace treaty with France, it shall be with such strict and severe conditions that the Frenchmen shall gain little thereby.”

Charles the Dauphin, the Duke of Alençon, the Bastard of Orleans, Reignier, and others arrived.

Charles the Dauphin said, “Since, lords of England, it is thus agreed that a peaceful truce shall be proclaimed in France, we have come to be informed by you what the conditions of that peace treaty must be.”

The Duke of York said, “Speak, Cardinal of Winchester; for boiling anger chokes the hollow passage of my poisoned voice because I see these our mortal enemies.”

The Cardinal of Winchester said, “Charles, and the rest, this is what has been decreed. King Henry VI gives his consent, in pure compassion and mercifulness to ease your country of distressful war and allow you to breathe in fruitful peace, as long as you shall become true and loyal liegemen to his crown — and Charles, upon the condition you will swear to pay him tribute and be submissive to him,

you shall be placed as Viceroy under him and you will continue to enjoy your regal dignity.”

A Viceroy rules a country on behalf of another ruler to whom the Viceroy is subordinate.

The Duke of Alençon said, “Must he be then simply a shadow of himself? He will adorn his temples with a coronet, and yet, in substance and authority, retain only the privilege of a private man? This offer is absurd and reasonless.”

Nobles, but not Kings, wore coronets. Kings wore crowns.

King Charles VI died two months after King Henry V of England had died. Now the citizens of France regarded Charles the Dauphin as King Charles VII of France. The English believed that King Henry VI of England was also the King of France.

Charles the Dauphin said, “It is known already that I possess more than half the Gallian — French — territories, and in those territories I am shown reverence as their lawful King. Shall I, for the gain of the territories I have not yet vanquished, take away so much from that prerogative of being acknowledged as King as to be called only the Viceroy of the whole?”

“No, lord ambassador, I’d rather keep that which I have than, coveting more, be excluded from the possibility of being King of all France.”

“Insulting Charles!” the Duke of York said. “Have you by secret means used intercession to obtain a league and a treaty, and now the matter draws toward a settlement, you stand aloof and quibble?”

“Either accept the title you are usurping, which is a gift that comes from our King and is not anything you deserve, or

we will plague you with incessant wars.”

Reignier said quietly to Charles the Dauphin so that the English could not hear, “My lord, you don’t do well by being obstinate and disputing details in the course of making this peace treaty. If once it is neglected, ten to one we shall not find the like opportunity to make another such treaty.”

The Duke of Alençon said quietly to Charles the Dauphin so that the English could not hear, “To say the truth, it is your policy to save your subjects from such massacres and ruthless slaughters as are daily seen by our proceeding in hostility. Therefore make this peace treaty now, although you can break it later when you want to.”

The Earl of Warwick asked, “What do you say, Charles? Shall our peace treaty stand?”

“It shall,” Charles said, “with this condition. You will claim no interest in any of our French towns that are fortified with garrisons.”

The Duke of York said, “Then swear allegiance to his majesty, King Henry VI, as you are a knight, never to disobey nor be rebellious to the crown of England. You and your nobles will swear never to disobey or be rebellious to the crown of England.”

The Frenchmen knelt and swore.

The Duke of York said, “So, now dismiss your army when you please. Hang up your battle flags and let your drums be still and quiet, for here we enter upon a solemn peace.”

— 5.5 —

In the royal palace in London, King Henry VI, the Earl of Suffolk, the Duke of Gloucester, and the Duke of Exeter met. Some attendants were present.

King Henry VI said to the Earl of Suffolk, “Your wondrous and splendid description, noble Earl, of beauteous Margaret has astonished me and filled me with wonder. Her virtues graced with external gifts breed love’s deeply rooted passions in my heart, and just as the strength of tempestuous gusts of wind impels the mightiest ship against the tide, so I am driven by the report of her renown either to suffer shipwreck or arrive where I may have fruition of her love.”

The Earl of Suffolk said, “Tush, my good lord, this superficial tale of her good qualities merely mentions those good qualities that are most apparent. It is only a preface of the praise that she deserves. The chief perfections of that lovely dame, had I sufficient skill to utter them, would make a whole book of enticing lines of praise that would be able to ravish and entrance any dull imagination, and which is more, she is not so divine, so fully replete with all choice delights, that she lacks humbleness of mind. She is content to be at your command. By command, I mean the command of virtuous and chaste intentions, to love and honor you, Henry VI, as her lord and husband.”

King Henry VI said, “And otherwise I, Henry, will never presume. My intentions toward her are honorable.

“Therefore, my Lord Protector, give consent that Margaret may become England’s royal Queen.”

The Duke of Gloucester replied, “If I would give consent to that, I would be giving consent to glossing over and extenuating sin. You know, my lord, that your highness is betrothed to another lady of esteem: You are engaged to marry the daughter of the Earl of Armagnac. How shall we then dispense with that contract of marriage, and not disfigure your honor with reproach?”

The Earl of Suffolk said, “As does a ruler with unlawful

oaths.”

King Henry VI’s oath, however, to marry the daughter of the Earl of Armagnac was not unlawful.

The Earl of Suffolk continued, “Or as does one who, at a tournament having vowed to test his strength, yet does not engage in a joust because of his adversary’s odds. A poor Earl’s daughter is unequal odds, and therefore the marriage contract may be broken without offence.”

Dukes outranked Earls, and Kings outranked Dukes. The Earl of Suffolk was saying that a King could do much better than to marry the daughter of an Earl.

The Duke of Gloucester asked, “Why, what, I earnestly ask, is Margaret more than that? Her father is no better than an Earl, although he excels in glorious titles.”

He meant that some of the glorious titles were titular, in name only; for example, they brought no money to Margaret’s father, who was poor for a person of his rank.

“Yes, lord, her father is better than an Earl. He is a King, the King of Naples and Jerusalem, and he has such great authority in France that this alliance — our King married to his daughter — will confirm our peace and keep the Frenchmen in allegiance.”

The Duke of Gloucester objected, “And so the Earl of Armagnac may do because he is a close relative of Charles the Dauphin.”

“Besides,” the Duke of Exeter said, “the wealth of the Earl of Armagnac guarantees a liberal and generous dowry, where Reignier will sooner receive than give. Reignier is poor.”

“A dowry, my lords!” the Earl of Suffolk said. “Don’t disgrace your King like this. Don’t say that he is so abject,

base, and poor that he must choose a wife on the basis of wealth and not on that of perfect love. Henry is able to enrich his Queen and does not need to seek a Queen who will make him rich. That is the way worthless peasants bargain for their wives; they are market men who buy and sell oxen, sheep, and horses. Marriage is a matter of more worth than to be dealt in by attorneys and the drawing up of contracts.

“Not whom we want, but whom his grace the King wants, must be the companion of his nuptial bed. And therefore, lords, since he loves her most, this is the reason that must be most binding on us out of all these reasons, and so in our opinions Margaret should be preferred as King Henry VI’s wife.

“For what is forced wedlock but a Hell, a lifetime of discord and continual strife? In contrast, the contrary — a marriage that is chosen, not forced — brings bliss, and is a pattern of celestial, Heavenly peace.

“Whom should we match with Henry, who is a King, but Margaret, who is daughter to a King? Her peerless features, joined with her noble birth, proves her fit for none but a King.

“Her valiant courage and undaunted spirit, more than is commonly seen in women, will give us what we hope for in the children of a King because Henry VI, the son of a conqueror, is likely to beget more conquerors, if he is linked in love with a lady of as high resolve as is fair Margaret.

“So then yield, my lords; and here conclude with me that Margaret shall be Queen of England, and none but she.”

King Henry VI said, “Whether it be through the forcefulness of your report of her, my noble Lord of Suffolk, or because my tender youth was never yet touched

with any passion of inflaming love, I cannot tell, but of this I am assured, I feel such sharp dissension in my breast, such fierce alarms both of hope and fear, that the working of my thoughts is making me sick.

“Take, therefore, a voyage on a ship; hurry, my lord, to France. Agree to any legal contracts, and take measures to ensure that Lady Margaret will agree to cross the seas to England and be crowned King Henry VI’s faithful and anointed Queen.

“For your expenses and sufficient outlay of money, from among the people gather up a tenth of their income as a tax.”

English citizens hated such taxes.

King Henry VI continued, “Be gone, I say, for until you return I remain bewildered with a thousand worries.

“And you, good uncle of Gloucester, take no offence at my decision to marry Margaret. If you judge me by what you were when you were younger, not by what you are now, I know it will excuse this swift execution of my will.”

The Duke of Gloucester’s first “marriage” was controversial and illegal. He “married” the Lady Jaquet, the legal wife of John, Duke of Brabant.

King Henry VI continued, “And so conduct me where, away from company, alone, I may consider and meditate on my grief.”

His grief was his not being with Margaret.

King Henry VI and his attendants exited.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Yes, grief, I am afraid, both at first and last, both at the beginning and the end.”

This kind of grief was trouble. He believed that King Henry

VI's marrying Margaret would bring bitter trouble to England.

The Duke of Gloucester and the Duke of Exeter exited.

Alone, the Earl of Suffolk said to himself, "Thus I, Suffolk, have prevailed; and thus I go, as the youthful Paris went once to Greece, with hope to find the like event in love, but prosper better than the Trojan did."

The Trojan Prince Paris caused the Trojan War by going to Sparta, Greece, and running off with Helen, the wife of Menelaus, the King of Sparta.

The Earl of Suffolk was saying that he hoped to sleep with Margaret, but that he hoped to do so without having to suffer such bad consequences as a war.

He continued, "Margaret shall now be Queen of England, and rule the King. But I will rule her, the King, and the realm of England."

Chapter XIX: HENRY VI, PART 2

CAST OF CHARACTERS (2 *Henry VI*)

Male Characters

King Henry VI.

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, uncle to King Henry VI.

Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, great-uncle to King Henry VI.

Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York.

Edward and Richard, his sons. In the future, they will be King Edward IV and King Richard III.

Duke of Somerset.

Marquess of Suffolk, later Duke of Suffolk. His given name and surname are William de la Pole.

Duke of Buckingham.

Lord Clifford.

Young Clifford, his son.

Earl of Salisbury.

Earl of Warwick. He is the Earl of Salisbury's son. The family name of the Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of Warwick is Neville.

Lord Scales.

Lord Say.

Sir Humphrey Stafford, and William Stafford, his brother.

Sir John Stanley.

Vaux.

Matthew Goffe.

A Sea Lieutenant, Master, and Master's-Mate, and Walter Whitmore.

Two Gentlemen, prisoners with Suffolk.

John Hume and John Southwell, priests.

Roger Bolingbroke, a conjurer.

Thomas Horner, an armorer.

Peter, his apprentice.

Clerk of Chatham.

Mayor of St. Albans.

Simpcox, an imposter.

Alexander Iden, a Kentish gentleman.

Jack Cade, a rebel leader.

George Bevis, John Holland, Dick the Butcher, Smith the Weaver, Michael, and other followers of Jack Cade.

Two Murderers.

Female Characters

Margaret, Queen to King Henry VI. Before marrying King Henry VI, she was known as Margaret of Anjou.

Eleanor, Duchess to Gloucester.

Margery Jourdain, a witch.

Wife to Simpcox.

Minor Characters

Lords, Ladies, Attendants, Petitioners, Aldermen, a Herald, a Beadle, Sheriff, and Officers, Citizens, Apprentices, Falconers, Guards, Soldiers, Messengers, etc.

A Spirit.

Scene

England.

Nota Bene

Cardinal Beaufort

In *1 Henry VI*, he was known mostly as the Bishop of Winchester.

Strong Supporters of King Henry VI

Lord Clifford.

Young Clifford, Lord Clifford's Son.

Strong Supporters of the Duke of York

Earl of Salisbury.

Earl of Warwick.

CHAPTER 1 (2 Henry VI)

— 1.1 —

At the palace in London, several people were assembled. On one side were King Henry VI, the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Salisbury, the Earl of Warwick, and Cardinal Beaufort. On the other side were Queen Margaret, the Marquess of Suffolk, the Duke of York, the Duke of Somerset, and the Duke of Buckingham.

The Marquess of Suffolk had gone to France to arrange a marriage between Margaret and King Henry VI. Now he had returned to England, bringing Margaret with him.

The Marquess of Suffolk said, “Your high imperial majesty gave me the command at my departure for France, as proxy to your excellence, to marry Princess Margaret for your grace. Therefore, in the famous ancient city of Tours, in the presence of the Kings of France and Sicily; the Dukes of Orleans, Calaber, Bretagne and Alencon; seven Earls, twelve Barons, and twenty reverend Bishops, I have performed my task and as your proxy I married her.”

He knelt and said, “And now humbly upon my bended knee, in sight of England and her lordly nobles, I deliver up my title in the Queen to your most gracious hands that are the substance of that great shadow I was as your representative; this is the happiest gift that ever Marquess gave, the fairest Queen that ever King received.”

The Marquess of Suffolk had married Margaret only as a proxy. Her marriage was actually to King Henry VI, who said, “Marquis of Suffolk, arise.”

King Henry VI then said, “Welcome, Queen Margaret. I can express no kinder, more natural sign of love than this

kind, affectionate kiss. Oh, Lord, Who lends me life, lend me a heart replete with thankfulness! You have given me in this beauteous face a world of Earthly blessings to my soul, if harmony of love unites our thoughts.”

Queen Margaret said, “Great King of England and my gracious lord, the intimate conversation that my mind has had, by day, by night, waking and in my dreams, in courtly company or while saying prayers and using my prayer beads, with you, my very dearest sovereign, makes me the bolder to greet my King with less polished words and terms, such as my intelligence affords and excess of joy of heart imparts.”

“The sight of Margaret entranced me,” King Henry VI said, “but her grace in speech, her words clothed with wisdom’s majesty, makes me go from mere admiration to joys that cause me to weep. Such is the fullness of my heart’s content.

“Lords, with one cheerful voice welcome my love.”

The lords knelt and said, “Long live Queen Margaret, England’s happiness!”

Using the royal plural, Queen Margaret replied, “We thank you all.”

The lords stood up.

The Marquess of Suffolk said to the Duke of Gloucester, “My Lord Protector, if it pleases your grace, here are the articles of contracted peace between our sovereign and the French King Charles VII. This peace treaty for the next eighteen months has been agreed to by both parties: the French and the English.”

The Duke of Gloucester was the late King Henry V’s only surviving brother. When King Henry VI had been a minor,

the Duke of Gloucester had been made Lord Protector so he could rule England until Henry VI came of age. King Henry VI was now old enough to make at least some decisions.

The peace treaty was written in formal language. “Imprimis” means “in the first place.” It is used to introduce a list. The word “item” is used to introduce each article in that list.

The Duke of Gloucester began to read the peace treaty out loud:

“Imprimis, it is agreed between the French King Charles VII and William de la Pole, the Marquess of Suffolk and ambassador for Henry VI, King of England, that the said Henry shall marry the Lady Margaret, daughter of Reignier, King of Naples, Sicilia, and Jerusalem, and crown her Queen of England before the next thirtieth of May. Item, that the Duchies of Anjou and Maine shall be released and delivered over to the King her fa —”

Shocked at reading this condition of the peace treaty, the Duke of Gloucester dropped it.

“Uncle, what is the matter?” King Henry VI asked.

“Pardon me, gracious lord,” the Duke of Gloucester said, “Some sudden illness has struck me at the heart and dimmed my eyes, and so I can read no further.”

“Great-uncle Beaufort of Winchester, please read on,” King Henry VI said.

Cardinal Beaufort read out loud:

“Item: It is further agreed between them, that the Duchies of Anjou and Maine shall be released and delivered over to the King her father, and she sent over to England at the King of England’s own personal cost and expenses,

without any dowry.”

Usually, the woman the King of England married would bring with her a large dowry. The King of England would be enriched through marrying her. In this case, however, King Henry VI would receive no dowry. Instead, he would hand over to Margaret’s father two very valuable regions of land in France. He would also pay for all of Margaret’s expenses as she moved from France to England.

Using the royal plural, King Henry VI said, “The conditions of the peace treaty and marriage contract please us well. Lord Marquess of Suffolk, kneel down.”

He knelt, and King Henry VI said, “We here create you the first Duke of Suffolk, and gird you with the sword.”

The newly created Duke of Suffolk rose.

King Henry VI said, “Duke of York, my kinsman, we here discharge your grace from being Regent in the parts of France under the control of England until the period of eighteen months is fully expired.

“Thanks, great-uncle Cardinal Beaufort, Gloucester, York, Buckingham, Somerset, Salisbury, and Warwick. We thank you all for the great favor done in the favorable reception of my Princely Queen.

“Come, let us go in, and with all speed see that her coronation is performed. She must be officially crowned Queen of England.”

King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, and the Duke of Suffolk exited, but the lords stayed behind. They wanted to discuss the peace treaty and the marriage contract.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Brave peers of England, pillars of the state, to you I, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, must unload his grief, your grief, the common grief of all

the land.

“Did my brother King Henry V expend his youth, his valor, his money, and his people in the wars? Did he so often lodge in open fields, in winter’s cold and summer’s parching heat, to conquer France, his true inheritance?”

King Henry V believed that his ancestry had made him the hereditary King of France and so he fought a war against the French. After winning the war, he married Catherine of Valois, a daughter of the French King Charles VI, with the understanding that he would become King of France after King Charles VI died. Unfortunately, Henry V died young, before King Charles VI died.

The Duke of Gloucester continued, “And did my brother the Duke of Bedford exhaust his wits, to keep by statesmanship what Henry V had gotten? Have you yourselves, Somerset, Buckingham, brave York, Salisbury, and victorious Warwick, received deep scars in France and Normandy? Or have my uncle Beaufort and myself, with all the learned Privy Council of the realm, deliberated so long, sat in the Council House early and late, debating to and fro how France and Frenchmen might be kept in awe, and had his highness Henry VI in his infancy crowned in Paris in contemptuous defiance of his foes?”

“And shall these labors and these honors die? Shall Henry V’s conquest, Bedford’s vigilance, your deeds of war, and all our counsel die?”

“Oh, peers of England, this agreement is shameful! This marriage is fatal, cancelling your fame, blotting your names from books of history, erasing the written records of your renown, defacing monuments — written documents and memorial structures — of conquered France, undoing all, as if all had never been!”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “Nephew, what is the meaning of

this impassioned discourse, this rhetorical speech with such detail? As for France, it is ours, and we will still keep it.”

“Yes, uncle, we will keep it — if we can. But now it is impossible we should keep it. Suffolk, the newly made Duke who rules the roost, has given the Duchies of Anjou and Maine to Margaret’s father, poor King Reignier, whose fancy formal titles do not match the leanness of his purse. He has many high titles, but little money.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Now, by the death of Him Who died for all, these counties were the keys of Normandy.

“But why does my valiant son, the Earl of Warwick, weep?”

“I weep out of grief because the Duchies of Anjou and Maine are past recovery,” the Earl of Warwick replied. “If hope existed that we could conquer them again, my sword would shed hot blood, and my eyes would shed no tears.

“Anjou and Maine! I myself won them both. Those provinces these arms of mine did conquer. And are the cities, which I conquered with my wounds, delivered to the French again with peaceful words? *Mort Dieu!* God’s death!”

The Duke of York said, “As for Suffolk’s Duke, may he be suffocated, he who dims the honor of this warlike isle! France should have torn and rent my very heart before I would have consented to this peace treaty.

“I have always read that England’s Kings have received large sums of gold and large dowries with their wives, but our King Henry VI gives away his own property in order to marry a woman who brings with her no profit.”

The Duke of Gloucester said, “It is a ‘proper’ jest, and

never heard before, that Suffolk should demand a tax levy taking a whole fifteenth from the people for the costs and charges of transporting Margaret from France to England! She should have stayed in France and starved in France before —”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “My Lord of Gloucester, now you grow too hot-tempered. It was the pleasure of my lord the King Henry VI to do that which you criticize.”

“My Lord of Winchester — Cardinal Beaufort — I know your mind,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “I know what you are thinking. It is not my speeches that you dislike; it is my presence that troubles you. Rancor will reveal itself. Proud prelate, in your face I see your fury. If I stay here any longer, we shall begin our longtime bickerings and quarreling again.

“My lords, farewell; and say when I am gone that I prophesied France will be lost before long.”

He exited.

Cardinal Beaufort said, “So, there goes our Lord Protector in a rage. It is known to all of you that he is my enemy. Nay, more, he is an enemy to all of you, and he is no great friend, I fear, to the King.

“Consider, lords, that he is the next of blood and heir apparent to the English crown. If Henry VI dies without having children first, the Duke of Gloucester will become King of England.

“Even if Henry VI had gotten an empire by his marriage, and all the wealthy kingdoms of the west, there’s reason the Duke of Gloucester should be displeased at his marriage. A marriage that results in children will keep the Duke of Gloucester from the throne.

“Look to it, lords! Be careful! Let not his smoothing, ingratiating words bewitch your hearts; be wise and circumspect.

“What though the common people favor him, calling him ‘Humphrey, the good Duke of Gloucester,’ clapping their hands, and crying with a loud voice, ‘May Jesus maintain your royal excellence!’ and ‘May God preserve the good Duke Humphrey!’

“I am afraid, lords, that despite all this flattering, glossy, deceptive appearance, he will be found to be a dangerous Lord Protector.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Why should Gloucester, then, protect our sovereign, since Henry VI is old enough to govern himself? Duke of Somerset, if you join with me, all together, along with the Duke of Suffolk, we’ll quickly hoist and remove by force Duke Humphrey of Gloucester from his seat.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “This weighty business will not allow delay. I’ll go to the Duke of Suffolk immediately.”

Cardinal Beaufort exited.

The Duke of Somerset said, “Duke of Buckingham, although Duke Humphrey of Gloucester’s pride and the greatness of his position is a torment to us, yet let us watch the haughty Cardinal Beaufort. His insolence is more intolerable than all the Princes in the land beside. If the Duke of Gloucester is removed as Lord Protector, Cardinal Beaufort will become Lord Protector.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Either you or I, Somerset, will be Lord Protector, despite Duke Humphrey of Gloucester or Cardinal Beaufort.”

The Duke of Buckingham and the Duke of Somerset exited.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Pride went before, ambition follows him. Cardinal Beaufort exited first, and then the Duke of Buckingham and the Duke of Somerset followed.

“While these labor for their own advancement, it is best for us to labor for the good of the realm.

“I never saw Duke Humphrey of Gloucester bear himself like anything other than a noble gentleman.

“Often I have seen the haughty Cardinal Beaufort, more like a soldier than a man of the church, as arrogant and proud as if he were lord of all, swear like a ruffian and conduct himself unlike the ruler of a commonwealth.

“Warwick, my son, the comfort of my age, your deeds, your honesty, and your hospitality have won the greatest favor of the common people, with the exception of no one but good Duke Humphrey of Gloucester.

“And, brother-in-law York, you who married Cecily Neville, my sister, your deeds in Ireland, in bringing the rebels back to civil discipline, and your recent military exploits done in the heart of France, when you were Regent for our sovereign, have made you feared and honored by the people.

“Let us join together for the public good and do what we can to bridle and suppress the pride of the Duke of Suffolk and Cardinal Beaufort, as well as the ambition of the Duke of Somerset and the Duke of Buckingham. And, as much as we can, let us support Duke Humphrey of Gloucester’s deeds while they promote the profit of the land of England.”

His son, the Earl of Warwick, said, “May God help Warwick, as long as he loves the land and the profit and general good of his country!”

The Duke of York said, “And so says York —”

He added in his thoughts, — *for he has the greatest cause.*

Already, the Duke of York was thinking of seizing the crown of the King of England.

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Then let’s hasten away, and look to the main chance. Let’s keep our eyes on the prize.”

“To the main!” the Earl of Warwick said. “Oh, father, Maine is lost, that Maine which by main — sheer — force I, Warwick, won, and would have kept as long as my breath did last! The main chance, father, you meant; but I meant Maine, which I will win from France, or else be slain.”

The Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of Warwick, his son, exited.

Alone, the Duke of York said to himself, “Anjou and Maine have been given to the French. Paris has been lost; the state of Normandy stands on a precarious point now that Anjou and Maine are gone. Suffolk arranged the articles of the peace treaty and marriage contract, the peers agreed, and Henry VI was well pleased to exchange two dukedoms for the beautiful daughter of Reignier, Duke of Anjou.

“I cannot blame them at all. What is it to them? What they are giving away belongs to me, the rightful King of England; this land in France is not their own.

“Pirates may make cheap pennyworths of their pillage by selling valuables for pennies, and they may purchase friends and give gifts to courtesans, continually reveling like lords until all they have stolen is gone. Meanwhile the silly real owner of the goods they have stolen weeps over the stolen goods and wrings his hapless hands and shakes his head and trembling stands aloof, while all is shared and

all is borne away, ready to starve and daring not to touch what is his own property.

“Just like that silly real owner, I, the Duke of York, must sit and fret and bite my tongue, while my own lands are bargained for and sold.

“I think the realms of England, France, and Ireland bear that connection to my flesh and blood as did the fatal firebrand Althaea burned did to the heart of the Prince of Calydon.”

When Meleager, Prince of Calydon, was born, the Fates prophesied that he would live only as long as a firebrand — a piece of burning firewood — that was lying in the fireplace would not be consumed by fire. His mother, Althaea, took the burning piece of wood out of the fire, put the piece of wood out, and kept it safe until much later, when Meleager killed her two brothers. Then she threw the piece of wood back into the fire, and Meleager died as the wood burned.

The Duke of York continued, “Anjou and Maine have both been given to the French! This is cold news for me, for I had hope of ruling France, even as I have hope of ruling England’s fertile soil.

“A day will come when the Duke of York shall claim his own, and therefore I will get the Nevilles — the Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of Warwick — on my side and make a show of friendship to proud Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, and, when I spy an advantage, I will claim the crown, for that’s the golden mark — target — I seek to hit.

“Nor shall proud Lancaster — King Henry VI, who is also the Duke of Lancaster — usurp my right to the crown and throne, nor hold the scepter in his childish fist, nor wear the diadem upon his head, whose church-like, devout disposition makes him not fit to wear a crown.

“So then, Duke of York, be still awhile, until the right time comes. Watch and be awake while others are asleep, in order to pry into the secrets of the state. Wait until Henry VI, overindulging in the joys of love with his new bride and England’s expensively bought Queen, and Duke Humphrey of Gloucester both fall into quarrels with the peers.

“Then I will raise aloft the milk-white rose, the symbol of the House of York, with whose sweet smell the air shall be perfumed, and in my battle flag I will bear the coat of arms of York to grapple with the House of Lancaster, whose symbol is the red rose.

“And, force perforce, with violent compulsion I’ll make Henry VI yield the crown — Henry VI whose bookish rule has pulled fair England down.”

— 1.2 —

The Duke and the Duchess of Gloucester talked together in their house. In this culture, wives called their husbands “lord.” The Duchess’ name was Eleanor, but the Duke sometimes called her Nell.

The Duchess of Gloucester asked, “Why does my lord droop his head, like over-ripened wheat, hanging the head at Ceres, goddess of grain’s plenteous load? Why does the great Duke Humphrey of Gloucester knit his eyebrows as if he were frowning at the favors of the world? Why are your eyes fixed on the sullen earth, gazing on that which seems to dim your sight? What do you see there? King Henry VI’s diadem, adorned with all the honors of the world?

“If that is so, gaze on, and grovel on your face, until your head is encircled with the same. You should wear the diadem. Put forth your hand and reach at the glorious gold.”

Groveling while lying face down was a part of supplicating

infernal supernatural spirits for help.

She continued, “Is your arm too short? I’ll lengthen it with mine. And, having both together heaved the diadem up, we’ll both together lift our heads to Heaven, and never again abase our sight so low as to permit even one glance at the ground.”

The Duke of Gloucester said, using his wife’s nickname, “Nell, sweet Nell, if you love your lord, banish the cancer of ambitious thoughts. May that thought, if I should imagine ill against my King and nephew, virtuous Henry VI, result in my last breath in this mortal world! My troubling dream last night makes me sad.”

“What did my lord dream? Tell me, and I’ll repay you with the sweet recounting of my morning’s dream,” she said.

In this culture, people believed that morning dreams were true dreams.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “I thought that this staff, my symbol of office at the court, was broken in two; by whom I have forgotten, but I think it was broken by Cardinal Beaufort, and on the pieces of the broken staff were placed the heads of Duke Edmund of Somerset and William de la Pole, who is the first Duke of Suffolk.

“This was my dream. What it forebodes, God knows.”

“Tut, this was nothing but an argument that he who breaks a stick of the Duke of Gloucester’s grove of trees shall lose his head for his presumption,” the Duchess of Gloucester said. “But listen to me, my Humphrey, my sweet Duke.

“I thought I sat in the seat of majesty in the cathedral church of Westminster, and in that chair — the coronation chair — where Kings and Queens are crowned, there Henry VI and Dame Margaret kneeled to me and on my head set

the diadem.”

“No, Eleanor, then must I chide you outright,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Presumptuous dame, ill-nurtured Eleanor, aren’t you the second woman in the realm, second only to the Queen, and aren’t you the Lord Protector’s wife, and beloved by him? Haven’t you worldly pleasure at your command, above and beyond the reach or compass of your thought? And will you still be hammering and working at treachery that will tumble down both your husband and yourself from the top of honor to the feet of disgrace? Get away from me, and let me hear no more about your morning dream!”

“What, what, my lord! Are you so choleric and angry at me, Eleanor, simply because I told you my dream? Next time I’ll keep my dreams to myself, and not be rebuked.”

The Duke of Gloucester replied, “No, don’t be angry; I am pleased again. I am no longer angry.”

A messenger entered the room.

The messenger said, “My Lord Protector, it is his highness’ pleasure that you prepare to ride to St. Albans, where the King and Queen intend to go hawking.”

St. Albans was a town twenty miles north of London.

“I will go,” the Duke of Gloucester said, and then added, “Come, Nell, will you ride with us?”

“Yes, my good lord, I’ll follow quickly,” the Duchess of Gloucester said.

The Duke of Gloucester and the messenger exited.

Alone, the Duchess of Gloucester said to herself, “Follow I must; I cannot go before, while the Duke of Gloucester bears this base and humble mind. If I were a man, a Duke,

and the next of blood, I would remove these tedious stumbling blocks and smooth my way upon their headless necks. And, being a woman, I will not be slack to play my part in Lady Fortune's pageant."

She still wanted to be Queen of England.

Sir John Hume, a priest, entered the room. In this culture, priests were called "Sir" as a mark of respect.

Hearing a noise, she said, "Who are you there? Sir John! No, don't be afraid, man. We are alone; here's no one but you and me."

Sir John Hume said, "May Jesus preserve your royal majesty!"

Kings and Queens were called majesty and sometimes grace; Dukes and Duchesses were called only grace.

"What are you saying!" the Duchess of Gloucester said. "Majesty! I am only grace."

"But, by the grace of God, and my advice, your grace's title shall be multiplied," Sir John Hume said.

"What are you saying, man?" she asked. "Have you conferred yet with Margery Jourdain, the cunning witch, and with Roger Bolingbroke, the conjurer who raises spirits? And will they undertake to do me good by helping me to succeed?"

"They have promised to show your highness a spirit raised from the depth of underground — Hell — that shall answer such questions as shall be asked him by your grace."

"It is enough," the Duchess of Gloucester said. "I'll think about the questions I will ask. When we return from St. Albans, we'll see that these things are completely done."

She gave the priest some money and said, "Here, Hume,

take this reward; make merry, man, with your confederates in this weighty, important cause.”

She exited.

Alone, Sir John Hume said to himself, “I, Hume, must make merry with the Duchess’ gold, and by Mother Mary I shall. But be careful now, Sir John Hume! Seal up your lips, and speak no words but stay mum. This business requires silent secrecy.

“Dame Eleanor gives me gold to bring the witch. Gold cannot come amiss, even if the witch were a Devil. Yet I have gold that comes to me from another source. I dare not say it comes from the rich Cardinal Beaufort and from the great and newly made Duke of Suffolk, yet that is the case.

“To be plain, they, knowing Dame Eleanor’s aspiring and ambitious disposition, have hired me to undermine the Duchess of Gloucester and buzz these conjurations in her brain.

“People say, proverbially, ‘A crafty knave needs no broker,’ that is, no agent, yet I am the Duke of Suffolk’s and Cardinal Beaufort’s broker. Hume, if you are not careful, you shall go near to calling them both a pair of crafty knaves.

“Well, so it stands; and thus, I fear, at last Hume’s — my — knavery will be the Duchess of Gloucester’s wreck, and her conviction and condemnation will be her husband Humphrey’s fall.

“No matter what happens, I shall have gold from them all.”

— 1.3 —

Three or four petitioners stood in front of the palace in London. One of the petitioners was Peter, an apprentice to an armorer. The petitioners had grievances that they hoped

the Lord Protector — the Duke of Gloucester — would redress.

The first petitioner said, “My masters, let’s stand close together and quietly. My Lord Protector will come this way by and by, and then we may deliver our supplications that are written with a quill.”

The second petitioner said, “By the Virgin Mary, may the Lord protect him, for he’s a good man! May Jesus bless him!”

The Duke of Suffolk and Queen Margaret came walking toward them.

Peter said, “Here the Lord Protector comes, I think, and the Queen is with him. I’ll be the first to present my petition, I am sure.”

“Come back, fool,” the second petitioner said. “This man is the Duke of Suffolk, and not my Lord Protector.”

Hearing them speak, the Duke of Suffolk asked, “How are you, fellow? Do you have any business with me?”

The first petitioner said, “Please, my lord, pardon me. I mistook you for my Lord Protector.”

Queen Margaret looked at the petition he was holding and read out loud, “*To my Lord Protector.*”

She then asked, “Are your supplications to his lordship? Let me see them.”

She asked the first petitioner, “What is your petition?”

He replied, “Mine is, if it please your grace, against John Goodman, my lord Cardinal Beaufort’s man, for keeping my house, and lands, and wife and all, from me.”

“Your wife, too!” the Duke of Suffolk said. “That’s some

wrong, indeed.”

He asked the second petitioner, “What’s your petition? What’s here!”

He read out loud, “*Against the Duke of Suffolk, for enclosing the commons of Melford.*”

Long Melford was a town in Suffolk. The Duke of Suffolk was being accused of fencing in land intended for the use of all the citizens. By fencing in the land, the Duke of Suffolk was keeping it for his own use.

The Duke of Suffolk said, “What is this, Sir Knavel!”

The second petitioner said, “Alas, sir, I am but a poor petitioner who is representing our whole township.”

Peter handed over his petition, saying, “This is against my master, Thomas Horner, for saying that the Duke of York was rightful heir to the crown.”

“What did you say?” Queen Margaret asked. “Did the Duke of York say that he was rightful heir to the crown?”

Peter replied, “Did the Duke of York say that my master was rightful heir to the crown? No, indeed. My master said that he — the Duke of York — was, and that King Henry VI was an usurper.”

The Duke of Suffolk called for a servant and then ordered, “Take this fellow in — arrest him — and send an officer to bring his master here immediately.”

He said to Peter, “We’ll hear more about this petition of yours in the presence of the King.”

The servant exited with Peter.

Queen Margaret said to the petitioners, “And as for you petitioners who love to be protected under the wings of our

Lord Protector's grace, begin your suits anew, and sue to him."

She tore up the petition she was holding and ordered, "Away, base cullions! Suffolk, let them go."

The word "cullions," which was an insult, literally meant "testicles."

The petitioners all said, "Come, let's go."

They exited.

Queen Margaret said, "My Lord of Suffolk, tell me, is this the custom, is this the fashion in the court of England? Is this the government of Britain's isle, and is this the royalty of Albion's King?"

Britain has had many names; the oldest known name for it is Albion.

She continued, "Shall King Henry VI always be a pupil under the governance of the surly Duke of Gloucester? Am I a Queen in title and in mode of address, and yet must I be made a subject to a Duke?"

"I tell you, de la Pole, my Lord of Suffolk, when in the city of Tours you jousting in honor of my love and stole away the French ladies' hearts, I thought King Henry VI resembled you in courage, courtship, and physical shape."

The word "courtship" meant both "wooing" and "courtly manners."

She continued, "But all his mind is bent to holiness, to number Ave-Maria prayers on his beads. His champions are the prophets and apostles. His weapons are the holy sayings of sacred writ. His study is his jousting yard, and his loves are the bronze statues of canonized saints.

"I wish the College of the Cardinals would choose him to

be Pope, and carry him away to Rome, and set the triple crown of the Pope upon his head. That would be a position fit for his holiness.”

The Pope wears a triple tiara, a crown with three circlets.

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Madam, be calm. As I was the cause of your highness coming to England, so I will work to make your grace fully content in England.”

She replied, “Besides the haughty Lord Protector, we have Cardinal Beaufort, the imperious churchman; Somerset, Buckingham, and grumbling York, and even the least of these can do more in England than the King can.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “And he of these who can do most of all cannot do more in England than can the Nevilles: The Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of Warwick are no simple, ordinary, common peers.”

Queen Margaret said, “None of these lords vexes me half as much as that proud dame, the Lord Protector’s wife, the Duchess of Gloucester. She struts through the court with troops of ladies, more like an empress than Duke Humphrey of Gloucester’s wife.

“Foreigners in the court mistake her for the Queen. She wears clothing worth a Duke’s revenues on her back, and in her heart she scorns our poverty. Shall I not live to be avenged on her? She is contemptuous — of me! Base-born callet — whore! — that she is, she boasted among her minions the other day that just the train of the worst gown she wears was worth more than all of my father’s lands until you, Duke of Suffolk, gave two Dukedoms — Anjou and Maine — in exchange for his daughter.”

The Duke of Suffolk replied, “Madam, I myself have limed a bush for her, and placed a choir of such enticing birds, that she will alight to listen to their lays, and never mount

to trouble you again.”

He was saying that he had set a trap for the Duchess of Gloucester. Birdlime was a sticky substance used to catch birds, and “enticing birds” were decoys. Literally, the “lays” of the birds were their songs. Metaphorically, the lays were words that would be spoken to the Duchess of Gloucester by the witch and conjuror she had hired.

The Duke of Suffolk continued, “So, let her rest, don’t worry about her, and madam, listen to me, for I am bold enough to give you counsel in this business.

“Although we don’t like Cardinal Beaufort, yet we must join with him and with the lords until we have brought Duke Humphrey of Gloucester into disgrace. As for the Duke of York, this recent complaint made by the petitioner Peter will do little for the Duke’s benefit.

“So, one by one, we’ll weed them all at last, and you yourself shall steer the happy helm of state.”

A trumpet sounded, and several people walked over to the Duke of Suffolk and Queen Margaret. They were King Henry VI, the Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Buckingham, the Duke of York, the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Salisbury, the Earl of Warwick, and the Duchess of Gloucester. The Duke of York and the Duke of Somerset were on either side of the King, whispering to him and trying to influence him.

King Henry VI said, “For my part, noble lords, I don’t care which person becomes Regent of France: Somerset or York. It’s all the same to me.”

The Duke of York said, “If I have badly behaved in France, then let me be denied the Regentship.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “If I am unworthy of the

position, then let the Duke of York be Regent; I will yield the position to him.”

The Earl of Warwick said to the Duke of Somerset, “Don’t argue about whether your grace is worthy, yes or no. The Duke of York is worthier to become Regent of France.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “Ambitious Warwick, let your betters speak.”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “Cardinal Beaufort is not my better in the battlefield.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “All present are your betters, Warwick.”

“Warwick may live to be the best of all,” the Earl of Warwick replied, referring to himself in the third person.

“Peace, son!” the Earl of Salisbury said to the Earl of Warwick. He added, “And give us some reasons, Buckingham, why Somerset should be preferred in this.”

Queen Margaret interrupted, “Because the King, indeed, will have it so.”

Actually, the King had said that he had no preference.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Madam, the King is old enough himself to give his opinion. These are no matters for women.”

“If the King is old enough, why does your grace need to be Protector of his excellence the King?” Queen Margaret asked.

“Madam, I am Protector of the Realm,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “And, at the King’s pleasure, I will resign my place.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Resign it then and leave your

insolence. Since you have been King — as who is King but you? — the commonwealth has daily run to wrack and ruin, the Dauphin has prevailed beyond the seas, and all the peers and nobles of the realm have been as bondsmen to your sovereignty.”

The Dauphin was King Charles VII of France, but since the English regarded King Henry VI as the true King of France, they referred to Charles VII as the Dauphin.

Cardinal Beaufort said, “You have racked the common citizens, torturing them with excessive taxation — it is as if they have been tortured on the rack. The clergy’s moneybags are lank and lean and empty as a result of your extortions.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “Your sumptuous buildings and your wife’s attire have cost a mass of public treasury.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Your cruelty in execution upon offenders has exceeded the law and left you to the mercy of the law. Your implementation of penalties for breaking the law has been too harsh.”

Queen Margaret said, “The sale of official positions and towns in France, if they were known to be true, as the suspicion is great, would make you quickly hop without your head.’

She was threatening the Duke of Gloucester with beheading.

Angry, the Duke of Gloucester left rather than say something that could hurt him. Queen Margaret and her allies had much power.

Queen Margaret deliberately dropped her fan and said to the Duchess of Gloucester, “Give me my fan.”

The Duchess of Gloucester was slow to obey, and Queen

Margaret said, “Minion, won’t you pick up and give me my fan!”

In this context, the word “minion” was derogatory and meant “underling.”

Queen Margaret hit the Duchess of Gloucester on the ear and said, “I beg your pardon, madam; was it you I hit?”

“Was it I!” an angry Duchess of Gloucester said. “Yes, it was I, proud Frenchwoman! If I could come near your beauty with my fingernails, I’d set my ten commandments in your face.”

God was believed to have written the Ten Commandments on two stone tablets with his fingernails.

King Henry VI said to his aunt, the Duchess of Gloucester, “Sweet aunt, be calm. It was against her will — it was unintentional.”

“Against her will!” the Duchess of Gloucester said. “Good King, beware before it’s too late. She’ll hamper you, and dandle you like a baby. Although in this place the greatest master wears no breeches because she is the Queen and not the King, she shall not strike Dame Eleanor of Gloucester unrevenged.”

The Duchess of Gloucester exited.

The Duke of Buckingham said quietly to only the Cardinal, “Lord Cardinal Beaufort, I will follow Dame Eleanor of Gloucester, and look for Duke Humphrey of Gloucester in order to see how he proceeds and conducts himself. Dame Eleanor of Gloucester is ticked off now. Her fury needs no spurs; she’ll gallop far enough to her destruction.”

The Duke of Buckingham exited as the Duke of Gloucester, now calmer, returned and said, “Lords, now that my anger has blown over while I walked once about the quadrangle, I

have come back to talk about the affairs of the commonwealth. As for your spiteful false objections, prove them and I will lie open to the law. But may God in mercy so deal with my soul as I in duty love my King and country! But, to the matter that we have in hand: I say, my sovereign, that the Duke of York is the fittest man to be your Regent in the realm of France.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Before we make the choice of who is to be Regent of France, give me permission to show some evidence, of no little force, that the Duke of York is the most unfitting of any man.”

The Duke of York said, “I’ll tell you, Duke of Suffolk, why I am unfitting. First, because I cannot flatter you and still keep my pride, Next, if I am appointed as the Regent in France, my Lord of Somerset will keep me here, without payment, money, or military equipment, until France has been won by the French and placed into the Dauphin’s hands. The last time I danced attendance on the Duke of Somerset’s will, I was kept waiting until Paris was besieged, famished, and lost.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “That I can bear witness to, and no traitor has ever in the land committed a fouler deed.”

Actually, both the Duke of York and the Duke of Somerset had been at fault for not coming to the aid of the English military leader Lord Talbot, who died as a result of their inaction. The death of Lord Talbot led to many French victories.

“Peace, headstrong Warwick!” the Duke of Suffolk said. “Be quiet!”

“Image of pride, why should I hold my peace?” the Earl of Warwick replied.

Guards brought in Horner the armorer and Peter, his

apprentice.

The Duke of Suffolk replied to the Earl of Warwick, “Because here is a man accused of treason. Pray to God that the Duke of York is able to excuse himself!”

The Duke of York asked, “Does anyone accuse me of being a traitor?”

King Henry VI asked, “What do you mean, Duke of Suffolk? Tell me, who are these men?”

The Duke of Suffolk replied, “If it pleases your majesty, this is the man who is accusing his master of high treason. He said that Richard, Duke of York, was the rightful heir to the English crown and that your majesty was a usurper.”

“Tell me, man, were these your words?” King Henry VI asked Horner.

He replied, “If it shall please your majesty, I never said or thought any such thing. God is my witness: I am falsely accused by this villain.”

Peter said, holding up his ten fingers, “By these ten bones, my lords, he did speak them to me in the garret one night, as we were scouring my Lord of York’s armor.”

The Duke of York said to Horner, “Base dunghill villain and craftsman! I’ll have your head for this traitorous speech of yours.”

He then said to King Henry VI, “I beseech your royal majesty to let him have all the rigor of the law.”

Horner said, “Alas, my lord, hang me, if I ever spoke those words. My accuser is Peter, my apprentice, and when I punished him for his mistake the other day, he vowed upon his knees that he would get even with me. I have good witness and evidence for this; therefore, I beseech your

majesty to not cast away an honest man because of a villain's accusation.”

King Henry VI asked the Duke of Gloucester, “Uncle, what shall we say to this in law?”

The Duke of Gloucester said, “This is my decision, if I may judge. Let the Duke of Somerset be the Regent over the French, because this accusation breeds suspicion against the Duke of York, and let these two men — Horner and Peter — have a day appointed for them to fight a single combat in a convenient place because Horner has witness and evidence of his servant's malice. This is the law, and this is Duke Humphrey's judgment.”

Peter had made an accusation against Horner, who had defended himself by giving a reason for why Peter could be lying. To decide the matter, since it could not be decided on the basis of the evidence available, the two would fight a single combat. This culture believed that God would help the person in the right to defeat the person in the wrong, and so the victor of the single combat would be in the right.

“I humbly thank your royal majesty,” the Duke of Somerset said to King Henry VI.

He addressed his thanks to the King rather than to the Duke of Gloucester because the Duke of Gloucester had made the decision on behalf of the King.

Horner said, “And I accept the combat willingly.”

“Alas, my lord, I cannot fight,” Peter said. “For God's sake, pity my case. The spite of man prevails against me. Oh, Lord, have mercy upon me! I shall never be able to fight a blow. Oh, Lord, my heart!”

“Sirrah, either you must fight, or else you must be hanged,” the Duke of Gloucester said to Peter.

“Take them away to prison,” King Henry VI said, “and the day of combat shall be the last day of the next month.

“Come, Duke of Somerset, we’ll see you sent on your way.”

— 1.4 —

Margery Jourdain the witch, Sir John Hume and Sir John Southwell the priests, and Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror met in the Duke of Gloucester’s garden.

Sir John Hume said, “Come, my masters; the Duchess of Gloucester, I tell you, expects performance of your promises.”

“Master Hume, we are therefore prepared,” Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror said. “Will her ladyship behold and hear our conjurations?”

“Yes, what else? Of course she will,” Sir John Hume said. “Don’t be afraid that she lacks courage.”

Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror said, “I have heard her reported to be a woman of an invincible spirit, but it shall be convenient, Master Hume, that you be near her on a higher place, while we are busy below; and so, please go, in God’s name, and leave us.”

Sir John Hume exited.

Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror added, “Mother Jourdain, lie prostrate and grovel on the earth. John Southwell, you read the conjuration, and let us go to our work.”

The Duchess of York and Sir John Hume appeared at a higher spot, and the Duchess, who had heard Bolingbroke’s most recent words, said, “Well said, my masters; and welcome, all of you. Let’s attend to this business, the sooner the better.”

“Have patience, good lady,” Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror said. “Wizards know their times. Deep night, dark night, the silent part of the night, the time of night when the city of Troy was set on fire and sacked by the Greeks, the time when screech owls cry and chained guard dogs howl, and spirits walk and ghosts break out of their graves, that time best fits the work we have in hand. Madam, sit and don’t be afraid. That spirit we raise, we will make fast within a hallowed verge — a sacred circle.”

They performed the relevant ceremonies and made the circle. Southwell read from the conjuring book the spell beginning “*Conjuro te*,” which is Latin for “I conjure you.”

As thunder sounded and lightning flashed, a spirit arose and said, “*Adsum*.”

“*Adsum*” is Latin for “I am present.”

Margery Jourdain the witch said, “Asnath, by the eternal God, whose name and power you tremble at, answer what I shall ask because until you speak, you shall not pass from hence.”

“Asnath” was an anagram form for “Sathan,” which is a form of the name “Satan.”

The spirit replied, “Ask what thou wilt. I wish that I had already finished answering your questions!”

The questions to be asked were already written down. Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror read, “*First about the King: What shall become of him?*”

The spirit replied, “The Duke yet lives whom Henry shall depose, but him outlive and die a violent death.”

Like many such answers, this answer was equivocal. Would the Duke depose Henry, or would Henry depose the Duke? Would Henry outlive the Duke and die a violent

death, or would the Duke outlive Henry and die a violent death?

Southwell wrote down the answer.

Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror read, "*What fates await the Duke of Suffolk?*"

The spirit replied, "By water shall he die, and take his end."

Again, this answer was ambiguous. "He shall die by water" can mean 1) "He shall drown," or 2) "He shall die on a seashore." Or as will be seen, it could also have a much different meaning.

Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror read, "*What shall befall the Duke of Somerset?*"

The spirit replied, "Let him shun castles. Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains than where castles mounted stand. Have done, for more I hardly can endure."

Again, this answer was ambiguous. It could mean, "Let him shun castles mounted high on mountains." Or as will be seen, it could also have a much different meaning.

Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror said to the spirit, "Descend to darkness and the burning lake! False fiend, leave!"

Thunder sounded and lightning flashed as the spirit exited.

The Duke of York and the Duke of Buckingham broke into the garden with their guards.

The Duke of York said, "Lay hands upon these traitors and their trash — their conjuring materials."

He said to Margery Jourdain the witch, "Beldam, I think we watched you closely."

He then pretended to be surprised to see the Duchess of

Gloucester and said sarcastically, “Madam, is that you there? The King and the commonwealth are deeply indebted to you for this piece of labor. My Lord Protector will, I don’t doubt, see you well rewarded for these good deserts.”

The Duchess of Gloucester replied, “These good deserts are not half as bad as yours to England’s King, you insulting Duke who threatens where there’s no reason to threaten.”

The Duke of Buckingham said sarcastically, “True, madam, no reason at all.” He then pointed at the conjuring materials and said, “What do you call this?”

“Away with them! Let them be securely imprisoned and kept apart from one another.

“You, madam, shall come with us.

“Stafford, arrest her.”

Stafford and some guards took away the Duchess of York and Sir John Hume.

The Duke of Buckingham said, “We’ll see to it that your conjuring materials here will all be produced as evidence in a court of law.

“Take them away!”

Some guards took away Margery Jourdain the witch, Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror, and Sir John Southwell.

The Duke of York said, “Lord Buckingham, I think that you watched her well. This is a pretty plot, well chosen to build upon! Now, please, my lord, let’s see the Devil’s writ. What have we here?”

He read out loud, “*The Duke yet lives whom Henry shall depose, but him outlive and die a violent death.*”

He said, “This is just ‘*Aio te, Aeacida, Romanos vincere posse.*’”

Pyrrhus had asked an oracle whether he could conquer Rome, and the oracle had answered with the Latin prophecy that the Duke of York had quoted. Like many prophecies, the oracle’s prophecy was ambiguous: “I prophesy that you, the descendant of Aeacus, the Romans to conquer are able.” This could mean, “I prophesy that you, the descendant of Aeacus, are able to conquer the Romans” or “I prophesy that the Romans are able to conquer you, the descendant of Aeacus.”

The Duke of York then read out loud, “*Tell me what fate awaits the Duke of Suffolk? By water shall he die, and take his end. What shall betide the Duke of Somerset? Let him shun castles; safer shall he be upon the sandy plains than where castles mounted stand.*”

He then said, “Come, come, my lords; these oracles are hardily attained, and hardily understood. It is difficult to receive an oracle, and difficult to understand the oracle once it is received.

“The King is now progressing towards St. Albans. With him goes the husband of this lovely lady, the Duchess of Gloucester. Thither take this news as fast as horse can carry it. This news will be a sorry breakfast for my Lord Protector.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Your grace shall give me permission, my Lord of York, to be the post and carry the message, in hope of being rewarded by King Henry VI.”

“At your pleasure, my good lord,” the Duke of York replied. “Yes, you shall carry this news to the King.”

He then called for a servant, “Who’s within there, ho!”

A servingman entered.

The Duke of York ordered him, "Invite my Lords of Salisbury and Warwick to dine with me tomorrow night.

"Let's go!"

Being a witch or wizard and engaging in witchcraft and sorcery were serious offenses, especially since King Henry VI was very religious. Here are a few Bible verses (King James Version) about witches:

Leviticus 19:31: *Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.*

Exodus 22:18: *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*

Leviticus 20:27: *A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.*

Deuteronomy 18:10-11: *There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, / Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.*

Leviticus 20:6: *And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.*

A familiar is a witch's attending spirit; often it has the form of an animal.

CHAPTER 2 (2 Henry VI)

— 2.1 —

Several people were hunting with hawks at St. Albans: King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, the Duke of Gloucester, Cardinal Beaufort, and the Duke of Suffolk. Some other falconers were hallowing to encourage the dogs to force the waterfowl into the air where hawks could seize them.

Queen Margaret said, “Believe me, lords, for hunting with hawks at the brook, I have not seen better entertainment for the past seven years. Yet, by your leave, the wind was very high, and I would have bet ten to one that old Joan the hawk would not have gone out and hunted.”

On very windy days, hawks were not used in hunting.

King Henry VI said to the Duke of Gloucester, “But what a point — position for attacking — your falcon made, my lord, and what a height she flew above the rest! To see how God in all his creatures works! Yes, Mankind and birds are eager to climb high.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “It is no marvel, if it pleases your majesty, that my Lord Protector’s hawks tower and soar so well. They know their master loves to be aloft and bears his thoughts above his falcon’s pitch.”

The word “pitch” means the greatest height a hawk will climb before swooping.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “My lord, it is but a base and ignoble mind that mounts no higher than a bird can soar.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “I thought as much; the Duke of Gloucester wants to be above the clouds.”

The Duke of Gloucester asked, “My lord Cardinal, what do

you mean by that? Wouldn't it be good if your grace could fly to Heaven?"

King Henry VI said, "Heaven is the treasury of everlasting joy."

Cardinal Beaufort said to the Duke of Gloucester, "Your Heaven is on Earth. Your eyes and thoughts are obsessed with a crown, which is the treasure of your heart, pernicious Protector, dangerous peer, who so flatters the King and commonwealth!"

Matthew 6:19-21 (King James Version) states this:

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The Duke of Gloucester replied, "Cardinal Beaufort, have you as a priest grown imperious and dictatorial? '*Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?*' Are churchmen so hot? Good uncle, hide such malice. With all of your 'holiness,' can you do it?"

"*Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?*" is a Latin quotation from Virgil's *Aeneid* 1:11. Translated, it means, "Is there such anger in the minds of Heavenly beings?"

Cardinal Beaufort and the Duke of Gloucester were related. The Duke of Gloucester's father was King Henry IV. Cardinal Beaufort was King Henry IV's half-brother. When Cardinal Beaufort was born, his parents were not married, but they married afterward. John of Gaunt is Cardinal

Beaufort's father and the Duke of Gloucester's grandfather.

The Duke of Suffolk said, "There is no malice, sir — no more than well becomes so good a quarrel and so bad a peer."

"So bad a peer as whom, my lord?" the Duke of Gloucester asked.

"Why, as you, my lord," the Duke of Suffolk said, "if it pleases your lordly Lord Protectorship."

"Why, Suffolk, England knows your insolence," the Duke of Gloucester said.

"And it knows your ambition, Gloucester," Queen Margaret said.

"Please, be calm and peaceful, good Queen," King Henry VI said, "and don't incite these furious peers, for blessed are the peacemakers on earth."

Cardinal Beaufort said, "Let me be blessed for the peace I make, against this proud Lord Protector, with my sword!"

The Duke of Gloucester said quietly so that only Cardinal Beaufort could hear him, "Indeed, holy uncle, I wish that it would come to that — an armed single combat between us two!"

Cardinal Beaufort whispered to the Duke of Gloucester, "By the Virgin Mary, I am ready whenever you dare to fight me."

The Duke of Gloucester whispered to Cardinal Beaufort, "Don't gather supporters to back you in a fight. You yourself shall pay for your insults."

Cardinal Beaufort whispered to the Duke of Gloucester, "Yes, I shall pay where you dare not peep. If you dare to fight me, let's fight this evening, on the east side of the

grove.”

“What’s going on, my lords?” King Henry VI asked them.

Cardinal Beaufort said out loud, “Believe me, cousin Gloucester, if your servant had not caused the fowl to rise from cover so suddenly, we would have had more sport.”

He was pretending to have been talking to the Duke of Gloucester only about hawking.

He then whispered to the Duke of Gloucester, “Come with your two-handed sword — your long sword.”

“I truly will, uncle,” the Duke of Gloucester replied.

Cardinal Beaufort whispered to the Duke of Gloucester, “Do you agree? The east side of the grove?”

The Duke of Gloucester whispered, “Cardinal, I will fight you there.”

“Why, what’s going on, uncle Gloucester!” King Henry VI asked.

“We are talking about hawking — nothing else, my lord,” the Duke of Gloucester replied.

He whispered to Cardinal Beaufort, “Now, by God’s mother, priest, I’ll shave your crown for this, or all my skill in fencing shall fail.”

Cardinal Beaufort whispered to the Duke of Gloucester, “*Medice, teipsum*. Protector, see to it well — protect yourself.”

Luke 4:23 in the Vulgate Bible stated in part, “*Medice, cura teipsum*.” The Latin meant, “Physician, cure yourself.” The words had become proverbial and the Latin word “*cura*” was understood.

King Henry VI said, "The winds grow high; so does your anger, lords. How irksome is this music to my heart! When such strings jar, what hope do we have of harmony? Please, my lords, let me settle this strife."

A townsman of St. Albans arrived, crying, "A miracle!"

The Duke of Gloucester asked, "What is the meaning of this noise? Fellow, what miracle are you proclaiming?"

"A miracle! A miracle!" the townsman cried.

The Duke of Suffolk said, "Come to the King and tell him what miracle."

"Truly, within this past half-hour a blind man at St. Albans' shrine that is devoted to St. Alban has received his sight. He is a man who was born blind and never saw in his life before."

St. Albans was named after St. Alban, the first British saint.

King Henry VI said, "Now, God be praised, Who to believing souls gives light in darkness, and comfort in despair!"

The Mayor of St. Albans and some townsmen arrived. Some townsmen were carrying Simpcox in a chair. Simpcox' wife followed behind the others.

Cardinal Beaufort said, "Here come the townsmen in a procession to show the man to your highness."

"Great is his comfort in this earthly vale, although by his sight his sin will be multiplied," King Henry VI said.

He meant that the gift of sight would increase the man's temptations to sin.

"Stand by, my masters," the Duke of Gloucester said. "Bring him near the King. His highness' pleasure is to talk

with him.”

“Good fellow, tell us here the circumstances of your receiving sight, so that we for you may glorify the Lord,” King Henry VI said. “Have you been blind a long time and is your sight now restored?”

“I was born blind, if it pleases your grace,” Simpcox said.

“Yes, indeed, he was,” his wife said.

“What woman is this?” the Duke of Suffolk asked.

“I am his wife, if it pleases your worship,” she replied.

The Duke of Gloucester, already suspicious of the miracle, said, “If you had been his mother, you would have been in a better position to say that.”

“Where were you born?” King Henry VI asked.

“At Berwick in the north, if it pleases your grace,” Simpcox replied.

Berwick is located near the Scottish border.

“Poor soul, God’s goodness has been great to you,” King Henry VI said. “Never let a day or a night pass without saying your prayers, but always remember what the Lord has done for you.”

“Tell me, good fellow,” Queen Margaret said, “did you come here to this holy shrine by chance, or out of devotion?”

“God knows that I came out of pure devotion,” Simpcox said. “I was called to come here a hundred times and oftener in my sleep by good St. Alban, who said, ‘Simpcox, come, come, make an offering at my shrine, and I will help you.’”

Simpcox' wife said, "This is very true, indeed; and many time and often I myself have heard a voice call to him so."

Because Simpcox had been carried in a chair, Cardinal Beaufort asked, "Are you lame?"

"Yes, may God Almighty help me!" Simpcox replied.

"How did you come to be lame?" the Duke of Suffolk asked.

"I fell out of a tree," Simpcox replied.

His wife added, "A plum tree, master."

The Duke of Gloucester asked, "How long have you been blind?"

"I was born blind, master," Simpcox replied.

"Born blind, and yet you climbed a tree?" the Duke of Gloucester asked.

"Just once in all my life, when I was a youth," Simpcox replied.

"That is too true, and his climbing cost him very dear," his wife said.

"By the Mass, you must have really loved plums, if you would risk climbing a tree to get them," the Duke of Gloucester said.

"Alas, good master, my wife desired some damsons, and made me climb to get them, despite the danger to my life," Simpcox said.

Some bawdy humor was being expressed here. "Plum tree" was slang for a woman's crotch and thighs. "Climbing a plum tree" was slang for mounting and having sex with a woman. "Damsons" was a word that meant 1) a kind of

small plum and 2) testicles.

The Duke of Gloucester thought to himself, *He is a cunning knave, but he won't get away with this.*

He said out loud to Simpcox, "Let me see your eyes. Close them; now open them. In my opinion you still do not see well."

"Yes, I do, master," Simpcox said. "I see as clear as day, for which I thank God and St. Alban."

"Tell me," the Duke of Gloucester said, "what color is this cloak?"

"It is red, master; it is as red as blood," Simpcox replied.

"Why, that's well said. What color is my gown?" the Duke of Gloucester asked.

"It is black, indeed," Simpcox said. "It is as black as coal; it is as black as jet."

Jet is a kind of black coal.

Suddenly suspicious, King Henry VI asked, "How do you know what color jet is?"

"I think he has never seen jet," the Duke of Suffolk said.

The Duke of Gloucester said, "But he has seen many cloaks and gowns before this day."

Simpcox' wife said, "Before today, he has never seen any cloaks and gowns."

The Duke of Gloucester asked, "Tell me, sirrah, what's my name?"

Simpcox replied, "Alas, master, I don't know your name."

The Duke of Gloucester pointed to a man and asked,

“What’s his name?”

“I don’t know,” Simpcox said.

The Duke of Gloucester pointed to another man and asked, “Do you know his name?”

“No, indeed, master.”

“What’s your own name?”

“Saunder Simpcox, if it pleases you, master.”

“Then, Saunder, sit there,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “You are the lyingest knave in Christendom. If you had been born blind, you might as well have known all our names as thus to name the several colors we wear. Sight may distinguish among colors, but for a just-sighted person to immediately be able to name them all is impossible.

“My lords, St. Alban here has done a miracle, and wouldn’t you think the cunning to be great of any person who could restore this cripple to his legs again?”

“Oh, master, I wish that you could!” Simpcox said.

The Duke of Gloucester asked, “My masters of St. Albans, don’t you have beadles — parish officers — in your town, and things called whips?”

The Mayor of St. Albans replied, “Yes, my lord, if it pleases your grace.”

“Then send for one of each immediately,” the Duke of Gloucester said.

The Mayor ordered an attendant, “Sirrah, go fetch the beadle and his whip here straightaway.”

An attendant exited to carry out the order.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Now fetch for me a stool

here immediately.”

He then said to Simpcox, “Now, sirrah, if you mean to save yourself from a whipping, leap over this stool and run away.”

“Alas, master, I am not able to stand by myself,” Simpcox said. “You are about to torture me in vain.”

A beadle arrived, carrying a whip.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Well, sir, we must have you find your legs.

“Sirrah beadle, whip him until he leaps over that stool.”

The beadle replied, “I will, my lord.”

He then said to Simpcox, “Come on, sirrah; take your jacket off quickly.”

“Alas, master, what shall I do?” Simpcox asked. “I am not able to stand.”

The beadle hit Simpcox once with the whip, and Simpcox leapt over the stool and ran away. Some townsmen ran after him and cried, “A miracle!”

King Henry VI said, “Oh, God, can You see this, and tolerate it for so long?”

Queen Margaret said, “It made me laugh to see the villain run.”

The Duke of Gloucester ordered, “Follow the knave; and take this drab — Simpcox’ slut — away.”

Simpcox’ wife said, “Alas, sir, we did it out of pure need.”

The Duke of Gloucester ordered, “Let them be whipped through every market town until they come to the town of Berwick, from whence they came.”

Simpcox' wife, the beadle, the Mayor, and the townspeople exited.

Cardinal Beaufort said, "Duke Humphrey of Gloucester has done a miracle today."

"That is true," the Duke of Suffolk said. "He made the lame leap and flee away."

The Duke of Gloucester said, "But you have done more miracles than I: You made in a day, my lord, whole towns flee away."

He was referring to the giving away of Anjou and Maine, and these regions' towns, in exchange for Margaret.

The Duke of Buckingham arrived.

King Henry VI asked, "What tidings come with our kinsman Buckingham? What news do you have?"

The Duke of Buckingham replied, "My news is such that my heart trembles to reveal. A gang of wicked persons, evilly inclined, under the approval and collusion of Lady Eleanor, the Lord Protector's wife, who is the ringleader and head of all this evil company, has conspired dangerously against your state. They have been dealing with witches and with conjurers whom we have apprehended in the act of raising up wicked spirits from underground and asking them about King Henry VI's life and death, and the life and death of other members of your highness' Privy Council, as in full detail your grace shall understand."

Cardinal Beaufort whispered to the Duke of Gloucester, "And so, my Lord Protector, by this means your lady — your wife — is awaiting trial at London. This news, I think, has blunted your weapon's edge; it is likely, my lord, you will not keep your appointment you made with me to fight

a duel.”

The Duke of Gloucester replied, “Ambitious churchman, stop afflicting my heart. Sorrow and grief have vanquished all my powers, and vanquished as I am, I yield to you, or to the lowest servant.”

“Oh, God, what evils work the wicked ones, heaping confusion on their own heads thereby!” King Henry VI said.

Queen Margaret said, “Gloucester, see here the defilement of your nest. It is best for you to make sure that you are faultless.”

The Duke of Gloucester replied, “Madam, as for myself, I call on Heaven to corroborate how I have loved my King and commonwealth. And, as for my wife, I don’t know what the facts are, but I am sorry to hear what I have heard just now. Noble she is, but if she has forgotten honor and virtue and conversed with such people as, similar to pitch, defile nobility, I banish her from my bed and company and I give her as a prey to law and shame — to them I give this woman who has dishonored Gloucester’s honest name.”

King Henry VI said, “Well, for this night we will repose here. Tomorrow we will head back toward London again, to look into this business thoroughly and call these foul offenders to their interrogation and weigh the case in justice’s scales. The scales of justice are equal, and the scales’ beam stands sure, certain, and reliable. We will find out whose rightful cause prevails. We will discover the truth.”

— 2.2 —

The Duke of York, the Earl of Salisbury, and the Earl of Warwick talked together in the Duke of York’s garden.

The Duke of York said, “Now, my good Lords of Salisbury and Warwick, our simple supper ended, give me permission in this private footpath to satisfy myself. I want to know your opinion of my title and right — which are infallible — to England’s crown.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “My lord, I long to hear in full about your claim to the crown.”

“Sweet York, begin,” the Earl of Warwick said, “and if your claim to the crown is good, the Nevilles — both I and my father, the Earl of Salisbury — are your subjects to command.”

The Duke of York said, “Then I will begin.

“King Edward III, my lords, had seven sons.

“The first son was Edward the Black Prince, Prince of Wales.

“The second son was William of Hatfield, who was born 16 February 1337 and died 8 July 1337.

“The third son was Lionel, Duke of Clarence.

“The fourth son was John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.

“The fifth son was Edmund Langley, Duke of York.

“The sixth son was Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester.

“The seventh and last son was William of Windsor, who was born 24 June 1348 and died 5 September 1348.

“Edward the Black Prince died before his father and left behind him King Richard II, his only son, who after Edward III’s death reigned as King until Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, who was the eldest son and heir of John of Gaunt, was crowned by the name of

King Henry IV.

“Henry Bolingbroke seized the realm, deposed the rightful King Richard II, sent Richard II’s poor Queen to France, from whence she came, and sent Richard II to Pomfret, where, as you know, harmless Richard II was murdered traitorously.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Father, the Duke of York has told the truth. This is how the House of Lancaster got the crown.”

The Duke of York said, “And now the House of Lancaster holds the crown by force and not by right.

“Once Richard II, the first son’s heir, was dead, the issue — one of the children — of the next son of Edward III should have reigned.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “The second son was William of Hatfield, and he died without an heir.”

The Duke of York said, “The third son, Duke Lionel of Clarence, from whose line I claim the crown, had issue: Philippa, a daughter, who married Edmund Mortimer, fourth Earl of March.

“Edmund had issue: Roger, fifth Earl of March.

“And Roger had issue: Edmund, Anne, and Eleanor.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “This last Edmund, in the reign of Henry Bolingbroke as Henry IV, as I have read, laid claim to the crown. Edmund would have been King, but Owen Glendower kept Edmund in captivity until he died.

“But tell us the rest of what you have to say.”

The Duke of York said, “Edmund’s eldest sister, Anne, who is my mother, being heir to the crown married Richard, the Earl of Cambridge, who was the son of

Edmund Langley, King Edward III's fifth son.

“By Anne I claim the Kingdom of England. She was heir to Roger, the Earl of March, who was the son of Edmund Mortimer, who married Philippa, the only daughter of Lionel, the Duke of Clarence.

“So, if the issue of the elder son succeeds to the throne before the issue of the younger son, I am the true and rightful King of England.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “What plain proceeding — line of descent — is more plain than this?”

“Henry VI claims the crown from John of Gaunt, the fourth son of Edward III.

“The Duke of York claims it from the third son of Edward III.

“Until Duke Lionel of Clarence's line fails, the issue of John of Gaunt should not reign.

“Duke Lionel of Clarence's line has not yet failed, for it flourishes in you, the Duke of York, and in your sons, who are the fair slips of such a stock — branches of the trunk of the family tree.

“So then, father Salisbury, let us kneel together; and in this private plot we will be the first who shall salute our rightful sovereign and acknowledge the honor of his birthright to the crown.”

The Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of Warwick knelt and said, “Long live our sovereign Richard, who is both the Duke of York and England's King!”

Using the royal plural, the Duke of York said, “We thank you, lords.”

He then said, “But I am not officially your King until I am

crowned and my sword is stained with the heart-blood of the House of Lancaster; and that's not to be performed immediately, but with deliberation and silent secrecy.

“Both of you must do what I do in these dangerous days.

“Shut your eyes and pretend not to notice the Duke of Suffolk's insolence and arrogance, Cardinal Beaufort's pride, the Duke of Somerset's ambition. Shut your eyes and pretend not to notice the Duke of Buckingham and all the rest of the crew of them until they have snared the shepherd of the flock, that virtuous Prince, the good Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. He is whom they seek to snare and destroy, and they in seeking that shall find their deaths, if the Duke of York can prophesy.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “My lord, you need say no more; we know your mind at full — we know what you mean to do.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “My heart assures me that the Earl of Warwick shall one day make the Duke of York a King.”

The Duke of York replied, “And, Neville, this I assure myself: Richard, Duke of York, shall live to make the Earl of Warwick the greatest man in England except for the King.”

— 2.3 —

In a hall of justice, the trial of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, was taking place. Present were King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, the Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of York, the Duke of Suffolk, and the Earl of Salisbury. Also present were the defendants — the Duchess of Gloucester, Margaret Jourdain the witch, John Southwell and John Hume the priests, and Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror — all of whom were under guard and all of whom had been

found guilty. Now they were learning what their punishment would be.

King Henry VI said, “Stand forth, Dame Eleanor Cobham, wife of the Duke of Gloucester. In the sight of God and us, your guilt is great. Receive the sentence of the law for sins such as by God’s book are punished by death.”

Exodus 22:18 states, “*Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live*” (King James Version).

King Henry VI continued, speaking to Margaret Jourdain the witch, John Southwell and John Hume the priests, and Roger Bolingbroke the conjuror, “You four shall go from here back again to prison, and from there to the place of execution. The witch in Smithfield shall be burned to ashes, and you three shall be strangled — hung — on the gallows.”

He then said to the Duchess of York, “You, madam, because you are more nobly born, will be dispossessed of your honor in your life, and you shall, after three days of open penance have been done, live in your country here in banishment, with Sir John Stanley, in the Isle of Man.”

The Duchess of Gloucester replied, “Welcome is banishment; also welcome would be my death.”

The Duke of Gloucester said to her, “Eleanor, the law, you see, has judged you. I cannot excuse and exonerate a person whom the law condemns.”

The Duchess of Gloucester and the other prisoners, under guard, exited.

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, said, “My eyes are full of tears, and my heart is full of grief. Ah, Humphrey, this dishonor in your old age will bring your head with sorrow to the ground! I ask your majesty to give me permission to

go. Sorrow needs solace, and my old age needs ease.”

“Wait, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester,” King Henry VI said. “Before you go, give up your staff of office. I, Henry VI, will to myself be my own Lord Protector, and God shall be my hope, my stay and support, my guide, and my lantern to my feet.”

Psalms 71:5 states, “*For thou art my hope, O Lord God [...]*” (King James Version).

Psalms 18:19 states, “*They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay*” (King James Version).

Isaiah 58:11 states, “*And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not*” (King James Version).

Psalms 119:105 states, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” (King James Version).

King Henry VI continued, “And go in peace, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, no less beloved than when you were Lord Protector to your King.”

Queen Margaret said, “I see no reason why a King who is no longer a minor should need to be protected like a child. May God and King Henry VI govern England’s realm. Give up your staff, sir, and the King’s realm.”

“Give up my staff?” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Here, noble King Henry VI, is my staff. I resign the staff as willingly as ever your father, King Henry V, made it mine; and even as willingly at your feet I leave it as others would ambitiously receive it.

“Farewell, good King. When I am dead and gone, may honorable peace attend your throne!”

The Duke of Gloucester exited.

Queen Margaret said, “Why, now Henry VI is King, and Margaret is Queen. Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, is scarcely himself because he bears so severe a maim. Two things at once have been pulled away from him: His lady has been banished, and a limb — his staff of office as Lord Protector — has been lopped off.

“This staff of honor snatched away from him, there let it stand, where it best is suitable to be, in King Henry VI’s hand.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Thus droops this lofty pine and thus hang his branches. Thus Eleanor’s pride dies in her youngest — most recent — days.”

“Lords, let him go and stop talking about him,” the Duke of York said. “If it pleases your majesty, this is the day appointed for the trial by combat, and the appellant and defendant — the armorer and his apprentice — are ready to enter the area of combat, if your highness would like to see the fight.”

“Yes, my good lord,” Queen Margaret answered for King Henry VI, “because for this purpose I left the court. I want to see this quarrel tried by combat.”

King Henry VI said, “In God’s name, see that the area of combat and all things are ready. Here let them end it; and may God defend the person who is in the right!”

The Duke of York said, “I never saw a fellow worse prepared, or more afraid to fight, than is the appellant, the apprentice of this armorer, my lords.”

From one direction came Horner the armorer and his neighbors, who were drinking to and with him so much that he was drunk. A drummer accompanied them, and Horner

carried a staff with a sandbag fastened to one end. This weapon was lethal.

From another direction came Peter the apprentice, also with a drummer and a staff with a sandbag fastened to one end. Some apprentices accompanied and drank to him, but Peter abstained from drinking.

Horner's first neighbor said, "Here, neighbor Horner, I drink to you a cup of the wine called sack, and fear not, neighbor Horner, you shall do well enough in the trial by combat."

Horner's second neighbor said, "And here, neighbor Horner, here's a cup of the wine called charneco."

Horner's third neighbor said, "And here's a pot of good double-strong beer, neighbor Horner. Drink, and don't be afraid of your apprentice."

Horner said, "Let the bowl of alcohol come to me, in faith, and I'll drink to the health of you all, and here's a fig for Peter!"

He made an obscene gesture in Peter's direction.

The first apprentice said, "Here, Peter, I drink to you, and don't be afraid."

The second apprentice said, "Be merry, Peter, and don't be afraid of your master. Fight for the credit and reputation of the apprentices."

"I thank you all," Peter said. "Drink, and pray for me, I ask you, because I think that I have taken my last drink in this world.

"Here, Robin, if I die, I give you my apron.

"And, Will, you shall have my hammer.

“And here, Tom, take all the money that I have.

“Oh, may the Lord bless me, so I pray to God! I am never able to deal with my master in combat because he has learned so much fencing already.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Come, stop your drinking, and fall to blows.

“Sirrah, what’s your name?”

“Peter, indeed.”

“Peter! What the rest of your name?”

“Thump,” Peter Thump said.

“Thump!” the Earl of Salisbury said. “Then see you thump your master well.”

Horner said, “Masters, I have come here, as it were, upon my apprentice’s instigation, to prove that he is a knave and that I myself am an honest man. Concerning the Duke of York, I will stake my death that I never meant him any ill, nor the King, nor the Queen.

“Therefore, Peter, I will come at you with a blow directed straight at you!”

“Let’s get started,” the Duke of York said. “This knave’s tongue begins to slur and double the time it takes him to say anything.

“Sound, trumpeters, the call to battle to the combatants!”

Horner and Peter fought, and Peter struck Horner a mortal blow.

Horner shouted, “Stop, Peter, stop! I confess, I confess treason. I am a traitor.”

He died.

This culture believed in the importance of confessing sins before dying. Doing so could keep one's soul out of Hell.

“Take away the apprentice's weapon,” the Duke of York said.

He then said to Peter, “Fellow, thank God, and the good wine that stood in your master's way and kept him from doing what he was capable of doing while sober.”

Overjoyed, Peter said, “Oh, God, have I overcome my enemy in the presence of this royal assembly? Oh, Peter, you have prevailed in combat and proven that you are in the right!”

King Henry VI ordered, “Go, take that traitor away from here and out of our sight. From the fact of his death we perceive his guilt, and God in justice has revealed to us the truth and innocence of this poor fellow named Peter, whom Horner, the traitor, had wanted to have murdered wrongfully in the trial by combat.

“Come, fellow, follow us and receive your reward.”

— 2.4 —

The Duke of Gloucester and his servingmen stood on a street. They were wearing hooded cloaks that were customarily worn by mourners.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “Thus sometimes the brightest day has a cloud; and after summer always and forevermore succeeds barren winter with its wrathful and nipping cold. So worries and joys abound, as seasons pass quickly.

“Sirs, what's the time?”

The servants replied, “Ten o'clock, my lord.”

“Ten is the hour that was appointed to me to watch the

coming of my punished Duchess. She is scarcely able to endure the flinty streets as she treads on them with her unshod and tender-feeling feet.

“Sweet Nell, your noble mind can ill endure the mean-spirited people gazing on your face with their malicious looks, laughing at your shame. These mean-spirited people formerly followed your proud chariot-wheels when you rode in triumph through the streets.

“But, wait! I think she is coming, and I’ll prepare my tear-stained eyes to see her miseries.”

The Duchess of Gloucester arrived. She was barefoot and wearing a white sheet. In her hand she carried a lit candle. On her back were pinned papers listing the crimes for which she was being punished. With her were Sir John Stanley, the Sheriff, and some officers. Sir John Stanley would take her to the Isle of Man after her public humiliation.

A servant said to the Duke of Gloucester, “If it would please your grace, we’ll take her by force from the Sheriff.”

“No, don’t do that, for your lives; let her pass by,” the Duke of Gloucester said.

Seeing him, the Duchess of Gloucester said, “Did you come, my lord, to see my public shame? Now you do penance, too. Look at how they gaze at you! See how the giddy multitude point, and nod their heads, and throw their eyes on you! Ah, Gloucester, hide yourself from their hateful looks, and, pent up in your private chamber, rue my shame, and ban your enemies — both my and your enemies!”

“Be patient and calm, gentle Nell,” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Forget this grief.”

“Ah, Gloucester, teach me to forget myself!” the Duchess of Gloucester replied. “For while I think I am your married wife and you are a Prince, the Lord Protector of this land, I think I should not thus be led along, wrapped in a white sheet in shame, with papers on my back, and followed by a rabble who rejoice to see my tears and hear my deep-fetched groans. The ruthless flint of the street cuts my tender feet, and when I flinch from the pain, the malicious people laugh and tell me to be careful how I walk.

“Ah, Humphrey, can I bear this shameful yoke? Do you think that I’ll ever look upon the world or count people happy who enjoy the Sun?

“No. Dark shall be my light and night shall be my day; to think upon my nobility shall be my Hell.

“Sometimes I’ll say that I am Duke Humphrey’s wife and he is a Prince and the ruler of the land, yet he so ruled and he was such a Prince that he stood by while I, his forlorn Duchess, was made a spectacle and a pointing-stock to every idle rascal follower.

“But be mild and do not blush at my shame, and do not stir at anything until the axe of death hangs over you, as, surely, it shortly will.

“The Duke of Suffolk, who can do all in all with her, Margaret, who hates you and hates us all, and the Duke of York and impious Cardinal Beaufort, that false priest, have all limed bushes to betray your wings, and, flee however you can, they’ll entangle you — they have set a trap for you.”

Sarcastically, she added, “But don’t be afraid until your foot is snared, and do not seek to prevent your foes from acting.”

“Ah, Nell, stop!” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Your aim is

all awry; you are mistaken. I must offend before I can be accused and condemned. And if I had twenty times as many foes, and each of them had twenty times their power, all these could not procure for me any harm as long as I am loyal, true, and crimeless.

“Do you want me to rescue you from this reproach? Why, if I did, your scandal would still not be wiped away, but I would be in danger for the breach of law.

“The thing that can best help you is patience and calmness, gentle Nell. Please, make your heart be patient. These few days’ wonder will be quickly worn away and exhausted.”

A herald arrived and said to the Duke of Gloucester, “I summon your grace to his majesty’s Parliament, which will be held at Bury St. Edmunds the first of this next month.”

The Duke of Gloucester said, “And I was not asked in advance if I consented to attend the Parliament! I am ordered to be there! This is underhanded plotting! Well, I will be there.”

The herald exited.

The Duke of Gloucester said, “My Nell, I take my leave of you, and, master Sheriff, don’t let her penance exceed what the King ordered.”

The Sheriff replied, “If it pleases your grace, here my orders end, and Sir John Stanley is appointed now to take her with him to the Isle of Man.”

The Duke of Gloucester asked, “Must you, Sir John, be the escort of my lady here?”

“So are my orders, may it please your grace,” Sir John Stanley replied.

“Don’t treat her worse because I ask you to treat her well,”

the Duke of Gloucester said. "The world may laugh again and look favorably upon me, and I may live to treat you kindly if you treat her kindly, and so, Sir John, farewell!"

The Duchess of Gloucester said, "Are you going, my lord, and without telling me farewell!"

"Witness my tears," the Duke of Gloucester said. "I cannot stay to speak to you."

The Duke of Gloucester and his servingmen exited.

The Duchess of Gloucester said, "Have you gone, too? May all comfort go with you! For none abides with me. My joy is death — death, at whose name I often have been afraid because I wished to enjoy this world for eternity.

"Stanley, please, go, and take me away from here. I care not where we go, for I beg no favor. Just convey me where you have been commanded to escort me."

"Why, madam, that is to the Isle of Man," Sir John Stanley said. "There you will be treated according to your state."

"That's bad enough, for I am only a source of shame, a person who deserves reproach. Shall I then be treated reproachfully?"

Sir John Stanley replied, "You will be treated like a Duchess, and like Duke Humphrey's lady and wife. According to that state, you shall be treated."

The Duchess of Gloucester said, "Sheriff, farewell, and may you fare better than I fare, although you have been the guide of my walk of shame."

"It was my duty," the Sheriff said, "and, madam, pardon me."

She said, "Yes, yes, farewell, your duty has been discharged."

“Come, Stanley, shall we go?”

Sir John Stanley replied, “Madam, your penance is done, so you will throw off this sheet; we will go to where you can dress yourself for our journey.”

“My shame will not be shifted with my sheet,” the Duchess of Gloucester said. “I can change what I wear, but my shame will hang upon my richest robes and show itself, no matter how I dress.

“Go, lead the way. I long to see my prison.”

CHAPTER 3 (2 Henry VI)

— 3.1 —

In the Abbey at Bury St. Edmund's, several people walked into the Parliament: King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, Cardinal Beaufort, the Duke of Suffolk, the Duke of York, the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Salisbury, and the Earl of Warwick. Attendants and guards were also present.

King Henry VI said, "I wonder why my Lord of Gloucester has not come. It is not his custom to be the last man to arrive, whatever reason keeps him from us now."

"Can you not see?" Queen Margaret said. "Or will you not observe the aloofness of his altered countenance? With what majesty he bears himself? How insolent and disdainful he has recently become? How proud, how peremptory and dictatorial, and unlike himself?"

"We know the time when he was mild and affable, and if we did but cast a far-off look at him, immediately he was upon his knee, so that all the court admired him for his submission.

"But meet him now, and if it is in the morning, when everyone will give each other the time of day and exchange greetings, he knits his brow and shows an angry eye, and passes by with stiff unbowed knee, disdainful to do the respect that belongs to us.

"Small curs are not regarded when they grin — snarl and show their teeth — but great men tremble when the lion roars, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, is no little man in England.

"First note that he is near you in descent, and should you fall, he as the next of kin will mount the throne. To me it

seems not to be politically wise, considering what a rancorous mind he bears toward us and his advantage that would follow your decease, that he should come about your royal person or be admitted to your highness' council.

“By using flattery the Duke of Gloucester won the hearts of the common people, and when he pleases to stir up insurrection, it is to be feared they all will follow him.

“Now it is the spring, and weeds are shallowly rooted. Tolerate them now, and they'll overgrow the garden and choke the herbs for want of husbandry and good management.

“The reverent care I bear unto my lord — you, Henry VI — made me see these dangers in the Duke of Gloucester.

“If this is foolish, call it a woman's fear. If better reasoning and evidence can supplant this fear, I will concur and say I wronged the Duke of Gloucester.

“My Lords of Suffolk, Buckingham, and York, disprove my allegation, if you can, or else conclude that my words are to the point.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Well has your highness seen into this Duke of Gloucester, and if I had been the first to speak my mind, I think I would have told your grace's tale — I would have said what you said.

“The Duchess of Gloucester, I swear upon my life, began her Devilish practices because of his subornation. Or, if he were not privy to those sins and crimes, yet through his holding in esteem his high descent, as being next of kin to the King he is next in succession to the throne if the King dies without children, and through his high boasts about his nobility, he instigated the bedlam — insane — brain-sick Duchess by wicked means to plan our sovereign's fall.

“Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep, and in his simple show — appearance of being an honest man — he harbors treason. The fox does not bark when it wants to steal the lamb.

“No, no, my sovereign. The Duke of Gloucester is a man unsounded and with still unrevealed depths, and he is full of deep deceit.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “Didn’t he, contrary to the form of law, order strange, cruel, and unusual deaths as punishment for small offences?”

The Duke of York said, “And didn’t he, in his Lord Protectorship, levy great sums of money through the realm of England for soldiers’ pay in France, and never sent it? Because of this, the towns each day revolted.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Tut, these are petty faults in comparison to faults unknown. Time will bring to light these unknown faults that lie in smooth Duke Humphrey.”

Using the royal plural, King Henry VI said, “My lords, I will say at once that the concern you have about us that makes you want to mow down thorns that would annoy our foot is worthy of praise, but I shall speak my conscience and say that our kinsman the Duke of Gloucester is as innocent of intending treason to our royal person as is the sucking lamb or harmless dove.

“The Duke of Gloucester is virtuous, mild, and too well disposed to dream about evil or to work toward my downfall.”

Queen Margaret said, “Ah, what’s more dangerous than this foolish confidence and trust!

“Does the Duke of Gloucester seem to be a dove? His feathers are only borrowed, for his disposition is that of the

hateful raven.

“Does he seem to be a lamb? His skin is surely lent him, for his inclination is that of the ravenous wolf.

“Who cannot steal a shape that means deceit? The deceitful man can assume a fake appearance.

“Take heed, my lord; be careful. The welfare of us all hangs on the cutting short that fraudulent man.”

One way to cut a man short is to behead him; this will shorten him by a head.

The Duke of Somerset entered and said, “I wish all health to my gracious sovereign!”

“Welcome, Lord Somerset,” King Henry VI said. “What is the news from France?”

As Regent of France, the Duke of Somerset was responsible for ruling and protecting the King’s territories in France.

“That all your interest in those territories is utterly taken away from you; all is lost.”

“This is cold news, Lord Somerset,” King Henry VI said, “but God’s will be done!”

The Duke of York thought, *This is cold news for me, for I had hope of obtaining France as firmly as I hope to obtain fertile England. Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud and caterpillars eat my leaves away, but I will remedy this business before long, or sell my title for a glorious grave.*

The Duke of Gloucester arrived and said, “All happiness unto my lord the King! Pardon me, my liege, for having stayed away so long.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “No, Duke of Gloucester, know

that you have come too soon, unless you were more loyal than you are. I arrest you on a charge of high treason here.”

The Duke of Gloucester replied, “Well, Duke of Suffolk, you shall not see me blush or change my countenance as a result of this arrest.

“A heart unspotted by sin or crime is not easily daunted. The purest spring is not so free from mud as I am clear from treason to my sovereign.

“Who can accuse me? Of what am I supposed to be guilty?”

The Duke of York said, “It is thought, my lord, that you took bribes from the King of France, and as Lord Protector, you kept back the soldiers’ pay with the result that his highness has lost France.”

“Is it only thought so?” the Duke of Gloucester said. “Who are they who think it?”

“I never robbed the soldiers of their pay, nor ever had even one penny as a bribe from the King of France.

“So help me God, I have stayed awake all night, yes, night after night, in studying how to do good for England.

“May any doit — small coin — that ever I wrested from the King, or any groat — another small coin — I hoarded to my use, be brought against me on the Day of Judgment!

“No; many pounds of my own personal money, because I would not tax the needy common people, have I disbursed to the garrisons, and I have never asked for restitution.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “It serves you well, my lord, to say so much.”

“I say no more than what is the truth, so help me God!” the Duke of Gloucester said.

The Duke of York said, "In your Lord Protectorship, you devised strange tortures never heard of for offenders, with the result that England was defamed and dishonored by your tyranny."

The Duke of Gloucester replied, "Why, it is well known that, while I was Lord Protector, pity was the only fault that was in me, for I would melt at an offender's tears, and humble, submissive words were the ransom for the offenders' crime."

"Unless it were a bloody murderer, or a foul, felonious thief who fleeced poor travelers, I never gave them their deserved punishment. Murder indeed, that bloody sin, I tortured more than other felonies or crimes."

The Duke of Suffolk said, "My lord, these faults are easily and quickly answered, but mightier crimes are laid to your charge, whereof you cannot easily purge yourself. I arrest you in his highness' name, and here I commit you to my lord Cardinal Beaufort to keep under guard until your future time of trial."

King Henry VI said, "My lord of Gloucester, it is my special hope that you will clear yourself from all suspicion. My conscience tells me you are innocent."

"Ah, gracious lord, these days are dangerous," the Duke of Gloucester said. "Virtue is choked with foul ambition and charity is chased away from here by rancor's hand. Foul subornation is in the ascendant and justice has been exiled from your highness' land."

"I know that their plot is to have my life, and if my death might make this island happy, and prove to be the end of their tyranny, I would expend my life with all willingness. But my death is made the prologue to their play, for the deaths of thousands more, who yet suspect no peril, will not conclude their plotted tragedy."

“Cardinal Beaufort’s red sparkling eyes blab and betray his heart’s malice, and the Duke of Suffolk’s cloudy appearance blabs and betrays his stormy hate. Sharp Buckingham unburdens with his tongue the envious load that lies upon his heart, and dogged, spiteful York, who reaches at the moon and at other things it is impossible to get, whose overweening arm I have plucked back, by false accusation aims at my life. And you, my sovereign lady, my Queen, along with the rest, without justification have laid disgraces on my head, and with your best efforts have stirred up my most cherished liege — Henry VI — to be my enemy.

“Yes, all of you have laid your heads together — I myself had notice of your secret meetings — all to take away my guiltless life.

“I shall not lack false witnesses to condemn me, nor shall I lack an abundance of ‘treasons’ attributed to me to augment my guilt.

“The ancient proverb will be well fulfilled: ‘A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.’”

Cardinal Beaufort said to King Henry VI, “My liege, his railing is intolerable. If those who care to keep your royal person from treason’s secret knife and traitors’ rage be thus upbraided, criticized, and berated, and the offender be granted scope of speech, it will make them cool in zeal toward your grace.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Has he not taunted our sovereign lady the Queen here with ignominious words, though clerkly couched — learnedly expressed — as if she had suborned some to swear false allegations to overthrow his greatness?”

Queen Margaret said, “But I can give the loser permission to chide and scold.”

The Duke of Gloucester said, "That is far truer spoken than meant. I lose, indeed. Damn the winners, for they have played me false! They have betrayed me! And well such losers may have permission to speak."

The Duke of Buckingham said, "He'll twist the meaning of whatever we say and hold us here all day."

"Lord Cardinal Beaufort, he is your prisoner."

Cardinal Beaufort ordered, "Sirs, take away the Duke of Gloucester, and guard him securely."

The Duke of Gloucester said, "Ah! Thus King Henry VI throws away his crutch before his legs are robust enough to bear his body. Thus is the shepherd beaten from your side, and wolves are snarling over who shall gnaw you first. Ah, I wish that my fear were false! Ah, I wish that it were! For, good King Henry, I fear that you will be destroyed."

Guards took away the Duke of Gloucester.

King Henry VI said, "My lords, whatever your wisdoms think to be best, do or not do, just as if we ourself were here."

Queen Margaret asked, "Will your highness leave the Parliament?"

"Yes, Margaret," King Henry VI said. "My heart is drowned with grief, whose flood begins to flow within my eyes. My body is engirdled by misery, for what's more miserable than discontent?"

"Ah, uncle Humphrey! In your face I see the embodiment of honor, truth, and loyalty. Good Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the hour is yet to come that ever I experienced you being traitorous or I feared your loyalty. What luring, ominous star now envies your high rank and standing, with the result that these great lords and Margaret our Queen

seek the destruction of your harmless life? You never did them wrong, nor did you ever do any man wrong.

“Just like the butcher takes away the calf and binds the wretch, and beats it when it strays, bearing it to the bloody slaughterhouse, even so remorselessly have they borne the Duke of Gloucester away from here, and as the mother of the calf runs lowing up and down, looking in the direction her harmless young one went, and can do nothing but bewail her darling’s loss, even so I myself bewail good Gloucester’s case with sad, unhelpful tears, and with dimmed eyes look after him and cannot do him any good, so mighty are his vowed enemies.

“His fortunes I will weep, and in between each groan I will say, ‘Who’s a traitor? Gloucester is not a traitor.’”

Everyone exited except Queen Margaret, Cardinal Beaufort, the Duke of Suffolk, and the Duke of York. The Duke of Somerset stayed, but he watched the others and did not take place in their plotting.

Queen Margaret said, “Free, honorable, worthy lords, cold snow melts with the Sun’s hot beams. My lord — Henry VI — is cold in great affairs. He is too full of foolish pity, and the Duke of Gloucester’s performance beguiles him as the mournful crocodile with its crocodile tears of sorrow snares soft-hearted travelers — it cries to entice travelers to come near it, and then it snatches at them — or as the snake coiled in a flowering bank, with shining, multicolored skin, bites a child who thinks the snake is excellent because of its beauty.

“Believe me, lords, if no one were wiser than I — and yet herein I judge my own intelligence to be good — this Duke of Gloucester would be quickly rid — removed from — the world, in order to rid — free — us of the fear we have of him.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “That the Duke of Gloucester should die is a sensible policy and good statesmanship, but yet we need a pretext for his death. It is a good idea for him to be condemned by the course of law.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “But, in my mind, that would not be a good idea; it won’t work. The King will labor always to save the Duke of Gloucester’s life. The common people perhaps will rise to save the Duke of Gloucester’s life. As of yet we have only trivial evidence, other than mistrust of him, that shows him to deserve a death sentence.”

The Duke of York said, “Judging by what you say, you would not have him die.”

“Ah, York, no man alive is as eager as I am to see him dead!” the Duke of Suffolk said.

The Duke of York said, “It is I, the Duke of York, who has more reason to want the Duke of Gloucester to die.

“But, my lord Cardinal Beaufort, and you, my Lord of Suffolk, say what you think, and speak it from your souls, isn’t it the same thing to set a hungry eagle to guard the chicken from a hungry kite — a bird of prey — and to make Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the King’s Protector?”

Queen Margaret said, “Either way, the poor chicken would be sure to die.”

“Madam, it is true,” the Duke of Suffolk said, “and isn’t it madness, then, to make the fox the guardian of the sheepfold? Should a person accused of being a crafty murderer have his guilt only frivolously looked at because his purpose is not executed and he has not yet committed the murder? No. Let him die. Why? Because he is a fox. And therefore his nature proves him to be an enemy to the flock even before his jaws are stained with crimson blood.

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, as proven by this reasoning, is like a fox to my liege: King Henry VI.

“And so we ought not to insist on niceties when it comes to slaying him. The main thing is that he die, whether it be by traps, by snares, by treacherousness, whether sleeping or awake, none of that matters as long as he dies, for good deceit checkmates first the man who first intends deceit.”

“Thrice-noble Suffolk, you have resolutely spoken your mind,” Queen Margaret said.

The Duke of Suffolk replied, “What I have said is not resolute, except in so much that is done, for things are often spoken about and seldom meant.

“But because my heart accords with my tongue, seeing the deed is meritorious and deserves to be rewarded by God because it will preserve my sovereign the King from his foe, say but the word, and I will be his priest. I will metaphorically give him his last rites — by literally making his last rites necessary.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “But I want him dead, my Lord of Suffolk, before you can take due orders for and become a priest. Say that you consent and judge the deed to be good, and I’ll provide an executioner to kill the Duke of Gloucester because I care so much for the safety of my liege the King.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Here is my hand. The deed is worthy and worth doing.”

They shook hands.

Queen Margaret said, “And I also say the deed is worthy and worth doing.”

The Duke of York said, “And so do I, and now that we three have agreed with Cardinal Beaufort to have the Duke

of Gloucester murdered, it does not much matter who disputes the validity of what we have decided.

A messenger entered the room and said, "Great lords, from Ireland I have come at full speed to report that rebels there are up in arms and have put the Englishmen to the sword. Send reinforcements, lords, and stop the rage quickly before the wound grows incurable because since the rebellion is fresh and green, there is great hope that help can stop it."

Cardinal Beaufort said, "This is a rebellion that needs a quick and expeditious stop!

"What advice do all of you give in this important affair?"

The Duke of York said, "I advise that the Duke of Somerset be sent as Regent there in Ireland. It is fitting that this lucky ruler be employed there. Just look at the fortune he has had in France."

The Duke of York was being sarcastic. While the Duke of Somerset had been Regent in France, all the French regions controlled by England had been lost to the French.

The Duke of Somerset said, "If the Duke of York, with all his scheming and cunning political policy had been the Regent there instead of me, he never would have stayed in France so long."

"No, not to lose it all, as you have done," the Duke of York replied. "I would have lost my life speedily rather than bring a burden of dishonor home by staying there a long time and losing all the English-controlled French territories.

"Show me one scar engraved on your skin. Men whose flesh is preserved so whole seldom win."

Queen Margaret said, "Don't engage in this wrangling. This spark will prove to become a raging fire, if wind and

fuel are brought to feed it with.

“Say no more, good York; sweet Somerset, be still and quiet. Your fortune, York, if you had been Regent there, might perhaps have proven to be far worse than his.”

“What, worse than nothing?” the Duke of York said. “In that case, then, may a shame take all!”

The Duke of Somerset said, “And among that number of people shamed, count yourself — you who wish shame on others!”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “My Lord of York, try what your fortune is. The uncivilized kerns of Ireland — lightly armed Irish foot soldiers — are in arms and moisten clay with blood of Englishmen. Will you lead a band of men, collected and chosen carefully, some from each county, and try your fortune against the Irishmen?”

“I will, my lord, if it pleases his majesty,” the Duke of York said.

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Why, our authority is his consent: Whatever we decide to do he will confirm. So then, noble York, take this task in hand. Take an English army to Ireland.”

“I am content,” the Duke of York said. “I agree. Provide soldiers for me, lords, while I make arrangements for my own affairs.”

“This charge, Lord York, I will see performed,” the Duke of Suffolk said. “I will see that you get soldiers. But now we return to the false and traitorous Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “We need talk no more about him, for I will deal with him in such a way that henceforth he shall trouble us no more.

“And so let us break off our meeting; the day is almost spent.

“Lord Suffolk, you and I must talk of that event. I will get the murderers and you will tell them what to do and how to do it.”

The Duke of York said, “My Lord of Suffolk, within fourteen days I will expect my soldiers to be at Bristol because from there I’ll ship them all to Ireland.”

“I’ll see it truly done, my Lord of York,” the Duke of Suffolk said.

Everyone exited except the Duke of York, who began speaking to himself:

“Now, York, or never, steel your fearful thoughts, and change doubtfulness to resolution. Be what you hope to be, or resign to death what you are — it is not worth the enjoying. Let pale-faced fear stay with the lowly born man, and find no harbor in a royal heart.

“Faster than springtime showers comes thought on thought, and every thought thinks about high rank. My brain more busily than the laboring spider weaves wearily intricate snares to trap my enemies.

“Well, nobles, well, it is shrewdly done, to send me packing with an army of men. I fear that you are only warming the frozen snake that, once warmed against your chests, will sting your hearts.

“It was men I lacked and you will give them to me. I take this army kindly; and yet be well assured that you are putting sharp weapons in a madman’s hands.

“While I in Ireland nourish a mighty band of soldiers, I will stir up in England some black storm that shall blow ten thousand souls to Heaven or Hell, and this fell tempest

shall not cease to rage until the golden circle is placed on my head — a crown like the glorious Sun's transparent beams will calm the fury of this mad-bred squall. This squall will be produced by a madman — me.

“And, for the agent of my intention, I have persuaded a headstrong Kentish man, John Cade of Ashford, whose nickname is Jack, to make a rebellion, as he very well is capable of doing, while pretending to be John Mortimer.

“In Ireland I have seen this stubborn, ruthless, fierce Cade oppose himself against a troop of Irish kerns, and he fought so long that his thighs with darts — arrows and light spears — were almost like a sharp-quilled porcupine.

“And, after he was finally rescued, I have seen him caper upright like a wild Morris dancer, shaking the bloody darts as the Morris dancer shakes his bells.

“Very often, disguised as a shaggy-haired crafty Irish kern, he has conversed with the enemy, and undiscovered come back to me again and given me notice of their villainies.

“This Devil — John Cade — here shall be my substitute because John Cade resembles in face, in gait, and in speech John Mortimer, who now is dead.

“By this I shall perceive the commoners' minds, how they think about the House and claim of York to the crown. If they follow John Cade, they will follow me.

“Let's say that John Cade is captured and tortured on the rack. I know that no pain they can inflict upon him will make him say I persuaded him to take up those weapons.

“Let's say that he thrives, as it is very likely he will, why, then from Ireland I will come with my strong army and reap the harvest that the rascal John Cade has sowed.

“With Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, dead, as he shall be,

and Henry VI put aside, then the next King of England will be me.”

— 3.2 —

Some murderers entered a room of state at Bury St. Edmund’s. They had just murdered the Duke of Gloucester by strangling him.

The first murderer said, “Run to my Lord of Suffolk; let him know that we have dispatched the Duke of Gloucester, as he commanded.”

“Oh, that it were not yet done so that we could decide not to do it!” the second murderer said. “What have we done! Did you ever hear a man so penitent?”

The Duke of Suffolk entered the room.

The murderer said, “Here comes my Lord of Suffolk.”

“Now, sirs, have you dispatched this thing?” the Duke of Suffolk asked. “Have you murdered him?”

“Yes, my good lord, he’s dead,” the first murderer said.

“Why, that’s well done,” the Duke of Suffolk said. “Go to my house; I will reward you for this venturous, dangerous deed. The King and all the peers are here at hand. Have you remade the bed? Is everything done well, in accordance with the directions I gave you?”

“Yes, it is, my good lord,” the first murderer said.

“Leave! Be gone!” the Duke of Suffolk ordered.

The murderers exited.

Trumpets sounded, and several people entered the room: King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, Cardinal Beaufort, the Duke of Somerset, and some attendants.

King Henry VI said, "Go, call our uncle the Duke of Gloucester to come into our presence immediately. Say that we intend to try his grace today to determine whether he is guilty, as charged publicly."

The Duke of Suffolk said, "I'll call him to you immediately, my noble lord."

He exited.

King Henry VI said, "Lords, take your places, and I ask you all to proceed no stricter against our uncle the Duke of Gloucester than from true evidence of good value he is proven to be guilty of treachery. Let true evidence of good value show whether he is guilty or innocent."

Queen Margaret said, "May God forbid that any malice should prevail that would condemn an innocent nobleman! I pray to God that the Duke of Gloucester may acquit himself of suspicion!"

"I thank you, Meg," King Henry VI said. "These words much content me. They make me very happy."

The Duke of Suffolk reentered the room.

Seeing him, King Henry VI said, "What's going on! Why do you look pale? Why are you trembling? Where is our uncle the Duke of Gloucester? What's the matter, Suffolk?"

"He is dead in his bed, my lord," the Duke of Suffolk said. "The Duke of Gloucester is dead."

"By the Virgin Mary, God forbid!" Queen Margaret said.

Cardinal Beaufort said, "This is God's secret judgment. I dreamt last night that the Duke of Gloucester was mute and could not speak a word."

King Henry VI fainted.

“How is my lord?” Queen Margaret said. “Help, lords! The King is dead.”

“Raise his body,” the Duke of Somerset said. “Wring his nose.”

This was thought to help someone regain consciousness.

“Run, go, help, help!” Queen Margaret said. “Henry, open your eyes!”

“He is regaining consciousness,” the Duke of Suffolk said. “Madam, be calm.”

“Oh, Heavenly God!” King Henry VI said.

“How is my gracious lord?” Queen Margaret asked.

“Take comfort, my sovereign!” the Duke of Suffolk said. “Gracious Henry, take comfort!”

“Is my Lord of Suffolk comforting me?” King Henry VI said sarcastically to him. “He came just now to sing a raven’s ominous note of death, whose dismal tune took away from me my vital powers, and does he think that the chirping of a wren, crying ‘take comfort’ from a hollow, false, insincere breast, can chase away the first-heard sound — that of the raven?”

“Don’t hide your poison with such sugared words. Lay not your hands on me; stop and forbear, I say. The touch of your hands frightens me as much as a serpent’s bite.

“You baleful messenger, get out of my sight! Upon your eyeballs murderous tyranny sits in grim majesty and frightens the world.

“Don’t look upon me — your eyes wound me.

“Yet do not go away. Come, basilisk, and kill the innocent gazer with your sight, for in the shadow of death I shall

find joy. In life I find only double death, now that the Duke of Gloucester is dead.”

A basilisk is a mythological serpent that could kill people simply by looking at them.

Queen Margaret said, “Why do you berate my Lord of Suffolk thus? Although the Duke of Gloucester was his enemy, yet Suffolk like a Christian laments his death. And as for myself, foe as the Duke of Gloucester was to me, if liquid tears or heart-offending groans or blood-consuming sighs could recall his life, I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans, and look as pale as a primrose with blood-drinking sighs, and all to have the noble Duke of Gloucester alive.”

She was referring to the belief that each sigh or groan would take a drop of blood away from the heart.

Queen Margaret continued, “What do I know about how the world may judge of me? It is known that the Duke of Gloucester and I were only hollow friends — we were enemies. It may be judged I killed the Duke, and so shall my name be wounded by the tongue of slander, and Princes’ courts be filled with the reproach of me. This is what I get by his death — unhappy me! To be a Queen, and crowned with infamy!”

King Henry VI said, “Ah, woe is me for Gloucester, wretched man! I am grieved because of his death.”

Queen Margaret said, “Be woe for me — be sorry for me — because I am more wretched than he is. Do you turn away from me and hide your face? I am no loathsome leper; look at me.

“What! Are you, like the adder, grown deaf? Be poisonous like the adder and kill your forlorn Queen.”

In this culture, snakes were thought to be able to stop one ear with their tail and hold the other ear to the ground, thereby not hearing any sounds.

Psalm 58:3-5 (King James Version) states this:

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;

5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

Queen Margaret continued, “Is all your comfort shut in the Duke of Gloucester’s tomb? Why, then, Dame Margaret was never your joy. Erect his statue and worship it, and make my image just a cheap alehouse sign.

“Was I for this almost wrecked upon the sea and twice by adverse winds from England’s bank driven back again to my native land? What foretold this, but a well-meaning and accurately prophesizing forewarning wind that seemed to say ‘Don’t seek a scorpion’s nest, and don’t set foot on this unkind shore’?

“What did I then, but cursed the gentle gusts and Aeolus, the god of winds, who loosed them forth from their strong bronze caves. And I bade the winds to blow towards England’s blessed shore, or turn our stern upon a dreadful rock and wreck the ship and drown me.

“Yet Aeolus would not be a murderer, but left that hateful office to you. The pretty vaulting — rising and falling — sea refused to drown me, knowing that you would have me drowned on shore, with tears as salty as sea water, through your unkindness. The rocks that split ships in pieces cowered in the sinking sands and would not dash me with

their jagged sides so that your flinty heart, harder than they, might in your palace destroy me, Margaret.

“As long as I could see your chalky cliffs at Dover, when from your shore the tempest beat us back, I stood upon the deck in the storm, and when the dusky sky began to rob my eagerly peering sight of the view of your land, I took a costly jeweled ornament from my neck — a heart it was, surrounded by diamonds — and threw it towards your land. The sea received it, and so I wished your body might receive my heart. And even with this I lost sight of fair England and bade my eyes to depart with my heart and called my eyes blind and dusky spectacles because they lost sight of Albion’s — England’s — wished-for coast.

“How often have I tempted Suffolk’s tongue, the agent of your foul inconstancy, the one who convinced me to marry you, to sit and bewitch me, as Ascanius did when he to Dido, maddened by love, would unfold his father’s acts commenced in burning Troy!”

In Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Aeneas’ son, Ascanius (actually Venus’ disguised son Cupid took his place) sat on the lap of Dido, Queen of Carthage, and told her about the exploits of Aeneas, who had survived the fall of Troy and rescued his father and son from the burning city.

Queen Margaret continued, “Am I not bewitched like her? Are you not false like him?”

Aeneas and Dido had a love affair in Carthage, but Aeneas left her in order to go to Italy and achieve his destiny of being an important ancestor of the Roman people.

Queen Margaret continued, “Woe is me. I can say or do no more! Die, Margaret, because Henry weeps that you live so long.”

Noises were heard, and the Earl of Warwick and the Earl of

Salisbury entered the room. Many commoners stood outside the room.

The Earl of Warwick said to King Henry VI, "It is reported, mighty sovereign, that the good Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, has been traitorously murdered by the means of the Duke of Suffolk and Cardinal Beaufort. The commoners, like an angry hive of bees that want their leader, scatter up and down and care not whom they sting in seeking revenge for his death. I myself have calmed their spleenful mutiny, until they hear the manner of his death."

"That he is dead, good Warwick, is too true," King Henry VI said. "But how he died God knows, not I, Henry. Enter his chamber, view his breathless corpse, and then tell us your opinion of his sudden death."

"That I shall do, my liege," the Earl of Warwick said. "Stay, Salisbury, with the unrefined multitude until I return."

The Earl of Warwick exited and joined the commoners.

King Henry VI said, "Oh, You Who judges all things, keep back my thoughts, my thoughts that labor to persuade my soul that some violent hands were laid on Humphrey's life! If my suspicion is false, forgive me, God, because judgment belongs only to You.

"Gladly would I go to warm the Duke of Gloucester's pale lips with twenty thousand kisses, and to rain upon his face an ocean of salt tears, to tell my love and friendship for him to his silent deaf body, and with my fingers feel his unfeeling hand. But all in vain are these mean funeral obsequies, and to survey his dead and Earthly image, what would it accomplish except to make my sorrow greater?"

The Earl of Warwick and some others came into the room, carrying the bed on which lay the corpse of the Duke of

Gloucester.

The Earl of Warwick said to King Henry VI, “Come here, gracious sovereign, and view this body.”

“That is to see how deep my grave is made,” King Henry VI said, “for with his soul fled all my worldly solace. When I see him, I see my life in death.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “As surely as my soul intends to live with that revered King — Jesus, our Lord and Savior — Who took our state upon him to free us from His Father’s wrathful curse as recounted in Genesis, I believe that violent hands were laid upon the life of this much-famed Duke of Gloucester.”

Genesis 3:17-19 (King James Version) states this:

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

“That is a dreadful oath, sworn with a solemn tongue!” the Duke of Suffolk said. “What evidence does Lord Warwick give for his vow?”

The Earl of Warwick said, “See how the blood is settled in his face. Often I have seen a body that has died a natural death have an ashy appearance, pale and bloodless, because the blood has all descended to the laboring heart. The heart, in the conflict that it wages with death, attracts the blood

for aid against the enemy — death. The blood stays in the heart after death and there cools and never returns to blush and beautify the cheek again.

“But look, the Duke of Gloucester’s face is black and full of blood. His eyeballs are further out than when he lived; he is staring very ghastly like a strangled man. His hair is standing on end, his nostrils are stretched with struggling; his hands are displayed wide apart, like those of a man who grasped and tugged for life and was by strength subdued.

“Look, you can see his hair is sticking on the sheets. His well-proportioned beard has been made rough and rugged, like the summer’s wheat that has been beaten down by a tempest.

“It cannot be otherwise than that he was murdered here. The least of all these signs makes that probable.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Why, Warwick, who would murder the Duke of Gloucester? I myself and Cardinal Beaufort had him in our protection, and we, I hope, sir, are no murderers.”

“But both of you were Duke Humphrey’s vowed foes,” the Earl of Warwick said.

He then said to Cardinal Beaufort, “And you, certainly, had the good Duke of Gloucester in your custody to guard. It is likely you would not feast him like a friend, and it is easily and clearly seen he found an enemy.”

Queen Margaret said, “Then you, it seems, suspect these noblemen to be guilty of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester’s untimely death.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “A person who finds the heifer dead and freshly bleeding and sees close by a butcher with an axe will definitely suspect it was the butcher who made

the slaughter. A person who finds the partridge in the nest of a bird of prey will definitely imagine how the bird died, although the bird of prey soars with an unbloody beak. Even so suspicious is this tragedy.”

Queen Margaret asked, “Are you the butcher, Duke of Suffolk? Where’s your knife? Is Cardinal Beaufort being called a bird of prey? Where are his talons?”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “I wear no knife to slaughter sleeping men, but here’s a vengeful sword, rusted with disuse, that shall be scoured in the rancorous heart of any man who slanders me with murder’s crimson badge.

“Say, if you dare, proud Lord of Warwickshire, that I am guilty of the death of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.”

Cardinal Beaufort’s face had become pale at the sight of the corpse of the Duke of Gloucester. Now he was close to fainting, and so the Duke of Somerset and some others assisted him in leaving the room.

The Earl of Warwick replied to the Duke of Suffolk, “What doesn’t Warwick dare to do, if false, treacherous Suffolk dares him?”

Queen Margaret said, “He dares not calm his arrogant, insolent, contentious spirit nor cease to be an arrogant critic, although Suffolk dare him twenty thousand times.”

“Madam, be quiet,” the Earl of Warwick said. “With reverence may I say that every word you speak in Suffolk’s behalf is slander to your royal dignity.”

“Blunt-witted lord, ignoble in demeanor!” the Duke of Suffolk said. “If ever a lady wronged her lord so much, your mother took into her blameworthy bed some coarse untutored peasant, and noble stock was grafted with a slip from a crabapple tree, whose fruit you are — you were

never of the Nevilles' noble family.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Except that the guilt of murder protects you like a buckler, aka a shield, and except that I would rob the deathsman of his fee for executing you for murder, in which act of me killing you I would be acquitting you thereby of ten thousand shames, and except that my sovereign's presence makes me mild, I would, you false murderous coward, make you beg pardon on your knee for your just now expressed speech, and I would make you say it was your mother that you meant and that you yourself were born a bastard. And after all this fearful homage was done, I would give you your hire, aka wages — death — and send your soul to Hell, you pernicious bloodsucker of sleeping men!”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “You shall be awake while I shed your blood, if away from the presence of King Henry VI you dare go with me.”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “Let's go away from the King's presence right now, or I will drag you away. Unworthy though you are, I'll fight you and do some service to Duke Humphrey's ghost.”

The Duke of Suffolk and the Earl of Warwick exited.

King Henry VI said, “What is a stronger breastplate than an untainted heart! Thrice is that man armed who has a just quarrel, and that man whose conscience is corrupted with injustice is naked, although he is locked up in steel armor.”

Noise was heard coming from outside.

Queen Margaret said, “What noise is this?”

The Duke of Suffolk and the Earl of Warwick reentered the room. Both of them had drawn their weapons, which was a serious offense. Drawn weapons were not allowed in the

presence of the King.

King Henry VI said, “Why, what are you doing, lords! You have your wrathful weapons drawn here in our presence! Do you dare be so bold? Why, what tumultuous clamor do we have here?”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “The traitorous Warwick with the men of Bury St. Edmunds all set upon me, mighty sovereign.”

The Earl of Salisbury and several commoners entered the room.

The Earl of Salisbury said to the commoners, “Sirs, stand outside; the King shall know your mind.”

The commoners exited.

He then said to King Henry VI, “Dread lord, the commoners send you word by me that unless Lord Suffolk is immediately executed, or banished from fair England’s territories, they will by violence tear him from your palace and torture him with a grievous lingering death. They say that by him the good Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, died. They say that in him they fear your highness’ death; and their pure instinct of love and loyalty, free from a stubborn hostile intent, which might be thought to contradict your liking, makes them thus insistent on his banishment.

“They say out of concern for your most royal person that if your highness would intend to sleep and would order that no man should disturb your rest on pain of your dislike or on pain of death, they still, notwithstanding such a strict edict, would wake you if it were necessary to protect your life.

“For example, if there were a serpent seen, with forked tongue, that slyly glided towards your majesty, and it were

necessary to awaken you lest your remaining in that slumber would allow the deadly snake to make your sleep eternal, they therefore would cry out and awaken you, although you forbid them to.

“They say that they will guard you, whether you want them to or not, from such cruel serpents as false Suffolk, with whose envenomed and fatal sting your loving uncle Gloucester, who was worth twenty times the worth of Suffolk, they say, is shamefully bereft of life.”

The commoners shouted from outside, “We want an answer from the King, my Lord of Salisbury!”

The Duke of Suffolk said to the Earl of Salisbury, “It is likely that the commoners, rude unpolished peasants, could send such a message to their sovereign. But you, my lord, were glad to be employed, to show how clever an orator you are. But all the honor you, Salisbury, have won is that you are the lord ambassador sent from a gang of tinkers to the King.”

In this society, one meaning of the word “tinker” was “beggar.”

The commoners shouted from outside the room, “We want an answer from the King, or we will all break in!”

King Henry VI ordered, “Go, Salisbury, and tell them all from me that I thank them for their tender loving care, and even if I had not been incited by them, yet I intended and intend to do what they entreat me to do, for surely my thoughts do hourly prophesy misfortune to my well-being by Suffolk’s means.

“And therefore, I swear by His majesty Whose much unworthy deputy I am that Suffolk shall not breathe infection into this air for more than three days longer, on the pain of death.”

The Earl of Salisbury left to inform the commoners that the Duke of Suffolk would be exiled from England within three days.

Queen Margaret said, “Oh, Henry, let me plead for gentle Suffolk!”

“Ungentle Queen, to call him gentle Suffolk!” King Henry VI said. “Unkind Queen, to call him kind Suffolk! Plead no more, I say. If you plead for him, you will only increase my wrath.”

“Had I but pronounced the sentence, but not sworn to it, I would have kept my word, but when I swear, it is irrevocable.”

He said to the Duke of Suffolk, “If, after three days’ space, you are found here on any ground that I am ruler of, the world shall not be the ransom for your life.”

King Henry VI then said, “Come, Warwick. Come, good Warwick, and go with me. I have great matters to impart to you.”

Everyone exited except for Queen Margaret and the Duke of Suffolk.

Queen Margaret said in the direction in which King Henry VI and the Earl of Warwick had departed, “May misfortune and sorrow go along with you! May heart’s discontent and sour affliction be playfellows to keep you company! There are two of you; may the Devil make a third! And may threefold vengeance escort your steps!”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Gentle Queen, stop these imprecations and let your Suffolk take his sorrowful leave.”

“Damn, you coward woman and soft-hearted wretch! Haven’t you the spirit to curse your enemy?” Queen Margaret said.

“May a plague fall upon them!” the Duke of Suffolk said. “Why should I curse them? If curses would kill, as does the poisonous mandrake’s cry when it is pulled from the ground, I would invent as bitter-wounding terms, as angry, as harsh and as horrible to hear, delivered as strongly through my clenched teeth, with as very many signs of deadly hate as the curses that the lean-faced, emaciated hag Envy delivers in her loathsome cave.

“My tongue would stumble as it sought to say my earnest words. My eyes would sparkle like the beaten flint. My hair would be fixed on end, as if I were deranged. Yes, every joint would seem to curse and excommunicate. And even now my burdened heart would break, should I not curse them.

“May poison be their drink! May gall — no, worse than gall — be the most delicious thing that they taste! May their sweetest shade be a grove of cypress trees in a cemetery! May their chief vista be murdering basilisks — either the large cannon known by that name or the snake that kills with a glance! May the softest thing they touch be as painful as a lizard’s sting! May their music be as frightful as the serpent’s hiss! And may foreboding screech owls make the band of musicians full! May all the foul terrors in dark-situated Hell —”

Queen Margaret interrupted, “Enough, sweet Suffolk. You are tormenting yourself, and these dread curses, like the Sun shining against a mirror, or like a gun filled too full of powder, recoil, and turn their force upon yourself.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “You bade me curse, and will you now tell me to stop? Now, by the ground that I am banished from, I say that I could curse away a winter’s night, although I were standing naked on a mountain top, where biting cold would never let grass grow, and I would think it but a minute spent in entertainment.”

Queen Margaret said, “Oh, let me entreat you to cease cursing. Give me your hand so that I may dew it with my mournful tears; don’t let the rain of Heaven wet this place, to wash away my woeful monuments — the tracks of my tears.

“I wish that this kiss could be printed in your hand so that by the seal you might think upon these lips of mine, through which a thousand sighs are breathed for you!

“So, leave so that I may know my grief, which is only imagined while you are standing by me, as if I were a person who overindulges while thinking about what she wants.

“I will get a repeal of your exile for you, or you can be well assured that I will do what it takes to be banished myself. And I am banished if I am apart from you.

“Go; don’t speak to me. Even now be gone.”

The Duke of Suffolk started to leave.

Queen Margaret changed her mind: “Oh, don’t go yet! Even like this, two friends who are condemned to die will embrace and kiss and take ten thousand leaves, both of them a hundred times loather to part from each other than to die.

“Yet now I say farewell to you; and I say farewell to life as well as to you!”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Thus is poor Suffolk banished ten times: once by the King, and three times thrice by you. It is not the land I care for, if you were away from here. A wilderness is populous enough, as long as I, Suffolk, would have your Heavenly company. For where you are, there is the world itself, with all the many pleasures in the world, and where you are not, there is desolation.

“I can say and do no more. Live to enjoy your life. I myself find joy in nothing except knowing that you live.”

A lord named Vaux arrived.

Queen Margaret asked, “Where is Vaux going so fast? What is your news, please?”

Vaux replied, “To report to his majesty that Cardinal Beaufort is at the point of death, for suddenly a grievous sickness took him that makes him gasp and stare and struggle for breath, blaspheming God and cursing men on Earth.

“Sometimes he talks as if Duke Humphrey of Gloucester’s ghost were by his side; sometimes he calls to the King, and whispers to his pillow, as if he were speaking to him, the secrets of his overwrought soul. And I have been sent to tell his majesty that even now he cries aloud for him.”

Queen Margaret said, “Go tell this solemn message to the King.”

Vaux exited.

Queen Margaret said, “Ay, me! What a world is this! What news is this!

“But why am I grieving about an hour’s poor loss? Cardinal Beaufort was an old man, and he would have lived only a short time — call it an hour! — more. Why am I omitting Suffolk’s exile, the exile of my soul’s treasure? That is the real grief.

“Why don’t I mourn only for you, Suffolk, and compete in tears with the southern clouds that bring rain? The southern clouds’ tears are for the Earth’s crops, while my tears are for my sorrows.

“Now go away from here. The King, you know, is coming.

If you are found beside me, you will die.”

The Duke of Suffolk replied, “If I depart from you, I cannot live, and what would dying in your sight be like other than taking a pleasant slumber in your lap?”

In this culture, one meaning of “dying” was “orgasming,” and one meaning of “lap” was “pudendum.”

The Duke of Suffolk continued, “Here I could breathe my soul into the air, as mild and gentle as the cradle-babe dying with its mother’s nipple between its lips.

“In contrast, away from your sight, I would be raging mad, and cry out for you to close my eyes — the eyes of a dead man — and to have you with your lips stop my mouth.

“That way, you would either send back my flying soul, or I would breathe my soul into your body and then it would live in sweet Elysium.

“To die beside you would be only to die in jest. To die away from you would be a torture more than death.

“Oh, let me stay, befall what may befall! Let me stay, no matter what happens!”

Queen Margaret said, “Leave! Although parting is a fretful, corrosive cure, it is applied to a deadly wound. If you stay, you die. If you go into exile, you live.

“Go to France, sweet Suffolk. Let me hear from you, for wherever you are in this world’s globe, I’ll have an Iris — a messenger — who shall find you.”

Iris was a messenger for the classical gods.

The Duke of Suffolk said, “I am going.”

Queen Margaret said, “And take my heart with you.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “It is a jewel, locked to the most woeful casket that ever did contain a thing of worth.

“Just like a ship that has split in two, so we split up. This way I go and fall to death.”

Queen Margaret said, “And this way I go and fall to death.”

— 3.3 —

Cardinal Beaufort lay mortally ill and delirious in bed. By him were King Henry VI, the Earl of Salisbury, and the Earl of Warwick.

“How is my lord?” King Henry VI asked. “Speak, Cardinal Beaufort, to your sovereign.”

Cardinal Beaufort replied, “If you are Death, I’ll give you England’s treasure, enough to purchase another such island, if you will let me live, and feel no pain.”

King Henry VI said, “Ah, what a sign it is of evil life, where death’s approach is seen as being so terrible!”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Beaufort, it is your sovereign who speaks to you.”

Cardinal Beaufort said, “Bring me to my trial when you will. Didn’t he — the Duke of Gloucester — die in his bed? Where else should he die? Can I make men live, whether they will or no?

“Oh, torture me no more! I will confess.

“Alive again? Then show me where he is. I’ll give a thousand pounds to look at him.

“He has no eyes, the dust has blinded them. Comb down his hair. Look, look! It stands upright, like twigs smeared with birdlime — like a trap to catch my winged soul.

“Give me some drink; and tell the apothecary to bring the strong poison that I bought from him.”

King Henry VI prayed, “Oh, Thou eternal Mover of the Heavens, look with a gentle eye upon this wretch! Oh, beat away the busy meddling fiend that lays strong siege to capture this wretch’s soul. And, Thou eternal Mover of the Heavens, purge this black despair from his bosom!”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Look at how the pangs of death make him grin and bare his teeth!”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “Don’t disturb him; let him pass peaceably.”

King Henry VI said, “May he have peace to his soul, if that is God’s good pleasure!

“Lord Cardinal Beaufort, if you are thinking about Heaven’s bliss, hold up your hand; make a signal — a sign — of your hope.”

Cardinal Beaufort died.

King Henry VI said, “He dies, and makes no sign. Oh, God, forgive him!”

“So bad a death is evidence of a monstrous life,” the Earl of Warwick said.

“Forbear to judge, for we all are sinners,” King Henry VI said. “God will be the judge.

“Close his eyes and draw closed the curtain around his bed; and let us all go to pray.”

CHAPTER 4 (2 Henry VI)

— 4.1 —

Off the coast of Kent, a battle between two ships had taken place. The losing ship was the one carrying the disguised Duke of Suffolk as he attempted to sail to France. The Lieutenant, a Master, a Master's-Mate, a man named Walter Whitmore, and others were meeting to decide what to do with the prisoners. Evening was falling. The Captain was the highest-ranking officer, while the Master was a high-ranking officer who was responsible for navigation.

The Captain said, “The showy, blabbing, and compassionate day has crept into the bosom of the sea, and now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades — dragons pulling the night-chariot — that drag the tragic melancholy night. These jades, with their drowsy, slow, and flagging wings, embrace dead men’s graves and from their misty jaws breathe foul contagious darkness into the air.”

Day is showy because it is bright with sunshine. It is blabbing because the daylight reveals what a criminal would prefer to be covered up by darkness, and it is compassionate because dirty — not-compassionate — deeds prefer to be done in the dark.

The Captain said, “Therefore bring forth the soldiers of our prize — the ship we captured. For, while our pinnace, aka small, light ship, anchors in the Downs, aka the sea off Kent’s east coast, they shall make their ransom here on the sand, or stain and discolor with their blood this shore.

“Master, this prisoner freely I give to you, and you who are his Master’s-Mate, take this second prisoner and make a profit from him. Walter Whitmore, this third prisoner is your share.”

The first gentleman prisoner asked, “What is my ransom, Master? Let me know.”

The Master replied, “A thousand crowns, or else lay down your head.”

To lay down one’s head was to be beheaded.

The Master’s-Mate said to the second gentleman prisoner, “And so much shall you give, or off goes your head.”

The Captain said to the two gentleman prisoners, “Do you think it too much to pay two thousand crowns, you who bear the name and bearing of gentlemen?”

Walter Whitmore advised, “Cut both the villains’ throats.”

He looked at his prisoner and said, “For die you shall.”

He then said to the Captain and the other pirates, “Shall the lives of those whom we have lost in the fight be counterbalanced with such a petty sum!”

The first gentleman prisoner said, “I’ll pay the ransom, sir; and therefore spare my life.”

The second gentleman prisoner said, “And so will I, and I will write home for it immediately.”

Walter Whitmore said to the third gentleman prisoner, who was the Duke of Suffolk in disguise, “I lost my eye in attacking the prize at close quarters, and therefore in order for me to get revenge for it, you shall die — and so would these other gentleman prisoners, if I might have my will.”

The Captain advised, “Don’t be so rash; take a ransom, and let him live.”

The disguised Duke of Suffolk said, “Look at my George; I am a gentleman. Rate me at whatever you will; you shall be paid.”

A George is a figure of St. George killing a dragon; it is part of the insignia of the Order of the Garter.

Walter Whitmore said, “And so I am and will be; the ransom I want is your life. My name is Walter Whitmore.”

He pronounced “Walter” without the L: “Water.” In this culture, this pronunciation was common.

Hearing this, and remembering the prophecy that he would die “by water,” the Duke of Suffolk flinched, aka started.

Walter Whitmore said, “What! Why did you start? Does death frighten you?”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Your name frightens me because in its sound is death. A cunning man who could foretell the future cast my horoscope and told me that by water I would die. Yet don’t let this make you be bloody-minded. Your name is the medieval French Gaultier, if it were rightly pronounced.”

“Gaultier or Walter, whichever it is, I don’t care,” Walter Whitmore said, “Never yet did base dishonor blur our name, but with our sword we wiped away the blot. Therefore, when merchant-like I sell my revenge by accepting a ransom, then let my sword be broken, my coat of arms be torn and defaced, and I be proclaimed a coward throughout the world!”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Wait, Whitmore; for your prisoner is a Prince. I am the Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole.”

Walter Whitmore said, “The Duke of Suffolk muffled up in rags!”

The Duke of Suffolk replied, “Yes, but these rags are no part of the Duke. The Roman King of the gods, Jove, sometimes went disguised, and so why not I?”

Unfortunately for the Duke of Suffolk, he was greatly disliked by the people of England.

The Captain said, "But Jove was never slain, as you shall be."

Recognizing the Captain as a former servant of his, the Duke of Suffolk said, "You obscure and lowly yokel, King Henry VI's blood, the honorable blood of the House of Lancaster, must not be shed by such a jaded groom as you.

"Haven't you kissed your hand to show respect to me and haven't you held my stirrup?

"Haven't you bare-headed plodded by my mule as it wore a decorative cloth and thought yourself happy when I shook my head?

"How often have you waited at my cup, fed from my serving-dish, and kneeled down at the table when I have feasted with Queen Margaret?

"Remember it and let it make you crestfallen, yes, and abate your abhorrent and ill-timed pride.

"How often in our waiting-room lobby have you stood and duly waited for me to come forth?

"This hand of mine has written legal testimonials in your behalf, and therefore it shall charm your riotous tongue."

Such words were insulting, and they were spoken in an insulting voice.

Walter Whitmore said, "Speak, Captain, shall I stab this forlorn swain?"

"First let my words stab him, as he has me," the Captain said.

"Base, lowly born slave, your words are blunt and harmless

and so are you,” the Duke of Suffolk said.

The Captain said, “Convey him away from here and on our longboat’s side strike off his head.”

“You don’t dare, for fear of losing your own head,” the Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole, said.

“Yes, I do dare, Pole,” the Captain said.

“Pole!” the Duke of Suffolk said, outraged at not being addressed by his title. He regarded as an insult the Captain’s addressing him by his family name.

In this culture, “Pole” was pronounced “Pool.” The Captain made a series of insults, some of them punning on the name. The word “poll” means “head.” The head of a beheaded man was displayed on a pole. “Sir Pol” was a common name for a parrot. A kennel is an open gutter. A sink is a cesspool.

The Captain said, “Pool! Sir Pool! Lord! Yes, kennel, puddle, sink — whose filth and dirt muddies the silver spring where England drinks.

“Now I will dam up your gaping, greedy mouth because it swallowed the treasure of the realm.

“Your lips that kissed the Queen shall sweep the ground.

“And you who smiled at good Duke Humphrey of Gloucester’s death shall grin in vain against the unfeeling winds.”

The Duke of Suffolk’s head would be displayed on a pole in a place open to the weather.

The Captain continued, “These winds in contempt shall hiss at you again, and you shall be wedded to the hags of Hell — the Furies — because you dared to betroth a mighty lord — Henry VI — to the daughter of a worthless King —

Reignier — who lacks subjects, wealth, and a diadem.

“By means of Devilish and cunning political intrigue, you have grown great, and, like ambitious Sulla, you have gorged yourself with gobbets — pieces of raw flesh — of your mother country’s bleeding heart.”

Lucius Cornelius Sulla was a Roman General who used his power as Dictator of Rome to kill his enemies.

The Captain continued, “Anjou and Maine were sold to France by you.

“Because of you, the false revolting Normans disdain to call us lord, and the citizens of Picardy have slain their governors, surprised our forts, and sent the ragged soldiers wounded home.

“The Princely Warwick, and all the Nevilles, whose dreadful swords were never drawn in vain, are rising up in arms because they hate you, and now the House of York, thrust from the crown by the shameful murder of the guiltless King Richard II and by lofty proud encroaching tyranny, burns with revenging fire. Their hopeful colors, aka battle flags, raise our half-faced Sun — a Sun bursting through clouds, aka the symbol of Richard II — striving to shine, under which is written ‘*Invitis nubibus*.’”

The Latin “*Invitis nubibus*” means “Despite the clouds.”

The Captain continued, “The commoners here in Kent are up in arms.

“And, to conclude, reproach and beggary have crept into the palace of our King Henry VI, and all because of you.

“Take him away! Take him to his death!”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Oh, I wish that I were a god, to shoot forth thunder upon these paltry, servile, abject

drudges! Small things make basely born men proud: This villain here, who is the Captain of a mere pinnace, threatens more than Bargulus, the strong Illyrian pirate.

“Drones don’t suck the blood of eagles, but they do rob beehives. It is impossible that I should die by such a lowly vassal as yourself. Your words move rage and not remorse in me.

“I am carrying a message from Queen Margaret to the King of France. I order you to waft — transport by water — me safely across the Channel.”

The Captain said, “Walter —”

Knowing what the Captain was going to order him to do, Walter Whitmore said, “Come, Suffolk, I must waft you to your death.”

He was identifying himself with Chiron, the mythological figure who ferried souls to the Land of the Dead.

The Duke of Suffolk said, “*Gelidus timor occupat artus*. It is you I fear.”

“*Gelidus timor occupat artus*” is Latin for “Cold fear seizes my limbs.”

Walter Whitmore said, “You shall have reason to fear before I leave you. Are you daunted now? Now will you stoop to me?”

The first gentleman prisoner said, “My gracious lord, beg him for your life. Speak respectfully to him.”

The Duke of Suffolk replied, “Suffolk’s imperial tongue is stern and rough, used to command, untaught to plead for favor.”

Using the royal plural, he said, “Far be it that we should honor such as these with humble entreaties. No, I would

rather let my head stoop to the chopping block than let these knees bow to anyone except to the God of Heaven and to my King. And I would sooner have my chopped-off head dance upon a bloody pole than stand uncovered — with my hand holding my hat in respect — to honor the vulgar groom, aka servant.

“True nobility is exempt from fear. I can bear more than you dare execute.”

The Captain ordered, “Haul him away, and let him talk no more.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Come, soldiers, show me what cruelty you can, so that this my death may never be forgotten!

“Great men often die at the hands of vile scoundrels.

“A Roman sword-fighter and outlaw slave murdered sweet Marcus Tullius Cicero, the great Roman orator.

“Brutus’ bastard hand stabbed Julius Caesar.

“Savage islanders murdered Pompey the Great.

“And now Suffolk dies at the hands of pirates.”

The Duke of Suffolk’s education was lacking. Cicero was actually killed by two of Marcus Antony’s soldiers: a centurion named Herennius and a tribune named Pompilius Laena. Brutus was incorrectly thought to be Julius Caesar’s bastard son. Pompey was actually killed by some of his former centurions on the coast of Egypt.

Centurions and tribunes are commanders of the ancient Roman army.

Walter Whitmore and others took the Duke of Suffolk away to be killed.

The Captain said, “And as for these whose ransom we have set, it is our pleasure that one of them depart.

“Therefore come you with us and let him” — he pointed to the first gentleman prisoner — “go.”

Everyone exited except for the first gentleman prisoner.

Walter Whitmore returned, carrying the Duke of Suffolk’s head and body.

He threw them on the ground and said, “There let his head and lifeless body lie, until the Queen his mistress bury them.”

The first gentleman prisoner said, “Oh, barbarous and bloody spectacle! I will carry his corpse to the King. If he doesn’t revenge this death, his friends will. So will the Queen, who regarded him dearly when he was alive.”

He carried away the head and body.

— 4.2 —

At Blackheath, Kent, two people named George Bevis and John Holland talked together. They were carrying staves — wooden boards, and they were waiting for Jack Cade and his rebels to arrive.

George Bevis said, “Come, and get yourself a sword, although it is made of thin wood. The rebels have been up these past two days.”

George Bevis meant “up in arms,” but Holland pretended he meant “up and out of bed.”

Holland said, “They have the more need to sleep now, then.”

George Bevis said, “I tell you, Jack Cade the clothier means to dress the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a

new nap upon it.”

A clothier makes woolen cloth. George Bevis was saying that Jack Cade was going to reform the commonwealth the way that a tailor could make old clothing seem new: turn it inside out, and give it a new surface, aka nap.

“He needs to do that, for the commonwealth is threadbare,” Holland said. “Well, I say it was never a merry world in England since gentlemen rose in rank and power.”

“Oh, what a miserable age!” George Bevis said. “Virtue is not regarded in handicraftsmen. We skilled workers are not valued.”

“The nobility think it is degrading to wear leather aprons,” Holland said.

“What’s more, the King’s Council are not good workmen,” George Bevis said.

“True,” Holland said, “and yet it is said, labor in your vocation, which is as much to say as, let the magistrates be laboring men; and therefore we laboring men should be magistrates.”

“You have hit the target,” George Bevis said, “for there’s no better sign of a fine, splendid mind than a hard, calloused hand.”

Seeing the rebels approaching, Holland said, “I see them! I see them! There’s the son of Best, the tanner of Wingham —”

“He shall have the skin of our enemies, to make dog’s-leather of,” George Bevis said.

Dog’s-leather was dogskin, a kind of leather used to make gloves.

“And there’s Dick the Butcher —” Holland said.

“Then is sin struck down like an ox, and iniquity’s throat cut like a calf,” George Bevis said.

“And there’s Smith the Weaver —” Holland said.

“*Argo*, their thread of life is spun,” George Bevis said.

“*Argo*” was an uneducated person’s way of saying “*Ergo*,” which is Latin for “Therefore.”

“Come, come, let’s fall in with them,” Holland said.

Jack Cade, Dick the Butcher, Smith the Weaver, a sawyer — a person who saws wood — and many other rebels arrived.

Using the royal plural, Jack Cade said, “We, John Cade, so named for our supposed father —”

Dick the Butcher and the other rebels knew who Jack Cade was. He was a man just like them, a rebel who was not royalty, although he was pretending to be royalty — and he and they knew that he was pretending.

Dick the Butcher said, “Or rather, so named for stealing a cade of herrings.”

A “cade” is a barrel.

Jack Cade said, “For our enemies shall fall before us, inspired with the spirit of putting down Kings and Princes.

He then ordered, “Command silence.”

Dick the Butcher shouted, “Silence!”

Jack Cade said, “My father was a Mortimer —”

Mortimer was supposed to have a better claim to the throne than King Henry VI, but Jack Cade’s father was a mortarer, a person who laid bricks. Jack Cade’s father was not a Mortimer.

Dick the Butcher said, “He was an honest man, and a good bricklayer.”

Jack Cade said, “My mother was a Plantagenet —”

A “jennet” is a lance, so his mother was a woman who knew about planting a particular phallic-shaped object, an act that sometimes results in the production of babies when an actual phallus is used.

Dick the Butcher said, “I knew her well; she was a midwife.”

Jack Cade said, “My wife was descended from the family known as the Lacies —”

Dick the Butcher said, “She was, indeed, a peddler’s daughter, and sold many laces.”

Smith the Weaver said, “But now of late, not able to travel with her furred pack, she washes bucks here at home.”

A “furred pack” is a peddler’s pack with the fur on the outside. To “wash bucks” meant to wash loads of soiled clothing. ” The word “buck” means “laundry.”

Smith the Weaver’s words had a bawdy sense. To “travel with a furred pack” meant to “labor as a prostitute.” A “pack” is a container, and a “furred pack” is a vulva (including the opening of the vagina) with pubic hair; a vagina can be a container for a penis. A “buck” is a strapping young man, and to “wash bucks” means to get them — that is, a certain part of their body — wet.

Jack Cade said, “Therefore I am of an honorable house.”

Dick the Butcher said, “Yes, by my faith, the field is honorable, and there was he born, under a hedge, because his father never had a house except the cage.”

The “cage” is a prison for petty criminals.

“Valiant I am,” Jack Cade said.

Smith the Weaver said, “He must needs be valiant; for beggary is valiant.”

“Valiant beggars” were able-bodied beggars; it was against the law to give alms to them. The penalty for able-bodied people who were caught begging was a whipping.

Jack Cade said, “I am able to endure much.”

Dick the Butcher said, “There is no question about that; for I have seen him whipped three market-days without intermission.”

“I fear neither sword nor fire,” Jack Cade said.

Smith the Weaver said, “He need not fear the sword; for his coat is of proof. His coat has had so much liquor spilled on it that it is obvious that Jack Cade is always too drunk to fear anything.”

Dick the Butcher said, “But I think he should stand in fear of fire because he was burnt on the hand for the stealing of sheep. His hand was branded with a ‘T’ for ‘Thief.’”

Jack Cade said, “Be brave, then; for your captain is brave, and vows reformation of the commonwealth. There shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny — you will get more bread for your money. The three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops — you shall get more beer. I will make it a felony to drink small beer; instead of small beer, which is weak, you shall drink strong beer. All the realm shall be common property. In Cheapside — London’s main market area — my horse shall go to eat grass, and when I am King, as King I will be —”

All the rebels present shouted, “God save your majesty!”

“I thank you, good people,” Jack Cade said. “There shall be

no money; all shall eat and drink at my expense, and I will clothe them all in one livery so that they may agree like brothers and worship me their lord.”

Dick the Butcher said, “The first thing we do, let’s kill all the lawyers.”

Jack Cade said, “I intend to do that. Isn’t this a lamentable thing, that the skin of an innocent lamb should be made into parchment, which, being scribbled over, should undo and ruin a man? Some say the bee stings, but I say that it is the bee’s wax that is used to seal legal documents that stings because I signed and sealed a legal document only once, and I have never been my own man since.”

He heard a noise and said, “What’s happening! Who’s there?”

Some rebels came forward, bringing with them a prisoner: the Clerk of Chatham. Clerks were learned men who could read, write, and do arithmetic. Clerks were also often schoolteachers.

Smith the Weaver said, “This is the Clerk of Chatham: He can write and read and do arithmetic.”

“Oh, monstrous!” Jack Cade said.

Smith the Weaver said, “We captured him while he was preparing samples of handwriting for schoolboys to copy.”

“Here’s a villain!” Jack Cade said.

Smith the Weaver said, “He has a book in his pocket with red letters in it.”

Almanacs, which were consulted by astrologers, had certain dates printed in red. Schoolbooks had capital letters printed in red.

Jack Cade said, “So then he is a conjurer.”

Dick the Butcher said, "He can make obligations, aka bonds, and write court-handwriting, which is used for legal documents."

"I am sorry to hear it," Jack Cade said. "The man is a proper man, a good-looking man, on my honor; unless I find him guilty, he shall not die."

"Come here, sirrah, I must examine you. What is your name?"

"Sirrah" was used to address a person of lower social standing than the speaker.

The Clerk replied, "Emmanuel."

Dick the Butcher said, "They write 'Emmanuel' on the top of letters. It will go hard with you."

Emmanuel is a Hebrew word that means "God is with us."

"Don't interrupt me," Jack Cade said.

Then he asked the Clerk, "Do you write your name? Or do you sign your name with a mark, like an honest plain-dealing man?"

The Clerk said, "Sir, I thank God that I have been so well brought up that I can write my name."

The rebels shouted, "He has confessed. Away with him! He's a villain and a traitor."

"Away with him, I say!" Jack Cade shouted. "Hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck."

The inkhorn was used to hold ink for writing.

A rebel took the Clerk away.

A rebel named Michael arrived and asked, "Where's our General?"

Jack Cade replied, "Here I am, you particular fellow."

"Flee, flee, flee!" Michael said. "Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother are close by, with the King's forces."

"Stand, villain, stand, or I'll fell you down," Jack Cade said. "He shall be encountered with a man as good as himself. He is only a knight, isn't he?"

Michael replied, "He is no better."

Jack Cade said, "To equal him, I will make myself a knight right now."

He knelt and then said, "Rise up, Sir John Mortimer."

He stood up and said, "Now let me at him!"

Sir Humphrey Stafford and William Stafford arrived, along with a drummer and some soldiers.

Sir Humphrey Stafford said to the rebels, "Rebellious peasants, the filth and scum of Kent, marked from birth for the gallows, lay your weapons down; go home to your cottages, forsake this servant named Jack Cade. The King is merciful, if you revolt against Jack Cade and again swear allegiance to your King."

William Stafford said, "But the King will be angry, wrathful, and inclined to blood, if you go forward and continue to rebel against him; therefore yield, or die."

Jack Cade said, "As for these silken-coated slaves, the Staffords, I care not. It is to you, good people, whom I speak, and over whom, in time to come, I hope to reign, for I am the rightful heir to the crown."

Sir Humphrey Stafford said, "Villain, your father was a plasterer, and you yourself are a shearman, aren't you?"

A shearman cuts off the extra nap from wool cloth.

Jack Cade said, "And Adam was a gardener."

A proverb stated, "When Adam delved and Eve span, /
Who was then the gentleman?"

Adam and Eve were the first human beings. After being cast out of the Garden of Eden, they had to work in order to survive.

To "delve" is to plow. "Span" is the past tense of "spin." Spinning is part of the process of making cloth.

William Stafford asked, "And what of that?"

Jack Cade replied, "By the Virgin Mary, this: Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, married the Duke of Clarence's daughter, didn't he?"

Sir Humphrey Stafford replied, "Yes, sir."

"By her he had two children at one birth," Jack Cade said.

"That's false," William Stafford said.

"There's the question," Jack Cade said, "but I say that it is true. The elder of them, being put to nurse, was by a beggar-woman stolen away, and, ignorant of his birth and parentage, he became a bricklayer when he came to age. I am his son. Deny it, if you can."

Dick the Butcher said, "It is very true; therefore, he shall be King."

Smith the Weaver said, "Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify to it; therefore, don't deny it."

Sir Humphrey Stafford said, "And will you credit the words of this base drudge, who doesn't know what he is saying?"

The rebels said, "By the Virgin Mary, we will; therefore,

get you gone. Leave.”

William Stafford said, “Jack Cade, the Duke of York has taught you to say this.”

Jack Cade said quietly so only the rebels could hear, “He lies, for I invented it myself.”

He then said out loud, “Bah, sirrah, tell the King from me that for the sake of his father, King Henry V, in whose time boys went to span-counter for French crowns, I am content that he shall reign, but I’ll be Lord Protector over him.”

King Henry V won many notable victories over the French. The English and the French fought man to man.

Span-counter is a game in which boys throw counters with the object of throwing their counter close to — within a hand-span — of the other boy’s counter.

Dick the Butcher said, “And furthermore, we’ll have the Lord Say’s head for selling the Dukedom of Maine.”

Jack Cade said, “And for good reason; for thereby is England maimed — I mean, maimed — and obliged to go about with a staff, except that my power holds it up.”

He said to the rebels, “Fellow Kings, I tell you that the Lord Say has gelded the commonwealth, and made it a eunuch, and more than that, he can speak French, and therefore he is a traitor.”

Sir Humphrey Stafford said, “Oh, gross and miserable ignorance!”

Jack Cade said, “Answer this, if you can: The Frenchmen are our enemies. And so, then, I ask only this: Can he who speaks with the tongue of an enemy be a good counselor, or not?”

The rebels shouted, “He cannot, and therefore we’ll have

his head.”

William Stafford said to his brother, “Well, seeing that gentle words will not prevail, assail them with the army of the King.”

Sir Humphrey Stafford ordered, “Herald, go; and throughout every town proclaim to be traitors those who are up in arms with Jack Cade so that those who flee before the battle ends may, even in their wives’ and children’s sight, be hanged up at their doors as an example to others.

“Those of you who are the King’s friends, follow me.”

Sir Humphrey Stafford and William Stafford exited with their drummer and soldiers.

Jack Cade said to the rebels, “And you who love the commoners, follow me. Now show yourselves to be men; it is for liberty. We will not leave one lord, one gentleman, alive. Spare none except such men as go about in shoes with hobnails, for they are thrifty and honest men, and such as would, except that they dare not, take our parts.”

Dick the Butcher said, “They are all in order and march toward us. They are drawn up in military formation.”

Jack Cade said, “But then we are in order when we are most out of order.”

He and the rebels were most in order — in military formation — when they were most out of order — rebelling against the King.

Jack Cade ordered, “Come, march forward.”

— 4.3 —

The battle took place, and Sir Humphrey Stafford and William Stafford were slain. Jack Cade and the rebels then discussed their victory.

Jack Cade asked, “Where’s Dick, the butcher of Ashford?”

Dick the Butcher said, “Here, sir.”

“They fell before you like sheep and oxen, and you behaved yourself as if you were in your own slaughterhouse; therefore, I will reward you thus: Lent shall be twice as long as it is now, and you shall have a license to kill for a hundred lacking one.”

During Lent, people did not eat meat unless they were invalids. Special licenses were granted to butchers to kill animals for food during Lent. Many licenses were granted for 99 years. However, Jack Cade was ambiguous. He could have meant that Dick the Butcher could kill 99 animals or that he could kill as many animals as would feed 99 people.

“I desire no more,” Dick the Butcher said.

Jack Cade said, “And, to speak the truth, you deserve no less.”

He pointed to Sir Humphrey Stafford’s helmet and armor and said, “This memorial of the victory I will wear, and the bodies of the Staffords shall be dragged at my horse’s heels until I come to London, where we will have the Mayor’s sword borne before us.”

Dick the Butcher said, “If we mean to thrive and do good, break open the jails and let out the prisoners.”

“Don’t worry about that — I promise I will do that,” Jack Cade said. “Come, let’s march towards London.”

— 4.4 —

In the King’s palace in London, several people were meeting: King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, the Duke of Buckingham, and Lord Say.

The King was holding a document sent to him from Jack Cade. Queen Margaret was holding the Duke of Suffolk's severed head.

Queen Margaret said, "Often I have heard that grief softens the mind and makes it fearful and degenerate. Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep. But who can cease to weep while looking at this head? Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast, but where's the body that I would embrace?"

The Duke of Buckingham asked, "What answer does your grace make to the rebels' written petition?"

King Henry VI said, "I'll send some holy bishop to entreat them to be peaceful, for God forbid that so many simple souls should perish by the sword! And I myself, rather than allow bloody war to cut them short, will parley with Jack Cade, their General. But wait, I'll read the written petition over once again."

Still holding the Duke of Suffolk's head, Queen Margaret said, "Ah, barbarous villains! Has this lovely face ruled, like a wandering planet, over me, and could it not force them to relent, who were unworthy to behold the same face?"

Astrologers believed that the planets, which wandered the night sky, unlike the fixed stars, ruled human destiny.

King Henry VI said, "Lord Say, Jack Cade has sworn to have your head."

"Yes, but I hope your highness shall have his," Lord Say replied.

"What is this, madam!" King Henry VI said to Queen Margaret. "Still lamenting and mourning for Suffolk's death? I am afraid, love, if I were the one who is dead, you

would not mourn so much for me.”

Queen Margaret replied, “No, my love. I would not mourn, but die for you.”

A messenger entered the room.

King Henry VI said, “What is it? What’s the news? Why have you come in such haste?”

“The rebels are in Southwark, just south of the Thames River. They will soon cross London Bridge,” the messenger said. “Flee, my lord! Jack Cade proclaims himself Lord Mortimer, descended from the Duke of Clarence’s house, and he calls your grace a usurper openly and vows to crown himself in Westminster.

“His army is a ragged multitude of rustics and peasants, uncivilized and merciless. The deaths of Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother have given them heart and courage to proceed. They call all scholars, lawyers, courtiers, and gentlemen traitorous parasites, and they intend to kill them.”

“Oh, graceless men!” King Henry VI said. “They lack the grace of God, and they know not what they do.”

Luke 23:34 states, *“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots”* (King James Version).

The Duke of Buckingham said, “My gracious lord, return to Kenilworth, near Warwick, until an army is raised to put them down.”

Queen Margaret said, “Ah, if the Duke of Suffolk were now alive, these Kentish rebels would be soon subdued!”

“Lord Say, the traitors hate you,” King Henry VI said. “Therefore, go away with us to Kenilworth.”

Lord Say replied, “If I go with you, then your grace’s person might be in danger. The sight of me is odious in their eyes, and in seeking to harm me, the rebels may harm you. Therefore, in this city I will stay and live alone as secretly as I may.”

Another messenger arrived and said, “Jack Cade has captured London Bridge. The citizens flee and forsake their houses. The rascal people, thirsting after prey, join with the traitor, and they jointly swear to despoil and plunder the city and your royal court.”

The Duke of Buckingham advised the King, “Don’t linger, my lord. Go away, and take to horse.”

“Come, Margaret,” King Henry VI said. “God, our hope, will succor us.”

Queen Margaret replied, “My hope is gone, now that the Duke of Suffolk is deceased.”

King Henry VI said to Lord Say, “Farewell, my lord. Don’t trust the Kentish rebels.”

“Trust nobody, for fear you will be betrayed,” the Duke of Buckingham advised.

Lord Say said, “The trust I have is in my innocence, and therefore I am bold and resolute.”

— 4.5 —

A commander named Lord Scales walked on top of a wall of the Tower of London, which King Henry VI had ordered him to defend. Two or three citizens arrived and stood below him on the ground.

Lord Scales saw them and asked, “What’s happening? Has Jack Cade been slain?”

“No, my lord,” the first citizen said. “Nor is he likely to be

slain, for the rebels have captured London Bridge, killing all those who stood against them. The Lord Mayor begs your honor for aid from the Tower of London to defend the city from the rebels.”

“Such aid as I can spare, you shall command,” Lord Scales said, “but I am troubled here with the rebels myself. The rebels have attempted to capture the Tower of London. But go to Smithfield and gather troops, and thither I will send you the great warrior Matthew Goffe.

“Fight for your King, your country, and your lives. And so, farewell, for I must go away from here again.”

— 4.6 —

On Cannon Street in London, Jack Cade and other rebels, including Dick the Butcher and Smith the Weaver, stood. Jack Cade struck his staff on London Stone, a historical landmark that is thought to be a remnant of London’s Roman history.

Jack Cade said, “Now I, Mortimer, am lord of this city. And here, sitting upon London Stone, I order and command that, at the city’s cost, the Pissing Conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign.”

The Pissing Conduit was a source of water for London’s poor.

Jack Cade continued, “And from now henceforward it shall be treason for anyone who calls me anything other than Lord Mortimer.”

A soldier came running and shouted, “Jack Cade! Jack Cade!”

Jack Cade said, “Knock him down there.”

His supporters killed the soldier.

Smith the Weaver said, “If this fellow is wise, he’ll never call you Jack Cade again. I think he has had a very fair warning.”

Dick the Butcher said, “My lord, there’s an army gathered together in Smithfield.”

Jack Cade said, “Come, then, let’s go fight with them, but first, go and set London Bridge on fire, and if you can, burn down the Tower of London, too. Come, let’s go.”

— 4.7 —

In Smithfield, London, the battle had taken place. The rebels were victorious and had killed the great warrior Matthew Goffe.

Jack Cade said, “So, sirs, now some of you go and pull down the Savoy — the residence of the Duke of Lancaster. Others of you go to the Inns of Court — the London law schools and the place where London lawyers work and reside. Down with them all!”

Dick the Butcher said, “I have a suit — a formal request — for your lordship.”

Jack Cade replied, “If you want a lordship, you shall have it for calling me ‘my lordship.’”

Dick the Butcher said, “I request only that the laws of England may come out of your mouth.”

John Holland said, “By the Mass, it will be sore — poor and painful — law, then, for he was thrust in the mouth with a spear, and the wound has not healed yet.”

Smith the Weaver said, “John, it will be stinking law because his breath stinks from eating toasted cheese.”

Jack Cade replied to Dick the Butcher, “I have thought about it, and it shall be so. All laws will come from my

mouth. Leave, and burn all the records of the realm. My mouth shall be the Parliament of England.”

John Holland said, “Then we are likely to have biting — severe — statutes, unless his teeth are pulled out.”

Jack Cade said, “And henceforward all things shall belong to the whole community — they shall be owned in common.”

A messenger arrived and said, “My lord, a prize, a prize! Here’s the Lord Say, who sold the towns in France; he is the man who made us pay one and twenty fifteens, and one shilling to the pound, the last subsidy.”

The messenger was exaggerating how much taxes the commoners paid. One and twenty fifteens totaled 140 percent.

Jack Cade said, “Well, he shall be beheaded for it ten times.”

Lord Say, guarded by the rebel George Bevis, arrived.

Jack Cade then said to Lord Say, “Ah, you say, you serge — no, you buckram lord!”

“Say” was a fine-textured cloth, “serge” was a woolen cloth, and “buckram” was a cloth that was stiffened with glue.

Jack Cade continued, “Now you are within point-blank range of our regal jurisdiction. What can you answer to my majesty for the giving up of Normandy to Mounsieur Basimecu, the Dauphin of France?”

“Mounsieur” was an uneducated pronunciation of the French “*Monsieur*,” and “Basimecu” was an uneducated pronunciation of the French “*Baise mon cul*,” aka “F**k my *ss.”

Jack Cade continued, “Be it known to you by these presence, even the presence of Lord Mortimer, that I am the besom — broom — that must sweep the court clean of such filth as you are. “

He was confusing the Latin “*per has literas presents,*” aka “by these present documents,” and “in this presence.”

Jack Cade continued, “You have most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm by erecting a grammar school, and whereas our forefathers previously had no other books but the score and the tally, which are a way of recording debts, you have caused printing to be used, and, contrary to the King, his crown, and his dignity, you have built a paper mill.”

The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates taught the youth of Athens, for which activity he was accused in a lawsuit of “corrupting the youth of Athens.”

Jack Cade continued, “It will be proved to your face that you have men about you who usually talk of a noun and a verb, and these are such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear. You have appointed justices of peace to call poor men before them about matters they were not able to answer satisfactorily. Moreover, you have put them in prison, and because they could not read, you have hanged them; when, indeed, for just that reason they have been most worthy to live.”

In this culture, priests were exempt from being tried in a criminal court, although they could be tried in an ecclesiastical court. Priests were able to read Latin and anyone who could prove that he could read Latin could avoid a sentence of capital punishment given in a criminal court by claiming benefit of clergy.

Jack Cade continued, “You ride in a footcloth, don’t you?”

He meant that Lord Say rode a horse that was decorated with a footcloth — a richly ornamented cloth that was draped over the horse's back.

“What of that?” Lord Say asked.

Jack Cade said, “By the Virgin Mary, you ought not to let your horse wear a cloak, when men who are more honest than you go about in their tights and jackets.”

Dick the Butcher added, “And work in their shirt, too, as for example I myself, who am a butcher, do.”

Jack Cade's point was that animals ought not to be better dressed than human beings.

Lord Say began, “You men of Kent —”

Dick the Butcher interrupted, “What do you say about Kent?”

Knowing that the rebels did not know Latin, Lord Say replied, “Nothing but this: It is ‘*bona terra, mala gens*.’”

“*Bona terra, mala gens*” is Latin for “a good land, a bad people.”

“Away with him, away with him!” Jack Cade said, “He speaks Latin.”

Lord Say said, “Hear me speak, and then take me where you will.

“Julius Caesar, in his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, wrote that Kent is the most civil place of this isle. Sweet is the country, because full of riches. The people are liberal, valiant, active, and wealthy, which makes me hope you are not devoid of pity.

“I did not sell Maine, I did not lose Normandy, yet I am willing to lose my life to recover them.

“As a judge, I have always given justice with mercy. Prayers and tears have moved me, but gifts never could. I did not accept bribes.

“When have I exacted any tax at your hands, except in order to maintain the King, the realm, and you?”

“I have bestowed large gifts on learned clerks because my education preferred me to the King. Seeing that ignorance is the curse of God, while knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to Heaven, unless you are possessed with Devilish spirits, you cannot but refrain from murdering me.

“This tongue has parleyed with foreign Kings for your benefit —”

Jack Cade said, “Tut, when have you struck even one blow on the battlefield?”

Lord Say said, “Great men have hands that reach far. Often have I struck those whom I never saw and struck them dead.”

George Bevis said, “Oh, monstrous coward! To come up behind folks and then strike them dead!”

Lord Say said, “These cheeks of mine are pale because I spent so much time watching out for your good.”

Jack Cade said, “Give him a box on the ear and that will make his cheeks red again.”

Lord Say said, “Long sitting as a judge to rule in poor men’s law cases has made me full of sickness and diseases.”

Jack Cade said, “You shall have a hempen caudle, then, and the help of hatchet.”

A caudle is a warm drink intended to restore invalids to health. A hempen caudle is a hangman’s noose. The word

“hatchet” refers to an executioner’s ax. After being hung and then beheaded so that one’s head can be displayed on a pole, no one has to worry about sickness and disease.

Dick the Butcher asked Lord Say, who was trembling, “Why are you quivering, man?”

“The palsy, and not fear, affects me, an old man, and makes me tremble,” Lord Say replied.

Jack Cade said, “He nods at us, as if to say, ‘I’ll get even with you.’ I’ll see if his head will stand steadier on a pole, or not. Take him away, and behead him.”

Lord Say said, “Tell me in what I have offended most? Have I sought wealth or honors? Tell me. Are my chests filled up with gold that I have extorted from others? Is my apparel sumptuous to behold? Whom have I injured with the result that you seek my death? These hands are free from the shedding of guiltless blood. This breast is free of harboring foul deceitful thoughts. Oh, let me live!”

John Cade thought, *I feel remorse in myself because of his words, but I’ll bridle my remorse. He shall die, even if it be only for pleading so well for his life.*

He said out loud, “Away with him! He has a familiar spirit under his tongue; he speaks not in God’s name.”

Witches had familiars — spirits that served them.

Jack Cade continued, “Go, take him away, I say, and strike off his head immediately; and then break into the house of his son-in-law, Sir James Cromer, and strike off his head, and bring both heads on two poles here.”

The rebels said, “It shall be done.”

“Ah, countrymen!” Lord Say said. “If when you make your prayers, God would be so obdurate as yourselves, how

would it fare with your departed souls? Therefore relent now, and save my life.”

Jack Cade ordered, “Take him away! And do as I command you.”

Some rebels, including Dick the Butcher, exited with Lord Say.

Jack Cade said, “The proudest peer in the realm shall not wear a head on his shoulders, unless he pays me tribute. Not a maid shall be married, but she shall pay to me her maidenhead before her husband can have it. Men shall hold land from me *in capite*.”

“*In capite*” was a Latin phrase meaning “from the head.” The Latin legal phrase referred to land held directly from the King, who was the head of the country.

Jack Cade continued, “And we order and command that husbands’ wives be as free and sexually available as heart can wish or tongue can tell — you will get as much sex as you could want or ask for.”

A rebel arrived and said, “Captain, London Bridge is on fire!”

Jack Cade said, “Run to Billingsgate and fetch pitch and flax and quench it.”

Pitch and flax would make the fire burn more fiercely.

Dick the Butcher and a Sergeant arrived.

The Sergeant said, “Justice, justice, I ask you for justice, sir. Let me have justice on this fellow Dick the Butcher here.”

Jack Cade asked, “Why? What has he done?”

“Sir, he has raped my wife,” the Sergeant said.

Dick the Butcher said to Jack Cade, “Why, my lord, he would have arrested me and so I went and entered my action in his wife’s proper house.”

“Arrested” also meant “stopped.”

“Entered my action in his wife’s proper house” meant 1) “stated my law case in his wife’s house,” and 2) “entered my penis and its action in his wife’s body.”

Jack Cade said, “Dick, follow your suit in her common place.”

This meant 1) “Dick, pursue your law case in her common meetinghouse,” and 2) “Dick, pursue your sexual desire in her vagina, which is open to all.”

John Cade then said to the Sergeant, “You whoreson villain, you are a Sergeant — you’ll take any man by the throat for twelve pence, and arrest a man when he’s at dinner, and have him in prison before the food is out of his mouth.”

He then said to Dick the Butcher, “Go, Dick, take him away from here. Cut out his tongue for deception, cripple him for running, and, to conclude, brain him with his own mace.”

Dick the Butcher took the Sergeant away.

A rebel asked Jack Cade, “My lord, when shall we go to Cheapside and take up commodities upon our bills?”

“Take up commodities upon our bills” meant 1) “Buy goods [commodities] on credit [bills],” 2) “Take women’s sexual organs [commodities] upon our penises [bills],” aka rape women, and 3) “Steal [Take] goods [commodities] by using our bills [long-handled weapons with blades].”

Jack Cade said, “By the Virgin Mary, right away. He who

will lustily stand to it shall go with me and take up these commodities following — item, a gown, a kirtle [outer petticoat], a petticoat, and a smock [ladies' undergarment].”

“Stand to it” meant “get an erection.”

The rebels shouted, “Oh, splendid!”

Two rebels arrived, carrying Lord Say's head and Sir James Cromer's head on two poles.

Jack Cade said, “But isn't this more splendid? Let them kiss one another, for they loved each other well when they were alive.”

The two rebels holding the poles brought the heads together as if the heads were kissing.

Jack Cade continued, “Now part them again, lest they consult about the giving up of some more towns in France.

“Soldiers, defer the despoiling and plundering of the city until night, for with these heads borne before us, instead of maces — staffs of office — we will ride through the streets, and at every corner we will have them kiss. Away! Let's go!”

— 4.8 —

A battle was being fought at Southwark, a district of London.

Jack Cade ordered, “Up Fish Street! Down Saint Magnus' Corner! Kill and knock down! Throw them into the Thames River!”

Fish Street was a major approach to London Bridge. Saint Magnus' Corner was at the lower end of Fish Street and the place where Saint Magnus' Church stood.

A parley sounded. The Duke of Buckingham and Lord

Clifford, who were representatives of King Henry VI, wished to talk to the rebels.

“What noise is this I hear?” Jack Cade said. “Does anyone dare to be so bold to sound either a retreat or a parley, when I command them to kill?”

The Duke of Buckingham and Lord Clifford arrived with many soldiers.

The Duke of Buckingham, who had heard Jack Cade’s second question, replied, “Yes, here are those who dare and will disturb you.

“Know, Cade, we come as ambassadors from the King to the commoners whom you have misled, and here we officially declare free pardon to all who will forsake you and go home in peace.”

Lord Clifford said, “What do you say, countrymen? Will you relent, and will you yield to mercy while it is offered to you? Or will you let a rebel lead you to your deaths?”

“Whoever loves the King and will embrace his pardon, let him fling up his cap and cry, ‘God save his majesty!’

“Whoever hates the King and does not honor his father, Henry V, who made all France quake, let him shake his weapon defiantly at us and pass by.”

All of the rebels except Jack Cade flung their caps up in the air and cried, “God save the King! God save the King!”

Jack Cade said, “Buckingham and Clifford, are you so daring? And you, base peasants, do you believe him? Will you have to be hanged with your worthless pardons about your necks? Has my sword broken through London gates so that you would leave me at the White Hart Inn where I am residing in Southwark? I thought you would never have surrendered these weapons until you had recovered your

ancient freedom, but you are all recreants and despicable people, and you delight to live in slavery to the nobility.

“Let them break your backs with burdens, take your houses over your heads, and rape your wives and daughters in front of your faces. As for me, I will look out for myself, and so may God’s curse fall upon you all!”

All of the rebels shouted, “We’ll follow Cade! We’ll follow Cade!”

Lord Clifford asked, “Is Cade the son of Henry V? Is that why you exclaim you’ll go with him? Will he conduct you through the heart of France, and make the lowest born of you Earls and Dukes?”

“Alas, he has no home, no place to fly to, nor does he know how to live except by pillaging, unless he makes his living by robbing your friends and us.

“Wouldn’t it be a shame, if while you live as rebels, the fearsome French, whom you recently vanquished, would make a start over seas and vanquish you? I think already in this civil broil I see them lording it in London streets, crying ‘*Villiago!*’ — ‘Villain!’ — at all whom they meet.

“It is better that ten thousand lowly born Cades die than that you should kneel to a Frenchman’s mercy.

“Go to France, go to France, and get what you have lost. Spare England, for it is your native coast. King Henry VI has money, you are strong and manly, and God is on our side, so don’t doubt that you will be victorious.”

All the rebels except Jack Cade shouted, “Clifford! Clifford! We’ll follow the King and Clifford.”

Jack Cade thought, *Was a feather ever so lightly blown to and fro as this multitude? The name of King Henry V drags them to a hundred deeds I don’t like, and it makes them*

leave me desolate. I see them lay their heads together as they plot to capture me. My sword must make a way for me, for there is no staying here.

He said out loud, “In despite of the Devils and Hell, I will make my way through the middle of you! May the Heavens and honor be my witnesses that no lack of resolution in me, but only my followers’ base and ignominious treasons, makes me take myself to my heels.”

He dashed through the crowd of rebels and escaped.

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Has he fled? Go, some of you, and follow him. Whoever brings his head to the King shall have a thousand crowns for his reward.”

Some of the rebels exited.

The Duke of Buckingham added, “Follow me, soldiers. We’ll devise a way to reconcile you all to King Henry VI.”

— 4.9 —

Trumpets sounded, and King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, and the Duke of Somerset, plus some attendants, appeared on the wall of Kenilworth Castle.

King Henry VI said, “Was there ever a King who enjoyed an Earthly throne and could command no more content than I? As soon as I had crept out of my cradle at nine months old, I was made a King. Never has a subject longed to be a King as I long and wish to be a subject.”

The Duke of Buckingham and Lord Clifford arrived.

The Duke of Buckingham shouted to King Henry VI, “Health and glad tidings to your majesty!”

King Henry VI asked, “Buckingham, has the traitor Cade been captured? Or did he make a strategic retreat to make himself strong?”

The rebels, wearing nooses around their necks as a sign of submission, arrived.

Lord Clifford said, “Jack Cade has fled, my lord, and all his soldiers yield, and humbly so, with nooses on their necks. They await your highness’ judgment of life or death.”

King Henry VI said, “Then, Heaven, set open your everlasting gates to entertain my vows of thanks and praise!

“Soldiers, this day you have redeemed your lives, and showed how well you love your Prince and country. Continue always in this so good a mind, and assure yourselves that Henry, although he is unfortunate, will never be unkind. And so, with thanks and pardon to you all, I dismiss you so you can return to your different counties.”

The rebels shouted, “God save the King! God save the King!”

The rebels exited.

A messenger arrived and said, “If it pleases your grace to be informed, know that the Duke of York has just come from Ireland, and with a powerful and mighty army of gallowglasses, aka heavily armed Irish soldiers, and fierce kerns, aka lightly armed Irish soldiers, he is marching here in proud array, and he continually proclaims as he comes along that his weapons are only to be used to remove from you the Duke of Somerset, whom he calls a traitor.”

King Henry VI said, “Thus stands my distressed country, between Cade and York. It is like a ship that, having escaped a tempest, is immediately calmed and then boarded by a pirate.

“Just now Cade was driven back and his men dispersed, and now York has come with weapons to take Cade’s place.

“I request that you, Buckingham, go and meet him, and ask him what’s the reason for these weapons of his. Tell him I’ll send Edmund Beaufort, the Duke of Somerset, to the Tower of London.

“Duke of Somerset, we’ll commit you to the Tower until the Duke of York’s army is dismissed from him.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “My lord, I’ll yield myself to prison willingly, or to death, to do my country good.”

King Henry VI said to the Duke of Buckingham, “In any case, don’t be too harsh in the discussion you have with the Duke of York, for he is fierce and cannot endure hard language.”

“I will do as you say, my lord,” the Duke of Buckingham replied, “and I don’t doubt that I will arrange matters so that they shall turn out to be for your good.”

King Henry VI said to Queen Margaret, “Come, wife, let’s go in, and learn to govern better, for England may yet curse my wretched reign.”

— 4.10 —

Jack Cade stood in the garden of Alexander Iden in Kent.

He said to himself, “Damn ambition! Damn myself, who has a sword, and yet is almost starved to death! These five days I have hidden in the woods outside this garden and have not dared to peep out, for all the country is looking for me, but now I am so hungry that even if I might have a lease of my life for a thousand years I still could stay no longer in the woods and starve.

“Because of my hunger, I have climbed over a brick wall into this garden to see if I can eat plants, or pick a sallet again, which is not amiss to cool a man’s stomach this hot weather.”

Despite his hunger, Jack Cade was still able to engage in word play. The phrase “a sallet” meant both 1) a salad, and 2) a type of helmet.

He said to himself, “I think this word ‘sallet’ was born to do me good, for many a time, except for a sallet, my brainpan would had been cleft with a halberd, and many a time, when I have been thirsty and bravely marching, it has served me instead of a quart pot to drink in; and now the word ‘sallet’ must serve me to feed on.”

Alexander Iden entered his garden.

Not seeing Jack Cade, he said to himself, “Lord, who would live troubled in the court, when he instead may enjoy such quiet walks as these? This small inheritance my father left me makes me content and happy, and to me it is worth a monarchy. I don’t seek to grow great by other people’s waning, or to gather wealth by any evil means possible. It is enough that what I have maintains my well-being and sends the poor from my gate well pleased with the alms I have given them.”

Jack Cade said to himself, *Here’s the lord of the soil come to seize me for a stray, for entering his fee-simple without leave.*

Alexander Iden owned the estate in fee-simple. It was his private possession in perpetuity unless he sold it. The owner of a private estate was permitted to take possession of any stray animals that wandered onto his property.

Jack Cade said to Alexander Iden, “Ah, villain, you will betray me, and get a thousand crowns from the King for carrying my head to him, but I’ll make you eat iron like an ostrich, and swallow my sword like a great pin, before you and I part.”

People in this culture believed that ostriches swallowed

iron nails.

Alexander Iden said, “Why, rude fellow, whoever you are, I don’t know you. Why, then, should I betray you? Isn’t it enough to break into my garden, and, like a thief, to come to rob my grounds, climbing over my walls in spite of me the owner? Must you also defy me with these insolent words?”

Jack Cade replied, “Defy you! Yes, by the best blood — that of Christ — that ever was shed, and I will pull your beard, too. Look well at me. I have eaten no food these five days, yet if you and your five men attack me, if I do not leave you all as dead as a doornail, then I pray to God I may never eat plants anymore.”

The phrase “your five men” was an insult. Jack Cade was implying that Alexander Iden had no more than five men working on his estate.

Alexander Iden said, “It shall never be said, while England stands, that Alexander Iden, an esquire of Kent, took advantage of superiority of numbers to combat a poor famished man.”

An esquire held the rank of a gentleman just below that of a knight.

He continued, “Oppose your steadfast-gazing eyes to mine, and see if you can stare me down with your looks. Compare us limb to limb, and you will see that you are far the lesser. Your hand is only a finger compared to my fist. Your leg is only a stick compared with this truncheon — thick club — that is my leg. My foot shall fight with all the strength you have, and if my arm is lifted in the air, then your grave is already dug in the earth.

“As for words, whose greatness answers words, let this my sword report what speech forbears. Big words answer big

words, but I will let my sword say what words cannot say.”

Jack Cade replied, “By my valor, you are the most complete champion whom I ever heard!”

He then said to his sword, “Steel, if you blunt your edge, or don’t cut the burly boned country boor into joints of beef before you sleep in your sheath, I will beg God on my knees that you may be melted down and turned into hobnails for shoes.”

The two men fought with swords, and Alexander Iden mortally wounded Jack Cade.

Jack Cade cried, “Oh, I am slain! Famine and no one else has slain me. Let ten thousand Devils come against me, and give me just the ten meals I have not eaten the past five days, and I’ll defy them all. Wither, garden, and be henceforth a cemetery to all who dwell in this house because the unconquered soul of Cade is fleeing.”

Alexander Iden said, “Is it Jack Cade whom I have slain, that monstrous traitor?”

“Sword, I will hallow and glorify you for this deed of yours, and I will have you hung over my tomb when I am dead. Never shall this blood be wiped from your point, but you shall wear it like a herald’s red coat to emblaze and proclaim publicly like a coat of arms the honor that your master has gotten.”

“Iden, farewell, and be proud of your victory,” Jack Cade said. “Tell the region of Kent from me that she has lost her best man, and exhort all the people in the world to be cowards, for I, who never feared anyone, have been vanquished by famine, not by valor.”

He died.

Alexander Iden said, “How much you have wronged me,

let Heaven be my judge. Die, damned wretch, the curse of her who gave birth to you, and as I pierce your body with my sword” — he did just that — “so wish I that I might thrust your soul to Hell.

“I drag your corpse by the heels with your head dragging from here to a dunghill that shall be your grave, and there I will cut off your most graceless and wicked head, which I will bear in triumph to the King, leaving your trunk for crows to feed upon.”

CHAPTER 5 (2 Henry VI)

— 5.1 —

In the fields between Dartford and Blackheath, the Duke of York and his army of Irish soldiers stood. Drummers and soldiers holding battle flags were present.

The Duke of York said to himself, “From Ireland thus come I, York, to claim my right to be King of England, and pluck the crown from feeble Henry VI’s head. Ring, bells, aloud, and burn, bonfires, clear and bright, to welcome great England’s lawful King.

“Ah! *Sancta majestas* — sacred majesty — who would not buy you at a high price?

“Let them obey who don’t know how to rule. This hand was made to handle nothing but gold. I cannot give due action to my words, unless a sword or scepter balance my hand. My hand shall have a scepter, I swear as I have a soul, and on that scepter I’ll impale the flower-de-luce — the heraldic lily — of France.”

He saw the Duke of Buckingham coming toward him.

“Whom have we here?” the Duke of York asked. “Buckingham, to disturb me? The King has sent him, I am sure. I must dissemble and deceive him.”

“York, if you mean well, I greet you well,” the Duke of Buckingham said.

“Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham, I accept your greeting. Are you a messenger, or have you come at your own pleasure?”

“I am a messenger from King Henry VI, our dread-inspiring liege in order to learn the reason for these

weapons in a time of peace, and the reason why you, being a subject as I am, against your oath and the true and loyal allegiance you have sworn, should raise so great an army without your King's leave, and the reason why you dare to bring your army so near the King's court."

The Duke of York thought, *I can scarcely speak because my anger is so great. Oh, I could hack up rocks and fight with flint because I am so angry at these abject terms he used to describe me — am I a subject! And now, like Ajax Telamonius, I could expend my fury on sheep or oxen the way he did after the armor of Achilles was awarded to Odysseus instead of to him, the rightful claimant, during the Trojan War. I am far better born than is King Henry VI. My claim to the throne is better. I am more like a King and more Kingly in my thoughts, but I must make fair weather and pretend to be friendly yet a while longer, until Henry is weaker and I am stronger.*

He said out loud, "Buckingham, I ask you to pardon me because I have given you no answer all this while. My mind was troubled with deep melancholy. The reason why I have brought this army here is to remove proud Somerset from the King. The Duke of Somerset is seditious to his grace the King and to the state."

"That is too much presumption on your part," the Duke of Buckingham said. "But if your weapons have no other purpose, know that the King has yielded to your demand: The Duke of Somerset is imprisoned in the Tower of London."

"Upon your honor, is he really a prisoner?" the Duke of York asked.

"Upon my honor, he is really a prisoner," the Duke of Buckingham replied.

The Duke of York said, "Then, Buckingham, I dismiss my

army.

“Soldiers, I thank you all. Disperse yourselves. Meet me tomorrow in St. George’s field. You shall have pay and everything you wish.

“And Buckingham, let my sovereign, virtuous Henry VI, be entrusted with my eldest son — no, with all my sons — as pledges of my obedience and love. I’ll send them all to him as willingly as I am willing to live. Lands, goods, horses, armor, anything I have, are the King’s to use, as long as the Duke of Somerset dies.”

The Duke of Buckingham replied, “York, I commend and praise your kind submission. We two will go into his highness’ tent.”

The two men locked arms together.

King Henry VI and some attendants arrived.

The King said, “Buckingham, does York intend no harm to us? I see that he is marching with you arm in arm.”

The two men unlocked arms, and the Duke of York said, “In all submission and humility, I, York, present myself to your highness.”

King Henry VI said, “Then what is the purpose of these soldiers you have brought?”

The Duke of York replied, “To heave the traitor Somerset away from here, and to fight against that monstrous rebel Cade, who since I arrived I have heard to be defeated and overthrown.”

Alexander Iden arrived; he was carrying Jack Cade’s head.

Alexander Iden said to King Henry VI, “If one so uncultivated and of such a low condition may pass into the presence of a King, here I present to your grace a traitor’s

head, the head of Cade, whom I in combat slew.”

“The head of Cade!” King Henry VI said. “Great God, how just You are! Oh, let me view his visage, now dead, that while living wrought me such exceeding trouble.

“Tell me, my friend, are you the man who slew him?”

“I was, if it please your majesty.”

“What is your name?” King Henry VI asked. “What rank are you?”

“My name is Alexander Iden. I am a poor esquire of Kent, and I love and honor my King.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “So please it you, my lord, it is not amiss that he be created a knight as a reward for his good service.”

King Henry VI said, “Iden, kneel down.”

He knelt.

King Henry VI tapped Alexander Iden’s shoulders with a sword and said, “Rise up a knight, Sir Alexander Iden. We give you a thousand marks as a reward, and we command that you henceforth serve us.”

“May Iden live to merit such a bounty and never live otherwise than as loyal to his liege!” Sir Alexander Iden said.

Queen Margaret arrived with the Duke of Somerset, who had been imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Seeing them, King Henry VI whispered to the Duke of Buckingham, “Look, Buckingham, Somerset is coming here with the Queen. Go, tell her to hide him quickly from the Duke of York.”

Queen Margaret, who had heard him, said, “He shall not hide his head on account of a thousand Yorks, but instead he will boldly stand and face him.”

The Duke of York said, “What is this? Is Somerset at liberty? Then, York, unloose your long-imprisoned thoughts, and let your tongue be equal with your heart. Shall I endure the sight of Somerset?”

“Lying King! Why have you broken your word to me, knowing how badly I can endure being deceived?”

“Did I call you King? No, you are not a King. You are not fit to govern and rule multitudes — not you, who dare not, and cannot, rule a traitor such as the Duke of Somerset.

“That head of yours does not become a crown. Your hand was made to grasp a palmer’s staff — the staff of a religious pilgrim — and not to grace an awe-inspiring Princely scepter.

“That gold crown you are wearing must round engirt these brows of mine. My smile and frown, like Achilles’ spear, is able with the change to kill and cure. Achilles’ spear could inflict a mortal wound and according to folklore, cure the mortal wound it inflicted. Achilles’ spear wounded Telephus, and then the rust of the spear cured Telephus. My frown can kill; my smile can cure.

“Here is a hand worthy to hold a scepter up and with the same to enact controlling laws.

“Give way to me. By Heaven, you shall rule no more over me, whom Heaven created to be your ruler.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “You monstrous traitor! I arrest you, York, on a charge of capital treason against the King and crown. Obey, audacious traitor; kneel for grace and mercy.”

“Would you have me kneel?” the Duke of York said. “First let me ask these knees of mine if they can endure my bowing a knee to any man.

“Sirrah, call in my sons to be my bail.”

One of his attendants exited.

The Duke of York continued, “I know that before they will have me go into custody, they’ll pawn their swords for my freedom.”

Queen Margaret ordered, “Call Clifford here! Tell him to come in all haste to say if the bastard boys of York shall be the surety for their traitor father.”

The Duke of Buckingham exited.

The Duke of York said to Queen Margaret, “Oh, blood-besotted Neapolitan, outcast of Naples, England’s bloody scourge!”

Queen Margaret’s father was the titular King of Naples.

The Duke of York continued, “The sons of York, your betters in their birth, shall be their father’s bail, and they shall be bane — ruination — to those who will refuse to allow the boys to be my surety!”

Two of his sons — Edward and Richard — entered the room. In the future, they would be King Edward IV and King Richard III.

The Duke of York said, “See where my sons are coming here. I’ll warrant they’ll make it good.”

“Make it good” was ambiguous. It could mean 1) “be their father’s bail” or 2) “be bane — ruination — to those who will refuse to allow the boys to be my surety.”

Lord Clifford and his son, young Clifford, entered the

room.

Queen Margaret said, “And here comes Lord Clifford to deny their bail for you.”

Lord Clifford knelt before King Henry VI and said, “Health and all happiness to my lord the King!”

The Duke of York said, “I thank you, Clifford. What news do you have?”

Clifford was loyal to King Henry VI, and so he became angry when he heard the Duke of York’s words.

Using the royal plural, the Duke of York said, “No, do not frighten us with an angry look. We are your sovereign, Clifford, so kneel again. We pardon you for mistakenly kneeling to Henry.”

“Henry VI is my King, York,” Lord Clifford angrily replied. “I have not made a mistake, but you are much mistaken if you think that I have made a mistake.

“Take this man — York — to Bedlam, the Bethlehem Hospital for the Insane in London! Has the man grown mad?”

“Yes, Clifford,” King Henry VI replied. “A bedlam — insane — and ambitious disposition makes the Duke of York oppose himself against his King.”

“He is a traitor,” Lord Clifford said. “Let him be taken to the Tower of London, and chop away that rebellious head of his.”

“He has been arrested, but he will not obey,” Queen Margaret said. “His sons, he says, shall give their words and be the surety for him.”

“You will, won’t you, sons?” the Duke of York said to his two sons who were present.

Edward replied, “Yes, noble father, if our words will serve.”

Richard added, “And if our words will not serve, then our weapons shall.”

“Why, what a brood of traitors have we here!” Lord Clifford said.

“Look in a glass, and call your image a traitor,” the Duke of York said. “I am your King, and you are a false-heart traitor.”

He then ordered, “Call here to the stake my two brave bears, who with just the shaking of their chains may fill these dangerous-lurking curs with wonder.

“Tell Salisbury and Warwick to come to me.”

The Duke of York called the Earl of Salisbury and his son, the Earl of Warwick, bears because their heraldic crest was a rampant — standing with its forefeet in the air — bear. The bear was chained to a knobby staff.

The Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of Warwick were very near and arrived immediately.

Lord Clifford said to the Duke of York, “Are these your bears? We’ll bait your bears to death and manacle the bear-keeper — you — in their chains, if you dare to bring them to the baiting place.”

Bear-baiting was a “sport” in which a bear was tied to a stake and then tormented by dogs.

Richard replied, “Often I have seen a hot overweening cur run back and bite its owner, because the owner was holding him back from the bear. The dog, once loose, got wounded by the bear’s deadly paw and clapped its tail between its legs and yelped, and the same thing will happen to you if

you oppose yourselves to and try to fight Lord Warwick.”

Lord Clifford replied to Richard, “Go away, you heap of wrath, you foul improperly formed lump, you who are as crooked in your manners as in your shape!”

Richard’s back was crooked as a result of scoliosis.

The Duke of York said, “We shall heat you thoroughly soon.”

The heat would be the heat of battle.

“Take care, lest by your heat you burn yourselves,” Lord Clifford replied.

King Henry VI said, “Why, Earl of Warwick, has your knee forgotten to bow?”

“Old Earl of Salisbury, shame to your silver hair, you mad misleader of your brain-sick son! Will you on your deathbed play the ruffian, and seek for sorrow with your eyes? You are an old man and soon to die, so why seek trouble through the eyeglasses of an old man?”

“Oh, where is faith? Oh, where is loyalty? If it has been banished from the frosty-haired head of an old man, where shall it find a harbor on the Earth?”

“Will you go and dig a grave in seeking out war, and shame your honorable age with blood?”

“Why are you old, and lack wisdom? Or why do you abuse your wisdom, if you have it?”

“For shame! Out of your duty to me, bend your knee to me — your knee that is bowing to the grave with great old age.”

The Earl of Salisbury said, “My lord, I have carefully considered the title and claim of this most renowned Duke

of York to the throne, and in my conscience I do consider his grace to be the rightful heir to England's royal seat."

"Haven't you sworn allegiance to me?" King Henry VI asked.

"I have," the Earl of Salisbury replied.

"Can you get forgiveness from Heaven for breaking such an oath?" King Henry VI asked.

"It is a great sin to swear a sinful oath, but it is a greater sin to keep a sinful oath," the Earl of Salisbury replied. "Who can be bound by any solemn vow to do a murderous deed, to rob a man, to rape a spotless virgin and take her chastity, to bereave the orphan of his patrimony, to wring from the widow her right that is in accordance with custom to inherit part of her husband's estate, and have no other reason for this wrong except that he was bound by a solemn oath?"

Queen Margaret said, "A subtle and cunning traitor needs no sophist — no specious reasoner."

King Henry VI ordered, "Call the Duke of Buckingham, and tell him to arm himself."

The Duke of York said, "Call Buckingham and all the friends you have. I am resolved to have either death or the dignity of high office. Either I will die, or I will be King."

"The first — death — I promise you, if dreams prove to be true," Lord Clifford said.

"It is best for you to go to bed and dream again," the Earl of Warwick said. "You ought to keep yourself from the tempest of the battlefield."

Lord Clifford said, "I am resolved to bear a greater storm than any you can conjure up today, and that I'll write upon your burgonet, if I might know you by your household

badge — your distinctive emblem.”

A burgonet is a helmet with a visor. On top of the helmet is the family crest — the distinctive emblem of the family.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Now, by my father’s badge, old Neville’s crest, which is a rampant bear chained to a ragged staff, this day I’ll wear it on top of my burgonet, just as on a mountain top the cedar — a symbol of royalty — stands and keeps its leaves in spite of any storm. I will do this in order to frighten you when you see my crest.”

Lord Clifford replied, “And from your burgonet I’ll rend your bear and tread it under foot with all contempt, despite the bear-keeper who protects the bear.”

Young Clifford said, “And so let’s go to arms, victorious father, to quell the rebels and their accomplices.”

“Ha!” Richard said. “Show some charity! Don’t be shameful! Don’t speak spitefully, for you shall eat with Jesus Christ tonight.”

“You foul and misshapen individual, that’s more than you can know and tell,” young Clifford said.

“If not in Heaven, you’ll surely eat in Hell,” Richard replied.

The two sides exited in different directions.

— 5.2 —

The first battle of St. Albans was taking place on 22 May 1455. At this particular location, a sign of the Castle, an inn at St. Albans, was displayed.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Lord Clifford of Cumberland, it is Warwick who is calling for you, and if you don’t hide yourself from the bear, then now, as the angry trumpet sounds the battle call and dying men’s cries fill the empty

air, Clifford, I say, come forth and fight me.

“Proud northern lord, Clifford of Cumberland, the Earl of Warwick is hoarse with calling you to arms.”

The Duke of York arrived, on foot.

Seeing him, the Earl of Warwick said, “How are you now, my noble lord? What! You are on foot!”

The Duke of York explained, “The deadly handed, death-dealing Lord Clifford slew my steed, but foe to foe I have encountered him and made a prey for carrion kites and crows out of the fine, bonny beast he loved so well.”

Lord Clifford arrived.

The Earl of Warwick said to him, “For one or both of us, the time to die has come.”

“Stop, Warwick,” the Duke of York said, “seek out some other prey, for I myself must hunt this deer to death.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Then do so nobly, York; you are fighting for a crown.

“I intend, Lord Clifford, to thrive in battle today, and so it grieves my soul to leave you unassailed by me.”

The Earl of Warwick exited.

The Duke of York looked at Lord Clifford instead of immediately fighting him.

“What is it you are seeing in me, York?” Lord Clifford asked. “Why do you pause and not begin to fight?”

“I should love your brave bearing, except that you are so firmly my enemy,” the Duke of York replied.

“Your prowess ought not to lack praise and esteem,” Lord Clifford said, “except it is used ignobly and treasonably.”

The Duke of York said, “So let my prowess help me now against your sword as I in justice and legitimate claim to the throne express and use it.”

Lord Clifford said, “I put both my soul and my body in the fight!”

“A dreadful wager! Prepare to fight immediately,” the Duke of York replied.

The two fought, and the Duke of York mortally wounded Lord Clifford.

“*La fin couronne les oeuvres,*” Lord Clifford said just before dying.

The French sentence meant, “The end crowns the works.”

Lord Clifford meant that he had lived an honorable life and died an honorable death.

The Duke of York said, respectfully, “Thus war has given you peace, for you are still.

“May peace be with his soul, Heaven, if it be your will!”

The Duke of York exited, and young Clifford arrived.

Young Clifford said, “Shame and confusion! All the forces of King Henry VI are being routed. Fear frames disorder, and disorder wounds where it should guard — in all the confusion, we are killing our own soldiers.

“Oh, war, you son of Hell, whom the angry Heavens make their minister of vengeance, throw hot coals of vengeance in the frozen-by-fear bosoms of our army! Let no soldier flee.

“He who is truly dedicated to war has no self-love, and he who loves himself doesn’t have in his own essence but only by circumstance the reputation of being a courageous

person. A person who has self-love wants to stay alive.”

He saw his father’s corpse and said, “Oh, let the vile world end, and the preordained flames of the last day knit Earth and Heaven together! Now let the general trumpet blow its blast and proclaim that the end of the world and Doomsday — the Day of Judgment — have arrived. Let personal matters and petty sounds cease!

“Were you fated, dear father, to lose your youth in peace, and to achieve the silver livery — grey hair — of judicious, wise old age, and in your respected state and during your days in which you should be sitting in a chair, thus to die in ruffian battle?

“Now, at this sight of your corpse, my heart has turned to stone, and as long as it is mine, it shall be stony.

“The Duke of York does not spare our old men, and no more will I spare his side’s babes. The tears of virgins shall be to me just like the dew is to fire.”

This culture believed that drops of water made a fire hotter by turning flames into burning coals.

Young Clifford continued, “And beauty, which often subdues the tyrant, shall to my flaming wrath be oil and flax.”

Oil and flax are highly flammable.

He continued, “Henceforth I will have nothing to do with pity. If I meet an infant of the House of York, I will cut it into as many pieces as wild Medea did young Absyrtus, her brother.”

While fleeing in a ship with Jason, Medea murdered her young brother and cut his corpse into pieces that she dropped into the sea. Her father, who was pursuing them, stopped to collect the pieces of his son’s corpse. Through

this stratagem, Medea and Jason were able to escape.

Young Clifford continued, "In cruelty I will seek my fame."

He picked up the body of his father and said, "Come, you new ruin of old Clifford's house. As Aeneas bore his old father, Anchises, on his shoulders as he fled burning Troy, so I bear you upon my manly shoulders. But then Aeneas bore a living load, who was not as heavy as these woes of mine."

He exited, carrying the corpse of his father.

Richard and the Duke of Somerset arrived and began to fight.

Richard killed the Duke of Somerset and said, "So, lie there. For underneath an alehouse's paltry sign, that of the Castle in St. Albans, you, Somerset, have died and made the wizard who predicted your death famous."

Much earlier, the Duchess of Gloucester, in the presence of a witch, a conjuror (wizard), and two priests, had consulted a spirit about the Duke of Somerset. The spirit had replied, "Let him shun castles. Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains than where castles mounted stand."

Richard then said, "Sword, hold your temper. Keep your edge; stay sharp. Heart, continue to be wrathful. Priests pray for enemies, but Princes kill."

The battle continued.

King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, and their attendants knew that they had lost the battle.

Queen Margaret said to King Henry VI, "Flee, my lord! You are slow; for shame, flee away!"

"Can we outrun the Heavens and escape what God sends

us?” King Henry VI asked. “Good Margaret, stay.”

“What are you made of?” Queen Margaret asked, exasperated. “You’ll neither fight nor flee. Manhood, wisdom, and defense all agree that the wise thing to do now is to retreat from the enemy and keep ourselves safe by whatever means we can. All we can do is flee.

“If you are captured, then we would see the lowest point of all our fortunes, but if we happen to escape, as well we may, unless your neglect and indifference to taking action keeps us from escaping, we shall go to London, where you are loved and where this breach now made in our fortunes may readily be stopped. We can recover from this defeat.”

Young Clifford arrived and said, “Except that my heart is set on causing future trouble for our enemy, I would speak blasphemy before I would advise you to flee, but flee you must. Hopeless defeat reigns in the hearts of all the remaining fragments of our army.

“Flee, for your deliverance and safety! If you do so, we will live to see their day and give them our misfortune. We will live to have a day of victory like theirs and they will have a day of misfortune like ours.

“Flee, my lord, flee!”

— 5.3 —

The battle was over. Victorious, the Duke of York met with his son Richard and the Earl of Warwick. Soldiers, including a drummer and a soldier holding a battle flag, were present.

The Duke of York said, “Who can report what happened to the Earl of Salisbury, that lion in the winter of old age who in his rage forgets the bruises of old age and all the attacks of time, and who, like a fine fellow with the unwrinkled

forehead of youth, restores himself with the opportunity to fight in a battle? This happy day is not itself — not happy — nor have we won one foot of land, if Salisbury is lost to us through death.”

Richard said, “My noble father, three times today I helped him to his horse, and three times today I bestrode him to defend him. Three times today I led him away and persuaded him not to undertake any further action in the battle.

“But still, wherever danger was, there I always met him. And like rich hangings in a plain, simple, homely house, so was his will in his old feeble body.

“But, noble as he is, look at where he is coming here.”

The Earl of Salisbury arrived and said to those present, “Now, by my sword, well have you fought today. By the Mass, so did we all fight well today.

“I thank you, Richard. God knows how long it is I have to live, and it has pleased Him that three times today you have defended me against imminent death.

“Well, lords, we have not got that which we have. We have won a victory, but we have not won a complete victory. It is not enough that our foes have fled this time because they are enemies who are able to regroup and to fight again.”

The Duke of York said, “I know our safest course of action is to follow them, for, as I hear, the King has fled to London, to call an immediate court of Parliament. Let us pursue him before the formal orders to attend Parliament go forth.

“What does Lord Warwick advise? Shall we go after them?”

“After them?” the Earl of Warwick said. “No, before them,

if we can.

“Now, by my faith, lords, it was a glorious day. St. Albans’ battle won by famous York shall be famous in all ages to come.

“Let the drums and trumpets sound, and let all of us go to London, and may more such days of victory like these befall us!”

Chapter XX: HENRY VI, PART 3

CAST OF CHARACTERS (3 *Henry VI*)

Male Characters

King Henry VI.

Edward, Prince of Wales, King Henry VI's son.

Louis XI, King of France.

Duke of Somerset. At the end of 2 *Henry VI*, the then Duke of Somerset is killed; at the beginning of 3 *Henry VI*, Richard is holding his severed head. This Duke of Somerset is the son of the earlier Duke of Somerset.

Duke of Exeter.

Earl of Oxford.

Earl of Northumberland.

Earl of Westmoreland.

Lord Clifford. This is the young Clifford of 2 *Henry VI*. His father was killed near the end of 2 *Henry VI*.

Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York.

Edward, Earl of March, afterwards King Edward IV, York's son.

Edmund, Earl of Rutland, York's son.

George, afterwards Duke of Clarence, York's son.

Richard, afterwards Duke of Gloucester, York's son; later, he becomes King Richard III.

Duke of Norfolk.

Marquess of Montague, the Earl of Warwick's brother and

the Duke of York's nephew. The Duke of York and the Marquess of Montague sometimes call each other "brother" as a term of affection.

Earl of Warwick.

Earl of Pembroke.

Lord Hastings.

Lord Stafford.

Sir John Mortimer and Sir Hugh Mortimer, uncles to the Duke of York.

Henry, Earl of Richmond, a youth; later, he becomes King Henry VII. As King Henry VII, he will end the Wars of the Roses and will begin the Tudor Dynasty. He is a Yorkist, but he will marry a Lancastrian.

Lord Rivers, brother to Lady Elizabeth Grey.

Sir William Stanley.

Sir John Montgomery.

Sir John Somerville.

Tutor to Rutland.

Mayor of York.

Lieutenant of the Tower.

A Nobleman.

Two Gamekeepers.

A Huntsman.

A Son who has killed his father.

A Father who has killed his son.

Female Characters

Queen Margaret.

Lady Elizabeth Grey, afterwards Queen consort to Edward IV.

Lady Bona, sister to the French Queen.

Minor Characters

Soldiers, Attendants, Messengers, Watchmen, etc.

SCENE

England.

NOTA BENE

Lancastrians and Yorkists

King Henry VI is a Lancastrian; he is the Duke of Lancaster as well as the King of England.

The symbol of the Lancastrians is a red rose.

The Duke of York is a Yorkist.

The symbol of the Yorkists is a white rose.

The roses were worn in hats.

Lancastrians

King Henry VI.

Edward, Prince of Wales.

Earl of Oxford.

Earl of Northumberland.

Lord Clifford.

Sir John Somerville.

Queen Margaret.

Yorkists

The Duke of York.

Edward, Earl of March, afterwards King Edward IV, York's son.

Edmund, Earl of Rutland, York's son.

Richard, afterwards Duke of Gloucester, York's son; later, he becomes King Richard III.

Sir John Mortimer, uncle to the Duke of York.

Sir Hugh Mortimer, uncle to the Duke of York.

Duke of Norfolk.

Earl of Pembroke.

Lord Hastings.

Lord Stafford.

Lord Rivers.

Sir John Montgomery.

Tutor to Rutland.

Lady Elizabeth Grey.

Side Switchers

The Earl of Warwick switches from the Yorkist to the Lancastrian side.

The Marquess of Montague switches from the Yorkist to the Lancastrian side.

The Duke of Somerset switches from the Yorkist to the Lancastrian side.

George, afterwards Duke of Clarence, York's son, at first is a Yorkist, but then he switches allegiance to the Lancastrians, and then he switches allegiance back to the Yorkists.

House of York, House of Lancaster

In this context, the word "House" means "Family."

CHAPTER 1 (3 Henry VI)

—1.1—

The Duke of York, his sons Edward and Richard, as well as the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquess of Montague, and the Earl of Warwick entered the Parliament House in London. With them were some soldiers. They were wearing white roses, the symbol of the House of York.

The Earl of Warwick said, “I wonder how King Henry VI escaped our hands.”

The Duke of York said, “While we pursued the horsemen of the north, he slyly stole away and left his men. At that time the great Lord of Northumberland, whose soldierly ears could never endure the call to retreat, rallied the drooping army, and he himself, old Lord Clifford, and Lord Stafford, all abreast, charged our main army’s front lines, and after breaking through were slain by the swords of common soldiers.”

Actually, the Duke of York had himself killed old Lord Clifford, but he was insulting old Lord Clifford and the other two enemies by claiming that common soldiers had killed them. According to the protocol of chivalry, an honorable death for nobles in battle could occur only if nobles killed other nobles.

Edward said, “Lord Stafford’s father, the Duke of Buckingham, is either slain or dangerously wounded. I cleft his beaver — part of the face guard of his helmet — with a downward blow. So that you know this is true, father, behold his blood.”

Edward lifted his bloody sword.

The Marquess of Montague said, “And, brother, here’s the Earl of Wiltshire’s blood, whom I encountered as the armies met and fought.”

The Marquess of Montague was the Earl of Warwick’s brother and the Duke of York’s nephew.

Richard said to the bloody head — that of the Duke of Somerset — he was holding, “Speak for me and tell them what I did.”

Richard’s father, the Duke of York, said, “Richard has best deserved of all my sons.”

The Duke of Somerset had been one of the Duke of York’s greatest enemies.

The Duke of York then said to the bloody head, “But is your grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?”

The Duke of Norfolk said, “May all the line of John of Gaunt have such hope! May all of them end up dead!”

John of Gaunt had been the Duke of Lancaster, and now his descendants, the Lancastrians, including King Henry VI, were fighting a war against the Yorkists, who were led by the Duke of York.

Richard said, “Thus do I hope to shake King Henry VI’s head.”

He shook the Duke of Somerset’s head and then threw it on the floor.

“And so do I,” the Earl of Warwick said. “Victorious Prince of York, before I see you seated in that throne which now the House of Lancaster usurps, I vow by Heaven these eyes shall never close. This is the palace of the timid, frightened King Henry VI, and this is the regal seat.”

He pointed to the throne.

He then said, “Possess it, Duke of York, for this is your throne. It does not belong to the heirs of King Henry IV.”

“Assist me, then, sweet Warwick, and I will,” the Duke of York said, “for we have broken in here by force.”

“We’ll all assist you,” the Duke of Norfolk said. “Any man who flees shall die.”

“Thanks, noble Norfolk,” the Duke of York said. “Stay by me, my lords.

“And, soldiers, stay and lodge by me this night.”

The Duke of York and his relatives and close allies approached the throne, and the soldiers hid themselves.

The Earl of Warwick said, “And when the King comes, offer him no violence, unless he should seek to thrust you out by force.”

“Queen Margaret holds her Parliament here this day,” the Duke of York said. “But she little thinks we shall be part of her council. By words or blows, here let us win our right.”

“Armed as we are, let’s stay within this house,” Richard said.

“This shall be called the Bloody Parliament,” the Earl of Warwick said, “unless Plantagenet, Duke of York, becomes King, and easily intimidated Henry VI is deposed — Henry VI, whose cowardice has made us objects of scorn to our enemies. According to our enemies, we are bywords — notorious examples — of cowardice.”

“Then don’t leave me, my lords,” the Duke of York said. “Be resolute. I mean to take possession of my right; I am the rightful King of England.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Neither King Henry VI, nor the man who loves him best, the proudest and bravest man who

holds up and supports Lancaster, will dare to stir a wing, if I, Warwick, should shake my bells.”

He was referring metaphorically to the bells that were tied to the legs of a falcon. In this culture, people believed that the falcon’s prey was frightened when hearing the bells.

The Earl of Warwick continued, “I’ll plant Plantagenet, and root up anyone who dares to oppose him. Resolve yourself, Duke Richard of York, to claim the English crown.”

The Duke of York sat on the throne.

Trumpets sounded, and King Henry VI, Lord Clifford, the Earl of Northumberland, the Earl of Westmoreland, the Duke of Exeter, and others entered the room. They were wearing red roses, the symbol of the House of Lancaster.

Seeing the Duke of York sitting on the throne, King Henry VI said, “My lords, look where the sturdy rebel sits, even on the throne — the chair of state. Probably he intends, backed by the power of the Earl of Warwick, that false peer, to aspire to the crown and reign as King.

“Earl of Northumberland, the Duke of York slew your father. Lord Clifford, the Duke of York also slew your father. Both of you have vowed revenge on him, his sons, his followers, and his friends.”

“If I be not revenged on him, may the Heavens be revenged on me!” the Earl of Northumberland swore.

“The hope of getting revenge makes me, Clifford, mourn while wearing steel armor,” Lord Clifford said.

“Shall we endure this?” the Earl of Westmoreland said. “Let’s pluck the Duke of York down from his seat on the throne. My heart burns because of my anger; I cannot endure it.”

“Be patient, noble Earl of Westmoreland,” King Henry VI said.

Lord Clifford said, “Patience is for cowardly poltroons, such as the Duke of York. He would not dare to sit there, if your father, Henry V, had lived. My gracious lord, here in the Parliament let us assail the family of York.”

“Well have you spoken, kinsman,” the Earl of Northumberland said. “Be it so. Let’s do it.”

“Ah, don’t you know that the citizens of London favor them,” King Henry VI said, “and that they have troops of soldiers at their beck and call?”

“But when the Duke of York is slain, his troops will quickly flee,” the Duke of Exeter said.

“Far be from my, Henry’s, heart the thought of making a shambles — a meat market, a slaughterhouse — of the Parliament House,” King Henry VI said. “Kinsman of Exeter, frowns, words, and threats shall be the weapons of war that Henry means to use.

“You factious Duke of York, descend from my throne, and kneel for grace and mercy at my feet. I am your sovereign. I am your King.”

“I am yours,” the Duke of York said.

“For shame, come down,” the Duke of Exeter said. “Henry VI made you Duke of York.”

“The Dukedom was my inheritance, as the Earldom was,” the Duke of York said.

He had also inherited the title of Earl of March.

“Your father was a traitor to the crown, and so your Dukedom was given to you, and not inherited by you,” the Duke of Exeter said. Your father lost his title and lands

because of his treason.”

“Exeter, you are a traitor to the crown in following this usurping Henry VI,” the Duke of Warwick said.

“Whom should he follow but his natural King?” Lord Clifford said.

The word “natural” means “legitimate, rightful, by birthright.”

“What you said is true, Clifford,” the Earl of Warwick said. “He should follow his natural King, and that is Richard, Duke of York.”

King Henry VI said, “And shall I stand, and you sit on my throne?”

“It must and shall be so,” the Duke of York said. “Content yourself. Be calm and accept it.”

The Earl of Warwick said to Henry VI, “Be Duke of Lancaster; let him be King.”

The Earl of Westmoreland said, “King Henry VI is both King of England and Duke of Lancaster, and that the Lord of Westmoreland shall maintain. Henry VI is my King.”

“And I, Warwick, shall disprove it,” the Earl of Warwick said. “You forget that we are those who chased you from the battlefield and slew your fathers, and with our battle flags unfurled, we marched through the city to the palace gates.”

“Yes, Warwick, I remember it to my grief,” the Earl of Northumberland said. “And, by my father’s soul, you and your House shall rue it.”

The Earl of Westmoreland said to the Duke of York, “Plantagenet, of you and these your sons, your kinsmen, and your friends, I’ll have more lives than drops of blood

that were in my father's veins.”

“Do not keep reminding me about the death of my father,” Lord Clifford said, “lest that, instead of words, I send you, Warwick, such a messenger as shall revenge his death before I stir.”

A basilisk can kill without stirring — moving. Merely seeing this mythological serpent kills. Another messenger of death from afar is an arrow. Yet another messenger of death is an exterminating angel.

“Poor Clifford!” the Earl of Warwick said. “How I scorn his worthless threats!”

Future events would show that Lord Clifford could kill important enemies.

Using the royal plural, the Duke of York said to King Henry VI, “Do you want us to show you the truth of our rightful title to the crown? If not, our swords in the battlefield shall plead my right to the crown.”

“What title do you, traitor, have to the crown?” King Henry VI said. “Your father was, as you are, Duke of York. Your grandfather was Roger Mortimer, the Earl of March.

“I am the son of King Henry V, who forced the Dauphin and the French to stoop in submission and who captured their towns and provinces.”

The Dauphin claimed to be King of France, but King Henry V of England disputed that claim.

“Don't talk about France,” the Earl of Warwick said, “since you have lost it all.”

“The Lord Protector, not I, lost it. When I was crowned King of England, I was only nine months old.”

“You are old enough now, and yet, I think, you continue to

lose,” Richard said.

He added, “Father, tear the crown from the usurper’s head.”

“Sweet father, do so,” Edward said. “Set it on your head.”

The Marquess of Montague said to the Duke of York, “Good brother, as you love and honor arms, let’s fight it out and not stand here disputing over details like this.”

Richard said, “If the drums and trumpets start playing, King Henry VI will flee.”

“Sons, peace!” the Duke of York said.

“Peace, all of you!” King Henry VI said. “Give King Henry the opportunity to speak.”

“Plantagenet — the Duke of York — shall speak first,” the Earl of Warwick said. “Hear him, lords.”

He then said to King Henry VI, “And be you silent and attentive, too, for he who interrupts the Duke of York shall not live.”

“Do you think that I will leave my Kingly throne, in which my grandfather and my father sat?” King Henry VI said. “No. Before that happens, war shall depopulate this — my — realm. Yes, and their battle flags, often borne in France, and now borne in England to our heart’s great sorrow, shall be my winding-sheet — my shroud.”

He said to his supporters, “Why are you losing courage, lords? My title to the crown is good, and far better than his.”

“Prove it, Henry,” the Earl of Warwick said, “and you shall be King.”

“My grandfather, Henry IV, got the crown,” King Henry VI said.

“It was by rebellion against his King,” the Duke of York objected.

This is true. King Henry IV had forced King Richard II to abdicate as King.

King Henry VI thought, *I don't know what to say; my claim to the crown is weak.*

He said out loud, “Tell me, may not a King adopt an heir?”

“What of it?” the Duke of York asked.

“If he may, then I am your lawful King,” King Henry VI said. “For King Richard II, in the presence of many lords, resigned the crown to King Henry IV, whose heir my father was, and I am his.”

“Henry IV rose against Richard II, who was his sovereign,” the Duke of York said, “and by force made him resign his crown.”

“Suppose, my lords, that Richard II resigned the crown without being constrained,” the Earl of Warwick said. “Do you think it would be prejudicial to the Duke of York’s claim to the crown?”

“No,” the Duke of Exeter whispered to King Henry VI, “for Richard II could not so resign his crown unless the next heir should succeed him and reign as King. The crown must pass to the next in line to be King.”

Shocked at hearing this from a man whom he considered to a supporter, King Henry VI whispered to him, “Are you against us, Duke of Exeter?”

“The Duke of York is in the right, and therefore pardon me,” the Duke of Exeter whispered.

King Henry VI’s claim to the crown rested on his being descended from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who

was the fourth son of King Edward III.

The Duke of York's claim to the throne rested on his being descended from Lionel, Duke of Clarence, who was the third son of King Edward III. However, he was descended from females in that line, while Henry VI was descended only from males in his line.

The Duke of York asked, "Why are you whispering among yourselves, my lords, and not answering me?"

"My conscience tells me that the Duke of York is the lawful King of England," the Duke of Exeter whispered.

King Henry VI thought, *Everyone will revolt from me, and everyone will turn to the Duke of York.*

The Earl of Northumberland said to the Duke of York, "Plantagenet, for all the claim to the crown you are making, don't think that King Henry VI shall be so deposed."

"Deposed he shall be, in spite of all," the Earl of Warwick said.

"You are deceived," the Earl of Northumberland said. "It is not your southern power of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, or of Kent — which makes you thus presumptuous and proud — that can set the Duke of York on the throne in spite — contemptuous dismissal — of me."

Lord Clifford whispered, "King Henry VI, whether your claim to the throne is right or wrong, I, Lord Clifford, vow to fight in your defense. May that ground gape and swallow me alive, if and where I would kneel to that man who slew my father!"

Numbers 16:30 states, "*But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up with all that they have, and they go down quick into the pit: then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the*

Lord” (1599 Geneva Bible).

King Henry VI whispered, “Oh, Clifford, how your words revive my heart!”

The Duke of York said, “Henry of Lancaster, resign your crown. What are you muttering, or what are you conspiring, lords?”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Do right to this Princely Duke of York, or I will fill the house with armed men, and over the chair of state — the throne — where now he sits, I will write up his title with the blood of the usurper.”

He stamped with his foot and the soldiers who had been hidden showed themselves.

“My Lord of Warwick, hear me speak but one word,” King Henry VI said. “Let me for my lifetime reign as King.”

The Duke of York said, “Confirm the crown to me and to my heirs, and you shall reign in quiet while you live. But after you die, I will reign and after I die, my heirs will reign.”

“I am content,” King Henry VI said. “I agree. Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, enjoy the Kingdom after my decease.”

Lord Clifford objected to the decision: “What a wrong is this to the Prince, your son!”

The Earl of Warwick approved of the decision: “What good is this to England and to Henry VI himself!”

The Earl of Westmoreland objected to the decision: “Base, dishonorable, frightened, and despairing Henry!”

Lord Clifford said, “How you have injured both yourself and us!”

The Earl of Westmoreland said, “I cannot stay to hear these legal articles that you two — York and Henry — will draw up between yourselves.”

“Nor can I,” the Earl of Northumberland said.

“Come, cousin, let us tell Queen Margaret the news,” Lord Clifford said.

The Earl of Westmoreland said, “Farewell, faint-hearted and degenerate King Henry VI, in whose cold, hopeless blood no spark of honor abides.”

The Earl of Northumberland said to King Henry VI, “May you be a prey for the House of York, and die wearing shackles for this unmanly deed of yours!”

Lord Clifford said to the King, “May you be overcome in dreadful war, or live abandoned and despised in peace!”

The Earl of Westmoreland, the Earl of Northumberland, and Lord Clifford exited.

King Henry VI watched them go.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Turn this way, Henry VI, and pay no attention to them.”

The Duke of Exeter said, “They seek revenge and therefore will not yield.”

“Ah, Exeter!” King Henry VI said.

“Why should you sigh, my lord?” the Earl of Warwick asked.

“I sigh not for myself, Lord Warwick, but for my son, whom I unnaturally and not like a father shall disinherit. But be it as it may.”

He said to the Duke of York, “I here entail the crown to

you and to your heirs forever, on this condition, that here you take an oath to stop this civil war, and to honor me as your King and sovereign while I live, and neither by treason nor by hostility to seek to put me down and reign as King yourself.”

“This oath I willingly take and will perform,” the Duke of York said.

“Long live King Henry VI!” the Earl of Warwick said. “Plantagenet, embrace him.”

King Henry VI climbed up onto the platform on which the throne was placed, the Duke of York stood up, and King Henry VI and the Duke of York embraced.

King Henry VI said, “And long may you and your promising sons live!”

“Now York and the Duke of Lancaster — you, Henry — are reconciled,” the Duke of York said.

“May any man who seeks to make them foes be cursed!” the Duke of Exeter said.

“Farewell, my gracious lord,” the Duke of York said. “I’ll go to my castle.”

“And I’ll stay in London with my soldiers,” the Earl of Warwick said.

“And I will go to Norfolk with my followers,” the Duke of Norfolk said.

“And I will go to the sea from whence I came,” the Marquess of Montague said.

Everyone exited except King Henry VI and the Duke of Exeter and a few attendants.

King Henry VI said, “And I, with grief and sorrow, will go

to the court.”

Queen Margaret and Edward, Prince of Wales, entered the room.

The Duke of Exeter said, “Here comes the Queen, whose looks reveal her anger. I’ll steal away.”

“Exeter, so will I,” King Henry VI said.

Too late.

Queen Margaret said to her husband, King Henry VI, “No, don’t go away from me! I will follow you!”

“Be patient and calm, my gentle, noble Queen, and I will stay,” King Henry VI said.

“Who can be patient in such extreme times?” Queen Margaret said. “Ah, wretched man! I wish that I had died a virgin maiden and never seen you, never borne you a son, seeing you have proven to be so unnatural a father. Has your son, the Prince of Wales, deserved to lose his birthright thus? Had you loved him only half as well as I do, or felt that pain which I did for him once in childbirth, or nourished him as I did with my blood *in utero*, you would have left your dearest heart-blood there, rather than have made that savage Duke of York your heir and disinherited your only son.”

“Father, you cannot disinherit me,” Prince Edward said. “If you are the King, why shouldn’t I succeed you as King?”

“Pardon me, Margaret; pardon me, sweet son,” King Henry VI said. “The Earl of Warwick and the Duke of York forced me.”

“Forced you!” Margaret said. “Are you King, and you will be forced? I am ashamed to hear you speak. Ah, timorous wretch! You have ruined yourself, your son, and me, and

you have given to the House of York such power and strength that you shall reign only by their permission.

“To entail the crown to the Duke of York and his heirs, what is it but to make your sepulcher and creep into it far before your time?”

In this culture, people believed that the loss of a King’s life quickly followed the loss of his power.

Queen Margaret continued, “Warwick is Chancellor and the lord of Calais. Stern Falconbridge commands the narrow seas. The Duke of York has been made Lord Protector of the realm. And yet you shall be safe? Such safety finds the trembling lamb surrounded by wolves.

“Had I been there, I who am a defenseless woman, the soldiers would have impaled and carried me aloft on their pikes before I would have agreed to that act of Parliament which gives your enemies all that power.

“But you preferred your life before your honor, and seeing that you do, I here divorce myself, Henry, both from your table and your bed until that act of Parliament by which my son is disinherited is repealed.

“The northern lords who have forsworn your battle flags will follow mine, if once they see them unfurled, and unfurled they shall be, to your foul disgrace and the utter ruin of the House of York.

“Thus I leave you.

“Come, son, let’s leave. Our army is ready. Come, we’ll go after our enemies.”

“Stay, gentle, noble Margaret, and hear me speak,” King Henry VI said.

“You have spoken too much already,” Queen Maragret

said. “Get you gone! Get lost!”

“Gentle son Edward, will you stay with me?” King Henry VI asked.

Queen Margaret said to her son, Prince Edward, “If you do, you will be murdered by your enemies.”

Prince Edward said, “When I return with victory from the battlefield, I’ll see your grace. Until then I’ll follow her.”

“Come, son, let’s go,” Queen Margaret said. “We cannot waste time here.”

Queen Margaret and Prince Edward exited.

King Henry VI said, “Poor Queen! How her love for me and for her son has made her break out into terms of rage! Revenged may she be on that hateful Duke of York, whose haughty spirit, winged with greed, will cost my crown, and like a hungry eagle tear and feast on the flesh of me and of my son!

“The loss of those three lords — the Earl of Westmoreland, the Earl of Northumberland, and Lord Clifford — torments my heart. I’ll write to them very courteously.

“Come, kinsman Exeter, you shall be the messenger.”

The Duke of Exeter said, “And I, I hope, shall reconcile them all to you.”

— 1.2 —

Richard and Edward, who were two of the Duke of York’s sons, and the Marquess of Montague talked together in the Duke of York’s castle: Sandal Castle, located near Wakefield in West Yorkshire.

They were discussing who should talk to the Duke of York.

Richard said to Edward, "Brother, although I am the youngest, allow me to be the one to speak to our father."

"No, I can better play the orator," Edward said.

The Marquess of Montague said, "But I have strong and forceful arguments that I can make to him."

The Duke of York entered the room and said, "Why, what's going on now, sons and brother! Engaging in a disagreement? What is your quarrel? How did it first begin?"

"No quarrel, but a slight contention," Edward said.

The contention was the disagreement among the three as well as the contention for the crown of the King of England.

"A contention about what?" the Duke of York asked.

"About that which concerns your grace and us," Richard said. "The crown of England, father, which is yours."

"Mine, son?" the Duke of York said. "It's not mine until King Henry VI is dead."

"Your right to the crown does not depend on King Henry VI's life or death," Richard said.

Edward said, "Now you are heir to the crown, so therefore enjoy the crown now. By giving the House of Lancaster the opportunity to catch its breath and recover, it will outrun you, father, in the end."

"I took an oath that King Henry VI should quietly reign until his death," the Duke of York said.

Edward said, "But for a Kingdom any oath may be broken. I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year."

A proverb stated, "For a Kingdom any law may be broken."

"No," Richard said. "God forbid that your grace should be forsworn."

"I shall be forsworn, if I claim the crown by open war," the Duke of York said.

"I'll prove that you will not be forsworn, if you'll hear what I have to say," Richard said.

"You cannot, son," the Duke of York said. "It is impossible."

Richard said, "An oath is of no importance, if it was not made before a true and lawful magistrate who has authority over the man who swears the oath.

"Henry VI had no authority because he usurped his Kingdom. So then, seeing that it was Henry VI who made you swear an oath, your oath, my lord, is worthless and groundless.

"Therefore, to arms! Fight for your crown! And, father, think how sweet a thing it is to wear a crown. Within the crown's circumference is the classical paradise known as Elysium, and within the crown's circumference is all that poets depict of bliss and joy.

"Why do we linger like this? I cannot rest until the white rose that I am wearing is dyed in the lukewarm blood of Henry VI's heart."

The Duke of York said, "Richard, enough; I will be King, or die."

"Marquess of Montague, my brother, you shall go to London immediately and encourage Warwick to do his part in this enterprise.

"You, Richard, shall go to the Duke of Norfolk, and tell

him secretly and privately what we intend to do.

“You, Edward, shall go to my Lord Cobham, with whom the Kentishmen will willingly rise up in rebellion against Henry VI. In them I trust, for they are soldiers who are intelligent, courteous, generous, and full of spirit.

“While you are thus employed, what is left to be done other than for me to seek an opportunity to rise without Henry VI and any of the House of Lancaster being aware of my intention?”

A messenger ran into the room.

The Duke of York said, “But wait.”

He said to the messenger, “What is the news? Why have you come in such haste?”

The messenger replied, “The Queen with all the northern Earls and lords intends to besiege you here in your castle. She is close by with twenty thousand men; therefore, fortify your stronghold, my lord.”

“Yes, with my sword,” the Duke of York said. “What! Do you think that we fear them?”

“Edward and Richard, you shall stay with me.

“My brother Montague shall hurry to London. Let noble Warwick, Cobham, and the rest, whom we have left as Protectors of the King, strengthen themselves with powerful political sagacity and not trust simple, foolish Henry or his oaths.”

“Brother, I go now,” the Marquess of Montague said. “I’ll win the Londoners over to your side — don’t fear that I won’t! And thus most humbly I take my leave.”

He exited.

Sir John Mortimer and Sir Hugh Mortimer entered the room. They were uncles of the Duke of York.

The Duke of York said, “Sir John and Sir Hugh Mortimer, my uncles, you have come to Sandal Castle in a happy hour. It is good that you are here because the army of Queen Margaret intends to besiege us.”

“She shall not need to,” Sir John Mortimer said. “We’ll meet her in the battlefield.”

“What, with five thousand men?” the Duke of York asked.

“Yes, with five hundred, father, if need be,” Richard said. “A woman is the General; what should we fear?”

Marching drums sounded in the distance.

“I hear their drums,” Edward said. “Let’s set our men in order, and issue forth and offer them battle at once.”

“Five men to twenty!” the Duke of York said. “Although the odds are great, I don’t doubt, uncle, that we will be victorious. Many battles have I won in France, when the enemy has outnumbered my soldiers ten to one. Why should I not now have the same success and victory that I have enjoyed before now?”

— 1.3 —

On 30 December 1460, the Battle of Wakefield was taking place. One of the Duke of York’s sons, young Rutland, and his tutor were in danger.

Rutland asked, “Where shall I flee to escape their hands?”

Lord Clifford and some soldiers arrived.

Seeing them, Rutland said, “Tutor, look where bloodthirsty Clifford comes!”

Lord Clifford said to the tutor, who, like many teachers of the time, was also a religious man and therefore knew Latin, "Chaplain, away! Your priesthood saves your life. As for this accursed Duke of York's brat, this brat whose father slew my father, he shall die."

The tutor replied, "And I, my lord, will bear him company."

Lord Clifford ordered, "Soldiers, take him away!"

The tutor pleaded, "Clifford, don't murder this innocent child, lest you be hated both by God and by men!"

The soldiers dragged away the tutor.

Rutland shut his eyes in fear.

Lord Clifford said, "What is this! Is he dead already? Or is it fear that makes him close his eyes? I'll open them."

Rutland opened his eyes and said, "So looks the confined, ravenous lion over the wretch that trembles under his devouring paws, and so the lion walks, exulting over his prey, and so the lion comes, to rend his limbs asunder.

"Ah, noble Clifford, kill me with your sword, and not with such a cruel threatening look. Sweet Clifford, hear me speak before I die. I am too mean a subject for your wrath: Be revenged on men, and let me live."

"You speak in vain, poor boy," Clifford said. "My father's blood has stopped the passage where your words should enter."

"Then let my father's blood open it again," Rutland pleaded. "He is a man, and so, Clifford, fight him."

"If I had all your male relatives here, their lives and yours would not be sufficient revenge for me. No, if I dug up your forefathers' graves and hung their rotten coffins up in

chains, it would not slake my anger, nor would it ease my heart. The sight of any of the House of York is like a Fury — an ancient avenging goddess — to torment my soul, and until I root out York’s accursed family and leave not one alive, I live in Hell. Therefore —”

He lifted his sword.

Rutland pleaded, “Oh, let me pray before I take my death! To you I pray: Sweet Clifford, pity me!”

He knelt.

“I will give you such pity as my rapier’s point affords,” Lord Clifford said.

“I never did you harm,” Rutland said. “Why will you slay me?”

“Your father has done me harm,” Lord Clifford replied.

“But it was before I was born,” Rutland said. “You have one son; for his sake pity me, lest in revenge for your murdering me, since God is just, your son will be as miserably slain as I am. Let me live in prison for all my days, and when I give you a reason to be offended, then let me die, for now you have no cause to kill me.”

“No cause!” Lord Clifford said. “Your father slew my father; therefore, die.”

Lord Clifford stabbed the boy.

Dying, Rutland said, “*Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae!*”

This is Latin for “May the gods grant that this be your crowning praise!”

In other words, “May you be most remembered for murdering a boy!”

“Plantagenet! I am coming for you, Plantagenet!” Lord Clifford said, referring to the Duke of York. “And this your son’s blood that cleaves to my blade shall rust upon my weapon until your blood, congealed with this blood of your son, makes me wipe off both.”

— 1.4 —

In another part of the battlefield, the Duke of York mourned the loss of the battle.

He said to himself, “The army of Queen Margaret has won the battle and controls the battlefield. Both of my uncles the Mortimers were slain as they rescued me, and all my followers turn their back to the fierce foe and flee, like ships before the wind or lambs pursued by hunger-emaciated wolves.

“God knows what has happened to my sons, but this I know: They have behaved like men born to be renowned either because of their life or because of their death. Three times Richard made a lane of dead enemy soldiers as he cut a path to me, and three times he cried, ‘Courage, father! Fight it out!’ And just as often Edward came to my side, with a red sword, painted to the hilt with the blood of those enemies who had encountered him.

“And when our hardest warriors retreated, Richard cried, ‘Charge! And give no foot of ground!’ And he cried, ‘A crown, or else a glorious tomb! A scepter, or an earthly sepulcher!’

“With this, we charged again, but alas! We retreated again, as I have seen a swan with useless labor swim against the tide and expend her strength against overwhelming waves.”

He heard a call to arms.

He said, “Listen! The fatal followers pursue my soldiers

and me, and I am faint and cannot flee from their fury. Even if I were strong, I would not shun their fury. The grains of sand in the hourglass that make up my life are so few in number that they can be counted. Here I must stay, and here my life must end.”

Queen Margaret, Lord Clifford, the Earl of Northumberland, Prince Edward, and some soldiers arrived.

The Duke of York said, “Come, bloodthirsty Clifford. Come, cruel Northumberland, I dare your quenchless fury to more rage. I am your target, and I await your shot.”

The Earl of Northumberland said to the Duke of York, “Yield to our mercy, proud Plantagenet.”

“Yes,” Lord Clifford said, “yield to such mercy as the Duke of York’s ruthless arm, with downright payment — directed straight down, in the form of a sword — showed to my father. Now Phaëthon has tumbled from his car, and made an evening at the noontide prick — the mark on the Sun-dial that indicates noon.”

Phaëthon was the son of Apollo the Sun-god. He asked Apollo to prove that he was his father by giving him a gift. Apollo swore an inviolable oath to give him any gift he asked for, and Phaëthon asked to be allowed to drive the Sun-chariot across the sky. Having sworn an inviolable oath, Apollo had no choice but to allow him to do it. Phaëthon was unable to control the immortal horses that pulled the Sun-chariot, and at times the Sun-chariot came too close to the Earth, making everything too hot, and at other times it went too far away from the Earth, causing darkness. The King of the gods, Jupiter, saved the Earth by hurling a thunderbolt at Phaëthon, killing him and causing him to fall out of the Sun-chariot. Apollo took his place in the Sun-chariot and restored order.

The Duke of York said, “My ashes, as happens with the Phoenix, may bring forth a bird that will get revenge on you all.”

The Phoenix was a mythical bird of Arabia that lived for 500 years and then died in a burst of fire but was regenerated from its ashes. In fact, the Duke of York’s sons Edward and Richard would get revenge for their father’s death.

The Duke of York continued, “And in that hope I throw my eyes — I look — to Heaven, scorning whatever you can afflict me with.

“Why don’t you attack me? What! There are multitudes of you, and you are afraid to attack me?”

Lord Clifford said, “So cowards fight when they can flee no further. So doves peck the falcon’s piercing talons. So desperate thieves, completely despairing of saving their lives, vehemently speak invectives against the officers who will give them capital punishment.”

A proverb stated, “Despair makes cowards courageous.”

The Duke of York said, “Clifford, think once again, and in your thoughts review my past, and then see if you can avoid blushing and biting your tongue, which slanders me with cowardice as you view this face, whose frown has made you lose heart and flee before this time!”

Lord Clifford replied, “I will not exchange words with you word for word, but I will exchange blows with you, giving you four blows for each blow you give me.”

He made a move toward the Duke of York, but Queen Margaret cried, “Wait, valiant Clifford! For a thousand reasons, I want to prolong for a while this traitor’s life.”

Lord Clifford was still angry and kept moving toward the

Duke of York, and Queen Margaret said, “Wrath makes him deaf.”

Others restrained Lord Clifford, and Queen Margaret said, “Speak, Earl of Northumberland.”

He said, “Stop, Clifford! Don’t honor him so much by pricking your finger, although it would wound his heart. What valor would one get, when a cur bares its teeth, if one were to thrust his hand between the cur’s teeth, when he might kick him away with his foot? War allows one to take all advantages, and ten against one is no impeachment of valor. In times of war, one ought not to fight an enemy one against one when enough soldiers are available to fight an enemy ten against one.”

They fought the Duke of York, who struggled against them but was subdued.

Clifford said, “Yes, yes, like this the woodcock strives with the trap.”

A woodcock is a proverbially stupid and easily caught bird.

The Earl of Northumberland said, “Like this the rabbit struggles in the net.”

The Duke of York said, “Like this thieves gloat upon their conquered booty. Like this true men yield, when so outnumbered by robbers.”

The Earl of Northumberland said to Queen Margaret, “What would your grace have done to him now?”

“You brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland, come, make him stand upon this molehill here,” Queen Margaret replied. “He reached out for mountains with outstretched arms, yet with his hand took as his own only their shadow.”

She said to the Duke of York, “Was it you who would be

England's King? Was it you who rioted in our Parliament and made a sermon about your high descent? Where is your mess of sons — your four sons — to back you now? Where are the wanton Edward, and the vigorous George? And where's that valiant hunchback monster, your boy Dicky, who with his grumbling voice was accustomed to cheer his dad in mutinies?

“And, along with the rest, where is your darling Rutland? Look, York: I stained this handkerchief with the blood that valiant Clifford with his rapier's point made flow from the bosom of the boy. And if your eyes can water for his death, I give you this handkerchief to dry your cheeks with.

“Alas, poor York! Except that I so deadly hate you, I would lament your miserable state. I ask you to grieve so you can make me merry, York.

“Has your fiery heart so parched your entrails that not a tear can fall for Rutland's death? Why are you patient, man? You should be mad, and I, to make you mad, mock you. Stamp your feet, rave, and fret so that I may sing and dance.

“You want to be paid, I see, to entertain me. York cannot speak, unless he wears a crown. Here's a crown for York!

“Lords, bow low to him. Restrain his hands while I set the crown on his head.”

She placed a paper crown on the Duke of York's head.

She continued, “Yes, by the Virgin Mary, sir, now he looks like a King! Yes, this is the man who took King Henry VI's throne, and this is the man who was his adopted heir.

“But how is it that great Plantagenet has been crowned so soon, and has broken his solemn oath? As I remember, you should not be King until our King Henry VI has shaken

hands with Death.

“And will you encircle your head with Henry’s glory, and rob his temples of the diadem, now, during his life, against your holy oath?”

“Oh, it is a crime too, too unpardonable!”

“Off with the crown, and with the crown take off his head. While we breathe, let’s take time to do him dead. While we’re alive, let’s kill him.”

“That is my job, for my father’s sake,” Lord Clifford said.

“No, wait,” Queen Margaret said. “Let’s hear the prayers he makes.”

The Duke of York said, “She-wolf of France, but worse than the wolves of France. Your tongue is more poisonous than the adder’s tooth!”

“How ill-beseeming is it for one of your sex to triumph, like an Amazonian warrior-woman whore, upon the woes of men whom Lady Fortune has made captives!”

“Except that your face, mask-like and unchanging, has been made impudent with the habitual practice of evil deeds, I would attempt, proud Queen, to make you blush.

“To tell you where you came from and who are your parents would be shame enough to shame you, if you were not shameless.

“Your father bears the title of King of Naples, Sicily, and Jerusalem, yet he is not as wealthy as an English farmer.

“Has that poor monarch taught you to be insolent? Showing insolence is not necessary, nor does it help you, proud Queen, unless this adage must be verified: Beggars, once mounted, run their horse to death.

“Beauty often makes women proud, but God knows that your share of beauty is small.

“Virtue makes women most admired, but your lack of virtue makes people look at you with wonder.

“Self-government — self-control — makes women seem divine, but your lack of self-control makes you abominable.

“You are as opposite to every good as the Antipodes — the people who live on the other side of the world — are to us, or as the south is to the Septentrion.”

The Septentrion is the north. The name derives from the Latin *septentriōnēs*, which means “seven plowing oxen.” This refers to the seven stars that make up the asterism known as the Plow, also referred to as the Big Dipper, which is part of the constellation *Ursa Major*, or Great Bear.

The Duke of York continued, “Oh, tiger’s heart wrapped in a woman’s hide! How could you drain the life-blood of the child so you could bid the father wipe his eyes with a handkerchief stained with that blood, and yet be seen to bear a woman’s face?

“Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible, but you are stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, and remorseless.

“You want me to rage? Why, now you have your wish. You want me to weep? Why, now you have what you want.

“For raging wind blows up incessant showers, and when the rage allays, the rain begins. These tears I shed are my sweet Rutland’s obsequies and funeral rites, and every drop cries out for vengeance for his death, against you, cruel Clifford, and you, false Frenchwoman.”

The Earl of Northumberland thought, *Curse me, but his passion moves me so that I can hardly keep my eyes from*

shedding tears.

The Duke of York continued speaking to Queen Margaret, “The hungry cannibals would not have touched Rutland’s face, would not have stained this handkerchief with his blood, but you are more inhuman, more inexorable, oh, ten times more, than the tigers of Hyrcania.

“See, ruthless Queen, a hapless father’s tears. You dipped this handkerchief in the blood of my sweet boy, and I wash the blood away with my tears.

“Keep the handkerchief and go boast about this; if you tell the sorrowful story correctly, I swear upon my soul that the hearers will shed tears. Yes, even my enemies will shed fast-falling tears, and they will say, ‘Alas, it was a piteous deed!’”

He shook the paper crown from his head and said, “There, Queen Margaret, take the crown, and, with the crown, take my curse. And in your need may such comfort come to you as I reap now at your too cruel hand!

“Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world. My soul will go to Heaven, and my blood is upon your heads!”

His eyes watering, the Earl of Northumberland thought, *Had he been the executioner of all my kinfolk, I would not for my life be able to avoid weeping with him when I see how inwardly sorrow grips his soul.*

Queen Margaret said to him, “What, ready to weep, my Lord Northumberland? Only think upon the wrong he did us all, and that will quickly dry your melting tears.”

Lord Clifford said as he stabbed the Duke of York, “Here’s for my oath, and here’s for my father’s death.”

Queen Margaret said as she stabbed the Duke of York, “And here’s to redress the injuries of our gentle-hearted

King.”

“Open your gate of mercy, gracious God!” the Duke of York cried. “My soul flies through these wounds to seek out You.”

He died.

Queen Margaret said, “Cut off his head, and set it on the town of York’s gates, so that the Duke of York may look out over the town of York.”

CHAPTER 2 (3 Henry VI)

— 2.1 —

Edward and Richard, two of the Duke of York's three surviving sons, talked together on a plain near Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire, not far from the border with Wales. Also present were some of their soldiers.

Edward said, "I wonder how our Princely father escaped, or whether he escaped away from Clifford's and Northumberland's pursuit. If he had been captured, we should have heard the news. If he had been slain, we should have heard the news. Or if he had escaped, I think we should have heard the happy tidings of his good escape.

"How are you, my brother? Why are you so sad?"

Richard replied, "I cannot feel joy until I know what has become of our very valiant father. I saw him in the battle ranging about, and I watched how he singled Clifford out as if he were hunting him. I thought our father bore himself in the thickest troop of enemy soldiers as a lion does in a herd of cattle, or as a dog-surrounded bear, having bitten a few dogs and made them cry, makes the remaining dogs stand at a distance and bark at him. So our father fared with his enemies, and so his enemies fled my warlike father.

"I think that it is prize enough to be his son. See how the morning opens her golden gates, and takes her farewell of the glorious Sun! Aurora, goddess of dawn, says farewell to the Sun! How well the Sun resembles the prime of youth, dressed like a young man prancing to his love!"

"Are my eyes dazzled, or do I see three Suns?" Edward asked.

Richard said, "Three glorious Suns, each one a perfect Sun.

They are not separated by the wind-driven clouds, but severed in a pale, clear-shining sky.”

The three Suns began to join together.

Richard continued, “Look, look! They join, embrace, and seem to kiss, as if they vowed some inviolable alliance. Now are they but one lamp, one light, one Sun. In this, Heaven prefigures some event. This is an omen.”

The Sun was the emblem — the distinctive badge — of the House of York.

Edward said, “It is wondrously strange; the like was never heard of so far. I think it incites us, brother, to go to the battlefield, so that we, the sons of brave Plantagenet, Duke of York, each one already blazing by our merited deserts, should notwithstanding join our lights together and shine over the earth as this Sun shines over the world. Whatever it bodes, henceforward I will bear three fair-shining Suns as a heraldic device on my shield.”

Richard said, “No, bear three daughters. If you don’t mind my saying so, I say that you love the breeder better than the male. You love women.”

A messenger arrived, and Richard asked, “Who are you, whose sorrowful looks foretell some dreadful story hanging on your tongue?”

The messenger replied, “I am one who was a woeful looker-on when the noble Duke of York, your Princely father and my loving lord, was slain!”

Edward said, “Oh, speak no more, for I have heard too much.”

Richard said, “Say how he died, for I will hear it all.”

The messenger said, “Many foes surrounded him, and he

stood against them, as the hope of Troy — Hector — stood against the Greeks who would have entered Troy. But even Hercules himself must yield to odds, and many strokes, although made with a little axe, will hew down and fell the hardest-timbered oak.

“By many hands your father was subdued, but he was slaughtered only by the angry arms of unrelenting Clifford and Queen Margaret, who crowned the gracious Duke in great scorn, laughed in his face, and when with grief he wept, the ruthless Queen gave him to dry his cheeks a handkerchief steeped in the harmless blood of sweet young Rutland, who was slain by violent Clifford.

“And after many scorns and many foul taunts, they took off his head, and on the gates of the town of York they set the head, and there it remains, the saddest spectacle that I ever viewed.”

Edward said, “Sweet Duke of York, our prop to lean upon, now that you are gone, we have no staff, no support.

“Oh, Clifford, savage Clifford! You have slain a man who for his chivalry was the flower of Europe, and you have vanquished him by treachery, for he would have vanquished you if you had fought him hand to hand.

“Now my soul’s palace has become a prison. I wish that my soul would break from my body, so that this body of mine might be enclosed in the ground and rest! For never henceforth shall I enjoy life again, never, oh, never shall I see enjoyment any more!”

Richard said, “I cannot weep, for all my body’s moisture scarcely serves to quench my heart that burns like a furnace. Nor can my tongue unload my heart’s great burden, for that same wind that I should speak with is kindling coals that fire all my breast, and burns me up with flames that my tears would quench.

“To weep is to make less the depth of grief. Tears then are for babes; blows and revenge are what I want.

“Richard, Duke of York, I bear your name; I am also a Richard. I’ll avenge your death, or die renowned by attempting it.”

Edward said, “His name that valiant Duke has left with you. His Dukedom and his chair — his ducal seat — he left with me.”

As the oldest son, Edward was now the new Duke of York and held the Dukedom.

Richard said, “If you are that Princely eagle’s fledgling, show your descent by gazing at the Sun. Say ‘For ducal seat and Dukedom’ and ‘For throne and Kingdom.’ Either those things are yours, or else you are not our father’s son.”

This society believed that the eagle was the King of the birds, and as such was able to look directly at the Sun.

A drum sounded a march, and the Earl of Warwick, the Marquess of Montague, and some soldiers arrived.

“How are you, fair lords?” the Earl of Warwick asked. “How do you fare? What is the news from abroad?”

“Great Lord of Warwick,” Richard said, “if we would recount our baleful news, and at each word’s deliverance stab daggers in our flesh until all were told, the words would add more anguish than the wounds.

“Oh, valiant lord, the Duke of York has been slain!”

“Oh, Warwick, Warwick!” Edward said, “that Plantagenet, who held you as dearly as his soul’s redemption, has been killed by the stern Lord Clifford.”

“Ten days ago I drowned this news with my tears,” the Earl of Warwick replied, “and now, to add even more to your

woes, I have come to tell you things since then befallen.

“After the bloody fray we fought at Wakefield, where your brave father breathed his last gasp, tidings, as swiftly as the messengers could travel, were brought to me of your loss and his departure from this life.

“I, who was then in London as keeper of King Henry VI, mustered my soldiers, gathered flocks of friends, and very well armed and equipped, so I thought, marched toward Saint Albans to intercept Queen Margaret, and I brought the King along as I thought his presence might be useful.

“I did all this because my scouts informed me that Queen Margaret was coming with a full intention to rescind our recent decree in Parliament concerning King Henry VI’s oath and your succession as King after his death.

“To make it a short tale, we met on 17 February 1461 and at Saint Albans fought the Second Battle of St. Albans.

“Our armies joined in battle, and both sides fiercely fought, but whether it was the coldness and lack of passion of the King, who looked very gently on his warlike Queen, that robbed my soldiers of their inflamed spirit, or whether it was the report of the Queen’s success, or whether it was the more than common fear of the harshness of Clifford, who thunders blood and death to his captives, I cannot judge, but to conclude with the truth, the enemies’ weapons struck as if they were lightning as they came and went. Our soldiers’ weapons struck like the night owl’s lazy flight, or like an idle thresher with a flail for reaping grain. Our soldiers’ weapons fell gently down, as if they were striking their friends.

“I revived them by telling them of the justice of our cause, and with the promise of high pay and great rewards, but all in vain. They had no heart to fight, and we had no hope in them to win the day.

“And so we fled. The King fled to the Queen. Your brother Lord George, as well as the Duke of Norfolk and I, fled in haste, as quickly as we could, to come to join with you, for we heard you were here in the marches — the Welsh borders — gathering another army with which to fight again.”

“Where is the Duke of Norfolk, noble Warwick?” Edward asked. “And when did George come from Burgundy to England?”

“The Duke of Norfolk is some six miles away with the soldiers,” the Earl of Warwick said. “And as for your brother, your kind aunt, the Duchess of Burgundy, recently sent him here with the aid of soldiers to this war because you need reinforcements.”

“The odds must have been against our side, most likely, when valiant Warwick fled,” Richard said. “Often have I heard his praises in pursuit, but never until now have I heard the scandalous imputations of his retiring from the battle.”

“And you do not now hear of any scandal affecting me, Richard,” the Earl of Warwick said, “for you shall learn that this strong right hand of mine can pluck the diadem from fainthearted Henry VI’s head, and wring the awe-inspiring scepter from his fist, even if he were as famous and as bold in war as he is famed for mildness, peace, and prayer.”

“I know it well, Lord Warwick,” Richard said. “Don’t blame me. It is the love I bear your glories that makes me speak. But in this troublous time what’s to be done?”

“Shall we throw away our coats of steel, and wrap our bodies in black mourning gowns, and count our Ave-Maries with our beads?”

“Or shall we on the helmets of our foes count with our blows our devotion with revengeful weapons?”

“If you vote for the last alternative, say yes, and let’s go to it, lords.”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “Why, that is the reason that I, Warwick, came to seek you. And for that same reason my brother Montague came to seek you.

“Listen to me, lords. The proud insulting Queen Margaret, with Clifford and the haughty Northumberland, and many more proud birds of the same feather, have molded the easily pliable and persuadable King like wax.

“Previously, he swore consent to your succession and he recorded his oath in the Parliament, but now to London all that crew have gone to annul both his oath and to do in addition whatever may make trouble against the House of Lancaster.

“Their army, I think, is thirty thousand strong. Now, if the help of the Duke of Norfolk and myself, with all the friends that you, Edward, who are the brave Earl of March, can procure among the friendly Welshmen, will at least amount to twenty-five thousand, why, *Via!*”

“*Via!*” is Italian for “Forward!”

The Earl of Warwick continued, “To London we will march at full speed, and once again we will bestride our foaming steeds, and once again cry, ‘Charge upon our foes!’ But never will we once again turn our backs and flee.”

Richard said, “Yes, now I think I hear great Warwick speak. May that man never live to see a sunshiny day who cries ‘Retreat,’ if Warwick orders him to stay and fight.”

“Lord Warwick, I will lean on your shoulder,” Edward

said, “and when you fail — may God forbid the hour! — then Edward must fall, which peril may Heaven forbid!”

The Earl of Warwick said, “No longer Earl of March, you are the Duke of York. The next step up is England’s royal throne, for you shall be proclaimed King of England in every borough as we pass along, and that man who does not throw his cap up in the air for joy shall for that crime make forfeit of his head.

“King Edward IV, valiant Richard, Marquess of Montague, let’s stay no longer, dreaming of renown, but let the trumpets sound, and go about achieving our task.”

Richard said, “Lord Clifford, even if your heart were as hard as steel, as you have shown it to be flinty by your deeds, I am coming to you to pierce it, or to give you mine.”

Edward said, “Then strike up drums. God and Saint George for us!”

Saint George is the patron saint of England.

A messenger arrived.

The Earl of Warwick asked, “What is it? What is the news?”

The messenger replied, “The Duke of Norfolk sends you word by me that Queen Margaret is coming with a powerful army. He requests your company for speedy counsel.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Why, then everything is working out well. Brave warriors, let’s go.”

— 2.2 —

King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, Lord Clifford, and the Earl of Northumberland stood in front of

the town of York. With them were soldiers, including a drummer and a trumpeter.

Queen Margaret said to her husband, King Henry VI, “Welcome, my lord, to this brave town of York. Yonder is the head of that archenemy, the Duke of York, who sought to have your crown encircle his head. Doesn’t the object cheer your heart, my lord?”

“Yes,” King Henry VI said, “as much as the rocks cheer those who fear their ship will wreck on them. To see this sight irks my very soul. Withhold revenge, dear God! It is not my fault, for I have not deliberately infringed my vow.”

King Henry VI was worried that he had violated his oath. He had sworn to allow the Duke of York and the Duke’s heirs to have the crown after he died, but Queen Margaret and Lord Clifford had been waging war to have the oath annulled.

Lord Clifford said, “My gracious liege, this excessive mildness and gentleness and harmful pity must be laid aside. To whom do lions cast their gentle looks? Not to the beast that would usurp their den. Whose hand does the wild forest bear lick? Not his who carries away her young before her face. Who escapes the lurking serpent’s deadly sting? Not he who sets his foot upon her back. The smallest snake will attack after being trodden on, and doves will peck to safeguard their brood.

“The ambitious York aimed at your crown, and you smile while he knits his angry brows. He, who was only a Duke, wanted his son to be a King, and he wanted to elevate in rank his offspring, like a loving sire.

“You, who are a King, blest with an excellent son, gave your consent to disinherit him, which argued that you are a very unloving father.

“Creatures that are incapable of reason feed their young, and although man’s face is frightening to their eyes, yet who has not seen them protect their tender ones with those wings that sometimes they have used in fearful flight and make war against that person who climbed to their nest, and offer their own lives in their young’s defense?”

“For shame, my liege, make them your precedent! Wouldn’t it be a pity that this excellent boy should lose his birthright by his father’s fault, and long hereafter say to his child, ‘What my great-grandfather and grandfather got, my heedless father foolishly gave away?’”

The great-grandfather and grandfather of Edward, Prince of Wales, were King Henry IV, who took the crown from King Richard II, and King Henry V, who became a national hero because of his victories in France.

Lord Clifford continued, “Ah, what a shame that would be! Look on the boy, and let his manly face, which promises a successful fortune, steel your melting heart to hold your own and leave your own with him. Look at your son and resolve to be King and let him be King after you.”

King Henry VI replied, “Very well has Clifford played the orator, making arguments of mighty force. But, Clifford, tell me, did you never hear that things ill gotten always have bad outcomes? And were things always happy for that son whose father went to Hell because of his hoarding? I’ll leave behind my virtuous deeds for my son, and I wish that my father had left me no more than that! For all the rest is held at such a rate as brings a thousand-fold more care to keep than possession brings jot of pleasure.”

He then said to the Duke of York’s decapitated head, “Ah, kinsman York! I wish your best friends knew how much it grieves me that your head is here!”

Queen Margaret said to him, “My lord, cheer up your

spirits. Our foes are near, and this soft courage makes your followers fainthearted. You promised knighthood to our early-maturing son. Unsheathe your sword, and dub him a knight immediately.

“Edward, Prince of Wales, kneel down.”

Prince Edward knelt, and King Henry VI tapped his shoulders with a sword and then said, “Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight, and learn this lesson: Draw your sword in justice.”

The House of Lancaster and the House of York were both descended from King Edward III, whose family name was Plantagenet.

Prince Edward said, “My gracious father, by your Kingly leave, I’ll draw my sword as heir apparent to the crown, and in that cause use it to the death.”

Lord Clifford said, “Why, that is spoken like a promising Prince.”

A messenger arrived and said, “Royal commanders, be in readiness, for with a band of thirty thousand men comes Warwick, with the support of Edward, the new Duke of York, and in the towns, as they march along, people proclaim him King, and many run to him. Arrange your troops in fighting position, for the enemy soldiers are near at hand.”

Lord Clifford said to King Henry VI, “I wish that your highness would depart from the battlefield. The Queen has best success when you are absent.”

Queen Margaret said, “Yes, my good lord, depart and leave us to our fortune.”

King Henry VI replied, “Why, that’s my fortune, too; therefore, I’ll stay.”

The Earl of Northumberland said, “If you stay, stay with resolution then to fight.”

“My royal father,” Prince Edward said, “cheer these noble lords and hearten those who fight in your defense. Unsheathe your sword, good father; cry ‘Saint George!’”

A marching drum sounded, and the three surviving sons of the Duke of York — Edward, George, and Richard — arrived. With them were the Earl of Warwick, the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquess of Montague, and some soldiers. They had come for a parley.

Edward said, “Now, perjured Henry, will you kneel for grace and set your diadem upon my head, or will you endure the deadly fortune of the battlefield?”

Queen Margaret said, “Go and berate your minions, proud insulting boy! Is it becoming for you to speak so boldly before your sovereign and lawful King?”

“I am his King, and he should bow his knee to me,” Edward said. “I was adopted heir by his consent. Since that time, his oath has been broken, for as I hear, you, Margaret, who are King although he wears the crown, have caused him by a new act of Parliament to blot me out of the succession and put his own son in.”

“And with good reason, too,” Lord Clifford said. “Who should succeed the father but the son?”

Richard said, “Are you there, butcher? Oh, I cannot speak!”

Richard was calling Lord Clifford a butcher because he had killed young Rutland.

Lord Clifford replied, “Yes, crookback, here I stand to answer you or any man who is the proudest of your gang.”

“It was you who killed young Rutland, wasn’t it?” Richard

asked.

“Yes, and the old Duke of York, and I am not yet satisfied,” Lord Clifford replied.

“For God’s sake, lords, give the signal to begin the battle,” Richard said.

“What do you say, Henry?” the Earl of Warwick asked.
“Will you yield the crown?”

Queen Margaret said, “Why, what is this, long-tongued, chattering Warwick! Do you dare to speak? When you and I last met at Saint Albans, your legs did better service for you than your hands.”

“Then it was my turn to flee, and now it is yours,” the Earl of Warwick said.

“You said that before,” Lord Clifford said, “and yet you fled.”

“It was not your valor, Clifford, that drove me away,” the Earl of Warwick said.

“No,” the Earl of Northumberland said, “nor was it your manhood that dared to make you stay.”

“Northumberland, I regard you with great esteem,” Richard said.

He added, “Break off the parley; for I can scarcely refrain from putting into action the passions of my big-swollen heart against Clifford, that cruel child-killer.”

“I slew your father,” Lord Clifford said. “Do you call him a child?”

Richard ignored that comment, but he said, “Like a dastardly and treacherous coward, you killed our young brother Rutland, but before sunset I’ll make you curse the

deed.”

“Have done with words, my lords, and hear me speak,” King Henry VI said.

“Defy them then, or else close your lips,” Queen Margaret said to him.

“Please, put no limits on my tongue. I am a King, and I have the privilege of speaking,” Henry VI said.

“My liege,” Lord Clifford said, “the wound that bred this meeting here cannot be cured by words; therefore, be still and quiet.”

“Then, executioner, unsheathe your sword,” Richard said. “By Him Who made us all, I am resolved that Clifford’s manhood lies upon his tongue. His tongue is more manly than his sword.”

“Tell me, Henry, shall I have my rights, or not?” Edward asked King Henry VI. “A thousand men have broken their fasts today who shall never eat the evening meal unless you yield the crown to me.”

The Earl of Warwick said to King Henry VI, “If you deny Edward the crown, the blood of the soldiers who will die is upon your head because Edward, the new Duke of York, puts his armor on for a just cause.”

Prince Edward said, “If that is right which Warwick says is right, then there is no wrong, but everything is right.”

Richard said to Prince Edward, “Whichever man begot you, there your mother stands, for I know well that you have your mother’s tongue.”

Queen Margaret said to Richard, “But you are like neither your sire nor your dam.”

This was an insult because “dam” is a word used for an

animal's mother.

She continued, "But you are like a foul misshapen deformed individual, marked by the destinies as a person to be avoided just like venomous toads or lizards' dreadful stings."

Richard replied, "You are iron of Naples hidden with a covering of English guilt, and your father bears the title of a King — as if a gutter should be called the sea. Aren't you ashamed, knowing from whom you are descended, to let your tongue reveal your basely born heart?"

Richard was pointing out that Margaret had married above her social rank. Her father was a titular King with little money, and yet she had married the King of England.

Edward, Duke of York, said, "A wisp of straw would be worth a thousand crowns if it were possible to make this shameless whore know herself.

"Helen of Greece was fairer far than you, although your husband may be Menelaus, and never was Agamemnon's brother wronged by that false woman, as this King has been wronged by you."

Edward, Duke of York, thought little of Helen of Greece, who became Helen of Troy. He believed that she had cuckolded Menelaus, her lawful husband, by running away with the Trojan Prince Paris.

Edward, Duke of York, continued, "Henry VI's father reveled in the heart of France, and tamed the King of France, and made the French King's oldest son — the Dauphin — stoop.

"And if Henry VI had married according to his rank and position, he might have kept that glory of being King of England to this day. But when he took a beggar to his bed,

and graced your poor father by marrying you, even then that sunshine brewed a shower for him — a shower that washed away the victories that his father — Henry V — had won in France.

“That shower also heaped sedition on his crown at home. For what has broached this tumult but your pride? Had you been meek, our title to the crown would have continued to sleep because we, in pity of the gentle King Henry VI, would have not asserted our claim to the crown until another age.”

George said, “But when we saw our sunshine made your spring, and we saw that your summer bred us no growth, we set the axe to your usurping root, and although the edge of the axe has to some extent hit ourselves, yet you should know that since we have begun to strike, we’ll never stop until we have hewn you down, or bathed and fertilized your growth with our heated blood.”

Duke Edward of York said, “And with that resolution, I defy you. I am not willing any longer to engage in talk, since you will not allow the gentle King to speak.

“Let the trumpets sound! Let our bloodthirsty battle flags wave! And let us get either victory, or else a grave.”

“Stay, Edward,” Queen Margaret said.

“No, wrangling woman, we’ll no longer stay,” Duke Edward of York said. “These angry words we have exchanged will cost ten thousand lives this day.”

— 2.3 —

The Battle of Towton was taking place on 29 March 1461 on a battlefield near Leeds in Yorkshire. An exhausted Earl of Warwick stood alone.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Exhausted with toil, as runners

with a race, I lay me down a little while to rest, for strokes received, and many blows repaid, have robbed my strongly knit muscles of their strength, and come what may I must rest awhile.”

Duke Edward of York arrived, running, and said, “Smile, gentle, noble Heaven! Or strike, ungentle, ignoble death! For this world frowns, and Edward’s sun is clouded.”

“What is it, my lord!” the Earl of Warwick asked. “What has happened? What hope of good fortune do we have?”

George arrived and said, “Our fortune is loss, and our hope is only sad despair. Our ranks are broken, and ruin follows us. What counsel can you give? Whither shall we flee?”

“Fight is useless,” Edward said. “They follow us with wings, and we are weak and cannot avoid pursuit.”

Richard arrived and said, “Ah, Warwick, why have you withdrawn yourself? Your bastard brother’s blood — not the blood of the Marquess of Montague — the thirsty earth has drunk after the steely point of Clifford’s lance pierced him like a wine cask. And in the very pangs of death he cried, like a dismal clangor heard from afar, ‘Warwick, revenge! Brother, revenge my death!’ So, underneath the belly of their steeds that stained their fetlocks in his steaming blood, the noble gentleman gave up the ghost.”

Enraged, the Earl of Warwick cried, “Then let the earth become drunken with our blood! I’ll kill my horse because I will not flee! Why do we stand here like soft-hearted women, bewailing our losses, while the foe rages? Why do we look upon these events as if the tragedy were played in jest by counterfeiting, feigning actors?”

He knelt and said, “Here on my knee I vow to God above, I’ll never pause again, never stand still, until either death has closed these eyes of mine or Lady Fortune has given

me my measure — my share — of revenge.”

Duke Edward of York knelt and said, “Oh, Warwick, I bend my knee with yours, and in this vow I chain my soul to yours!

“And, before my knee rises from the earth’s cold face, I throw my hands, my eyes, my heart to You, God, You setter up and plucker down of Kings. I beseech You that if with Your will it stands that this body must be prey to my foes, yet may your strong gates of Heaven open and give sweet passage inside to my sinful soul!

Daniel 2:21 states, “*And he changeth the times and seasons: he taketh away kings: he setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and understanding to those that understand*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Duke Edward of York continued, “Now, lords, let us take leave until we meet again, wherever it be, in Heaven or on Earth.”

Richard said, “Brother, give me your hand, and gentle Warwick, let me embrace you in my weary arms. I, who never did weep, now melt with woe that winter should cut off our springtime so.”

“Let’s go! Let’s go!” the Earl of Warwick said. “Once more, sweet lords, farewell.”

George said, “Yet let us all together go to our troops and give permission to flee to those who will not stay. And let us call them pillars who will stand by and support us; we will promise them such rewards as victors wear at the Olympian games if we thrive. This may plant courage in their quailing breasts, for yet there is hope of life and victory. Delay no longer; let’s go away from here at full speed.”

— 2.4 —

In another part of the battlefield, Richard and Lord Clifford met.

Richard said, “Now, Clifford, I have singled you out of the herd so that you are alone and I can hunt you. Suppose this arm of mine is for the Duke of York, and this arm of mine is for Rutland. Both of my arms are under an obligation to get revenge even if you were surrounded by a strong bronze wall.”

“Now, Richard, I am with you here alone,” Lord Clifford replied. “This is the hand that stabbed your father York, and this is the hand that slew your brother Rutland, and here’s the heart that triumphs and exults in their death and cheers these hands that slew your sire and brother to execute the same slaughter upon yourself. And so, let’s fight!”

They fought, but the Earl of Warwick arrived. Unwilling to fight both Richard and the Earl of Warwick, one against two, Lord Clifford fled.

Richard said, “No, Warwick, single out some other game to hunt, for I myself will hunt this wolf to death.”

Richard ran after Lord Clifford.

— 2.5 —

In another part of the battlefield, King Henry VI said to himself, “This battle fares like the morning’s war, when dying clouds contend with growing light at that time the shepherd, blowing on his fingernails to warm his hands, can call it neither perfect day nor perfect night.

“Now sways the morning’s war this way, like a mighty sea forced by the tide to combat with the wind. Now sways it that way, like the selfsame sea forced to retire by the fury

of the wind. Sometimes the flood prevails, and then the wind prevails. Now one is the better, and then another is best. Both are tugging to be victors, breast to breast, yet neither is conqueror nor conquered, and so the morning's war is the equal of this deadly war.

“Here on this molehill I will sit down.

“To whom God will, there be the victory! My Queen Margaret and Clifford, too, have scolded me and shooed me away from the battle, both of them swearing that they prosper best of all when I am absent.

“I wish that I were dead — if God's good will would have it so — for what is in this world but grief and woe?

“Oh, God! I think it would be a happy life to be no better than a simple shepherd, to sit upon a hill, as I do now, to artfully carve out sundials in the turf of a hillside, point by point, thereby to see how the minutes run, how many minutes make the hour fully complete, how many hours bring about the day, how many days will finish up the year, and how many years a mortal man may live.

“When this is known, then to divide the times: So many hours must I tend my flock, so many hours must I take my rest, so many hours must I contemplate and pray, so many hours must I entertain myself, so many days my ewes have been with young, so many weeks before the poor fools will give birth, and so many years before I shall shear the fleece.

“In this way, minutes, hours, days, months, and years would pass over to the purpose for which they were created, and they would bring white hairs to a quiet grave.

“Ah, what a life would this be! How sweet! How lovely!

“Doesn't the hawthorn bush give a sweeter shade to

shepherds looking on their defenseless sheep than a rich embroidered canopy does to Kings who fear their subjects' treachery? Oh, yes, it does — a thousand-fold it does.

“And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds, his cold, thin drink out of his leather bottle, his usual sleep under a fresh tree's shade, all of which he enjoys securely and sweetly, is far beyond a Prince's delicacies, his food sparkling in a golden cup, his body couched in a finely wrought bed, when care, mistrust, and treason lie in wait for him.”

A trumpet sounded a battle call.

Two soldiers arrived and fought. The younger soldier killed the older soldier.

The younger soldier said, “Ill blows the wind that profits nobody. This man, whom hand to hand I slew in fight, may be possessed with some store of coins, and I, who happen to take them from him now, may yet before night yield both my life and the coins to some other man, as this dead man does to me.”

He took the older soldier's helmet off and said, “Who's this? Oh, God! It is the face of my father, whom in this conflict I have killed without knowing who he was.

“Oh, heavy, sorrowful times, begetting such events! From London I was impressed by the King into the King's army. My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man, came here to fight on the side of the Duke of York after being impressed by his master into the Duke's army.

“And I, who at my father's hands received my life, have by my hands bereaved him of life.

“Pardon me, God. I knew not what I did! And pardon me, father, for I did not know who you were!

“My tears shall wipe away these bloody marks on my father’s face, and I will say no more words until my tears have flowed their fill.”

King Henry VI said, “Oh, piteous spectacle! Oh, bloody times! While lions war and battle for their dens, poor harmless lambs endure their enmity.

“Weep, wretched man, I’ll aid you tear for tear, and let our hearts and eyes, like civil war, be blind with tears, and break overburdened with grief.”

Two more soldiers arrived and fought. The older soldier killed the younger soldier.

The older soldier said, “You who so bravely have resisted me, give me your gold, if you have any gold, for I have bought it with a hundred blows.”

He took the younger soldier’s helmet off and said, “But let me see. Is this our foeman’s face? Ah, no, no, no, it is the face of my only son!

“Ah, boy, if any life is left in you, open your eyes! See, see what showers arise, blown with the windy tempest of my heart, upon your wounds that kill my eyes and heart!

“Oh, pity, God, this miserable age! What bloodthirsty deeds, how deadly, how butcherly, criminal, mutinous and unnatural and abnormal, this deadly quarrel daily begets!

“Oh, boy, your father gave you life too soon, and he has bereft you of your life too late!

“Oh, boy, your father gave you life too soon because you are old enough to be a soldier, and he has lived too long — because he lived long enough to bereft you of your life!”

King Henry VI said, “Woe above woe! Grief more than common grief! I wish that my death would stop these

piteous deeds! Oh, pity, pity, gentle Heaven, have pity!

“The red rose and the white rose are on his face, the fatal colors of our striving Houses. The one his red blood very well resembles; the other his pale cheeks, I think, present. May one rose wither and let the other rose flourish. If the red rose and the white rose fight, a thousand lives must wither.”

The son who had killed his father said, “How my mother will be angry with me because of a father’s death and never be happy again!”

The father who had killed his son said, “How my wife will shed seas of tears because of the slaughter of my son and never be happy again!”

King Henry VI said, “How the country because of these woeful occurrences will think ill of the King and not be happy!”

The son who had killed his father said, “Has a son ever so rued a father’s death?”

The father who had killed his son said, “Has a father ever so mourned his son?”

King Henry VI said, “Has a King ever so grieved for subjects’ woe? Much is your sorrow; mine is ten times as much.”

The son who had killed his father said, “I’ll carry you away to a place where I may weep my fill.”

He exited, carrying his father’s corpse.

The father who had killed his son said, “These arms of mine shall be your shroud. My heart, sweet boy, shall be your sepulcher, for from my heart your image shall never go. My sighing breast shall be your funeral bell, and so

dutiful in performing your funeral rites will your father be, even for the loss of you, my only son, as Priam was for all his valiant sons.”

Priam, King of Troy, lost many of his fifty sons during the Trojan War.

The father who had killed his son continued, “I’ll carry you away from here, and let them fight who will, for I have murdered where I should not kill.”

He exited, carrying his son’s corpse.

King Henry VI said, “Sad-hearted men, much overcome with cares and concerns, here sits a King more woeful than you are.”

Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, and the Duke of Exeter arrived.

Prince Edward said to King Henry VI, “Flee, father, flee! For all your friends have fled, and Warwick rages like an angry bull! Run away! Death pursues us!”

“Mount on horseback, my lord,” Queen Margaret said. “Ride towards Berwick-on-Tweed in Northumberland as quickly as you can. Edward and Richard, like a pair of greyhounds that have the fearful, fleeing hare in sight, with their fiery eyes sparkling with thorough-going wrath, and bloody steel swords grasped in their angry hands, are at our backs, and therefore you need to go away from here as quickly as possible.”

The Duke of Exeter said, “Run away! For vengeance comes along with them. No, don’t cause delay by speaking; make a speedy exit now, or else follow me later. I’m going now.”

“No, take me with you, good sweet Exeter,” King Henry VI said. “Not that I fear to stay, but that I love to go wherever the Queen journeys. Forward; let’s go!”

In another part of the battlefield, an injured Lord Clifford knew he was dying.

Alone, he said, “Here burns my candle out; yes, here it dies. My candle, while it lasted, gave the Lancastrian King Henry VI light.

“Oh, House of Lancaster, I fear your overthrow more than my body’s parting with my soul! Love and fear of me glued many friends to you, and now that I am falling, your tough commixture melts — your strong alliances dissolve.

“Impairing Henry and strengthening wickedly proud York, the common people swarm like summer flies; and where do gnats fly but to the Sun? And who shines now but Henry’s enemies?

“Oh, Phoebus Apollo — Henry — if you had never given consent that Phaëthon — the Duke of York — should control your fiery steeds, your burning Sun-chariot would never have scorched the Earth!

“And, Henry, had you ruled as Kings should do, or as your father and his father did, giving no ground to the House of York, they never then had sprung up like summer flies. I and ten thousand other men in this luckless realm would not have left any widows mourning for our death, and you this day would have kept your throne in peace.

“For what nourishes weeds but gentle air? And what makes robbers bold but too much lenity?

“But useless are my complaints, and incurable are my wounds. I have no way to flee, nor do I have the strength to sustain flight.

“The foe is merciless, and will not pity me, for at their hands I have deserved no pity. The air has gotten into my

fatal wounds, and much shedding of blood makes me faint.

“Come, York and Richard, Warwick and the rest. I stabbed your fathers’ bosoms; now split my breast.”

He fainted.

A trumpet called the Lancastrian army to retreat, leaving the Yorkist army triumphant.

The Yorkists Edward, George, Richard, the Marquess of Montague, and the Earl of Warwick arrived. Some Yorkist soldiers were with them.

Edward said, “Now we rest, lords. Good fortune bids us pause and smooth the frowns of war with peaceful looks.

“Some troops pursue the bloodthirsty-minded Queen, who led calm Henry, although he were a King, as a sail, filled with a fretting gust, commands and forces an argosy — a large merchant ship — to make headway against the waves.

“But, lords, do you think that Lord Clifford fled with them?”

“No, it is impossible that he should escape,” the Earl of Warwick said, “for although before your brother Richard’s face I speak the words, Richard marked him for the grave, and wherever Lord Clifford is, he’s surely dead.”

Lord Clifford groaned and died.

Edward said, “Whose soul is that which takes its sorrowful departure?”

Richard said, “A deadly groan, like life departing and leaving death.”

“See who it is,” Edward said, “and now the battle’s ended, whether he is friend or foe, let him be gently treated.”

Richard looked at the corpse and said, “Revoke that sentence of mercy, for it is Clifford, who not contented that he lopped the branch in hewing Rutland when his leaves put forth, set his murdering knife to the root from whence that tender spray did sweetly spring. I mean that Lord Clifford murdered our Princely father, the Duke of York.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “From off the gates of York fetch down your father’s head, which Clifford placed there. Instead, let this head take its place. Measure must be repaid with measure. An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth.”

Edward said about Lord Clifford’s body, “Bring forth that fatal screech owl to our house, that owl that sang nothing but death to us and ours. Now death shall stop his dismal threatening sound, and his ill-boding tongue no more shall speak.”

The Earl of Warwick looked at Lord Clifford’s body and said, “I think his understanding has left him.

“Speak, Clifford, do you know who is speaking to you?

“Dark, cloudy death casts a gloom over his beams of life, and he neither sees us nor hears what we say.”

“Oh, I wish he did!” Richard said. “And so perhaps he does. Perhaps it is just his trick and he is pretending to be dead because he wants to avoid such bitter taunts as those that he gave our father in his time of death.”

George said, “If you think so, then vex him with sharp, cutting words.”

“Clifford, ask for mercy and obtain no grace,” Richard said.

“Clifford, repent in unavailing penitence,” Edward said.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Clifford, make excuses for your crimes and sins —”

“— while we devise cruel tortures for your crimes and sins,” George said.

“You ‘loved’ York,” Richard said, “and I am a son of the old Duke of York.”

“You ‘pitied’ Rutland,” Edward said. “I will ‘pity’ you.”

“Where’s Captain Margaret, to protect you now?” George asked.

“They mock you, Clifford,” the Earl of Warwick said. “Swear as you were accustomed to swear.”

“What, no oath!” Richard said. “The world goes hard when Clifford cannot spare his ‘friends’ an oath. I know by that he’s dead, and by my soul, if this right hand could buy two hours of life for him, so that I in all contempt might rail at him, this hand would chop off my other hand, and with the blood that spurts out I would choke and strangle and drown this villain whose unquenchable thirst for blood the deaths of the old Duke of York and young Rutland could not satisfy.”

“Yes, he’s dead,” the Earl of Warwick said. “Off with the traitor’s head, and put it in the place where your father’s head now stands. And now triumphantly march to London, where you will be crowned England’s royal King: Edward IV. From London I, Warwick, will cut the sea to France, and ask for the Lady Bona, sister-in-law of the King of France to be your Queen. With that marriage, you shall strongly join, as with a sinew, both these lands — England and France — together. And, having the King of France as your friend, you shall not dread the scattered foes — the Lancastrians — who hope to rise again. For although they cannot greatly sting to hurt, yet look to have them buzz to offend your ears. They will circulate rumors about you.

“First I will see the coronation, and then I’ll cross the sea to

Brittany to bring about this marriage, if it pleases my lord.”

“Do as you will, sweet Warwick,” Edward said. “Let it be done, for with your strong shoulder as my support I build my throne, and I will never undertake the thing for which your counsel and consent are lacking.

“Richard, I will make you Duke of Gloucester, and George, I will make you Duke of Clarence.”

Using the royal plural, he said, “Warwick, with the consent of and acting as ourself, shall do and undo as pleases him best.”

Richard joked, “Let me be the Duke of Clarence, and let George be the Duke of Gloucester because Gloucester’s Dukedom is too ominous. The previous three Dukes of Gloucester have died violent deaths.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Tut, that’s a foolish observation. Richard, you will be the Duke of Gloucester. Now let’s go to London to see to the rituals that will give all of you possession of these honors.”

CHAPTER 3 (3 Henry VI)

— 3.1 —

In a rural area in the north of England, two gamekeepers carrying crossbows were talking.

The first gamekeeper said, “Under this thickly grown thicket, we’ll shroud and hide ourselves, for through this glade the deer will soon come, and in this covert we will make our hiding place and choose the best of all the deer.”

“I’ll stay higher up the hill, so both of us may shoot,” the second gamekeeper said.

“That cannot be,” the first gamekeeper said. “The noise of your crossbow will scare the herd of deer, and so my shot will be lost. Here we both will stand, and we will aim at the best deer. So that the time shall not seem tedious, I’ll tell you what befell me on a day in this same place where now we intend to stand.”

The second gamekeeper looked up and said, “Here comes a man; let’s wait until he has passed by.”

King Henry VI, disguised and carrying a prayer book, was the man the second gamekeeper had seen.

King Henry VI said, “From Scotland I have stolen, purely out of love, to greet my own land with my wistful sight. No, Harry, Harry, it is no land of yours. Your place is filled, your scepter has been wrung from you, and the balm with which you were anointed has been washed off. No bending knee will call you Caesar now, no humble petitioners will press forward to speak to you and ask you for justice. No, not a man comes to you for redress of wrongs, for how can I help them, when I cannot help myself?”

The first gamekeeper said, “Aye, here’s a deer whose skin’s a gamekeeper’s fee. This is the former King; let’s seize him.”

Gamekeepers received the skin and head of a deer in payment for their services.

“Let me embrace you, sour adversity,” King Henry VI said, “for wise men say it is the wisest course.”

“Why do we linger?” the second gamekeeper said. “Let us lay hands on him.”

“Wait awhile,” the first gamekeeper said. “We’ll listen a little longer.”

King Henry VI said, “My Queen and son have gone to the King of France to seek aid, and I hear that the great commanding Earl of Warwick has also gone thither to request the French King’s sister-in-law as a wife for Edward. If this news is true, then, the labor of my poor Queen and son is only lost, for Warwick is a subtle orator and King Louis XI is a Prince soon won with moving words.

“However, by this second point — King Louis XI is a Prince soon won with moving words — Margaret may win him, for she’s a woman to be much pitied. Her sighs will make an assault on his breast. Her tears will pierce into a marble heart. The tiger will be mild while she mourns, and even a cruel tyrant such as the Roman emperor Nero will be affected by remorse when he hears her complaints and sees her brinish tears.

“Yes, but she’s come to beg, while Warwick has come to give. Margaret, on the French King’s left side, will beg for aid for me, Henry. Warwick, on his right side, will ask for a wife for Edward — a good marriage for the French King’s sister-in-law.

“Margaret will weep and say that her Henry has been deposed. Warwick will smile and say that his Edward has been formally installed as King of England.

“She, poor wretch, will be able to speak no more because of grief, while Warwick will tell the French King about Edward’s claim to be King of England. Warwick will smoothly pass over the wrong that Edward has done in claiming the crown and he will put forth arguments of mighty strength, and in conclusion he will win the King of France away from Margaret with the promise of a good marriage for his sister-in-law, and who knows what else he will say to strengthen and support King Edward IV’s place on the throne.

“Oh, Margaret, thus it will be, and you, poor soul, will then be forsaken because you went forlorn to the King of France!”

The gamekeepers came out of hiding.

The second gamekeeper said, “Tell us who you are who talks of Kings and Queens.”

King Henry VI said, “I am more than I seem, and less than I was born to. I am a man at least, for less I should not be. Men may talk of Kings, and so why not I?”

The second gamekeeper said, “Yes, but you talk as if you were a King.”

“Why, so I am, in my mind, and that’s enough,” King Henry VI said.

“But, if you are a King, then where is your crown?” the second gamekeeper asked.

“My crown is in my heart, not on my head,” King Henry VI said. “My crown is not decorated with diamonds and jewels from India, nor is it to be seen. My crown is called

contentment: It is a crown that Kings seldom enjoy.”

The second gamekeeper said, “Well, if you are a King crowned with contentment, your crown of contentment and you must be contented to go along with us, for we think that you are the King whom King Edward IV has deposed, and we his subjects sworn in all allegiance will apprehend you as his enemy.”

“Haven’t you ever sworn and broken an oath?” King Henry VI asked.

“No, I never have, and I will not now,” the second gamekeeper said.

“Where did you dwell when I was King of England?”

“Here in this country, where we now remain,” the second gamekeeper replied.

“I was anointed King at nine months old,” King Henry VI said. “My father and my grandfather were Kings, and you were sworn true subjects to me. Tell me, then, haven’t you broken your oaths?”

“No, for we were your subjects only while you were King,” the first gamekeeper said.

“Am I dead?” King Henry VI said. “Don’t I breathe as a living man? Ah, simple men, you know not what you swear!”

He picked up a feather from the ground and said, “Look as I blow this feather from my face, and look as the air blows it to me again; the feather obeys my wind when I blow, and yields to another wind when it blows, commanded always by the greater gust. Such is the lightness and fickleness of you common men.

“But do not break your oaths, for of that sin my mild

entreaty shall not make you guilty. Go where you will; the King shall be commanded. You two be the Kings: Command, and I'll obey."

The first gamekeeper said, "We are true and loyal subjects to the King of England: King Edward IV."

"So would you be again to Henry VI, if he were seated on the throne as King Edward IV is," King Henry VI said.

"We order you, in God's name, and the King's, to go with us to the officers of the peace," the first gamekeeper said.

"In God's name, lead," King Henry VI said. "May your King's name be obeyed, and whatever God wills, let your King perform, and whatever he wills, I humbly yield to."

— 3.2 —

King Edward IV, Duke Richard of Gloucester, Duke George of Clarence, and Lady Elizabeth Grey were together in a room in the palace at London. Richard and George had recently become Dukes.

King Edward IV said, "Brother Richard of Gloucester, at Saint Albans' battlefield this lady's husband, Sir Richard Grey, was slain. His lands were then seized by the conqueror. Her petition to me is now to allow her to repossess those lands, which we in justice cannot well deny because the worthy gentleman lost his life on the side of the House of York."

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, "Your highness shall do well to grant her petition. It would be dishonorable to deny it."

"It would be no less than dishonorable, but yet I'll pause before I make a decision," King Edward IV said.

Both Duke Richard of Gloucester and Duke George of

Clarence knew that King Edward IV was sexually attracted to Lady Elizabeth Grey.

Duke Richard of Gloucester whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “Is that so? I see the lady has a thing to grant, before the King will grant her humble petition.”

In this culture, the word “thing” also meant genitals. Richard meant that before King Edward IV would grant Lady Elizabeth Grey her lands, she would have to grant him access to her vagina.

Duke George of Clarence whispered to Richard, “He knows the game. How well he keeps downwind so she doesn’t immediately smell what he wants!”

“Silence!” Richard whispered to Duke George of Clarence.

King Edward IV said, “Widow, we will consider your petition; come back some other time to know what we have decided.”

“Right gracious lord, I cannot endure delay,” Lady Elizabeth Grey replied. “May it please your highness to tell me what your decision is now? Whatever your pleasure is, it shall satisfy me.”

Her words had a sexual meaning of which she was unaware. She was unknowingly saying that the King’s sexual pleasure would satisfy her — by having sex with King Edward IV, she would receive the satisfaction of getting her late husband’s lands back.

Duke Richard of Gloucester whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “Is that so, widow? Then I’ll warrant that you will get all your lands, if what pleases him shall pleasure you. Fight closer, or, in good faith, you’ll catch a blow. Fight more closely if you want to avoid his thrusts.”

The blows — thrusts — could be made in fencing, or in

bed.

Duke George of Clarence whispered to Richard, “I am not afraid for her, unless she should happen to fall.”

One kind of fall would be into bed.

Duke Richard of Gloucester whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “May God forbid that! For the King will take advantage.”

King Edward IV asked Lady Elizabeth Grey, “How many children do you have, widow? Tell me.”

Duke George of Clarence whispered to Richard, “I think he means to beg a child of her.”

“To beg a child of her” could mean 1) “to beg that he be allowed to make one of her children his ward,” or 2) “to beg that she give birth to one of his future biological children.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “No, if that happens, whip me. He’d rather make her pregnant twice and give her two children.”

Lady Elizabeth Grey said to King Edward IV, “I have three children, my most gracious lord.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “She shall have four, if she’ll be ruled by the King.”

King Edward IV said, “It would be a pity if they would lose their father’s lands.”

“Be full of pity, revered lord, and grant my petition then,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said.

King Edward IV asked his two brothers, Richard and Duke George of Clarence, “Lords, give us good leave — let the

widow and I speak together privately. I'll test this widow's moral and mental sharpness."

As they walked a short distance away, Richard said to Duke George of Clarence about Edward, "Aye, good leave have you, for you will have leave until your youth takes leave and leaves you to the crutch — and crotch — of old age."

"Good leave" is "good permission." Richard was saying that King Edward IV would use his position of power to get much permission from women to have sex with them until he got too old to have sex.

King Edward IV said, "Now tell me, madam, do you love your children?"

"Yes," Lady Elizabeth Grey replied. "I love them fully as dearly as I love myself."

"And would you not do much to do them good?" King Edward IV asked.

One meaning of the word "do" is "f**k."

"To do them good, I would sustain some harm," Lady Elizabeth Grey replied.

"Then get your husband's lands, to do them good," King Edward IV said.

"That's why I have come to your majesty," Lady Elizabeth Grey said.

"I'll tell you how these lands are to be gotten," King Edward IV said.

"If you do, you shall bind me to your highness' service," Lady Elizabeth Grey replied.

"What service will you do me, if I give you the lands?"

King Edward IV asked.

He meant sexual service.

“Whatever you command that rests in me to do,” Lady Elizabeth Grey replied.

“But you will take exception to my request,” King Edward IV said.

“No, gracious lord, with the exception that I cannot do your request,” Lady Elizabeth Grey replied.

“Aye, but you can do what I mean to ask,” King Edward IV said.

“Why, then I will do what your grace commands,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said.

Duke Richard of Gloucester and Duke George of Clarence were watching, but they could not hear.

Richard whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “He plies her hard, and much rain wears the marble.”

Duke George of Clarence said to Richard, “The King is horny! His sexual excitement makes him as red as fire! Her wax must melt in the presence of his fire. She will grow wet.”

Lady Elizabeth Grey said, “Why did my lord stop speaking? Shall I not hear the task you want me to do?”

“It is an easy task,” King Edward IV said. “It is only to love a King.”

“That’s soon performed, because I am a subject, and subjects love their King,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said.

“Why, then, your husband’s lands I freely give you,” King Edward IV said.

“I take my leave with many thousand thanks,” Lady Elizabeth Gray said.

Richard believed that Lady Elizabeth Grey had agreed to sleep with the King.

Richard whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “The match is made; she seals it with a curtsy.”

“Wait,” King Edward IV said, “it is the fruits of love I mean.”

He meant sex, which sometimes results in the fruit of the womb.

“I also mean the fruits of love, my loving liege,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said.

She meant the love and respect that a loyal subject had for his or her King.

King Edward IV said, “Yes, but I am afraid that you are using the words in another sense than I am. What love do you think I am pursuing so much?”

“My love until I die, my humble thanks, my prayers,” Lady Elizabeth Grey replied. “That love which virtue begs and virtue grants.”

“No, by my truth, I did not mean such love,” King Edward IV said.

“Why, then you did not mean what I thought you did,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said, realizing what he wanted.

“But now you may partly perceive my mind,” King Edward IV said.

“My mind will never grant what I perceive your highness aims at, if I aim — guess — rightly,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said.

“To tell you plainly, I aim to lie with you in bed,” King Edward IV said.

“To tell you plainly, I had rather lie in prison,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said.

“Why, then you shall not have your late husband’s lands,” King Edward IV said.

“Why, then my chastity shall be my dower,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said, “for I will not purchase my late husband’s lands with the loss of my chastity.”

A dower is a widow’s share of her late husband’s estate.

“Therein you wrong your children mightily,” King Edward IV said.

“Herein your highness wrongs both them and me,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said. “But, mighty lord, this merry inclination of yours is not in accord with the seriousness of my petition to you. Please dismiss me with either ‘yes’ or ‘no.’”

“Yes, if you will say ‘yes’ to my request,” King Edward IV replied. “No if you say ‘no’ to my demand.”

“Then, no, my lord,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said. “My petition to you is at an end.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “The widow does not like him; she knits her eyebrows and frowns.”

George whispered to Richard, “The King is the bluntest and most unceremonious wooer in all Christendom.”

King Edward IV thought, *Her angry looks in response to my proposition show that she is replete with modesty. Her words show that her intelligence is incomparable. All her perfections have a natural claim on sovereignty. One way*

or other, she is for a King, and she shall be my lover, or else my Queen.

He said out loud, “Suppose that King Edward IV takes you for his Queen?”

“It is better said than done, my gracious lord,” Lady Elizabeth Grey replied. “I am a subject fit to jest with, but I am very unfit to be a sovereign.”

“Sweet widow, by my sovereignty I swear to you that I say no more than what my soul intends,” King Edward IV replied, “and that is, to enjoy you for my love.”

“And that is more than I will yield to,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said. “I know I am too mean — too low in social status — to be your Queen, and yet I am too good to be your concubine.”

“You cavil, widow,” King Edward IV said. “I did mean that I want you to be my Queen.”

“It will grieve your grace that my sons would call you father,” Lady Elizabeth Grey said.

“No more than when my daughters call you mother,” King Edward IV replied. “You are a widow, and you have some children. And, by God’s mother, I, who am only a bachelor, have some other children. Both of us are fertile. Why, it is a happy thing to be the father to many sons.

“Say no more and make no more objections, for you shall be my Queen.”

Richard whispered to Duke George of Clarence, “The ghostly father now has done his shrift. The priest has imposed his penance and performed his absolution.”

Duke George of Clarence whispered to Richard, “When he was made a shriver, it was for shift.”

“Ghostly” meant “spiritual.” A shriver is a father confessor. A shift is a woman’s undergarment. A joke of the time was to say that a woman had been “shriven to her shift” — that is, seduced.

King Edward IV walked over to his two brothers and said, “Brothers, you must wonder what Lady Elizabeth Grey and I have been talking about.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “The widow did not like it, for she looks very serious.”

“You’ll think it strange if I would marry her,” King Edward IV said.

“Marry her to whom, my lord?” Duke George of Clarence asked. Kings often had the right to marry nobles to each other.

“Why, Clarence, to myself,” King Edward IV said.

“That would be ten days’ wonder at the least,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said.

“That’s a day longer than a wonder lasts,” Duke George of Clarence said.

A cliché of the time was “nine days’ wonder.”

“By so much is this an extreme wonder,” Richard said.

“Well, jest on, brothers,” King Edward IV said. “I can tell you both that I have granted her suit to gain possession of her late husband’s lands.”

A nobleman entered the room and said, “My gracious lord, your foe Henry VI has been captured. He has been brought as your prisoner to your palace gate.”

“See that he is conveyed to the Tower of London,” King Edward IV said, “and let’s go, brothers, to the man who

captured him to question him about how he captured Henry.

“Widow, come along with us.

“Lords, treat her honorably.”

Everyone left except Duke Richard of Gloucester, who said to himself, “Yes, Edward will use women honorably. He will use a woman and be on-her-ably. I wish that he were wasted, marrow, bones, and all, with venereal disease so that from his loins no hopeful branch may spring and be born to cross and thwart me from accomplishing the golden time of wearing a golden crown I look for!

“And yet, between my soul’s desire and me — once the lustful Edward’s title of being King of England is dead and buried — is my older brother Duke George of Clarence, Henry VI, and Henry VI’s son, who is young Edward, as well as all the unwelcome children they will sire. These will all have precedence before I can be King. This is a cold forecast for accomplishing my goal!

“Why, then, I only dream about sovereignty and being King. I am like a person who stands upon a promontory and spies a far-off shore where he wants to tread. He wishes that his feet could travel there as quickly as his eye, and so he curses the sea that separates him from where he wants to be, saying that he’ll ladle it dry to make his passage.

“Just like that, I wish had the crown, which is so far off, and so I curse the obstacles that keep me from it, and so I say that I’ll remove the obstacles by cutting their lives short, thereby flattering myself with impossibilities.

“My eye is too quick and my heart presumes too much, unless my hand and strength could equal them.

“Well, let’s say there is no Kingdom then for Richard.

What other pleasure can the world afford? I'll make my Heaven in a lady's vagina, and deck my body in gay ornamental clothing, and bewitch sweet ladies with my words and looks.

“Oh, miserable thought! To do that is more unlikely than to accomplish the acquisition of twenty golden crowns!

“Why, the goddess Love forswore me when I was in my mother's womb, and in order that I should not deal in her soft laws of love, she corrupted frail nature with some bribe to shrink my arm up like a withered shrub, to make out of spite a mountain on my back — where sits deformity to mock my body — to make my legs of an unequal size, and to make me disproportionate in every part, as if I were a chaos, or an unlicked bear-whelp that has no resemblance to its dam.”

In this culture, people believed that when bear cubs were born they were unshaped masses and their mother bear licked them into the proper shape.

Richard continued, “And am I then a man to be beloved? Oh, monstrous fault, to harbor such a thought!

“Then, since this earth affords no joy to me, except to command, to restrain and rebuke, to overrule and overcome such as are of better physical appearance than myself, I'll make my Heaven to dream upon the crown, and while I live, I will consider this world only a Hell, until my misshapen trunk that bears this head be surrounded with a glorious crown.

“And yet I don't know how to get the crown because many lives stand between me and my goal. And I — like one lost in a thorny wood, one who rends the thorns and is rent by the thorns, seeking a way and straying from the way; not knowing how to find the open air, but toiling desperately to find it — torment myself to catch the English crown.

“And from that torment I will free myself, or hew my way out with a bloody axe.

“Why, I can smile, and murder while I smile. And I can cry ‘I am content’ to that which grieves my heart, and wet my cheeks with artificial tears, and frame my face to all occasions.

“I’ll drown more sailors than the mermaids known as the Sirens shall.”

The Sirens used their beautiful singing voices to entice sailors to come too close to shore and wreck their ships.

Richard continued, “I’ll slay more gazers than the basilisk.”

The basilisk is a mythological serpent that can kill with its look.

Richard continued, “I’ll play the orator as well as Nestor, deceive more slyly than Ulysses could, and like a Sinon, conquer another Troy.”

Nestor was the wise old advisor to Agamemnon, leader of the Greek army against Troy. Ulysses’ Greek name was Odysseus. He was the trickiest of all the Greeks and is the hero of Homer’s *Odyssey*. Ulysses came up with the idea of the Trojan Horse, which Sinon convinced the Trojans to take into the city. London was considered a new Troy because people believed that a grandson of the Trojan hero Aeneas had founded it.

Richard continued, “I can add colors to the chameleon, change shapes with Proteus for advantages, and set the murderous Machiavelli to school.”

The chameleon can change colors so that it remains unseen. Proteus was a shape-shifter. Machiavelli was an Italian political theorist who was widely regarded as completely lacking morality.

Richard continued, “Can I do this, and cannot get a crown? Tut, even if it were farther off, I’ll pluck it down.”

— 3.3 —

A number of people were meeting in a room of King Louis XI’s palace in Paris: King Louis XI of France, his sister-in-law Lady Bona, the French Admiral Bourbon, Prince Edward of England, Queen Margaret, and the Earl of Oxford, one of King Henry VI’s supporters.

King Louis XI said, “Fair Queen of England, worthy Margaret, sit down with us. It ill befits your royal position and lineage that you should stand while I, Louis, sit.”

“No, mighty King of France,” Queen Margaret replied. “Now Margaret must strike her sail and learn for a while to serve where Kings command.”

A lowlier vessel would strike — lower — its sail in deference to a mightier ship. Striking the sail was also used as a sign that the ship was surrendering.

Queen Margaret continued, “I was, I must confess, great Albion’s Queen in former golden days.”

“Albion” is an ancient name for Britain.

She continued, “But now misfortune has trodden my title of Queen down, and with dishonor laid me on the ground, where I must take a low seat that is like my low fortune, and I must bring myself into conformity with my humble seat.”

“Tell me, fair Queen, from what springs this deep despair?” King Louis XI asked.

“From such a cause as fills my eyes with tears and stops my tongue, while my heart is drowned in cares,” Queen Margaret said.

“Whatever that cause is, always be royalty like yourself, and sit yourself by our side,” he said, using the royal plural.

They sat down, and the King of France added, “Don’t allow your neck to yield to the yoke of fortune, but instead let your dauntless mind always ride in triumph over all misfortune.

“Be plainspoken, Queen Margaret, and tell me about your grief. It shall be eased, if the King of France can yield relief.”

Queen Margaret replied, “Those gracious words revive my drooping thoughts and give my tongue-tied sorrows permission and the ability to speak. Now, therefore, be it known to noble Louis, that Henry VI, sole possessor of my love, from being a King has become a banished man, and he is forced to live in Scotland as a forlorn man, while proud, ambitious Edward, Duke of York, usurps the regal title and the seat of England’s truly anointed and lawful King.

“This is the reason that I, poor Margaret, with this my son, Prince Edward, King Henry VI’s heir, have come to request your just and lawful aid, and if you fail us, all our hope is over.

“Scotland wants to help, but cannot help. Our common people and our noble peers are both misled, our treasury has been seized, our soldiers put to flight, and as you see, we ourselves are in a heavy plight.”

“Renowned Queen, use patience to calm the storm of your emotions, while we think about a means to bring the storm to an end,” King Louis XI said.

“The more we delay, the stronger grows our foe,” Queen Margaret said.

“The more I delay, the more I’ll help you,” King Louis XI said.

“Oh, but impatience waits on and serves true sorrow,” Queen Margaret said.

The Earl of Warwick entered the room.

Queen Margaret said, “And see where comes the breeder — the cause — of my sorrow!”

“What is the rank of that man who boldly approaches our presence?” King Louis XI said.

Queen Margaret replied, “He is England’s Earl of Warwick, Edward IV’s greatest friend.”

“Welcome, brave Warwick! What brings you to France?” King Louis XI said.

Both King Louis XI and Queen Margaret stood up, but only King Louis XI stepped down from the dias to greet the Earl of Warwick.

Queen Margaret thought, *Yes, now a second storm begins to rise, for this is the man who moves both wind and tide.*

The Earl of Warwick said to King Louis XI, “From worthy Edward IV, King of Albion, who is my lord and sovereign and your vowed friend, I come in kindness and unfeigned love, first to greet your royal person and then to ask for a league of friendship, and lastly to confirm that friendship with a nuptial knot, if you will grant that the virtuous Lady Bona, your fair sister-in-law, be given to England’s King Edward IV in lawful marriage.”

Queen Margaret thought, *If that happens, Henry VI’s hope of regaining his crown is finished.*

The Earl of Warwick said to Lady Bona, “And, gracious madam, in our English King’s behalf, I am commanded,

with your permission and favor, humbly to kiss your hand, and with my tongue to tell you about the passion of my sovereign's heart, where reports about you, recently entering at his heedful ears, has placed your beauty's image and your virtue."

Queen Margaret said, "King Louis XI and Lady Bona, hear me speak before you give your answer to Warwick. His request does not spring from Edward IV's supposed well-meant honest love, but instead from deceit bred by necessity, for how can tyrants safely govern at home, unless they acquire great alliances abroad? To prove that Edward IV is a usurper, this may suffice: Henry VI is still alive, but even if he were dead, yet here Prince Edward, King Henry's son, stands.

"Be careful, therefore, Louis XI, that by this league and marriage you do not bring on yourself danger and dishonor, for although usurpers may rule for a while, yet the Heavens are just, and time suppresses wrongs."

"Insulting, slandering Margaret!" the Earl of Warwick said.

"And why do you not call her Queen?" Prince Edward asked.

The Earl of Warwick replied, "Because thy father, Henry VI, usurped the crown, and thou art Prince no more than she is Queen."

He deliberately used the — in this context — insulting "thy" and "thou" rather than the respectful "your" and "you."

The Earl of Oxford said, "Then Warwick makes null and nothing great John of Gaunt, who subdued the greatest part of Spain, and after John of Gaunt, King Henry IV, whose wisdom was a model of excellence to the wisest, and after wise King Henry IV, King Henry V, who by his prowess

conquered all France. From these our King Henry VI lineally descends.”

In his anger, the Earl of Oxford had brought up King Henry V’s French conquests, something that King Louis XI did not want to hear about.

The Earl of Warwick replied, “Oxford, how does it happen that in this smooth discourse of yours, you did not mention that Henry VI has lost all that which Henry V had gotten? I think these peers of France should smile at that.

“But as for the rest, you tell a pedigree of threescore and two years.”

Henry IV became King in 1399; Edward IV became King in 1461.

The Earl of Warwick continued, “That is a short time to make prescription for a Kingdom’s worth.”

The word “prescription” was used in a legal sense to mean “claim founded on long and uninterrupted use or possession.”

The Earl of Oxford said, “Why, Warwick, can you speak against your liege, whom you obeyed for thirty-six years, and not reveal your treason with a blush?”

“Can Oxford, who always protected the right, now shield and protect falsehood with a pedigree? For shame! Leave Henry VI, and call Edward IV King.”

The Earl of Oxford replied, “Call him my King by whose unjust and harmful order my elder brother, the Lord Aubrey Vere, was executed? And worse than that, he had my father killed — my father who was then in his old age and whom Nature had brought to the door of death?”

King Edward IV had executed them on a charge of treason.

The Earl of Oxford continued, “No, Warwick, no; while life upholds this arm, this arm upholds the House of Lancaster.”

“And I uphold the House of York,” the Earl of Warwick said.

King Louis XI said, “Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, and Oxford, please, at our request, stand aside while I have further conversation with Warwick.”

Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, and the Earl of Oxford moved away far enough that they could not hear the French King’s and Warwick’s conversation.

Queen Margaret said to Prince Edward and the Earl of Oxford, “May the Heavens grant that Warwick’s words do not bewitch King Louis XI!”

King Louis XI said, “Now Warwick, tell me, on your conscience, is Edward IV your true King? For I am loath to link myself with a King who was not lawfully chosen.”

“On my reputation and my honor, I say that Edward IV is my true and lawfully chosen King,” the Earl of Warwick replied.

“But is he popular and esteemed in the people’s eye?” King Louis XI asked.

“The more that Henry VI is unfortunate, the more that Edward IV is esteemed.”

“Tell me further — with all possible dissembling set aside — tell me truthfully the measure of Edward IV’s love for our sister-in-law Lady Bona,” King Louis XI said, using the royal plural.

“It is such as may befit a monarch like himself,” the Earl of Warwick replied. “I myself have often heard him say and

swear that this his love is an eternal plant, whereof the root is fixed in virtue's ground, the leaves and fruit maintained with beauty's Sun. His love will not feel the effects of malice because Lady Bona has no malice, but his love will feel the effects of disdain and rejection unless the Lady Bona removes his pain by returning his love."

King Louis XI said to Lady Bona, "Now, sister-in-law, let us hear your clear decision regarding marriage to the English King Edward IV."

"Your decision is my decision," Lady Bona replied. "Your agreement to, or your denial of, the marriage proposal will also be mine."

She then said to the Earl of Warwick, "Yet I confess that often before this day, when I have heard about your King Edward IV's merits, my ear has tempted my judgment to desire him."

King Louis XI, picking up on the implicit statement that she was willing to marry King Edward IV, said, "So then, Warwick, this is my decision: Our sister-in-law shall be Edward's wife, and now without delay the articles of the agreement shall be drawn up concerning the marriage settlement that your King must make. Her dower — what she will get if your King dies before she does — shall be matched by her dowry — what she brings to your King by marrying him."

He then said, "Draw near us, Queen Margaret, and be a witness that Lady Bona shall be the wife of the English King."

Prince Edward said, "She shall be married to Edward, who is called Edward IV, but not to the English King, who is my father."

"Deceitful Warwick!" Queen Margaret said. "It was your

plot to make void my petition to Louis XI by making this alliance with him. Before you came here, Louis XI was Henry VI's friend."

King Louis XI said, "And he still is friends to Henry VI and Margaret, but if your claim to the crown is weak, as may appear by Edward IV's good success in obtaining the crown, then it is only reasonable that I be released from giving you the aid that just now I promised. Yet you shall have all kindness at my hand that your high rank requires and my estate can yield."

The Earl of Warwick said, "Henry VI now lives in Scotland at his ease, where since he has nothing, he can lose nothing. And as for you yourself, our former Queen, you have a father who is able to maintain you, and it would be better if you troubled him rather than the King of France."

"Be quiet, impudent and shameless Warwick, be quiet," Queen Margaret said. "Proud setter up and puller down of Kings! I will not leave from here until, with my talk and tears, both full of truth, I make King Louis XI see your sly trickery and your lord's false love, for both of you are birds of the same feather."

A horn sounded to announce the arrival of an express messenger.

King Louis XI said, "Warwick, this is some messenger to us or to you."

The messenger entered the room and gave a letter to the Earl of Warwick, saying, "My lord ambassador, this letter is for you, sent from your brother, the Marquess of Montague."

He gave King Louis XI a letter and said, "This letter is from our English King Edward IV to your majesty."

He gave Queen Margaret a letter and said, "This letter is for you; from whom it comes I don't know."

They all read their letters.

The Earl of Oxford said to Prince Edward, "I like it well that our fair Queen and leader smiles at her news, while the Earl of Warwick frowns at his."

Prince Edward replied, "Look at how King Louis XI stamps his foot as he were angry. I hope all's for the best."

King Louis XI asked, "Warwick, what is your news? And yours, fair Queen?"

Queen Margaret said, "My news is such as fills my heart with unhoped-for and unanticipated joys."

The Earl of Warwick said, "My news is full of sorrow and heart's discontent."

King Louis XI said, "Your King Edward IV has married the Lady Elizabeth Grey! And now, to smooth over your deceit and his, he has sent me a letter to persuade me to be calm and patient! Is this the alliance that he seeks with the King of France? Does he dare to presume to scorn us in this manner?"

"I told your majesty as much before," Queen Margaret said. "This proves Edward's 'love' and Warwick's 'honesty.'"

The Earl of Warwick said, "King Louis XI, I here protest, in the sight of Heaven and by the hope I have of Heavenly bliss after I am dead that I am blameless in this misdeed of Edward IV's. He is no more my King, for he dishonors me, but he dishonors himself most of all, if he could see his shame.

"Did I forget that because of the House of York my father came to his untimely death?"

The Earl of Warwick's father had fought against the House of Lancaster and had been captured and killed by Lancastrians, but the Earl of Warwick was so angry that he was blaming the Yorkists for his father's death: If the Yorkists had not rebelled against King Henry VI, his father would still be alive.

The Earl of Warwick continued, "Did I let pass the abuse done to my niece?"

Rumor had it that King Edward IV had tried to take the virginity of the Earl of Warwick's niece.

The Earl of Warwick continued, "Did I encircle the head of Edward IV with the regal crown? Did I take from Henry VI his right by birth to be King of England? And am I rewarded at the end with shame? Shame on Edward IV! What I deserve is honor.

"And to repair my honor that I lost for Edward IV, I here renounce him and return to Henry VI.

"My noble Queen, let former grudges pass, and henceforth I am your true servant. I will revenge Edward IV's wrong to Lady Bona, and I will replant Henry on the throne in his former high rank as King of England."

Queen Margaret replied, "Warwick, these words have turned my hate to love, and I forgive and quite forget old faults, and I rejoice that you have become King Henry VI's friend."

The Earl of Warwick said, "I am so much King Henry VI's friend, yes, his unfeigned friend, that, if King Louis XI will agree to furnish us with some few troops of chosen soldiers, I'll undertake to land them on our coast and force the usurper from the throne by war. His newly made marriage will not result in support for him. And as for Clarence, as my letters tell me, he's very likely now to fall

away from him and support Henry VI because Edward IV married more for wanton lust than for honor or for the strength and safety of our country.”

Lady Bona said to King Louis XI, “Dear brother-in-law, how shall I, Lady Bona, be revenged except but by your help to this distressed Queen?”

Queen Margaret said to King Louis XI, “Renowned Prince, how shall poor Henry VI live, unless you rescue him from foul despair?”

“My quarrel and this English Queen’s quarrel with Edward IV are one and the same,” Lady Bona said.

“And my quarrel with Edward IV, fair Lady Bona, joins with yours,” the Earl of Warwick said.

King Louis XI replied to the Earl of Warwick, “And my quarrel with Edward IV joins with hers, and yours, and Margaret’s.”

He said to Queen Margaret, “Therefore, at last I am firmly resolved that you shall have aid.”

“Let me give humble thanks for all at once,” Queen Margaret replied.

King Louis XI said, “So then, England’s messenger, return in haste, and tell false Edward IV, your supposed King, that Louis XI of France is sending over ‘entertainers’ — troops of soldiers — to revel with him and his new bride. You witnessed what has happened here; go and frighten your King with what you have witnessed.”

Lady Bona said, “Tell him that in hope he’ll become a widower shortly, I’ll wear the willow garland for his sake.”

A willow garland is a symbol of unrequited love.

Queen Margaret said, “Tell him that I have laid aside my

mourning clothing, and I am ready to put on armor.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Tell him from me that he has done me wrong, and therefore I’ll uncrown him before long.”

He gave the messenger some money and said, “There’s your reward. Leave now.”

The messenger exited.

King Louis XI said, “But, Warwick, you and Oxford, with five thousand men, shall cross the seas, and bid false Edward IV to a battle, and when the time is right, this noble Queen and Prince shall follow you with a fresh supply of troops. But before you go, resolve for me my doubt: What pledge do we have of your firm loyalty? How can I be certain that you won’t again support Edward IV?”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “This shall assure you of my constant loyalty: If our Queen Margaret and this young Prince Edward agree, I’ll join my eldest daughter and my joy to him forthwith in holy wedlock bands. Prince Edward and my eldest daughter shall be married.”

Queen Margaret said, “Yes, I agree, and I thank you for your proposed offer.

“Son Edward, Warwick’s eldest daughter is beautiful and virtuous. Therefore, don’t delay, but give your hand to Warwick, and with your hand and your irrevocable faith, vow that only Warwick’s daughter shall be yours and unlike Edward IV, you will marry no one else in her place.”

Prince Edward said, “Yes, I accept her, for she well deserves it, and here, to pledge my vow, I give you my hand.”

He and the Earl of Warwick shook hands.

King Louis XI said, “Why are we delaying now? These soldiers shall be levied, and you, Lord Bourbon, our high Admiral, shall waft them over the English Channel with our royal fleet. I am impatient for Edward IV to fall by war’s misfortune because he mocked making a marriage with a lady of France.”

Everyone exited except the Earl of Warwick, who said to himself, “I came from Edward IV as an ambassador, but I return as his sworn and mortal foe. To arrange a marriage was the charge he gave to me, but dreadful war shall be the answer to the request he wanted me to make on his behalf.

“Had he no one else to make a dupe but me? Then no one but I shall turn his jest to sorrow. I was the chief person who raised him to the crown, and I’ll be the chief person to bring him down again. It’s not that I pity Henry VI’s misery, but that I seek revenge on Edward’s mockery of me.”

CHAPTER 4 (3 Henry VI)

— 4.1 —

In a room of the palace in London were Duke Richard of Gloucester, Duke George of Clarence, the new Duke of Somerset (son of the Duke of Somerset whom Richard had killed in battle), and the Marquess of Montague.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said sarcastically, “Now tell me, brother Clarence, what do you think of this new marriage of Edward IV with the Lady Elizabeth Grey? Hasn’t our brother made a worthy choice?”

“Alas, as you know, it is far from here to France,” Duke George of Clarence said sarcastically. “How could he wait until Warwick made his return?”

The Duke of Somerset said, “My lords, don’t talk like that; here comes the King.”

“And his well-chosen bride,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said.

Duke George of Clarence said, “I intend to tell him plainly what I think.”

King Edward IV and Lady Elizabeth Grey — who was now Queen Elizabeth, the Queen consort of the King of England — entered the room, along with the Earl of Pembroke, Lord Stafford, Lord Hastings, and others.

A Queen consort is the wife of a King and does not rule. A Queen regnant, such as Queen Elizabeth I of Shakespeare’s time, does rule.

King Edward IV said, “Now, brother Clarence, how do you like our choice of a wife? I can see that you stand pensively, thinking deep thoughts, as if you were half

malcontent.”

Duke George of Clarence replied sarcastically, “I like it as well as do the French King Louis XI and the English Earl of Warwick, who are so weak of courage and so weak in judgment that they’ll take no offence at our insult to Lady Bona and to them.”

“Suppose they take offence without a cause,” King Edward IV said. “They are only Louis XI and Warwick. I am Edward, your King and Warwick’s, and I must have my will.”

The word “will” meant desire, including sexual desire.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “And you shall have your will because you are our King. Yet hasty, impulsive marriages seldom turn out well.”

“Brother Richard, are you offended, too?” King Edward IV asked.

“Not I,” Duke Richard of Gloucester replied. “No, God forbid that I should wish them severed whom God has joined together. Yes, and it would be a pity to sunder them who yoke so well together.”

The word “yoke” meant both joined in marriage and joined in sex.

King Edward IV said, “Setting your scorns and your dislike aside, tell me some reason why Lady Elizabeth Grey should not be my wife and England’s Queen. And you, too, Somerset and Montague, speak freely what you think.”

Duke George of Clarence said, “Then this is my opinion: King Louis XI of France will become your enemy because you have mocked him by asking for marriage with the Lady Bona but marrying someone else.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “And Warwick, by doing what you ordered him to do, is now dishonored by this new marriage of yours.”

King Edward IV replied, “What if both Louis XI and Warwick should be appeased by some scheme that I devise?”

The Marquess of Montague said, “Still, to have joined with France in an alliance would have strengthened this our commonwealth more against foreign storms than any home-bred marriage. By marrying Lady Elizabeth Grey, you have dashed the hope of an alliance by marriage with the King of France.”

Lord Hastings said, “Why, doesn’t Montague know that of itself England is safe, if true within itself?”

The Marquess of Montague said, “But England is safer when it is allied with France.”

Lord Hastings said, “It is better to use France than to trust France. Let us be allied with God and with the seas that He has given us to serve as an impregnable fence. Using only God’s and the seas’ help, we can defend ourselves: In God and the seas and in ourselves our safety lies.”

Duke George of Clarence said, “For this one speech Lord Hastings well deserves to have the heir of the Lord Hungerford as a wife.”

King Edward IV said, “Yes, and what of that? It was my will and grant, and for this once my will shall stand for law.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “And yet I think your grace has not done well to give the heir and daughter of Lord Scales to the brother of your loving bride. She would have better fitted Clarence or me. But in your bride you

bury brotherhood.”

Duke George of Clarence said, “Or else you would not have bestowed the heir of the Lord Bonville on your new wife’s son, and left your brothers to go and find prosperity elsewhere.”

King Edward IV had been raising the status and wealth of Queen Elizabeth’s relatives by arranging good marriages for them.

“Alas, poor Clarence!” King Edward IV said sarcastically. “Is it for a wife that you are malcontent? I will provide a wife for you.”

Duke George of Clarence replied, “In choosing for yourself, you showed your judgment, which was shallow; therefore, give me permission to play the marriage broker in my own behalf, and to that end — the end of getting a wife — I intend to leave you shortly.”

King Edward IV said, “Whether you leave or stay, I, Edward, will be King, and not be bound by his brother’s will.”

Queen Elizabeth now spoke up: “My lords, before it pleased his majesty to raise my state to the title of a Queen, you must all confess — if you do me right — that I was not ignoble of descent and that women of lower rank than I have had like fortune.

“But as this title honors me and mine, so your dislike of my marriage, dislike by those whom I would like to please, clouds my joys with danger and with sorrow.”

King Edward IV said to her, “My love, don’t fawn upon their frowns. What danger or what sorrow can befall you as long as Edward is your constant friend and their true sovereign, whom they must obey?”

“They shall obey, and they shall love you, too, unless they seek for hatred at my hands, which if they do, I will still keep you safe, and they shall feel the vengeance of my wrath.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester thought, *I hear, yet I don't say much, but I think much more.*

The messenger who had gone to France with letters for the King of France, the Earl of Warwick, and Queen Margaret entered the room.

King Edward IV recognized him and asked, “Now, messenger, what letters or what news do you have from France?”

The messenger replied, “My sovereign liege, no letters, and few words, but such words as I, without your special pardon, dare not tell you.”

King Edward IV said, “Go on, for we pardon you; therefore, briefly tell me their words as accurately as you can remember them. What answer does King Louis XI make to our letter?”

“At my departure, he said these very words, ‘Tell false Edward IV, your supposed King, that Louis XI of France is sending over ‘entertainers’ — troops of soldiers — to revel with him and his new bride.’”

“Is Louis XI so daring?” King Edward IV said. “Perhaps he thinks that I am Henry VI.

“But what did Lady Bona say about my marriage to Lady Elizabeth Grey?”

The messenger replied, “These were her words, uttered with mad disdain: ‘Tell him, in hope he’ll prove a widower shortly, I’ll wear the willow garland for his sake.’”

“I don’t blame her,” King Edward IV said. “She could say little less; she had wrong done to her.

“But what did Henry VI’s Queen Margaret say? For I have heard that she was there in person.”

The messenger replied, “She said, ‘Tell him that I have laid aside my mourning clothing, and I am ready to put on armor.’”

“Perhaps she intends to play the role of an Amazonian woman-warrior,” King Edward IV said. “But what did the Earl of Warwick say concerning these insults?”

The messenger replied, “He, more incensed against your majesty than all the rest, discharged me with these words: ‘Tell him from me that he has done me wrong, and therefore I’ll uncrown him before long.’”

“Ha!” King Edward IV said. “Does the traitor dare breathe out such proud words?”

“Well, I will arm myself, being thus forewarned. They shall have wars and pay for their presumption.

“But tell me, is Warwick friends with Queen Margaret?”

“Yes, gracious sovereign,” the messenger replied. “They are so linked in friendship that young Prince Edward will marry Warwick’s daughter.”

Duke George of Clarence said, “He will probably marry Warwick’s elder daughter. I, Clarence, will have and marry Warwick’s younger daughter.

“Now, brother King, farewell, and sit yourself firmly on the throne, for I will go from here to Warwick’s other daughter, so that, although I lack a Kingdom, yet in marriage I may not prove to be inferior to yourself.

“Anyone who loves and respects me and Warwick, follow

me.”

Duke George of Clarence and the Duke of Somerset exited.

Duke Richard of Gloucester thought, *Not I; I won't exit. My thoughts aim at a further matter; I stay not because of love for Edward, but because of love for the crown.*

King Edward IV said, “Both the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of Somerset have gone to join Warwick! Yet I am armed against the worst that can happen, and haste is necessary in this desperate case.

“Lord Pembroke and Lord Stafford, you two go and levy men in our behalf, and make preparations for war. The enemy soldiers are already or quickly will be landed. I myself in person will immediately follow you.”

The Earl of Pembroke and Lord Stafford exited.

King Edward IV continued, “But, before I go, Lord Hastings and the Marquess of Montague, resolve and remove my doubt. You two, of all the rest, are close to Warwick by blood and by alliance. Tell me whether you love and respect Warwick more than me. If you do, then both of you depart and go to him. I would rather wish you to be my foes than to be my hollow, insincere friends. But if you intend to hold and maintain your true obedience to me, your lawful King, give me assurance with some friendly vow, so that I may never be suspicious of you.”

“May God help Montague only to the extent that he proves true and loyal to you!” the Marquess of Montague said.

“And may God help Hastings only to the extent that he favors Edward's cause!” Lord Hastings said.

King Edward IV then said, “Now, brother Richard, will you stand by us?”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “Yes, in defiance of all who shall stand against you.”

“Why, good!” King Edward IV said. “Then I am sure of victory. Now therefore let us go from here, and waste no hour, until we meet Warwick with his foreign power.”

— 4.2 —

The Earl of Warwick and the Earl of Oxford talked together on a plain in Warwickshire. French soldiers were also present.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Trust me, my lord, everything has gone well up to now. The common people in great numbers swarm to us.”

Duke George of Clarence and the Duke of Somerset arrived.

The Earl of Warwick continued, “But see where Somerset and Clarence come!

“Tell me quickly, my lords, are we all friends?”

Duke George of Clarence replied, “Don’t be afraid that we are not your friends, my lord, for I assure you that we are.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Then, gentle Clarence, Warwick welcomes you, and welcome to you, Somerset. I regard it as cowardice to remain mistrustful where a noble heart has pledged an open hand in sign of love and friendship. Otherwise I might think that Clarence, Edward IV’s brother, were only a feigned friend to our proceedings.

“But welcome, sweet Clarence; my daughter shall be yours. And now, because your brother Edward IV is carelessly encamped, his soldiers are idling in the nearby towns, and he is attended only by a minimal guard, what remains to be done but under the cover of night, we ambush and capture

him at our pleasure?

“Our scouts have determined that the venture will be very easy to accomplish. Just as Ulysses and brave Diomedes with cunning and manliness stole to King Rhesus’ tents, and brought away the Thracian steeds of fate, so we, well covered with the night’s black mantle, without warning may beat down Edward IV’s guard and seize the King himself.”

During the Trojan War, the Greeks Ulysses and Diomedes made a night raid on King Rhesus of Thrace and slaughtered him and many of his men and captured his horses and drove them back to the Greek camp. Some sources state that the raid was made because of a prophecy that if the horses grazed on the grass and drank from a river at Troy, then Troy would never fall, and so Ulysses and Diomedes made the raid before the Thracian horses could graze on Trojan grass and drink Trojan water.

The Earl of Warwick continued, “I say that we will not slaughter him, for I intend only to surprise and capture him.

“You who will follow me in this attempt, applaud the name of Henry VI with your leader.”

They all cried, “Henry!”

The Earl of Warwick continued, “Why, then, let’s go on our way silently. We fight for Warwick and his friends, for God, and for Saint George!”

— 4.3 —

Three watchmen who were assigned to guard King Edward IV’s tent talked together outside the tent.

The first watchman said, “Come on, my masters; each man take his stand. The King by this time has set himself down in a chair to sleep.”

“Won’t he go to bed?” the second watchman said.

“Why, no,” the first watchman replied, “for he has made a solemn vow never to lie and take his natural rest until either Warwick or himself is quite suppressed.”

The second watchman said, “Tomorrow then shall likely be the day we see who is suppressed if Warwick is as near as men report he is.”

The third watchman said, “But tell me, please, which nobleman is that who with the King here rests in his tent?”

“He is the Lord Hastings, the King’s chiefest friend,” the first watchman replied.

“Oh, is that him?” the third watchman said. “But why does the King command that his chief followers lodge in nearby towns, while the King himself lodges in the cold field?”

“It is more honorable,” the second watchman said, “because it is more dangerous.”

The third watchman said, “Yes, but give me dignified ease, comfortable dignity, and quietness. I like those things better than a dangerous honor. If Warwick knew in what circumstances King Edward IV is lodging, I fear that Warwick would awaken the King.”

“Unless our halberds prevented his attempt to go to and awaken King Edward IV,” the first watchman said.

“Yes,” the second watchman said. “Why else do we guard King Edward IV’s royal tent but to defend his person from night-foes?”

The Earl of Warwick, Duke George of Clarence, the Earl of Oxford, the Duke of Somerset, and some French soldiers silently crept up on the watchmen.

“This is his tent,” the Earl of Warwick said quietly. “See

where stand his guards. Courage, my masters! Acquire honor now or never! Just follow me, and Edward IV shall be ours.”

The first watchman asked, “Who goes there?”

“Stop, or you die!” the second watchman said.

The Earl of Warwick and the others with him all cried, “Warwick! Warwick!” and set upon the watchmen, who fled, crying “Arm! Arm!” The Earl of Warwick and the others pursued them.

The cry “Arm!” meant, “Supporters of King Edward IV, arm yourselves! Get your weapons!”

In the turmoil, Duke Richard of Gloucester and Lord Hastings fled.

Soon, the Earl of Warwick and the others with him captured King Edward IV.

The Duke of Somerset asked, “Who were the men who fled?”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “They were Richard and Hastings, but let them go. Here we have captured the Duke of York.”

“The Duke of York!” King Edward IV said. “Why, Warwick, when we parted, you called me King.”

“Yes, but the case is altered,” the Earl of Warwick replied. “When you disgraced me in my embassy to the French King, then I degraded you from being the English King, and I have come now to make you Duke of York. Too bad! How could you govern any Kingdom, you who do not know how to treat ambassadors, and do not know how to be contented with one wife, and do not know how to treat your brothers brotherly, and do not know how to take pains for

the people's welfare, and do not know how to shroud yourself from enemies?"

King Edward IV said, "Brother of Clarence, are you here, too? Then I see that Edward IV must necessarily fall as King.

"Yet, Warwick, in defiance of all misfortune, and in defiance of you yourself and all your accomplices, Edward will always bear himself as King of England. Although the malice of Lady Fortune overthrows my Kingship, my mind exceeds the compass of her Wheel of Fortune that lowers and raises men."

"Then, let Edward be England's King, but only in his own mind," the Earl of Warwick said.

He took off Edward IV's crown and said, "But Henry VI now shall wear the English crown, and be the true King of England indeed, while you are only the shadow of a King.

"My Lord of Somerset, at my request, see that Duke Edward of York is immediately conveyed to my brother: the Archbishop of York. After I have fought a battle against the Earl of Pembroke and his soldiers, I'll follow you and tell what answer King Louis XI and the Lady Bona have sent to Duke Edward of York.

"Now, for a while farewell, good Duke Edward of York."

King Edward IV said, "What the Fates, goddesses of destiny, impose, men must necessarily abide; it is useless to resist both wind and tide."

Soldiers forcibly led away Duke Edward of York.

The Earl of Oxford asked, "What now remains, my lords, for us to do but march to London with our soldiers?"

The Earl of Warwick replied, "Yes, that's the first thing

that we have to do: We need to free King Henry VI from imprisonment and see him seated on the regal throne.”

— 4.4 —

Queen Elizabeth and her brother Earl Rivers talked together in a room in the palace in London.

Earl Rivers asked, “Madam, what is the reason for this sudden change?”

Queen Elizabeth replied, “Why, brother Rivers, are you yet to learn what recent misfortune has befallen King Edward IV?”

“Is it the loss of some pitched battle against Warwick?” Earl Rivers asked.

“No,” Queen Elizabeth replied. “It is the loss of his own royal person.”

“Then is my sovereign slain?” Earl Rivers asked.

“Yes, he is almost slain, for he has been taken prisoner,” Queen Elizabeth replied. “He was either betrayed by the treachery of his guards or was surprised and captured without warning by his foe, and as I understand further, he has been recently committed to the custody of the Archbishop of York, who is cruel Warwick’s brother and therefore our foe.”

“This news I must confess is full of grief, gracious madam,” Earl Rivers said, “yet bear it as you may. Warwick may lose, although for now he has won the day.”

“Until then fair hope must hinder life’s decay,” Queen Elizabeth replied. “And I would rather wean myself from despair because of my love for Edward IV’s offspring in my womb. My pregnancy is what makes me bridle passion and bear with mildness the cross of my misfortune. Yes,

yes, because of my pregnancy I draw in many a tear and stop the rising of health-destroying sighs, lest with my sighs or tears I blight or drown King Edward IV's fruit, the true heir to the English crown."

"But, madam, what has become of Warwick?" Earl Rivers asked.

"I am informed that he is coming towards London in order to set the crown once more on Henry VI's head," Queen Elizabeth replied. "You can guess the rest. King Edward IV's friends must fall, but to prevent the tyrant Warwick's violence — for we ought not to trust a man who has once broken his vow — I'll go immediately away from here and to the sanctuary, to save at least the heir of Edward's rightful claim to the crown of England. There I shall rest secure and safe from force and fraud. Come, therefore, let us flee while we may flee. If Warwick should capture us, we are sure to die."

— 4.5 —

Duke Richard of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and Sir William Stanley talked together in a park — a hunting ground — near Middleham Castle in Yorkshire. Some soldiers were with them.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, "Now, my Lord Hastings and Sir William Stanley, stop wondering why I drew you hither into this most densely wooded thicket of the park. Thus stands the case: You know our King, my brother, is prisoner to the Archbishop of York here, at whose hands he has received good treatment and great liberty, and, often attended only by a weak guard, he comes hunting in this area to entertain himself. I have informed him by secret means that if about this hour he would make his way here under the pretense of his usual entertainment, he shall here find his friends with horses and men to set him free from

his captivity.”

King Edward IV and a huntsman arrived.

The huntsman said, “This way, my lord, for this way lies the quarry.”

King Edward IV replied, “No, this way, man. See where the huntsmen stand.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, Sir William Stanley, and the soldiers showed themselves. King Edward IV’s guard, the huntsman, was outnumbered and unable to resist.

King Edward IV said, “Now, brother of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and the rest, do you stand thus close in order to steal the Archbishop’s ‘deer’?”

Duke Richard of Gloucester replied, “Brother, the time and case require haste. Your horse stands ready at the corner of the park.”

“But whither shall we go afterward?” King Edward IV asked.

“To Lynn, my lord,” Lord Hastings replied, “and ship from thence to Flanders.”

“Well guessed, believe me,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “for that was my intention.”

King Edward IV said, “Sir William Stanley, I will reward your zeal.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “But why do we stay here? This is no time to talk.”

King Edward IV said, “Huntsman, what do you say? Will you come along with us?”

The huntsman replied, "It is better to do that than to tarry here and be hanged."

"Come then, let's go," Duke Richard of Gloucester said. "Let's have no more ado."

"Archbishop, farewell," King Edward IV said, facing the direction of the Archbishop's home. "May God shield you from Warwick's frown, and may you pray that I repossess the crown."

— 4.6 —

In a room of the Tower of London, many people stood: King Henry VI, Duke George of Clarence, the Earl of Warwick, the Duke of Somerset, Earl Henry of Richmond, the Earl of Oxford, the Marquess of Montague, and the Lieutenant of the Tower. The Marquess of Montague had switched sides and now supported King Henry VI and the Earl of Warwick.

King Henry VI said, "Master Lieutenant, now that God and friends have shaken Edward from the regal seat, and turned my captive state to liberty, my fear to hope, my sorrows to joys, what are the fees I owe you now that I am free?"

Wealthy prisoners paid for their food and keep after being released from prison. Of course, King Henry VI, if he were a different kind of person, could have the Lieutenant of the Tower executed.

The Lieutenant of the Tower replied, "Subjects may demand as a right nothing from their sovereigns, but if a humble person who prays to you may prevail, then I crave the pardon of your majesty."

"Pardon for what, Lieutenant?" King Henry VI said. "For treating me well? You can be sure I'll well repay your kindness because it made my imprisonment a pleasure."

Yes, such a pleasure as caged birds feel when after many melancholy thoughts, they at last because of the harmonic sounds of the household quite forget their loss of liberty.

“But, Warwick, after God, you are responsible for setting me free, and chiefly therefore I thank God and you. God was the author and instigator; you were the instrument and agent of His plan.

“Therefore, so that I may conquer Lady Fortune’s spite by living low on the Wheel of Fortune, where Lady Fortune cannot hurt me, and so that the people of this blessed land may not be punished with my perverse stars that bring misfortune, Warwick, although my head shall still wear the crown, I here resign my government to you, for you are fortunate in all your deeds while I am unfortunate in all my deeds.”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “Your grace has always been famed for being virtuous, and now you may be seen to be as wise as virtuous because you have spied on and avoided Lady Fortune’s malice, for few men rightly conform their temperament with the stars. Few men can rightly react to what the stars bring them. Yet in this one thing let me blame your grace: for choosing me when Clarence is present and available.”

Duke George of Clarence said, “No, Warwick, you are worthy of the position of authority. To you the Heavens in your nativity gave an olive branch and a laurel crown because you were likely to be blest both in peace and in war, and therefore I give you my free consent for you to hold this high office.”

The Earl of Warwick replied, “And I choose only Clarence for Lord Protector.”

King Henry VI said, “Warwick and Clarence, both of you give me your hands. Now join your hands, and with your

hands your hearts, so that no dissension may hinder government and the proper exercise of authority over Britain. I make you both Lord Protectors of this land, while I myself will lead a private life and spend my final days in devotion to rebuke sin and to praise my Creator.”

“What does Clarence answer to his sovereign’s will?” the Earl of Warwick asked.

Duke George of Clarence replied, “He answers that he consents, if Warwick will also yield his consent, for on your fortune I myself happily rely.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Why, then, although I am loath to wield this power, yet I must be content. We’ll yoke together, like a double shadow to Henry’s body, and occupy his place as his substitutes — I mean, in bearing the weight of government and certainly not as usurpers — while he enjoys the honor of being King and enjoys his ease.

“And, Clarence, it is more than necessary that immediately Edward IV be pronounced a traitor, and all his lands and goods be confiscated.”

“Of course. What else?” Duke George of Clarence replied. “And it is necessary that the succession be determined.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Yes, and therein Clarence shall not lack his part.”

When Henry VI died, his son was next in time to be King. But if both Henry VI and Prince Edward died before Prince Edward had children, then Duke George of Clarence would be next in line to be King because Edward IV was a traitor.

King Henry VI said, “But, with the first of all your chief affairs, let me entreat you, for I no longer command you, that Margaret your Queen and my son, Prince Edward, be

sent for to return from France quickly because until I see them here my joy in my liberty is half eclipsed by disquieting fear and dread.”

Duke George of Clarence replied, “It shall be done, my sovereign, with all speed possible.”

Seeing a young man nearby, King Henry VI asked, “My Lord of Somerset, what youth is that, of whom you seem to take so tender care?”

The Duke of Somerset replied, “My liege, it is young Henry, Earl of Richmond.”

King Henry VI said, “Come hither, England’s hope.”

In a traditional gesture of prophecy, King Henry VI laid his hand on the head of the young Henry, Earl of Richmond.

King Henry VI said, “If secret powers suggest the truth to my divining and future-foretelling thoughts, this pretty lad will prove to be our country’s bliss. His looks are full of peaceful majesty, his head by nature framed to wear a crown, his hand to wield a scepter, and himself likely in time to bless a regal throne. Make much of him, my lords, for this is the one who must help you more than you are hurt by me.”

Young Henry, Earl of Richmond, would become King Henry VII. He would end the Wars of the Roses and begin the Tudor Dynasty.

A messenger arrived.

The Earl of Warwick asked, “What is your news, my friend?”

The messenger replied, “That Edward IV has escaped from your brother, and fled, as your brother has heard since, to Burgundy.”

“This is unsavory news!” the Earl of Warwick said. “But how did he make his escape?”

The messenger replied, “He was conveyed away by Duke Richard of Gloucester and Lord Hastings, who waited for him in secret ambush at the side of the forest and rescued him from the Archbishop’s huntsmen, for hunting was Edward IV’s daily exercise.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “My brother was too careless of his charge. He was too careless in doing his duty. But let us go from here, my sovereign, in order that we may provide a salve for any sore that may happen.”

Everyone exited except the Duke of Somerset, young Earl Henry of Richmond, and the Earl of Oxford.

The Duke of Somerset said to the Earl of Oxford, “My lord, I don’t like this flight of Edward IV’s, for doubtless the Duke of Burgundy will give him help, and we shall have more wars before long. As Henry VI’s recent presaging prophecy gladdened my heart with hope concerning this young Earl Henry of Richmond, so does my heart make me apprehensive about what may happen to him in these conflicts, to his harm and ours. Therefore, Lord Oxford, to prevent the worst, immediately we’ll send him hence to Brittany, until the storms of civil enmity have passed.”

“Yes,” the Earl of Oxford said, “for if Edward IV repossesses the crown, it is likely that young Earl Henry of Richmond along with the rest shall fall.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “It shall be so; the young Earl Henry of Richmond shall go to Brittany. Come, therefore, let’s set about doing it speedily.”

— 4.7 —

Before the town of York stood King Edward IV, Duke

Richard of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and some soldiers.

King Edward IV said, “Now, brother Richard, Lord Hastings, and the rest, so far Lady Fortune is making us amends and says that once more I shall exchange my diminished state for Henry VI’s regal crown. Well have we passed and now again passed the seas and brought desired help from Burgundy. What then remains, we being thus arrived from Ravenspurgh Haven before the gates of York, but that we enter York, as into our Dukedom? I am, after all, the Duke of York.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “The gates are firmly bolted against us! Brother, I don’t like this, for many men who stumble at the threshold are well given notice that danger lurks within.”

Superstition held that stumbling at the threshold was an omen of bad luck.

King Edward IV said, “Tush, man. Omens must not now frighten us. By fair or foul means, we must enter York, for here our friends will come to join us.”

Lord Hastings said, “My liege, I’ll knock once more to summon them.”

He knocked, and on the city walls appeared the Mayor of York and the Aldermen of York.

The Mayor of York said, “My lords, we were forewarned of your coming, and we shut the gates for our own safety because now we owe allegiance to King Henry VI.”

King Edward IV said, “But, master Mayor, if Henry VI is your King, Edward at the least is still the Duke of York.”

“That is true, my good lord,” the Mayor of York said. “I know you to be no less.”

King Edward IV said, “Why, I demand nothing but my Dukedom, for I am well content with that alone.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said quietly, “But when the fox has once got in his nose, it’ll soon find a way to make the body follow.”

Lord Hastings said, “Master Mayor, why do you stand there and doubt what you hear? Open the gates; we are King Henry VI’s friends.”

The Mayor of York said, “Do you say so? The gates shall then be opened.”

The Mayor of York and the Aldermen of York descended from the walls in order to open the gates.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said sarcastically, “He is a wise and brave Captain, and soon persuaded!”

Lord Hastings said, “The good old man would fain that all were well, so it were not ’long of him.”

This meant both 1) “The good old man would like that all were well, so long as all being well — opening the gates — were not along — associated — with him,” and 2) “The good old man would like that all were well, so long as all being well — opening the gates — would not belong to him.”

In other words, “The good old man would like that all were well, so long as the blame for opening the gates was not his.”

Lord Hastings continued, “But once we pass through the gates and enter the city, I don’t doubt that we shall soon persuade both him and all his brothers, aka the Aldermen, to see reason — to see that Edward IV is King of England.”

The Mayor and the two Aldermen opened the gates and

came out of the city.

King Edward IV said, "So, master Mayor, these gates must not be shut except in the nighttime or in the time of war. Don't be afraid, man, but give me the keys to the gates."

He took the keys and added, "For I, Edward, will defend the town and you, and all those friends who deign to follow me."

The sound of a military drummer was heard and Sir John Montgomery arrived along with the drummer and some soldiers.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, "Brother, this is Sir John Montgomery, our trusty friend, unless I am deceived."

King Edward IV said, "Welcome, Sir John! But why have you come in arms?"

Sir John Montgomery replied, "To help King Edward IV in his time of storm, as every loyal subject ought to do."

"Thanks, good Montgomery," King Edward IV said, "but we now forget our title to the crown and we claim only our Dukedom until God is pleased to send the rest."

"Then fare you well, for I will go away from here again," Sir John Montgomery said. "I came to serve a King and not a Duke.

"Drummer, strike up, and let us march away."

"No, Sir John," King Edward IV said. "Stay awhile, and we'll debate and discuss by what safe means the crown may be recovered."

"Why do you talk of debating?" Sir John Montgomery said. "In few words, I say to you that if you'll not here proclaim yourself our King, I'll leave you to your fortune and leave to keep back anyone who comes to succor you. Why shall

we fight, if you claim no title of Kingship?”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said to Edward IV, “Why, brother, do you dwell on trivial details?”

King Edward IV said, “When we grow stronger, then we’ll make our claim. Until then, it is wise to conceal our intentions.”

“Away with scrupulous wit!” Lord Hastings said. “Now arms must rule.”

“And fearless minds climb soonest to crowns,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said. “Brother, we will proclaim you King immediately. The report of this will bring you many friends.”

“Then be it as you will,” King Edward IV said, “for it is my right, and Henry VI only usurps the diadem.”

Sir John Montgomery said, “Yes, now my sovereign speaks like himself, and now I will be Edward IV’s champion and defender.”

Lord Hastings ordered, “Blow, trumpeter. Edward shall be here proclaimed King.

“Come, fellow-soldier, you make the proclamation.”

The trumpet sounded, and the soldier read, “*Edward IV, by the grace of God, King of England and France, and lord of Ireland, and etc.*”

Sir John Montgomery said, “And whosoever denies Edward IV’s right to be King of England, by this I challenge him to single combat.”

He threw down his gauntlet.

Everyone shouted, “Long live Edward IV!”

King Edward IV said, “Thanks, brave Montgomery, and thanks to you all. If Lady Fortune serves me well, I’ll repay this kindness.

“Now, for this night, let’s harbor and lodge here in York, and when the morning Sun shall raise his chariot above the border of this horizon and dawn arrives, we’ll go forward to meet Warwick and his mates, for I know well that Henry VI is no soldier.

“Ah, perverse, obstinate Clarence! How evil it is for you to flatter Henry and forsake your brother! Yet, as we may, we’ll meet both you and Warwick.

“Come on, brave soldiers. Don’t doubt that we will win the day, and, don’t doubt that you will receive large pay once the day is won.”

— 4.8 —

A number of people met in a room in the Bishop’s Palace in London: King Henry VI, the Earl of Warwick, the Marquess of Montague, Duke George of Clarence, the Duke of Exeter, and the Earl of Oxford.

“What advice can you give, my lords?” the Earl of Warwick said. “Edward from Flanders in Belgium, with rash Germans and rough, uncivilized Hollanders, has passed in safety through the narrow seas, and with his troops he marches at full speed to London, and many inconstant, fickle people flock to him.”

“Let’s levy men, and beat him back again,” King Henry VI said.

Duke George of Clarence said, “A little fire is quickly trodden out, but if the fire is allowed to grow, rivers cannot quench it.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “In Warwickshire I have true-

hearted friends who are not mutinous in peace yet are bold in war. Those I will muster up.

“You, my son-in-law Clarence, shall stir the knights and gentlemen in Suffolk, Norfolk, and Kent to come with you.

“You, brother Marquess of Montague, in Buckingham, Northampton, and Leicestershire shall find men well inclined to hear what you command.

“And you, brave Oxford, who is wondrously well beloved in Oxfordshire, shall muster up your friends.

“My sovereign, King Henry VI, with the loving citizens, like his island girdled by the ocean, or like modest, chaste Diana encircled by her nymphs, shall rest in London until we come to him.

“Fair lords, take leave and do not delay in order to reply.

“Farewell, my sovereign.”

“Farewell, my Hector, and my Troy’s true hope,” King Henry VI said.

Hector was the foremost warrior for Troy during the Trojan War. London was thought of as *Troia Nova*, or New Troy, because a grandson of Aeneas, another important Trojan warrior, was believed to have founded it.

Kissing Henry VI’s hand, Duke George of Clarence said, “In sign of my truth and loyalty to you, I kiss your highness’ hand.”

King Henry VI replied, “Well-minded, loyal Clarence, may you be favored by Lady Fortune!”

The Marquess of Montague said, “Take comfort, my lord, and so I take my leave.”

“And thus I seal my truth, and bid *adieu* to you,” the Earl

of Oxford said.

“Sweet Oxford, and my loving Montague, and everyone all at once, once more I say to you a happy farewell,” King Henry VI said.

“Farewell, sweet lords,” the Earl of Warwick said. “Let’s meet at Coventry.”

Everyone exited except King Henry VI and the Duke of Exeter.

“Here at the palace I will rest awhile,” King Henry VI said. “Cousin of Exeter, what does your lordship think? I think the army that Edward IV has in the field should not be able to oppose and defeat mine.”

“The fear is that he will persuade others to desert their allegiance to you,” the Duke of Exeter said.

“That’s not my fear,” King Henry VI said. “My merit has gotten me a good reputation. I have not stopped my ears so I can’t hear my subjects’ requests, nor have I put off their petitions with slow delays. My pity has been balm to heal their wounds. My mildness has allayed their swelling griefs. My mercy has dried their water-flowing tears. I have not been desirous of their wealth, nor have I much oppressed them with great taxation. Nor am I eager for or inclined to revenge, although my subjects have much erred. So why then should they love Edward more than me?”

“No, Exeter, these virtues of mine lay claim to my subjects’ goodwill. And when the lion fawns upon the lamb, the lamb will never cease to follow him.”

Shouts were heard from outside: “Protect Lancaster! Protect Lancaster!”

The Duke of Exeter said, “Listen! Listen, my lord! What shouts are these?”

The shouts were due to King Edward IV's Yorkist soldiers attacking the palace in order to capture the Lancastrian King Henry VI.

King Edward IV, Duke Richard of Gloucester, and some Yorkist soldiers entered the room.

King Edward IV said, "Seize the shy, retiring Henry VI and carry him away from here, and once again proclaim us King of England.

"You, Henry VI, are the spring that makes small brooks flow. Now your spring stops; my sea shall suck your brooks dry and swell so much the higher by their ebb.

"Take Henry VI to the Tower of London; don't let him speak.

"And, lords, we will bend our course towards Coventry, where peremptory Warwick now remains.

"The sun shines hot, and if we delay, cold biting winter will mar our hoped-for hay."

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, "Let's leave at once, before the Earl of Warwick's forces join, and let's take the greatly grown traitor unawares.

"Brave warriors, march at full speed towards Coventry."

CHAPTER 5 (3 Henry VI)

— 5.1 —

The Earl of Warwick, the Mayor of Coventry, two messengers, and some others stood upon the walls of Coventry.

The Earl of Warwick asked, “Where is the messenger who came from the valiant Earl of Oxford? How far away is your lord, my honest fellow?”

The first messenger replied, “By this time, he is at Dunsmore, marching to here.”

The Earl of Warwick then asked, “How far away is our brother the Marquess of Montague? Where is the messenger who came from Montague?”

The second messenger replied, “By this time, he is at Daintry, with a powerful troop of soldiers.”

Sir John Somerville arrived.

The Earl of Warwick asked, “Tell me, Somerville, what says my loving son-in-law? And, by your guess, how near is Duke George of Clarence now?”

Sir John Somerville replied, “At Southam I left Duke George of Clarence with his forces, and I expect him to be here some two hours from now.”

They heard the sound of a drum.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Clarence is at hand. I hear his drum.”

“It is not his, my lord,” Sir John Somerville said. He pointed and said, “In this direction Southam lies. The drum

your honor hears is marching from Warwick.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Who would they be? Probably, unlooked-for friends.”

Sir John Somerville said, “They are at hand, and you shall quickly know who they are.”

King Edward IV, Duke Richard of Gloucester, and many soldiers arrived.

King Edward IV ordered, “Go, trumpeter, to the walls, and sound a parley.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “See how the surly Warwick mans the wall!”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Oh, unbidden, spiteful annoyance! Has lascivious Edward IV come? Where did our scouts sleep, or how were they seduced, that we could hear no news of Edward IV’s coming here?”

King Edward IV said, “Now, Warwick, will you open the city gates, speak gentle words and humbly bend your knee, call me your King, and at my hands beg mercy? If you do, we shall pardon you these outrages.”

“No,” the Earl of Warwick said. “Rather, will you withdraw your forces from here, confess who set you up and plucked you down, call Warwick your patron, and be penitent? If you do, you shall continue to be the Duke of York.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester joked, “I thought, at least, he would have said, ‘You shall continue to be the King,’ or is he jesting against his will?”

“Is not a Dukedom, sir, a goodly gift?” the Earl of Warwick asked.

Duke Richard of Gloucester replied, “Yes, by my faith, for

a poor Earl to give.”

Dukes outrank Earls.

Duke Richard of Gloucester continued, sarcastically, “I’ll serve you for so good a gift.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “It was I who gave the Kingdom to your brother.”

“Why, then it is mine, if only by Warwick’s gift,” King Edward IV said.

“You are no Atlas for so great a weight,” the Earl of Warwick said.

Atlas is the mythological Titan who holds up the sky on his shoulders.

The Earl of Warwick continued, “And, you weakling, Warwick takes his gift back again. Henry VI is my King, and Warwick is his subject.”

King Edward IV said, “But Warwick’s King Henry VI is Edward IV’s prisoner. And, gallant Warwick, just answer this: What is the body when the head is off?”

“It’s a pity that Warwick had no more foresight,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said. “While he thought to steal the poor, feeble ten, the King was slyly stolen from the deck of cards!”

A ten is not a court card; court cards are the Jack, Queen, and King. Duke Richard of Gloucester was saying that when the Earl of Warwick was rescuing Henry VI from captivity, he was not rescuing a legitimate member of the royal court.

He continued, “You left poor Henry VI at the Bishop’s Palace, and, ten to one, you’ll meet him in the Tower of London.”

“All this is true,” King Edward IV said, “yet you are still the same old Warwick. This news will not change your opposition to me.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “Come, Warwick, adjust yourself to the time; kneel down, kneel down. No? If not now, when? Strike now, or else the iron cools.”

“Strike” could mean 1) Strike a blow, or 2) Strike — lower — your topsail in deference or in surrender. Richard wanted Warwick to take action quickly.

The Earl of Warwick raised his hand and replied, “I would rather chop this hand off at a blow, and with the other hand fling it at your face, than bear so low a sail as to strike and lower my topsail to you.”

King Edward IV raised his hand and said, “Sail however you can, have wind and tide as your friends, this hand, fast wound about your coal-black hair shall, while your head is warm and newly cut off, write in the dust this sentence with your blood, ‘Changing-with-the-wind Warwick now can change sides no more.’”

The Earl of Oxford arrived with a drummer and his colors — battle flags — and his army.

The Earl of Warwick said, “Oh, cheerful colors! Oh, cheerful battle flags! See where Oxford is coming!”

The Earl of Oxford cried, “Oxford, Oxford, for the House of Lancaster!”

He and his army entered the city of Coventry.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “The gates are open; let us enter, too.”

King Edward replied, “If we do that, other foes may attack our backs. Instead, we will stand here in good array, for

they no doubt will issue out again and challenge us to battle them. If they don't, since the city has only a weak defense, we'll quickly rouse the traitors out of their den."

The Earl of Warwick said, "You are welcome, Oxford, for we need your help."

The Marquess of Montague arrived with his troops, drummer, and battle flags.

He cried, "Montague, Montague, for the House of Lancaster!"

He and his troops entered the city.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, "You and your brother both shall pay for this treason even with the dearest blood your bodies bear."

King Edward IV said, "The more powerful the enemies, the greater the victory. My mind foretells happy gain and conquest."

The Duke of Somerset arrived with his troops, drummer, and battle flags.

He cried, "Somerset, Somerset, for the House of Lancaster!"

He and his troops entered the city.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, "Two of your name, both of them Dukes of Somerset, have lost their lives to the House of York, and you shall be the third if my sword continues to hold its edge."

Duke George of Clarence arrived with his troops, drummer, and battle flags.

The Earl of Warwick said, "Look where George of Clarence sweeps along with forces enough to challenge his

brother to battle; with George of Clarence, an upright zeal for justice prevails more than the nature of a brother's love!"

Duke George of Clarence said, "Clarence for the House of Lancaster!"

King Edward IV said, "*Et tu, Brute?* Will you stab Caesar, too?"

"*Et tu, Brute?*" is Latin for "You, too, Brutus?" Julius Caesar said these words to Brutus, whom he thought was his friend, when Brutus, with many other Romans, stabbed him to death.

Edward IV ordered, "Call a parley, sir, to Duke George of Clarence."

The trumpet sounded, requesting a parley.

Duke Richard of Gloucester and Duke George of Clarence talked together.

The Earl of Warwick called, "Come, Clarence, come; you will, if Warwick calls for you to."

Duke George of Clarence replied, "Father-in-law Warwick, do you know what this means?"

He took the red rose — symbol of the House of Lancaster — out of his hat and threw it toward the Earl of Warwick. Duke George of Clarence had been reconciled to his brother the King; once more, he was a Yorkist. He placed a white rose — symbol of the House of York — in his hat.

He continued, "Look here, I throw my infamy at you. I will not ruin my father's House — his family — by giving blood to cement the stones together and set up Lancaster.

"Do you think, Warwick, that Clarence is so harsh, so blunt, and so unnatural as to bend the fatal instruments of

war against his brother and his lawful King?

“Perhaps you will raise as an objection my holy oath. To keep that oath would be more impious than Jephthah keeping his oath, when he sacrificed his daughter.”

In Judges 11, Jephthah had vowed to sacrifice the first thing that came out of the door of his house when he returned home if God would grant him a military victory; unfortunately, the first thing to come out of the door was his only child: a daughter, whom he sacrificed.

Judges 11:30-34 states this:

30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

31 Then that thing that cometh out of the doors of mine house to meet me, when I come home in peace from the children of Ammon, shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it for a burnt offering.

32 And so Jephthah went unto the children of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands.

33 And he smote them from Aroer even till thou come to Minnith, twenty cities, and so forth to Abel of the vineyards, with an exceeding great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were humbled before the children of Israel.

34 Now when Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and dances, which was his only child: he had none other son, nor daughter. (1599 Geneva Bible)

Duke George of Clarence continued, “I am so sorry for the trespass I made that, to deserve well at my brother’s hands, I here proclaim myself your mortal foe, and I resolve that

wherever I meet you — and I will meet you, if you stir abroad — to plague you for foully misleading me.

“And so, proud-hearted Warwick, I defy you, and to my brother I turn my blushing cheeks.

“Pardon me, Edward. I will make amends.

“And, Richard, do not frown upon my faults, for I will henceforth be no more inconstant and disloyal.”

King Edward IV said to him, “Now you are more welcome, and ten times more beloved, than if you had never deserved our hate.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “Welcome, good Clarence; this is brotherlike.”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Oh, unsurpassed traitor; you are perjured and unjust!”

King Edward IV said, “Warwick, will you leave the town and fight? Or shall we beat the stones about your ears?”

The Earl of Warwick said, “Unfortunately for you, I am not cooped up here for defense! I will leave and go towards Barnet immediately, and I challenge you to battle me there, Edward, if you dare.”

King Edward IV replied, “Yes, Warwick, Edward dares, and he leads the way.

“Lords, let’s go to the battlefield! Saint George and victory!”

King Edward IV and his troops marched to the battlefield. The Earl of Warwick and his troops followed.

— 5.2 —

On 14 April 1471, the Battle of Barnet was being fought on

a battlefield near Barnet. King Edward IV met the Earl of Warwick, who was mortally wounded and whose eyesight was failing.

King Edward IV said to him, “So, lie there. Die, you, and with you die our fear, for Warwick was a terror who frightened us all.

“Now, Marquess of Montague, sit fast, I seek you, so that Warwick’s bones may keep your bones company.”

King Edward IV exited.

Alone, the blinded Earl of Warwick said, “Who is near? Come to me, friend or foe, and tell me which General is the victor: York or Warwick?”

“But why do I ask that? My mangled body shows, my blood shows, my lack of strength shows, my sick heart shows that I must yield my body to the earth, and by my fall, I must yield the victory to my foe.

“Thus yields the cedar to the axe’s edge, although the cedar’s arms gave shelter to the Princely eagle, and although under the cedar’s shade the ramping lion slept, and although the cedar’s topmost branch peered over Jove’s spreading oak tree and protected low shrubs from winter’s powerful wind.

“These eyes, which now are dimmed with death’s black veil, have been as piercing as the mid-day Sun as they perceived the secret treasons of the world.

“The wrinkles in my brows, now filled with blood, were often likened to Kingly sepulchers, for who lived as King, except a person whose grave I could dig?

“And who dared to smile when Warwick frowned?”

“But look, now my glory is smeared in dust and blood! My

hunting grounds, my walks, my manors that I had just now have forsaken me, and of all my lands there is nothing left to me except my body's length — land enough for a grave.

“Why, pomp, rule, and reign are nothing but earth and dust! And, live us how we can, yet die we must.”

The Earl of Oxford and the Duke of Somerset arrived.

The Duke of Somerset said, “Ah, Warwick, Warwick! If you were still uninjured, like us, we might recover all our losses. Queen Margaret has brought from France a powerful army. Just now we heard the news. I wish that you could flee!”

“Why, even if I could, I would not flee,” Warwick said. “Ah, Marquess of Montague, if you are there, sweet brother, take my hand and with your lips kiss me and keep my soul in my body awhile! Your kiss will keep my soul from exiting my body through my lips. You don't love me because, brother, if you did, your tears would wash this cold, congealed blood that glues my lips and will not let me speak. Come quickly, Montague, or I will be dead before you get here.”

The Duke of Somerset said, “Warwick, the Marquess of Montague has breathed his last, and to the last gasp he cried out for Warwick and said, ‘Commend me to my valiant brother.’ And he would have said more, and he did speak more that sounded like a clamor in a vault that could not be understood, but at last I heard him say clearly, delivered with a groan, ‘Oh, farewell, Warwick!’”

The Earl of Warwick said, “May his soul sweetly rest! Flee, lords, and save yourselves, for Warwick bids you all farewell until we meet in Heaven.”

He died.

The Earl of Oxford said, "Let's go, so we can meet the Queen's great army!"

— 5.3 —

On another part of the battlefield, King Edward IV celebrated his victory. With him were his brothers Duke Richard of Gloucester and Duke George of Clarence. Also present were many soldiers.

King Edward IV said, "Thus far our fortune keeps an upward course, and we are graced with wreaths of victory. But, in the midst of this brightly shining day, I spy a black, suspicious, threatening cloud that will battle our glorious Sun before it attains its easeful, comfortable western bed. I mean, my lords, those troops whom Queen Margaret has raised in France have arrived at our coast and, so we hear, march on to fight us."

Duke George of Clarence said, "A little gale will soon disperse that cloud and blow it to the source from whence it came. The very beams of the Sun will dry those vapors up, for not every cloud generates a storm."

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, "The Queen's forces are estimated to be thirty thousand strong, and both the Duke of Somerset and the Earl of Oxford have fled to her. If she is given time before she has to fight, be well assured that her faction will be fully as strong as ours."

King Edward IV said, "We are informed by our loving friends that Queen Margaret and her troops hold their course toward Tewksbury. We, having now the victory at Barnet battlefield, will go to Tewksbury immediately, for willingness makes for progress on the journey. And as we march, our strength will be augmented in every county as we go along."

He ordered the drummer, "Strike up the drum," and then he

ordered everyone, “Cry ‘Courage!’ and let’s go.”

— 5.4 —

On the plains near Tewksbury, Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, the Duke of Somerset, and the Earl of Oxford were meeting. With them were many soldiers.

Queen Margaret said, “Great lords, wise men never sit and bewail their loss, but cheerfully seek how to repair their misfortunes.

“What though the mast is now blown overboard, the cable broken, the holding-anchor lost, and half our sailors swallowed in the flood? Our pilot — King Henry VI — still lives.

“Is it suitable that a pilot should leave the helm and like a fearful lad with tearful eyes add water to the sea and give more strength to that which has too much, while as he moans the rock splits the ship, which toil and courage might have saved?

“What a shame, what a fault that would be!

“Say Warwick was our anchor — what of that? And the Marquess of Montague was our topmost sail — what of him? Our slaughtered friends were the ship’s tackles — what of these?

“Why, isn’t Oxford here another anchor? And Somerset another goodly mast? The friends from France our sail-ropes and tacklings?

“And, although we are unskillful, why shouldn’t my son Ned — Prince Edward — and I for once be allowed to perform the skillful pilot’s duty?

“We will not leave the helm in order to sit and weep, but we will instead keep our course, although the rough wind

says no, and we will avoid the sandbanks, shoals, and rocks that threaten us with wreck.

“It is as good to scold the waves as to speak well of them. And what is Edward but ruthless sea? What is Clarence but a quicksand of deceit? And what is Richard but a jagged, deadly rock?

“All these are enemies to our poor ship.

“Say you can swim — but you can swim only for a while! Tread on the quicksand; why, there you quickly sink. Bestride the rock; the tide will wash you off, or else you will starve. That’s a threefold death: You can drown in the sea, sink in quicksand, or die of starvation on a rock.

“This speak I, lords, to let you understand, in case one of you would flee away from us, that there’s no hoped-for mercy coming from the brothers — Edward, Clarence, and Richard — no more than the mercy you would get from the ruthless waves, quicksand, and rocks.

“Why, be courageous then! It is childish weakness to lament or fear what cannot be avoided.”

Prince Edward said, “I think a woman of this valiant spirit would, if a coward heard her speak these words, infuse his breast with greatness of heart and nobleness of spirit and make him, without armor and weapons, defeat an armed warrior.

“I don’t say this because I doubt the courage of anyone here, for if I did suspect a man to be fearful he would have my permission to go away right now, lest when we need him to fight he might infect another man and make him of similar fearful spirit as himself.

“If any such be here — God forbid! — let him depart before we need his help.”

The Earl of Oxford said, “Women and children have so high a courage — and warriors are faint-hearted! Why, for warriors to have faint hearts is perpetual shame.

“Oh, brave young Prince! Your famous grandfather — King Henry V — lives again in you. Long may you live to bear his image and renew his glories!”

The Duke of Somerset said, “And may he who will not fight for such a hope as the young Prince go home to bed, and like an owl that is seen during the day, be mocked and wondered at if he arise.”

Queen Margaret said, “Thanks, gentle Somerset; sweet Oxford, thanks.”

Prince Edward said, “And take thanks from me, who as of yet has nothing else to give you.”

A messenger arrived and said, “Prepare yourselves, lords, for Edward IV is at hand and ready to fight; therefore, be resolute.”

The Earl of Oxford said, “I thought no less. It is his military strategy to hasten so quickly in order to find us unprepared to fight.”

“But he’s deceived,” the Duke of Somerset said. “We are ready to fight.”

“Seeing your eagerness to fight cheers my heart,” Queen Margaret said.

“Here we will pitch our battle formation,” the Earl of Oxford said. “From here we will not budge.”

King Edward IV, Duke Richard of Gloucester, Duke George of Clarence, and many soldiers arrived.

King Edward IV said, “Brave followers, yonder stands the metaphorical thorny wood, which by the Heavens’

assistance and your strength must by the roots be hewn up before night. I need not add more fuel to your fire, for well I know you blaze to burn them out. Give the signal for the battle, and let's go to it, lords!"

Queen Margaret said, "Lords, knights, and gentlemen, my tears contradict what words I should say because as you see, for every word I speak I drink the water of my eyes. Therefore, I will say no more but this: Henry VI, your sovereign, is held prisoner by the foe; his Kingship is usurped, his realm is a slaughterhouse, his subjects are being slain, his laws and statutes are cancelled, and his treasure is spent. And yonder is the wolf that makes this spoil. Your fight is just, and so then, in God's name, lords, be valiant and give the signal for the battle."

The battle started.

— 5.5 —

The battle was over, and King Edward IV was triumphant. King Edward IV, Duke Richard of Gloucester, and Duke George of Clarence stood together with their prisoners: Queen Margaret, the Earl of Oxford, and the Duke of Somerset. Many Yorkist soldiers were present.

King Edward IV said, "Now here ends our tumultuous broils. Take the Earl of Oxford away to Hames Castle immediately. As for the Duke of Somerset, cut off his guilty head. Go, take them away; I will not hear them speak."

The Earl of Oxford said, "For my part, I'll not trouble you with words."

The Duke of Somerset said, "Nor will I, but I bow with patience to my ill fortune."

Queen Margaret said to the Earl of Oxford and the Duke of

Somerset, “So part we sadly in this troublous world, but we will meet with joy in the sweet city of Jerusalem in Heaven.”

Guards took away the Earl of Oxford and the Duke of Somerset.

King Edward IV said, “Has the proclamation been made that whoever finds Prince Edward, Queen Margaret’s son, shall have a large reward, and Prince Edward shall keep his life?”

“The proclamation has been made,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “and look, here comes the youthful Prince Edward!”

Soldiers arrived, bringing Prince Edward.

King Edward IV said, “Bring forth the gallant, and let us hear him speak. What! Can so young a thorn begin to prick? Prince Edward, what penalty can you pay for bearing arms, for stirring up my subjects to rebel against me, and for all the trouble you have caused me?”

Prince Edward replied, “Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York! Suppose that I am now my father’s mouthpiece. Resign your throne, and where I stand kneel before me, while I say the same questions to you, traitor, which you would have me answer.”

Queen Margaret said, “I wish that your father had been so resolute!”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “If he had been, then you might always have worn the petticoat, and never have stolen the pants from your husband, Henry VI, and worn them.”

Prince Edward said, “Let Aesop tell false fables during a winter’s night; Richard’s currish riddles are not suitable for

this place.”

Aesop was popularly supposed to be hunchbacked like Richard. The word “currish” meant “like a cur, aka a mean-spirited dog.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “By Heaven, brat, I’ll plague you for that word.”

Queen Margaret said, “True, you were born to be a plague to men.”

“For God’s sake, take away this captive scold,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said.

“No,” Prince Edward said. “Instead, take away this scolding hunchback.”

“Be quiet, willful boy, or I will put a charm on your tongue to make it silent,” King Edward IV said.

“Untutored, badly raised lad, you are too malapert and impudent,” Duke George of Clarence said.

“I know my duty,” Prince Edward said. “You are all undutiful. Lascivious Edward, and you perjured George, and you misshapen Dick, I tell you all that I am your better, traitors as you are, and you have usurped my father’s right and mine.”

King Edward IV stabbed Prince Edward and said, “Take that, you likeness of this railer — Queen Margaret — here.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester stabbed Prince Edward and said, “Are you suffering your death throes? Take that, to end your agony.”

Duke George of Clarence stabbed Prince Edward and said, “And this is for twitting me with perjury.”

Prince Edward died.

Queen Margaret said, “Oh, kill me, too!”

“By Mother Mary, I shall,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said.

King Edward IV stopped him by saying, “Don’t, Richard, don’t; for we have already done too much.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester asked, “Why should Queen Margaret live? She will fill the world with words.”

Queen Margaret fainted.

King Edward IV said, “Does she swoon? Help her.”

During the commotion, Duke Richard of Gloucester said quietly to his brother Duke George of Clarence, “Clarence, excuse me to the King my brother. I’ll leave here and go to London on a serious matter. Before you come there, you will be sure to hear some news.”

“What? What?” Duke George of Clarence asked.

“The Tower! The Tower!” Duke Richard of Gloucester replied.

He exited.

Brought back to consciousness, Queen Margaret said, “Oh, Ned, sweet Ned! Speak to your mother, boy! Can’t you speak?”

“Oh, traitors! Murderers! They who stabbed Julius Caesar shed no blood at all, did not offend, and did not deserve blame, if this foul deed were nearby to be compared to it. Julius Caesar was a man; this, in comparison, is a child. And men never expend their fury on a child.

“What’s worse than being a murderer, so that I may name

it? No, no, my heart will burst, if I speak. And I will speak, so that my heart may burst. Butchers and villains! Bloody cannibals! How sweet a plant you have untimely cut!

“You have no children, butchers! If you had, the thought of them would have stirred up remorse. But if you ever chance to have a child, look in his youth to have him so cut off as, you deathmen and executioners, you have killed this sweet young Prince!”

King Edward IV said, “Take her away! Go and bear her forcibly away from here.”

Queen Margaret said, “No, never carry me away from here; instead, kill me here and now. Here in my chest sheathe your sword; I’ll pardon you for killing me. What, Edward IV, you will not? Then, Clarence, you do it.”

“I swear by Heaven that I will not cause you so much comfort,” Duke George of Clarence replied.

Queen Margaret said, “Good Clarence, do it; sweet Clarence, please do it.”

“Didn’t you hear me swear I would not do it?” Duke George of Clarence replied.

“Yes, I did, but you are used to committing perjury,” Queen Margaret said. “Committing perjury was a sin before, but now it is a charitable deed. Won’t you kill me?”

“Where is that Devil’s butcher, ugly Richard? Richard, where are you? You are not here. Murder is your good deed. You never refuse those who petition you to shed other people’s blood.”

King Edward IV ordered, “Take her away, I say; I order you, carry her away from here.”

Queen Margaret said, “May what happened to my son the

Prince happen to you and yours!”

Guards forcibly carried her away.

King Edward IV asked, “Where has Richard gone?”

Duke George of Clarence said, “To London, in all haste.”

He thought, *And, I guess, to make a bloody supper in the Tower of London.*

King Edward IV said, “Richard acts quickly, if an idea comes into his head.

“Now we will march away from here. Discharge the common soldiers with pay and thanks, and let’s go away to London and see how well our gentle Queen fares. By this time, I hope, she has given birth to a son for me.”

— 5.6 —

King Henry VI and a Lieutenant were in a room of the Tower of London when Duke Richard of Gloucester arrived. King Henry VI was reading a religious book.

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “Good day, my lord. Studying your book so hard?”

“Yes, my good lord,” King Henry VI said. “I should say rather ‘my lord’ because it is a sin to flatter; ‘good’ is a ‘little’ better than you deserve and so it is flattery. ‘Good Gloucester’ and ‘good Devil’ are alike, and both are contrary to the way things should be; therefore, I ought not to call you ‘good lord.’”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said to the Lieutenant, “Sirrah, leave us to ourselves. We must confer.”

The Lieutenant exited.

King Henry VI, who suspected what was about to occur,

and who may have had the gift of prophecy, said, “So flees the reckless shepherd from the wolf. So the harmless sheep first yields his fleece and next yields his throat to the butcher’s knife. What scene of death has the famous Roman tragedian Roscius now to act? How am I to die?”

Duke Richard of Gloucester replied, “Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind. The thief is afraid that each bush is an officer of the law.”

King Henry VI said, “After being trapped in a bush, with trembling wings a bird fears every bush. And I, the hapless father to one sweet bird, the Prince, now have the fatal object in my eye where my poor young bird was trapped, caught, and killed. I need not fear every bush because in front of me I see the bush that I ought to fear.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “Why, what a peevish fool was that father of Crete, who taught his son the function of a foolish fowl! And yet, for all his wings, the fool was drowned.”

He was referring to the myth of Daedalus and Icarus. Imprisoned by King Minos on the island of Crete, they escaped after Daedalus fashioned wings made of wax and feathers. Icarus, however, flew too close to the hot Sun, which melted the wax of his wings, and he fell into the sea and drowned.

King Henry VI said, “I am Daedalus; my poor boy is Icarus; your father, the old Duke of York, is King Minos, who would not allow us to freely leave Crete; the sun that seared the wings of my sweet boy is your brother Edward; and you yourself are the sea whose malicious whirlpool swallowed up my son’s life. Ah, kill me with your weapon, not with words! My breast can better endure feeling your dagger’s point than my ears can endure hearing that tragic history.

“But why have you come? Have you come to take my life?”

Duke Richard of Gloucester asked, “Do you think that I am an executioner?”

“I am sure you are a persecutor,” King Henry VI said. “If murdering innocents is executing, why, then you are an executioner.”

“I killed your son for his presumption,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said.

“If you had been killed when you first presumed, then you would not have lived to kill a son of mine,” King Henry VI said. “And thus I prophesy that many a thousand people, who now mistrust no part of what I fear, and many an old man’s and many a widow’s sigh, and many an orphan’s tear-filled eye — men for their sons, wives for their husbands, and orphans for their parents’ untimely death — shall bitterly regret the hour that you were born.

“The owl shrieked at your birth — an evil sign. The night-crow cried, foretelling a luckless time. Dogs howled, and a hideous tempest shook down trees. The raven crouched on the chimney’s top, and chattering magpies sang dismal discords.

“Your mother felt more than a mother’s pain of childbirth, and yet brought forth less than a mother’s hope. I mean that she gave birth to an incomplete and deformed lump, not like the fruit expected from such a splendid tree as your mother.

“You had teeth in your head when you were born to signify that you came to bite the world. And, if the rest be true that I have heard, you came —”

“I’ll hear no more,” Duke Richard of Gloucester said. “Die,

prophet, in the middle of your speech.”

He stabbed King Henry VI and said, “For this deed among the rest of my deeds, I was ordained. For such deeds I was born.”

“Yes, and for much more slaughter after this,” King Henry VI said.

As he died, King Henry VI said, “May God forgive my sins, and may God pardon you!”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said over King Henry VI’s corpse, “Will the ambitious, soaring blood of Lancaster sink into the ground? I thought it would have mounted into the sky. See how my sword weeps for the poor King’s death! Oh, may such bloody tears be always shed from those who wish the downfall of our House of York!

“If any spark of life is yet remaining, go down, down to Hell — and say I sent you there.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester stabbed King Henry VI’s corpse.

He continued, “I, who haven’t pity, love, or fear, sent you there. Indeed, what Henry VI told me is true, for I have often heard my mother say that I came into the world with my legs and feet first. Didn’t I have reason, you think, to make haste and seek the ruin of those who usurped our right? The midwife wondered and the women cried, ‘Oh, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!’ And so I was, which plainly signified that I would snarl and bite and play the mean dog.

“So then, since the Heavens have misshaped my body, let Hell make my mind crooked to correspond to my crooked body.

“I have no brother, I am like no brother, and this word

‘love,’ which graybeards call divine, is resident in men who are like one another, but it is not resident in me: I am myself alone.

“Clarence, beware, for you are keeping me from the light, from my golden-crowned goal. But I will arrange a pitch-black day for you, for I will buzz abroad rumors of such prophecies that Edward IV shall fear for his life, and then, to purge his fear by lancing and bloodletting, I’ll be your death.

“King Henry VI and his son — the Prince — are dead and gone. Clarence, your turn is next, and then the rest who are in line ahead of me to be King of England. I regard myself as worthless until I am the best and highest-ranking person in England.

“I’ll throw your body in another room and triumph, Henry VI, in your day of doom.”

— 5.7 —

In a room of the palace in London were King Edward IV, Queen Elizabeth, Duke George of Clarence, Duke Richard of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, a nurse holding the recently born Prince, and some attendants.

Using the royal plural, King Edward IV said, “Once more we sit on England’s royal throne, repurchased with the blood of enemies. What valiant foemen, similar to autumn’s wheat, have we mown down, at the peak of all their pride!

“We have mown down three Dukes of Somerset, who were threefold renowned as hardy and undoubted champions; two Cliffords, both the father and the son; and two Northumberlands — two braver men never spurred their warhorses at the military trumpet’s sound.

“Along with them, we have mown down the two brave bears, Warwick and Montague, who in their chains fettered the Kingly lion and made the forest tremble when they roared.”

The Earl of Warwick, the Marquess of Montague, and the Earl of Warwick’s father were members of the Neville family, whose crest depicted a rampant — standing — bear chained to a knobby post.

King Edward IV continued, “Thus have we swept suspicion and anxiety from our seat and made our footstool out of security.”

King Edward IV thought that he was safe and secure on the throne, but already Duke Richard of Gloucester was plotting to become King of England. A now rare meaning of “security” is “overconfidence.”

He continued, “Come here, Bess — my Queen — and let me kiss my boy.

“Young Ned, your uncles and I have in our armors stayed awake during the winter’s night and gone on foot in the summer’s scalding heat, so that that you could possess the crown in peace and so that you shall reap the gain of our labors.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester thought, *I’ll blast your son’s harvest, if your head were laid in the grave, the way that a storm can blight a harvest by driving the tops of the wheat into the ground, for I am not yet respected in the world. This shoulder of mine was created so thick so that it could heave, and it shall either heave some bodies out of my way, or break my back.*

He touched his head and thought, *You work out the way to accomplish my goals.*

Then he touched his shoulder and thought, *And you shall execute the plan.*

King Edward IV continued, “Clarence and Gloucester, love my lovely Queen, and kiss your Princely nephew, both of you brothers of mine.”

Duke George of Clarence said, “The duty that I owe to your majesty I seal upon the lips of this sweet babe.”

“Thanks, noble Clarence,” Queen Elizabeth said, “Worthy brother, thanks.”

Duke Richard of Gloucester said, “And, because I love the tree from whence this babe sprang, witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.”

He kissed the recently born Prince and thought, *And Judas cried ‘all hail!’ when he meant all harm.*

Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

Matthew 26:48-49 states, “*Now he that betrayed him, had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he, lay hold on him. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, God save thee, Master, and kissed him*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

King Edward IV said, “Now am I seated as my soul delights because I have my country’s peace and my brothers’ loves.”

Duke George of Clarence said, “What does your grace want to do with Queen Margaret? Reignier, her father, has pawned Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem to the King of France and has sent here the money raised for her ransom.”

“Send her away, and waft her over the sea to France,” King Edward IV said. “And what remains to be done now but that we spend the time with stately triumphs and mirthful

comic shows such as are suitable for the pleasure of the court?

“Sound, drums and trumpets!

“Farewell, sour, bitter annoyances! For here, I hope, begins our lasting joy.”

Chapter XXI: RICHARD III

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Richard III*)

House of York

King Edward IV. King Edward IV and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, have two young sons, who are often referred to as the Princes:

Edward, Prince of Wales, and afterwards King Edward V; son of King Edward IV.

Richard, Duke of York; son of King Edward IV.

George, Duke of Clarence. Brother of King Edward IV. Clarence is the second-oldest brother.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and afterwards King Richard III. Brother of King Edward IV. Gloucester is the youngest brother.

Duchess of York. Mother of King Edward IV; George, Duke of Clarence; and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who becomes King Richard III.

A young son of Clarence.

A young daughter of Clarence, named Margaret.

House of Lancaster

Queen Margaret. Widow of King Henry VI.

Lady Anne Neville. Widow of Edward, Prince of Wales (son of King Henry VI). She afterwards marries Richard.

Tressel and Berkeley, gentlemen attending on the Lady Anne.

Woodville Family

Queen Elizabeth, Queen of King Edward IV. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Woodville. Also called Lady Grey because she was the widow of Sir John Grey when King Edward IV married her. Among her children is young Elizabeth of York, who after the events of *Richard III* marries King Henry VII and becomes Queen Elizabeth. Neither Queen Elizabeth should be confused with Queen Elizabeth I. Two other children Queen Elizabeth had with her husband, King Edward IV, are Edward, Prince of Wales, and Richard, the young Duke of York.

Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers. Brother of Queen Elizabeth, aka Lady Grey.

Marquess of Dorset. Son of Queen Elizabeth, aka Lady Grey. This son is from a marriage previous to that with King Edward IV. Dorset's father was Sir John Grey. A Marquess ranks above an Earl and below a Duke.

Lord Richard Grey. Son of Queen Elizabeth, aka Lady Grey. This son is from a marriage previous to that with King Edward IV. Grey's father was Sir John Grey.

Sir Thomas Vaughan. Ally of Earl Rivers and Lord Richard Grey.

King Richard III's Group

Duke of Buckingham.

Sir William Catesby.

Duke of Norfolk.

Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey. He is the Duke of Norfolk's son.

Sir Richard Ratcliff.

Sir James Tyrrel.

Lord Francis Lovel.

Earl of Richmond's Group

Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, and afterwards King Henry VII.

Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby. Father of Earl of Richmond, who becomes King Henry VII.

Sir James Blunt.

Sir Walter Herbert.

Earl of Oxford.

Sir William Brandon.

Two Cardinals.

Clergy

Cardinal Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York.

John Morton, Archbishop of Ely.

Christopher Urswick, a priest.

Second priest.

Other Characters

Lord William Hastings. He was Lord Chamberlain under King Edward IV.

Sir Robert Brakenbury. He was the Lieutenant of the Tower of London.

Lord Mayor of London.

Ghosts of those murdered by Richard III; Lords and other Attendants; a Pursuivant (a royal or state messenger who

had the power to execute warrants), Scrivener, Citizens, Murderers, Messengers, Soldiers, Sheriff of Whitshire, etc.

Scene

England.

Note

See “Appendix A: Brief Historical Background” if you need a refresher on English history.

King Richard III reigned from 26 June 1483 to 22 August 1485.

CHAPTER 1 (Richard III)

— 1.1 —

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, stood alone on a street in London near the Tower of London.

He said to himself, “Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this Sun of York.”

For most people, this would be good news; the time of dissatisfaction was over. England had suffered from a long-lasting power struggle between the House of York and the House of Lancaster. This power struggle had ended with the Battle of Tewksbury in 1471 in which the Yorkists won a decisive victory over the Lancastrians. This had made secure the power of King Edward IV, a Yorkist. England was now at peace, but enmity still existed between the two Houses, aka families.

However, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, wanted to become King. Edward IV was his eldest brother, and George, Duke of Clarence, was the middle brother between King Edward IV and Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Richard would have to get rid of these two brothers if he were to become King.

When Richard, Duke of Gloucester, referred to “this Sun of York,” he meant King Edward IV, whose emblem was a Sun.

Richard continued, “And all the clouds that scowled upon our House of York are buried in the deep bosom of the ocean. Our enemies have been conquered. Now our brows are bound with victorious wreaths. Our battered armor is hung up to serve as memorials. Our stern alarums — calls to arms — have been changed to merry meetings, and our dreadful martial marches to delightful measures of dance.

Grim-faced war has smoothed his wrinkled forehead, and now, instead of mounting armored steeds to frighten the souls of fearful adversaries, he capers nimbly in a lady's chamber to the lascivious pleasing of a lute."

Instead of making war, people were now able to dance and to make love. To caper nimbly in a lady's chamber has a double meaning: It can mean to dance nimbly in a lady's room, or to 'dance' nimbly in a lady's vagina. A lute can be thought of as a phallic symbol.

Richard continued, "But I am not shaped for sexual sports, nor made to court an amorous, loving mirror."

Richard had been born prematurely, and he was physically handicapped. He walked with a limp, his arm was withered, and his back was hunched.

Richard continued, "I am rudely stamped and badly made, and lack love's majesty and so cannot strut before a wanton ambling nymph. I lack a fair bodily shape, and dissembling nature has cheated me by not giving me pleasing facial features. I am deformed, unfinished, sent before my time into this breathing, living world, scarcely half finished. I am so lame and so badly fashioned that dogs bark at me as I limp by them.

"Why, in this weak piping time of peace in which are heard the pipes of peace and not the fifes and drums of war, I have no delight to pass away the time, unless I delight to spy my shadow in the Sun and talk about my own deformity.

"And therefore, since I cannot show myself to be a lover, to while away these fair courteous and refined days, I am determined to prove that I am a villain and hate the frivolous and wanton pleasures of these days.

"I have lain plots and made dangerous first steps, using

prophecies made under the influence of drunkenness, libels, and dreams to set my brothers George, who is the Duke of Clarence, and King Edward IV in deadly hate the one against the other.

“And if King Edward is as true and just as I am subtle, false, and treacherous, this day George, Duke of Clarence, should closely be confined and imprisoned because of a prophecy, which says that G shall murder King Edward IV’s heirs.”

King Edward IV thought that the G of the prophecy referred to George, Duke of Clarence. He should have thought that it referred to Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

Richard continued, “Dive, thoughts, down to my soul. I see Clarence coming toward me.”

George, Duke of Clarence, was being guarded. With him was Sir Robert Brakenbury, Lieutenant of the Tower of London.

Richard said to Clarence, “Brother, good day. What is the meaning of this armed guard who waits upon your grace?”

Clarence joked, “His majesty, King Edward IV, my brother, being concerned about my personal safety, has appointed this guard to convey me to the Tower of London.”

Clarence knew that he was under arrest on a serious charge, but he was able to joke. King Edward IV was his brother, and he felt that eventually they would be reconciled.

Richard asked, “Upon what cause are they taking you to the Tower of London?”

“The cause is that my name is George: George, Duke of Clarence.”

“Alas, my lord, that fault is none of yours,” Richard said. “Edward IV should, to punish that fault, commit your godfathers to the Tower. Your godfathers were present at your baptism and naming. Perhaps his majesty has some intention that you shall be newly christened and renamed in the Tower. But what’s the matter, Clarence? May I know? Can you tell me?”

“Yes, Richard, when I know,” Clarence replied, “for I protest that as of now I do not know why King Edward IV is imprisoning me, but as far as I can learn, he is paying attention to prophecies and dreams, and from the alphabet he plucks the letter G, and says that a wizard told him that G would disinherit his children and prevent them from ever succeeding to the throne. And, because my name George begins with G, he thinks that I am the G of the prophecy. These things, as far as I can learn, and other trifles such as these have moved his highness to imprison me now in the Tower.”

“Why, this is what happens when men are ruled by women,” Richard replied. “It is not the King who sends you to the Tower. Clarence, Lady Grey — the King’s wife — is the woman who has persuaded him to do this extreme action.”

Richard used the less complimentary title Lady Grey instead of her proper title: Queen Elizabeth, wife of Edward IV. She was the widow of Sir John Grey when King Edward IV married her.

Richard continued, “Was it not she and that good man of worship, Anthony Woodville, her brother there, who made Edward IV send Lord William Hastings to the Tower, from whence today he is delivered?”

Again, Richard was using a less-complimentary term. Anthony Woodville was the Earl Rivers. Richard was using

his family name, not his title of Earl. Also, a goodman was a man of substance, but not a man of gentle — noble — birth.

Richard continued, “We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.”

Clarence replied, “By Heaven, I think there’s no man who is secure except the Queen’s relatives and the night-walking heralds who trudge between the King and Mistress Shore.”

A night-walker is a criminal, but here the heralds — actually, messengers — walk at night because they are engaged on a mission that they need to keep secret. They are arranging assignations between King Edward IV and his mistress, Mistress Jane Shore, a commoner. Mistress is a title that means Ms. or Mrs.

Clarence continued, “Haven’t you heard what a humble suppliant Lord Hastings was to Mistress Shore for his delivery from the Tower?”

“Humbly complaining to her deity got the Lord Chamberlain — Hastings — his liberty,” Richard said. “I’ll tell you what; I think it is our best course of action, if we want to keep in the King’s favor, to be her men and wear her livery.”

Again, Richard was belittling his enemies. Jane Shore was a commoner, and so her servants did not wear her livery — distinctive uniforms that would identify them as being employed by her.

Richard continued, “The jealous over-worn widow and herself, since our brother the King dubbed them gentlewomen, are mighty gossips in this monarchy.”

The “jealous over-worn widow” was Queen Elizabeth,

widow of Sir John Grey, and understandably jealous of Mistress Shore. Richard was calling both Queen Elizabeth and Mistress Shore chatterers who had a lot of power because of their relationships to King Edward IV. Richard was again mocking the Queen; she had been born a gentlewoman, so her new husband had not made her a gentlewoman. Mistress Shore, of course, was a commoner.

Brakenbury had allowed the two men to talk because of Richard's high rank as Duke of Gloucester, but now he intervened to enforce King Edward IV's orders. Brakenbury did not want to make an enemy of Richard, but he also did not want to make an enemy of Edward IV.

Brakenbury said, "I beseech your graces both to pardon me, but his majesty has strictly ordered that no man — no matter how high his rank — shall have private conversation with Clarence, his brother."

Richard replied, "So be it. If it please your worship, Brakenbury, you may listen to anything we say."

Richard again was being mocking. He had called Brakenbury "your worship," as if Brakenbury had a higher rank than his. Richard was a Duke, while Brakenbury was only a knight.

Richard continued, "We speak no treason, man. We say the King is wise and virtuous, and his noble Queen is well struck in years, fair, and not jealous. We say that Shore's wife has a pretty foot, a cherry lip, a bonny eye, and a surpassingly pleasing tongue, and we say that the Queen's relatives are made gentlefolks. What do you say, sir? Can you deny all this?"

"My lord, I myself have nought to do with this," Brakenbury replied.

"Naught to do with Mistress Shore!" Richard said. "I tell

you, fellow, he who does naught with her, excepting one, should realize that it is best he do it secretly and without witnesses.”

Richard had changed Brakenbury’s “nought” to “naught.” “Nought” means “nothing,” but “naught” means “naughtiness or sex.”

“Which one, my lord?”

“Her husband, knave,” Richard said. “Would you betray me?”

Richard, of course, was alluding to Edward IV’s affair with Mistress Shore. It were best that such an affair be carried on by the principals secretly, and it were best for other people to not speak about it.

“I beseech your grace to pardon me, and at the same time I ask you to cease your conversation with the noble Duke of Clarence.”

Clarence said, “We know your orders, Brakenbury, and we will obey.”

“We are the Queen’s abject subjects, and we must obey,” Richard said, again making the point that Edward IV was being controlled by women — especially Queen Elizabeth.

Richard said to Clarence, “Brother, farewell. I will go to the King, and whatsoever you want me to do, even if it is to call King Edward’s widow ‘sister,’ I will perform it to free you.”

King Edward’s widow was the still-living Queen Elizabeth — she was the widow he had married: Lady Grey. Richard was saying it would be hard for him to be civil to her and call her his sister-in-law, but he was willing to do that if it would make Clarence a free man.

Richard added, “In the meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood touches me deeper than you can imagine.”

The “deep disgrace in brotherhood” referred to two disgraces: 1) Edward IV’s imprisonment of his brother Clarence, and 2) Richard’s plotting against his two brothers: Edward IV and the Duke of Clarence.

In addition, “touches me deeper than you can imagine” had two meanings: 1) distresses me more than you can imagine, and 2) concerns me — and my deep plot to make myself King — more than you can imagine.

Richard was capable of crocodile tears. Weeping, he hugged his brother.

“I know it pleases neither of us well,” Clarence said.

“Well, your imprisonment shall not be long. In the meantime, have patience.”

“I must, necessarily. Farewell.”

Clarence, Brakenbury, and the guard departed to go to the Tower of London.

Richard said to himself, “Go, tread the path from which you shall never return. Simple, plain Clarence! I love you so much that I will shortly send your soul to Heaven, if Heaven will take the present from my hands. But who is coming toward me? The newly freed Hastings!”

Hastings walked over to Richard and said, “Good time of day to my gracious lord!”

“As much to my good Lord Chamberlain!” Richard said. “You are very welcome to the open air. How has your lordship endured your imprisonment?”

“With patience, noble lord, as prisoners must,” Hastings replied, “but I shall live, my lord, to give ‘thanks’ to those

who were the cause of my imprisonment.”

“No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence, too, for those who were your enemies are also his, and they have prevailed as much over him as over you.”

“It is all the more pity that the eagle should be mewed, while kites and buzzards prey at liberty.”

The eagle, a noble bird, was Clarence, a nobleman. He was mewed — imprisoned — while the lesser birds of prey who were his enemies — kites and buzzards — were still free to wreak harm on others.

“What is the news abroad?” Richard asked.

Hastings was able to joke despite his imprisonment. By “abroad,” Richard had meant “current, being discussed now.” Hastings deliberately misinterpreted it as meaning “in other countries,” but he still gave Richard the information he wanted.

“No news is so bad abroad as this news we have at home. The King is sickly, weak, and melancholy, and his physicians fear mightily that he will die.”

“Now, by Saint Paul, this news is bad indeed,” Richard said. “Oh, he has kept an evil way of life for a long time, and he has excessively consumed and wasted his royal person. This is very grievous to think about. What, is he in his bed?”

“He is.”

“Go ahead of me to the court, and I will follow you.”

Hastings departed.

Richard said to himself, “He cannot live, I hope, and he must not die until George, Duke of Clarence, be galloped as quickly as possible up to Heaven. I’ll go in and see him so I

can urge him even more to hate Clarence. I will use lies well steeled with weighty arguments. And, if my deep plot does not fail, Clarence has not another day left in which to live. Once Clarence is dead, then I hope that God takes King Edward IV into his mercy and leaves the world for me to bustle in!

“For then I’ll marry the Earl of Warwick’s youngest daughter: Lady Anne Neville. She is the widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, who was the son of King Henry VI.

“What though I killed her husband and her father-in-law? The readiest way to make the wench amends is to become her husband and her father. This I will do, not so much for love as for another secret purpose for which I must marry her — if I marry her, I can make more secure my future crown as King Richard III of England. But I am running before my horse to market — I am running ahead of myself because I am not yet King. Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns. When they are gone, that is the time for me to count my gains.”

— 1.2 —

On another street in London, the corpse of King Henry VI lay in an open coffin on a bier. Four gentlemen carried the bier. Attendants carrying halberds — a combined spear and battle-ax — guarded the body. Mourning the body was Lady Anne, King Henry VI’s daughter-in-law. Only nine or so people were present, including the gentlemen who were carrying the bier. Two of Lady Anne’s attendants, Tressel and Berkeley, were with her. The ruling party wanted little attention given to the disposal of King Henry VI’s corpse, and Lady Anne was being defiant by publicly mourning his death.

Lady Anne said, “Set down your honorable load, if honor may be shrouded in a coffin — does honor belong only to

the living? Wait while I for a while lament as a mourner with proper regard for the untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster. The fall of the Lancastrian King Henry VI is also the fall of the House of Lancaster! Poor figure of a holy King! Your body is as cold as an iron key during winter. Pale remains of the House of Lancaster! You bloodless remnant of that royal blood! May it be lawful that I call upon your ghost, as if you were a saint, to hear the lamentations of Poor Anne, who was wife to your Edward, your slaughtered son, stabbed by the selfsame hand — that of Richard, Duke of Gloucester — that made these wounds that killed you! In these windows — your wounds — that let forth your life, I pour the unavailing and useless balm of my poor eyes — my tears.

“Cursed be the hand that made these fatal holes in your body! Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it! Cursed be the blood that let this blood flow from out of your body! May a more direful fortune befall that hated wretch, who makes us wretched by your death, than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads, or any creeping poisonous thing that lives!

“If your murderer should ever have a child, let it be defective, monstrous, and prematurely brought to light. Let it have an ugly and unnatural appearance that will frighten the hopeful mother when she looks at it, and let that child be the heir to his evil, wrongdoing, and unhappiness!

“If he should ever have a wife, let her be made as miserable by the death of him as I am made by the deaths of my poor husband and you! Let her suffer from the death of a loved one as I have suffered!”

She said to the pallbearers, “Come, now let us go towards the monastery of Chertsey near London with your holy load, which we have taken from Saint Paul’s Cathedral to be interred there, and whenever you are weary from

carrying the weight, rest yourselves while I lament King Henry VI's corpse."

The pallbearers lifted the bier.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, walked up to the group of people and said, "Stop, you who bear the corpse, and set it down."

Lady Anne said, "What black magician has conjured up this fiend to stop our holy and charitable deeds?"

"Villains, set down the corpse," Richard said, "or, by Saint Paul, I'll make a corpse of him who disobeys me."

A gentleman said, "My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass."

"Unmannered dog!" Richard said. "Halt, when I command you to. Stop pointing your halberd at my chest and instead hold it upright, or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike you with my foot and spurn you, beggar, for your boldness in disobeying me."

The pallbearers set down the bier.

Lady Anne said to them, "Do you tremble? Are you all afraid? I don't blame you, for you are mortal, and mortal eyes cannot endure the devil."

She said to Richard, "Avaunt, you dreadful minister of Hell!"

The word "avaunt" was a strong way of saying "get lost" and was used in addressing malevolent spirits.

She continued, "You had power only over the mortal body of King Henry VI. His soul you have no power over and cannot have; therefore, be gone."

Richard replied, "Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst

and ill-tempered.”

Lady Anne said to Richard, “Foul devil, for God’s sake, go away from here and stop troubling us, for you have made the happy Earth your Hell. You have filled it with cursing cries and deep outcries. If you delight to view your heinous deeds, behold this corpse — this example of your butcheries.”

She said to the men with her, “Gentlemen, see, see! The dead King Henry VI’s wounds open their congealed mouths and bleed afresh! Such things happen when a corpse is in the presence of its murderer!”

She said to Richard, “Blush, blush, you lump of foul deformity, for it is your presence that draws out this blood from cold and empty veins where no blood dwells. Your murderous deed, which is inhuman and unnatural, provokes this most unnatural deluge of blood.

“God, Who made King Henry VI’s blood, revenge his death!

“Earth, which drinks King Henry VI’s blood, revenge his death!

“May either Heaven with lightning strike the murderer dead or Earth gape wide open and eat Richard quickly, as quickly as you swallow up this good King Henry VI’s blood that Richard’s Hell-governed arm has butchered!”

Richard replied, “Lady, you know no rules of Christian charity, which renders good for bad, and blessings for curses.”

“Villain, you know no law of God or man,” Lady Anne said. “No beast is so fierce but that it knows some touch of pity.”

“But I know none, and I therefore am no beast.”

“You are not a beast, and you are not a man. It’s wonderful when devils tell the truth!”

“It is more to be wondered at when angels are so angry,” Richard said. “Grant me, you divine perfection of a woman, the opportunity to acquit myself in detail of these supposed evils.”

“Grant me, you shapeless plague of a man, the opportunity to curse your cursed self in detail for these known evils.”

“You who are more beautiful than tongue can say, let me have some patient leisure time in which to explain to you my actions.”

“You who are fouler than any heart can think you to be, you can make no justified excuse for your actions other than to hang yourself.”

“By such despair, I should accuse myself,” Richard said.

Lady Anne said, “Yes, and also, by despairing, you should stand excused for your sin because you would do worthy vengeance on yourself, who did unworthy and undeserved slaughter upon others.”

The despair they meant was the kind that involved believing that Richard had sinned so greatly that God was incapable of forgiving him. That kind of despair meant committing the sin of pride since God is merciful and can forgive any sin that is sincerely repented. That kind of despair also often results in committing suicide, which is another sin. Dante’s *Inferno* describes a ring in Hell that includes the suicides. Lady Anne would be happy if Richard were to despair, commit suicide, and be damned to Hell for eternity.

Richard said, “Suppose that I did not kill your husband and your father-in-law: Prince Edward and King Henry VI.”

“Why, then they would not be dead, but they are dead, and you devilish slave, you murdered them.”

“I did not kill your husband.”

“Why, then he is alive.”

“No, he is dead; King Edward IV’s hand slew him.”

“In your foul throat you lie,” Lady Anne said. “Queen Margaret, the wife of King Henry VI, saw your murderous sword steaming with his blood. That same sword you once pointed at her breast and would have used to murder her if your brothers — Clarence and Edward IV — had not beaten aside the swordpoint.”

“I was provoked by Queen Margaret’s slanderous tongue, which laid the guilt of my two brothers upon my guiltless shoulders.”

“You were provoked by your own bloody mind, which never dreamt about anything but butcheries,” Lady Anne said. “Did you not kill this King — Henry VI?”

“I grant you that I did,” Richard said.

“You grant me, hedgehog?” Lady Anne said, mockingly referring to Richard’s emblem, which was a boar.

An emblem is a heraldic device that symbolizes a family or person.

She continued, “Then, may God grant me something, too — that you be damned for that wicked deed! Oh, King Henry VI was gentle, mild, and virtuous!”

“Then he was all the fitter for the King of Heaven, Who has him.”

“He is in Heaven, where you shall never come.”

“Let King Henry VI thank me, who helped to send him to Heaven, for he was fitter for that place than Earth.”

“And you are unfit for any place but Hell.”

“I am fit for one other place, if you will hear me name it,” Richard said.

“You are fit for some dungeon.”

“I am fit for your bedchamber.”

“May troubled sleep be the rule in any bedchamber where you lie!”

“That will be the case, madam, until I lie with you.”

“I hope so,” Lady Anne said. “You will never lie with me, and so you will always endure troubled sleep.”

“I know so,” Richard said. “I know that I will endure troubled sleep until I lie with you. But, gentle Lady Anne, let us leave this keen encounter of our wits, and fall somewhat into a slower method of thinking. Isn’t the causer of the untimely deaths of these Plantagenets, King Henry VI and his only son, Prince Edward, as blameful as the executioner?”

“You are the cause, and you are the most accursed effect,” Lady Anne replied.

The word “effect” usually means “result,” but Lady Anne was using it in the sense of “fulfillment.” She meant that Richard was fully responsible for the two murders — he had been the cause of the fulfillment — accomplishment — of the two murders.

In his reply, Richard used the word “effect” with its usual meaning of “result”: “Your beauty was the cause of that effect. Your beauty that haunted me in my sleep caused me to undertake the death of all of the world, so that I might

live one hour in your sweet bosom. Your beauty caused me to act as I did.”

“If I thought that, I tell you, murderer, my fingernails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.”

“These eyes could never endure sweet beauty’s destruction,” Richard replied. “You would not blemish your beauty, if I stood by — I would stop you. As all the world is cheered by the Sun, so I am cheered by your beauty; your beauty is my day, my life.”

“May black night darken your day, and may death darken your life!”

“Curse not yourself, fair creature — you are both my day and my life.”

“I wish I were, so I could be revenged on you,” Lady Anne said. “I would end that day and that life.”

“It is a most unnatural quarrel to be revenged on the man who loves you.”

“It is a quarrel just and reasonable to be revenged on him who slew my husband.”

“He who bereft you, lady, of your husband, did it to help you to a better husband.”

“His better does not breathe upon the earth.”

“He lives who loves you better than he — Prince Edward — could.”

“Name him.”

“Plantagenet,” Richard replied.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was a Plantagenet, by virtue of being a York; however, Prince Edward, Lady Anne’s

late husband, was also a Plantagenet, by virtue of being a Lancaster. The House of York and the House of Lancaster shared a common ancestry. One of the sons of King Edward III — who was a Plantagenet — was John of Gaunt, first Duke of Lancaster. Another of King Edward III's sons was Edmund of Langley, first Duke of York.

“Why, Prince Edward was a Plantagenet,” Lady Anne replied.

“I mean a person with the same name, but with a better nature.”

“Where is he?”

“Here he is. I am he.”

Lady Anne spit at him. According to folklore, this was a way to ward off the malevolent influence of the evil eye.

Richard asked, “Why do you spit at me?”

“I wish it were deadly poison, for your sake!” Lady Anne replied.

“Poison has never come from so sweet a place.”

“Never has poison hung on a fouler toad than you! Get out of my sight! You infect my eyes.”

“Your eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.”

In this culture, one person's eyes were thought to be able to affect another person's eyes. For example, people thought that illness could be transferred through glances from sore eyes. However, people also believed that love entered the body through the eyes.

“I wish that my eyes were basilisks, to strike you dead!”

Basilisks were mythological creatures that could kill simply

by looking at a living thing.

“I wish they were, that I might die at once, immediately and once and for all, for now they kill me with a living death,” Richard said. “Your eyes have from mine drawn salt tears. Your eyes have caused me to shame the appearance of my eyes with a store of childish drops — tears. Your eyes have done that to these eyes of mine that have never before shed a remorseful tear.

“No, I did not weep even when my father — Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York — and my brother Edward, who is now King, wept when they heard the piteous moan that my late brother Edmund, Earl of Rutland, made when the black-faced and darkly angry Lancastrian supporter John de Clifford shook his sword at him and then killed him. No, I did not weep even when your warlike father, the Earl of Warwick, like a child, told the sad story of my father’s death and paused twenty times to sob and weep. All the bystanders who heard your father tell the tale wet their cheeks like trees dashed with rain, but in that sad time my manly eyes scorned to shed even one humble tear.

“But what these sorrows could not do — make me cry — your beauty has. Your beauty has made my eyes blind with weeping. I never sued to friend or enemy. My tongue could never learn sweet, smooth, flattering words. But now your beauty is proposed my fee, and so my proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak. If speaking and pleading will earn for me your beauty, then I will speak and plead.”

Lady Anne looked scornfully at Richard.

Richard said, “Teach not your lips such scorn, for they were made for kissing, lady, not for such contempt. If your revengeful heart cannot forgive me, then here and now I give you this sharp-pointed sword, which if you please to hide it in my true and faithful bosom and let the soul that

adores you leave my body, I lay it naked to the deadly stroke, and humbly beg the death that follows judgment upon my knee.”

Richard gave her his sword, knelt, and opened his shirt to lay bare his chest. Lady Anne pointed the sword at his chest, and then she paused.

Richard said, “No, do not pause, for I did kill King Henry VI, but it was your beauty that provoked me to kill him. Now dispatch me; it was I who stabbed young Prince Edward, your husband, but it was your Heavenly face that set me on.”

Lady Anne dropped the sword.

Richard said, “Take up the sword again, or take up me.”

Richard was in the position of a suppliant. If Lady Anne were to take his hand and help him up, she would be accepting his suit by showing mercy to the suppliant.

She said, “Arise, dissembler. Although I wish your death, I will not be the executioner.”

Richard rose, unassisted, and said, “Then order me to kill myself, and I will do it.”

“I have already done that.”

“Tush, you said that in your rage. Speak it again, and, even with the word, that hand, which, for your love, did kill your love — your husband — shall, for your love, kill a far truer love — mine. To both their deaths you shall be an accessory.”

“I wish that I knew what was in your heart.”

“What is in my heart appears in my tongue — with the words I say, I express what is in my heart.”

“I am afraid that both your heart and your tongue are false and treacherous.”

“Then no man has ever been true and faithful.”

“Well, well, sheathe your sword,” Lady Anne said.

“Say, then, my peace is made,” Richard said. “Say that we have made peace between us.”

The terms that Richard wanted with the peace treaty included marriage to Lady Anne.

“That you shall know hereafter.”

“But shall I live in hope?”

“All men, I hope, live in hope.”

“Agree to wear this ring,” Richard said, holding out a ring.

“To take is not to give,” Lady Anne replied.

Richard put the ring on Lady Anne’s finger and said, “Just like this ring encompasses your finger, even so your breast encloses my poor heart. Wear both of them, for both of them are yours. And if your poor devoted suppliant may but beg one favor at your gracious hand, you will confirm his happiness forever.”

“What favor do you wish?”

“That it would please you to leave these sad designs — the funeral arrangement for King Henry VI — to a man who has more cause to be a mourner. I want you to immediately go to Crosby Place, one of my residences in London, where, after I have solemnly interred at Chertsey monastery this noble King, and wet his grave with my repentant tears, I will with all speedy and expeditious duty see you. For many secret reasons, I beg you, grant me this favor.”

“With all my heart, I grant it, and it gives me much joy, too, to see you have become so penitent.”

She ordered her attendants, “Tressel and Berkeley, go along with me.”

“Tell me farewell,” Richard said.

“Faring well is more than you deserve,” Lady Anne replied, “but since you are teaching me how to flatter you, imagine I have said farewell already.”

Lady Anne, Tressel, and Berkeley departed.

“Sirs, take up the corpse,” Richard said to the pallbearers.

“Towards Chertsey, noble lord?” one of the pallbearers asked.

“No, to Whitefriars; there await my coming.”

Whitefriars was a monastery in London. Richard had no real reason to have the corpse taken there rather than to Chertsey, except to be contrary and not do what he had told Lady Anne he would do.

Everyone departed, leaving Richard by himself.

Pleased with how his courtship of Lady Anne had gone, he said to himself, “Was ever a woman in this manner wooed? Was ever a woman in this manner won? I’ll have her, legally and sexually, but I will not keep her long.

“What! I, who killed her husband, Prince Edward, and his father, King Henry VI, have taken and conquered Lady Anne when her heart was filled with the extremest hate of me, when she had curses for me in her mouth and tears in her eyes, when the bleeding witness — the corpse of King Henry VI — of her hatred for me was nearby, when God, her conscience, and these obstructions were all against me, and I had nothing to back my wooing of her at all except

the plain devil and dissembling, hypocritical looks, and yet I won her, with all the world against me and nothing for me! Ha!

“Has she already forgotten that brave Prince Edward, her lord and husband, whom I, some three months ago, stabbed in my angry mood in the Battle of Tewksbury? A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman, created with the prodigality and generosity of nature, young, valiant, wise, and, no doubt, extremely royal and made to be a King, the spacious world cannot again afford, and will she yet debase and lower her eyes on me, who cropped the golden prime of this sweet Prince, and made her widow to a woeful bed? She will lower her eyes on me, whose all does not equal Prince Edward’s half? On me, who limps and is misshapen?”

“I bet my Dukedom against a beggarly small coin that I have been mistaken about my personal appearance all this while. Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot, that I am a marvelously handsome man. I’ll buy a mirror, and pay some score or two of tailors to study fashions to adorn my body. Since I am crept in favor with myself, and have discovered that I am handsome, I will maintain my appearance with some little cost.

“But first I’ll dump yonder fellow into his grave, and then I will return lamenting to my ‘love’: Lady Anne.

“Shine out, fair Sun, until I have bought a mirror, so that I may see my shadow as I walk.”

— 1.3 —

In a room of the palace was Queen Elizabeth, wife of the very ill King Edward IV. With her were Rivers, Dorset, and Grey.

Queen Elizabeth’s maiden name was Elizabeth Woodville.

Rivers was Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, and he was the brother of Queen Elizabeth.

Dorset was the Marquess of Dorset, and he was a son of Queen Elizabeth, aka Lady Grey. This son is from a marriage previous to that with King Edward IV. Dorset's father was Sir John Grey.

Grey, Dorset's brother, was Lord Richard Grey, another son of Queen Elizabeth. This son is from a marriage previous to that with King Edward IV. Grey's father was Sir John Grey.

Rivers said to his sister, Queen Elizabeth, "Have patience, madam. There's no doubt that his majesty will soon recover his accustomed health."

Queen Elizabeth's son Grey said to her, "When you badly endure his illness, it makes him worse. Therefore, for God's sake, allow yourself to be comforted, and cheer up his grace with quick and merry words."

"If my husband the King were dead, what would happen to me?" Queen Elizabeth asked.

"No other harm but loss of such a lord and husband," Rivers, her brother, replied.

"The loss of such a lord and husband includes all harm," she said.

Grey said, "The Heavens have blessed you with a goodly son to be your comforter when he is gone."

That son was the young Edward, the current Prince of Wales.

"Oh, he is young and while he is too young to govern, his power will be put unto the trust of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, a man who does not love me, or any of you. If

my son Edward becomes King of England, then because Edward is so young, Richard will have the royal power until Edward becomes an adult.”

“Is it concluded that Richard shall be Lord Protector?” Rivers asked.

“It has been decided that he will be, but the decision is not officially made yet, but it will be officially made, if King Edward IV dies,” Queen Elizabeth said.

The Duke of Buckingham and Lord Stanley, who was the Earl of Derby, entered the room.

Grey said, “Here come the lords of Buckingham and Derby.”

Buckingham greeted Queen Elizabeth, “Good time of day unto your royal grace!”

Lord Stanley greeted Queen Elizabeth, “May God make your majesty as joyful as you have been!”

Queen Elizabeth replied, “The Countess Richmond, my good Lord Stanley, to your good prayers will scarcely say amen.”

The Countess Richmond was Lord Stanley’s wife. Her maiden name was Margaret Beaufort, and her first marriage was to Edmund Tudor, first Earl of Richmond, with whom she had had a son: Henry Tudor, second Earl of Richmond. Henry Tudor had inherited his father’s title. One of Countess Richmond’s ancestors was King Edward III. Henry Tudor was a member of the House of Lancaster.

Queen Elizabeth continued, “Still, Lord Stanley, notwithstanding she’s your wife, and she does not love me, I want you, my good lord, to be assured that I do not hate you on account of her proud arrogance.”

“I beg you,” Lord Stanley said, “either to not believe the malicious slanders of her false accusers, or, if she is justly accused, to bear with her weakness, which I think proceeds from chronic sickness, and not from firmly grounded and deeply rooted malice.”

Rivers asked, “Did you see the King today, Lord Stanley?”

“Just now the Duke of Buckingham and I have come from visiting his majesty.”

“What is the likelihood of his recovery from his illness, lords?” Queen Elizabeth asked.

“Madam, there is good hope of recovery,” Buckingham replied. “His grace speaks cheerfully.”

“May God grant him health!” Queen Elizabeth said. “Did you talk with him?”

“Madam, we did,” Buckingham said. “He desires to make reconciliation between the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers, and between them and Hastings, who is the Lord Chamberlain, and he sent people to summon them to his royal presence.”

“I wish that all were well!” Queen Elizabeth said. “But that will never be. I fear that our happiness is at the highest point and will soon suffer a decline.”

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and Lord Chamberlain Hastings entered the room.

Pretending to be angry, Richard complained, “They do me wrong, and I will not endure it! Who are they who complain to King Edward IV that I indeed am stern and do not love and respect them?”

“By holy Saint Paul, they love his grace only lightly when they fill his ears with such dissentious rumors. Because I

cannot flatter and speak nicely, smile in men's faces, smooth and conciliate, deceive and cheat, duck with French nods in ostentatious bows and apish courtesy, I must be held to be a rancorous enemy.

“Cannot a plain man live and think no harm, but his simple truth must be abused like this by silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?”

Jacks are lowly born fellows.

Rivers asked, “To whom present here is your grace speaking?”

“To you,” Richard said, insultingly, “who has neither honesty nor grace. When have I injured you? When have I done you wrong? Or you, Dorset? Or you, Grey? Or any of your faction? A plague upon you all! His royal person the King — whom I hope God may preserve better than you would wish! — cannot be quiet scarcely the time it takes him to catch his breath, but you must trouble him with lewd complaints.”

Queen Elizabeth said, “Brother-in-law Richard, Duke of Gloucester, you are mistaken about this matter. The King, of his own royal disposition, and not provoked by any suitor, thinking, probably, of your interior hatred, which in your outward actions shows itself against my kindred, brothers, and myself, has sent for you so that thereby he may learn the grounds of your ill will toward us, and so remove it.”

“I don't know what to think,” Richard said. “The world has grown so bad, that wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch. Since every Jack has become a gentleman, there's many a gentle, noble person made a Jack.”

A Jack was an item used in the game of bowls. The Jack was a small bowl, or ball, that was targeted by larger bowls.

Another meaning of “Jack” was “lowly born person.”

Richard was complaining because when his brother, King Edward IV, had married Elizabeth and made her Queen, her family — the Woodvilles — had been elevated to a high social status. And he was saying that some highly born people — such as his brother Clarence and Lord Chamberlain Hastings — were being targeted by the newly elevated people.

Queen Elizabeth said, “Come, come, we know your meaning, brother-in-law Richard, Duke of Gloucester; you envy my advancement and my kinsmen’s. May God grant we never may have need of you!”

“In the meantime, God grants that we have need of you,” Richard replied. “Your brother-in-law, Clarence, who is my brother, is imprisoned by your means, I myself am disgraced, and the nobility is held in contempt, while many fair promotions are daily given to ennoble those who scarcely, even two days ago, were worth a noble.”

The word “noble” referred both to a coin called a noble and to a nobleman or noblewoman. Richard, as Queen Elizabeth realized, was complaining about her family’s great rise in status and many promotions as a result of her marriage to Edward IV.

She replied, “By Him — God — Who raised me to this filled-with-worries height from that contented fortune that I previously enjoyed, I have never incensed his majesty the King against the Duke of Clarence, but I have instead been an earnest advocate to plead for him. My lord, you do me shameful injury when you falsely draw me into these vile suspicions.”

“You may deny that you were not the cause of my Lord Hastings’ recent imprisonment,” Richard replied.

Rivers said, “She may, my lord, for —”

Richard interrupted, “She may, Lord Rivers! Why, who does not know that? She may do more, sir, than deny that. She may help you to many fair promotions, and then deny her aiding hand therein, and instead say that your ‘great merit’ deserved those honors. What may she not? She may, yes, marry, may she —”

“What, marry, may she?” Rivers asked.

The word “marry,” as used by Rivers, was a mild oath, meaning “By the Virgin Mary.”

“What, marry, may she!” Richard said. “Marry with a King, a bachelor, a handsome stripling, too. Certainly your grandmother had a worse match.”

Richard was making fun of Queen Elizabeth’s age; she was older than her husband. And by saying that Rivers’ grandmother had made a worse match, he meant that she had not married a King; indeed, Queen Elizabeth’s family was far from belonging to the top aristocracy until she married the King.

Queen Elizabeth said, “My Lord of Gloucester, I have too long endured your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs. By Heaven, I will acquaint his majesty with those gross taunts of yours that I have often endured. I had rather be a country servant-maid than a great Queen with this way of life, being thus taunted, scorned, and baited at.”

The baiting she referred to was bear-baiting, in which bears were tied to a stake and tormented by dogs.

The old Queen Margaret entered the room in time to hear Queen Elizabeth say, “Small joy have I in being England’s Queen.”

The old Queen Margaret was the widow of King Henry VI.

She was bitter about his death and the death of her son: Prince Edward.

She said to herself, “God, I pray that you lessen that small joy that she feels! Her honor, status, and throne are all my due. They belong to me, not to her.”

Richard said to Queen Elizabeth, “What! You threaten me that you will tell the King what I am saying? Tell him, and leave out nothing. Everything that I have said I will avouch to be true in the presence of the King. I dare to risk being sent to the Tower of London in retaliation. It is time for me to speak up; my pains are quite forgotten.”

Richard meant the pains that he had taken to make his brother Edward King of England, but the old Queen Margaret took “pains” to mean the pains that Richard had inflicted on her family.

She said to herself, “Damn, devil! I remember those pains all too well. You slew my husband, King Henry VI, in the Tower of London, and you slew Prince Edward, my poor son, in the Battle of Tewksbury.”

Richard said to Queen Elizabeth, “Before you were Queen or your husband was King, I was a pack-horse — a toiler — in his great affairs. I was a weeder-out of his proud adversaries and a liberal rewarder of his friends. To make his blood royal, I spilt my own blood.”

“Yes, and you spilt much better blood than your brother’s or your own,” the old Queen Margaret said to herself.

Richard continued, “In all which time you and your then-husband, Sir John Grey, were supporters of the House of Lancaster — and so were you, Rivers. Queen Elizabeth, wasn’t your husband slain in old Queen Margaret’s army in the Battle of Saint Albans? Let me put in your minds, if you have forgotten, what you have been before now, and

what you are now, and in addition, what I have been, and what I am now.”

“You have been a murderous villain, and you still are,” the old Queen Margaret said to herself.

Richard said, “Poor Clarence did forsake his father-in-law, the Earl of Warwick; yes, he forswore and perjured himself — which may Jesus pardon!”

“Which may God revenge!” the old Queen Margaret said to herself.

George, Duke of Clarence, had married Isabella, one of the Earl of Warwick’s daughters — Lady Anne was her sister — and for a while he had fought for the House of Lancaster. However, he changed sides and fought for the House of York and helped to make his brother Edward King of England.

Richard continued, “Clarence fought on Edward’s side for the crown, and for his reward, poor lord, he is locked up in the Tower of London. I wish to God my heart were flint, like Edward’s, or I wish that Edward’s heart were soft and pitiful, like mine. I am too foolish — like a child — for this world.”

“Hurry yourself to Hell for shame, and leave the world, you evil demon! There your kingdom is,” the old Queen Margaret said to herself.

Rivers said to Richard, “My Lord of Gloucester, in those busy days that here you bring up to prove us enemies, we followed then our lord, our lawful King. Likewise, we would follow you, if you should ever be our King.”

“If I should be!” Richard said. “I had rather be a peddler than be King. Far be from my heart the thought of being King!”

Queen Elizabeth said to Richard, “As little joy, my lord, as you suppose you should enjoy, were you this country’s King, may you suppose me to enjoy as the Queen of this Kingdom.”

The old Queen Margaret, who regarded herself as the rightful Queen of England, said to herself, “The Queen truly enjoys little joy, for I am the rightful Queen, and I am entirely joyless. I can no longer hold my tongue.”

She advanced toward the others and said loudly to them, “Hear me, you wrangling pirates, who fall out with each other in sharing that which you have pillaged from me! Which of you who looks on me does not tremble? I am the rightful Queen, and if you don’t bow to me like subjects, then — because you deposed me — you quake like rebels!”

Richard turned as if he were going to walk away, but the old Queen Margaret said to him, “Oh, gentle villain, do not turn away!”

“Gentle villain” was an insult. Richard was gentle — highly born — but he was also a villain.

Richard replied to her, “Foul wrinkled witch, what are you doing in my sight?”

Many people in England believed that witches existed.

Old Queen Margaret replied, “I am making an account of everything that you have marred and ruined. I will make that account before I let you go.”

“Weren’t you banished from England on pain of death?” Richard asked.

“I was, but I find more pain in banishment from England than death can give me if I make my abode here. Richard, you owe me a husband and a son. All of you here owe me a Kingdom, and all of you here owe me allegiance: The

sorrows that I have by rights are yours, and all the pleasures that you usurp are mine.”

Richard said, “My noble father laid a curse on you when you set on his warlike brows a paper crown and with your scorns drew rivers of tears from his eyes, and then, so he could dry his tears, you gave my father — the third Duke of York — a cloth steeped in the innocent blood of his young, pretty son Rutland. The curses that he then from the bitterness of his soul denounced against you have all fallen upon you, and God, not we, has plagued your bloody deed.”

Queen Elizabeth said, “God is just when he avenges the innocent.”

Hastings said, “Oh, it was the foulest deed to slay that babe, and the most merciless deed that ever was heard of!”

Rivers said, “Tyrants themselves wept when it was reported.”

Dorset said, “Every man prophesied that the evil deed would be revenged.”

Buckingham said, “Northumberland, who was then present, wept to see it.”

The old Queen Margaret replied, “What! Were you all snarling at each other before I came in here, with all of you ready to catch each other by the throat, and now all of you turn all your hatred on me?”

“Did the dread curse of Richard’s father prevail so much with Heaven that King Henry VI’s death, the death of my lovely Prince Edward, the loss of their Kingdom, and my own woeful banishment were all needed to answer for the death of Rutland, that peevish brat?”

“Can curses pierce the clouds and enter Heaven the way

that prayers can? Why, then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!

“If King Edward IV does not die by war, then may he die from sickness brought on by excess. That will avenge our King — Henry VI — who died from murder in order that your Edward could be made a King!

“Queen Elizabeth, may Edward, your son, who now is Prince of Wales, die just like Edward, my son, who was Prince of Wales, in his youth by similar untimely violence!

“May you, yourself a Queen, to avenge me who was a Queen, outlive your glory, just like my wretched self! Long may you live to mourn the loss of your children, and long may you see another Queen, as I see you now, decked in your rights, as you are installed in mine! May your happy days die long before your death, and, after many lengthened hours of grief, may you die not as a mother, a wife, or as England’s Queen!

“Rivers and Dorset, you were bystanders, and so were you, Lord Hastings, when my son, Prince Edward, was stabbed with bloody daggers. I pray to God that none of you may live out your natural life, but that by some unanticipated disaster your loves may be cut short!”

Richard said, “Finish making your curses, you hateful withered hag!”

“And leave you out?” the old Queen Margaret replied. “Stay, dog, for you shall hear me. If Heaven should have any grievous plague in store exceeding those that I can wish upon you, let Heaven keep it until your sins are ripe, and then let Heaven hurl down its indignation on you, the troubler of the poor world’s peace! I want you to commit many more sins before you die so that you can be all the more damned to Hell! May the worm of conscience continually gnaw your soul! May you suspect that your

friends are traitors while you live, and may you believe that deep traitors are your dearest friends! May no sleep close up your evil eye, unless it be while some tormenting dream frightens you with a Hell of ugly devils! You elvish-marked, abortive and prematurely born, rooting hog! Malignant, spiteful elves marked you with deformities to show that you are their own. You were marked when you were born to show that you are the slave of nature and the son of Hell! You are in bondage to Humankind's fallen nature!"

Margaret began to call Richard names: "You slander of your mother's heavy womb! You loathed issue of your father's loins! You rag of honor! You detested —"

Richard substituted Margaret's name for his own: "— Margaret."

The old Queen Margaret said the correct name: "Richard."

"Ha!" Richard said.

"I am not calling you," she said.

"I beg your mercy then, for I had thought that you had called me all these bitter names."

"Why, so I did, but I looked for no reply. Oh, let me make the period — the end — to my curse!"

"I have already done that," Richard said. "The end of your curse is 'Margaret.'"

Queen Elizabeth said to the old Queen Margaret, "Thus have you made your curse against yourself."

"You are a poor, painted, imitation Queen, a worthless decoration of my throne!" the old Queen Margaret replied. "Why are you strewing sugared words on that bottled spider — that humpbacked Richard — whose deadly web

is ensnaring you? Fool, fool! You are sharpening a knife that will be used to kill you. The time will come when you shall wish for me to help you curse that poisonous hunchbacked toad.”

Hastings threatened, “You falsely prophesizing woman, end your frantic, insane curse, lest you disturb and end our patience and move us to hurt you.”

“Foul shame upon you!” the old Queen Margaret said. “You have all ended my patience.”

“Were you well served, and got what you deserved, you would be taught your duty,” Rivers said.

The old Queen Margaret replied, “To serve me well, you all should do me duty and show me that I am your Queen and you are my subjects. Oh, serve me well, and teach yourselves to do that duty! You should regard me with reverence!”

“Don’t argue with her,” the Marquess of Dorset said. “She is a lunatic.”

“Be silent, Master Marquess, you are impertinent,” the old Queen Margaret said. She was being insulting. “Master” is a title for a boy of good family.

She continued, “Your newly fired stamp of honor is scarcely current — your new honor is like a newly minted coin that has just gone into circulation. Oh, that your young nobility could judge what it were to lose it, and be miserable! They who stand high have many blasts to shake them, and if they fall from their great height, they dash themselves to pieces.”

Richard said, “That is good advice, by the Virgin Mary. Learn it, learn it, Marquess of Dorset.”

“It touches and concerns you, my lord, as much as me,”

Dorset said.

“Yes, and much more,” Richard said, “but I was born so high. Our brood of young eagles — the sons of my father — build in the cedar’s top, and our brood dallies with the wind and scorns the Sun.”

Richard was alluding to these proverbs: “The highest trees abide the sharpest winds” and “Only the eagle can gaze at the Sun.”

“That brood turns the Sun to shadow,” the old Queen Margaret said. “Witness my son, now in the shadow of death, whose bright out-shining beams your cloudy wrath has folded up in eternal darkness. Your brood of young eagles built in the nest of our brood of young eagles. Oh, God, Who sees it, do not endure it! As it was won with blood, so let it also be lost with blood!”

“Stop!” Buckingham said. “Be silent for shame, if not for charity.”

“Urge neither charity nor shame to me,” the old Queen Margaret replied.

She then said to the people, other than Buckingham, who were present, “Uncharitably with me have you dealt, and shamefully by you my hopes are butchered. The most charitable emotion felt by me is only rage, and the only life I can live is one filled with shame — and in that shame shall always live my sorrows’ rage.”

“Stop, stop,” Buckingham said.

“Oh, Princely Buckingham,” the old Queen Margaret said, “I’ll kiss your hand as a sign of league and friendship with you. Now may good things happen to you and your noble house! Your garments are not spotted with our blood, nor are you included within the compass of my curse.”

“No one else here is included within the compass of your curse,” Buckingham said, “for curses never pass the lips of those who breathe them and never go into the air. Curses are not heard by God, and so curses have no effect on those who are cursed.”

“I believe that curses ascend the sky, and there they awake God’s gentle-sleeping peace,” the old Queen Margaret said. “Oh, Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog — Richard! Whenever he fawns, he bites; and when he bites, his venomous tooth creates a festering wound that kills. Have nothing to do with him — beware of him! Sin, death, and Hell have set their marks on him, and all their ministers are his servants.”

“What is she saying, my Lord of Buckingham?” Richard asked.

“Nothing that I respect, my gracious lord.”

The old Queen Margaret said to Buckingham, “Do you scorn me for my gentle, friendly, kind counsel? And do you soothe and flatter the devil that I warn you against? Oh, just remember this on another day that will come, when he shall split your very heart with sorrow, and then you shall say poor Margaret was a prophetess!”

The old Queen Margaret then said to everyone present, “May each of you live to be the objects of his hate, and may he live to be the objects of your hate, and may all of you live to be the objects of God’s hate!”

The old Queen Margaret departed.

Hastings said, “My hair is standing on end from hearing her curses.”

“And so is mine,” Rivers said. “I wonder why she’s at liberty. Why isn’t she locked up?”

“I cannot blame her,” Richard said. “By God’s holy mother, she has had too much wrong done to her, and I repent the wrong that I have done to her.”

“I never did her any wrong, to my knowledge,” Queen Elizabeth said.

“But you have received all the advantage of the wrongs done to her,” Richard said. “I was too hot to do somebody good, who is too cold in thinking about it now.”

That somebody was King Edward IV. Richard was saying that he had been eager to make Edward King, but now that Edward was King, Edward was not eager to reward Richard.

Richard continued, “As for Clarence, he is well repaid. He is enclosed in a sty to be fattened up for slaughter in return for his pains, which are similar to my pains. May God pardon all of them who are the cause of Clarence’s imprisonment!”

“It is a virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,” Rivers said, “to pray for them who have done injury to us.”

Richard replied, “And so I always do.”

He thought, *I am well advised to pray for those who do injury, for I am the one who does the injury. If I had cursed those who had gotten Clarence imprisoned, I would have cursed myself.*

Sir William Catesby entered the room and said to Queen Elizabeth, “Madam, his majesty is calling for you.”

He then said to Richard and the others, “And he is calling for your grace; and for you, my noble lords.”

“Catesby, we are coming,” Queen Elizabeth said. “Lords, will you go with us?”

“Madam, we will attend your grace,” Rivers replied.

All departed except for Richard, who said to himself, “I do the wrong, and I am the first to begin to quarrel. The secret crimes that I set abroad I lay unto the grievous charge of others.

“Clarence, whom I, indeed, have laid in darkness, I weep over in the presence of many simple, gullible fools, namely, in the presence of Hastings, Lord Stanley, and Buckingham, and say that it is the Queen and her allies who stir the King against the Duke of Clarence, my brother. Now, they believe it, and they urge me to be revenged on Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey — all of whom are allies of Queen Elizabeth.

“But then I sigh, and with a piece of scripture, I tell them that God bids us do good in return for evil, and thus I clothe my naked villainy with old odds and ends stolen out of holy scripture and so I seem to be a saint when I most play the devil.”

Two murderers entered the room.

“Quiet!” Richard said to himself. “Here come my executioners.”

He said out loud, “How are you now, my hardy, brave determined associates! Are you now going to dispatch this deed?”

“We are, my lord,” the first murderer said, “and we have come to get the warrant so that we may be admitted to where he is.”

“Good thinking,” Richard said. “I have it here on me.”

He searched his pockets, pulled out a paper, and looked at it. It was the wrong paper — the one that stated that Clarence was to be released from the Tower of London. He

searched another pocket and pulled out another paper — the one that was written earlier than the other paper and stated that Clarence was to be killed. Richard gave this paper to the first murderer, saying, “When you have finished, go to Crosby Place, a London residence of mine. But, sirs, be quick in the execution, and be obdurate — do not hear him plead for his life, for Clarence is well-spoken, and perhaps he may move your hearts to pity if you listen to him.”

The first murderer said, “Tush! Fear not, my lord, we will not stand and make prattling conversation. Talkers are not good doers. Be assured that we have come to use our hands and not our tongues.”

“Your eyes drop millstones when fools’ eyes drop tears,” Richard replied. “I like you lads. Go about your business immediately. Go, go. Hurry.”

“We will, my noble lord,” the first murderer said.

— 1.4 —

Clarence and Brakenbury, the Lieutenant of the Tower of London, were in Clarence’s cell in the Tower of London.

“Why does your grace look so sad today?” Brakenbury asked.

Clarence replied, “I have passed such a miserable night, so full of ugly sights and ghastly dreams, that, as I am a faithful Christian man, I would not endure another such night even if it would buy me a world of happy days, so full of dismal terror was the miserable night!”

“What was your dream? I want to hear you tell it.”

“I thought that I had escaped from the Tower of London and had embarked on a ship to cross to Burgundy, and in my company was my brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester,

who from my cabin persuaded me to walk upon the deck. From there we looked toward England and remembered a thousand fearful times that had befallen us during the wars of the House of York and the House of Lancaster. As we walked along upon the uncertain and unsteady footing of the deck, I thought that Richard stumbled and, in falling, struck me, who tried to steady him, overboard into the tumbling billows of the ocean.

“Lord! Lord! I thought what pain it was to drown! What a dreadful noise of waters was in my ears! What ugly sights of death were within my eyes!

“I thought I saw a thousand dreadful shipwrecks, ten thousand men whom fishes gnawed upon, ingots of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearls, precious stones, and jewels that were precious beyond anyone’s ability to judge their worth — all scattered on the bottom of the sea. Some lay in dead men’s skulls; and, in those holes where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept, as if in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems, which wooed the slimy bottom of the deep, and mocked the dead bones that lay scattered nearby.”

Brakenbury asked, “Had you such leisure in your time of death to gaze upon the secrets of the deep?”

“I thought I had,” Clarence said, “and often I strove to yield my soul in my body, and would not let it go forth to seek the empty, vast, and wandering air; instead, the ocean smothered my soul within my panting body, which almost burst in its attempt to belch my soul into the sea.”

“Didn’t you wake up because of this heavy anguish?”

“No, my dream continued after my life ended in my dream. Then began the tempest to my soul, which passed, I thought, over the melancholy River Styx with that grim ferryman — Charon — whom poets write about, and into

the kingdom of perpetual night — Hell.

“The first there who did greet my newly arrived soul was my great father-in-law, the renowned Earl of Warwick, who cried aloud, ‘What scourge for perjury can this dark monarchy give false Clarence?’ And then he vanished.

“Next came wandering by a shadow like an angel, with bright hair daubed in blood; and he shrieked out loud, ‘Clarence has come — false, fickle, perjured Clarence, who stabbed me in the battlefield by Tewksbury. Seize him, Furies, and take him to your torments!’”

The shadow like an angel was Prince Edward, whom Clarence had helped kill in the Battle of Tewksbury. Prince Edward was calling on the Furies — ancient Greek avenging goddesses — to torment Clarence.

Clarence continued, “With that, I thought, a legion of foul fiends surrounded me, and howled in my ears such hideous cries that with the noise I awakened trembling, and for a time afterward could not but believe that I was in Hell, such a terrible impression the dream made on me.”

“It is no wonder, my lord, that the dream frightened you,” Brakenbury said. “I promise you that I was afraid when I heard you tell it.”

“Oh, Brakenbury, I have done things that now bear evidence against my soul — things I did for the sake of my brother Edward, and see how he repays me!” Clarence said.

He prayed, “Oh, God, if my deep prayers cannot appease You, but You must be avenged on my misdeeds, yet execute Your wrath on me alone and spare my guiltless wife and my poor children!”

He said to Brakenbury, “Please, gentle jailor, stay by me. My soul is heavy — sorrowful and tired — and I wish to

sleep.”

“I will, my lord,” Brakenbury replied. “May God give your grace a good rest!”

Clarence fell asleep.

Brakenbury said to himself, “Sorrow interrupts seasons and the hours for sleeping, makes the night morning, and makes the noontime night. Princes have only their titles for their glories, outward honors for inward toils, and in return for the satisfactions that Princes are thought to enjoy, but do not, Princes often feel a world of restless cares. The conclusion is that, between the titles of Princes and the names of commoners, there’s no difference except the outward fame.”

The two murderers entered the cell.

“Ho! Who’s here?” the first murderer asked.

“In God’s name who and what are you,” Brakenbury asked, “and how did you come here?”

“I am a man who wants to speak with Clarence, and I came here on my legs,” the first murderer replied.

“Must you be so brief?” Brakenbury asked.

“Sir, it is better to be brief than tedious,” the second murderer replied.

The second murderer then said to the first murderer, “Show him our commission; talk no more.”

Brakenbury read the commission and said, “I am by this commission ordered to deliver the noble Duke of Clarence into your hands. I will not reason about what is meant by this because I want to be guiltless and not know the meaning. Here are the keys, there sits the Duke asleep. I’ll go to the King and inform him that I have resigned my

charge to you.”

“Do so, it is a wise thing to do,” the first murderer said.
“Fare you well.”

Brakenbury departed.

The second murderer asked about Clarence, “What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?”

“No; if we do that, then he will say it was done cowardly, when he wakes up,” the first murderer said.

“When he wakes up! Why, fool, he shall never wake up until Judgment Day.”

“Why, at that time he will say we stabbed him while he was sleeping.”

“The urging of that word ‘judgment’ has bred a kind of remorse in me,” the second murderer said.

“Are you afraid?”

“I am not afraid to kill him, since we have a warrant for it, but I am afraid of being damned to Hell for killing him. On Judgment Day, no warrant can defend us.”

“I thought you were resolute and resolved,” the first murderer said.

“So I am, but not to commit this murder. I am resolute and resolved to let Clarence live.”

“Go back to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and tell him that.”

“Please, wait a while,” the second murderer said. “I hope my holy mood will change; it usually keeps hold of me only until a man can count to twenty.”

“How do you feel now?”

“Truly, I have some dregs of conscience still inside me.”

“Remember the reward we will get when the deed is done,” the first murderer said.

“By God’s wounds, Clarence dies,” the second murderer said. “I had forgotten about the reward.”

“Where is your conscience now?”

“In Richard, Duke of Gloucester’s purse.”

“So when he opens his purse to give us our reward,” the first murderer said, “your conscience will fly out.”

“Let it go; there’s few or none who will welcome it.”

“What if it comes to you again?” the first murderer asked.

“I’ll not meddle with it; it is a dangerous thing. A conscience makes a man a coward. A man cannot steal, but his conscience accuses him. He cannot swear, but it stops him. He cannot lie with his neighbor’s wife, but it detects him. A conscience is a blushing, shame-faced spirit that mutinies in a man’s bosom; it fills a man full of obstacles. My conscience once made me restore a purse of gold that I found; a conscience beggars any man who keeps it. A conscience is turned out of all towns and cities because it is a dangerous thing, and every man who means to live well endeavors to trust to himself and to live without it.”

“By God’s wounds, my conscience is even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the Duke of Clarence,” the first murderer said.

“Arrest the devil — your conscience — in your mind, and do not let him loose; the devil wants to curry favor with you only in order to make you sigh.”

“Tut, I am strong-framed; he cannot prevail with me, I promise you.”

“Spoken like a brave fellow who respects his reputation,” the second murderer said. “Come, shall we fall to work?”

“Hit him on the head with the hilt of your sword, and then we will throw him in the barrel of sweet malmsey wine in the next room and drown him.”

“Oh, excellent plan!” the second murderer said. “We will make a sop of him.”

A sop is a piece of cake or bread soaked in wine.

“Listen,” the first murderer said. “He is waking up and stirring. Shall I strike him?”

“No, first let’s talk with him,” the first murderer said.

“Where are you, jail keeper?” Clarence said. “Give me a cup of wine.”

“You shall have wine soon enough, my lord,” the second murderer said.

“In God’s name, who are you?” Clarence asked.

“A man, as you are,” the second murderer replied.

“But you are not, as I am, royal,” Clarence said.

“Nor are you, as we are, loyal,” the second murderer said.

“Your voice is thunderous, but your looks show you to be a commoner,” Clarence said.

“My voice is now King Edward IV’s, my looks are my own,” the second murderer said.

“How darkly and how deadly do you speak!” Clarence said. “Your eyes menace me. Why do you look pale? Who sent you here? Why have you come?”

Both murderers stuttered, “To, to, to —”

Clarence finished for them, "To murder me?"

Both murderers said, "Yes, yes."

"You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so, and therefore you cannot have the hearts to do it," Clarence said. "In what, my friends, have I offended you?"

The first murderer said, "You have not offended us, but you have offended King Edward IV."

"I shall be reconciled to him again," Clarence said.

"Never, my lord," the second murderer said, "so prepare to die."

"Are you handpicked from out of the entire world of men to slay the innocent?" Clarence asked. "What is my offence? Where are the witnesses who accuse me? What lawful jury has given its verdict to the frowning judge? Or who has pronounced the bitter sentence of poor Clarence's death?"

"To threaten me with death before I have been convicted by the course of law is most unlawful. I command you, as you hope to have redemption by Christ's dear blood that was shed for our grievous sins, to depart and lay no hands on me. The deed you undertake is damnable — if you commit it, you will be damned to Hell."

"What we will do, we do upon command," the first murderer replied.

"And he who has commanded us to do it is the King," the second murderer said.

"Mistaken wretches!" Clarence said. "The great King of Kings has in the tablets of his law — the Ten Commandments — commanded that you shall commit no murder. Will you, then, spurn and reject contemptuously

God's command and carry out the command of a mere man? Take heed; for God holds vengeance in His hands, and He will hurl His vengeance upon the heads of those who break His law."

The second murderer said, "And that same vengeance God hurls on you, for false forswearing and for murder, too. You took an oath on the Holy Eucharist to fight on behalf of the House of Lancaster."

The first murderer said, "And, like a traitor to the name of God, you broke that vow; and with your treacherous blade you laid open the bowels of your sovereign's son. You fought for your Yorkist brother Edward, and you murdered Prince Edward, the Lancastrian son of King Henry VI."

"You had sworn to cherish and defend Prince Edward."

"How can you urge God's dreadful law against us, when you have broken it in such a significant degree?"

"Alas!" Clarence said. "For whose sake did I do that ill deed? I did it for Edward, for my brother, for his sake. Why, sirs, he sends you not to murder me for this because in this sin he is as deep as I. If God will be revenged for this deed, you should know that He will do it publicly. Do not take the cause of complaint and the punishment for the sin away from God's powerful arm; God needs no devious or lawless course to cut off those who have offended Him."

The first murderer asked Clarence, "Who made you, then, a bloody agent, when the finely growing, splendid, lively, and brave Plantagenet — Prince Edward, that Princely youth — was struck dead by you?"

"Who made me a bloody agent? My brother's love, the devil, and my rage," Clarence answered.

"Your brother's 'love,' our duty, and your sin," the first

murderer said, “provoke us here and now to slaughter you.”

The brother the first murderer referred to was Richard, but Clarence thought that he meant Edward.

“Oh, if you love my brother, do not hate me,” Clarence said. “I am his brother, and I love him well. If you are hired for a reward, go back again, and I will send you to my brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who shall reward you better for my life than Edward will for tidings of my death.”

“You are deceived,” the second murderer said. “Your brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, hates you.”

“Oh, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear,” Clarence said. “Go from me to him.”

Both murderers replied, “Yes, we will.”

They meant that after they had murdered Clarence, they would go to Richard and collect their reward for committing the murder.

“Tell Richard that when our Princely father the Duke of York blessed his three sons with his victorious arm, and charged us from his soul to love each other, he little thought of this divided friendship,” Clarence said. “He did not think that the friendship between us three brothers would be broken. Tell my brother Richard to think of this, and he will weep.”

“Yes, he will weep,” the first murderer said. “He will weep millstones instead of tears, just as he taught us to weep.”

“Do not slander Richard, for he is kind,” Clarence said.

“Right, he is kind,” the first murderer said. “He is as kind as snow during harvest time. You deceive yourself. Richard is the man who sent us here now to slaughter you.”

“It cannot be,” Clarence said, “for when I parted with him, he hugged me in his arms, and he swore, with sobs, that he would labor to bring about my delivery from the Tower of London.”

“Why, so he does,” the second murderer said. “Even now he delivers you from this world’s bondage to the joys of Heaven.”

The first murderer said, “Make peace with God, for you must die, my lord.”

“Have you that holy feeling in your soul that you counsel me to make my peace with God, and are you yet to your own soul so blind that you will war with God by murdering me?” Clarence replied. “Ah, sirs, consider, the man who set you on to do this deed will hate you for the deed.”

“What shall we do?” the second murderer asked.

“Relent, and save your souls,” Clarence replied.

“Relent!” the first murderer said. “That would be cowardly and womanish.”

“Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish,” Clarence said. “Which of you, if you were a Prince’s son, being imprisoned away from liberty, as I am now, if two such murderers as yourselves came to you, would not beg for life?”

Clarence said to the second murderer, “My friend, I see some pity in your looks. Oh, if your eye is not a flatterer, come and be on my side, and beg for me, as you would beg if you were in my distressful situation. What beggar will not pity a begging Prince?”

The second murderer relented and tried to warn Clarence: “Look behind you, my lord!”

The first murderer stabbed Clarence a few times as he said, “Take that, and that. If all this will not kill you, I’ll drown you in the barrel of malmsey wine inside this other room.”

The first murderer carried the still-breathing Clarence out of the cell.

The second murderer said to himself, “A bloody deed, and desperately dispatched! How I would like to, like Pontius Pilate, wash my hands of this most grievous and guilty murder!”

Pontius Pilate had reluctantly allowed the crucifixion of Jesus to take place, but he had washed his hands in an attempt to show that he was not taking responsibility for his act.

The first murderer returned and said to the second murderer, “Hey! Why didn’t you help me to murder Clarence? By Heavens, Richard shall know how slack you have been!”

“I wish that Richard could know that I had saved the life of his brother, but that did not happen!” the second murderer replied. “You take the fee for committing the murder, and tell Richard what I just said, for I repent and I am sorry that the Duke of Clarence has been slain.”

The second murderer exited.

The first murderer said, “I do not repent the murder. Go, coward that you are. Now I must hide Clarence’s body in some hole, until Richard, Duke of Gloucester, makes an order for his burial. And when I have my reward for committing the murder, I must run away, for this murder will out — murders do not remain hidden — and here I must not stay.”

CHAPTER 2 (Richard III)

— 2.1 —

In a room of the palace were an ill King Edward IV, Queen Elizabeth, Dorset, Rivers, Hastings, Buckingham, Grey, and others. Two factions were represented in this group of people. One faction consisted of Queen Elizabeth, Dorset, Rivers, and Grey; Hastings and Buckingham had been opposed to this faction. King Edward IV was working to reconcile these factions.

King Edward IV said, “Why, good; now have I done a good day’s work. You peers, continue this united league. I every day expect a message from my Redeemer to redeem me from this world, and now my soul shall part in peace from Earth and go to Heaven, since I have set my friends at peace on Earth. Rivers and Hastings, take each other’s hand. Do not hide any hatred and pretend to be reconciled; instead, sincerely swear your friendship for each other.”

Rivers said, “By Heaven, my heart has purged all grudging hate, and with my hand I seal my true heart’s friendship for Hastings.”

Hastings shook Rivers’ hand and said, “May I prosper, as I truly swear my true heart’s friendship for Rivers!”

King Edward IV said, “Take heed you do not put on an act before your Earthly King, lest He who is the Supreme King of Kings put to shame your hidden falsehood and make each of you the death of the other.”

Hastings said, “May I prosper, as I swear perfect friendship! May I thrive according to the truth of my swearing. If I am lying, may God keep me from thriving. If I am telling the truth, may God let me thrive.”

“And may I prosper, as I swear that I regard Hastings as my friend with all my heart!” Rivers said.

King Edward IV said to his wife, Queen Elizabeth, “Madam, you yourself are not exempt in this, nor is your son Dorset, nor Buckingham, nor you, Hastings. All of you have been in one faction that is opposed against the other. Wife, respect Lord Hastings, let him kiss your hand, and when you do it, do it honestly.”

“Here, Hastings,” Queen Elizabeth said, giving Hastings her hand. “I will never any more remember our former hatred, so thrive I and mine! May I thrive according to the truth of my swearing.”

Hastings kissed her hand.

“Marquess of Dorset, embrace Hastings; Hastings, respect the Lord Marquess of Dorset,” King Edward IV said.

Dorset said, “This interchange of respect, I here promise, upon my part shall be inviolable.”

“And I swear the same, my lord,” Hastings said.

Dorset and Hastings hugged each other.

King Edward IV said, “Now, Princely Buckingham, seal this league by embracing my wife’s allies, and make me happy in your unity.”

Buckingham said to Queen Elizabeth, “Whenever Buckingham turns his hate on you or yours, and unless with all duteous love Buckingham cherishes you and yours, may God punish me with hatred of me in those whom I most expect to love and respect me! If I ever turn my hatred against you or yours, then when I have the most need to employ a friend, and when I am most assured that he is a friend, let him be deeply cunning, hollow, treacherous, and full of guile to me. Let him betray me! I beg of God to let

this happen if I am ever cold in zeal to you and your family.”

“Your vow is a pleasing cordial — a restorative — to my sickly heart,” King Edward IV said. “Now we need only our brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, here to make the perfect end to this making of peace.”

Seeing Richard coming toward them, Buckingham said, “And, at exactly the right time, here comes the noble Duke of Gloucester.”

Richard said, “Good morning to my sovereign King and Queen, and, Princely peers, I wish you a happy time of day!”

King Edward IV said, “This day has been happy, indeed, because of how we have spent the day.”

Using the royal plural, he said, “Brother, we have done deeds of Christian charity; we have made peace out of enmity and fair love out of hate, between these swollen-with-anger and wrongly incensed peers.”

“That is a blessed labor, my most sovereign liege,” Richard said. “Amongst this Princely heap of nobles, if there is anyone here who because of bad information or incorrect surmises thinks that I am a foe, and if I unwittingly, or in my rage, have committed anything that is endured only with great difficulty by anyone here present before the King, I desire to be reconciled to that person and to his friendly peace. It is death to me to be involved in enmity; I hate hatred, and I desire all good men’s friendship.

“First, madam, Queen Elizabeth, I entreat true peace from you, which I will purchase with my duteous service.

“From you, my noble cousin Buckingham, I entreat true peace if ever any grudge were lodged between us.

“From you, Lord Rivers, and, Lord Grey, from you, I entreat true peace. You two have frowned on me without any merit.

“Dukes, Earls, lords, gentlemen — indeed, I entreat true peace from all.

“I do not know any Englishman alive with whom my soul is even a little bit more at odds than the Englishman will be with the infant who is born tonight.

“I thank my God for my humility.”

Queen Elizabeth said, “This day shall be remembered hereafter as a holy day. I wish to God all contentious arguments could be as well ended.”

She said to her husband, “My sovereign liege, I beg your majesty to show mercy to our brother-in-law Clarence.”

Richard said, “Why, madam, have I offered friendship for this — to be so abused and mocked in the royal presence of the King? Who does not know that the noble Duke of Clarence is dead?”

Everyone was startled by the news.

Richard continued, “You do him wrong to scorn his corpse.”

Rivers said, “‘Who does not know that the noble Duke of Clarence is dead?’ Who knows that he is dead?”

“All-seeing Heaven, what a world is this!” Queen Elizabeth said.

“Do I look as pale, Lord Dorset, as the others who are here?” Buckingham asked.

“Yes, my good lord; there is no one here in the presence of the King who has not had the red color forsake his cheeks.

All of us are pale,” Dorset said.

“Is Clarence dead?” King Edward IV asked. “I revoked the order to have him killed.”

“But Clarence, poor soul, died by your first order,” Richard said. “The order to have Clarence killed was carried by a winged Mercury, the quick messenger of the gods. Some tardy cripple carried the second order, which countermanded the first order. That tardy cripple lagged and came too late even to see Clarence buried.”

Richard was capable of black humor. The tardy cripple who carried the second order was himself.

Richard continued, “May God grant that some people, who are less noble and less loyal than Clarence, who are more bloody than him in their thoughts but who are not as royal in their blood relations, do not deserve even worse treatment than wretched Clarence did — and yet they are thought to be true citizens and are unsuspected of any wrongdoing!”

Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby, entered the room and said to King Edward IV, “I ask for a boon, my sovereign, in return for the service I have done for you!”

“Please, leave me in peace,” King Edward IV replied. “My soul is full of sorrow.”

Lord Stanley knelt and said, “I will not rise, unless your highness grants me the favor I ask for.”

“Then tell me at once what it is you demand,” King Edward IV replied.

“My servant has forfeited his life because he slew today a righteous gentleman who was recently an attendant of the Duke of Norfolk. I want you to save my servant’s life.”

“Do I have a tongue that doomed my brother Clarence to death, and shall that same tongue give pardon to a slave?” King Edward IV said. “My brother slew no man; his crime was only in his thoughts, and yet his punishment was cruel death. Who sued to me to pardon his life? Who, when I was angry at him, knelt at my feet, and asked me to think things over and be judicious and prudent? Who spoke to me of brotherhood? Who spoke to me of love? Who reminded me of how Clarence, that poor soul, forsook the mighty Earl of Warwick, and instead fought for me? Who reminded me that, in the battlefield by Tewksbury when the Earl of Oxford had me down, he rescued me and said, ‘Dear brother, live, and be a King’? Who reminded me that, when we both lay in the field frozen almost to death, how he wrapped me in his own garments, and exposed himself, all thinly clothed and practically naked, to the numbingly cold night?”

“All these things brutish wrath sinfully plucked from my memory, and not a man of you had enough grace to remind me of them. But when your wagon drivers or your waiting-servants have committed a drunken slaughter, and defaced the precious image of our dear Redeemer by killing a man who was created in His image, you immediately get on your knees and beg for pardon, and I — who am unjust, too — must grant it to you.”

Lord Stanley stood up.

King Edward IV continued, “But not a man would speak up for my brother Clarence. Nor did I, ungracious as I am, speak to myself on behalf of him, poor soul. The proudest of you all have been beholden to him during his life, yet none of you would plead even once for his life.

“Oh, God, I fear Your justice will destroy me, and all of these men here, and my family members, and their family members, because of this!”

“Come, Hastings, help me to my private room.

“Oh, poor Clarence!”

King Edward IV, Queen Elizabeth, and most of the others left the room.

Richard, Hastings, and Buckingham remained behind.

Richard said, “This is the fruit of rashness! Did you see how the guilty relatives of the Queen looked pale when they heard about Clarence’s death?”

True, the relatives of Queen Elizabeth had looked pale, but everyone had looked pale when they learned of Clarence’s death.

Richard continued, “Oh, they continually urged the King to kill him! God will revenge it. But come, let us go in, so we can comfort Edward with our company.”

Buckingham said, “We will go with you, your grace.”

— 2.2 —

The old Duchess of York was in a room of the palace with Clarence’s two children, a boy and a girl. The old Duchess of York was the children’s grandmother; she was the mother of King Edward IV, Clarence, and Richard.

Clarence’s young son asked the old Duchess of York, “Tell me, good grandmother, is our father dead?”

“No, boy,” she lied.

He asked, “Why then do you wring your hands, and beat your breast, and cry, ‘Oh, Clarence, my unhappy son!’”

Clarence’s young daughter asked her, “Why do you look on us, and shake your head, and call us wretches, orphans, and castaways, if our noble father is still alive?”

The old Duchess of York said, "My pretty grandchildren, you are much mistaken about me; I lament the sickness of King Edward IV. I am loath to lose him. I am not lamenting your father's death; it is lost sorrow to cry for one who's lost. When someone has died, it is useless to mourn him."

"Then, grandmother, you are saying that our father is dead," Clarence's son said. "King Edward IV, my uncle, is to blame for this. God will revenge it; I will beg Him to revenge my father's death in my daily prayers."

"And so will I," Clarence's daughter said.

"Peace, children, peace!" the old Duchess of York said. "King Edward IV loves you well. Uncomprehending and naive innocents, you cannot guess who caused your father's death."

Clarence's son said, "Grandmother, we can because my good uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester, told me that the King, provoked by the Queen, devised charges on which to imprison him. And when my uncle Richard told me that, he wept, and hugged me in his arms, and kindly kissed my cheek. He told me to rely on him as I would rely on my father, and he told me that he would love me as dearly as if I were his child."

"Oh, that deceit should steal such a gentle and friendly disguise, and with a virtuous mask hide foul guile!" the old Duchess of York said. "He is my son, yes, and therein he is my shame. Yet from my breasts he did not drink this deceitfulness with his milk when he was a baby."

"Do you think that my uncle Richard was lying, grandmother?" the boy asked.

"Yes, boy."

"I cannot think that is true," he said. "Listen! What is that

noise?”

A grieving Queen Elizabeth, with her hair loose about her ears, entered the room. Her son Dorset followed her; so did Rivers, her brother.

“Oh, who shall stop me from wailing and weeping, from berating my fortune, and from tormenting myself?” Queen Elizabeth said. “I’ll join with black despair against my soul, and to myself I will become an enemy. I will despair and commit suicide.”

The old Duchess of York asked, “What do you mean by making this scene of barbarous lack of self-control? Why are you making such a scene?”

“I mean to make an act of tragic violence,” Queen Elizabeth said. “Edward IV, my lord and husband, your son, our King, is dead. Why do the branches grow now that the root is withered? Why don’t the leaves wither now that the sap is gone? If you will continue to live, lament; if you will die, be quick, so that our swift-winged souls may catch the King’s soul, or so that, like obedient subjects, we may follow him to his new Kingdom of perpetual rest.”

“Ah, so much interest have I in your sorrow as I had title in your noble husband!” the old Duchess of York said. “I have wept because of the death of a worthy husband, and lived by looking on his images — his children. But now two mirrors of his Princely semblance — two of my husband’s children, Edward and Clarence — are cracked in pieces by malignant death, and I for comfort have only one false mirror, Richard, who grieves me when I look at him and feel shame.

“You are a widow; yet you are a mother, and you have the comfort of your children left to you. But death has snatched my husband from my arms, and plucked two crutches from my feeble limbs — those crutches are Edward and

Clarence. Since your grief is only half of my grief, I have cause enough to surpass you in grieving and drown out your cries of grief!”

Clarence’s son said to Queen Elizabeth, “Good aunt, you did not weep for our father’s death. How then can we justify aiding you with our familial tears by crying for the death of your husband?”

Clarence’s daughter said, “Our fatherless distress was left unwept by you; may your widow’s grief likewise be unwept by us!”

“Give me no help in lamentation,” Queen Elizabeth said, weeping. “I am not barren in bringing forth complaints — I am pregnant with sorrow. May all springs direct their currents to my eyes, so that I, being governed by the watery Moon, may send forth tears enough to drown the world! I cry for my husband, for my dear lord, Edward!”

Weeping, Clarence’s children said, “We cry for our father, for our dear lord, Clarence!”

Weeping, the old Duchess of York said, “I cry for both, for both are mine, Edward and Clarence!”

“What support had I but Edward?” Queen Elizabeth said, “And he’s dead and gone.”

Clarence’s children said, “What support had we but our father, Clarence? And he’s dead and gone.”

“What supports had I but my sons Edward and Clarence?” the old Duchess of York said. “And they are dead and gone.”

“Never has a widow had so dear a loss!” Queen Elizabeth said.

“Never have orphans had so dear a loss!” Clarence’s

children said.

“Never has a mother had so dear a loss!” the old Duchess of York said. “I am the mother of these men we grieve! Your woes are for an individual death; my woes are for both deaths! Queen Elizabeth weeps for Edward IV, and so do I; I weep for Clarence, but she does not. These babes weep for Clarence and so do I; I weep for Edward, and they do not.

“I am more distressed than the three of you, so you three ought to pour all your tears on me. I am your sorrow’s wet nurse, and I will feed sorrow with my lamentations.”

Dorset said, “Be comforted, dear mother: God is much displeased that you take with ungratefulness what is His doing. In common worldly things, when we with sullen unwillingness repay a debt that with a bounteous hand was kindly lent, we are called ungrateful. We are all the more ungrateful when we oppose Heaven, which lent you King Edward IV, and now has required that the royal debt be repaid.”

Rivers said, “Madam, think, like a careful and concerned mother, of the young Prince Edward, your son. Send immediately for him and let him be crowned; in him your comfort lives. Drown your desperate sorrow in dead Edward’s grave, and plant your joys in living Edward’s throne. King Edward IV is dead; Edward, Prince of Wales, lives.”

Richard, Buckingham, Lord Stanley, Hastings, and Sir Richard Ratcliff entered the room.

Richard said to Queen Elizabeth, “Madam, be comforted. All of us have cause to grieve the dimming of our shining star, Edward IV, but none can cure their harms by grieving them.”

He then said to the old Duchess of York, “Madam, my mother, I beg your pardon. I did not see your grace.”

He knelt and said, “Humbly on my knee I ask for your blessing.”

The old Duchess of York said, “May God bless you and put meekness in your mind, as well as love, charity, obedience, and true duty!”

Richard said, “Amen,” as he stood up.

He thought, *And let God make me die a good old man! That ought to be the conclusion of a mother’s blessing. I wonder why her grace left it out.*

Buckingham said, “You gloomy Princes and heart-sorrowing peers, who bear this mutual heavy load of moaning grief, cheer up each other now in each other’s love. Though we have spent our harvest of this King, we are yet to reap the harvest of his son. The broken rancor of your high-swollen hearts — rancor just recently broken, splinted, knit, and joined together like a barely healed broken leg — must gently be preserved, cherished, and kept.”

Most of Buckingham’s listeners thought that he had meant to say this: We must ensure that the rancor remains broken so that peace can be the result. But the content of what he had said was ambiguous. He could have meant this: We must ensure that the rancor — which was recently broken — between us remains.

Buckingham added, “It seems to be a good idea that with some little train of followers the young Prince of Wales be fetched here to London, so that he can be crowned our King.”

“Why with some little — not great — train of followers,

my Lord of Buckingham?” Rivers asked.

“My lord, I am afraid that if a multitude of followers bring the Prince out of Wales that the newly healed wound of malice could break out and factions could form again and quarrel. This danger is all the more likely because the new state is green and newly established and as yet ungoverned — we have not yet crowned the new King. In such a state every horse bears the reins that should command it, and every horse may direct its course as it pleases. In my opinion, we ought to prevent both real harm as well as the fear that real harm may occur.”

Rivers listened, and he thought that Buckingham was pointing out that if a large number of people who had recently been in opposing factions got together to escort the Prince of Wales to London, it was possible that their close proximity could cause quarrels to break out. It was better to prevent that possibility by having a small train of followers escort the Prince. A small train of followers could more easily control themselves. In addition, if a large train of followers included a large number of people who had been in the faction opposing Queen Elizabeth, they could stage a coup and not allow her son the Prince to be crowned King.

Rivers did not reflect that if a small train of followers escorted the Prince, and that small train of followers was the faction opposing Queen Elizabeth, it could seek to control the Prince.

Richard said, “I hope King Edward IV made peace with all of us, and the agreement we made to be friends with each other is firm and true. I know that it is firm and true in me.”

“As it is in me,” Rivers said, “and so, I think, in all of us. Yet, since the state is still green, it should be put to no apparent likelihood of breach, which perhaps by much company might be urged: We don’t want a coup to take

power from the Prince of Wales. Therefore, I say with noble Buckingham, that it is fitting only a few people should fetch the Prince.”

“I agree,” Hastings said.

Richard said, “Then let it be so, and let us determine who shall be the men who immediately shall ride to Ludlow to meet the Prince.”

He said to Queen Elizabeth and the old Duchess of York, “Madam, and you, my mother, will you go with us so you can give your advice in this important business?”

Both replied together, “With all our hearts.”

Everyone departed except for Richard and Buckingham.

Buckingham said, “My lord, whoever journeys to meet the Prince and escort him to London, for God’s sake, let us two not be left behind, for, along the road, I’ll find an occasion, as the beginning to the plot we recently talked about, to part the Queen’s proud relatives from the Prince, who will be the new King.”

Richard replied, “You are my other self, my source of excellent advice, my oracle, my prophet! My dear kinsman, I, as if I were a child, will guide myself by your advice. Towards Ludlow we will ride, for we’ll not stay behind.”

— 2.3 —

On a street, two citizens talked together.

The first citizen said, “Neighbor, we are well met. Where are you going so quickly?”

“I assure you, I scarcely know myself,” the second citizen said. “Have you heard the news that is going around?”

“Yes, that King Edward IV is dead.”

“That is bad news; seldom comes good news. I fear our world will prove to be troubled.”

A third citizen arrived and said, “Neighbors, may God make you prosper!”

“Good morning, sir,” the first citizen replied.

The third citizen asked, “Is this news of good King Edward IV’s death true?”

The second citizen said, “Yes, sir, it is too true; may God help the times!”

“Since it is true,” the third citizen said, “then, masters, look to see a troubled world.”

“No, no,” the first citizen said. “By God’s good grace, King Edward IV’s son shall reign.”

“Woe to the land that’s governed by a child!” the third citizen said.

The second citizen said, “In him there is a hope of good government. His council of advisors will govern well while he is a minor, and in his full and mature years he himself, no doubt, shall govern well.”

“So stood the state when King Henry VI was crowned in Paris when he was only nine months old.”

“Stood the state so?” the third citizen said. “No, no, good friends, God knows that the situations are different. For then this land was famously enriched with prudent and grave counsel; King Henry VI had virtuous uncles to protect his grace.”

“Why, so has our own Prince of Wales,” the first citizen said. “He has good advisors on both his father’s and his mother’s side.”

The third citizen said, “It would be better if they all were on the father’s side, or if none at all came from the father’s side. But now there are factions, and they will compete about who shall be nearest to the new King Edward V. Their competition for power will touch and hurt us all too dearly, if God does not prevent it. The Duke of Gloucester is very dangerous! And Queen Elizabeth’s sons and brothers are haughty and proud. If both sides were to be ruled, and not to rule, this sickly land might feel solace as it has before. Now we are likely to have a struggle for power.”

“Come, come, we fear the worst,” the first citizen said, “but all shall be well.”

“Wise men are prepared,” the third citizen said. “When clouds appear, wise men put on their cloaks. When great leaves fall, the winter is at hand. When the Sun sets, who doesn’t expect night? Untimely storms make men expect a dearth of food. All may be well, but if God arranged all to be well, it is more than we deserve, or I expect.”

The second citizen said, “Truly, the souls of men are full of dread. It is difficult to find a man to talk to who does not look serious and full of fear.”

“Before times of change, it is always like this,” the third citizen said. “By a divine instinct, men’s minds predict ensuing dangers; as by experience, we see the waters of the sea swell before a boisterous storm. But let’s leave it all to God. Where are you going?”

The second citizen said, “The justices sent for us.”

“They also sent for me,” the third citizen said. “I’ll go with you and keep you company.”

In a room in the palace were the Archbishop of York, the young Duke of York, Queen Elizabeth, and the old Duchess of York.

The young Duke of York was the Prince of Wales' younger brother. Both were the sons of Queen Elizabeth and King Edward IV.

"Last night, I hear, they spent the night at Northampton," the Archbishop of York said. "They will be at Stony Stratford tonight. Tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow they will be here."

The old Duchess of York said, "I long with all my heart to see the Prince of Wales. I hope he has grown much since I last saw him."

Queen Elizabeth said, "But I hear that he has not grown much; they say my son the young Duke of York has almost grown as tall as he is."

"Yes, mother, but I would not have it so," the young Duke of York said.

"Why, my young grandson, it is good to grow," the old Duchess of York said.

"Grandmother, one night, as we sat down for supper, my uncle Rivers talked about how I was growing taller than my brother. 'Yes,' said my uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester, 'small herbs have grace, great weeds do grow apace.' And since then I have hoped I would not grow so fast, because sweet flowers grow slowly and weeds grow hastily."

"Truly, the saying did not hold true for him who told you the saying," the old Duchess of York said. "Richard was the most wretched thing when he was young. He grew very slowly and very leisurely. If this saying were true, Richard would be a gracious man."

“Why, madam, so, no doubt, he is,” the Archbishop of York said politely.

“I hope he is,” the old Duchess of York said. “But I am his mother, and I have my doubts.”

“Now, truly,” the young Duke of York said, “if I had remembered, I could have made a jest that would hit my uncle Richard’s growth harder than he hit mine.”

“How would you do that, my pretty grandson of York?” the old Duchess of York said. “Please, let me hear it.”

“They say that my uncle Richard grew so fast that he could gnaw a crust when he was two hours old. It was two full years before I had my first tooth. Grandmother, this would have been a biting jest.”

“Please, my pretty grandson of York, who told you this?” the old Duchess of York asked.

“Grandmother, Richard’s nurse told me,” the young Duke of York replied.

“His nurse! Why, she was dead before you were born.”

“If she didn’t tell me, then I don’t know who told me.”

“You are a precocious boy,” Queen Elizabeth said. “You are too shrewd and clever for your own good.”

“Good madam, don’t be angry with the child,” the Archbishop of York said.

“Pitchers have ears,” Queen Elizabeth said. She meant that her son had been listening to the gossip of adults.

A messenger entered the room.

“Here comes a messenger,” the Archbishop of York said. “What is the news?”

“I have such bad news, my lord, that it grieves me to tell it to you.”

Immediately worried about her other son by King Edward IV, Queen Elizabeth asked, “How is the Prince of Wales?”

“He is well, madam,” the messenger said. “He is in good health.”

“What is your news then?” the old Duchess of York asked.

“Lord Rivers and Lord Grey have been sent to Pomfret Castle, as has Sir Thomas Vaughan; they are prisoners.”

Pomfret Castle was in northern England. King Richard II and other political prisoners had been killed there.

“Who has committed them there?” the old Duchess of York asked.

“Two mighty Dukes: Gloucester and Buckingham.”

“For what offence?” Queen Elizabeth asked.

Rivers was her brother; Grey was her son; Vaughan was her ally.

“The sum of everything I know, I have told you,” the messenger said. “Why or for what these nobles were sent to prison is entirely unknown to me, my gracious lady.”

Queen Elizabeth said, “I see the downfall and ruin of our House, our family! The tiger now has seized the gentle doe. Contemptuously exulting tyranny begins to encroach upon the innocent throne, on which sits King Edward V, who is so young that he does not awe his subjects. Welcome, destruction, death, and massacre! I see, as in a map or picture, the end of all.”

The old Duchess of York said, “Accursed and unquiet wrangling days, how many of you have my eyes beheld!

My husband lost his life in an attempt to get the crown, and often my sons were tossed up and down on the Wheel of Fortune over their losses. Once King Edward IV was seated on the throne, and domestic quarrels had entirely abated, the conquering faction made war upon each other. It was blood relative against blood relative, and self against self. Oh, monstrous, perverted, and frantic outrage, end your damned malice, or let me die so I do not look on death any longer!”

Queen Elizabeth said to her son, “Come, come, my boy; we will go to sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. We are in danger.”

She said to the old Duchess of York, “Madam, farewell.”

“I’ll go along with you,” she replied.

“You have no cause or reason to,” Queen Elizabeth said.

The Archbishop of York said to Queen Elizabeth, “My gracious lady, go, and there carry your treasure and your goods. As for my part, I’ll resign unto your grace the Great Seal of England King Edward IV gave to me to keep safe.”

By giving the Great Seal to Queen Elizabeth, the Archbishop of York was taking her side. Legally, however, he was required to give the Great Seal to the new King Edward V.

The Archbishop of York continued, “May my fortunes be as good as the care I give to you and to all of your family! Come, I’ll conduct you to the sanctuary.”

CHAPTER 3 (Richard III)

— 3.1 —

On a street in London stood the young Edward, Prince of Wales. With him were Richard, Buckingham, Cardinal Bourchier, Catesby, and others. Cardinal Bourchier was the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Buckingham said, “Welcome, sweet Prince, to London, your capitol.”

Richard said, “Welcome, dear nephew, who is the sovereign of my thoughts. The weary way has made you melancholy.”

“No, uncle,” Prince Edward said, “but our crosses — vexations — on the way have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy.”

The crosses were the arrests of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan.

Prince Edward continued, “I lack — and want — more uncles here to welcome me.”

“Sweet Prince,” Richard said, “the untainted and unsullied virtue of your young years has not yet dived into the world’s deceit. You cannot distinguish more of a man than his outward appearance, which God knows seldom or never coincides with the man’s heart. Those uncles whom you want were dangerous. Your grace attended to their sugared words, but you did not look on the poison of their hearts. May God keep you from them, and from such false friends!”

Rivers was the Prince’s uncle; Grey was the Prince’s step-brother; Vaughan was a family friend.

“May God keep me from false friends!” Prince Edward

said. "But they were not false."

Richard saw some people coming, and he said, "My lord, the Mayor of London comes to greet you."

The Lord Mayor of London and his train of attendants came over to them.

The Lord Mayor said, "May God bless your grace with health and happy days!"

"I thank you, my good lord, and I thank you all," Prince Edward said. "I thought my mother, and my brother, the young Duke of York, would long before this have met us on the way. What a sluggard Hastings is, because he hasn't come to tell us whether they will come or not!"

Hastings arrived.

"And, in good time, here comes the sweating lord," Buckingham said.

"Welcome, my lord," Prince Edward said. Using the royal plural, he asked, "Will our mother come to meet us?"

"For what reason, God knows, not I," Hastings said, "your mother, the Queen, and your brother, the young Duke of York, have taken sanctuary. The young Duke of York would gladly have come with me to meet your grace, but his mother kept him by force."

"What a deceitful and perverse action is this of hers!" Buckingham said. "Lord Cardinal, will your grace persuade the Queen to send the young Duke of York to his Princely brother immediately? In case she denies this, Lord Hastings, go with him, and from her suspicious arms pluck him by force."

The Cardinal replied, "My Lord of Buckingham, if my weak oratory can from his mother win the young Duke of

York, expect him here soon, but if she resists mild entreaties, then may God in Heaven forbid we should infringe the holy privilege of blessed sanctuary! Not for all this land would I be guilty of so deep a sin.”

“You are too irrationally unyielding, my lord,” Buckingham said. “You are too scrupulous over formalities and you are too traditional. Weigh this action against the grossness and unrefined character of this age, and you will find that you do not break sanctuary in seizing him. The benefit of sanctuary is always granted to those whose actions have deserved the place of sanctuary, and those who have the intelligence to claim it. This Prince, the young Duke of York, has neither claimed sanctuary nor deserved it, and so, in my opinion, he cannot have it. Therefore, in taking him from thence that is not there — a place of sanctuary where there is no sanctuary for him — you break no privilege or prerogative there. I have often heard of sanctuary men, but I have never heard of sanctuary children until now.”

The Cardinal replied, “My lord, you shall overrule my mind for once.”

He then said, “Come on, Lord Hastings, will you go with me?”

“I will go, my lord,” Hastings replied.

Prince Edward said, “Good lords, do this quickly.”

The Cardinal and Hastings exited.

Using the royal plural, Prince Edward said, “Say, uncle Richard, if our brother comes, where shall we stay until our coronation?”

“Where it seems best to your royal self,” Richard replied. “If I may advise you, your highness should stay a day or

two at the Tower of London. Then you can stay where you please, and where it shall be thought is most suitable for your best health and recreation.”

“I do not like the Tower, of all places,” Prince Edward said.

The Tower of London is where King Henry VI and Clarence had been killed.

Prince Edward asked, “Did Julius Caesar build that place, my lord?”

Buckingham answered, “He did, my gracious lord, begin that place; since that time, succeeding ages have re-built it.”

According to tradition, Julius Caesar had built a fort on the location where the Tower of London was later built. William the Conqueror started building the Tower.

“Is it upon written record, or else reported orally successively from age to age, that he built it?” Prince Edward asked.

“Upon written record, my gracious lord,” Buckingham replied.

“But if, my lord, it were not recorded in written documents, I still think that the truth would live from age to age, as if it were recounted orally to all posterity, even to the Day of Judgment.”

Richard thought, *Those who are so wise when they are so young, people say, do never live long.*

“What do you say, my uncle?” Prince Edward asked.

Richard replied, “I say that without characters, fame lives long.”

He thought, *Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity, I draw*

lessons from two meanings in one word.

Richard was good with language. The word “characters” meant letters, as in written reports. Using that meaning, Richard was saying that fame could be long lasting even without written reports. Of course, the word “character” also means a kind of person, such as a good person. Using that meaning, Richard was saying that evil people — people without good characters — could have long-lasting fame. King Richard III is well known today, hundreds of years after he died. Also, of course, the word “character” can refer to the collection of qualities that make up a person. Using that meaning, Richard was saying that dead people could have long-lasting fame. Soon, two young Princes would be dead, but they would still have fame hundreds of years after their deaths.

The formal Vice, Iniquity, was a reference to the conventional Vice character in medieval morality plays. This character, which represented evil, was often named after a sin. The Vice often equivocated — used words that were ambiguous because they had more than one meaning.

“Julius Caesar was a famous man,” Prince Edward said. “With what his valor did enrich his wit, his wit set down to make his valor live. He was brave when he conquered Gaul, and his bravery increased his intelligence. With his intelligence he wrote the book *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* — *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* — and so knowledge of his bravery lives on in fame. Death makes no conquest of this conqueror because now he lives in fame, though not in life.

“I’ll tell you what, my kinsman Buckingham —”

“What, my gracious lord?” Buckingham asked.

“If I live until I become a man, I’ll win our ancient right to France again, or die a soldier as I lived a King.”

England and France had fought the Hundred Years' War because English Kings believed that they had a right to rule France.

Richard thought, *Short summers usually have a forward spring.*

Richard was alluding to, and changing, this proverb: Sharp frosts bite forward springs. The word "forward" meant "early" or "precocious." The word "springs" meant a certain season; it also meant "youth." One meaning of Richard's sentence was this: Those who die young are usually precocious.

The young Duke of York, Hastings, and the Cardinal arrived.

Buckingham said, "Now, at a good time, here comes the young Duke of York."

"Richard of York!" Prince Edward said. "How are you, our loving brother?"

"I am well, my dread lord," his brother replied. "I must call you 'my dread lord' now."

The word "dread" means "revered, held in awe, deeply honored."

"Yes, brother, you must call us that to our grief, as it is to yours," Prince Edward said, using the royal plural. "Just recently, the man — our father, King Edward IV — died who ought to have kept that title, which by his death has lost much majesty."

"How is our cousin, the noble Lord of York?" Richard asked.

"I thank you, noble uncle, for asking," the young Duke of York replied. "Oh, my lord, you said that worthless weeds

are fast in growth. Prince Edward, my brother, has outgrown me by far.”

“He has, my lord,” Richard said.

“And is he therefore worthless?”

“Oh, my fair nephew, I must not say so.”

“Then he is more beholden to you than I.”

The young Duke of York meant that Prince Edward was beholden to Richard for not calling him a worthless weed. Earlier, Richard had not been so polite when talking to and about the young Duke of York.

“Prince Edward may command me as my sovereign,” Richard said, “but you have power over me since you are a kinsman.”

“Please, uncle, give me this dagger of yours.”

“My dagger, little nephew?” Richard said. “With all my heart.”

He thought, *With all my heart, I would like to give you this dagger in your heart.*

“Are you a beggar, brother?” Prince Edward asked.

“Yes, of my kind uncle, whom I know will give,” the young Duke of York said. “And I begged for only a trifle, which will not hurt him to give away.”

“A greater gift than that I’ll willingly give my nephew,” Richard said.

He thought, *I would like to give him the gift of Heaven, which I can do by having him killed.*

“A greater gift!” the young Duke of York said. “Oh, you must mean the sword that goes with this dagger.”

“Yes, noble nephew, if the sword were light enough.”

“Oh, then I see that you will part only with light, trivial gifts,” the young Duke of York said. “In weightier things you’ll tell a beggar no.”

“The sword is too heavy for your grace to wear,” Richard said.

“I would weigh it lightly, even if it were heavier,” the young Duke of York said.

He was precocious, and he was punning. One meaning of what he had said was this: I would regard the gift lightly, even if it were heavier.

“Would you have my weapon, little lord?” Richard asked.

“I would, so that I might thank you as you call me.”

“What do I call you?”

“Little.”

The young Duke of York could be insulting; he was saying that he would little thank Richard for the gift.

Recognizing this, Prince Edward said, “My Lord of York will always be cross and perverse in his conversation. Uncle, you know how to bear with and endure him.”

The young Duke of York said, “You mean, to bear me, not to bear with me. Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me. Because I am little, like a monkey, he thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.”

Trained bears sometimes carried monkeys on their backs. So did fools, and so the young Duke of York was calling Richard a fool. He was also saying that Richard’s humped back was a good place for a monkey to sit.

The young Duke of York was good with language; he had made a triple pun: 1) “to bear with” meant “to put up with,” 2) “to bear” meant “to endure,” and 3) “bear” referred to the animal.

Buckingham said, “With what a quick and ready, sharply equipped wit he reasons! To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle, he prettily and aptly taunts himself by likening himself to a monkey. To be so cunning at so young an age is wonderful.”

Richard said to Prince Edward, “My lord, will it please you to continue on your way now? I and my good kinsman Buckingham will go to your mother to try to persuade her to meet you at the Tower of London and welcome you.”

The young Duke of York said to his brother, “Will you go to the Tower, my lord?”

“Richard, my Lord Protector, will have it so,” Prince Edward replied.

“I shall not sleep in peace at the Tower,” the young Duke of York said.

“Why, what should you fear in the Tower?” Richard asked.

“My uncle Clarence’s angry ghost. My grandmother told me he was murdered there.”

“I fear no dead uncles,” Prince Edward said.

“Nor none who live, I hope,” Richard — Prince Edward’s uncle — said.

“If they live, I hope I need not fear them. But come, my brother; with a heavy heart, thinking about my dead uncles, I go to the Tower.”

Everyone exited except Richard, Buckingham, and Catesby.

“Don’t you think, my lord,” Buckingham said, “that this little prattling Duke of York was incited by his devious mother to taunt and scorn you thus opprobriously and insultingly?”

“No doubt, no doubt,” Richard replied. “Oh, he is a perilous boy; he is bold, lively, ingenious, presumptuous, and intelligent. He completely takes after his mother, from the top of his head to his toe.”

“Well, let them rest. We will not think about them for a while,” Buckingham said. “Come here, Catesby. You have sworn as deeply to bring about what we intend as you have sworn closely to conceal the information we impart to you. You know our reasons for what we do. We told them to you as we were traveling together. What do you think? Will it be an easy matter to take Lord William Hastings into our confidence? Will he help us make the noble Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the King of this famous isle?”

Catesby replied, “Hastings so loves Prince Edward for the sake of his father, King Edward IV, that he will not be persuaded to do anything against Prince Edward.”

Buckingham then asked, “What do you think, then, about Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby? Whose side will he take?”

“He will do exactly what Hastings will do.”

“Well, then, I have no more to say but this,” Buckingham said. “Go, noble Catesby, and, subtly sound out Lord Hastings. See how he feels about our goal of making Richard King and summon him to go to the Tower of London tomorrow to attend a meeting about the coronation. If you find that he supports our goal, encourage him, and tell him all our reasons for wanting Richard to become King. If he is leaden, icy cold, and unwilling, then you be the same, too; and so break off your talk. Then give us notice of his inclination. Tomorrow we will hold two

separate councils, wherein you yourself shall greatly be employed.”

“Commend me to Lord William Hastings,” Richard said. “Give him my greeting. And tell him, Catesby, that his ancient knot of dangerous adversaries — Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan — will be bled tomorrow at Pomfret Castle. Yes, they will be executed. And tell my friend, for joy of this good news, to give Mistress Shore one gentle kiss the more.”

After King Edward IV had died, his mistress, Jane Shore, became Hastings’ mistress.

“Good Catesby, go,” Buckingham said. “Do this business well and soundly.”

“My good lords, I will do this with all the care and attention I can,” Catesby said.

“Shall we hear from you, Catesby, before we sleep?” Richard asked.

“You shall, my lord.”

“Go to my house called Crosby Place,” Richard said. “There you shall find us both.”

Catesby exited.

“Now, my lord,” Buckingham said, “what shall we do, if we perceive that Lord Hastings will not join our treacheries?”

“Chop off his head,” Richard said. “We will decide something to do and then do it.”

He added, “When I am King, you will be able to claim from me the Earldom of Hereford, and all the moveable possessions that my brother King Edward IV had there.”

“I’ll claim that promise when you become King,” Buckingham said.

“And look to have it given to you very willingly,” Richard said. “Come, let us eat early, so that afterwards we may digest — arrange and organize — our treacheries and put them in good order.”

— 3.2 —

In front of Hastings’ house, a messenger knocked at his door.

The messenger called, “My lord!”

From inside his house, Hastings called, “Who is knocking at my door?”

The messenger replied, “A messenger from the Lord Stanley.”

Hastings opened the door and asked, “What time is it?”

“Four in the morning.”

“Can’t your master sleep during these tedious nights?”

“You will see that he cannot from what I have to say. First, he gives his greetings to your noble lordship.”

“And then?”

“And then he sends you word that he dreamt this night that the boar had cut off his helmet and had obliterated the heraldic crest on the helmet. In other words, he dreamt that Richard, whose emblem is the boar, had cut off his head and had destroyed his family line. Besides, he says that two councils will be held, and that what may be determined at one of the councils may make you and him rue that you attend the other council. Therefore, he sent me to find out what your lordship will do. Will you immediately mount

horses with him and as quickly as possible travel with him toward the north in order to shun the danger that his soul divines in his dream?"

Hastings replied, "Go, fellow, go, return to your Lord Stanley. Tell him not to fear the two separate councils. He and I will attend the one, and at the other will be my servant Catesby, and so nothing can occur that concerns Lord Stanley and me that I will not have knowledge of.

"Tell Lord Stanley that I say his fears are shallow and lack evidence. And as for his dreams, I wonder that he is so foolish to trust the mockery of unquiet slumbers. To flee from the boar before the boar pursues us would incense the boar to follow us although he had not intended to chase us.

"Go, tell your master to get up and come to me and we will both go together to the Tower of London, where he shall see that the boar will treat us kindly."

Hastings' words had an additional meaning that he did not intend. "The boar will treat us kindly" can mean that "the boar will treat us after its own kind, its own nature." In other words, it meant that Richard would treat them in accordance with his own wild nature — that of a dangerous boar.

The messenger replied, "My gracious lord, I'll tell him what you say."

The messenger exited, and Catesby arrived.

"Many good mornings to my noble lord!" Catesby said.

"Good morning, Catesby," Hastings replied. "You are up early and stirring. What is the news in this, our tottering state?"

"It is a reeling world, indeed, my lord," Catesby said, "and I believe it will never stand upright until Richard wears the

garland of the realm.”

“What? Wear the garland? Do you mean the crown?”

“Yes, my good lord.”

“I’ll have this crown of mine — the crown of my head — cut from my shoulders before I will see the crown of the King of England so foully misplaced,” Hastings said. “But do you think that Richard is ambitious to become King?”

“Yes, on my life, and he hopes to find you an eager member of his faction who will work to get the crown for him. And thereupon he sends you this good news, that on this very same day your enemies, the kindred of the Queen, must die at Pomfret Castle.”

The messenger was referring to the upcoming executions of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan.

“Indeed, I am no mourner for that news because they have always been my enemies,” Hastings said. “But, that I’ll give my voice on Richard’s side to help make him King, and to bar my master King Edward IV’s truly descended heirs from becoming King, God knows I will not do it, even if I should die for my loyalty.”

“May God keep your lordship in that gracious mind!” Catesby said.

“But I shall laugh at this a year from now,” Hastings said. “I shall laugh because I live to look upon the tragedy of those who made my master — King Edward IV — hate me. I tell you, Catesby —”

“What, my lord?”

“Before I am older by a fortnight, I’ll send some packing who do not yet think I will do so.”

“It is a vile thing to die, my gracious lord, when men are

unprepared and do not expect it,” Catesby replied.

“Oh, it is monstrous, monstrous!” Hastings said, “And so it falls out with Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan, and so it will fall out with some other men, who think they are as safe as you and I, who, as you know, are dearly valued by Princely Richard and by Buckingham.”

“Those two Princes both make high account of you,” Catesby said.

He thought, *They account your head high upon the London Bridge.*

In this society, traitors (and political enemies) were beheaded, and the heads were displayed high at the end of poles on London Bridge.

“I know they do,” Hastings replied, “and I have well deserved their high account of me.”

Lord Stanley arrived.

Hastings said to him, “Come on, come on; where is your boar-spear, man? Do you fear the boar, and yet go about without a weapon to protect you?”

“My lord, good morning,” Lord Stanley said. “Good morning, Catesby.”

He said to Hastings, “You may continue to jest, but by the Holy Cross, I do not like the idea of these two separate councils.”

“My lord, I regard my life as dear as you do yours,” Hastings said, “and never in my life, I assure you, was it more precious to me than it is now. Do you think that unless I knew that we two were safe that I would be as triumphant as I am?”

“The lords at Pomfret Castle, when they rode from London,

were jocular, and they supposed that they were surely safe, and they indeed had no reason to think otherwise, but yet you see how soon the day becomes overcast. This sudden stab of rancor by Richard against Queen Elizabeth's faction makes me suspicious. I pray to God that I prove to be needlessly cowardly! Shall we go to the Tower? The day is well begun."

"Come, come; let's go," Hastings said. "Do you know what, my lord? Today the lords you talk about — Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan — will be beheaded."

"They, for their loyalty, might better wear their heads than some who have accused them wear their hats," Lord Stanley said.

He meant that others deserved to be put to death more than Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan, who were loyal to King Edward IV and his family. The hats he referred to were hats that indicated official positions. Richard and Buckingham were both Dukes, and so they had the privilege of wearing the ducal hat in the presence of the King. No one below the rank of Duke was allowed to wear a hat in the presence of the King.

Lord Stanley said, "But come, my lord, let us go to the Tower."

A Pursuivant, a royal or state messenger who had the power to execute warrants, arrived.

Hastings replied, "Go on ahead of me while I talk with this good fellow."

Lord Stanley and Catesby departed.

"How now, sirrah!" Hastings said to the Pursuivant. "How goes the world with you? How are you?"

"Sirrah" was a word used to address someone of a lower

rank or social status than the speaker.

The Pursuivant replied, “It is going better for me since your lordship is pleased to ask.”

“I tell you, man, it is better with me now than when I met you last where we meet now. Then I was going as a prisoner to the Tower of London because of the false charges of the Queen’s allies, but now, I tell you — keep it to yourself — this day those enemies will be put to death, and I am in a better state than ever I have been.”

“May God preserve you, to your honor’s good content and happiness!”

“Many thanks, fellow,” Hastings said. He gave the Pursuivant some money and said, “There, drink that for me.”

“May God save your lordship!” the Pursuivant said and then he departed.

A priest arrived and said to Hastings, “We are well met, my lord. I am glad to see your honor.”

“I thank you, good Sir John, with all my heart,” Hastings replied.

Priests were addressed as “sir” as a mark of respect.

“I am in your debt for your last sermon,” Hastings said. “At the next Sabbath, I will pay my debt.”

Hastings was speaking about giving money to the church, but God gave each of us our life, and so we owe God a debt. This debt can be paid back only with a death.

Hastings whispered in the priest’s ear, most likely to tell him news of the upcoming executions of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan.

Buckingham arrived and said to Hastings, “What, talking with a priest, Lord Chamberlain? Your friends at Pomfret Castle need the priest; your honor has no shriving work in hand. You do not need to confess your sins.”

“Indeed, when I met this holy man, those men you talk about came into my mind,” Hastings replied. “Are you going to the Tower of London?”

“I am, my lord; but I shall not stay long. I shall leave the Tower before your lordship does.”

“That is likely enough, for I will wait to have dinner there.”

Buckingham thought, *And supper, too, although you do not know it. You will be taken prisoner and executed, and so you will wait and wait for your supper, which will never be delivered to you.*

He said, “Come, will you go with me?”

“I’ll go with your lordship,” Hastings replied.

— 3.3 —

At Pomfret Castle, Sir Richard Ratcliff and some halberdiers led Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan to the place of execution.

“Come, bring forth the prisoners,” Ratcliff said.

Rivers said, “Sir Richard Ratcliff, let me tell you this: Today you shall see a citizen die for truth, for duty, and for loyalty.”

“May God keep the Prince from all the pack of you!” Grey said to Ratcliff. “A knot you are of damned blood-suckers!”

Vaughan said, “You who continue to live shall cry with woe for this later.”

“Hurry up,” Ratcliff said. “The end of your lives has arrived.”

Rivers said, “Oh, Pomfret, Pomfret! Oh, you bloody prison. You are fatal and ominous to noble peers! Within the guilty enclosure of your walls, King Richard II was here hacked to death. To bring more disgrace and disrepute to your dismal seat, we give you our guiltless and innocent blood to drink.”

Grey said, “Now old Queen Margaret’s curse has fallen upon our heads, for standing by when Richard, Duke of Gloucester, stabbed her son: Edward, the Prince of Wales.”

Rivers said, “She cursed Hastings, then she cursed Buckingham, and then she cursed Richard.”

Old Queen Margaret had not cursed Buckingham, but no doubt Rivers wished that she had.

Rivers continued, “Remember, God, to hear old Queen Margaret’s prayers for them, as now you hear her prayers for us. But as for my sister — Queen Elizabeth — and her Princely sons, be satisfied, dear God, with our true and loyal blood, which, as You know, unjustly must be spilt. Keep Queen Elizabeth, Prince Edward, and the young Duke of York safe.”

“Hurry,” Ratcliff said. “The hour of your deaths has come.”

Rivers said, “Come, Grey. Come, Vaughan. Let us all embrace and take our leave, until we meet in Heaven.”

They hugged, and then they left with Ratcliff and the guards.

— 3.4 —

In the Tower of London, several people sat at a table and talked: Buckingham, Lord Stanley, Hastings, the Bishop of

Ely, Ratcliff, Francis Lovel, and others. This council of lords was meeting to discuss plans for the coronation of Prince Edward, who would be crowned King Edward V. Ratcliff had been present for the execution of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan at Pomfret Castle, but he had then ridden unbelievably quickly to London.

Hastings, who as Lord Chamberlain presided over the meeting, said, "Now, my lords, the reason why we are meeting is to come to a decision about the coronation. In God's name, speak: When shall be the royal day?"

"Are all things ready for that royal time?" Buckingham asked.

"They are," Lord Stanley said, "and all we need to do is to name the day for the coronation."

"Let's have the coronation tomorrow, then," the Bishop of Ely said. "I judge that to be a suitable and happy day."

"Who knows what Richard, the Lord Protector, thinks about the coronation?" Buckingham asked. "Who is the most intimate friend of the royal Duke of Gloucester?"

"We think that you, yourself, your grace, is the most likely to know what he thinks," the Bishop of Ely replied.

"Who, I, my lord?" Buckingham said. "Richard and I know each other's faces, but as for our hearts, he knows no more of mine than I do of yours. And I know no more of his than you know of mine."

He then said, "Lord Hastings, you and he have a close friendship."

"I thank Richard's grace," Hastings said. "I know he much respects me. But, as for his opinion about the coronation, I have not asked him, nor has he delivered his gracious opinion to me in any way. But you, my noble lords, may

name the day, and on behalf of the Duke of Gloucester I'll cast my vote, which, I presume, he'll take well and without offense."

Richard entered the room.

The Bishop of Ely said, "Now, at exactly the right time, here comes the Duke of Gloucester himself."

"My noble lords and all my kinsmen, good morning," Richard said. "I have been long a sleeper, but I hope that my absence has not caused you to neglect great matters that with my presence might have been dealt with and concluded."

"Had you not come upon your cue, my lord," Buckingham said, "Lord Hastings had pronounced your part — I mean, your vote — for the day on which to crown the new King."

"No man might be bolder than my Lord Hastings," Richard said. "His lordship knows me well, and he well respects me."

"I thank your grace," Hastings said.

"My lord of Ely," Richard said, "when I was last in Holborn, where you have your palace, I saw good strawberries in your garden there. I ask you to please send for some of them."

"I will, my lord, with all my heart," the Bishop of Ely said as he exited.

In this culture, strawberries were associated with danger and death. Strawberry bushes grow low to the ground and provide cover for dangerous snakes.

"My kinsman Buckingham, may I have a word with you?" Richard asked.

They went a short distance away from the other people

present, and Richard said, “Catesby has sounded Hastings about our business of making me King, and Catesby finds the testy gentleman so hot, angry, and passionate that Hastings says he will lose his head before he shall give consent that the son of his master, King Edward IV, as he worshipfully calls him, shall lose the royalty of England’s throne. He wants Prince Edward, King’s Edward IV’s son, to be crowned King Edward V.”

“Go into another room, my lord,” Buckingham advised. “I’ll go with you.”

Richard led the way out of the room; Buckingham followed him.

Lord Stanley said, “We have not yet decided on the day of triumph on which the Prince shall be crowned. Tomorrow, in my opinion, is too soon and sudden because I myself am not so well prepared as I would be if the day were postponed.”

The Bishop of Ely returned and asked, “Where is the Lord Protector? I have sent for the strawberries.”

Hastings said about Richard, “His grace looks cheerful and affable today. There’s some idea or other that he likes well when he says to others, ‘Good morning,’ with such a spirit. I think there has never been a man in the Christian nations who can less hide his friendship or his hatred than he, for by looking at his face you immediately shall know what is in his heart.”

Lord Stanley asked, “What of his heart have you perceived in his face by any liveliness he has shown today?”

Hastings replied, “I have perceived that he is offended by no man here, for if he were offended, he would have shown it in his looks.”

“I pray God that Richard is not offended by anyone, I say,” Lord Stanley replied.

Richard and Buckingham reentered the room. Anyone looking at Richard would think that he was angry.

Richard said, “All of you, please tell me what they deserve who conspire to bring about my death with devilish plots of damned witchcraft, and who have prevailed upon my body with their Hellish charms?”

Hastings replied, “The tender love I bear your grace, my lord, makes me most forward in this noble presence to doom the offenders, whoever they are. I say, my lord, that they have deserved death.”

“Then let your eyes be the witness of this ill,” Richard said, holding out his arm, which had been crippled since his birth. “See how I am bewitched. Look at how my arm is all withered up like a sapling blasted by lightning! Who are responsible for this? King Edward IV’s wife, that monstrous witch, has joined with that harlot and strumpet Jane Shore, and by their witchcraft they have thus hurt me.”

Richard was accusing Queen Elizabeth and Jane Shore, who had been King Edward IV’s mistress and who was now Hastings’ mistress, of being witches who had withered his arm.

“If they have done this thing, my gracious lord —” Hastings began.

“If —?” Richard interrupted “You protector of this damned strumpet — your mistress — you talk to me about ‘ifs’? You are a traitor!”

Richard then ordered, “Off with his head! Now, by Saint Paul I swear that I will not dine until I see his cut-off head. Francis Lovel and Ratcliff, see that it is done. The rest of

you, who love and respect me, rise and follow me.”

Everyone exited except Hastings, Ratcliff, and Francis Lovel.

“Woe, woe for England!” Hastings said. “But not a bit of mourning for me because I, who have been very foolish, might have prevented this. Lord Stanley dreamt that the boar cut off his helmet, but I did not believe it, and I scorned the dream and distained to flee. Three times today my horse, which wore a finely decorated covering on its back and sides, stumbled and started when it looked upon the Tower of London as if my horse were loath to carry me to the slaughterhouse.

“Oh, now I need the priest who spoke earlier to me. I now repent that in front of the Pursuivant I exulted too much at how my enemies bloodily were butchered at Pomfret Castle. I thought that I was safe because I had Richard’s grace and favor.

“Oh, Margaret, Margaret, now your heavy curse has lighted on poor Hastings’ wretched head!”

“Hurry, my lord,” Ratcliff said. “Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, wants to eat his dinner, but he won’t until he sees that you are decapitated. Make a short confession of your sins; he longs to see your head.”

“Oh, the momentary and temporary grace of mortal men, which we hunt for more than we do the permanent grace of God!” Hastings said. “Whoever builds his hopes on air, based on the favorable looks and opinions of mortal men such as Richard, lives like a drunken sailor on a mast, ready, with every sleepy nod, to tumble down into the fatal bowels of the deep.”

“Come, come, hurry,” Francis Lovel said. “It is useless to exclaim and complain.”

“Oh, bloodthirsty Richard! Miserable England!” Hastings said. “I prophesy the most fearful time to you that any wretched age has ever looked upon.

“Come, lead me to the executioner’s chopping block. Take to Richard my head. They who smile at me now shall shortly be dead.”

— 3.5 —

Hastings had been executed illegally, without recourse to law. Now Richard had to provide an excuse for Hastings’ death. He decided to pretend that a plot had broken out in the Tower of London and that Hastings had attempted to murder Buckingham and him. He and Buckingham had put on rusty, ugly armor as if they had been suddenly attacked and had been forced to put on whatever armor they could find. Now they were standing by a drawbridge of the Tower of London.

Richard said to Buckingham, “Kinsman, can you shudder, and change your color, murder — that is, stop — your breath in the middle of a word, and then begin again, and stop again, as if you were distraught and mad with terror?”

“Tut, I can imitate the deep tragedian, the actor who plays in tragedies,” Buckingham said. “I can speak and look back over my shoulder, and peer on every side, tremble and startle at the mere wagging of a straw, all while pretending to be deeply suspicious. Ghastly looks are at my service, like forced smiles, and both are ready to do their duty at any time, to advance my stratagems.

“But has Catesby gone?”

“He has,” Richard said. “Look, he is returning, and he is bringing the Lord Mayor of London with him.”

The Lord Mayor and Catesby walked over to Richard and

Buckingham, who quickly began acting.

“Lord Mayor —” Buckingham began.

Richard shouted, “Look to the drawbridge there!”

“Listen!” Buckingham said. “A drum!”

“Catesby, look over the walls,” Richard ordered.

Catesby went to the wall to keep a “lookout.”

“Lord Mayor, the reason we have sent —” Buckingham began again.

“Look behind you! Defend yourself! Here are enemies!” shouted Richard, who saw Ratcliff and Francis Lovel coming toward them.

“May God and our innocence defend and guard us!” Buckingham said.

“Be calm,” Richard said. “They are our friends Ratcliff and Francis Lovel.”

Ratcliff and Francis Lovel had with them Hastings’ head.

Francis Lovel said, “Here is the head of that ignoble traitor, the dangerous and unsuspected Hastings.”

“So dearly I loved the man,” Richard said, “that I must weep. I took him to be the most plain and harmless creature who ever breathed upon this Earth a Christian. I made him my diary in which my soul recorded the history of all her secret thoughts. So smoothly he covered his vice with a show of virtue, that, with the exception of his obvious and open guilt — I mean his sexual intercourse with Shore’s wife — he lived free from any hint of suspicion.”

Buckingham said, “Well, well, he was the most secretive and hidden traitor who ever lived.”

He said to the Lord Mayor, "If it were not for the great preservation and protection given to us by Heaven, we would not be alive to talk to you. Would you imagine, or almost believe, that this secret traitor had plotted to murder me and my good Lord of Gloucester today in the Council House?"

"Did he do that?" the Lord Mayor asked.

"Do you think that we are Turks or infidels who do not respect the rule of law?" Richard asked. "Do you think that we would, against the rule of law, proceed thus rashly to the villain's death unless the extreme peril of the case, the peace of England, and our personal safety forced us to do this execution of the traitor?"

"Now, may fair fortune befall you!" the Lord Mayor said. "He deserved his death, and you, my good lords, both have done the right thing, thereby warning false traitors not to attempt what this man, Hastings, has attempted. I never looked for anything better from him, after he once fell in with Mistress Shore."

"We had not decided that he should die yet," Richard replied. "We wanted your lordship to come and see his death. But the loving haste of these our friends, Ratcliff and Francis Lovel, somewhat against what we had intended, have prevented that because they quickly executed the traitor out of regard for our safety."

"My lord, we wish that you had heard the traitor speak, and timorously confess the manner and the purpose of his treason. That way you might well have told what you witnessed to the citizens, who perhaps may misunderstand us and bewail the traitor's death."

"But, my good lord, your grace's word shall serve as well as if I had seen him and heard him speak," the Lord Mayor said. "I believe what you have told me. Do not doubt, both

you right noble Princes, but that I'll acquaint our duteous citizens with all your just proceedings in this cause. I will tell them that you are fully justified in what you have done."

"That is why we wanted your lordship to be here to witness the execution of the traitor," Richard said. "We wanted to avoid the carping censures and criticisms of the world."

"But since you came too late to do what we intended," Buckingham said, "you can still witness — and serve as witness to — what you hear we intended, and so, my good Lord Mayor, we bid you farewell."

The Lord Mayor exited to address the citizens of London.

"Go, after him, kinsman Buckingham," Richard said. "The Lord Mayor hurries as quickly as he can towards Guildhall, the town hall of London. There, at the most suitable time, imply that King Edward IV's children are bastards, that they are not his and so are not eligible to succeed him as King. Tell them how King Edward IV put to death a citizen because the citizen said that he would make his son heir to the Crown, although the citizen meant only that his son would inherit his house, which was named the Crown, as a sign outside the house attested. That King Edward IV would do that is evidence that he feared that he was a cuckold. It is also evidence that he acted tyrannically over minor things. In addition, I want you to talk about his hateful lechery and his bestial appetite that required frequent change of the women with whom he slept. Say that his lechery was so vast that it stretched to their servants, daughters, and wives because his lustful eye and savage heart had no control over what they wished to make their prey.

"Indeed, if necessary, you may thus far come near my person: Tell them that when my mother was pregnant with

that insatiable Edward, my Princely father, the Duke of York, then had gone to the war in France, and say that a just computation of the time shows that the child — Edward IV — was not fathered by him, as could be seen in Edward's appearance because he did not look anything like the noble Duke my father. But touch on this lightly, and subtly, because you know, my lord, my mother is still alive."

"Fear not, my lord," Buckingham said. "I'll orate as if the golden fee — the crown — for which I plead were for myself, and so, my lord, *adieu*."

"If you thrive well, bring the citizens to Baynard's Castle, one of my residences, where you shall find me well accompanied by reverend fathers and well-educated bishops."

"I leave now," Buckingham said. "Around three or four o'clock look for news from the Guildhall."

He departed.

Gloucester ordered, "Go, Francis Lovel, as quickly as you can to Doctor Shaw."

He ordered Catsby, "You go to Friar Penker."

He said to both of them, "Tell them both to meet me within this hour at Baynard's Castle."

Doctor Shaw was a Doctor of Divinity. Both Doctor Shaw and Friar Penker supported Richard.

Everyone exited except Richard, who said to himself, "Now I will go in to give a secret order to draw the brats of Clarence out of sight, and to give notice that no person, no matter how important, at any time shall have means of access to the Princes: Edward, the Prince of Wales, and his brother, the young Duke of York."

— 3.6 —

A Scrivener, a person who copies documents, looked at a legal document he was holding in his hands.

The Scrivener said to himself about the document he was holding, “This is the document containing the charges against and explaining why the good Lord Hastings was executed. This document is fairly written out in the correct style of handwriting and in the proper legal form, so that it may this day be proclaimed in Paul’s Cross outside Saint Paul’s Cathedral. And notice how well the succeeding events hang together. I spent eleven hours writing this document, for last night Catesby brought the original draft to me. The original draft itself took eleven hours to write, and yet within the past five hours Lord Hastings was still alive, untainted by accusation, unexamined in a law court, and free and at liberty.

“Here’s a good world we live in! Here’s a fine state of affairs! Why, who’s so stupid that he does not see through this obvious fraud? Yet who’s so blind, but he says that he does not see it? Everyone is afraid to speak up about what they know is true.

“Bad is the world, and all will come to evil when such bad dealings must be seen only in thought. Bad things happen when people cannot speak out against such evil.”

— 3.7 —

At Baynard’s Castle, Richard and Buckingham met.

Richard said, “What is the news, my lord? What do the citizens say?”

“Now, by the holy mother of our Lord, the citizens are completely quiet and do not speak a word.”

“Did you say that Edward’s children are bastards?”

“I did,” Buckingham replied. “I talked about his contract to marry Lady Lucy, and about his contract by deputy to marry Lady Bona, sister-in-law to the King of France.”

Edward IV had been engaged to marry Lady Lucy, with whom he had a child. Also, he had sent the Earl of Warwick to France to negotiate a marriage for him with Lady Bona, but he had changed his mind and married Elizabeth Grey, the widow of Sir John Grey. By this marriage, she became Queen Elizabeth. Richard had wanted these two previous contracts of marriage to be brought up because he hoped that the English subjects might regard them as invalidating King Edward IV’s marriage to Queen Elizabeth. If that were to happen, then Richard would be regarded as the heir to the throne.

Buckingham continued, “I brought up the insatiable greediness of his sexual desires, and his rapes of the city wives, his tyrannous behavior wrought by trifling causes, and his own bastardy. I said that he was begotten when your father was in France. I said that he did not resemble the Duke of York, who was supposed to be his father. I also said that your appearance was an exact replica of your father and that you resembled him both in your form and in the nobleness of your mind. I talked about all your victories in Scotland, your discipline in war, your wisdom in peace, and your generosity, virtue, and fair humility.

“Indeed, I left out nothing that would help to show that you are fit to be the King of England. I emphasized all of your good points, and when my oratory grew to an end I asked everyone who loves their country’s good to cry, ‘God save Richard, England’s royal King!’”

“Ah! And did they do that?” Richard asked.

“No, so God help me, they spoke not a word,” Buckingham replied. “Instead, like dumb statues or breathing stones,

they gazed at each other, and looked deadly pale. When I saw that, I reprehended them, and I asked the Lord Mayor what this willful silence meant.”

“His answer was that the people were not accustomed to be spoken to by anyone except the Recorder. Then the Recorder was urged to tell my tale again by saying, ‘Thus says the Duke’ and ‘Thus has the Duke inferred,’ but to say nothing on his own authority.

“When he had done, some of my followers at the lower end of the hall hurled their caps into the air, and around ten voices cried, ‘God save King Richard!’

“I took advantage of those few voices, and said, ‘Thanks, gentle citizens and friends. This general applause and loving shout argue your intelligence and your love and respect for Richard.’ At that time, I stopped speaking and came here.”

“What tongueless blockheads they were!” Richard said. “Wouldn’t they speak?”

“No, indeed, they would not, my lord.”

“Won’t the Lord Mayor and his brethren come here?”

“The Lord Mayor is here at hand,” Buckingham replied. “Pretend that you are afraid that the citizens will hate you because of the execution of Hastings. Do not speak to them until they insistently petition you to speak to them. Get yourself a prayer book to hold in your hand, and stand in between two churchmen, my good lord, for on that ground I’ll build a holy harmony and make you appear to be very religious.

“And do not be easily won to our request that you accept the crown. Play the part of a maiden: Always answer no, but eventually take it. Be like a virgin who says no but

really means yes.”

“I go now,” Richard said, “and if you plead as well for them as I can say no to you for myself, no doubt we’ll bring it to a happy issue. I will be convincing when I say no to accepting the crown; if you can be as convincing when you urge me to accept the crown, it will end up on my head.”

“Go, go inside and upstairs,” Buckingham said. “The Lord Mayor is knocking on the door of the courtyard.”

Richard exited.

The Lord Mayor and some London citizens entered, and Buckingham said, “Welcome, my lord. I have been waiting for a while. I have been left to kick my heels while waiting to speak to Richard — I am dancing attendance on him. I am afraid that the Duke of Gloucester will not speak with anyone here.”

Catesby entered the room, and Buckingham said, “Here comes his servant. What is the news, Catesby? What does Richard say?”

“My lord, he entreats your grace to visit him tomorrow or the day after. He is inside with two right reverend fathers, divinely bent to meditation, and he will allow no worldly suit to draw him away from his holy exercise and spiritual devotions.”

“Return, good Catesby, to your lord again,” Buckingham replied. “Tell him that I myself, the Lord Mayor, and the aldermen have come to have some conversation with his grace about deep designs and matters of great moment concerning no less than our general good.”

“I’ll tell him what you say, my lord,” Catesby said, and then he exited.

“Ah, ha, my lord,” Buckingham said to the Lord Mayor.

“This Prince is not an Edward! Richard is nothing like his lecherous brother! He is not lolling on a lewd daybed, but instead he is on his knees and saying his prayers. He is not dallying with a pair of prostitutes, but instead he is meditating with two deeply learned divines. He is not sleeping, to fatten his idle body, but instead he is praying, to enrich his wakeful and vigilant soul.

“England would be happy if this gracious Prince were to take on himself the sovereignty thereof and become its King. But indeed I fear that we shall never convince him to become King.”

“May God forbid that his grace should say no to our request that he become King!” the Lord Mayor said.

“I am afraid that he will say no,” Buckingham said.

Catesby returned.

Buckingham asked him, “What is the news, Catesby? What does your lord say?”

“My lord, he wonders for what purpose you have assembled such troops of citizens to speak with him. Because his grace was not previously told that you were coming to see him, my lord, he fears that you mean no good to him.”

Buckingham replied, “I am sorry that my noble kinsman should suspect that I mean no good to him. By Heaven, I come in perfect love to him; return again to Richard and tell his grace what I have said.”

Catesby exited.

Buckingham said, “When holy and devout religious men are saying prayers with their rosary beads, it is hard to draw them away, so sweet is zealous contemplation.”

Richard appeared on a balcony above them. He stood in between two Bishops. Catesby also stood on the balcony.

The Lord Mayor said, "Look! Richard is standing between two clergymen!"

Buckingham said to the Lord Mayor, "The clergymen are two props of virtue for a Christian Prince; they keep him from falling into sin because of vanity. Look! Richard is holding a book of prayer in his hand. The clergymen and prayer book are true ornaments by which you can know that Richard is a holy man."

He then said to Richard, "Famous Plantagenet, most gracious Prince, lend favorable ears to our request, and pardon us the interruption of your religious devotion and very Christian zeal."

"My lord, there is no need for such an apology," Richard said. "I rather ask you to pardon me, who, earnest in the service of my God, neglect the visitation of my friends. But tell me now, what is your grace's pleasure?"

"Our pleasure, I hope, is that which pleases God above, and all good men of this ungoverned isle," Buckingham said.

He called the isle ungoverned because it currently had no crowned King. Edward, Prince of Wales, who had become King Edward V with his father's death, had not been crowned.

Richard replied, "I suspect I have done some offence that seems ungracious in the city's eyes, and that you have come here to criticize my ignorance."

"You have committed an offense, my lord," Buckingham said. "I wish that it might please your grace, at our entreaties, to amend that fault!"

"Why else would I breathe in a Christian land?" Richard

said.

“Then know that it is your fault that you resign the supreme seat, the majestic throne, the sceptered office of your ancestors, your state of fortune and position of greatness and your due of birth, the lineal glory of your royal house, to the corruption of a blemished stock. As long as you continue the mildness of your sleepy and contemplative thoughts, which here we awaken for the good of our country, this noble isle will lack her proper limbs. Her face is defaced with the scars of infamy; her royal stock has been grafted with ignoble plants and has almost been shouldered in the swallowing gulf of blind forgetfulness and dark oblivion. In short, because you are not wearing the crown, a lesser, undeserving person shall wear it.

“To right this wrong, we heartily solicit your gracious self to take on you the charge and Kingly government of this your land, not as Lord Protector, steward, substitute, or lowly agent for the gain of another person, but as the rightful successor by blood and inheritance. The throne belongs to you by your right of birth and your sovereignty; the throne is your own.

“For this reason, together with the citizens, who are your very worshipful and loving friends, and by their vehement instigation, in this just suit I have come to move your grace. We want you to be King of England.”

Richard replied, “I don’t know whether to depart in silence or to speak bitterly and rebuke you is best suitable for my social rank and for your social rank. If I don’t answer you, you may perhaps think that I have tongue-tied ambition, which does not reply to you, but which has yielded to your request and has agreed to bear the golden yoke — the crown — of sovereignty, which foolishly you would here impose on me. But if I rebuke you for this entreaty of yours, which is so seasoned — made agreeable and given a

palatable taste — by your faithful love to me, then, going to an extreme on the other side, I have criticized my friends.

“Therefore, to speak, and to avoid the first course of action, and then, in speaking, not to incur the last course of action, I answer you thus definitively and once and for all. Your respect for me deserves my thanks, but my lack of merit shuns your high request. I do not have the skills to be King of England.

“Even if all obstacles were cut away, and even if my path were clear and unobstructed to the crown, and even if the people regard the crown as being mine by law and by birthright, yet so much is my poverty of spirit, and so mighty and so many are my defects, that I prefer to hide myself away from my title to the throne. I am a ship that can survive no mighty sea, and I do not desire to be enveloped by my title to the throne and smothered in the vapor of my glory.

“But, thank God, there’s no need for me to become King, and I would need much better qualities to help you, if you should need my help.

“The royal tree has left us royal fruit, which, mellowed by the passing hours of time, will well become the seat of majesty, and make us, no doubt, happy by his reign.”

Richard was referring to Edward, Prince of Wales.

Richard continued, “I lay on him what you would lay on me, the right and fortune of his happy stars, which God forbid that I should wring from him!”

In his speech, Richard had mentioned his birthright, knowing the importance of hereditary succession. When he talked about Prince Edward, he mentioned “happy stars,” or lucky astrological influence. Hearing this, Richard’s audience would think that Richard had the better claim to

the throne. And yet Richard could claim that he was saying that he did not want to take away his nephew's claim to be King of England.

Buckingham said, "My lord, this argues conscience in your grace, but the arguments you make are unimportant and trivial, if you carefully think about all the circumstances of this situation.

"You say that Prince Edward is your brother's son. We say the same thing, but we say that Prince Edward was not given birth to by King Edward IV's *wife*. King Edward IV was first contracted to marry Lady Lucy — your mother is a living witness to that vow — and afterward he used a deputy to get himself betrothed to Bona, sister to the King of France.

"These were both put off by a poor petitioner, Elizabeth Grey, a care-crazed mother of many children."

Elizabeth Grey had petitioned King Edward IV for the return of her late husband's lands and possessions.

Buckingham continued, "She was a beauty-waning and distressed widow, and she was in the afternoon of her best days. Elizabeth Grey captured King Edward IV's lustful eye. She seduced the greatest height of all his thoughts and led them to a base decline and loathed bigamy. She led him down and away from the greatness of his noble rank."

Because King Edward IV had married a widow, many people in his society regarded him as engaging in a bigamous "marriage," according to canon law. In addition, Buckingham was saying that Edward IV's pre-contracts of marriage to two other women made his marriage to Elizabeth Grey bigamous.

Buckingham continued, "By her, in his unlawful bed, he begot this Edward, whom we call the Prince of Wales

because of etiquette. I could expostulate more bitterly, except that, to show respect to someone who is still alive, I put a limit to my tongue.”

He was referring to the old Duchess of York, the mother of Edward IV and of Richard. Earlier, Richard had told him to hint that Edward IV was illegitimate.

Buckingham continued, “Then, my good lord, take to your royal self this proffered benefit of dignity. Accept the crown, if not to bless England and us, yet to draw forth your noble ancestry from the corruption of abusing times, and lead it to a lineal and truly derived course. Your lineage is true; do not allow a usurper to become King of England.”

The Lord Mayer said, “Do become King, my good lord, your citizens beg you.”

“Do not refuse, mighty lord, this love that is offered to you,” Buckingham said.

“Oh, make them joyful — grant their lawful suit!” Catesby said.

“Alas, why would you heap these cares on me?” Richard replied. “I am unfit for state and majesty. I beg you not to take it amiss, but I cannot and I will not yield to you. I will not become King.”

Buckingham said, “If you refuse to become King — as a result of your being, because of love and zeal, loath to depose the child, your brother’s son, as we well know your tenderness of heart and kind, compassionate pity, which we have noted that you have shown to your kin, and equally indeed to all types of persons — yet whether you accept our suit or not, your brother’s son shall never reign as our King. Instead, we are resolved to plant some other person in the throne to the disgrace and downfall of your house. And with this resolution we now leave you.”

He then shouted, “Come, citizens! Damn! I’ll beg no more that Richard become King!”

Richard said, “Oh, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham.”

Buckingham and the citizens started to leave.

Catesby said to Richard, “Call them again, my lord, and accept their suit. Do, my good lord, lest all the land rue that you do not.”

Richard replied, “Would you force me to go into a world of care? Well, call them again. I am not made of stone; your kind entreaties have penetrated my heart, albeit against my conscience and my soul.”

Buckingham and the other citizens faced Richard.

Richard said, “Kinsman Buckingham, and you sage, grave men, since you will buckle fortune on my back and make me bear fortune’s burden, whether I want to or not, I must have patience to endure the load, but if black scandal or foul-faced reproach follow, your forcing me to put on the crown shall acquit me from all the impure blots and stains thereof — I shall not be blamed because God knows, and you may in part see, how far I am from wanting to be King.”

“God bless your grace!” the Lord Mayor said. “We see that you are reluctant to become King, and we will witness to others that this is so.”

“In saying that I am reluctant to be King, you shall say only the truth,” Richard said.

“Then I salute you with this Kingly title,” Buckingham said. “Long live Richard, England’s royal King!”

The Lord Mayor and the citizen said together, “Amen.”

“Will it please you to be crowned tomorrow?” Buckingham

asked.

“Whenever you please, since you insist that I be crowned,” Richard replied.

“Tomorrow, then, we will attend your grace,” Buckingham said, “and so most joyfully we take our leave of you.”

Richard said to the two bishops, “Come, let us return to our holy task again.”

He then said to Buckingham, “Farewell, good kinsman.”

And he said to the departing Lord Mayor and citizens, “Farewell, gentle friends.”

CHAPTER 4 (Richard III)

— 4.1 —

A short distance from the Tower of London, two groups of people met. In one group were Queen Elizabeth, the old Duchess of York, and the Marquess of Dorset, one of Queen Elizabeth's sons. The other group included Lady Anne, who had married Richard, thereby becoming the Duchess of Gloucester. She was leading by the hand Lady Margaret Plantagenet, who was the young daughter of Clarence.

The old Duchess of York said, "Who are we meeting here? My granddaughter Plantagenet, led in the hand of her kind aunt of Gloucester?"

By marrying Richard, Lady Anne had become the aunt of Clarence's children.

The old Duchess of York continued, "Now, on my life, my granddaughter is wandering to the Tower of London, out of the love of her pure heart, to greet the young Princes."

She then said to Lady Anne, "Daughter-in-law, we are well met."

Lady Anne said to Queen Elizabeth and the old Duchess of York, "May God give both your graces a happy and a joyful time of day!"

"We wish you the same," Queen Elizabeth said. "Where are you going?"

"No farther than the Tower, and as I guess, we are on the same errand as you. We wish to greet the gentle, kind Princes there."

"Kind sister-in-law, thanks," Queen Elizabeth said. "We'll

all go into the Tower together.”

Sir Robert Brakenbury, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, walked over to them.

Queen Elizabeth said, “And, at a good time, the lieutenant is coming here.”

She said to Brakenbury, “Master lieutenant, please, by your leave, tell us how my young son Prince Edward and my young son the Duke of York are doing?”

“Very well, dear madam,” Brakenbury replied, “but by your leave, I may not allow you to visit them. The King has strictly ordered that you may not visit the Princes.”

“The King!” Queen Elizabeth said. “Why, who’s that?”

“I beg your pardon,” Brakenbury said. “I meant the Lord Protector.”

“May the Lord prevent Richard, the Lord Protector, from ever having the title of King!” Queen Elizabeth said. “Has he set a barrier between the Princes’ love and me? I am the Princes’ mother; who should keep me from them?”

“I am their father’s mother,” the old Duchess of York said. “I will see them.”

“I am their aunt by marriage,” Lady Anne said. “I love them as if I were their mother. Bring me to where I can see them; I’ll bear your blame and take your duty from you at my own peril.”

As the wife of Richard, the Lord Protector, Lady Anne believed that Brakenbury would allow her to see the Princes.

“No, madam, no. I may not put aside my duty,” Brakenbury said. “I am bound to do my duty by oath, and therefore pardon me.”

He departed.

Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby, walked over the group of women and said, “If I meet you, ladies, one hour from now, I’ll salute your grace, the old Duchess of York, as the mother and honored beholder of two fair Queens.”

One Queen, of course, was Queen Elizabeth. The Queen-to-be was Lady Anne.

He said to Lady Anne, “Come, madam, you must go immediately to Westminster Abbey. There you will be crowned Richard’s royal Queen.”

Queen Elizabeth said, “Oh, cut the lace of my bodice so that my closely confined heart may have some room to beat, or else I will faint because of this deadly, killing news!”

“These are spiteful tidings!” Lady Anne said. “This is unpleasant news!”

Dorset said, “Lady Anne, be of good cheer. Mother, how are you?”

“Oh, Dorset, do not speak to me!” Queen Elizabeth said. “For your own safety, leave this place! Death and destruction dog you at your heels; your mother’s name is ominous to children. They will die because of who their mother is. If you want to outstrip death, go across the seas, and live with the Earl of Richmond, out of the reach of Hell — Richard and his government!

“Go, hurry, flee from this slaughterhouse, lest you increase the number of the dead, and make me die the slave of Margaret’s curse, who said that I would not be a mother, a wife, or England’s acknowledged Queen. As long as you remain alive, I am still a mother.”

Lord Stanley said, “Your advice is full of wisdom and

concern for your son, madam.”

He said to Dorset, “Take swift advantage of all the hours. I will send a letter on your behalf from me to my stepson, the Earl of Richmond.”

Margaret Beaumont had married Edmund Tudor, the first Earl of Richmond, and she had given birth to Henry Tudor, the second Earl of Richmond, who now lived in Brittany, France, and to whom Dorset would flee. Years after the first Earl of Richmond had died, Margaret Beaumont married Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby, and so he became the stepfather of Henry Tudor, the second Earl of Richmond.

Lord Stanley continued, “The letter shall tell my stepson to meet you on the way and welcome you. Be careful not to be captured by Richard’s men because of unwise tardiness and delay.”

The old Duchess of York said, “Oh, ill-dispersing wind of misery! Oh, my accursed womb, the bed of death! My womb has hatched a cockatrice and brought it into the world — the cockatrice murders everyone who does not avoid it.”

Lord Stanley said to Lady Anne, “Come, madam, come with me to Westminster Abbey. I was sent to bring you there in all haste.”

“And I in all unwillingness will go,” Lady Anne said. “I wish to God that the inclusive verge of golden metal — the crown — that must go round my brow were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brain!”

Lady Anne was referring to a kind of torture in which a band of red-hot metal was placed around a traitor’s forehead.

She continued, “Let me be anointed with deadly venom

rather than holy oil as part of the ceremony of coronation, and let me die, before men can say, ‘God save the Queen!’”

Queen Elizabeth said to her, “Go, go, poor soul. I do not envy your glory. My mood is such that I wish you no harm.”

“No harm!” Lady Anne said. “Why? When Richard — he who is my husband now — came to me as I wept as I followed Henry’s corpse, the blood was scarcely well washed from Richard’s hands, blood that had come from my first husband — now an angel — and from that dead saint named King Henry VI.

“Oh, when I say I looked on Richard’s face, this was my wish: ‘Be you,’ I said to him, ‘cursed for making me, who am so young, so old a widow’ — my grief over the death of my husband had aged me! I said to him, ‘And, when you wed, let sorrow haunt your bed; and let your wife — if any be so mad as to marry you — be made as miserable by the life of you as you have made me miserable by the death of my dear husband!

“Even in so short a space as it would take me to repeat this curse, my woman’s heart foolishly grew captive to his honey words and proved to be the subject of my own soul’s curse, which ever since has kept my eyes from rest. I have never yet enjoyed the golden dew of sleep for even one hour in his bed; I have continually been awakened by his timorous dreams that frighten him. Besides, Richard hates me because of my father, the Earl of Warwick, and Richard will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.”

“Poor heart, *adieu!*” Queen Elizabeth said. “I pity you because of your troubles.”

Lady Anne replied, “No more than from my soul I mourn for yours.”

Queen Elizabeth said to her, “Farewell, you woeful welcomer of the glory of being Queen!”

“*Adieu*, poor soul, who take your leave of that glory!” Lady Anne replied.

The old Duchess of York said to Dorset, “Go to the Earl of Richmond, and may good fortune guide you!”

She said to Lady Anne, “Go to Richard, and may good angels guard you!”

She said to Queen Elizabeth, “Go to sanctuary, and may good thoughts possess you!”

She then said, “I will go to my grave, where peace and rest will lie with me! Eighty-odd years of sorrow have I seen, and for each hour I have felt joy I have endured a week of woe.”

Queen Elizabeth said, “Wait and look back with me at the Tower. Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes whom malice has enclosed within your walls! You are a rough cradle for such little pretty ones! You rough-hewn and ragged nurse, you old sullen playfellow for tender Princes, treat my babies well! And so foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell.”

— 4.2 —

In the palace in London, the newly crowned King Richard III talked with Buckingham in the throne room. Catesby, a page, and others were present.

King Richard III ordered, “Move to the sides, everyone.”

He then said, “My kinsman of Buckingham!”

Buckingham replied, “My gracious sovereign?”

“Give me your hand.”

Holding onto Buckingham's hand for support, Richard III climbed up some stairs to the throne, saying, "Thus high, by your advice and your assistance, is King Richard III seated. But shall we wear these honors for only a day? Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?"

"Always may they live and forever may they last!" Buckingham replied.

Richard III lowered his voice and began a private conversation with Buckingham, "Oh, Buckingham, now I play the role of a touchstone, to test you to see if you are indeed genuine gold."

A touchstone was used to test the purity of gold.

Richard III continued, "Young Edward, Prince of Wales, is still alive. Now guess what I am going to say."

"Tell me, my lord," Buckingham replied.

"Why, Buckingham, I say that I want to be King."

"Why, so you are, my thrice-renowned liege."

"Ha! Am I King? So I am, but Edward, Prince of Wales, still lives."

"True, noble Prince," Buckingham said.

"That Edward should continue to live has a consequence bitter to me: He will continue to be the 'true and noble Prince'! Kinsman, you have not been accustomed to be so dull. Shall I speak plainly? I wish the two bastards in the Tower of London dead, and I want them to be quickly dead. What do you say? Speak quickly; be brief."

"Your grace may do whatever you please."

"Tut, tut, you are all ice; your kindness freezes," Richard III said. "Tell me, do I have your consent that they shall

die?”

“Give me some breathing time, some little time to think, my lord, before I answer your question. I will give your grace my answer soon.”

Buckingham exited.

Catesby said quietly to a bystander, “The King is angry. See, he bites his lip.”

Richard III said, “I will converse with iron-witted stupid fools and heedless boys. I want no one who looks at me with thoughtful eyes. High-reaching, ambitious Buckingham grows circumspect: He is wary, and he is unwilling to be a risk-taker.”

He then called, “Boy!”

The page replied, “My lord?”

“Do you know anyone whom corrupting gold would tempt to perform a secret deed of death?”

“My lord, I know a discontented gentleman, whose humble means do not match his haughty mind,” the page replied. “Gold is as good as twenty orators, and gold will, no doubt, tempt him to do anything.”

“What is his name?”

“His name, my lord, is Tyrrel.”

“I know the man a little,” Richard III said. “Go, bring him here.”

The page departed to perform his errand.

Richard III said to himself, “The deeply thinking and cunning Buckingham shall no longer be the neighbor to my counsels; I shall no longer tell him my plans. Has he,

untired, for so long kept up with me, but now he must stop for breath?"

Lord Stanley, the Earl of Derby, entered the room.

"How are you now?" Richard III asked him. "What news do you bring with you?"

"My lord, I hear the Marquess of Dorset has fled to the Earl of Richmond in those parts beyond the sea where he lives."

Having delivered his news, Lord Stanley stood to the side.

"Catesby!" Richard III called.

"My lord?" Catesby said.

"Spread abroad a rumor that Lady Anne, my wife, is sick and likely to die. I will give orders to keep her confined. Also, find me some meanly born gentleman, whom I will immediately marry to Clarence's daughter. Clarence's son is foolish, and I do not fear him."

Richard III was continuing to make plans to get rid of any rival claimants to the throne. He also wanted to get rid of Lady Anne so he could marry a woman who would give him a better claim to the throne of England than marriage to Lady Anne could.

Catesby was surprised by the orders and stood still.

Richard III was angry: "Look at how you are daydreaming! I say again, spread a rumor that Lady Anne, my wife, is sick and likely to die. Hop to it because it is very important that I stop all hopes whose growth may damage me."

Catesby departed to carry out his orders.

Richard III said to himself, "I must be married to my niece — my brother's daughter — or else my Kingdom stands on brittle glass. I must murder her brothers and then marry

her!”

The niece whom Richard III wanted to marry was young Elizabeth of York, the daughter of King Edward IV and Queen Elizabeth.

He continued, “This is an uncertain way of gain — things can go wrong! But I have stepped so far in blood that sin will lead to sin. Tear-dropping pity does not dwell in this eye.”

“This eye” was an evil eye.

The page returned, bringing with him Sir James Tyrrel.

Richard III asked, “Is your name Tyrrel?”

“I am James Tyrrel, and I am your most obedient subject.”

“Are you, indeed?”

“Test me, my gracious sovereign.”

“Do you dare to resolve to kill a friend of mine?”

“Yes, my lord, but I had rather kill two enemies.”

“Why, there you have it,” Richard III said. “I have two deep, deadly enemies, who are foes to my rest and who are my sweet sleep’s disturbers. They are the two whom I want you to proceed against. Tyrrel, I mean those two bastards in the Tower of London.”

“Let me have unobstructed access to them,” Tyrrel said, “and soon I’ll rid you of the fear of them.”

“You sing sweet music,” Richard III said. “Listen, come here, Tyrrel. Take this token; it will give you access to the two Princes.”

Richard III handed Tyrrel a document.

He continued, "Rise, and listen to me."

He whispered to Tyrrel instructions about committing the murders, and then he said, "There is no more to say but this: Tell me that it is done, and I will love and respect you, and I will show you preferment, too."

"It shall be done, my gracious lord."

Using the royal plural, King Richard III said, "Shall we hear from you, Tyrrel, before we go to sleep?"

"You shall, my Lord."

Tyrrel exited.

Buckingham returned and said to Richard III, "My lord, I have considered in my mind the recent demand that you asked me about."

"Well, let that pass," Richard III replied, adding, "The Marquess of Dorset has fled to the Earl of Richmond."

"I have heard that news, my lord," Buckingham said.

Thinking to himself and addressing someone who was not present, Richard III said, "Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby, your wife's son is the Earl of Richmond, so you should be careful."

Buckingham said, "My lord, I claim your gift, my due by promise, for which your honor and your faith are pawned; I claim the gift of the Earldom of Hereford and the moveable property that you promised I should possess."

Still thinking to himself and addressing someone who was not present, Richard III said, "Lord Stanley, control your wife; if she conveys letters to the Earl of Richmond, you shall pay for it."

Buckingham said, "What does your highness say to my just

demand?”

Still thinking to himself and ignoring Buckingham, Richard III said, “I remember that when the Earl of Richmond was a little silly boy, King Henry VI prophesied that he should become King. A King, perhaps, perhaps —”

“My lord!” Buckingham said.

Still thinking to himself and ignoring Buckingham, Richard III said, “How did it happen that the prophet — King Henry VI — could not at that time have told me, since I was nearby, that I should kill him?”

The word “him” was ambiguous. It could refer to King Henry VI or to the Earl of Richmond.

“My lord, your promise for the Earldom —” Buckingham began.

Still thinking to himself and ignoring Buckingham, Richard III said, “Richmond! When last I was at Exeter, the Mayor courteously showed me the castle, and he called it Rougemont. I was startled by that name because a bard of Ireland told me once that I should not live long after I saw the Earl of Richmond.”

The words “Rougemont” and “Richmond” both mean “Red Hill.”

Buckingham said, “My lord!”

Richard III replied, “Yes? What time is it?”

“I am so bold as to remind your grace of what you promised me,” Buckingham said.

“Well, but what time is it?”

“Almost ten o’clock.”

“Well, let the hour strike.”

“Why let it strike?” Buckingham said.

Richard III replied, “Because, like a Jack, you keep the stroke between your begging and my meditative thinking. I am not in the giving mood today.”

A Jack was a figurine of a man who struck the hour on clocks; a Jack was also an insulting term that meant a low-born man. Richard III was complaining that Buckingham’s request to be given the Earldom of Hereford with all its moveable property was interfering with his thinking, and so Richard III wanted Buckingham to end his asking for the Earldom. After the Jack strikes the time, the Jack need strike no more. Richard III wanted Buckingham to quit making noise.

“Why, then let me know whether you will give me the Earldom or not.”

“Tut, tut, you annoy me,” King Richard III replied. “I am not in the giving mood.”

Everyone except Buckingham left the room.

Buckingham said to himself, “Is this even real? He rewards my true service to him with such deep contempt! Did I make him King to be treated like this? Oh, let me remember what happened to Hastings, whom Richard III executed, and let me flee to Brecknock, my family’s estate in southeast Wales, while my head, which is afraid, is still on my shoulders!”

— 4.3 —

Tyrrel entered King Richard III’s throne room.

He said to himself, “The tyrannous and bloody deed is done. It is the most preeminent deed of piteous massacre

that ever yet this land was guilty of. I bribed Dighton and Forrest, who are fleshed villains, bloody dogs, to do this ruthless piece of butchery. They are criminals who have killed before; they are dogs that have killed and have eaten a piece of the flesh of their kill. Yet they melted with tenderness and kind compassion, and they wept like two children while telling the sad stories of the deaths they had caused.

“‘Like this,’ said Dighton, demonstrating, ‘those tender babes lay.’

“‘Thus, thus,’ said Forrest, also demonstrating, ‘girdling one another within their innocent alabaster arms.’”

Alabaster was a white stone used in the creation of statues of humans in funerary monuments.

Tyrrel continued, “Forrest added, ‘Their lips were four red roses on a stalk, which in their summer beauty kissed each other. A book of prayers lay on their pillow, which once almost changed my mind. But oh, the devil’ — there the villain stopped. Dighton then said, ‘We smothered the most perfect and sweet work of nature, that from the first, original, prime creation ever nature framed.’

“Thus both murderers are brought down by conscience and remorse. They could not speak any longer, and so I left them both in order to bring these tidings to the bloodthirsty King — and here he comes.”

King Richard III entered the throne room.

Tyrrel said, “All hail, my sovereign liege!”

“Kind Tyrrel, will I be made happy by the news you bring?” Richard III asked.

The word “kind” has two meanings. It can mean “good and benevolent,” and it can mean “a group of people who share

similar character traits.” Tyrrel and Richard III shared similar character traits.

“If news that I have done the thing you ordered me to do will make you happy, then you will be happy,” Tyrrel replied. “For it is done, my lord.”

“But did you see the two Princes dead?”

“I did, my lord.”

“And buried, gentle Tyrrel?”

“The Chaplain of the Tower has buried them, but how or in what place I do not know.”

“Come to me soon, Tyrrel, when I am enjoying dessert after the evening meal, and you shall tell me the story of the two Princes’ deaths. In the meantime, think about how I may do you good. What you desire, you shall receive. Farewell until a short time from now.”

Tyrrel departed.

Richard III said to himself, “The son of Clarence I have locked up in strict confinement. The daughter of Clarence I have basely married to an unimportant man. The sons of Edward IV sleep in Abraham’s bosom — they are in Heaven. And Lady Anne, my wife, has bid the world good night.

“Now, because I know the Earl of Richmond, who is in exile in Brittany, France, aims to marry young Elizabeth of York, my brother Clarence’s daughter, and, by that marriage-knot, he would look proudly over the crown because by uniting the House of York and the House of Lancaster, he would have a serious claim to the throne, to young Elizabeth of York I go as a jolly thriving wooer. I want to marry her before the Earl of Richmond does.”

Young Elizabeth of York, of course, was a member of the House of York. The Earl of Richmond's mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, was a great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who was the fourth son of Edward III. Such a marriage would end the conflict between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians, and if Henry Tudor, the second Earl of Richmond, became King Henry VII, he would become a Tudor King and could start a Tudor dynasty.

An excited Catesby entered the room and said, "My lord!"

"You come here so abruptly and without ceremony that you must be bearing important news," King Richard III said. "Is it good news or bad?"

"Bad news, my lord," Catesby replied. "The Bishop of Ely has fled to the Earl of Richmond, and Buckingham, backed with the hardy Welshmen, is in the field against you, and his army continually grows in size."

"The Bishop of Ely and the Earl of Richmond trouble me much more than the Duke of Buckingham and his hurriedly raised army," Richard III said. "Come, I have heard that timorous thinking is the indolent servant to dull delay. Delay leads impotent and snail-paced beggary. So then let fiery expedition and warlike enterprise be my wings. Let them be like Jove's messenger Mercury, and let them be heralds for a King! Come, muster the men. My counsel is my shield. We must act speedily when traitors brave the battlefield."

— 4.4 —

Standing in front of the palace, old Queen Margaret said to herself, "So, now prosperity begins to ripen, grow soft, and drop into the rotten mouth of death. I was prosperous, I matured, and soon I will die. The same is happening to my enemies. Here in these confines I have slyly lurked in order

to watch the waning of my adversaries.

“I am witnessing the dire beginning of a tragedy, and I will go to France, hoping that what follows will prove to be as bitter, black, and tragic as the beginning.”

Hearing a noise, she said to herself, “Withdraw out of the way and hide yourself, wretched Margaret. Who is coming here?”

Queen Elizabeth and the Duchess of York, wearing mourning clothes because of the deaths of the two Princes, walked onto the scene.

Queen Elizabeth was the widow of King Edward IV and the mother of the two Princes. The Duchess of York was King Richard III’s mother and the grandmother of the two Princes; she was the widow of Richard, the third Duke of York, Richard III’s father. In 1460, Richard, the third Duke of York, had died in the Battle of Wakefield.

“My young Princes!” Queen Elizabeth mourned. “My tender babes! My flowers with the buds unopened; my newly appearing sweets! If yet your gentle souls fly in the air and have not yet been judged and gone to Heaven, hover about me with your airy wings and hear your mother’s lamentation!”

Old Queen Margaret said to herself, “Hover about her, and say that justice for the sake of justice has dimmed your infant morn to aged night.”

Old Queen Margaret had suffered, and now Queen Elizabeth was suffering. Old Queen Margaret regarded this as just and rightful retribution — a just punishment for a crime against justice. Queen Elizabeth had aged due to grief, and old Queen Margaret also regarded that as just. She also regarded the deaths of the two Princes — they had gone quickly from the beginning to the end of their lives —

as a just punishment for the deaths of her own loved ones.

The Duchess of York said, “So many miseries have cracked my voice that my woe-wearied tongue is mute and dumb. Edward Plantagenet, why are you dead?”

Edward Plantagenet was Edward, Prince of Wales, the older of the two Princes who had been murdered in the Tower of London.

Old Queen Margaret said, “Plantagenet does requite Plantagenet. Edward for Edward pays a dying debt.”

Both Edwards were Princes of Wales. Old Queen Margaret had had her only son, Edward, with her husband, King Henry VI. This Edward had married Lady Anne. The other Edward was the older of the two Princes who had been murdered in the Tower of London. Old Queen Margaret believed that the only way the murder of her Edward could be requited or avenged was by the death of another person. That person turned out to be the older of the two Princes who had been murdered in the Tower of London.

Queen Elizabeth said, “Will you, God, flee from such gentle lambs as the two Princes, and throw them in the belly of the wolf? When have you ever slept when such a deed was done?”

Still talking to herself, Old Queen Margaret answered in place of God: “When holy Harry died, and my sweet son.”

Holy Harry was Old Queen Margaret’s husband, King Henry VI, and “my sweet son” was their son, Edward, Prince of Wales.

Regretting that she had lived long enough to experience the grief caused by the murders of the two Princes, the old Duchess of York sat and said, “Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal living ghost, woe’s scene, world’s shame, grave’s

due by life usurped, brief summary and record of tedious days, rest your unrest on England's lawful earth, unlawfully made drunk with the blood of the two innocent Princes!"

Queen Elizabeth sat by her and said, "Oh, that you — England's lawful earth — would as well give me a grave as you give me a melancholy seat! Then I would hide my bones in my grave, not rest them here. I wish that I were dead."

Old Queen Margaret revealed herself and said to them, "Who has any cause to mourn but I?"

She sat down by them.

She continued, "If ancient sorrow be most reverend, give my sorrow the benefit of seniority, and let my woes frown on the upper hand. If sorrow can admit society, count your woes again by viewing mine.

"I had an Edward, until a Richard killed him.

"My son, Edward, was killed by Richard, who is now Richard III.

"I had a Harry, until a Richard killed him.

"My Harry was my husband, King Henry VI, who was killed by Richard, who is now Richard III.

"You, Queen Elizabeth, had an Edward, until a Richard killed him.

"Your son Edward, Prince of Wales, was killed in the Tower of London, by Richard, who is now Richard III.

"You, Queen Elizabeth, had a Richard, until a Richard killed him.

"Your son Richard, the young Duke of York, was killed in the Tower of London, by Richard, who is now Richard III."

The old Duchess of York said to old Queen Margaret, “I had a Richard, too, and you killed him.

“You killed my husband, Richard, the third Duke of York, Richard III’s father.

“I had a Rutland, too, and you helped to kill him.

“Rutland was one of my sons, and he was murdered just before my husband was murdered.”

Old Queen Margaret replied to the old Duchess of York, “You had a Clarence, too, and Richard killed him. Richard, who is now Richard III, killed his brother Clarence in the Tower of London.

“From forth the kennel of your womb has crept a Hellhound that hunts us all to death. That Hellhound is Richard, who was born with teeth. That dog, which had his teeth before he had his eyes, since dogs are born blind, to bite lambs and lap their gentle blood, that foul defacer of God’s handiwork, that killer of humans created in the image of God, that excellent grand tyrant of the earth, who reigns in the inflamed eyes of weeping souls — that is the creature your womb let loose to chase us to our graves.

“Oh, upright, just, and true-disposing God, how do I thank you that this carnal cur preys on the children who came from his mother’s body, and makes her share a pew in church with other mourning mothers!”

The old Duchess of York said to old Queen Margaret, widow of King Henry VI, “Oh, Harry’s wife, do not triumph in my woes! May God witness with me that I have wept for your woes.”

“Bear with me,” old Queen Margaret said. “I am hungry for revenge, and now I fill myself by beholding it.

“Your Edward is dead, who stabbed my Edward.

“Your son, King Edward IV, stabbed and helped kill my son: Edward, Prince of Wales.

“Your other Edward — the older of the two young Princes, died, to requite Edward, my son.

“Young Richard, Duke of York, the younger of the two Princes, is only a little something added to the revenge, because both your Edward IV and your Edward, Prince of Wales, together cannot match the loss of the high perfection of my Edward, Prince of Wales.

“Clarence, your son, is dead who helped kill Edward, Prince of Wales, my son.

“And the beholders of this tragedy that is the murder of my son by your Edward IV, Clarence, and Richard III are all untimely smothered in their dusky graves. Those beholders — bystanders — are the adulterer Hastings, and Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey.

“Richard III still lives. He is Hell’s black agent, kept alive only to serve Hell by buying souls and sending them there. But at hand is his deplorable and unpitied end. Earth gapes, Hell burns, fiends roar, and saints pray to have Richard III die and suddenly be conveyed away from the Land of the Living. Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray, so that I may live to say, ‘The dog is dead!’”

Queen Elizabeth said, “You prophesied that the time would come that I would wish for you to help me curse that bottle-bodied spider, that foul hunchbacked toad, that Richard!”

Old Queen Margaret said, “I called you then the worthless ornamentation of my fortune. I called you then a poor shadow and image, a painted — not real — Queen. I called you the mere semblance of what I was. I called you the flattering preface of a dreadful pageant.

“You are a person who has been heaved high on the Wheel of Fortune, only to be hurled down below.

“You are a mother who has been only mocked — not blessed — with two sweet babes who have so quickly been taken from you.

“You are only a dream of what you used to be; you are a breath, a bubble, an empty symbol of dignity, a garish flag that is the target of every dangerous soldier. You are a Queen only in jest, brought onto the scene only to be an extra.

“Where is your husband now?

“Where are your brothers?

“Where are your children?

“What makes you rejoice?

“Who pleads to you and cries, ‘God save the Queen’?

“Where are the bowing peers who flattered you?

“Where are the thronging troops who followed you?

“Go through all this point by point, and see what now you are.

“Instead of being a happy wife, you are a very distressed widow.

“Instead of being a joyful mother, you are one who mourns the name.

“Instead of being a Queen, you are a very wretched creature who is crowned with care and worry.

“Instead of being a person to whom people plead, you are a person who humbly pleads.

“Instead of being a person who scorns me, you are now scorned by me.

“Instead of being a person who is feared by all, you now fear one person — Richard III.

“Instead of being a person who commands all, you are obeyed by none.

“Thus has the course of justice wheeled about, and it has left you a prey to time. Now if you think about what you have been, you are tortured all the more, because of what you are now.

“You usurped my position as Queen of England, and therefore don’t you usurp the just and proper proportion of my sorrow? Now your proud neck bears half of my burdensome yoke, from which now and here I slip my weary neck, and leave the burden of it all on you.

“Farewell, York’s wife, and farewell, Queen of sad mischance. These English woes will make me smile in France.

“Goodbye, old Duchess of York and Queen Elizabeth. I am going to France, where I shall enjoy your misery.”

Queen Elizabeth pleaded, “You are well skilled in making curses. Stay awhile, and teach me how to curse my enemies!”

Old Queen Margaret replied, “Cease sleeping during the nights, and fast during the days. Compare the dead happiness of the past with the woe that lives today. Think that your babes were fairer and better than they were, and think that he who slew them is fouler than he is. Magnifying your loss makes the bad causer of your loss worse. Meditating on these things will teach you how to curse.”

“My words are dull,” Queen Elizabeth said. “Make my words lively like your words!”

“Your woes will make them sharp and make them pierce like mine,” old Queen Margaret said, and then she exited.

The old Duchess of York asked, “Why should calamity be full of words?”

Queen Elizabeth replied, “Words are windy attorneys that plead the woes of their client, they are the heirs of joys that died without leaving a will to pass on good things, and they are poor breathing orators of miseries!

“Let words have scope. Although the content that they impart helps not at all, yet words do ease the grieving heart.”

“If that is true, then do not be tongue-tied,” the old Duchess of York said. “Go with me, and in the breath of bitter words let’s smother my damned son, Richard III, who smothered your two sweet sons. I hear his army’s drums. Let’s be copious in our outcries.”

King Richard III and his army entered the scene. The old Duchess of York and Queen Elizabeth stood in his way. Because they were wearing veils as part of their mourning clothing, Richard III did not recognize them.

He asked, “Who intercepts my setting out for war?”

His mother, the old Duchess of York, said, “I am she who might have intercepted you, by strangling you in her accursed womb, and kept you from committing all the slaughters, wretch, that you are responsible for!”

Queen Elizabeth asked, “Do you hide your forehead with a golden crown? On your forehead should be engraved, if justice prevailed, the slaughter of the true Prince who owned and possessed by right that crown, and the dire

deaths of my two sons and brothers!

“Tell me, you villain slave, where are my children?”

The old Duchess of York asked, “You toad, where is your brother Clarence? And where is little Ned Plantagenet, his son?”

Queen Elizabeth asked, “Where are kind Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey?”

Queen Elizabeth had no reason to call Hastings kind except to magnify one of Richard’s sins.

King Richard III called for martial music to drown out the cries of the two women: “A flourish, trumpets! Strike the call to battle, drums! Let not the Heavens hear these telltale, gabbling women rail against the Lord’s anointed King. Play, I say!”

Military music filled the air, and Richard III said to his mother and sister-in-law, “Either be calm, and talk to me with respect, or with the clamorous noise of war I will thus drown out your exclamations.”

“Are you my son?” the old Duchess of York asked.

“Yes, I thank God, my father, and yourself.”

“Then patiently hear my impatience.”

Richard III replied, “Madam, I have a touch of your temperament, which cannot endure the tone of reproof.”

“Let me speak!” the old Duchess of York demanded.

“Speak, then, but I’ll not listen to you.”

“I will be mild and gentle in my speech.”

“Also be brief, good mother, because I am in a hurry.”

“Are you so hasty?” his mother asked. “I have waited for you, God knows, in anguish, pain, and agony. I gave birth to you.”

“And didn’t I come at last to comfort you?”

“No, you did not, by the Holy Cross. You well know that you came on Earth to make the Earth my Hell. Your birth was a grievous burden to me. In your infancy you were peevish and disobedient. Your schooldays were frightening, desperate, wild, and furious. Your time of prime of manhood was daring, bold, and venturesome. Your time of maturity was proud, subdued, bloodthirsty, and treacherous; it was milder, but yet more harmful because you appeared to be kind when actually you felt hatred. What cheerful hour can you name that ever graced me in your company?”

“Indeed, I can name only one cheerful hour — Humphrey Hour,” Richard replied. “He graced you in my company by calling you away from my company — he asked you to go and eat breakfast. If I am so disgracious and displeasing in your sight, then let me march on, and not offend your grace.”

He then ordered, “Strike the drum.”

The old Duchess of York said, “Please, hear me speak.”

Richard III replied, “You speak too bitterly.”

“Hear me speak briefly to you because I shall never speak to you again.”

“Speak.”

“Either you will die, by God’s just ordinance, before you return as a conqueror from this war, or I with grief and extreme old age shall perish and never look upon your face again. Therefore take with you my most heavy and serious

curse, which, on the day of battle, will tire you more than all the full and heavy suit of armor that you are wearing!

“My prayers will fight on the side of the party opposing you, and there the little souls of Edward IV’s children — the two Princes — will whisper to the spirits of your enemies and promise them success and victory.

“Bloodthirsty you are, and bloody will be your end. Shame serves your life and does your death attend.”

Having cursed her son, the old Duchess of York exited.

“Although I have far more cause, yet I have much less spirit to curse you,” Queen Elizabeth said, “but I say ‘amen’ to everything that your mother said.”

“Wait, madam,” Richard III said. “I must speak with you.”

“I have no more sons of the royal blood for you to murder,” Queen Elizabeth said. “As for my daughters, Richard, they shall be praying nuns, not weeping Queens, and therefore you ought not to aim at them and take their lives.”

“You have a daughter called young Elizabeth of York,” Richard III said. “She is virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.”

“And must she die for that? Oh, let her live, and I’ll corrupt her manners and morals, stain her beauty, and slander myself by saying that I was false to Edward IV’s bed and cheated on him. I will throw over her the veil of a bad and infamous reputation so she may live unscarred by bleeding slaughter. I will confess — falsely — that she is not Edward’s daughter.”

“Do not wrong her birth,” Richard III said. “She is of royal blood.”

“To save her life, I’ll say she is not of royal blood.”

“Her life is safest only if she is of royal blood,” Richard III said.

He wanted to marry young Elizabeth of York in order to make his hold on the throne tighter; if she were not believed to be the legitimate daughter of King Edward IV, marrying her would not help him do that.

Queen Elizabeth said, “And only in that safety died her brothers.”

Young Elizabeth of York’s brothers — the two Princes — had died because they were the legitimate sons of King Edward IV.

“At their births, the good stars were hostile to them,” Richard III said.

“No, bad family members were hostile to their lives.”

“Entirely unavoidable is the doom of destiny,” Richard III said.

“True, when avoided grace — you, Richard, lack the grace of God — makes destiny. My babes were destined to have a fairer death, a death without violence, if grace had blessed you with a fairer life, a life with fewer blemishes.”

“You speak as if I had slain my nephews.”

“They were your nephews, indeed, and by their uncle they were cheated of comfort, Kingdom, kindred, freedom, and life,” Queen Elizabeth said. “No matter whose hand pierced their tender hearts, your head, all indirectly, gave the order. No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt until it was whetted on your stone-hard heart, to revel in the entrails of my lambs.

“Except that continual experience of grief makes wild grief tame, my tongue should to your ears not name my boys

until my fingernails were anchored in your eyes, and I, in such a desperate bay of death, like a poor ship bereft of sails and tackling, would rush against you and be wrecked all to pieces on your rocky bosom.”

Richard III said, “Madam, may I so thrive and prevail in my enterprise and dangerous success of bloody wars to the extent that I intend to do more good to you and yours than ever you or yours were by me wronged!”

“What good is covered by the face of Heaven that can yet be uncovered and do me good?”

“The advancement of your children, gentle lady,” Richard III replied.

“Advancement up to some scaffold, there to lose their heads.”

“No, advancement to the dignity and height of honor, the high imperial symbol of this Earth’s glory.”

“Flatter my sorrows by telling me about it,” Queen Elizabeth said. “Tell me: What rank, what dignity, what honor can you give to any child of mine?”

“Everything I have; yes, I will endow a child of yours with myself and all I have as long as in the Lethe of your angry soul you drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs that you suppose I have done to you.”

The Lethe was a river in the Land of the Dead that causes forgetfulness in the souls who drank from it. Richard III wanted Queen Elizabeth to forget the sins that he had committed against her and her family.

“Be brief, lest the report of your kindness last longer in the telling than in the duration of your kindness,” Queen Elizabeth said.

Richard III lied, “Then know that from my soul I love your daughter.”

Richard III had said that he loved her daughter with all his soul, but Queen Elizabeth deliberately misunderstood him to be saying that he loved her daughter apart from his soul — that is, not with his soul, and not at all.

“My daughter’s mother thinks it with her soul,” Queen Elizabeth said.

“What do you think?”

“That you love my daughter from your soul. So from your soul’s love you loved her brothers; and from my heart’s love I thank you for it.”

“Don’t be so hasty to misinterpret my meaning,” Richard III said. “I mean that with my soul I love your daughter, and I mean to make her Queen of England.”

“Tell me, who do you mean shall be her King?”

“He who makes her Queen. Who else should he be?”

“Do you mean yourself? You shall be her King?”

“I, yes, I. What do you think about it, madam?”

“How can you woo her?”

“How to woo her is something that I want to learn from you, as you are the one who is best acquainted with her temperament.”

“And will you learn how to do that from me?”

“Madam, with all my heart,” Richard III said.

“Then do what I tell you to do. Send to her, by the man who slew her brothers, a pair of bleeding hearts. On those hearts engrave the names Edward and York. Perhaps then

she will weep. Therefore present to her — as once old Queen Margaret gave a handkerchief steeped in your brother Rutland's blood to your father — a blood-soaked handkerchief. Say to her that this handkerchief soaked up the red blood that drained from her sweet brothers' bodies and tell her to dry her weeping eyes with it. If this inducement does not force her to love you, send her a story of your noble acts. Tell her you killed her uncle Clarence. Tell her you killed her uncle Rivers. Yes, and tell her that for her sake you killed her good aunt Anne."

"Come, come, you mock me; this is not the way for me to win your daughter."

"There is no other way unless you could put on some other shape, and not be the Richard who has done all this."

"Say that I did all this because of love of her," Richard III said.

"Then indeed she cannot choose but hate you since you have bought love with such a bloody spoil."

"Look, what is done cannot be now undone," Richard said. "Men sometimes make mistakes, which later hours give leisure to repent. If I took the Kingdom from your sons, then to make amends I'll give the Kingdom to your daughter. If I have killed the children born from your womb, then to rejuvenate your offspring I will beget children with your daughter.

"A grandmother's name is little less in love than is the loving title of a mother. Grandchildren are like children, but they are one step below. Grandchildren are of your substance and your character and your blood. Children and grandchildren cause the same amount of effort and pain, save for a night of groans in childbirth that will be endured by her, young Elizabeth of York, for whom you have already endured a night of groans.

“Your children were a vexation to your youth, but mine shall be a comfort to your old age. The loss you have is only a son who was only briefly King — Edward V — and never crowned, and by that loss your daughter will be made Queen.

“I cannot make you what amends I would like to make, so therefore accept such kindness as I can give to you.

“This fair alliance between your daughter and me shall quickly call home Dorset, your son, who now with a frightened soul leads discontented steps in foreign soil, and his returning home will result in him getting high promotions and great dignity.

“I, the King, who will call your beautiful daughter wife, shall familiarly call your son Dorset brother.

“Again you shall be mother to a King — this time you shall be a mother-in-law to a King.

“And all the ruins of distressful times shall be repaired with double riches of content.

“We have many good days to see in the future. The liquid drops of tears that you have shed shall come again, transformed to orient pearls, advantaging their loan with interest of ten times double gain of happiness.

“Go, my mother-in-law to be, go to your daughter and make bold her bashful years with your experience. Prepare her ears to hear a wooer’s tale that will put in her tender heart the aspiring flame of golden sovereignty. Acquaint the Princess with the sweet silent hours of marriage joys, and when this arm of mine has chastised and punished the petty rebel, dull-brained Buckingham, I will return wearing triumphant garlands, and I will lead your daughter to a conqueror’s bed. To her I will tell about the conquest I have won, and she shall be the sole victress, the conqueror of

Caesar — Caesar's Caesar."

"Who would it be best I say is wooing her?" Queen Elizabeth asked. "Shall I say her father's brother wants to be her husband? Or shall I say her wooer is her uncle? Or, he who slew her brothers and her uncles? What title shall I call you that God, the law, my honor, and her love can make seem pleasing to her young and tender years?"

"Say that fair England shall enjoy fair peace as a result of this alliance and marriage."

"Fair peace that England shall purchase with everlasting war."

"Say that the King, who may command, begs her to marry him."

"You beg her to do what the King of Kings forbids."

The church forbids marriage between uncle and niece.

"Say that she shall be a high and mighty Queen," Richard III said.

"That is a title that she shall bewail, as does her mother," Queen Elizabeth said.

"Say that I will love her everlastingly."

"But how long shall that 'everlastingly' last?"

"It shall remain sweetly in force until her fair life ends."

"But how long fairly shall her sweet life last?"

"As long as Heaven and nature lengthen it."

"As long as Hell and Richard want it to last."

"Say that I, her sovereign, am her subject love."

"But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty."

“Be eloquent on my behalf when you speak to her,” Richard III said.

“An honorable tale succeeds best when it is plainly told.”

“Then in plain terms tell her my loving tale.”

“Plain and *not* honorable is too harsh a style.”

“Your arguments for going against my wishes are too shallow and too quick.”

One meaning of “quick” is “alive,” and Queen Elizabeth deliberately misunderstood Richard to use that meaning rather than “hasty.”

“Oh, no, my arguments are too deep and dead,” Queen Elizabeth said. “Too deep and dead are my poor infants in their grave.”

“Harp not on that string, madam; that is past,” Richard said.

“Harp on it I always shall until my heartstrings break.”

“Now, by my George, my garter, and my crown —”

“You have profaned your George, dishonored your garter, and usurped your crown,” Queen Elizabeth said.

The George is a jeweled ornament depicting Saint George. The garter is a decorative leg-band showing membership in the Order of the Garter, the highest order of English knighthood. Both the George and the garter are emblems of chivalry.

Richard III began to say, “I swear —”

“— by nothing,” Queen Elizabeth interrupted, “because this is no oath. The George, profaned by you, has lost its holy honor. The garter, blemished by you, has pawned its knightly virtue. The crown, usurped by you, has disgraced

its Kingly glory. If you want to swear by something that will make your oath be believed, swear by something that you have not wronged.”

“Now, by the world —”

“The world is full of your foul wrongs.”

“My father’s death —”

“Your life has dishonored your father’s death.”

“Then, by myself —”

“You misuse yourself. You are not the person you ought to be.”

“Why then, by God —”

“You have wronged God most of all,” Queen Elizabeth said. “If you had feared to break the oath you made by Him, the unity between opposing factions that King Edward IV, your brother, made would not have been broken, nor had my brother — Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers — been slain. If you had feared to break the oath you made by Him, the imperial metal, the crown that now circles your brow, would have graced the tender temples of my child, and both of the young Princes would still be breathing here in this world, but now they are two young playfellows to dust — your broken faith has made them a prey for worms.

“What can you swear by now?”

“The time to come,” Richard III said.

“You have wronged the future, for I myself have many tears to wash my face in the future because of wrongs that you have committed in the past. Some children live, whose parents you have slaughtered, who will spend their youths without parental guidance, and they will wail for it in their

old age. Some parents live, whose children you have butchered, parents who are now old, withered, barren plants, and in their old age they bewail the loss of their children.

“Swear not by the time that is to come; for that you have misused before it is used, by misusing time that has already passed.”

“As I intend to prosper and repent, so may I thrive in my dangerous battle against hostile arms! May I destroy myself if I do not intend to prosper and repent! May Heaven and Lady Fortune keep happy hours away from me! Day, do not give me your light; night, do not give me your rest! Oppose me, all planets of good luck, and ruin my proceedings. May all this happen to me if I do not regard your beauteous Princessly daughter with the love of a pure heart, with immaculate devotion, and with holy thoughts. In her consists my happiness and yours. Unless I have her, what will follow to this land and me, and to you, herself, and many a Christian soul, will be death, desolation, ruin, and decay. These bad things cannot be avoided except by my marrying her. These bad things will not be avoided except by my marrying her.

“Therefore, good mother-in-law to be — I must call you so — be the attorney of my love to her. Plead what I will be, not what I have been. Do not plead what I deserve, but what I will deserve. Urge the necessity and the state of times, and do not be obstinately foolish when great affairs of the world are at stake.”

“Shall I thus be tempted by the devil?” Queen Elizabeth asked.

“Yes, if the devil tempt you to do good,” Richard III replied.

According to Christian belief, the devil tempts people to do

good only when the result will be a greater evil.

“Shall I forget myself to be myself? Shall I forget that I was the mother of a King — Edward V — whom you killed? Shall I forget that simply so that I can be the mother of a Queen?”

“Yes, you should forget that memory if that memory hurts you.”

“But you killed my children.”

“But I will bury them in your daughter’s womb, where in that nest of spicery they shall breed copies of themselves, to your consolation.”

Richard III was referring to the myth of the phoenix, a bird that sets itself on fire in a nest of spices. After burning, the phoenix arises, newly young, from the ashes.

“Shall I go now and persuade my daughter to do what you want her to do?” Queen Elizabeth asked.

“Yes, and by doing so, you will be a happy mother.”

“I am going now,” Queen Elizabeth said. “Write to me very soon, and I will let you know what she thinks.”

Richard III kissed her and said, “Carry to her my true love’s kiss; and so, farewell.”

Queen Elizabeth exited.

King Richard III, who thought that he had persuaded Queen Elizabeth to persuade her daughter, young Elizabeth of York, to marry him, said about her, “Relenting, soft-hearted fool, and shallow, naïve, changing woman!”

Ratcliff, with Catesby following him, came over to Richard III, who said, “How are you, Ratcliff? What is the news?”

“My gracious sovereign, on the western coast of England rides a powerful navy; to the shore throng many doubt-filled hollow-hearted friends, who are unarmed and who are not determined to beat your enemies back. It is thought that the Earl of Richmond is the navy’s admiral, and there they drift, expecting that the forces of Buckingham will welcome them ashore.”

“Some swift-footed friend needs to ride to my ally, the Duke of Norfolk,” Richard III said. “You yourself, Ratcliff, or Catesby. Where is Catesby?”

“Here I am, my lord.”

“Fly to the Duke of Norfolk.”

Richard III then said to Ratcliff, “You ride to Salisbury. When you arrive there —”

Seeing Catesby, Richard III said, “Dull, unmindful villain, why are you standing still? Why aren’t you on the way to see the Duke of Norfolk?”

“First, mighty sovereign, let me know your mind,” Catesby said. “Tell me what message from your grace I shall deliver to him.”

“True, good Catesby,” Richard III said, “tell him immediately to raise the greatest, strongest, and most powerful army he can, and then to meet me soon at Salisbury.”

“I am going now,” Catesby said as he exited.

Ratcliff asked Richard III, “What is your highness’ pleasure I shall do at Salisbury?”

“Why, what would you do there before I go there?” Richard III asked.

“Your highness told me I should ride there before you do.”

“I have changed my mind, sir,” Richard III said. “I have changed my mind.”

Lord Stanley, the Earl of Derby, arrived and walked over to Richard III.

“How are you?” Richard III asked. “What news have you brought?”

“None so good, my lord, as to please you with the hearing, nor none so bad, but it may well be told.”

“A riddle!” Richard III said sarcastically. “Neither good nor bad! Why are you running your mouth so many miles in a circle, when you could tell your tale simply and directly? Once more, what news have you brought?”

“Richmond’s navy is on the seas.”

“There let him sink, and let the seas be on him!” Richard III said. “That white-livered renegade, what is he doing there?”

“I don’t know, mighty sovereign, but I can make a guess,” Lord Stanley said.

“Well, sir, since you can make a guess, what guess do you make?”

“Stirred up by Dorset, Buckingham, and the Bishop of Ely, he is making for England, and he intends there to claim the crown.”

“Is the throne empty? Is the sword of state unwielded? Is the King dead? Is the empire unpossessed?” Richard III said.

Using the royal plural, he said, “What heir of York is there alive but we? And who is England’s King but great York’s heir?”

He ignored any claims the House of Lancaster could make to the throne. As far as the House of York was concerned, Clarence's son was still alive.

Richard III next asked, "So tell me what is he doing upon the sea?"

"Unless for the reason I have already stated, my liege, I cannot guess."

"Unless for the reason that he comes to be your liege, you cannot guess why the Welshman comes," Richard III said.

The Earl of Richmond was Welsh; he was descended from the Welshman Owen Tudor and Katherine of Valois, the widow of King Henry V.

Richard III then said to Lord Stanley, "You will revolt and fly to him, I fear."

"No, I won't, mighty liege," Lord Stanley replied. "Therefore, do not mistrust me."

"Where is your army, then, to beat him back?" Richard III asked. "Where are your tenants and your followers? They should be soldiers opposing the Earl of Richmond. Aren't they now upon the western shore, safely conducting the rebels from their ships?"

"No, my good lord," Lord Stanley said. "My friends are in the north."

"They are cold friends to Richard. What are they doing in the north, when they should be serving their sovereign in the west?"

"They have not been commanded, mighty sovereign, to come and serve you. If it pleases your majesty to give me leave, I'll muster my friends and meet your grace where and at what time your majesty shall please."

“Yes, yes,” Richard III replied. “You want to leave so you can join forces with the Earl of Richmond. I will not trust you, sir.”

“Most mighty sovereign, you have no cause to doubt my friendship. I never have been and never will be false to you.”

“Well, go muster men, but — listen to me carefully — leave behind your son and heir, George Stanley,” Richard III said. “Look that your faith to me is firm, or else his head’s assurance is frail. If you are not loyal to me, your son will lose his head.”

“Deal with him in the same way as I prove true and faithful to you,” Lord Stanley said, and then he exited.

A messenger arrived and said, “My gracious sovereign, I am well informed by friends that now in Devonshire several people are in arms against you: Sir Edward Courtney, and the haughty prelate the Bishop of Exeter, his brother there, and many more confederates.”

Another messenger arrived and said, “My liege, in Kent the Guildfords are in arms against you, and every hour more confederates flock to their aid, and continually their power increases.”

A third messenger arrived and said, “My lord, the army of the Duke of Buckingham —”

Angry, King Richard III said, “Damn you, owls! Do you sing nothing except songs of death?”

The cry of the screech owl was thought to be ominous — an omen of death.

Richard III struck the third messenger and said, “Take that, until you bring me better news.”

The third messenger replied, “The news I have to tell your majesty is that because of sudden floods and rainstorms, Buckingham’s army has been dispersed and scattered, and Buckingham himself has wandered away alone, no man knows where.”

This was good news for Richard III, and he said, “I beg your pardon. Here is some money to cure any injury caused by that blow I gave you. Has any well-advised, prudent friend proclaimed a reward to the man who brings the traitor Buckingham in?”

The third messenger replied, “Such proclamation of a reward has been made, my liege.”

A fourth messenger arrived and reported, “It is said, my liege, that Sir Thomas Lovel and Lord Marquess Dorset in Yorkshire are in arms against you. Yet I bring to your grace some good news and comfort. The French navy of the Earl of Richmond has been dispersed by a tempest. Richmond, in Yorkshire, sent out a boat to the shore to ask those on the banks if they were on his side, yes or no. They answered him that they came from Buckingham and were of his party. Richmond, mistrusting them, hoisted sail and set off to return to Brittany, France.”

“March on, march on, since we are up in arms,” Richard III said. “If don’t fight against foreign enemies, yet we can beat down these rebels here at home.”

Catesby returned and said, “My liege, the Duke of Buckingham has been captured — that is the best news. That the Earl of Richmond has with a mighty army landed at Milford Haven, on the coast of Wales, is colder tidings, yet they must be told.”

“Let’s march towards Salisbury!” Richard III said. “While we talk here, a battle to determine who sits on the throne might be won and lost. Someone deliver an order that

Buckingham be brought to Salisbury; the rest march on with me.”

— 4.5 —

In the house of Lord Stanley, the Earl of Derby, Sir Christopher Urswick and Lord Stanley talked.

Lord Stanley said, “Sir Christopher, tell the Earl of Richmond this from me. In the sty of this most bloody boar named Richard, my son and heir, George Stanley, is imprisoned and under guard. If I revolt against Richard, off goes young George’s head. The fear of that keeps me from offering aid to Richmond right now.”

The Earl of Richmond was Lord Stanley’s stepson.

Lord Stanley added, “But, tell me, where is Princely Richmond now?”

“He is at Pembroke, or at Haverfordwest, in Wales.”

“What men of name — men with titles — resort to him?”

“Sir Walter Herbert, who is a renowned soldier, as well as Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sir William Stanley, the Earl of Oxford, respected Pembroke, Sir James Blunt, and Rice ap Thomas with a valiant crew. Also, many more of noble fame and worth.”

“Ap” was part of some Welsh surnames.

Sir Christopher added, “They will march toward London if they don’t encounter any resistance. If they do encounter resistance, they will fight.”

Lord Stanley said, “Return to Richmond, your lord. Give him my greetings. Tell him that Queen Elizabeth has heartily consented that he shall marry her daughter, young Elizabeth of York.”

He handed Sir Christopher Urswick a letter and said, "This letter will inform him about what I think. Farewell."

CHAPTER 5 (Richard III)

— 5.1 —

In a field of Salisbury, the Sheriff and some halberdiers led Buckingham to the place of execution.

“Won’t King Richard let me speak with him?” Buckingham asked.

“No, my good lord,” the Sheriff replied. “Therefore be patient.”

“Hastings, and Edward IV’s children, Rivers, Grey, Holy King Henry VI, and King Henry VI’s fair son — Edward, Prince of Wales — as well as Vaughan, and all others who have died because of underhand, corrupted, foul injustice, if your angry, discontented souls do through the clouds behold this present hour, get your revenge by mocking my destruction!” Buckingham said.

He then asked, “This is All-Souls’ Day, fellows, is it not?”

“It is, my lord,” the Sheriff said.

On All-Souls’ Day, Catholics pray for the souls of the dead, including souls in Purgatory.

“Why, then All-Souls’ Day is my body’s doomsday — it is my final day,” Buckingham said. “This is the doomsday that, in King Edward IV’s time, I wished that might fall on me, if I was ever found to be false and disloyal to his children or to his wife’s allies. This is the day on which I wished to fall by the false faith of the man I most trusted — Richard.

“This All-Souls’ Day to my frightened soul is the appointed day on which the respite for the punishment of my sins ends. That high All-Seer Whom I trifled with has turned

my feigned prayer on my head and given to me in earnest what I begged for in jest.

“Thus does He — God — force the swords of wicked men to turn their own points on the wicked men’s bosoms. Now old Queen Margaret’s curse has fallen upon my head. ‘When Richard,’ said she, ‘shall split your heart with sorrow, remember that Margaret was a prophetess.’

“Come, sirs, convey me to the block of shame where my head will be cut off. Wrong has only wrong, and blame is the due of blame. I have done wrong, and so I will suffer wrong. I am blameworthy, and so I will be blamed.”

— 5.2 —

At their camp near Tamworth in central England, the Earl of Richmond stood with some of his followers: the Earl of Oxford, Sir James Blunt, Sir Walter Herbert, and others. Near them were drummers and flag-bearers.

Using the royal plural, the Earl of Richmond said, “Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends, bruised underneath the yoke of tyranny, thus far into the middle of the land have we marched on without impediment and resistance and here we receive from our stepfather, Lord Stanley, some lines of fair comfort and encouragement in a letter.

“The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar — Richard — spoiled your summer fields and fruitful vines. He also swills your warm blood like hogwash and makes his trough in your disemboweled bodies. This foul swine lies now even in the center of this isle, near the town of Leicester, as we learn. From Tamworth to Leicester is only one day’s march.

“In God’s name, let us cheerfully go on, courageous friends, so we can reap the harvest of perpetual peace by this one bloody trial of sharp war.”

Oxford replied, “Every man’s conscience is a thousand swords that will fight against that bloody homicide — Richard.”

Herbert said, “I don’t doubt that Richard’s friends will fly to join us.”

Blunt said, “Richard has no friends but those who are loyal to him out of fear of what he will do to them if they are not loyal. When he needs their help most, they will shrink from him.”

The Earl of Richmond replied, “All of this is to our advantage. So then, in God’s name, march. True hope is swift, and flies with swallow’s wings. Kings it makes gods, and creatures of lower status it makes Kings.”

— 5.3 —

On a field in Bosworth, where the battle would be fought the following day, stood the fully armed King Richard III. With him were the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Suffolk, and others.

King Richard III ordered, “Here pitch our tents, here in Bosworth field.”

He then asked, “My Lord of Surrey, why do you look so sad?”

“My heart is ten times lighter than my looks,” the Earl of Surrey replied.

“My Lord of Norfolk —” Richard III said.

“I am here, most gracious liege.”

“Norfolk, we must have blows in battle, ha! Mustn’t we?”

“We must both give and take blows, my gracious lord,” the Duke of Norfolk replied.

“Put my tent up there!” Richard III ordered. “I lie here tonight, but where will I lie tomorrow? Well, all’s one for that. It doesn’t matter.”

He then asked, “Who has reconnoitered the number of the foe?”

“Six or seven thousand is their utmost power,” the Duke of Norfolk replied.

“Why, the number of soldiers in our battalion triples that number,” Richard III said. “Besides, the King’s name is a tower of strength, which they in the adverse party lack.”

He ordered for the third time, “Up with my tent there!”

Then he said, “Valiant gentlemen, let us survey the battlefield to see which part is most advantageous to place our troops. Call for some men of sound tactical knowledge. Let’s lack no discipline and make no delay, for, lords, tomorrow is a busy day.”

On the other side of the battlefield, Richmond stood with Sir William Brandon, the Earl of Oxford, and others. Some soldiers were pitching his tent.

Richmond said, “The weary Sun has made a golden set, and by the bright track of his fiery chariot, gives token of a good day tomorrow.

“Sir William Brandon, you shall bear my standard — my flag.

“Give me some ink and paper in my tent. I’ll draw the form and layout of our army, appoint each leader to his individual charge, and share in just proportion our small strength.

“My Lord of Oxford, and you, Sir William Brandon, and you, Sir Walter Herbert, stay with me.

“The Earl of Pembroke is staying with his regiment. Good Captain Blunt, bear my ‘good night’ to him and tell him that by the second hour in the morning I want him to go to my tent and see me. Yet one thing more, good Blunt, before you go, where is Lord Stanley quartered — do you know?”

“Unless I have greatly mistaken his colors — battle flags — which I am very sure I have not done, his regiment lies half a mile at least south from the mighty army of King Richard III.”

“If it is possible to do without great danger, good Captain Blunt, bear my ‘good night’ to him, and give him from me this very important letter.”

“Upon my life, my lord, I’ll undertake the task,” Sir James Blunt replied, “and so, God give you quiet rest tonight!”

“Good night, good Captain Blunt,” Richmond said. “Come, gentlemen, let us plan tomorrow’s business inside our tent; the air is raw and cold.”

On the other side of the battlefield, the Duke of Norfolk, Ratcliff, Catesby, and others went to Richard III, who asked, “What time is it?”

“It’s suppertime, my lord,” Catesby replied. “It’s nine o’clock.”

It was late for suppertime, but Catesby knew that Richard III had not eaten.

“I will not have supper tonight,” Richard III said. “Give me some ink and paper. Is the beaver of my helmet easier to manipulate than it was? And is all my armor laid in my tent?”

“It is, my liege,” Catesby replied. “All things are in readiness.”

“Good Norfolk, hasten to your charge,” Richard III said.
“Put up careful watch, choose trusty sentinels.”

“I go, my lord,” the Duke of Norfolk replied.

“Get up with the morning lark tomorrow, noble Norfolk,”
Richard III said.

“I promise you that I will, my lord.”

He exited.

“Catesby!” Richard III called.

“My lord?” Catesby replied.

“Send out a Pursuivant-at-Arms to Lord Stanley’s
regiment. Tell him to bring his army before the Sun rises,
lest George, his son, fall into the blind cave of eternal night.
If Lord Stanley fails to obey my order, his son will die.”

A Pursuivant-at-Arms is a junior officer who attends a
herald.

Catesby exited.

Richard III ordered, “Fill me a bowl of wine. Give me a
clock. Saddle my horse, which is named White Surrey, for
the battlefield tomorrow. Look that my lances are sound,
and not too heavy.”

He then called, “Ratcliff!”

“My lord?” Ratcliff replied.

“Have you seen the melancholy Lord Northumberland?”
Richard III asked.

“The Earl of Surrey and he, at around twilight, the time for
shutting away chickens, went from troop to troop through
the army, cheering up the soldiers.”

“I am satisfied,” Richard III said. “Give me a bowl of wine: I don’t have that brisk readiness of spirit, nor cheerfulness of mind, that I used to have. Set the wine down. Are ink and paper ready?”

“They are, my lord,” Ratcliff replied.

“Tell my guard to keep watch; leave me. Ratcliff, about the middle of the night come to my tent and help to arm me. Leave me, I say.”

Ratcliff and Richard III’s attendants departed, leaving the guard behind.

On the other side of the battlefield, Lord Stanley, the Earl of Derby, went to visit the Earl of Richmond. This was a secret meeting between stepfather and stepson because Lord Stanley was supposed to fight for Richard III during the upcoming battle.

Lord Stanley said, “May fortune and victory guide your destiny! May you be victorious tomorrow!”

“May all the comfort that the dark night can afford be yours, noble stepfather!” Richmond replied.

Using the royal plural, he said, “Tell me, how is our loving mother?”

“I, as your mother’s deputy, bless you from your mother, who prays continually for your good. So much for that. The silent hours steal on, and flakes of darkness break in the East.

“In brief — for the time bids us to be brief — prepare your army early in the morning, and put your fortune to the arbitration of bloody sword strokes and death-dealing war.

“I, as I may — that which I would like to do, which is to support you openly, I cannot — will as best I can secretly

support your side and aid you in this doubtful shock of arms. But I may not be too openly on your side lest, if I am seen supporting you, your stepbrother, young George, be executed in his father's sight.

“Farewell. The lack of leisure time and the fears of this time cut off the ceremonious vows of love and ample interchange of sweet discourse, which family members as long separated as we should dwell upon. May God give us leisure for these rites of love! Once more, *adieu*. Be valiant, and prosper well!”

Richmond ordered, “Good lords, conduct Lord Stanley to his regiment. I'll strive, with troubled thoughts, to take a nap, lest leaden slumber weigh me down tomorrow, when I should mount with wings of victory. Once more, good night, kind lords and gentlemen.”

Everyone except Richmond exited.

He prayed, “Oh, You, Whose captain I account myself, look on my military forces with a gracious eye; put in their hands Your bruising irons of wrath, so that they may crush with a heavy fall the usurping helmets of our adversaries! Make us Your ministers of chastisement, so that we may praise You in the victory! To You I commend my watchful soul, before I let fall the windows — the eyelids — of my eyes. Sleeping and waking, defend me always!”

He fell asleep.

On the opposite side of the battlefield, Richard III was also asleep.

Ghosts began to appear in the dreams of King Richard III and the Earl of Richmond.

The ghost of Prince Edward, son of King Henry VI, appeared.

To Richard III, he said, "Let me sit heavy on your soul tomorrow! Think about how you stabbed me in the prime of my youth at Tewksbury. Despair, therefore, and die!"

To Richmond, he said, "Be cheerful, Richmond; for the wronged souls of butchered Princes fight in your behalf. King Henry VI's son thus comforts you, Richmond."

The ghost of King Henry VI appeared.

To Richard III, he said, "When I was mortal, my anointed body was punched full of deadly holes by you. Think about the Tower of London and me. Despair, and die! Harry VI tells you to despair, and die!"

To Richmond, he said, "Virtuous and holy, you will be conqueror! Harry, who prophesied that you would be King, thus comforts you in your sleep. Live, and flourish!"

The ghost of Clarence appeared.

To Richard III, he said, "Let me sit heavy on your soul tomorrow! I, who was washed to death with nauseating wine, am poor Clarence, who by your guile was betrayed to death! Tomorrow in the battle think about me, and drop your blunt sword. Despair, and die!"

To Richmond, he said, "You offspring of the House of Lancaster, the wronged heirs of the House of York pray for you. May good angels guard your army! Live, and flourish!"

The ghosts of Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan appeared.

Rivers said, "Let me sit heavy on your soul tomorrow. I am Rivers, who died at Pomfret! Despair, and die!"

Grey said to Richard III, "Think about Grey, and let your soul despair!"

Vaughan said to Richard III, "Think about Vaughan, and

with guilty fear, let your lance drop. Despair, and die!”

All together, the three ghosts said to Richmond, “Awaken, and think that our wrongs in Richard’s bosom will conquer him! Awaken, and win the day!”

The ghost of Hastings appeared.

Hastings said to Richard III, “Bloodthirsty and guilty, guiltily awaken, and in a bloody battle end your days! Think about Lord Hastings. Despair, and die!”

To Richmond he said, “Quiet untroubled soul, awaken, awaken! Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England’s sake!”

The ghosts of the two young Princes appeared.

To Richard III they said together, “Dream about your nephews who were smothered in the Tower of London. Let us be led within your bosom, Richard, and weigh you down to ruin, shame, and death! Your nephews’ souls tell you to despair and die!”

To Richmond they said, “Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and wake in joy. May good angels guard you from the boar’s annoyance! Live, and beget a happy race of Kings! Edward IV’s unhappy sons tell you to flourish.”

The ghost of Lady Anne appeared.

To Richard III she said, “Richard, your wife, that wretched Anne who never slept a quiet hour with you, now fills your sleep with perturbations. Tomorrow in the battle think about me, and drop your blunt sword. Despair, and die!”

To Richmond she said, “You quiet soul, sleep a quiet sleep. Dream of success and happy victory! Your adversary’s wife prays for you.”

The ghost of Buckingham appeared.

To Richard III he said, "I was the first who helped you to the crown; I was the last who felt your tyranny. In the battle think about Buckingham, and die in terror of your guiltiness! Dream on, dream on, dream of bloody deeds and death. Fainting, despair; despairing, yield your breath!"

To Richmond he said, "I died because I hoped to render you aid before I was able to yield you aid. But cheer your heart, and do not be dismayed. May God and good angels fight on Richmond's side, and may Richard fall from the height of all his pride."

The ghosts vanished.

Still half-asleep, Richard III called, "Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds! Have mercy, Jesus!"

He woke up and said, "Wait! I was only dreaming. Coward conscience, how you are afflicting me! The candle flames burn blue — a sign of the presence of ghosts. It is now exactly midnight. Cold fearful drops — tears — stand on my trembling flesh.

"What do I fear? Myself? There's no one else nearby. Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I. Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, a murderer is here because I am here. Then fly away from here. What, from myself? Here is a great reason why I should flee from myself — lest I get revenge on myself. What, revenge myself upon myself? Alas. I love myself. Why? For any good that I myself have done to myself? No! Instead, I hate myself because of the hateful deeds committed by myself! I am a villain. Yet I lie. I am not a villain. Fool, of yourself speak well. Fool, do not flatter yourself.

"My conscience has a thousand different tongues, and every tongue brings in a different tale, and every tale condemns me for a villain. Perjury, perjury, in the highest degree. Murder, stern murder, in the direst degree. All

different kinds of sins, all used in each degree — bad, worse, worst — throng to the bar of justice, all of them crying, ‘Guilty! Guilty!’

“I shall despair. No creature loves me, and if I die, no soul shall pity me. Why should they, since I myself find in myself no pity for myself? I thought that the souls of all whom I had murdered came to my tent, and every soul threatened vengeance tomorrow on the head of me, Richard.”

Ratcliff arrived and said, “My lord!”

“By God’s wounds! Who is there?” Richard III said.

“Ratcliff, my lord; it is I. The early village rooster has twice crowed and saluted the morning. Your friends are up and buckle on their armor.”

“Ratcliff, I have dreamed a frightening dream!” Richard III said. “What do you think? Will all our friends prove to be true and loyal?”

“No doubt, my lord.”

“Ratcliff, I fear, I fear —”

“No, my good lord, do not be afraid of shadows.”

Richard III replied, “By the apostle Paul, shadows tonight have struck more terror to the soul of Richard than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers armed in proven-to-be-impenetrable armor, and led by shallow Richmond. It is not yet near day. Come, go with me. Under our tents I’ll play the eavesdropper in order to see if any soldiers mean to desert me.”

On the other side of the battlefield, some lords went to Richmond’s tent.

“Good morning, Richmond!” they said.

“I beg your pardon, lords and wakeful gentlemen,” Richmond said. “You have found me acting like a tardy sluggard here.”

A lord asked, “How have you slept, my lord?”

“Since your departure, my lords, I have enjoyed the sweetest sleep, and the fairest-boding, most encouraging dreams that ever entered a drowsy head. I dreamed that the souls whose bodies Richard murdered came to my tent, and shouted ‘Victory’ to me. I promise you that my soul is very joyful as it remembers so fair a dream.”

He then asked, “How late in the morning is it, lords?”

“It is almost the stroke of four.”

“Why, then it is time for me to arm and give orders,” Richmond said.

He said to his soldiers, “Loving countrymen, the lack of time available before we fight forbids me to say much more than I have already said, but remember this. God and our good cause fight upon our side. The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls, like high-reared fortified walls, stand before our faces. With the exception of Richard, those whom we fight against prefer to have us win than Richard, whom they follow.

“For what is the man whom they follow? Truly, gentlemen, he is a bloodthirsty tyrant and a murderer. He is a man who was raised to the throne because of bloodshed, and a man who has kept the throne because of bloodshed. He is a man who used people to get what he has, and he slaughtered those who were the means to help him achieve the throne.

“He is a base and foul stone, made precious only by the foil of England’s throne, where he is falsely set.”

Richmond was comparing Richard to a stone of little worth

— Richard was not a precious jewel — that had been placed in a foil, or setting, of great worth.

Richmond continued, “Richard is a man who has always been God’s enemy. If you fight against God’s enemy, God will justly protect you as his soldiers. If you sweat to put a tyrant down, you will sleep in peace once the tyrant is slain. If you fight against your country’s foes, your country’s fat — its wealth — shall pay the wage for your pains. If you fight to keep your wives safe, your wives shall welcome home the conquerors. If you free your children from the sword, your children’s children will repay you in your old age.

“So then, in the name of God and all these rights, raise high your flags, draw your willing swords. As for me, the ransom of my bold attempt to save England from Richard shall be this cold corpse on the Earth’s cold face. If I am captured, I shall pay no ransom to be freed — Richard will have to kill me. But if I thrive, the least of you shall share in the gain of my attempt to save England from Richard.

“Play the drums and trumpets boldly and cheerfully. God and Saint George! Richmond and victory!”

On the other side of the battlefield, King Richard III and Ratcliff spoke. With them were attendants and soldiers.

“What did Northumberland say about Richmond?” Richard III asked.

“That he was never trained as a soldier,” Ratcliff answered.

“He said the truth, and what did Surrey say then?”

“He smiled and said, ‘The better for our purpose.’”

“He was in the right; and so indeed it is,” Richard III said.

A clock began to strike, and Richard III said, “Count the

strokes.”

After the clock had finished striking, he said, “Give me an almanac. Who has seen the Sun today?”

“Not I, my lord,” Ratcliff replied.

After looking at the almanac, Richard III said, “Then he — the Sun — disdains to shine; for according to the almanac, he should have adorned the East an hour ago. A black day will it be to somebody. Ratcliff!”

“My lord?”

“The Sun will not be seen today,” Richard III said. “The sky frowns and scowls upon our army. I wish these dewy tears were off the ground — I wish the Sun would dry the dew. Not shine today! Why, what is that to me more than it is to Richmond? The same Heaven that frowns on me looks sadly upon him.”

The Duke of Norfolk arrived and said, “Arm, arm, my lord; the foe vaunts and exults in the field.”

“Come, bustle, bustle,” Richard III said. “Caparison and make ready my horse; put my horse’s trappings on it. Call up Lord Stanley and tell him to bring his army.”

He then pointed to a map as he said, “I will lead forth my soldiers to the plain, and my army shall be ordered like this. My front line of soldiers shall be drawn out all in length, consisting equally of cavalry and infantry. Our archers shall be placed in their midst. John, Duke of Norfolk, and Thomas, Earl of Surrey, shall lead these foot soldiers and horse soldiers. They thus deployed, I will follow with our main forces, which on either side shall be well flanked with our best cavalry. We will have all this and the help of Saint George to boot! What do you think, Norfolk?”

“This is a good plan, warlike sovereign,” the Duke of

Norfolk replied. He then showed Richard III a piece of paper and said, "I found this on my tent this morning."

Richard III read the piece of paper out loud, "*Jockey of Norfolk, be not too bold, for Dickon your master is bought and sold.*"

"Jockey" was a nickname for John; John was the Christian name of the Duke of Norfolk. "Dickon" was a nickname for Richard. "To be bought and sold" meant "to be betrayed for money or something of worth."

Richard III said, "This is a thing devised by the enemy. Go, gentleman, every man go to his charge. Let not our babbling dreams frighten our souls. Conscience is only a word that cowards use; it was first invented to keep the strong in awe. Let our strong arms be our conscience, and let our swords be our law. March on, join bravely, let us go pell-mell if not to Heaven, then hand in hand to Hell."

"What shall I say more than I have said? Remember with whom you are to cope. They are a sort of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways. They are a scum of Bretons from Brittany, France, and they are base lackey peasants, whom their over-filled country vomits forth and so they go to desperate ventures and assured destruction.

"You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest. You having lands, and blest with beauteous wives, they would steal the one, and stain the other.

"And who leads them but a paltry fellow, long kept in Brittany at our brother-in-law's cost?"

Charles, Duke of Burgundy, had financially supported the Earl of Richmond at the court of the Duke of Brittany. King Richard III's sister, Margaret of York, had married Charles, Duke of Burgundy.

Richard III continued, “He is a milk-sop, one who never in his life felt as much cold as is felt by one standing in snow higher than his shoes. Let’s whip these stragglers over the seas again; let’s lash away from here these overweening rags of France, these famished beggars, who are weary of their lives, and who, poor rats, except for dreaming on this foolish exploit, would hang themselves because they lack the means of supporting their lives.”

He was comparing Richmond’s soldiers to poor vagabonds who, if they were found wandering outside their own parish, would be whipped and sent back to their parish.

Richard III continued, “If we shall be conquered, let men conquer us, and not these bastard Bretons, whom our fathers have in their own land beaten, struck, and thumped, and left them the heirs of shame in the history books.”

He was referring to English victories over the French. In 1346, on a French battlefield, Edward the Black Prince, the son of King Edward III, played the role of a hero as he and his soldiers defeated the French army in the Battle of Crécy. In 1356, he also defeated the French in the Battle of Poitiers. On 25 October 1415, on the plains near the village of Agincourt, King Henry V and his army, despite being vastly outnumbered, decisively defeated the French army.

Richard III continued, “Shall these Bretons enjoy our lands? Shall they lie with our wives? Shall they rape our daughters?”

Military drums sounded.

Richard III continued, “Listen! I hear their drums. Fight, gentlemen of England! Fight, bold yeomen! Draw, archers, draw your arrows until the arrowhead touches the bent bow! Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in full vigor and in blood from your spurs. Amaze the sky with your lances that break as they hit their target!”

A messenger entered, and King Richard III asked, “What does Lord Stanley say? Will he bring his army?”

“My lord, he says that he will not come.”

“Off with the head of George, his son and heir!” Richard III shouted.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “My lord, the enemy has advanced past the marsh. Let George Stanley die after the battle.”

Richard III said, “A thousand hearts are great within my bosom. Raise our flags, set upon our foes. May our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George, inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons! Let us set upon them! Victory steers our course.”

— 5.4 —

In the middle of the battle, Catesby shouted for help for King Richard III, “Rescue, my Lord of Norfolk, rescue, rescue! The King performs more wonders than seems possible for a man! He dares every opponent to fight to the death! His horse has been slain, and he is fighting on foot, seeking Richmond in the throat of death! Rescue, fair lord, or else the day is lost!”

King Richard III appeared and shouted, “A horse! A horse! My Kingdom for a horse!”

He did not want to flee; he knew that he could fight more valiantly on horseback.

Catesby said, “Withdraw, my lord; I’ll help you to find a horse.”

Richard III was unwilling to withdraw from the battle; he wanted to fight.

He replied, “Slave, I have set my life upon a cast of the die,

and I will stand the hazard of the die, win or lose. I think six Richmonds are on the battlefield; I have slain five copies today instead of the real Richmond. Those five copies were dressed like Richmond to fool me.”

He then shouted, “A horse! A horse! My Kingdom for a horse!”

— 5.5 —

Later, King Richard III and the real Richmond met on the battlefield, and Richmond killed Richard III. Fighting continued until a retreat was sounded, and Richmond and his army were victorious. Now he stood on the battlefield with many lords, including Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby, who was holding the crown.

Richmond said, “God and your arms be praised, victorious friends. The day is ours; the bloodthirsty dog — Richard — is dead.”

Lord Stanley said, “Courageous Richmond, you have acquitted yourself well. Look here, I have plucked off this long-usurped crown from the dead temples of this bloody wretch so that you can grace your brows with it. Wear it, enjoy it, and make much of it.”

“Great God of Heaven, say ‘Amen’ to all!” Richmond said. “But, tell me, is young George Stanley living?”

Lord Stanley, George’s father, replied, “He is, my lord, and he is safe in Leicester, where, if it pleases you, we may now go.”

“What men of high rank are slain on either side?”

Lord Stanley replied, “John, the Duke of Norfolk; Walter Lord Ferrers, Sir Robert Brakenbury, and Sir William Brandon.”

“Inter their bodies as is suitable for their births,” Richmond said. Using the royal plural, he said, “Proclaim a pardon to the enemy soldiers who fled and who will in submission return to us. We took the sacrament when we vowed to marry young Elizabeth of York, and together she and I will unite the white and the red.”

He meant that by marrying young Elizabeth of York, he and she would unite the House of York and the House of Lancaster. The emblem of the House of York is a white rose, and the emblem of the House of Lancaster is a red rose. The marriage would end the enmity between the two Houses and bring peace to England. He would also be the first Tudor King.

He continued, “May Heaven smile upon this fair conjunction, this marriage; Heaven has long frowned on the enmity between the two Houses! What traitor hears me, and does not say, ‘Amen’?”

“England has long been mad, and scarred herself. The brother has blindly shed the brother’s blood. The father has rashly slaughtered his own son. The son has been forced to butcher the sire. All this divided York and Lancaster; they were divided in their dire division, for the divided Houses led to other divisions.

“Now let Richmond and Elizabeth, the true successors of each royal House, by God’s fair ordinance join together! And let their heirs, God, if Your will be so, enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace, with smiling plenty, and with fair prosperous days!

“Dull the swords of traitors, gracious Lord, who would bring these bloody days again, and make poor England weep in streams of blood! Let those who would with treason wound this fair land’s peace not live to taste this land’s prosperity!

“Now civil wounds are closed up, and now peace lives again. So that she may long live here, may God say, ‘Amen!’”

Chapter XXII: HENRY VIII

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Henry VIII*)

Male Characters

King Henry VIII.

Cardinal Thomas Wolsey. He is Archbishop of York and also Lord Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor is custodian of the Great Seal.

Cardinal Campeius.

Capucius, Ambassador from the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

Thomas Cranmer, later Archbishop of Canterbury.

Duke of Norfolk.

Duke of Buckingham.

Duke of Suffolk. His name is Charles Brandon, and he married Mary Tudor, King Henry VIII's sister.

Earl of Surrey, Buckingham's Son-in-Law.

Lord Chamberlain.

Lord Chancellor.

Gardiner, Secretary to the King; later Bishop of Winchester.

Bishop of Lincoln.

Bishop of Ely.

Bishop of Rochester.

Bishop of Saint Asaph.

Bishop of Canterbury.

Lord Sands.

Sir Henry Guildford.

Sir Thomas Lovell.

Sir Anthony Denny.

Sir Nicholas Vaux.

Secretaries to Wolsey.

Cromwell, Servant to Wolsey; later Secretary to the Privy Council.

Griffith, Gentleman-usher to Queen Catherine.

Three Gentlemen.

Doctor Butts, Physician to the King.

Garver King of Arms. The Garver King of Arms is the King of England's heraldic advisor; he is an expert on ceremonials and heraldry.

Former Surveyor to the Duke of Buckingham. He oversaw the Duke of Buckingham's estates.

Brandon.

A Sergeant-at-Arms.

Doorkeeper of the Council Chamber.

Porter, and his Assistant.

Page to Gardiner.

A Crier.

Female Characters

Queen Catherine, First Wife to King Henry, afterwards divorced and becomes Princess Dowager.

Anne Boleyn, her Maid of Honor, afterwards Henry VIII's Second Wife and Queen.

Old Lady, Friend to Anne Boleyn.

Patience, Woman Servant to Queen Catherine.

Minor Characters

Several Lords and Ladies in the Dumb Shows.

Women attending upon the Queen.

Scribes, Officers, Guards, and other Attendants.

Spirits.

Scene

London; Westminster; Kimbolton.

Nota Bene

Anne Boleyn is Anne Bullen in Shakespeare's play, and Catherine is Katherine in Shakespeare's play. I have used the spellings that are most often used in our time.

Catherine is Catherine of Aragon; she married King Henry VIII in 1509, and they were divorced on 23 May 1533.

Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer pronounced the marriage of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn valid on 18 May 1533. The marriage had taken place on 25 January 1533, but was kept secret until Anne became noticeably pregnant.

Anne Boleyn was crowned Queen of England on 1 June 1533, and she gave birth to the future Queen Elizabeth I on 7 September 1533.

William Shakespeare is thought to have co-written this play with John Fletcher.

PROLOGUE (*Henry VIII*)

The Prologue speaks directly to you, the readers:

“If I remember correctly, the last time I appeared before you, it was in a comedy, but I come no more to make you laugh. We the characters now present things that bear a weighty and a serious aspect. They are solemn, lofty, and moving, full of stateliness and woe, such noble scenes as draw the eye with tears to flow.

“Those who can feel pity, may, if they think it good to do, let a tear fall here while reading this work of art. The theme of our work of art will deserve such pity.

“Such as give their money out of hope they may believe what they read, may find truth here, too.

“Those who come to read about only a spectacle or two will approve of this work of art, if they will be still and willing to pay attention. I’ll venture to say that they may agree that their small amount of money was well spent for the few short hours it takes to read this work of art.

“Only they who come to read a merry and bawdy work of art and to imagine a noise of swords against shields or to imagine seeing a fellow in a jester’s long motley coat trimmed with yellow will be disappointed.

“Gentle readers, you should know that our work of art shows the truth we choose to focus on. To rank it as of equal worth to such a show as is filled with fools and fights, besides forfeiting the labor of the brain and characters that created this work of art and forfeiting the goal that we have of revealing only truth, will leave us no understanding friends and audience. Such readers who rank it like that misunderstand what we are attempting to do.

“Therefore, for goodness’ sake, and as you are known as the best and happiest readers of the town — you are reading this in London, aren’t you? If you aren’t, pretend that you are — be serious as you read this, as we want you to be. Imagine that you see the very persons of our noble story as if they were living. Imagine that you see them great and high on the Wheel of Fortune, and followed by the general throng and sweat of a thousand friends, and then in a moment, see how quickly the Wheel of Fortune turns and this mightiness meets misery.

“And, if you can be merry then, I’ll say that a man may weep upon his wedding day.”

CHAPTER 1 (Henry VIII)

— 1.1 —

In an antechamber — a small room leading to a large room — in the palace in London, the Duke of Norfolk met the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Abergavenny. Lord Abergavenny was one of the Duke of Buckingham's sons-in-law.

The Duke of Buckingham said to the Duke of Norfolk, “Good morning; we have met at a good time. How have you been since we saw each other last in France?”

“I thank your grace,” the Duke of Norfolk said. “I am healthy, and ever since I left France I continue to be an enthusiastic admirer of what I saw there.”

“An untimely bout of fever made me a prisoner in my chamber when those Suns of glory, those two lights of men — King Henry VIII of England and King Francis I of France — met in the valley of Andren,” the Duke of Buckingham said.

They were talking about a summit held between the two Kings from 7 to 24 June 1520 in the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “It was held between the English-held town of Guynes and the French-held town of Ardres. I was present and saw the two Kings salute on horseback. I also saw, when they dismounted, how they clung in their embracement, as if they grew together. And if they had grown together and formed one compounded King, what four enthroned Kings could have equaled such a compounded one?”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “The entire time I was a

prisoner of illness in my chamber.”

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Then you lost the view of Earthly glory. Men might say that until this time of the meeting of the two Kings pomp was single, but now pomp is married to one above itself. With the meeting of the two Kings, pomp moved to a higher level, as if it had married into a higher social class.

“Each following day became the next day’s master, until the last day made all former wonders its own. Each day was more splendid than the previous day.

“One day the French, all glittering, all in gold, like heathen gods made of precious metals, outshone and out-glittered the English. But the next day, the English made Britain appear to be wealthy India. Every English man who stood looked like a gold mine. Their dwarfish pages were similar to cherubim, all in gold. The ladies of rank, too, not used to toil, almost sweat to bear the proud and splendid attire upon them, so that their labor made their faces red as if they were wearing blush.

“This masque was cried incomparable, but the ensuing night made it in comparison seem to be a fool and beggar.

“The two Kings, equal in luster, were now best, now worst, according to which one was present. Whoever was in the public eye was always the one receiving praise, and when both Kings were present, people said they saw only one King because the two Kings were equal in splendor. No discerning viewer dared to wag his tongue in censure and rate one King higher than the other.

“When these Suns — for that is what people called the two Kings — had their heralds challenge the noble spirits to arms, the two Suns performed beyond what was thought possible, so that stories that were formerly thought to be fabulous fabrications were now seen to be possible enough,

and so the old stories got credit and even the improbable stories about the hero Bevis, the protagonist of the verse romance *Bevis of Hampton* who battled giants, dragons, and other mythological creatures, were believed.”

“Oh, you go too far,” the Duke of Buckingham said.

“As a noble of high rank who loves and seeks honesty in matters of honor, I say that the relation of everything that happened would lose some life even when told by a good raconteur. The actions spoke for themselves far better than even a good storyteller could.

“All was royal. Nothing rebelled against its management. Everything was arranged so that each sight was clearly visible, and each official performed his duty perfectly and with distinction.”

The Duke of Buckingham asked, “Who guided — I mean, who set the body and the limbs of this great entertainment together, do you guess?”

“One, certainly, who does not lead one to expect him to be a part of such a business,” the Duke of Norfolk said.

“Please tell me whom you mean, my lord,” the Duke of Buckingham said.

“All this was arranged by the good discretion of the right reverend Cardinal Wolsey of York.”

“May the Devil — not God! — make him prosper!” the Duke of Buckingham said. “No man’s pie is freed from his ambitious finger — he has a finger in every pie. What business had he with these fierce vanities? I wonder that such a keech can with his very bulk take up the rays of the beneficial Sun and keep them from the Earth.”

A keech is the fat of a slaughtered animal, fat that has been rolled up into a ball. Cardinal Wolsey was both fat and the

son of a butcher.

The Duke of Buckingham knew, of course, that Cardinal Wolsey was a powerful man who had the ear of King Henry VIII. He felt that Cardinal Wolsey was preventing King Henry VIII from doing good things for England. Cardinal Wolsey was using his fat bulk to keep the Sun's — Henry VIII's — beneficial rays from reaching England.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Surely, sir, there's in him stuff and qualities that cause him to do such things. For, since he is the son of a butcher, he is not propped up by a noble ancestry, whose grace shows successors their way to success, nor is he acclaimed for high feats done on behalf of the crown. Neither is he allied with eminent assistants; he has no important connections. Instead, like a spider, out of his self-made web, he let us know that the force of his own merit makes for him a passageway to success — his merit is a gift that Heaven bestows on him, and his merit buys for him a place next to the King. He lacks a good family, notable deeds of service, and good connections, but nevertheless he has other qualities that Heaven gave him that enable him to make for himself a position next to King Henry VIII.”

Lord Abergavenny said, “I cannot tell what Heaven has given Cardinal Wolsey — let some graver eye than mine pierce into that, but I can see his pride peep through each part of him. Where did he get that pride? If he didn't get it from Hell, then the Devil is niggardly and keeps all the pride or has already given it all away. If Cardinal Wolsey didn't get his pride from Hell, then he begins a new Hell in himself.”

A proud person regards himself as the center of the universe. Out of pride, Lucifer rebelled against God. Lucifer was thrown out of Heaven and fell to Earth, where he hit with such impact that he reached the center of the

Earth. His fall created the nine circles of Hell that Dante writes about in his *Inferno*. Dante believed that the Earth was the center of the universe, and since Lucifer is at the center of the Earth, Lucifer is at the center of the universe. Pride created Hell, and if Cardinal Wolsey did not get his pride from the previously existing Hell, then he is creating a new Hell with his pride.

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Why the Devil, upon this expedition to France, did Cardinal Wolsey take upon him, without the participation and knowledge of the King, to appoint who should attend on him?”

“Cardinal Wolsey makes up the list of all the gentry who attend on the King. For the most part those on the list are those whom Cardinal Wolsey means to extract as much money and give as little honor as he can in return. Without consulting the honorable Board of Council, aka the Privy Council, he sends his letter to the nobles and they accompany the King and pay great expenses.”

The Duke of Buckingham objected to the great expense of such an expedition to France. He believed that the whole Board of Council, and not just Cardinal Wolsey, should decide which nobles would accompany King Henry VIII on such a foreign expedition.

Lord Abergavenny said, “I know of at least three kinsmen of mine who have by this action of Cardinal Wolsey so sickened their estates that they will never again be as wealthy as they were previously.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Oh, many have broken their backs with laying manors on them for this great journey.”

Nobles would sell manors in order to buy fabulously expensive clothing for such an expedition.

The Duke of Buckingham continued, “What good did this expensive vanity accomplish? The two Kings met and conferred, but the result of their conference was very poor, and it impoverished the children of the nobles forced to accompany our King.”

“I grieve when I say that the peace treaty made between the French and us was not worth the cost that it took to make it,” the Duke of Norfolk said.

“After the peace between England and France was made, a hideous storm followed, and every man became an inspired prophet. Without previously consulting each other, they all made the same prophecy — they said that this tempest, destroying the garment of this peace, foretold the sudden breach of the treaty.”

“And the prophecy turned out to be true,” the Duke of Norfolk said, “for France has broken the peace treaty and has confiscated the goods of our merchants at Bordeaux.”

Lord Abergavenny asked, “Is that the reason Cardinal Wolsey has silenced the French ambassador and has placed him under house arrest?”

“Yes, it is,” the Duke of Norfolk replied.

Lord Abergavenny said sarcastically, “What a ‘good’ peace treaty, and purchased at such a highly wasteful rate!”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Our reverend Cardinal Wolsey has managed all this business. He is the one responsible.”

The Duke of Norfolk said, “May it please your grace, the government is aware of the private quarrel between you and the Cardinal. I advise you — and take it from a heart that wishes towards you honor and much safety — that you take into account both Cardinal Wolsey’s malice and his

power. He is a formidable enemy. Consider further that he does not lack the power and agents to do to you whatever his great hatred of you wants to do. You know his nature; you know that he's revengeful. And I know that his sword has a sharp edge. His sword is long and it reaches far, and where it will not extend, there he shoots an arrow. Take my advice to heart — you'll find it wholesome.”

He then said, “Look, that rock that I advise you to shun and avoid is coming. Unless you steer clear of that rock, you will shipwreck.”

Cardinal Wolsey, who was also Lord Chancellor, walked into the anteroom. A bag containing the Great Seal, an emblem of the Lord Chancellor, was carried before him. Some members of the guard and two secretaries holding papers accompanied him.

Cardinal Wolsey and the Duke of Buckingham stared at each other with hatred. They were far enough apart that they could not hear what the other said.

Cardinal Wolsey said to the first secretary, “Where's the deposition of the Duke of Buckingham's surveyor?”

The Duke of Buckingham's surveyor was actually his former surveyor. He had been recently fired as the overseer of the Duke of Buckingham's estates.

The first secretary replied, “Here it is, if it please you.”

“Is he here in person and ready to give evidence?” Cardinal Wolsey asked.

“Yes, if it please your grace,” the first secretary replied.

“Well, we shall then know more, and Buckingham shall not look at me with such a haughty look.”

Cardinal Wolsey and his train of attendants exited.

Referring to Cardinal Wolsey's parentage, the Lord of Buckingham said, "This butcher's cur — mean dog — is venom-mouthed, and I don't have the power to muzzle him; therefore, it is best that I not wake him from his slumber. Let sleeping dogs lie."

He added, "A beggar's book learning is regarded more highly than a noble's blood."

"What, are you angry?" the Duke of Norfolk said. "Ask God for temperance; that's the only remedy that your disease requires."

The Duke of Buckingham said, "I read in his looks that he intends business against me, and his eye reviled me as if I were an object of contempt to him. At this instant, he is wounding me with some trick. He has gone to the King. I'll follow and outstare the Cardinal."

"Stay here, my lord," the Duke of Norfolk said, "and reason with your anger. Question what you are thinking about doing. To climb a steep hill requires a slow pace at first because hasty climbers have sudden falls. Anger is like a high-spirited horse, which being allowed its way, its high spirits soon tire it."

"Not a man in England can advise me like you do. Be to yourself as you would be to your friend. Take for yourself the advice you would give to your friend."

"I'll go to the King," the Duke of Buckingham said, "and from a mouth of honor quite cry down this Ipswich fellow's insolence, or else I will proclaim there's no distinction of rank or quality among people and a butcher's son is as good as a Duke."

Ipswich was the provincial town from which Cardinal Wolsey came.

“Be advised and take thought,” the Duke of Norfolk said. “Don’t heat a furnace for your foe so hot that it singes yourself.”

He was alluding to the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Chapter 3 of the Book of Daniel. They were thrown into a fiery furnace, but God protected them; however, the men who threw them into the fiery furnace died from the fire. While Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were in the fiery furnace, a fourth figure who resembled the Son of God was seen with them.

Daniel 3:19-22 states this:

19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of rage, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he charged and commanded that they should heat the furnace at once seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he charged the most valiant men of war that were in his army, to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the hot fiery furnace.

21 So these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their cloaks, with their other garments, and cast into the midst of the hot fiery furnace.

22 Therefore, because the king’s commandment was strait, that the furnace should be exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that brought forth Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. (1599 Geneva Bible)

The Duke of Norfolk continued, “We may outrun, by violent swiftness, that which we run at, and lose by over-running.

“Don’t you know that the fire that heats the liquid and makes it rise until it run over the pot, although it seems to

augment the liquid, actually wastes it?

“Be advised: I say again that there exists no English soul better to direct your course of action than yourself — if with the sap of reason you would quench, or at least lessen, the fire of passion.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “Sir, I am thankful to you; and I’ll go along with your advice to me, but this proud-to-the-top fellow, about whom I say not from the flow of anger but from sincere motives, from reliable information, and from evidence and proofs as clear as streams in July when we see each grain of gravel, that I know him to be corrupt and treasonous.”

Streams get muddy when dirt is washed into them; in the Duke of Buckingham’s experience, streams in July tend to be clear.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Don’t say the word ‘treasonous.’”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “To the King I’ll say it, and I’ll make my accusation as strong as a shore made of rock. Listen to me. Cardinal Wolsey is a holy fox, or wolf, or both — for he is equally as ravenous as he is subtle, and as prone to mischief as he is able to perform it; his mind and place infecting one another, yes, reciprocally.”

He was referring to two sayings about animals: as subtle — sly — as a fox, and as ravenous as a wolf.

He continued, “Cardinal Wolsey, only to show his pomp as well in France as here at home, persuaded the King our master to accept this recent costly treaty and the meeting of the two Kings that has swallowed so much treasure, and the treaty is like a glass that broke as it was being rinsed.”

In this culture, drinking glasses were expensive.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Truly, the peace treaty broke as easily as a drinking glass.”

“Please, let me continue to speak, sir,” the Duke of Buckingham said. “This cunning Cardinal Wolsey drew up the terms of the peace treaty as he himself pleased, and they were ratified as he cried ‘Thus let it be,’ to as much purpose as giving a crutch to a dead man, but our Count-Cardinal — our upstart Cardinal who tries to act like a Count — has done this, and it is well, for worthy Wolsey, who cannot err, did it. I am being sarcastic, of course.

“Now this follows — which, as I take it, is a kind of puppy to the old dam, treason — Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, under the pretense to see Queen Catherine, his aunt — for it was indeed his stratagem, but he really came to whisper to Cardinal Wolsey — came here and visited.

“Holy Roman Emperor Charles V’s fears were that the meeting between the King of England and the King of France might, through their amity, breed him some misfortune, for from this peace league peeped harms that menaced him. He privately dealt with our Cardinal Wolsey, and I know well — I am sure about it — that Holy Roman Emperor Charles V paid before Cardinal Wolsey promised to do as the Emperor wished, and so the Emperor’s suit was granted before it was asked.

“In short, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V got what he wanted from Cardinal Wolsey because before asking for what he wanted, he had already paved the way with gold. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V asked that Cardinal Wolsey would break the aforesaid peace treaty with France to alter the King’s planned course of peaceful action.

“Let the King know, as soon he shall learn from me, that thus Cardinal Wolsey buys and sells King Henry VIII’s honor as he pleases, and for his own advantage. Cardinal

Wolsey accepts bribes to do the bidding of people other than his King.”

The Duke of Norfolk said, “I am sorry to hear this of him, and I could wish that he were somewhat misjudged in it.”

“No, he has not been misjudged,” the Duke of Buckingham said. “Not a syllable of what I have said about him is incorrect. My report about him describes him exactly as he shall be proved to be.”

Brandon entered the antechamber, along with a Sergeant-at-Arms and two or three members of the Guard.

Brandon said to the Sergeant-at-Arms, “Your duty, Sergeant; execute it.”

The Sergeant-at-Arms said, using all the titles of the Duke of Buckingham, “Sir, my lord the Duke of Buckingham, and Earl of Hereford, Stafford, and Northampton, I arrest you for high treason, in the name of our most sovereign King.”

The Duke of Buckingham said to the Duke of Norfolk, “Look, my lord, the net has fallen upon me! I shall perish because of a plot and trickery.”

Brandon said, “I am sorry to see your liberty taken from you, and I am sorry to look on this present business, but it is his highness’ pleasure that you shall be taken to the Tower of London.”

The Duke of Buckingham said, “It won’t help me at all to plead my innocence, for a dye has been placed on me that makes my whitest part black. May the will of Heaven be done in this and all things!

“Brandon, I will do as you say.

“Oh, my Lord Abergavenny, fare you well!”

Brandon said, "No, he must bear you company in the Tower of London."

Brandon said to Lord Abergavenny, "The King wishes you to be taken to the Tower of London until you know what he decides to further do."

Lord Abergavenny replied, "As the Duke of Buckingham said, may the will of Heaven be done, and may I obey the King's pleasure!"

Brandon said, "Here is a warrant from the King to arrest Lord Montacute and to arrest the bodies of the Duke's confessor, who is named John de la Car, and one Gilbert Peck, his Chancellor —"

"I see," the Duke of Buckingham said. "These are the parts that make up the plot. No more will be arrested, I hope."

Brandon replied, "A monk of the Chartreux."

"Oh, Nicholas Hopkins?" the Duke of Buckingham asked.

"Yes, him," Brandon replied.

"My surveyor is false," the Duke of Buckingham said. "He lies and commits perjury. The over-great Cardinal Wolsey has shown him gold and bribed him to tell lies about me. My life is spanned already. The extent of my life has been measured, and its string is about to be cut.

"I am the shadow of poor Buckingham, whose figure even this instant cloud puts on, by darkening my clear Sun.

"I, poor Buckingham, am now only a shadow of what I was. This instant cloud — this immediate accusation — darkens my blameless life and takes my character and even my body away from me."

He then said to the Duke of Norfolk, "My lord, farewell."

King Henry VIII, leaning on Cardinal Wolsey's shoulder, walked into the Council Chamber of the palace in London. Sir Thomas Lovell and some other nobles accompanied them.

Henry VIII sat on a throne on a dais. Cardinal Wolsey sat on a lower level on the King's right side.

The King then said to Cardinal Wolsey, "My life itself and its most vital essence — the heart — thank you for this great care you have taken of me. I stood in the line of fire of a fully loaded conspiracy, and I give thanks to you for suppressing it."

He then ordered, "Let be called before us that gentleman of Buckingham's. In person I'll hear him confirm his confessions, and he shall again relate point by point the treasons of his master."

Outside the room, someone shouted, "Make way for the Queen!"

Queen Catherine entered the Council Chamber, accompanied by the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Suffolk. She went to the King and kneeled. King Henry VIII rose from his chair of state, raised her up from her kneeling position, kissed her, and then moved her beside him.

Using the royal plural, Queen Catherine said, "No, we must continue to kneel. I am a petitioner to you."

"Arise, and take a seat by us," King Henry VIII said. "You don't need to ask me to grant half of whatever you want because you have half of our power. The other half, before you ask me for it, is granted to you. Tell me what you want, and it is yours."

Queen Catherine replied, "I thank your majesty. The point of my petition is that you would love yourself, and in that love not leave unconsidered your honor or the dignity of your office. What I want is what is best for you, and it will not require that you lose your honor or the dignity of your position."

"My lady, continue speaking," King Henry VIII said.

"I have been solicited, not by a few, and by those of true and loyal disposition toward you, to inform you that your subjects have a great grievance and are in great distress. Tax levies have been sent down among them that have flawed the heart of all their loyalty to you."

She said to Cardinal Wolsey, "Although, my good Lord Cardinal, they vent reproaches most bitterly against you as the putter on of these extortionate taxes, yet the King our master — whose honor may Heaven shield from being soiled! — even he does not escape being the target of impolite and rude language, yes, such language as breaks the sides of loyalty, and almost appears in the midst of loud rebellion."

"Not 'almost appears,'" the Duke of Norfolk said. "It does appear, for upon receiving these notices of taxation, all the clothiers who make woolen clothing, no longer able to maintain their many employees, have laid off the spinsters who spin the wool, the carders who comb the wool, the fullers who beat the wool to clean and thicken it, and the weavers. These unemployed people, unable otherwise to make a living and compelled by hunger and lack of other means to maintain life, in desperation are daring the event to the teeth — they are accepting the dire consequences that follow from rebellion. They are all in uproar, and danger is their servant!"

"Taxation!" King Henry VIII said. "Where? And what kind

of taxation? My Lord Cardinal, you who are blamed for it alike with us, do you know about this taxation?"

Cardinal Wolsey replied, "If it pleases you, sir, I know only of a single part — one person's share — in anything that pertains to the state. I am only the most conspicuous among those who march along with me. In other words, I am only one man among other men, although I am the most conspicuous among those men."

Queen Catherine disagreed: "No, my lord. You know no more than others, but you bring to pass things that are known by everyone who marches along with you — by others in your council. You originate things such as taxes that are not wholesome to those who don't want them and yet are forced to pay them.

"These exorbitant taxes, about which my sovereign wants to have information, are very pestilent to those who bear them. In bearing these exorbitant taxes, the back is sacrificed to the load — people are sacrificed because they are considered less valuable than the taxes they pay.

"People say that the exorbitant taxes were devised by you, Cardinal. If that isn't true, then you suffer too hard an exclamation of outrage against you."

"Still talking about exorbitant taxes?" King Henry VIII said. "What is the nature of these taxes? What kind of taxation is this? Let me know that."

Queen Catherine said, "I am much too bold in testing your patience, but I am emboldened under your promised pardon."

King Henry VIII had already promised to give her whatever she wanted.

Queen Catherine continued, "The subjects' grief comes

through tax commissions, which compel from each a sixth of his wealth, to be given up without delay; and the excuse given for this tax levy is your wars in France.

“This exorbitant taxation makes mouths bold. Tongues spit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze their allegiance within them. Your subjects’ curses now live where their prayers did, and it’s come to pass that your subjects’ tractable, compliant obedience has become a slave to each incensed will.

“I wish that your highness would give that matter quick consideration, for there is no more important business than this.”

“By my life, this is against our pleasure,” King Henry VIII said.

Cardinal Wolsey said, “As for me, I have gone no further in this than by a single vote. That taxation was not imposed by me but by the learned approval of the judges of the council.

“If I am traduced and slandered by ignorant tongues, which know neither my capabilities nor me as a person and which yet want to be the chronicles of my actions, let me say that it is only the fate of a high position and the rough thicket that virtue must go through.

“We must not refrain from doing our necessary actions just because we are afraid to encounter malicious censurers — malicious censurers who always, as ravenous fishes do, follow a newly outfitted ship, but benefit no further than vainly longing.”

Sharks can follow a ship in hopes that it will sink and they can dine on sailors, but a newly outfitted ship is in good repair and unlikely to sink. Or sharks can follow a newly outfitted ship that has just set out on a journey in hopes of eating tossed-overboard food garbage, but a ship that has

just set out on a journey will probably have no food garbage to throw overboard.

Cardinal Wolsey continued, “Envious, malicious, and critical commentators, who are forever weak and deficient, often call our best accomplishments either not our accomplishments, or no accomplishments at all. Such commentators praise our worst deeds, which have a grosser quality, as being our best deeds.

“If we shall stand still out of fear that any action we take will be mocked or carped at, we would take root here where we sit, or sit as if we were only statues of statesmen.”

King Henry VIII said, “Things done well and carefully exempt themselves from fear; the outcome of things done without a precedent is to be feared. Have you a precedent for this levy of taxes? I believe that there is not any.

“We must not rend our subjects from our laws, and stick them in our will. We must treat our subjects lawfully and not subject them to any unlawful whims.

“A sixth part of each person’s wealth? That is a contribution to make one tremble! Why, if we take from every tree its small branches, bark, and part of its timber, although we leave it with a root, with the tree thus hacked, the air will drink the sap and the tree will die.

“To every county where this excessive tax is disputed, send our letters, giving free pardon to each man who has denied the force of this commission to levy excessive taxes.

“Be sure to look after it and do it. I give it to you — Cardinal Wolsey — to take care of.”

Cardinal Wolsey said to his secretary, “Let me have a word with you.”

He then said quietly so that no one but the secretary could

hear him, “Let there be letters written to every shire about the King’s grace and pardon. The aggrieved commoners harshly think of me. Let it be noised abroad that through our intercession this pardon and this repeal of the excessive taxes come.”

Cardinal Wolsey used the royal plural — “our” — when talking to the secretary. He was careful not to do that when the King and Queen and other high-ranking people could hear him.

Cardinal Wolsey added, “I shall soon advise you further in the proceeding.”

The secretary exited.

The Duke of Buckingham’s former surveyor entered the room.

Queen Catherine said to King Henry VIII, “I am sorry that the Duke of Buckingham has incurred your displeasure.”

“It grieves many people,” King Henry VIII replied. “The Duke of Buckingham is a learned gentleman and a most marvelous speaker. No one is more indebted for having been born with good qualities. His education is such that he may prepare and instruct great teachers, and never seek for aid beyond himself.

“Yet it is important to note that when these so noble qualities shall prove not well directed, the mind growing once corrupt, they turn to vicious forms, ten times more ugly than they ever were beautiful. Noble qualities used to plan and perform evil actions become ugly.

“This man is so accomplished, and he was listed among wonders. We, almost with ravished listening, could listen to him talk for an hour and it was as if not even a minute had gone by.

“He, my lady, has used the graces that once were his in monstrous habits and given them monstrous appearances, and he has become as black as if he were besmeared in Hell.

“Sit by us; you shall hear — this man who is to give testimony about him was his trusted official — things about him to strike honor sad.”

He ordered, “Tell the Duke of Buckingham’s surveyor to recount the treacheries he has previously testified about. We cannot regard those treacheries as too little — lacking in loyalty and morality, and not deserving severe punishment — or hear too much about them.”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “Stand forth, and with bold spirit relate the information that you, most like a concerned subject, have collected as evidence by watching the Duke of Buckingham.”

“Speak freely,” King Henry VIII ordered.

The Duke of Buckingham’s former surveyor replied, “First, it was usual with him — every day it would infect his speech — that if the King should die without leaving behind a legitimate child, he would arrange things to make the scepter his. These very words I’ve heard him utter to his son-in-law, Lord Abergavenny. And to Lord Abergavenny he swore a menacing oath that he would get revenge upon the Cardinal.”

Cardinal Wolsey said to King Henry VIII, “Please, your highness, note this part of his dangerous plan. His wish that you would die not having come true, his will is most malignant to your high person and it stretches beyond you, to your friends.”

By “your friends,” Cardinal Wolsey meant himself.

Queen Catherine said, “My learned Lord Cardinal, speak with Christian charity.”

King Henry VIII said to the surveyor, “Speak on. On what grounds did he think he had a title to the crown if I should die without a legitimate child? Have you heard the Duke of Buckingham say anything about this point?”

The surveyor said, “He was brought to believe this by a vain prophecy of Nicholas Hopkins.”

“Who is that Hopkins?” King Henry VIII asked.

The surveyor replied, “Sir, he is a Carthusian friar, the Duke of Buckingham’s confessor, and he fed him every minute with words of sovereignty.”

“How do you know this?” King Henry VIII asked.

The surveyor replied, “Not long before your highness traveled to France, while the Duke of Buckingham was at the Rose, his manor within the Saint Lawrence Poultry parish in London, the Duke asked what the Londoners were saying about the journey to France. I replied that men feared the French would prove to be perfidious, to the King’s danger. Immediately, the Duke said, it was something to be feared, indeed, and he said that he feared it would prove the truth of certain words spoken by a holy monk ‘who often,’ he said, ‘has sent messages to me, wishing me to permit John de la Car, my chaplain, at an appropriate time to hear from him in person about a matter of some importance. This monk made my chaplain swear under the seal of confession that he would utter to no living creature except to me, what the monk told him. Then, with solemn trust, the monk, with pauses, said that my chaplain should tell me, the Duke, that neither the King nor his heirs shall prosper. Tell him to strive to gain the love of the common people because the Duke shall govern England.’”

Queen Catherine said, “If I know you well, you were the Duke’s surveyor, and you lost your office because of the complaints of the tenants. Take good care that you don’t make charges against a noble person because of your anger — you will spoil your nobler soul. I say, take care. Yes, I heartily implore you to take care.”

“Let him continue his testimony,” King Henry VIII said.

He then ordered the surveyor, “Continue.”

“On my soul, I’ll speak nothing but truth,” the surveyor said. “I told my lord the Duke that the monk might be deceived by the Devil’s illusions and deceptions, and that it was dangerous for him to think about this so much that he believed the monk’s prophecy, leading him — the Duke — to create some plot that was very likely to cause trouble. He answered, ‘Tush, it can do me no damage.’ He then added further that if the King had died as a result of his recent sickness, the Cardinal’s and Sir Thomas Lovell’s heads would have been cut off.”

“Ha!” King Henry VIII said. “So foul? There’s evil in this Duke of Buckingham.”

He then asked the surveyor, “Can you say anything further?”

“I can, my liege.”

“Proceed.”

The surveyor began, “Being at Greenwich, after your highness had reproved the Duke about Sir William Blumer —”

King Henry VIII interrupted, “I remember that time. Sir William Blumer was my sworn servant, but the Duke retained him as his sworn servant. But go on. What happened then?”

The surveyor replied, “‘If,’ said the Duke, ‘I for this act had been committed to prison, as to the Tower of London, I thought, I would have played the part my father meant to act upon the usurper King Richard III. When Richard III was at Salisbury, my father petitioned him to be allowed to come into his presence. If that petition had been granted, my father, pretending to show his loyalty by kneeling before Richard III, would have put his knife into him.’”

“A giant traitor!” King Henry VIII said.

Cardinal Wolsey said to Queen Catherine, “Now, madam, do you think his highness can live in freedom, with this Duke of Buckingham out of prison?”

“May God mend all!” Queen Catherine said.

“There’s something more you want to say,” King Henry VIII said to the surveyor. “What is it?”

“After the Duke talked about his father and the knife, he drew himself up to his full height, and with one hand on his dagger and the fingers of the other hand spread out on his breast, he raised his eyes and thundered a horrible oath, whose tenor was this: If he were ever evilly treated, he would outgo his father by as much as a performance does an irresolute purpose. His father had merely planned an assassination, but he would commit one.”

Using the royal plural, King Henry VIII said, “There’s the Duke of Buckingham’s goal — to sheathe his knife in us. He has been arrested. Call him to an immediate trial. If he finds mercy in the law, it is his; if he can find no mercy in the law, then let him not seek mercy from us. By day and night, he’s a traitor to the utmost height.”

— 1.3 —

In a room of the palace in London, Lord Chamberlain and

Lord Sands talked.

Lord Chamberlain asked, “Is it possible that the spells of France should trick men into such bizarre fashions?”

Lord Sands replied, “New customs, no matter how ridiculous — even unmanly and effeminate — yet are followed.”

“As far as I can see,” Lord Chamberlain said, “all the good our Englishmen have gotten by the recent voyage to France is merely a grimace or two of the face, but the grimaces are shrewd ones, for when our Englishmen hold them, you would swear immediately that their very noses had been counselors to the early French Kings Pepin or Clotharius, they keep so high up in the air.”

Lord Sands said, “Our Englishmen all have new legs, and lame legs.”

In this society, “to make a leg” meant “to bow.” Lord Sands was complaining that many of the Englishmen who had recently traveled to France with the King had returned with a major case of Francophilia: love of France and of French ways. These Englishmen were walking and bowing in an affected French manner.

He continued, “One who had never seen them pace before would think that spavin and springhalt reigned among them.”

Spavin and springhalt were diseases that affected horses’ legs. A spavin was a tumor on a horse’s leg. Springhalt was a disease that caused a horse’s leg muscles to suddenly and involuntarily contract.

“By God’s death!” Lord Chamberlain swore. “Their clothes are made after such a pagan cut, too, that surely they’ve worn out the fashions of all of the countries of

Christendom.”

Sir Thomas Lovell entered the room.

Lord Chamberlain asked, “How are you? What is the news, Sir Thomas Lovell?”

“Truly, my lord,” Sir Thomas Lovell replied, “I hear of no news except for the new proclamation that’s clapped upon the court gate.”

“What is the proclamation about?” Lord Chamberlain asked.

“The reformation of our travelled gallants who fill the court with quarrels, talk, and tailors,” Sir Thomas Lovell replied.

Quarrels — duels — were one of the fashions that these gallants had brought back from France.

Lord Chamberlain said, “I’m glad that the proclamation is there. Now I hope that our *monsieurs* will think that an English courtier may be wise, and yet never have seen the Louvre.”

The plural of *monsieur* is *messieurs*, but Lord Chamberlain cared little about accuracy in such a matter.

Sir Thomas Lovell said, “They must leave those remnants of fool and feather and foolish fashions that they got in France, with all their honorable insistence on ignorance pertaining thereunto, as fights and fireworks, dueling and whoring, and abusing better men than they can be out of a foreign ‘wisdom.’”

One of the more destructive customs the Englishmen had borrowed from France was a quickness to fight duels over what they considered points of honor. In this society, “fireworks” was a word used to refer to whores, especially whores who had a contagious venereal disease. In this

society, syphilis was known as “the French disease.”

He continued, “They must also renounce cleanly and wholly the faith they have in the French game of tennis, and tall stockings, short blistered breeches, and such other signs of travel, and stand under their legs again like honest men.

“If they don’t do these things, then the alternative is, for so run the conditions of the proclamation, for them to pack off and return to their old playfellows in France.

“There in France, I take it, they may, *cum privilegio* — with immunity — wear away the reminder of their lewdness and be laughed at.”

Lord Sands said, “It is time to give them medicine because their diseases have grown so contagious.”

Lord Chamberlain said, “What a loss our ladies will have with the disappearance of these fine, pretty vanities!”

“That is true,” Sir Thomas Lovell said. “There will be woe among the ladies indeed, lords. The sly bastards have got an effective and rapidly working trick to lay down ladies. A French song and a fiddle have no fellow — no equal — for getting the ladies in bed.”

“May the Devil fiddle them!” Lord Sands said. “I am glad these Frenchified fellows are going, for, surely, there’s no converting them back into Englishmen now. An honest country lord, as I am, beaten a long time out of play, may bring his plainsong and have an hour of hearing, and, by the Virgin Mary, have it held to be up-to-date music, too.”

By “play,” Lord Sands meant “playing music,” but an eavesdropper may have also thought of “love playing.”

Lord Chamberlain said, “Well replied, Lord Sands; your colt’s tooth is not cast away yet.”

The phrase “colt’s tooth” meant “desire for wantonness.”

“No, my lord,” Lord Sands replied. “And it shall not be cast away, as long as I have a stump.”

One meaning of “stump” is a rudimentary limb or member, and so the word “stump” can be used to refer to a penis. Of course, Lord Sands also meant “stump of a tooth.”

Lord Chamberlain asked, “Sir Thomas, where were you going?”

“To Cardinal Wolsey’s residence. Your lordship is a guest, too.”

“Oh, it is true,” Lord Chamberlain replied. “Tonight Cardinal Wolsey is hosting a supper, and a great one, for many lords and ladies. At the supper will be the beauty of this kingdom, I assure you.”

Sir Thomas Lovell said, “That churchman bears a bounteous mind indeed. He has a hand as fruitful as the land that feeds us. His dew falls everywhere.”

An eavesdropper might think that he had said about Cardinal Wolsey, “His dew falls everywhere.”

Lord Chamberlain said, “There’s no doubt that Cardinal Wolsey is noble. Anyone who says otherwise about him has a black and evil mouth.”

“He can be bountiful, my lord,” Lord Sands said. “He is wealthy; he has the wherewithal. For him, being miserly would show a worse sin than believing ill doctrine. Men of his way of life should be very liberal and generous. They are set here on Earth to serve as examples.”

“True, they are indeed,” Lord Chamberlain said. “But few now give such great suppers. My barge is waiting for me. Your lordship shall come along with me.”

“Come, good Sir Thomas; otherwise, we shall be late, which I don’t want to be because I was asked, along with Sir Henry Guildford, to be masters of ceremony this night.”

Lord Sands replied, “I am your lordship’s servant. I will do what you asked me to do.”

— 1.4 —

In a hall in York Place, a small table had been placed under a canopy of state for Cardinal Wolsey. A longer table was for the guests. Anne Boleyn and several other ladies and gentlemen who were guests entered the hall.

Sir Henry Guildford, one of the masters of ceremony, also entered the hall.

Sir Henry Guildford said, “Ladies, a general welcome from his grace Cardinal Wolsey salutes you all; he dedicates this night to delightful pleasure and to you. No one here, he hopes, in all this noble bevy of ladies has brought with her one care or worry. Cardinal Wolsey wants all to be as merry as first good company and then good wine and good welcome can make good people.”

Lord Chamberlain, Lord Sands, and Sir Thomas Lovell entered the hall.

Seeing Lord Chamberlain, Sir Henry Guildford said, “Oh, my lord, you’re tardy. The very thought of this fair company clapped wings to me and made me hurry here.”

“You are young, Sir Harry Guildford,” Lord Chamberlain said.

Lord Sands said, “Sir Thomas Lovell, had the Cardinal only half my lay thoughts in him, some of these ladies would find a running banquet before they rested that I think would better please them.”

“Lay” thoughts are unclerical, secular thoughts; for example, they could be thoughts about running after and laying the ladies.

A running banquet can be a light repast of sweets in between meals. “Running” is done in haste, and so perhaps Lord Sands was referring to a hasty bout of sweet, sweet lovemaking.

He added, “By my life, those ladies are a sweet society of beautiful ones.”

Sir Thomas Lovell said, “Oh, that your lordship Cardinal Wolsey were now here to be confessor to one or two of these beautiful ladies!”

Lord Sands said, “I wish that I were their confessor. They would find easy penance.”

“Indeed, how easy?” Sir Thomas Lovell asked.

Lord Sands replied, “As easy as a featherbed would afford it.”

A confessor is a shriver, and a shift is a woman’s undergarment. A joke of the time was to say that a woman had been “shriven to her shift” — that is, seduced.

Lord Chamberlain said, “Sweet ladies, will it please you to sit?”

“Sir Harry, you sit the guests on that side; I’ll take charge of this side.

“His grace is coming soon.”

He said to two women, “No, you must not freeze. Two women placed together make cold weather.”

He then said, “My Lord Sands, you are one who will keep them awake and lively. Please, sit between these ladies.”

Lord Sands said, "By my faith, I thank your lordship.

"With your permission, sweet ladies, I will be seated between you. If I chance to talk a little wildly, forgive me. I got it from my father."

"Was he mad, sir?" Anne Boleyn asked.

"Oh, very mad, exceedingly mad. He was in love, too," Lord Sands said. "But he would bite no one. Just as I do now, he would kiss twenty of you with one breath."

He kissed Anne.

Lord Chamberlain said, "Well done, my lord.

"So, now you're fairly seated.

"Gentlemen, the penance lies on you, if these fair ladies leave here frowning tonight."

Lord Sands said, "Trust me, I will give the ladies a little cure for frowning."

Cardinal Wolsey entered the hall and sat in his chair of state.

He said, "All of you are welcome, my fair guests. Any noble lady, or gentleman, who is not freely merry is not my friend. To confirm my welcome to you, I drink this, and to you all, I wish good health."

He drank.

Lord Sands said, "Your grace is noble. Let me have such a bowl of wine as may hold my thanks, and save me so much talking. I will enjoy drinking my thanks to you."

A servant brought Lord Sands a bowl of wine.

Cardinal Wolsey said, "My Lord Sands, I am beholden to you. Cheer up your neighbors.

“Ladies, you are not merry.

“Gentlemen, whose fault is this?”

Lord Sands said, “The red wine first must rise in their fair cheeks, my lord, and then we shall have them talk to us so much that we gentlemen must be silent.”

Anne Boleyn said, “You are a merry gamester, my Lord Sands.”

By “gamester,” she meant that he was a “merry fellow,” but in his reply, he played on the meanings of “gamester” as “gambler” and “player in the game of love.”

Lord Sands replied, “Yes, if I make my play.”

A gambler who makes his play wins at a hand of cards. A lover who makes his play makes a successful attempt at seduction.

He added, “Here’s to your ladyship.”

He drank and then said, “Pledge it, madam. Drink, for it is to such a thing —”

Anne Boleyn bawdily joked, “You cannot show me your thing.”

Lord Sands said, “I told your grace they would talk soon.”

A drum and trumpet sounded, and guns fired.

“What’s that noise?” Cardinal Wolsey asked.

Lord Chamberlain ordered, “Investigate, some of you.”

A servant exited.

Cardinal Wolsey said, “What warlike noise is this, and for what purpose is it?”

“No, ladies, don’t be afraid. By all the laws of war, you’re

privileged. You will not be harmed.”

The servant returned.

Lord Chamberlain asked, “Now, what is it?”

The servant replied, “A noble troop of strangers — for so they seem to be — have left their barge and landed. And they have come here, as if they were great ambassadors from foreign Princes.”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “Good Lord Chamberlain, go and give them welcome — you can speak the French tongue. And, please, receive them nobly, and conduct them into our presence, where this Heaven of beauty shall shine at full blast upon them. Some of you go with him.”

Lord Chamberlain and some servants exited.

Everyone stood up, and the tables were removed to make room for dancing.

Cardinal Wolsey said, “You have now an interrupted banquet, but we’ll mend it. I wish a good digestion to you all, and once more I shower a welcome on you. All of you are welcome.”

King Henry VIII and others entered, wearing masks and dressed like shepherds so that they would not be recognized. Ushered in by Lord Chamberlain, they went directly to Cardinal Wolsey and gracefully greeted him.

Lord Wolsey said, “A noble company! What are their pleasures?”

Lord Chamberlain said, “Because they speak no English, they asked me to tell your grace that, having heard by rumor that this so noble and so fair assembly would meet here this night, they could do no less out of the great respect they bear to beauty but leave their flocks and under

your fair direction beg permission for them to view these ladies and entreat you to allow them to share an hour of revels with the ladies.”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “Tell them, Lord Chamberlain, that they have done my poor house grace, for which I pay them a thousand thanks, and I ask them to please enjoy their pleasures here.”

Cardinal Wolsey’s male guests, including the new visitors, chose ladies for the dance. The disguised King Henry VIII chose Anne Boleyn to be his dance partner.

King Henry VIII said to Anne, “This is the fairest hand I ever touched! Oh, beauty, until now I never knew you!”

He had quickly forgotten his wife: Queen Catherine.

They danced.

Cardinal Wolsey said to Lord Chamberlain, “My lord!”

He replied, “Your grace?”

Cardinal Wolsey, who had a network of spies, which possibly may explain how he realized the new guests would speak French, said, “Please, tell them this from me: There should be one among them, by his person, who is more worthy of this seat of honor than myself. Also tell them that I would surrender this seat of honor to that person if I only knew which of them he was, out of my love and duty for him.”

“I will, my lord,” Lord Chamberlain said.

He whispered to the new, masked guests.

“What do they say?” Cardinal Wolsey asked.

Lord Chamberlain replied, “Such a one, they all confess, there is here indeed. They would have your grace find out

who he is, and he will take the seat of honor.”

“Let me see, then,” Cardinal Wolsey said. “By all your good leaves, gentlemen; here I’ll make my royal choice.”

He correctly picked out King Henry VIII, who said, “You have found him, Cardinal.”

King Henry VIII took off his mask and said, “You hold a fair assembly; you do well, lord. You are a churchman; if you weren’t, I’ll tell you, Cardinal, I should judge you now unfavorably.”

He meant that a churchman such as a Cardinal was chaste and could refrain from the temptations of the female flesh around them.

Cardinal Wolsey replied, “I am glad that your grace is grown so merry and jolly.”

“My Lord Chamberlain, please come here,” King Henry VIII said. “Who is that beautiful lady I was dancing with?”

Lord Chamberlain replied, “If it please your grace, she is the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn — the Viscount Rochford — and she is one of Queen Catherine’s ladies-in-waiting.”

King Henry VIII said, “By Heaven, she is a dainty one.”

He then said to Anne Boleyn, “Sweetheart, I would be unmannerly if I were to dance with you and not kiss you afterward, as is the custom.”

He kissed her and said, “A health, gentlemen! Let it go round! Everyone, have a drink!”

Cardinal Wolsey asked, “Sir Thomas Lovell, is the banquet ready in the inner room?”

This banquet included fruit, candies, and wine.

Sir Thomas Lovell replied, “Yes, my lord.”

Cardinal Wolsey said to the King, “Your grace, I fear, is a little heated from dancing.”

“I fear, too much,” King Henry VIII replied.

The heat came not just from dancing, but also from being around Anne Boleyn.

Cardinal Wolsey said, “There’s fresher air, my lord, in the next chamber.”

“Lead in your ladies, everyone,” King Henry VIII said.

To Anne Boleyn, he said, “Sweet partner, I must not yet forsake you. Let’s be merry.”

He then said, “My good Lord Cardinal, I have half a dozen toasts to good health to drink to these fair ladies, and a dance to lead them once again, and then let’s dream about who’s best in favor.”

He meant that they could dream about which lady was the most beautiful and about which gentleman was the favorite of the ladies.

He then said, “Let the music start up.”

CHAPTER 2 (Henry VIII)

— 2.1 —

Two gentlemen met on a street in Westminster.

The first gentleman asked, “Where are you going so quickly?”

“Oh, may God save you!” the second gentleman said, recognizing the first gentleman. “I am going to Westminster Hall to hear what shall become of the great Duke of Buckingham.”

“I’ll save you that labor, sir. All’s now done, except for the ceremony of bringing back the prisoner.”

“Were you there?”

“Yes, indeed, I was.”

“Please, tell me what has happened,” the second gentleman said.

“You may guess quickly what happened.”

“Was he found guilty?”

“Yes, truly he was, and then he was condemned to die.”

“I am sorry for it,” the second gentleman said.

“So are a number of other people.”

“But, please, tell me what happened during the trial.”

“I’ll tell you briefly,” the first gentleman said. “The great Duke of Buckingham came to the bar, where to the accusations made against him he pleaded always not guilty and brought forth many acute arguments to refute the accusations. The King’s attorney, who argued against the

Duke, emphasized the depositions, testimony, and confessions of several witnesses, whom the Duke desired to have brought *viva voce* — with living voice; that is, in person — before him.

“At this, a number of people appeared against him: his surveyor; Sir Gilbert Peck, who is his Chancellor; John Car, his confessor; and that Devil-monk, Hopkins, who made this wickedness.”

“Is Hopkins the man who fed the Duke with prophecies?” the second gentleman asked.

“The same. All these accused the Duke of Buckingham strongly, accusations that he gladly would have flung from him, but indeed he could not. And so his peers, upon this evidence, have found him guilty of high treason. Much he spoke, and learnedly, to save his life, but everything he said either created ineffectual pity for him or was instantly disregarded.”

“After all this, how did he bear himself? How did he act?”

“When he was brought again to the bar, to hear his knell rung out, his sentence, he was stirred with such an agony that he sweat extremely and spoke some things in anger that were ill and hasty. But he recovered his self-control, and sweetly in all the rest showed a most noble patience and calmness.”

“I do not think he fears death,” the second gentleman said.

“Surely, he does not. He never was so womanish as to fear death, but he may a little grieve because of the reason he will die.”

“Certainly Cardinal Wolsey is the root cause of this.”

“That is likely,” the first gentleman said. “All surmises lead to that conclusion. First, Kildare, who was then the King’s

governor of Ireland, was condemned and lost his office and estate. After he was removed from office, the Earl of Surrey was sent to Ireland, and hastily, too, lest he should help his father-in-law: the Duke of Buckingham.”

The second gentleman said, “That political trick was a deeply malicious one.”

“Once the Earl of Surrey returns from Ireland, no doubt he will get payback for that political trick. It has been noted by everyone that for whomever the King favors, Cardinal Wolsey will immediately find employment elsewhere, and far enough from court, too, that he will not interfere with the Cardinal’s influence over the King.”

“All the commoners hate Cardinal Wolsey with deep loathing, and, I swear by my conscience, they would like to see him ten fathoms deep and drowned. In contrast, they love and dote on this Duke as much as they hate the Cardinal. They call the Duke bounteous Buckingham, the paragon of all courtly behavior —”

“Stop there, sir,” the first gentleman said, “and see the noble ruined man you speak of.”

The Duke of Buckingham entered, having left the court. Guards carrying staves tipped with metal walked before him. On each side of him were guards carrying halberds, weapons that are a combination of a battleax and a spear. The edge of each battleax was pointed toward the Duke of Buckingham, indicating that he had been sentenced to death by beheading. Accompanying the Duke of Buckingham were Sir Thomas Lovell, Sir Nicholas Vaux, Lord Sands, and several commoners.

The second gentleman said, “Let’s stand quietly close by, and behold him.”

The Duke of Buckingham, making a mighty effort to

behave like a Christian despite the resentment he felt, said, “All good people, you who thus far have come to pity me, hear what I say, and then go home and forget me, know that I have this day received a traitor’s sentence, and I must die with the name of traitor, yet I ask Heaven to bear witness that I am faithful and loyal to King Henry VIII, and I say that if I am not faithful and loyal to King Henry VIII, then if I have a conscience, let it sink me down to Hell, even as the axe falls!

“I bear the law no malice for my death. It has done, given the evidence and testimony presented to it, only justice.

“But those who sought this judgment against me I could wish were more Christian.

“Be they what they will, I heartily forgive them. Yet let them take care that they don’t glory in evil deeds, nor build their evils on the graves of great men, for then my innocent, guiltless blood must cry out against them.

“I can never hope for further life in this world, nor will I plead for mercy, although the King has more mercies than I dare make faults. The King could, if he wished, pardon me, no matter what he thought I did.

“You few who have loved and respected me, and who dare to be bold enough to weep for me, Buckingham, are my noble friends and fellows, whom to leave is the only bitterness to me, the only dying.

“Go with me, like good angels, to my end, and as the long steel blade falls on me and divorces my soul from my body, make of your prayers one sweet sacrifice, and lift my soul to Heaven.”

He then said to his guards, “Lead on, in God’s name.”

Sir Thomas Lovell said, “I beg your grace for charity. If

ever any hidden malice in your heart were against me, now please forgive me frankly and freely.”

The surveyor had testified that the Duke of Buckingham wanted to behead both Cardinal Wolsey and Sir Thomas Lovell.

The Duke of Buckingham replied, “Sir Thomas Lovell, I as freely forgive you as I would be forgiven. I forgive everyone. Out of all those numberless offences against me, there is none that I cannot make peace with: There is none that I cannot forgive. No black malice shall go with me to my grave.

“Commend me to his grace the King, and if he speaks of the Duke of Buckingham, please tell him that you met him when he was half in Heaven. My vows and prayers still are for the benefit of the King, and, until my soul forsakes and leaves my body, I shall cry for blessings upon him. May he live longer than I have time to count his years! May his rule be always beloved and loving! And when old Time shall lead him to his death, may goodness and he fill up one tomb!”

Sir Thomas Lovell said, “To the shore of the river, I must conduct your grace. Then I give my charge up to Sir Nicholas Vaux, who will take you to your place of death.”

Sir Nicholas Vaux ordered some attendants, “Prepare everything. The Duke is coming. Make everything ready on the barge, and see that it is fitted with such things as suit the greatness of his person.”

“No, Sir Nicholas,” the Duke of Buckingham said, “let it alone. Recognition of my former great state now will but mock me. When I came here, I was the lord high constable and the Duke of Buckingham. Now, with my titles taken from me, I am only poor Edward Bohun. Yet I am richer than my base accusers, who never knew what truth and

loyalty meant. I now seal my truth and loyalty with my blood as if I were sealing an official document, and with that blood I will make them one day groan for what they have done to me.

“My noble father, Henry of Buckingham, who first raised an army against the usurping Richard III, fled for aid to Banister, one of his servants. My father, who was distressed, was by that wretch betrayed, and he was executed without a trial. May God’s peace be with him!

“King Henry VII succeeded Richard III. Truly pitying my father’s loss, Henry VII, who was a most royal Prince and sovereign, restored me to my honors, and, out of ruins, made my name once more noble.

“Now his son, King Henry VIII, at one stroke has taken my life, honor, name, and all that made me happy forever from the world.

“I had my trial, and I have to say that it was a noble one, which makes me a little happier than my wretched father.

“Yet thus far my father and I are one in our fortunes. Both of us fell because of our servants, by those men we loved most — our servants gave us a most unnatural and faithless service!

“Heaven has a purpose in everything, yet you who hear me, regard as certainly true what I, a dying man, tell you: Where you are liberal and generous in your loves and counsels, be sure you are not loose and casual, for those loose and casual people you make friends and give your hearts to, when they once perceive the least obstacle in your fortunes, will fall away like water from you and never be found again except where they mean to sink you.

“May all good people pray for me! I must now leave you. The last hour of my long weary life has come upon me.

“Farewell. And when you would say something that is sad, talk about how I fell. I have finished, and may God forgive me!”

The Duke of Buckingham, his guards, and the other people accompanying him exited.

The first gentleman said, “Oh, this scene is full of pity! Sir, it calls, I fear, too many curses upon the heads of those who were the originators of the plot against the Duke of Buckingham.”

“If the Duke is guiltless, then this scene is full of woe,” the second gentleman said, “yet I can give you an inkling of an ensuing evil that if it happens it will be greater than this evil.”

“May good angels keep it from occurring! What may it be? You do not doubt my trustworthiness, do you, sir?”

“This secret is so weighty that it will require a strong faith to conceal it.”

“Tell it to me,” the first gentleman said. “I do not talk much.”

“I am confident that you are trustworthy, and I will tell it to you, I shall, sir. Didn’t you recently hear gossip of a separation between the King and Catherine?”

“Yes, but the rumor didn’t last, for when the King once heard it, out of anger he immediately sent a command to the Lord Mayor to stop the rumor, and quell those tongues that dared to disperse it.”

“But that slander, sir,” the second gentleman said, “is found to be a truth now, for it grows again fresher than it ever was, and people regard as certain that the King will venture to be separated from his wife. Either Cardinal Wolsey, or some person or people close to the King, have, out of

malice to the good Queen, possessed him with a misgiving that will ruin her. In confirmation of this, too, Cardinal Campeius has recently arrived, and everyone thinks that he is here for this business.”

“Cardinal Wolsey is behind this,” the first gentleman said, “and his purpose is only to get revenge on the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V for not bestowing on him the Archbishopric of Toledo in Spain that he asked for.”

“I think you have hit the mark. You are correct, but isn’t it cruel that Queen Catherine should feel the pain of this? Cardinal Wolsey will get his revenge, and Queen Catherine must fall.”

“It is woeful,” the first gentleman said. “We are too open and exposed to talk about this matter here. Let’s think and talk in private some more about this.”

— 2.2 —

Lord Chamberlain read a letter out loud in an antechamber in the palace:

“My lord, concerning the horses your lordship sent for, with all the care I had I made sure that they were well chosen, broken in and trained, and equipped. They were young and handsome, and of the best breed in the north. When they were ready to set out for London, a man of Cardinal Wolsey’s, by commission and brute force, took them from me, giving this reason: His master would be served before a subject, if not before the King. This stopped our mouths, sir.”

“I fear Cardinal Wolsey will be served before a subject, if not before the King, indeed. Well, let him have them. He will have everything, I think.”

The Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Suffolk entered the

antechamber.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “We are well met, my Lord Chamberlain.”

“Good day to both your graces,” Lord Chamberlain replied.

“How is the King employed?” the Duke of Suffolk asked.
“What is he doing?”

“I left him in private,” Lord Chamberlain said. “He was full of sad, serious thoughts and troubles.”

“What’s the cause?” the Duke of Norfolk asked. “What’s the reason?”

“It seems the marriage with his brother’s wife has crept too near his conscience,” Lord Chamberlain said.

Before marrying King Henry VIII, Catherine had been married to his older brother. A Papal dispensation had allowed Henry VIII and Catherine to marry. King Henry VIII was now supposedly wondering whether his marriage was legitimate.

The Duke of Suffolk thought, *No, his conscience has crept too near another lady.*

The Duke of Norfolk replied to Lord Chamberlain, “That is true. This is Cardinal Wolsey’s doing. He is the King-Cardinal. That blind priest, like the eldest son of Lady Fortune, turns the Wheel of Fortune just as he wishes.”

Lady Fortune is often depicted as blind as she turns the Wheel of Fortune, improving some people’s fortune in life, while worsening other people’s fortune. Cardinal Wolsey was able to promote or demote people as he wished because King Henry VIII allowed him to have so much influence and power.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “The King will know what kind

of man Cardinal Wolsey really is one day.”

“I pray to God he does!” the Duke of Suffolk said. “King Henry VIII will never know himself otherwise. He will never act with the power of a King if Cardinal Wolsey continues to have so much influence over him and to wield so much of the King’s power.”

“How holily he works in all his business!” the Duke of Norfolk said sarcastically. “And with what zeal! Now that he has cracked the league between us and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, the Queen’s great nephew, he dives into the King’s soul, and there he scatters dangers, doubts, torturing of the conscience, fears, and despairs, and all these concerns and worries are all about his marriage. And to restore the King and do away with all of the King’s concerns and worries, Cardinal Wolsey advises that the King divorce Queen Catherine. This would be a loss to the King of a woman who, like a jewel, has hung twenty years about his neck, yet never lost her luster. It would be a loss of a woman who loves him with that excellence that angels love good men with, even of her who, when the greatest blow of fortune falls, will bless the King. Isn’t this advice of divorce ‘pious’?”

“May Heaven keep me from such ‘pious’ counsel!” Lord Chamberlain said. “It is very true that this news is everywhere. Every tongue is speaking about a divorce, and every true heart weeps because of it. All who dare look into these affairs see this main outcome: Cardinal Wolsey wants King Henry VIII to marry the French King’s sister. Heaven will one day open King Henry VIII’s eyes that for so long have slept and not seen what a bold bad man Cardinal Wolsey really is.”

“When that happens, King Henry VIII will free us from Cardinal Wolsey’s slavery,” the Duke of Suffolk said.

“We had better pray, and heartily, for our deliverance,” the Duke of Norfolk said, “or this imperious man will work us all from Princes into pages. All men’s honors lie like one lump of clay before him, to be fashioned into whatever rank — high or low — the Cardinal pleases.”

“As for me, my lords,” the Duke of Suffolk said, “I neither love the Cardinal nor fear him. There’s my creed: As I am made without him, so I’ll stand firm without him if the King will allow me to. Cardinal Wolsey’s curses and his blessings affect me alike; they’re breath I don’t believe in — they are nothing but air. I knew him and I know him, and so I leave him to the man who made him proud: the Pope.”

“Let’s go in,” the Duke of Norfolk said, “and with some other business distract the King from these sad thoughts that work too much upon him.

“My Lord Chamberlain, will you bear us company?”

“Excuse me,” Lord Chamberlain said. “The King has sent me somewhere else. Besides, you’ll find this a very bad time to disturb him. I wish health to your lordships.”

“Thanks, my good Lord Chamberlain,” the Duke of Norfolk said.

Lord Chamberlain exited, and the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Suffolk went to visit the King, who was reading.

The Duke of Suffolk said quietly about the King, “How sad he looks! Surely, he is much afflicted with worries.”

King Henry VIII asked loudly, “Who’s there?”

“I pray to God that the King is not angry at us,” the Duke of Norfolk said.

“Who’s there, I say?” King Henry VIII asked. “How dare

you disturb my private meditations? Who do you think I am?”

The Duke of Norfolk replied, “We think you are a gracious King who pardons all offences in which malice was never intended. Our breach of duty here is business of state, in which we come to know your royal pleasure.”

“You are too bold,” King Henry VIII said. “I’ll make you know the correct time for state business. Is this an hour for temporal affairs?”

Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius entered the room. Cardinal Campeius held a commission from the Pope that allowed Cardinal Wolsey and himself to act in the matter of determining whether King Henry VIII’s marriage to Queen Catherine was valid.

King Henry VIII said, “Who’s there? My good Lord Cardinal? Oh, my Wolsey, you quiet my wounded conscience. You are a cure fit for a King.”

He then said to Cardinal Campeius, “You’re welcome, most learned reverend sir, in our Kingdom. Make use of us and it.”

He then said to Cardinal Wolsey, “My good lord, take great care that I am not found to be just a talker.”

In other words, he wanted Cardinal Wolsey to make sure that he, Henry VIII, carried out his welcome to Cardinal Campeius. A proverb of the time stated, “The greatest talkers are the least doers.”

Cardinal Wolsey replied, “Sir, you cannot be found to be merely a talker; you are not capable of it. I wish that your grace would give us but an hour in private conversation.”

King Henry VIII said to the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Suffolk, “We are busy; go.”

The Duke of Norfolk whispered sarcastically to the Duke of Suffolk, "This priest has no pride in him."

The Duke of Suffolk whispered sarcastically to the Duke of Norfolk, "Not to speak of."

He added, without sarcasm, "I would not be so sick with pride even though it would get me Cardinal Wolsey's position. But this state of affairs cannot continue."

Norfolk whispered to Suffolk, "If it does, I'll venture one punch at the Cardinal."

Suffolk whispered to Norfolk, "And I will venture another."

The Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Suffolk exited.

Cardinal Wolsey said to King Henry VIII, "Your grace has given a precedent of wisdom above all Princes in committing freely your scruple concerning the legitimacy of your marriage to the judgment of Christendom.

"Who can be angry now? What malice can reach you?

"Queen Catherine is the aunt of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who is also the King of Spain. The Spaniards, tied blood and favor to her, must now confess, if they have any goodness, that the trial judging the legitimacy of your marriage is just and noble.

"All the clerics, I mean the learned ones, in Christian Kingdoms will have their free votes. Rome, the nurse of judgment, invited by your noble self, has sent one general tongue to us — one man to speak for all as spokesman. He is this good man, this just and learned priest, Cardinal Campeius, whom once more I present to your highness."

King Henry VIII said, "And once more in my arms I bid him welcome, and I thank the holy conclave for their loves

for me. They have sent me such a man as I would have wished for.”

Cardinal Campeius replied, “Your grace must necessarily deserve all foreigners’ loves because you are so noble. To your highness’ hand I tender my commission, by whose virtue, under the order of the court of Rome, you, my Lord Cardinal Wolsey of York, are joined with me as Rome’s servant in the impartial judging of this business.”

“You are two fair and just men,” King Henry VIII said. “The Queen shall be informed immediately why you have come.

“Where’s Gardiner, my secretary?”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “I know your majesty has always loved Queen Catherine so dearly in your heart that you will not deny her what a woman of less position might ask for by law: scholars allowed freely to argue on her behalf.”

“That is true,” King Henry VIII said, “and she shall have the best, and I will give my favor to the scholar who represents her best. God forbid that I do otherwise. Cardinal, please call Gardiner, my new secretary, to come to me. I find that he is a fit fellow.”

Cardinal Wolsey exited and quickly returned with Gardiner.

Cardinal Wolsey said quietly to Gardiner, “Give me your hand. I wish much joy and favor to you. You are the King’s man now.”

Gardiner said quietly to Cardinal Wolsey, “But I will always obey your commands because it is your hand that has raised me so high.”

King Henry VIII said, “Come here, Gardiner.”

The two talked quietly together.

Cardinal Campeius said quietly, "My Lord of York, wasn't there a Doctor Pace in this man's place as the King's secretary before him?"

"Yes, he was," Cardinal Wolsey said.

"Wasn't he regarded as a learned man?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Believe me, there's an ill opinion spread then about yourself, Lord Cardinal."

"What! About me?" Cardinal Wolsey said.

"They will not hesitate to say you envied Doctor Pace, and fearing that he would rise because he was so virtuous, you always kept him away from England on foreign business, which so grieved him that he became insane and died."

"May Heaven's peace be with him!" Cardinal Wolsey said. "That's enough Christian charity. Let's talk seriously. For living murmurers of gossip, there are places of rebuke where they can be punished. Doctor Pace was a fool, for he insisted on being virtuous."

"See Gardiner there? He's a good fellow and does whatever I command him to do. If he didn't, I would not allow him to be near either the King or me. Learn this, brother, we do not live to be touched in a familiar way by persons of low status."

King Henry VIII said to Gardiner, "Tell this with mildness to the Queen."

Gardiner exited.

King Henry VIII said, "The most convenient place that I can think of for such discussion of scholarly learning

regarding my marriage is Blackfriars, where the Dominicans have a great hall. There you shall meet about this weighty business.

“My Wolsey, see that it is properly equipped.

“Oh, my lord, would it not grieve an able, sexually mature man to leave so sweet a bedfellow?”

The bedfellow may have been Queen Catherine, but it may have been Anne Boleyn.

The King continued, “But, conscience, conscience! Oh, it is a tender place; and I must leave her.”

His conscience may have been the tender place, or the tender place may have been Queen Catherine’s vagina.

— 2.3 —

Anne Boleyn and an Old Lady talked in an antechamber of Queen Catherine’s apartments.

In the middle of a conversation, Anne Boleyn said, “Not for that neither. Here’s the pang that torments: His highness having lived so long with her, and she so good a lady that no tongue could ever pronounce her dishonorable — by my life, she never knew harm-doing — now, after being enthroned for so many yearly courses of the Sun, still growing in majesty and pomp, to leave which is a thousand times more bitter than it is sweet at first to acquire, and after all this, the King orders her to go! The pity of this would move a monster.”

The Old Lady said, “Hearts of the very hardest temper melt and lament for the Queen.”

“Oh, God’s will!” Anne Boleyn said. “It would be much better if she had never known pomp. Although pomp is secular and worldly, yet if that quarreler, Lady Fortune,

divorces pomp from the bearer, it is as painful a suffering as that caused by the severing of soul and body.”

“Alas, poor lady!” the Old Lady said. “She’s a foreigner in England now again.”

“So much the more must pity drop upon her,” Anne Boleyn said. “Verily, I swear, it is better to be lowly born, and wander freely with humble livers in contentment and happiness, than to be perked up in a glittering grief, and wear a golden sorrow. It is better to be impoverished and happy than to be rich and unhappy.”

“Our happiness is our best possession,” the Old Lady said.

“By my truth and virginity, I would not be a Queen,” Anne Boleyn said.

The word “Queen” was much pronounced much like the word “quean,” which means “whore.”

The Old Lady said, “Curse me, but I would, and I would risk maidenhead for it; and so would you, for all this taste of your hypocrisy. You, who have the so beautiful parts of a woman, have also a woman’s heart, which has always desired eminence, wealth, and sovereignty, all of which, to say truly, are blessings, and which gifts, despite your hypocritical acting, the capacity of your soft cheveril conscience would receive, if you might please to stretch it.”

Cheveril is soft, pliable leather used to make gloves. Fingers fit in gloves, and cheveril stretches so that the fingers fit. Penises fit in vaginas, and vaginas stretch so that the penises fit.

“No, truly,” Anne Boleyn said.

“Yes, truly and truly,” the Old Lady said. “Wouldn’t you be a Queen?”

The Old Lady spoke unclearly; she may have said “quean,” not “Queen.”

“No, not for all the riches under Heaven,” Anne Boleyn replied.

The Old Lady said, “It is strange: A bent coin worth only three pence would hire me, old as I am, to Queen [quean?] it, but, I ask you, what do you think of becoming a Duchess? Have you limbs that would bear that load of title?”

The way that Anne Boleyn would become a Duchess would be to marry a Duke. If that were to happen, Anne Boleyn would bear the Duke’s weight on her limbs as they made love.

“No, truly,” Anne Boleyn said.

“Then you are weakly made,” the Old Lady said. “Pluck off a little.”

“Pluck off a little” meant 1) “Come down in rank a little.” That is, if you can’t marry a Duke, then marry someone in the next lowest group: an Earl, and 2) “Take off some clothing.” Besides the obvious meaning, the Old Lady had in mind that the length of the trains of dresses depended on the social status of the woman wearing the dress. Women of high social status had dresses with long trains. Women of lower social status had dresses with shorter trains.

The Old Lady continued, “I would not be a young Count in your way, for more than blushing comes to.”

The Old Lady spoke unclearly, and she may have said “cunt” instead of “Count.” If so, she had said, “I would not be a young cunt in your position, that of virginity, for more than blushing comes to.” In other words, she would eagerly give up her virginity with no more cost than a blush.

The Old Lady continued, “If your back cannot vouchsafe — that is, bear — this burden, it is too weak ever to get — or beget — a boy.”

Women who are unable to bear the weight of a man in the missionary position are unlikely to get married or to give birth to boys.

“How you do talk!” Anne Boleyn said. “I swear again that I would not be a Queen for all the world.”

The Old Lady said, “Truly, for little England you would venture an emballing. I myself would for Carnarvonshire, even if there belonged no more to the crown but that.”

“Little England” meant either 1) England, which is little compared to some other countries, or 2) “Little England” in Wales: the county of Pembrokeshire, whose inhabitants spoke English rather than Welsh.

“Emballing” meant 1) being invested with the ball — an emblem of royalty, and/or 2) being balled (the act of sex).

The Old Lady then said, “Look. Who is coming here?”

The Lord Chamberlain entered the antechamber and said, “Good morning, ladies. What would it be worth to know the secret of your conversation?”

Anne Boleyn replied, “My good lord, it is not even worth asking about. We were pitying the sorrows of our mistress the Queen.”

Lord Chamberlain said, “Pitying the Queen’s sorrows is a soft, tender business, and it is a suitable act for good women to do. There is hope that all will be well.”

“I pray so to God, amen!” Anne Boleyn said.

“You have a kind, gentle mind, and Heavenly blessings follow such persons. So that you may, fair lady, perceive

that I speak sincerely and that high note has been taken of your many virtues, the King's majesty commends to you his good opinion of you, and he gives to you honor that is no less flowing than the title of Marchioness of Pembroke. To this title he adds, out of his grace, a thousand pounds a year in annual support."

Anne Bolen replied, "I do not know what kind of my obedience I should tender; more than my all is nothing."

The Old Lady would know exactly how to thank the King: by giving him access to her vagina. Perhaps Anne Boleyn had some unconscious inkling of that. She was talking of giving the King more than all that she had, which is nothing. A man has a thing, or penis. A woman has no thing, or vagina.

Anne Boleyn continued, "My prayers are not words duly hallowed, and my wishes are not of more worth than empty vanities, yet prayers and wishes are all I can return to the King. I ask your lordship to please speak my thanks and my obedience, as from a blushing handmaid, to his highness the King, whose health and royalty I pray for."

In Genesis 16, Sarah, who is barren, sends her handmaid to have sex with Abram, Sarah's husband, so that he can have a child. Like Abram, King Henry VIII wanted to sire a male heir.

Lord Chamberlain replied, "Lady, I shall not fail to corroborate the fair opinion that the King has of you."

He thought, *I have perused her well. Beauty and honor in her are so mingled that they have caught the King, and who knows yet but from this lady may come a gem to lighten all of this isle?*

King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn would be the parents of Queen Elizabeth I.

Lord Chamberlain said, "I'll go to the King, and say I spoke with you."

As he exited, Anne Boleyn said, "My honored lord."

The Old Lady said, "Why, look at this; see, see! I have been begging sixteen years in court, and I am still a beggarly courtier. I have never been able to find the right time — I was always either too early or too late — to make a successful petition for money. But you — oh, fate! I can't believe that you have had a fortune thrust upon you! You are a very fresh fish here, and yet you have had your mouth filled up before you open it!"

The Old Lady meant that Anne's "mouth" had been filled with money before she asked for it, but readers may be forgiven for thinking about sex, including oral sex — Anne's mouth could be filled with the King's penis before she opened it to say "I do" in the marriage ceremony.

Readers may also remember that in the future Anne Boleyn would be accused of adultery and treason, found guilty, and beheaded. The ancient Greeks and Romans put a coin in the mouth of a dead person so that the dead person's soul could pay a toll to Charon, who would ferry the soul to the Land of the Dead.

Anne Boleyn said, "This is strange to me."

The Old Lady asked, "How does it taste? Is it bitter? I'll bet forty pence that the answer is no. There was a lady once, it is an old story, she was a lady who would not be a Queen [quean?] — she would not be that for all the mud in Egypt. Have you heard that story?"

The story was actually recent. Anne Boleyn had very recently said that she would not be Queen for all the world.

Anne Boleyn said, "Come, you are pleasant. You are

joking.”

The Old Lady said, “If I had your reason for singing, I could soar higher than the lark. The Marchioness of Pembroke! A thousand pounds a year for pure respect! No other obligation! By my life, that promises more thousands. Like the trains of noble dresses, honor’s train is longer than the front part of the skirt. By this time, now, I know your back will bear a Duchess. Tell me, aren’t you stronger than you were?”

The Old Lady believed that Anne’s back would bear the weight of a Duchess; that is, it would bear the weight — the guilt — of supplanting Queen Catherine, who had been married to King Henry VIII’s older brother: Duke Arthur of Cornwall.

She was also asking whether Anne’s back was strong enough to bear the weight of King Henry VIII and give birth to a son.

Anne Boleyn replied, “Good lady, make yourself mirthful with your own particular flights of fancy, and leave me out of them. If this had excited my passion even a jot, I would wish that I did not exist. I grow faint when I think about what follows.

“The Queen is comfortless, and we are forgetful in our long absence from her. Please, do not tell her what you’ve heard here.”

“What do you think I am?” the Old Lady asked.

Readers may want to answer this question in this way: a bawd.

In a hall in Blackfriars, the inquiry regarding the legitimacy of the marriage of King Henry VIII and Queen Catherine

was about to begin.

Trumpets and cornets sounded, and then a number of people in a procession entered the hall.

Two vergers, who carried short silver wands, entered the hall first. Vergers carry rods or wands before justices.

Two scribes, aka secretaries, wearing the academic robes of doctors of law, entered next.

The Bishop of Canterbury entered next.

The Bishop of Lincoln, the Bishop of Ely, the Bishop of Rochester, and the Bishop of Saint Asaph entered next.

A gentleman carrying the bag containing the Great Seal, and carrying a Cardinal's hat, entered next.

Two priests, each carrying a silver cross, entered next.

A bareheaded gentleman-usher, accompanied by a Sergeant-at-Arms bearing a silver mace, entered next.

Two gentlemen bearing two great silver pillars entered next.

Side by side, Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius entered next.

Two noblemen with the sword and mace entered next.

King Henry VIII took a seat under the cloth of state — the canopy over the throne, which sat on a dais.

Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius took seats at a lower level than the King. The two Cardinals would be judges.

Queen Catherine sat at some distance from King Henry VIII.

The Bishops placed themselves on each side of the court, in the manner of a consistory or ecclesiastical court of judgment.

On a lower level than the Bishops sat the scribes.

The lords sat next to the Bishops.

The rest of the attendants stood in convenient places about the hall.

Cardinal Wolsey said, "While our commission from Rome is read, let silence be commanded."

"What's the need for reading the commission out loud?" King Henry VIII said. "It has already publicly been read, and by all sides the authority of the commission has been recognized. You may, then, spare that time."

"Be it so," Cardinal Wolsey said. "Proceed."

A scribe said, "Say, King Henry VIII of England, that you are present in the court."

A crier repeated more loudly what the scribe had said.

"I am here," King Henry VIII said.

The scribe said, "Say, Queen Catherine of England, that you are present in the court."

The crier loudly repeated the words.

Queen Catherine made no answer; instead, she rose out of her chair, walked through the court to King Henry VIII, and knelt at his feet.

Then she said, "Sir, I desire that you do me right and justice, and I desire that you bestow your pity on me. I am a very poor woman, and I am a stranger who was not born in your dominions. I have here no impartial judge, and I have

no assurance of equal, fair, and evenhanded friendship and proceeding.

“Sir, in what have I offended you? What cause has my behavior given to make you displeased with me that thus you should proceed to thrust me away from you and take your good grace from me? May Heaven witness that I have been to you a true and humble wife, at all times conformable to your will, always afraid to kindle your dislike. Yes, I have always been the obedient subject of your countenance, glad or sorry as I saw it inclined. When was the hour I ever contradicted your desire, or did not make it mine, too? Or which of your friends have I not striven to love, although I knew that that friend of yours were my enemy? What friend of mine have I had who brought down your anger on him have I continued to regard as my friend? I have not continued in my liking for such a person; instead, I gave notice to him that he was no longer my friend.

“Sir, call to mind that I have been your wife, your obedient wife, upward of twenty years, and I have been blessed with many children by you. If, in the course and process of this time, you can report, and prove it, too, anything against my honor, my bond to wedlock, or my love and duty, against your sacred person, then in God’s name turn me away and let the foulest contemptible person shut the door against me, and so give me up to the sharpest kind of justice.

“If it please you, sir, King Henry VII, your father, was reputed to be a most prudent Prince and sovereign, of an excellent and unmatched intelligence and judgment. Ferdinand II, my father, the King of Spain, was reckoned to be one of the wisest Princes who there had reigned by many years before. It is not to be questioned that they had gathered a wise council to them from every realm, and they debated this business of whether a marriage between you

and me would be legitimate. That wise council deemed our marriage lawful.

“Therefore, I humbly beg you, sir, to spare me until I may be advised by my friends in Spain, whose counsel I will ask for. If you will not grant my request, then in the name of God, may your pleasure be fulfilled!”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “You have here, lady, and of your choice, these reverend fathers. They are men of singular integrity and learning. Indeed, they are the best of the land, and they are assembled to plead your cause. It shall be therefore useless for you to wish to delay the work of this ecclesiastical court. Delaying will not make you feel quieter and calmer, and it will not rectify what is unsettling King Henry VIII.”

Cardinal Campeius said, “His grace has spoken well and justly; therefore, madam, it’s fitting that this royal court session proceed, and that, without delay, these reverend fathers’ arguments be now produced and heard.”

“Lord Cardinal Wolsey,” Queen Catherine said, “to you I speak.”

“What is your pleasure, madam?” Cardinal Wolsey replied.

“Sir, I am about to weep, but thinking that we are a Queen, or long have dreamed so, and knowing that I certainly am the daughter of a King, I’ll turn my drops of tears into sparks of fire.”

“Stay patient and calm,” Cardinal Wolsey said.

“I will, when you are humble,” Queen Catherine said. “No, I will be patient and calm before you are humble, or God will punish me.”

She meant that Cardinal Wolsey would never be humble.

Queen Catherine continued, “I do believe, persuaded by potent circumstances, that you are my enemy, and I make my challenge that you shall not be my judge. I make my legal objection to you being my judge because it is you who have blown this coal into fire and caused this dissension between my lord — my husband — and me. May God’s dew quench the fire that you started! Therefore, I say again, I utterly object, yes, from my soul, to you being my judge, and I refuse you as my judge. I say yet once more that I regard you as my most malicious enemy, and I do not think that you are at all a friend to truth.”

Cardinal Wolsey replied, “I do profess that you are not speaking like yourself. You have always so far maintained Christian charity, and you have displayed the effects of a gentle disposition and of wisdom that surpasses what other women are capable of.

“Madam, you do me wrong. I have no anger against you, nor do I want injustice for you or for anyone. How far I have proceeded, or how much further I shall proceed, is warranted by a commission from the consistory, yes, the whole consistory of Rome.

“You charge against me that I have metaphorically blown this coal and caused dissension between the King and you. I deny it. The King is present. If it be known to him that I am denying that I did something that I really did, then he may wound, and worthily, my treachery! Yes, he may wound it as much as you have wounded my truth.

“If the King knows that I am guiltless of what you charge against me, then he knows that I am badly hurt by your false accusation. Therefore in him it lies to cure me, and the cure is to remove these thoughts from you. Before his highness speaks, I beg you, gracious madam, to take back what you said about me and to accuse me no more. Don’t think such bad things about me.”

“My lord, my lord,” Queen Catherine said, “I am a simple woman, and I am much too weak to oppose your cunning. You’re meek and humble-mouthed. You put on a full display of meekness and humility in order to advertise your place and calling, but your heart is crammed with arrogance, anger, and pride.

“You have, by Lady Fortune’s and his highness’ favors, gone lightly over low steps and now you have climbed high where powerful people are your servants, and your words, which are your servants, serve your will as it pleases you to pronounce their office. You order something to be done, and what you order is instantly done.

“I must tell you, you hold your secular reputation dearer than your high, spiritual profession. And I tell you again that I refuse to have you for my judge, and here, before you all, I say that I will appeal to the Pope to allow me to bring my whole case before his holiness so I can be judged by him.”

She curtsied to King Henry VIII and started to exit.

Cardinal Compeius said, “The Queen is obstinate, antagonistic to justice, prompt to accuse it, and disdainful to be tried by it. It is not well. She’s going away.”

King Henry VIII ordered, “Call her again.”

The crier said loudly, “Queen Catherine of England, come into the court.”

Queen Catherine’s gentleman-usher, whose name was Griffith, said to her, “Madam, you are called back to the court.”

“What need have you to pay attention to that?” Queen Catherine said. “Please, keep moving out of the court with me. When *you* are called, then *you* return. Now, may the

Lord help me because they vex me past my patience! Please move on. I will not stay here, no, nor will I ever again upon this business make my appearance in any of their courts.”

Queen Catherine and her attendants exited.

King Henry VIII said, “Go on your way, Kate. Any man in the world who shall report he has a better wife, let him be trusted in nothing because he spoke falsely when saying that. If your splendid qualities, sweet gentleness, saint-like meekness, wife-like self-control, obedience to me while giving commands to others, and your supreme and pious qualities could speak out for you, they would say that you, alone, are the Queen of Earthly Queens.

“She’s nobly born, born noble, and like her true nobility, she has conducted herself nobly towards me.”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “Most gracious sir, in humblest manner I request of your highness that it shall please you to declare, in the hearing of all these ears — for where I am robbed and bound, there I must be unloosed, although there I cannot be immediately and fully compensated for what has been done to me — whether I ever broached this business to your highness, or laid any difficulty or doubt concerning your marriage in your way, which might induce you to question whether your marriage is legitimate. Also say whether I have to you, except with giving thanks to God for such a royal lady, spoken the least word that might be to the prejudice of her present state, or stain of her good person.”

King Henry VIII said, “My Lord Cardinal Wolsey, I excuse you; yes, upon my honor, I free you from that accusation. You already know that you have many enemies who don’t know why they are your enemies, but who, similar to village curs, bark when their fellows do. By some of these

the Queen has been made angry. You are excused.”

King Henry VIII turned to the other people in the court and said, “But do you want to hear more exoneration for Cardinal Wolsey than those few words? Let me say more.

“Cardinal Wolsey, you have always wished the sleeping of this business; you have never desired it to be stirred up, but often you have hindered — often, I say — the passages made toward it.

“People in the court, on my honor, I speak for my good Lord Cardinal Wolsey on this point, and thus far clear him.

“Now, to tell you what moved me to hold this court to determine whether my marriage to Catherine is legitimate, I will be bold with your time and your attention: Pay attention as I describe what induced me to do this. Thus it came; give heed to it.

“My conscience first received a tenderness, misgiving, and prick, upon hearing certain speeches uttered by the Bishop of Bayonne, who was then the French ambassador. He had been sent here while we were discussing a marriage between the Duke of Orleans and our daughter, Mary.

“In the discussion of this business, before we made a decision, he — I mean the Bishop — required a respite during which he might inform the King his lord whether our daughter, Mary, was legitimate. He needed to do this because Mary was the child of my marriage with the dowager who was formerly my brother’s wife.

“This respite shook the heart of my conscience and entered me — yes, with a power as if I had been impaled with a spit — and made my chest tremble. This respite forced its way into my conscience, resulting in bewildered considerations thronging against me and pressing me to exercise caution.

“First, I thought I stood not in the smile of Heaven, which had commanded Nature that my lady’s womb, if it conceived a male child by me, should do no more offices of life to it than the grave does to the dead. I thought this because my lady’s male children were either stillborn or died shortly after being born and coming into the air of this world.

“Therefore, I took thought and concluded that this was a judgment on me, that my Kingdom, which was very worthy to have the best heir of the world, would not be made glad by me because Heaven and Nature were against me producing such an heir.

“Then I weighed the danger that my realms stood in because of my failure to produce a living male heir, and that gave to me many a groaning pain. Thus hulling in the wild sea of my conscience, I steered towards this remedy.”

“Hulling” means for a ship to have furled sails while on the sea; in this culture, a ship that is hulling cannot be steered.

King Henry VIII continued, “The remedy I mean is this for which we are now present here together. That’s to say, I meant to rectify my conscience. Previously, I felt very sick, and even now I don’t feel well. All the reverend fathers of the land and learned doctors of law will give me my remedy by determining whether my marriage to Queen Catherine is legitimate.

“First I began in private with you, my Lord Bishop of Lincoln. You remember how under my oppression I sweat, when I first raised this issue with you.”

“I remember very well, my liege,” the Bishop of Lincoln replied.

“I have spoken for a long time,” King Henry VIII said. “Please say yourself to what extent you satisfied me.”

“So please your highness,” the Bishop of Lincoln said, “the question at first so staggered me — because it was a question of such mighty moment and its outcome was something to be feared — that I made myself doubt the most daring counsel that I had and I entreated your highness to take this course of action that you are taking here.”

The most daring counsel was perhaps a recommendation of a divorce between the King and the Queen.

King Henry VIII said, “I then raised this issue with you, my Lord Bishop of Canterbury, and I got your permission to make this present summons of the Queen to this court.

“I left no reverend person unsolicited in this court, but by individual and particular consent I proceeded under your hands and seals. I got your written permission to hold this ecclesiastical court.

“Therefore, let us go on. Not because of any dislike in the world against the person of the good Queen, but only because of the sharp, thorny points of the reasons I have told you, I have taken this action.

“If you prove that the marriage of my Queen and me is lawful, then by my life and Kingly dignity, I say that I am contented to spend the rest of my mortal existence with her, Catherine our Queen, rather than with even the most excellent woman who is considered to be the paragon of the world.”

Cardinal Campeius said, “So please your highness, the Queen being absent, it is necessary and fitting that we adjourn this court until a later day.

“Meanwhile, an earnest attempt must be made to the Queen to persuade her to call back the appeal she intends to make to his holiness the Pope.”

King Henry VIII thought, *I can perceive that these Cardinals are trifling with me. I abhor this dilatory sloth and these tricks of Rome.*

My learned and well-beloved servant, Thomas Cranmer, please return. I know that when you arrive here, my comfort comes with you.

He said out loud, “Dissolve and break up the court. I say, let us move on.”

CHAPTER 3 (Henry VIII)

— 3.1 —

Queen Catherine and her female attendants were sewing in a room of her apartment.

Queen Catherine said to one of her female attendants, “Take up your lute, girl. My soul grows sad with troubles. Sing, and disperse them, if you can. Stop working.”

The female attendant sang this song:

“Orpheus with his lute made trees,

“And the mountain tops that freeze,

“Bow themselves when he did sing:

“To his music plants and flowers

“Ever sprung; as if Sun and showers

“There had made a lasting spring.

“Every thing that heard him play,

“Even the billows of the sea,

“Hung their heads, and then lay by and rested.

“In sweet music is such art,

“Mortal worry and grief of heart

“Fall asleep, or hearing, die.”

A gentleman entered the room.

Queen Catherine asked, “What is it?”

The gentleman replied, “If it pleases your grace, the two

great Cardinals are waiting for you in the reception chamber.”

“Do they wish to speak with me?” Queen Catherine asked.

“They wanted me to say so, madam,” the gentleman replied.

“Ask their graces to come here,” Queen Catherine ordered.

The gentleman exited.

Queen Catherine said, “What can their business be with me, a poor weak woman, who has fallen from favor? I do not like their coming. Now I think about it, the Cardinals should be good men, and their business should be as righteous as the Cardinals are good, but not all hoods make monks.”

Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeius entered the room.

“Peace to your highness!” Cardinal Wolsey said.

“Your graces find me here doing a part of the work of a housewife,” Queen Catherine said. “I should learn to do all the work of a housewife as preparation for the worst that may happen. Perhaps I will be cast out of the palace with nothing and will have to work to make my living.

“What is your business with me, reverend lords?”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “If it would please you, noble madam, to withdraw into your private chamber, we shall tell you the full reason for our coming to visit you.”

“Tell me here,” Queen Catherine said. “There’s nothing I have done yet, on my conscience, that deserves a corner in which it can hide.”

A proverb stated, “Truth seeks no corners.”

She continued, “I wish that all other women could say this with as free and innocent a soul as I do!

“My lords, I am so much happier than many others that I don’t care if my actions were to be tried by every tongue, if every eye saw them, and if malice and base gossip were set against them. I know that my life is constantly upright.

“If your business concerns me and my situation as wife to King Henry VIII, then say so — out with it boldly. Truth loves open dealing.”

Cardinal Woolsey, who did not want the female attendants to know what he, Cardinal Campeius, and Queen Catherine would be discussing, said, “*Tanta est erga te mentis integritas, regina serenissima* —”

This Latin meant, “So great is the integrity of my purpose towards you, most serene Queen —”

Queen Catherine, who was not serene, objected, “Oh, my good lord, no Latin. I am not such a truant since my coming to England from Spain as not to know the language of the country I have lived in so long. A strange — foreign — tongue makes my matter of concern seem stranger — more suspicious.

“Please, speak in English. Here among us are some who will thank you, if you speak the truth, for their poor mistress’ sake. Believe me, she has suffered much wrong done to her, Lord Cardinal.

“The most deliberate sin I have ever yet committed may be absolved in English.”

“Noble lady,” Cardinal Wolsey said, “I am sorry my integrity — and my service to his majesty and, um, to you — should breed such deep suspicion, where only loyalty was meant.

“We come not to accuse you of anything. We don’t want to taint that honor of yours that every good tongue blesses, nor do we want to betray you in any manner to sorrow — you already have too much sorrow, good lady. Instead, we have come to find out what you think about the weighty difference between the King and you, and we have come to declare, like magnanimous and honorable men, our just opinions about your court case. We hope to comfort you.”

Cardinal Campeius said, “Most honored madam, my Lord Cardinal Wolsey of York, out of his noble nature, zeal, and obedience he always has borne your grace, forgetting like a good man your recent condemnation both of his truth and himself, a condemnation that went too far, offers, as I do, as a sign of peace, his service and his counsel.”

Queen Catherine thought, *Yes, they offer their service and counsel in order to betray me.*

She said out loud, “My lords, I thank you both for your good wills. You speak like honest men; I pray to God that you prove to be honest men!

“But I truly don’t know how to make you an impromptu answer in such a serious matter that is so near my honor — and even nearer to my life, I fear — with my weak intelligence, and to such men of gravity and learning.”

This culture regarded men as being more intelligent than women.

Queen Catherine continued, “I was seated and at work among my ladies-in-waiting, and I was very little, God knows, expecting either such men as you or such business as this. For the sake of the woman whom I have been — for I feel that these are the final hours and the death spasm of my greatness as Queen — I ask your good graces to let me have time and counsel for my case. Alas, I am a woman who is friendless and hopeless!”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “Madam, you wrong the King’s love with these fears. Your hopes and friends are infinite.”

Queen Catherine said, “In England I have few hopes and few friends for my benefit. Can you think and believe, lords, that any Englishman would dare to give me counsel or be a known friend to me, against his highness’ pleasure, even if he has grown so desperate as to be honest and truthful, and yet still live as a subject to the King?”

“No, truly, my friends — those who must compensate for my afflictions, and those whom I have grown to trust — do not live here in England. They are, as are all my other comforts, far from here and in my own country of Spain, lords.”

Cardinal Campeius said, “I wish that your grace would set aside your griefs, and take my counsel.”

“How can I do that, sir?” Queen Catherine asked.

He replied, “You can put yourself under the King’s protection. He’s loving and very gracious, and it will be much better both for your honor and yourself, for if the trial of the law overtakes you, you’ll depart from here disgraced.”

“He tells you rightly,” Cardinal Wolsey said.

This was a threat. If she agreed to a divorce, she would retain some honor and be treated well as the dowager of King Henry VIII’s older brother — her marriage to Arthur, the older brother, was regarded by all as legitimate. But if she did not agree to the divorce and a trial was held with acrimonious judges, she could end up severely disgraced. In addition, her enemies were powerful, and one possible outcome if she continued to resist could be being accused of adultery and treason, followed by a beheading.

Queen Catherine replied, “You tell me what both of you wish for — my ruin. Is this your Christian counsel to me? Get out! Heaven is still above all of us; in Heaven a Judge sits Whom no King can corrupt.”

“Your rage misjudges us,” Cardinal Campeius said.

“Your actions shower all the more shame on you,” Queen Catherine said. “Upon my soul, I thought that you were holy men. I thought that you were two reverend personifications of the cardinal virtues.

“But I fear that you are two personifications of cardinal sins — and of hollow hearts.”

The cardinal sins are the seven deadly sins: pride, greed, envy, wrath, sloth, gluttony, and lechery. The cardinal virtues are justice, prudence, temperance, and fortitude. In addition, there are three Heavenly graces, aka virtues: faith, hope, and love/charity.

Queen Catherine continued, “Mend your hollow hearts, for shame, my lords. Is this your Christian comfort for me? Is this the cordial — the medicinal drink — that you bring a wretched lady, a woman lost among you, laughed at, scorned?

“I will not wish you half my miseries because I have more charity than that, but say that I warned you. Take heed, for Heaven’s sake, take heed, lest one day the burden of my sorrows suddenly falls upon you.”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “Madam, this is purely a frenzy of yours. The good we offer to you, you misconstrue as malice.”

“You turn me into nothing,” Queen Catherine said. “Woe upon you and all such false professors of the Christian faith! Would you have me — if you have any justice, any

pity; if you are anything but the mere appearance of churchmen — put my sick self into the hands of one who hates me?

“Alas, the King has already banished me from his bed. His love was too long ago! I am old, my lords, and all the fellowship I hold now with the King my husband is only my obedience. What can happen to me above this wretchedness? All your efforts have made me accursed like this.”

“Your fears are worse than the reality,” Cardinal Campeius said.

Queen Catherine replied, “Have I lived thus long — let me speak for myself, since virtue finds no friends — as a wife, a true and loyal and faithful wife? I dare say without vainglory that I am a woman who never has been branded with suspicion of adultery. Haven’t I with all my full affections always met the King’s wishes? Haven’t I always loved him second only to Heaven? Haven’t I always obeyed him? Haven’t I always, out of fondness and love for him, almost idolized him? Haven’t I almost forgot my prayers in my attempt to make him happy? And am I thus rewarded?

“This treatment of me is not good, lords. Bring me a woman who has been constantly loyal to her husband, one who never dreamed of a joy beyond his pleasure, and compared to that woman, when she has done the most and the best she can do, yet I will add an honor: a great patience.”

“Madam, you wander from the good we aim at,” Cardinal Wolsey said.

“My lord, I dare not make myself so guilty as to give up willingly that noble title your master — the King — wed me to. Nothing but death shall ever divorce my dignities.”

“Please, listen to me,” Cardinal Wolsey said.

Queen Catherine said, “I wish that I had never trod on this English earth, or felt the flatteries that grow upon it! You have angels’ faces, but Heaven knows your hearts.”

A proverb stated, “Fair face, foul heart.”

She continued, “What will become of me, a wretched lady, now! I am the unhappiest woman living.”

She said to her ladies-in-waiting, whose fortunes were connected to hers, “Alas, poor women, where are now your fortunes! I am shipwrecked upon a Kingdom where I have no pity, no friend, no hope, and no kindred to weep for me, and where almost no grave is allowed me. Like the lily that once was mistress of the field and flourished, I’ll hang my head and perish.”

Psalm 103:15-16 states, “*The days of man are as grass: as a flower of the field, so flourisheth he. For the wind goeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Cardinal Wolsey said, “If your grace could but be brought to know our ends are honest, you would feel more comfort. Why should we, good lady, for what reason should we wrong you? Alas, our positions and the way of our religious calling are against it. We are to cure such sorrows, not to sow them.

“For goodness’ sake, consider what you are doing, how you may hurt yourself, yes, utterly grow away from the King’s acquaintance, by this behavior.

“The hearts of Princes kiss obedience, so much they love it, but to stubborn spirits the hearts of Princes swell, and grow as terrible as storms.”

Again, this was a threat. Bad things could happen to Queen

Catherine if she continued to resist agreeing to a divorce.

Cardinal Wolsey continued, “I know you have a gentle, noble temperament, a soul as calm as a sea with no wind and waves. Please, think that we are what we profess to be: peacemakers, friends, and servants.”

Cardinal Campeius said, “Madam, you’ll find that this is true. You wrong your virtues with these weak women’s fears. A noble spirit, like yours that was put into you when you were conceived, always casts such doubts, as if they were false coin, from it.

“The King loves you. Be careful that you don’t lose his love. As for us, if you please to trust us in your business, we are ready to use our utmost efforts in your service.”

Queen Catherine said, “Do what you will, my lords, and please forgive me if I have behaved without good manners. You know I am a woman who lacks the intelligence to make a seemly, decorous answer to such persons as yourselves.

“Please, pay my respects to his majesty. He has my heart still, and he shall have my prayers as long as I live. Come, reverend fathers, bestow your counsels on me. She — I — now begs, who little thought, when she set foot on England here, she should have bought her dignities at such an expensive price.”

This sounds as if she capitulated, yet history records that she continued to refuse to appear in any court that discussed the legality of her marriage to King Henry VIII.

— 3.2 —

The Duke of Norfolk, the Duke of Suffolk, the Earl of Surrey, and Lord Chamberlain talked together in an antechamber leading to King Henry VIII’s apartment. The

Earl of Surrey was the Duke of Buckingham's son-in-law; he had been in Ireland when the Duke of Buckingham was found guilty of treason and beheaded.

The Duke of Norfolk said, "If you will now unite in your complaints, and press them with steadfastness, Cardinal Wolsey cannot resist them. If you neglect the opportunity we have at this time, I cannot promise anything except that you shall sustain more disgraces to add to these you bear already."

The Earl of Surrey said, "I am joyful to have the least opportunity that may recall to my mind my father-in-law, the Duke of Buckingham, and let me be revenged on the person who caused his death."

The Duke of Suffolk asked, "Which of the nobles have not been despised by Cardinal Wolsey, or at least have not been coldly ignored as if they were a stranger? When did he regard and respect the stamp of nobleness in any person other than himself?"

Lord Chamberlain said, "My lords, you speak what you please. I know what Cardinal Wolsey deserves from you and me, but I very much fear what could happen if we do something to him, although now the time gives an opportunity to us. If you cannot bar his access to King Henry VIII, never attempt to do anything against Cardinal Wolsey, for his tongue has a kind of witchcraft over the King. Cardinal Wolsey is very persuasive and can make the King do what Cardinal Wolsey wants him to do."

"Oh, don't fear Cardinal Wolsey doing that," the Duke of Norfolk said. "His ability to influence the King is gone. The King has found evidence against him that forever mars the honey of the Cardinal's language. No, Cardinal Wolsey is firmly fixed in the displeasure of the King."

The Earl of Surrey said, "Sir, I would be glad to hear such

news as this once every hour.”

“Believe it because it is true,” the Duke of Norfolk said. “In the divorce of King Henry VIII and Queen Catherine, Cardinal Wolsey acted contrary to the wishes of the King. This has all been unfolded to the King, and now Cardinal Wolsey is in such a position as I would wish my enemy to be.”

“How did Cardinal Wolsey’s intrigue come to light?” the Earl of Surrey asked.

“Very strangely,” the Duke of Suffolk said.

“How?” the Earl of Surrey asked.

The Duke of Suffolk replied, “Cardinal Wolsey’s letters to the Pope miscarried and came to the eye of the King. In those letters, the King read that against his wishes the Cardinal was entreating his holiness the Pope to delay the judgment of the divorce. In a letter, Cardinal Wolsey wrote that if the divorce did take place, *‘I perceive that my King is entangled in affection to a lady-in-waiting of the Queen’s: Lady Anne Boleyn.’*”

“Does the King have this letter?” the Earl of Surrey asked.

“Believe it,” the Duke of Suffolk replied.

“Will the Cardinal’s treachery work?” the Earl of Surrey asked.

“The King by reading this letter perceives clearly how Cardinal Wolsey moves in a devious, roundabout way but always follows his own course. But in this point all of the Cardinal’s tricks flounder, and he brings his medicine after his patient’s death: The King has already married the fair lady.”

“I wish that were true!” the Earl of Surrey said.

“May you be happy in your wish, my lord,” the Duke of Suffolk said, “for, I profess, you have it. Your wish has come true.”

“Now, may all my joy follow from this conjunction — this marriage!” the Earl of Surrey said.

“I add my ‘amen’ to that!” the Duke of Suffolk said.

“All men say ‘amen’ to that!” the Duke of Norfolk said.

“The order has been given for her coronation,” the Duke of Suffolk said. “By the Virgin Mary, this order is newly given, and it ought to be left untold to some ears. But, my lords, she is a splendid woman, and she is perfect in mind and features. I believe that from her will fall some blessing to this land, which shall be remembered forever on account of it.”

“But will the King read and then tolerate and ignore this letter of the Cardinal’s?” the Earl of Surrey asked. “The Lord forbid!”

“By the Virgin Mary, amen to that!” the Duke of Norfolk said. “The Lord forbid!”

“No, no, the King will not tolerate it,” the Duke of Suffolk said. “There are other wasps that buzz about the King’s nose that will make this wasp sting all the sooner. Cardinal Campeius has stolen away to Rome. He has taken no official leave, and he has left the law case of the King’s divorce unfinished. He was sent speedily to Rome as the agent of our Cardinal Wolsey to advance Cardinal Wolsey’s plots. I assure you that the King cried out in disgust and anger when he learned all this.”

Lord Chamberlain said, “May God now further cause him to be angry and let him cry out in disgust and anger all the more loudly!”

“But, my lord, when does Thomas Cranmer return?” the Duke of Norfolk asked. “He has been traveling around, gathering learned opinions about whether the King is justified in divorcing Queen Catherine.”

“He has returned in the form of a report of his opinions, which have satisfied the King that his divorce is justified. These opinions are those of Cranmer together with almost all the famous colleges in Christendom. Shortly, I believe, King Henry VIII’s second marriage shall be publicly proclaimed, and her coronation shall be held. Catherine no more shall be called Queen; instead, she will be called Princess Dowager and widow to Prince Arthur, the King’s older brother.”

The Duke of Norfolk said, “This Cranmer is a worthy fellow, and he has taken much pain to do the King’s business.”

“He has,” the Duke of Suffolk said, “and we shall see him rewarded for it by being made an Archbishop. He shall be made the Archbishop of Canterbury.”

“So I hear,” the Duke of Norfolk said.

“It is true,” the Duke of Suffolk said. “It will happen.”

He looked up and said, “The Cardinal!”

Cardinal Wolsey and Cromwell, his servant, entered the room. They were at a distance from the others and did not see them for a while.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Look. Look. The Cardinal is moody.”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “The packet of letters, Cromwell. Did you give it to the King?”

“I handed it to the King himself, in his bedchamber,”

Cromwell replied.

“Did he look inside the packet?”

“Immediately, he unsealed the letters and the first letter he viewed, he did so with a serious mind; his face showed that he was paying careful attention to the letter. He then ordered that you wait for him here this morning.”

Cardinal Wolsey asked, “Is he ready to come out of his apartment?”

“I think that by this time he has left his apartment,” Cromwell replied.

“Leave me alone for a while,” Cardinal Wolsey ordered.

Cromwell exited.

Cardinal Wolsey thought, *It shall be to the Duchess of Alençon, the French King's sister. Henry VIII shall marry her. Anne Boleyn! No! I'll have no Anne Boleyns for him! There are more important things than a fair face. Boleyn! No, we'll have no Boleyns. I hope to hear quickly from Rome. The Marchioness of Pembroke!*

One of Anne Boleyn's titles was the Marchioness of Pembroke.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Cardinal Wolsey is unhappy.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Maybe he has heard that the King whets his anger toward him.”

“May the King's anger be sharp enough, Lord, for Your justice!” the Earl of Surrey said.

Cardinal Wolsey thought, *Anne Boleyn is the recent Queen's gentlewoman, a knight's daughter. Should she be her mistress' mistress! Should she be the Queen's Queen! This candle does not burn clearly. It is I who must snuff it.*

Then out it goes.”

The candle is the marriage of Anne Boleyn to King Henry VIII. It was not burning brightly yet, Cardinal Wolsey thought, because Anne Boleyn’s marriage to King Henry VIII had not yet taken place. It was up to him to snuff the candle. The snuff of the candle is the partially consumed wick. To keep the candle burning brightly, the candle must occasionally be snuffed, meaning that the wick must be trimmed. But to snuff a candle has another meaning: to put out the candle.

King Henry VIII had wanted Cardinal Wolsey to snuff the candle: to clear away the obstacles to his marriage to Anne Boleyn. But Cardinal Wolsey wanted to snuff the candle: to prevent the King from marrying Anne.

Cardinal Wolsey thought, What though I know her to be virtuous and well deserving? Yet I know her to be a passionate Lutheran, and not beneficial to our cause, that of Roman Catholicism and our plan for King Henry VIII to marry the sister of the King of France, and so she should not lie in the bosom of our hard-to-rule King. She should not lie in the King’s bed and should not share his secrets. Also, there has sprung up a heretic — an arch-heretic — named Thomas Cranmer. He has crawled into the favor of the King, and he is the King’s oracle.

“He is vexed at something,” the Duke of Norfolk said.

“I hope that it is something that will fret the string — the master-cord — of his heart!” the Earl of Surrey said. “I hope it cuts the Cardinal’s heartstring, and he dies!”

King Henry VIII entered the room, reading a paper. Sir Thomas Lovell accompanied him.

“The King! The King!” the Duke of Suffolk said.

King Henry VIII said, “What piles of wealth has Cardinal Wolsey accumulated to his own possession! And what prodigal expenditures each hour seem to flow from him! How, in the name of thrift, does he rake all this money and these possessions together when he has such high expenses! Now, my lords, have you seen Cardinal Wolsey?”

The Duke of Norfolk pointed to the Cardinal and replied, “My lord, we have stood here observing him. Some strange commotion is in his brain: He bites his lip, and startles, stops suddenly, looks upon the ground, lays his finger on his temple, immediately springs out into a fast gait, stops again, strikes his breast hard, and casts his eye upward to the Moon. We have seen him act very strangely.”

“It may well be that a mutiny is in his mind,” King Henry VIII said. “This morning he sent me state papers to peruse, as I had ordered him, and do you know what I found there — on my conscience, put there unwittingly?”

“Truly, I found an inventory that listed the many pieces of his silver plate and gold plate, his treasure, rich fabrics, and household ornaments, which I find to have such value that it far exceeds what a subject of mine ought to possess.”

“It’s Heaven’s will,” the Duke of Norfolk said. “Some spirit put this paper in the packet to bless your eye with. Heaven wanted you to find and read that inventory of Cardinal Wolsey’s possessions.”

King Henry VIII looked at Cardinal Wolsey and said, “If we thought that he was contemplating Heavenly matters — matters that are above the Earth — and if we thought that his attention was fixed on spiritual objects, we would allow him to continue to dwell in his musings, but I am afraid his thoughts are about things below the Moon, things that are not worth his serious consideration.”

King Henry VIII sat down and whispered to Sir Thomas

Lovell, who went over to Cardinal Wolsey and brought him out of his deep thoughts.

Startled, Cardinal Wolsey said, "Heaven forgive me!"

He went to the King and said, "May God for ever bless your highness!"

"My good lord," King Henry VIII said, "you are full of Heavenly stuff, and bear in your mind the inventory of your best graces, which you were just now running over. You scarcely have time to steal from spiritual leisure a brief span to keep your Earthly audit. To be sure, in that I deem you to be an ill manager of your Earthly affairs, and because of it I am glad to have you be my companion."

The King was mocking Cardinal Wolsey by using such Earthly terms as "stuff," "inventory," "steal," "leisure," and "audit." The Heavenly audit, as opposed to an Earthly audit, is the audit that takes place on the Day of Judgment.

Cardinal Wolsey replied, "Sir, for holy offices I have a time. I also have a time to think upon the part of the business that I bear in the state, and Nature requires her times of rest and preservation, which necessarily I, her frail son, like my mortal brothers, must tend to."

"You have spoken well," King Henry VIII said.

"And may your highness always yoke together, as I will lend you reason to do, my doing well with my saying well!" Cardinal Wolsey said.

"You have said well again," King Henry VIII said. "And it is a kind of good deed to say well, and yet words are no deeds."

A proverb states, "Saying is one thing, doing another." Another proverb states, "From words to deeds is a great space."

King Henry VIII continued, “My father loved you. He said he did, and his *said* he *did*, and with his deed he crowned his word upon you. Ever since I have had my office as King of England, I have kept you near my heart; I have not only employed you where high profits might come home to you, but I have pared and reduced my own possessions in order to bestow my bounties upon you.”

Suspicious, Cardinal Wolsey thought, *What does this mean?*

The Earl of Surrey thought, *May the Lord promote this business!*

King Henry VIII continued, “Have I not made you the prime, most important man of the state?”

As Lord Chancellor, one of his many titles, Cardinal Wolsey was second only to the King.

King Henry VIII continued, “Please, tell me if what I just now said you have found to be true. And, if you may confess it, say in addition whether you are indebted to us or not. What do you say?”

“My sovereign,” Cardinal Wolsey said, “I confess that your royal graces, which have been showered on me daily, have been more than my deliberate efforts can repay, although my deliberate efforts have exceeded the endeavors of all other men. My endeavors have always come up too short compared to my desires, although they have kept pace with my abilities: I have done all I can and yet not accomplished what I hoped. My own ends have been mine to the extent that they always pointed to the good of your most sacred person and the profit of the state: I have subordinated my own profit in order to profit you and England. For your great graces that you have heaped upon me, a poor undeserver, I can render nothing but my faithful and allegiant thanks, my prayers to Heaven for you, and my

loyalty, which always has and always shall be growing until the winter that is death shall kill it.”

“You have answered fairly,” King Henry VIII said. “A loyal and obedient subject is therein illustrated in your words. The honor of it pays the act of it, as in the contrary the foulness is the punishment.”

A proverb states, “Virtue is its own reward.” In other words, the intrinsic quality of honor is the reward of being virtuous.

King Henry VIII continued, “I presume that, as my hand has opened bounty to you, my heart dropped love, my power rained honor, more on you than on any other, so your hand and heart, your brain, and every function of your power, should — even though your bond of duty is, as it were, in love’s particular — be more to me, your friend, than to any other. You have the duty of a subject to your King, and a subject should love his King, but since I am your personal friend, you also have the bond of personal friendship to me, your King, and personal friendship carries its own duties with it.”

Cardinal Wolsey said, “I profess that for your highness’ good I have always labored more than for my own. What is my own? It is that *am*, *have*, and *will-be*. My own is what I am, what I have, and what I will be.”

Cardinal Wolsey most valued power and money, and what he hoped his *will-be* would be was a powerful man who had much wealth. He was honest about what is *his own*.

He continued, “Though all in the world should split asunder their duty to you, and throw it from their soul, and though perils did abound, as thick as thought could make them and appear in forms more horrid, yet my duty, as does a rock against the tumultuous flood, should the approach of this wild river withstand, and stand unshaken yours.”

“It is nobly spoken,” King Henry VIII said. “Take notice, lords, he has a loyal breast, for you have seen him open it.”

He then handed Cardinal Wolsey two papers and said, “Read over this paper, and after reading it, read this other paper, and then go to breakfast with what appetite you have.”

King Henry VIII frowned at Cardinal Wolsey and then exited. Smiling and whispering to each other, the nobles in the room exited behind him.

Cardinal Wolsey said to himself, “What does this mean? What sudden anger is this? How have I reaped it? He departed frowning from me, as if ruin leaped from his eyes. So looks the enraged lion at the daring huntsman who has wounded him, and then the lion makes him nothing — the lion obliterates him.”

“I must read this paper. I fear it contains the story behind his anger.”

He read the paper and said, “It is so. This paper has ruined me. It is the account of all that world of wealth I have drawn together for my own ends — indeed, to become Pope, and pay my friends in Rome.

“Oh, this is negligence fit for a fool to fall by. What perverse Devil made me put this major secret in the packet I sent the King? Is there no way to cure this? No new trick to beat this paper away from his brains? I know it will stir him strongly, yet I know a way that, if it succeeds, will spite bad fortune and get me out of this mess.”

He looked at the other paper and said, “What’s this? ‘*To the Pope*’! This letter, as I live, has all the business I wrote to his holiness the Pope. So then, farewell! I have touched the highest point of all my greatness, and, from that full meridian of my glory, I hasten now to the setting of my

greatness. I shall fall like a bright meteor in the evening, and no man shall see me anymore.”

The Duke of Norfolk, the Duke of Suffolk, the Earl of Surrey, and Lord Chamberlain returned.

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Hear the King’s pleasure, Cardinal Wolsey. He commands you to render up the Great Seal immediately into our hands, and to confine yourself to Asher House, the residence of my Lord of Winchester, until you hear further from his highness.”

“Stop,” Cardinal Wolsey said. “Where’s your commission, lords? Where are your written orders for me to hand over the Great Seal? Words cannot carry authority so weighty; a written commission is needed for so important a matter.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Who dares to oppose words bearing the King’s will when those words come directly and expressly from the King’s mouth?”

Cardinal Wolsey replied, “Until I find more than will or oral words to hand over the Great Seal — I mean by ‘will’ your malice, you officious lords — know that I dare and I must deny to do it.

“Now I feel of what coarse metal and mettle you are molded — it is malice. How eagerly you follow my disgraces, as if it fed you! And how sleek and wanton you appear in everything that may bring my ruin!

“Follow your vindictive courses of action, men of malice. You have ‘Christian’ warrant for them, and, no doubt, in time will find their ‘fit’ rewards.

“The King, who is my and your master, entrusted that Great Seal that you ask for with such violence to me with his own hand. He told me to enjoy it, with the official position of Lord Chancellor and attendant honors, during my life. And,

to confirm his goodness, he ratified his entrusting the Great Seal to me with letters-patents, aka public documents. Now, who'll take it from me?"

The Earl of Surrey replied, "The King, who gave it to you, will take it from you."

"He himself must do it, then," Cardinal Wolsey said.

Now the Earl of Surrey and Cardinal Wolsey began to use insulting pronouns such as "thou," "thy," and "thee" to refer to each other. In this culture, these words were not insulting to use when speaking to intimates such as friends, wives, or children, or when speaking to servants, but they were insulting in this situation.

"Thou are a proud traitor, priest," the Earl of Surrey said.

Cardinal Wolsey replied, "Proud lord, thou lie. Within these past forty hours, the Earl of Surrey would have preferred to burn his tongue than to say so."

"Thy ambition, thou scarlet sin, robbed this bewailing land of noble Buckingham, my father-in-law," the Earl of Surrey said.

As a Cardinal, Wolsey wore scarlet clothing.

The Earl of Surrey was alluding to Isaiah 1:18: "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins were as crimson, they shall be made white as snow: though they were red like scarlet, they shall be as wool*" (1599 Geneva Bible).

The Earl of Surrey continued, "The heads of all thy brother Cardinals, with thee and all thy best parts bound together, were not worth a hair of his. A plague on your political maneuverings!"

"You sent me to be Governor of Ireland, far from my

father-in-law's succor, far from the King, and far from all who might have mercy on the crime thou attributed to him, while your great goodness, out of holy pity, absolved him with an axe by cutting off his head."

Cardinal Wolsey said, "This, and everything else this talking lord can lay upon my reputation, I answer is most false. The Duke of Buckingham by law found his deserts. How innocent I was from any private malice in his death, his noble jury and foul crimes can witness.

"If I loved many words, lord, I should tell you that you have as little honesty as honor, that in the way of loyalty and truth toward the King, my ever royal master, I dare match myself with a sounder man than Surrey can be and than all who love Surrey's follies can be."

The Earl of Surrey said, "By my soul, your long Cardinal's coat, priest, protects you; otherwise, thou should feel my sword in thy life-blood.

"My lords, can you endure to hear this arrogance? And from this fellow?"

A servant could be called "fellow," but in this context the word "fellow" was insulting.

The Earl of Surrey continued, "If we live thus tamely, to be thus jaded — deceived — by a piece of scarlet, then farewell to our nobility. Let his grace go forward, and dazzle us with his cap like trappers dazzle larks."

People would use a piece of bright scarlet cloth — or a mirror — to lure and fascinate larks and then throw a net over them.

The Earl of Surrey was also alluding to Joan Lark, Cardinal Wolsey's mistress.

Cardinal Wolsey said, "All goodness is poison to thy

stomach.”

The Earl of Surrey said, “Yes, that ‘goodness’ of gleaning all the land’s wealth into one heap, into your own hands, Cardinal, by extortion and misuse of your official position. Yes, that ‘goodness’ of your intercepted packets of letters you wrote to the Pope against the interests of the King. Your ‘goodness,’ since you provoke me, shall be very notorious and widely known.

“My Lord of Norfolk, as you are truly noble and as you respect the common good, the state of our despised nobility, our male children, who, if Cardinal Wolsey continues to live, will scarcely be gentlemen, much less inherit the titles of Earl and Duke from their fathers, produce now the grand sum of Cardinal Wolsey’s sins, the articles of indictment collected from his life.

“I’ll startle you worse than the sacring bell did when the brown wench lay kissing in your arms, Lord Cardinal.”

The sacring bell rang to let people know it was time to go to prayers.

As a priest, Cardinal Wolsey was supposed to be celibate, but it was widely known that he was not.

A brown wench is a lower-class woman. Upper-class women protected their skin from the Sun.

Cardinal Wolsey said, “How much, I think, I could despise this man, except that I am bound in Christian charity against it!”

The Duke of Norfolk said to the Earl of Surrey, “Those articles, my lord, are in the King’s own hand; he has possession of them. But I can tell you this much, the articles of indictments are for foul crimes.”

Cardinal Wolsey replied, “So much fairer and spotless shall

my innocence arise, when the King knows my truth and loyalty.”

The Earl of Surrey replied, “This cannot save you. I thank my memory that I still remember some of these articles, and they shall be widely known. Now, if you can blush and cry ‘guilty,’ Cardinal, you’ll show a little honesty.”

“Speak on, sir,” Cardinal Wolsey said. “I defy your worst objections. If I blush, it is because I see a nobleman who lacks manners.”

“I had rather lack manners than my head,” the Earl of Surrey said. “Listen to the charges against you!

“First, that without the King’s assent or knowledge, you contrived to be a Papal legate, by which power you maimed the jurisdiction of all the Bishops in England.”

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Second, that in all you wrote to Rome, or to foreign Princes, ‘*Ego et Rex meus*’ — ‘I and my King’ — was always inscribed, in which you put yourself first and described the King as your servant.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Third, that without the knowledge either of King or council, when you went as an ambassador to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, you made bold to carry into Flanders the Great Seal, which is not permitted to leave England.”

If the Great Seal were to fall into the wrong hands, forged letters stamped with the Great Seal could greatly embarrass the King.

The Earl of Surrey said, “Fourth, that you sent a large commission of delegates to Gregory de Cassado, to conclude, without the King’s will or the state’s permission, a treaty between his highness and the Duke of Ferrara, Italy.”

Gregory de Cassado was the English ambassador to the Papal court. Ferrara was a city-state in Italy.

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Fifth, that out of sheer ambition, you have caused your profile and holy hat to be stamped on the King’s coin.”

The Earl of Surrey said, “Sixth, that you have sent uncountable wealth — by what means acquired, I leave to your own conscience — to supply Rome, and to bribe your way to honors, to the complete undoing of all the Kingdom of England. Many more there are, which since they are about you, and odious, I will not taint my mouth by enumerating them.”

Lord Chamberlain said, “Oh, my lord, do not press a falling man too far! It is a virtue not to. Cardinal Wolsey’s faults, sins, and crimes lie open to the laws; let the laws, not you, correct him. My heart weeps to see him have now so little of his formerly great self.”

“I forgive him,” the Earl of Surrey said.

The Duke of Suffolk said, “Lord Cardinal Wolsey, because all of those things you have done recently by your power as a Papal legate within this kingdom, fall into the compass of a *praemunire* — our English law against preempting and denying the King’s authority by asserting Papal jurisdiction in England — the King’s further pleasure is that therefore this writ be sued against you: You must forfeit all your goods, lands, tenements, castles and chattels, and whatsoever else, and be out of the King’s protection and declared an outlaw. This is my charge.”

The Duke of Norfolk said, “And so we’ll leave you to your meditations about how to live better. As for your stubborn answer about the giving back of the Great Seal to us, the King shall know it, and, no doubt, shall ‘thank’ you. So fare you well, my little-good Lord Cardinal Wolsey.”

They exited, leaving Cardinal Wolsey alone.

“So farewell to the little good you bear me,” Cardinal Wolsey said. “Farewell! A long farewell to all my greatness! This is the state of man: Today he puts forth the tender leaves of hopes; tomorrow he blossoms and bears his blushing honors thick upon him; on the third day comes a frost, a killing frost; and when he, good and easygoing man, thinks that most certainly his greatness is ripening, the killing frost nips his root, and then he falls, as I do.

“I have ventured, like little carefree, playful boys who swim with the aid of bladders filled with air, these many summers in a sea of glory, but I went far beyond my depth. My high-blown pride at length broke under me and now has left me, weary and old with service, to the mercy of a turbulent stream that must forever hide me.

“Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you. I feel my newly opened heart. Oh, how wretched is that poor man who hangs on Princes’ favors! There is, between that smile we would aspire to, that sweet aspect of Princes, and the ruin Princes cause, more pangs and fears than wars or women have. And when that poor man who hangs on Princes’ favors falls, he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again.”

Psalm 118:9 states, “*It is better to trust in the Lord, than to have confidence in princes*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Isaiah 14:12 states, “*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? and cut down to the ground, which didst cast lots upon the nations?*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Cromwell, Cardinal Wolsey’s servant, entered the room. He was in a state of shock.

“Why, how are you now, Cromwell?” Cardinal Wolsey

asked.

“I have no power to speak, sir,” Cromwell replied.

“What, are you amazed at my misfortunes? Can your spirit wonder that a great man should decline? If you weep, I know that I have indeed fallen.”

“How is your grace?”

“Why, well,” Cardinal Wolsey replied. “I have never been so truly happy, my good Cromwell. I know myself now; and I feel within me a peace above all Earthly high official positions; I have a still and quiet conscience. The King has cured me, for which I humbly thank his grace, and from these shoulders of mine, these ruined pillars, out of pity, he has taken a load that would sink a navy — the load of too much honor. Oh, it is a burden, Cromwell, it is a burden too heavy for a man who hopes for Heaven!”

“I am glad your grace has made that right use of it,” Cromwell said. “I am glad that your grace has been able to learn a moral lesson from what has happened to you.”

“I hope I have,” Cardinal Wolsey said. “I am able now, I think, out of a fortitude of soul I feel, to endure more miseries and greater miseries by far than my weak-hearted enemies dare give to me.

“What is the news going around?”

“The heaviest and the worst is your falling out of favor with the King.”

“God bless him!” Cardinal Wolsey said.

“The next important piece of news is that Sir Thomas More has been chosen Lord Chancellor in your place.”

“That’s somewhat quick,” Cardinal Wolsey said, “but he’s a learned man. May he continue long in his highness’ favor,

and do justice for truth's sake and his conscience; may his bones, when he has run his course of life and sleeps in blessings, have a tomb with orphans' tears wept on them!"

The Lord Chancellor was the official guardian of orphans. If he did his job well, orphans would mourn his death.

"What other news?" Cardinal Wolsey asked.

"Cranmer has returned with welcome, and he has been installed Lord Archbishop of Canterbury."

"That's news indeed."

Cromwell said, "The last piece of news is that the Lady Anne, whom the King has secretly been long married to, this day was viewed in open as his Queen, going to chapel. People now talk only about her coronation."

"There was the weight that pulled me down," Cardinal Wolsey said. "Oh, Cromwell, the King has gotten the better of me. I have lost forever all my glories because of that one woman. No Sun shall ever usher forth my honors, or gild again the noble troops who waited on me and wanted me to smile.

"Go, get away from me, Cromwell. I am a poor fallen man, unworthy now to be your lord and master. Seek the King — that Sun, I pray, may never set! I have told him who you are and how true and loyal you are. He will promote you. Some little memory of me will stir him — I know his noble nature — and he will not let your promising service perish, too, as he has mine. Good Cromwell, do not neglect the King. Take this opportunity now, and provide for your own future safety."

"Oh, my lord, must I, then, leave you?" Cromwell said. "Must I necessarily forego so good, so noble, and so true and loyal a master? Bear witness, all of you who don't have

hearts of iron, with what sorrow Cromwell leaves his lord. The King shall have my service, but my prayers forever and forever shall be yours.”

“Cromwell, I did not think I would shed a tear in all my miseries, but you have forced me, because of your honest truth and loyalty, to play the woman and cry. Let’s dry our eyes, and thus far hear me, Cromwell, and, when I am forgotten, as I shall be, and sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention of me more must be heard, say that I taught you — say that Wolsey, who once trod the ways of glory, and sounded all the depths and shoals of honor, found for you a path, out of his wreck, to rise in, a sure and safe path, although your master missed it.

“Note carefully my fall and what ruined me. Cromwell, I charge you to fling away ambition. Because of the sin of ambition, the angels fell; how can Man, then, the image of his Maker, hope to profit by it?

“Love yourself last. Cherish the hearts of those who hate you. Corruption does not profit more than honesty. Always in your right hand carry gentle peace that will silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not. Let all the ends you aim at be your country’s, your God’s, and truth’s; then if you fall, Cromwell, you fall as a blessed martyr!

“Serve the King, and — please, lead me in. There take an inventory of all I have, to the last penny. It is the King’s now. My Cardinal’s robe and my integrity to Heaven are all I dare now to call my own.

“Oh, Cromwell, Cromwell! Had I but served my God with half the zeal I served my King, He would not in my old age have left me naked and defenseless to my enemies.”

“Good sir, have patience,” Cromwell said.

“So I have,” Cardinal Wolsey said. “Farewell to the hopes

of court! My hopes in Heaven do dwell.”

CHAPTER 4 (Henry VIII)

— 4.1 —

Two gentlemen met each other on a street. The coronation of Queen Anne Boleyn at Westminster Abbey was taking place that day, and she and a procession would pass along this street after she left Westminster Abbey.

“You’re well met once again,” the first gentleman said.

“So are you,” the second gentleman replied.

“Have you come to take your stand here, and see the Lady Anne pass from her coronation?”

“Yes, that is why I am here today. The last time we met, the Duke of Buckingham came this way from his trial.”

“That is very true, but that time offered sorrow. This time offers general joy.”

“That is good,” the second gentleman said. “The citizens, I am sure, have shown fully their devotion to royalty — as, to give them their due, they are always ready to do — in celebration of this day with shows, pageants, and sights of honor.”

“These shows, pageants, and sights of honor have never been greater, nor, I assure you, better appreciated, sir.”

“May I be bold and ask what that paper in your hand contains?”

“Of course,” the first gentleman said. “It is the list of those who claim their offices and duties this day by custom of the coronation.

“The Duke of Suffolk is the first, and his claim is to be the

High Steward.”

The High Steward presides over the coronation.

The first gentleman continued, “Next is the Duke of Norfolk, and his claim is to be the Earl Marshal.”

The Earl Marshal arranges great ceremonies.

The first gentleman continued, “You may read the rest.”

“I thank you, sir,” the second gentleman said. “If I had not known those customs, I should have been indebted to your paper.

“But, I ask you, what’s become of Catherine, the Princess Dowager? How goes her business — the matter concerning her?”

The first gentleman said, “That I can tell you, too. The Archbishop of Canterbury, accompanied with other learned and reverend fathers of his order, held a recent court at Dunstable, six miles off from Ampthill, where the Dowager Princess resided. She was often summoned by them to appear at the court, but she did not appear. And, to be short, because of her non-appearance and the King’s recent worry that he may not be legally married to her, by the majority assent of all these learned men she was divorced from the King. After that judgment was made, she moved to Kimbolton, where she remains now. She is sick.”

“I pity the good lady,” the second gentleman said.

Trumpets sounded.

The second gentlemen said, “Listen! The trumpets sound. Stand close by because the Queen is coming.”

This is the order in which the procession of the coronation passed by the two gentlemen:

1. Trumpeters appeared first and blew a lively flourish.
2. Two judges appeared.
3. The Lord Chancellor appeared, with his mace of office and the bag containing the Great Seal carried before him.
4. Singing choristers appeared with playing musicians.
5. The Mayor of London appeared, bearing the mace. Just behind him was the Garter King of Arms, in his coat of arms, and on his head a gilt copper crown.
6. The Marquess Dorset appeared, bearing a scepter of gold and wearing on his head a demi-coronal of gold. With him appeared the Earl of Surrey, carrying a rod of silver with a dove and crowned with an Earl's coronet. They were wearing collars made of S's joined together.
7. The Duke of Suffolk appeared, wearing his robe of state, with his coronet on his head, bearing a long white wand, in his office as High Steward. With him appeared the Duke of Norfolk, carrying the rod of a Marshal and wearing a coronet on his head. They were wearing collars made of S's joined together.
8. Four people representing the Cinque-ports — ports on the southeast coast of England — appeared, holding a canopy. Under the canopy was Queen Anne, wearing her robe and with her hair richly adorned with pearls and crowned. At her sides walked the Bishops of London and Winchester.
9. The old Duchess of Norfolk appeared, wearing a coronal of gold, wrought with flowers, carrying Queen Anne's train.
10. Certain ladies or Countesses, wearing plain circlets of gold without flowers, appeared.

The two gentlemen talked about the members of the procession as they passed by them.

The second gentleman said, "This is a royal procession, believe me. These people I know, but who is that man who is carrying the scepter?"

"He is the Marquess Dorset," the first gentleman said, "and the man carrying the rod is the Earl of Surrey."

"He is a bold, brave gentleman. I suppose that this man is the Duke of Suffolk?"

"Yes, that is he. He is acting as the High Steward today."

"And is that man my Lord of Norfolk?" the second gentleman asked.

"Yes," the second gentleman replied.

He then looked at Queen Anne and said, "May Heaven bless you! You have the sweetest face I ever looked on."

He then said to the first gentleman, "Sir, as I have a soul, she is an angel. Our King has all the riches of the Indies in his arms, and more and richer, when he embraces that lady. I cannot blame his conscience."

The second gentleman thought that King Henry VIII's conscience might be bothering him because he had had to divorce his first wife, Catherine, in order to marry Anne Boleyn, but Queen Anne was so beautiful that the second gentleman could not blame the King for divorcing Catherine.

The first gentleman said, "Those who carry the cloth of honor — the canopy — over her are four barons of the Cinque-ports."

"Those men are happy; and so are all men who are near her," the second gentleman said. "I take it that the woman

who carries the train of the Queen's robe is that old noble lady, the Duchess of Norfolk."

"It is; and all the rest are countesses."

"Their coronets say so," the second gentleman said. "These are stars indeed, and sometimes falling ones."

He was punning. One meaning of "falling" was "yielding her virginity."

The first gentleman said, "No more of that."

The procession exited. Trumpets sounded, and a third gentleman joined the first two gentlemen. The third gentleman was obviously hot; he was sweating.

The first gentleman said, "May God save you, sir! Where have you been broiling?"

"Among the crowd in Westminster Abbey, where not even one more finger could be wedged in because it was so crowded," the third gentleman said. "I am stifled with the complete rankness of their joy."

The word "rankness" meant both "excess" and "bad odor."

The second gentleman asked him, "Did you see the coronation ceremony?"

"Yes, I did."

"How was it?" the first gentleman asked.

"Well worth the seeing."

"Good sir, describe it to us," the second gentleman said.

"I will as well as I am able to," the third gentleman said. "The rich stream of lords and ladies, having brought the Queen to a prepared place in the choir, withdrew a distance away from her while her grace sat down to rest awhile,

some half an hour or so, in a rich chair of state, displaying freely the beauty of her person to the people.

“Believe me, sir, she is the most beautiful woman who ever lay by a man. When the people had a full view of her, such a noise arose as the mast ropes make at sea in a stiff tempest, as loud, and to as many tunes. Hats, cloaks — and doublets, I think — flew up, and if their faces had been loose, this day the people would have lost their faces.

“Such joy I never saw before. Great-bellied women who had not half a week to go before giving birth, like battering rams in the old time of war, would shake the crowd of people and make them reel before them.

“No man living could say, ‘This is my wife,’ there; all were woven together so strangely into one piece.”

“What happened next?” the second gentleman said.

“At length her grace rose,” the third gentleman said, “and with modest, moderate steps, she came to the altar, where she kneeled and saint-like cast her fair eyes toward Heaven and prayed devoutly.

“Then she rose again and bowed to the people. The Archbishop of Canterbury then laid all the royal accouterments of a Queen — namely, holy oil, Edward the Confessor’s crown, the rod, and the bird of peace, and all such emblems — nobly on her.

“After that was performed, the choir, accompanied by all the choicest musicians of the kingdom, sang the ‘*Te Deum*.’”

The song began, “*Te deum laudamus*.” This meant, “You, God, we praise.”

The third gentleman continued, “So then she departed, and with the same full state walked back again to York Place,

where the feast is to be held.”

“Sir, you must no longer call it York Place,” the first gentleman said. “That’s past, for since Cardinal Wolsey fell, that title’s lost. That place is now the King’s, and it is now called Whitehall.”

“That’s true,” the third gentleman said. “I knew that, but the name is so recently altered that the old name is still foremost in my mind.”

The second gentleman asked, “Who are the two reverend Bishops who were on each side of the Queen?”

“They are Stokesley and Gardiner,” the third gentleman said. “Gardiner is the Bishop of Winchester; he was recently promoted from being the King’s secretary. Stokesley is the Bishop of London.”

The second gentleman said, “The Bishop of Winchester is thought to be no great good friend to the Archbishop of Canterbury: the virtuous Cranmer.”

“All the land knows that,” the third gentleman said. “However, as of now there is no great breach between them. When it comes, Cranmer will find that he has a friend who will not shrink from him.”

“Who may that be, I ask you?” the second gentleman said.

“Thomas Cromwell,” the third gentleman said. “He is a man whom the King holds in much esteem, and truly he is a worthy friend. The King has made him Master of the Jewel House, and he is already a member of the Privy Council.”

The Master of the King’s Jewel House had charge of the crown jewels and other valuable items.

“He will deserve more,” the second gentleman said.

“Yes, without all doubt,” the third gentleman said. “Come, gentlemen, you shall go with me on my way, which is to the court, and there you shall be my guests: That is something I can arrange. As we walk there, I’ll tell you more.”

“You may command us, sir,” the first and second gentlemen said.

— 4.2 —

In a room of the Dowager Princess’ residence in Kimbolton, several people met: Catherine, the Princess Dowager; Griffith, her gentleman-usher; and Patience, her serving woman. Catherine was sick; in fact, she was dying.

Griffith asked Catherine, “How is your grace?”

She replied, “Oh, Griffith, I am sick to death! My legs, like heavily laden branches, bow to the earth, wanting to be relieved of their burden. Bring me a chair.”

He did, and she sat down.

“Good,” she said. “Now, I think, I feel a little relief. Didn’t you tell me, Griffith, as you helped me walk here, that the great child of honor, Cardinal Wolsey, is dead?”

“Yes, madam,” Griffith said, “but I thought your grace, out of the pain you were suffering, did not hear me.”

“Please, good Griffith,” Catherine said, “tell me how he died. If he died well, then he stepped ahead of me, perhaps to be my happy, fortunate example.”

“He died well — that is how the talk goes, madam,” Griffith said. “For after the brave Earl Northumberland arrested him at York, and brought him forward, as a man severely disgraced, to answer the charges against him, Cardinal Wolsey fell sick suddenly, and he grew so ill that

he could not sit on his mule.”

“Alas, poor man!” Catherine said. “That’s a pity.”

“At last, with easy stages of his journey, he came to Leicester, where he lodged in the abbey,” Griffith said. “There the reverend abbot, with all the members of his religious community, honorably received him.

“Cardinal Wolsey said to the reverend abbot, ‘Oh, father abbot, I am an old man, broken with the storms of state, and I have come to lay my weary bones among you. Give me a little earth for charity! Give me a grave when I die!’

“He then went to bed, where his sickness eagerly and continually pursued him, and three nights after this, about the hour of eight, which he himself had foretold should be his last hour, full of repentance, continual meditations, tears, and lamentations, he gave his honors to the world again and he gave his blessed part — his soul — to Heaven, and he slept in peace.”

“So may he rest in peace,” Catherine said. “May his faults lie gently on him! Yet thus far, Griffith, give me permission to speak about and describe him — with charity, I mean.”

She believed that she ought to speak with Christian charity and love about the dead, but doing so was difficult despite her good intentions.

She said, “He was a man of an unbounded stomach for power and wealth and pride, forever ranking himself as the equal of Princes. He was a man who, by underhanded dealing and incitement to evil, put all the Kingdom of England into bondage. To him, Simony — the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices — was fair play. His own opinion was his law. In the presence of the King, he would say untruths, and he was always duplicitous both in his words and meaning. He was never seemingly

compassionate except where he meant to ruin. His promises were, as he then was, mighty, but his performance was, as he is now, nothing: He promised more than he gave. In his sexual morality, he was reprehensible, and he gave the clergy a bad example.”

“Noble madam,” Griffith said, “men’s evil deeds are recorded and live on in brass; their virtues we write in water. May it please your highness to hear me speak about his good deeds and good qualities now?”

“Yes, good Griffith,” Catherine said. “I would be malicious if I did not.”

“Cardinal Wolsey, although he came from humble stock, undoubtedly was fashioned to much honor. From his cradle he was a scholar, and a ripe and good one. He was exceedingly wise, fair-spoken, and persuasive. He was haughty and sour to them who were not his friends, but to those men who sought him he was as sweet as summer. And although he was never satisfied with all the wealth he accumulated, and he wanted more and more, which was a sin, yet in bestowing, madam, he was most Princely. For example, take those twin schools of learning that he raised in Ipswich and Oxford! The school of learning in Ipswich fell with him, unwilling to outlive the good man who had founded it. The school of learning in Oxford, though unfinished, is yet so famous, so excellent in scholarship, and still so rising, that Christendom shall always speak about its virtue.

“Cardinal Wolsey’s overthrow and fall from power heaped happiness upon him because then, and not until then, he found and knew himself, and he found the blessedness of being little powerful. And, to add greater honors to his age than man could give him, he died fearing — revering — God.”

Catherine said, "After my death I wish no other herald, no other speaker of my actions that I performed while I was alive, to keep my honor from corruption, except such an honest chronicler as you, Griffith.

"You have made me, with your scrupulous truth and moderation, honor in his ashes now Cardinal Wolsey, the man whom I most hated while he was living. May peace be with him!

"Patience, be near me still, and set me lower on this chair so that I can recline. I have not much time left alive in which to trouble you.

"Good Griffith, tell the musicians to play me that sad music I named my knell — music to announce my death — while I sit meditating on that celestial harmony I go to."

The musicians played sad, solemn music.

Griffith said, "She is asleep. Patience, good girl, let's sit down quietly, for fear we will awaken her. Gently, gentle Patience."

While asleep, Catherine had a vision.

She saw, solemnly dancing one after another, six personages, clad in white robes, wearing garlands of bay leaves on their heads and golden masks on their faces, and holding bay or palm branches in their hands.

The six personages first curtsied to her, then danced. At certain rounds of the dance, the first two personages held a spare garland over her head, at which the other four made reverent curtsies to Catherine. Then the two personages who had held the garland gave it to the next two, who danced the same rounds, and then held the garland over her head while the other personages curtsied. This done, they gave the garland to the last two personages, and all the

personages did the same things that had been done before.

Catherine, as if she were inspired, made in her sleep signs of rejoicing, and she held up her hands to Heaven.

The personages danced away and vanished, carrying the spare garland with them.

The music continued to play.

Catherine woke up and said, “Spirits of peace, where are you? Have you all gone and left me here in wretchedness behind you?”

Griffith said, “Madam, we are here.”

“It is not you I am calling for,” Catherine said. “Did you see anyone enter the room since I fell asleep?”

“No one, madam,” Griffith said.

“No?” Catherine said. “Didn’t you see, just now, a blessed troop invite me to a banquet — a blessed troop of good spirits whose bright faces cast a thousand beams upon me, like the Sun? They promised me eternal happiness, and they brought me garlands, Griffith, which I feel I am not worthy yet to wear. I shall, assuredly, be worthy to wear them in Heaven.”

“I am very joyful, madam, that such good dreams have come to you,” Griffith said.

“Order the musicians to stop playing,” Catherine said. “Their notes are harsh and heavy to me.”

The musicians stopped playing.

Patience said quietly to Griffith, “Do you see how much her grace has suddenly changed? How long her face is drawn? How pale she looks? She is of an earthy coldness — a sign of death! Look at her eyes!”

According to Aristotle, four elements exist: earth, air, fire, and water. Earth is a cold, dry element.

Ecclesiastes 12-7 states, “*And dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return to God that gave it*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

“She is going, girl,” Griffith said. “She is dying. Pray, pray for her.”

“May Heaven comfort her!” Patience said.

A messenger entered the room and said to Catherine, without kneeling, “If it like your grace —”

These words were too informal for a mere messenger to use when addressing a Queen, who should be knelt to and spoken formally and respectfully to.

“You are a saucy, insolent fellow,” Catherine said to the messenger.

Using the royal plural, she added, “Don’t we deserve more reverence than that?”

Griffith said to the messenger, “You are to blame for using such rude behavior. You know that she will not let go of her accustomed greatness. Go on! Kneel!”

The messenger knelt and apologized, “I humbly entreat your highness’ pardon. My haste made me act rudely and without manners. A gentleman, sent from the King, is waiting to see you.”

“Bring the gentleman here, Griffith,” Catherine ordered, “but this fellow, this messenger, I never want to see again.”

Griffith and the messenger exited, and Griffith quickly returned with the gentleman, whose name was Capucius.

Catherine said to him, “If my sight has not failed me, you

are the lord ambassador from the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who is my royal nephew, and your name is Capucius.”

“Yes, madam,” Capucius said. “I am he, and I am your servant.”

“Oh, my lord,” Catherine said, “the times and my titles now are strangely altered since first you knew me, but please tell me what you want.”

“Noble lady,” Capucius said, “first I want to offer my own service to your grace. Next I want to say that King Henry VIII requested that I would visit you. He grieves much for you because of your weakness, and by me he sends you his Princely commendations and greetings, and heartily entreats you to take good comfort.”

“Oh, my good lord, that comfort comes too late,” Catherine said. “It is like a pardon after an execution. That gentle medicine, given in time, would have cured me, but now I am past all comforts here on Earth, except prayers.

“How is his highness?”

“Madam, he is in good health,” Capucius replied.

“So may he always be!” Catherine said. “And may he always flourish, while I shall dwell with worms, and my poor name has been banished from the Kingdom!

“Patience, has that letter I caused you to write been sent away yet?”

“No, madam,” Patience replied.

She gave the letter to Catherine, who gave it to Capucius and said, “Sir, I most humbly ask you to deliver this letter to my lord the King.”

“I will do so most willingly, madam,” Capucius replied.

Catherine said, "In this letter I have entrusted to the King's goodness the model of our chaste loves, his young daughter: Mary. May the dews of Heaven fall thickly in blessings on her!

"I ask him to give her a virtuous upbringing. She is young, and she has a noble and modest nature. I hope she will deserve well. I also ask him to love her a little for the sake of her mother, who loved him, Heaven knows how dearly.

"My next poor petition to the King is that his noble grace would have some pity upon my wretched ladies-of-waiting, who for so long have followed both my fortunes — my good fortune and my bad fortune — faithfully. I dare to avow — since I am a dying person, I will not lie — that of all my ladies-of-waiting, all of them deserve on account of their virtue and true beauty of the soul and their honesty and decent behavior a very good husband. Let their husbands be noble; I am sure that those men who shall marry my ladies-of-waiting will be happy.

"My last request is for my men who serve me. They are the poorest in money, but poverty could never draw them away from me. I request from the King that they may have their wages duly paid them, and something in excess to remember me by.

"If Heaven had been pleased to give me longer life and suitable means, we would not have parted like this.

"These are the whole contents of my letter to the King.

"My good lord, by all that you love the dearest in this world, and as you wish Christian peace to departed souls, I ask you to be these poor people's friend, and urge the King to do me this last right and rite."

"By Heaven, I will," Capucius said, "or let me not be known as a man!"

“I thank you, honest lord,” Catherine said. “Remember me in all humility to his highness. Say that the person who caused his long trouble is now passing out of this world. Tell him that while dying I blessed him, for so I will. My eyes grow dim. Farewell, my lord.

“Griffith, farewell.

“Patience, you must not leave me yet. I must go to bed. Call in more women to help you put me to bed. When I am dead, good girl, let me be treated with honor. Strew over me flowers that are appropriate for a maiden, so that all the world may know that I was a chaste wife all the way to my grave. Embalm me, then lay me out. Although I have been un-Queened, yet inter me like a Queen and like the daughter to a King. I can do and say no more.”

CHAPTER 5 (Henry VIII)

— 5.1 —

Gardiner, who was the Bishop of Winchester, was in a gallery in the palace in London. A page held a torch before him. A gallery is a long room in which the King and others could take indoor walks.

Gardiner said, “It’s one o’clock, boy, isn’t it?”

The page replied, “The clock has struck one.”

“These should be hours for necessities, not for delights,” Gardiner said. “These should be times to repair our nature with comforting repose, and not for us to waste these times.”

Sir Thomas Lovell entered the room, and Gardiner said, “This is a good hour of the night, Sir Thomas! Where are you going so late?”

“Did you come from the King, my lord?” Sir Thomas Lovell asked.

“I did, Sir Thomas, and I left him as he was playing the card game primero with the Duke of Suffolk.”

“I must go to him, too, before he goes to bed,” Sir Thomas Lovell said. “I’ll take my leave of you. Good night.”

“Not yet, Sir Thomas Lovell,” Gardiner said. “What’s the matter? It seems you are in haste. If you can do so without causing great offence, give your friend some taste of your late business. Affairs that walk, as they say spirits do, in the middle of the night, have in them a wilder nature than the business that seeks dispatch by day. Your business must be something important.”

Sir Thomas Lovell replied, “My lord, I respect you, and I would dare to entrust to your ears a secret much weightier than this one. Queen Anne’s in labor, they say, and in great extremity, and it is feared she’ll die in childbirth.”

“The fruit she goes with I pray for heartily, hoping that it may find this a good time to be born and live, but as for the trunk of the tree, Sir Thomas, I wish it were uprooted now. I hope that the child lives and the mother dies.”

“I think I could cry ‘amen’ and agree with you, and yet my conscience says that Queen Anne is a good creature and a sweet lady, and that she deserves our better wishes,” Sir Thomas Lovell said.

“But, sir, sir, listen to me, Sir Thomas. You’re a gentleman of my own way. We believe in the same form of religion. I know that you are wise and religious, and let me tell you that it will never be well, it will not, Sir Thomas Lovell, take it from me, until Cranmer and Cromwell, who are Queen Anne’s two hands, aka two main supporters, and she, Queen Anne herself, sleep in their graves.”

“Now, sir, you are speaking about two of the most talked-about men in the kingdom. As for Cromwell, besides being Master of the Jewel House, he has been made Master of the Rolls, and the King’s secretary.”

The Master of the Rolls is in charge of the records of the Court of Chancery and of documents bearing the Great Seal.

Sir Thomas Lovell continued, “Further, sir, Cromwell stands in the entrance and path of more promotions, with which the time will load him.

“Cranmer — the Archbishop of Canterbury — is the King’s hand and tongue, and so who dares to speak even one syllable against him?”

Gardiner replied, “Yes, yes, Sir Thomas, there are those who dare to speak against him, and I myself have ventured to speak my mind about him, and indeed this day, Sir, I may say to you, I think I have incensed and angered the lords of the Privy Council by informing them that he is — for if I know he is, then they know he is — a most arch heretic, a pestilence that infects the land.”

Cranmer supported Protestant ideas, and Gardiner supported Catholic ideas.

Gardiner continued, “Moved by my information, they have given this information to the King, who has so far listened to our complaint. Because of his great grace and Princely care foreseeing those deadly evils our arguments made clear lay before him, the King has commanded that Cranmer be summoned to appear tomorrow morning before the Council Board. He’s a rank weed, Sir Thomas, and we must root him out.

“I have kept you from your affairs too long. Good night, Sir Thomas.”

“Many good nights to you, my lord,” Sir Thomas Lovell replied. “I remain your servant.”

Gardiner and the page exited.

King Henry VIII and the Duke of Suffolk, whose name was Charles Brandon, entered the room.

King Henry VIII said, “Charles, I will play no more tonight. My mind’s not on it; you are too hard for me to beat.”

“Sir, I never have won anything from you before,” the Duke of Suffolk said.

“You have won only a little, Charles, and you shall not win anything when I can keep my mind on my play,” King

Henry VIII said. His wife's giving birth was distracting his mind.

Seeing Sir Thomas Lovell, the King asked, "Now, Lovell, what is the news from the Queen?"

"I could not personally deliver to her the message that you commanded me to give her, but by her woman servant I sent your message. She returned the Queen's thanks with the greatest humbleness, and she desired your highness most heartily to pray for her."

"What are you saying?" King Henry VIII said. "To pray for her? Is she crying out in pain?"

"So said her woman servant, who also said that her suffering almost made each pang a death," Sir Thomas Lovell said.

"Alas, good lady!" King Henry VIII said.

"May God safely deliver her of her burden, her baby, and with little travail, to the gladdening of your highness with an heir!" the Duke of Suffolk said.

"It is the middle of the night, Charles," King Henry VIII said. "Please, go to bed and in your prayers remember the condition of my poor Queen. Leave me alone; for I must think about that which company would not be friendly to. I want to be alone right now."

"I wish your highness a quiet night," the Duke of Suffolk said, "and I will remember my good mistress in my prayers."

"Charles, good night," the King said.

Sir Anthony Denny entered the gallery.

"Well, sir, what is your news?" King Henry VIII asked.

“Sir, I have brought my lord the Archbishop, as you commanded me.”

“The Archbishop of Canterbury?” the King asked.

“Yes, my good lord,” Sir Anthony Denny replied.

“Good,” the King said. “Where is he, Denny?”

“He is awaiting your highness’ pleasure to see him.”

Sir Anthony Denny exited to get Cranmer.

Sir Thomas Lovell, who wanted to eavesdrop on the conversation, thought, *This concerns that which Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester, spoke to me about. It is fortunate that I came here tonight.*

Sir Anthony Denny returned with Cranmer.

King Henry VIII ordered, “Leave the gallery.”

Sir Thomas Lovell loitered, hoping the King was referring only to Sir Anthony Denny.

King Henry VIII looked directly at Sir Thomas Lovell and said, “I gave you an order. Leave the gallery.”

Sir Anthony Denny and Sir Thomas Lovell left the gallery.

The King frowned.

Cranmer thought, *I am afraid. Why is the King frowning like this? This is a terrifying expression. Not all is well.*

“How are you now, my lord?” King Henry VIII said. “You must want to know why I sent for you.”

Cranmer knelt and said, “It is my duty to attend your highness’ pleasure.”

“Please, arise, my good and gracious Lord of Canterbury,” the King said.

Cranmer stood again.

The King continued, “Come, you and I must take a walk together in the gallery. I have news to tell you. Come, come, give me your hand. Ah, my good lord, I grieve at what I will speak to you, and I am very sorry to repeat what follows.

“I have, and most unwillingly, recently heard many grievous — I do say, my lord, grievous — complaints about you. Having considered these grievances, we and our Privy Council have decided to summon you to come before us this morning.

“I know that you cannot easily clear yourself there of these accusations, so until there is a further trial in those charges that will require you to make your defense, you must gather your patience and be well contented to make your house our Tower of London. That will be your residence for a while. You are a metaphorical brother to us, and you are a member of the powerful Privy Council. It is fitting that we thus proceed like this, or else no witness would come against you. If you were to continue to be a member of the powerful Privy Council, no one would be brave enough to give any testimony against you.”

Cranmer knelt again and said, “I humbly thank your highness, and I am very glad to catch this good occasion for me very thoroughly to be winnowed, in which my chaff and my wholesome grains shall fly apart, for I know that there’s no one who is exposed to more calumnious and defamatory tongues than I myself, poor man, do.”

“Stand up, good Archbishop of Canterbury,” King Henry VIII said.

The King now used the informal pronouns “thy” and thou” that in this context were a sign of affection between friends: “Thy truth and thy integrity are rooted in us, thy friend. We

know that thou are loyal and have integrity. Give me thy hand; stand up.”

Cranmer stood up, and the King said to him, “Please, let’s walk. Now, by my sanctity, I ask you, what manner of man are you? My lord, I expected you to petition me to take some pains to bring together yourself and your accusers so you could face them, and for me to hear your case completely and quickly without a distressing delay.”

“Most dread-inspiring liege,” Cranmer said, “The good I stand on is my truth and honesty: If they shall fail, I, with my enemies, will triumph over my personal self, which I regard as being worth nothing, if I lack those virtues of truth and honesty. I fear nothing that can be said against me.”

Touched by Cranmer’s innocence, King Henry VIII said, “Don’t you know how you stand in the world, with the whole world? Your enemies are many, and not small in rank or in power. Their schemes and plots must bear the same proportion — they will not be small. And not always do the justice and the truth of the question carry the due of the verdict with them. A just and true person can unjustly and falsely be found guilty.

“How easily might corrupt minds procure knaves as corrupt as they to swear falsely and commit perjury against you? Such things have been done. Your enemies are powerful, and their malice is of as great size as their power.

“Do you think you will have better luck, I mean when it comes to perjured testimony, than your Master, Jesus, whose minister you are, while He lived here upon this evil, wicked Earth?

“Come on! Don’t be naïve! With no good reason, you are walking along a precipice and putting yourself in danger of falling to your own destruction.”

Cranmer replied, “May God and your majesty protect my innocence, or I will fall into the trap that is laid for me!”

“Be of good cheer,” King Henry VIII said. “Your enemies shall no more prevail than we will allow them to.

“Be of good comfort, and this morning see that you appear before them. If they should happen, in charging you with these matters, to commit you to the Tower of London, do not fail to make the best and most persuasive arguments to the contrary, and be sure to make them with what vehemence is necessary for the occasion.

“If your entreaties will render you no remedy, and your enemies insist that you go to the Tower of London, give them this ring that they will know is mine, and there make your appeal to us before them. Let them know that you want me to be your judge.”

The King handed him a ring and said, “Look, the good man — Cranmer — weeps! He’s honest, on my honor. God’s blessed mother! I swear he is true- and loyal-hearted, and no soul is better in my Kingdom.

“Leave now, and do as I told you to do.”

Cranmer exited.

King Henry VIII said, “He has strangled his language in his tears. He cannot speak because of his tears.”

The Old Lady entered the gallery.

A man yelled at her, “Come back. What are you doing?”

The Old Lady said, “I’ll not come back; the news that I bring will make my boldness good manners.”

She said to the King, “Now, may good angels fly over thy royal head, and shade thy person under their blessed wings!”

King Henry VIII said, “Now, by thy looks, I guess thy message. Has the Queen delivered her baby? Say, yes; and say that the Queen has given birth to a boy: a male heir who will become King after me.”

The Old Lady said, “Yes, yes, my liege. And it’s a lovely boy. May the God of Heaven both now and forever bless her! It is a girl, and a girl is a promise of boys hereafter.

“Sir, your Queen wants you to come and visit her, and to be acquainted with this stranger who is as like you as a cherry is to a cherry.”

“Lovell!” King Henry VIII shouted.

Sir Thomas Lovell entered the room and said, “Sir?”

“Give her a hundred marks,” the King said. “I’ll go to the Queen.”

The King exited.

A mark is a unit of money, and a hundred marks is a generous amount, but the Old Lady wanted more. If the Queen had delivered a boy, the Old Lady knew that she would have gotten more. The better the news, the better the tip, and the King wanted a male heir.

The Old Lady said, “A hundred marks! By this light, I swear I’ll have more. An ordinary servant can receive such payment. I will have more, or I will scold it out of him. Did I say for this that the girl resembled him? I will have more, or else I will unsay it and say that the daughter does not resemble her presumed father, and now, while it is hot, I’ll put it to the issue.”

Presumably, she said this for Sir Thomas Lovell’s hearing, hoping that he would give her a bigger tip.

The daughter of King Henry VIII and Queen Anne would

be named Elizabeth, and she would become the great Queen Elizabeth I.

— 5.2 —

Before the Council Chamber in which the Privy Council were about to meet, a number of pursuivants and pages and footboys and so on were standing. Pursuivants are junior officers of the state.

Cranmer entered the Council Chamber and said, “I hope I am not too late, and yet the gentleman who was sent to me from the council asked me to make great haste.”

He tried to open the door and said, “All locked and bolted? What is the meaning of this? Ho! Who is the doorkeeper here?”

The doorkeeper walked over to Cranmer, who said, “Surely, you know who I am.”

“Yes, my lord,” the doorkeeper said, “but still I cannot help you.”

“Why?” Cranmer asked.

Doctor Butts entered the room and observed what was happening.

The doorkeeper said, “Your grace must wait until you are called for.”

“I see,” Cranmer said.

Doctor Butts thought, *This is done out of malice. I am glad I came this way so providentially. I shall immediately inform the King what is happening here.*

He exited to find the King.

Cranmer saw him leaving and thought, *It is Doctor Butts,*

the King's physician. As he passed along, how earnestly he looked at me! I pray to Heaven that he doesn't spread gossip about my disgrace! For certainly some who hate me have done this on purpose to quench my honor — may God change their hearts! I never sought their malice. They would be ashamed otherwise to make me wait at the door, a fellow-counselor on the Privy Council, a person of high rank who is forced to wait here among boys, servants, and lackeys. But their pleasures must be fulfilled, and I will wait patiently.

King Henry VIII and Doctor Butts looked out of a high window, unnoticed by Cranmer.

Doctor Butts said, "I'll show your grace the strangest sight —"

"What's that, Butts?" King Henry VIII asked.

"— the strangest sight I think your highness has seen in many days."

"Where is it?" King Henry VIII asked.

"There it is, my lord," Doctor Butts said, adding sarcastically, "See the high promotion of his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, who holds his state at door, amongst pursuivants, pages, and footboys."

Cranmer was waiting with dignity among people of much lower social status at the door.

"It is he, indeed," King Henry VIII said. "Is this the honor the members of the Privy Council do one another? It is well there's one — or One — above them yet."

The one — or One — above them was either the King or God or both.

King Henry VIII said, "I had thought they had shared so

much honesty among them — at least, so much good manners — as not thus to plague a man of his high office, and so near our favor, to make him dance attendance on their lordships' pleasures, and at the door, too, like a post-messenger with packets of letters. By holy Mary, Butts, there's knavery.

“Let them alone, and draw the curtain closed. We shall hear more soon.”

— 5.3 —

In the Council Chamber, members of the Privy Council were about to meet. The Chancellor entered the room and placed himself at the upper end of the table on the left hand; a seat was left empty above him — Cranmer's seat.

The Duke of Suffolk, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Surrey, Lord Chamberlain, and Gardiner sat themselves in order on each side. Cromwell sat at the lower end of the table; he was the secretary. The doorkeeper stood at the door.

The Chancellor said, “Announce the topic of our business, Master Secretary. For what reason are we met in council?”

Cromwell replied, “If it pleases your honors, the chief reason for our meeting in Council concerns Cranmer, his grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.”

“Has he been informed about this?” Gardiner asked.

“Yes,” Cromwell replied.

“Who is waiting there?” the Duke of Norfolk asked.

“Outside the door, my noble lords?” the doorkeeper asked.

“Yes,” Gardiner replied.

“He is my lord the Archbishop of Canterbury,” the

doorkeeper said. "He has been waiting for half an hour to know what are your pleasures."

The Chancellor ordered, "Let him come in."

The doorkeeper opened the door and said to Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, "Your grace may enter now."

Cranmer entered the Council Chamber and approached the Council table.

The Chancellor said, "My good lord Archbishop of Canterbury, I'm very sorry to sit here at this present time, and behold that chair in which you normally sit stand empty, but we all are only men, and in our own natures we are frail and susceptible to our flesh. Few men are angels, and out of this human frailty and lack of wisdom, you, who best should teach us how to act, have behaved improperly yourself, and not a little, toward the King first and then toward his laws, by filling the whole realm, through your teaching and your chaplains, for so we are informed, with new opinions that are diverse and dangerous. These new opinions are heresies, and if they are not reformed, they may prove pernicious and destructive."

Gardiner said, "This reformation must be swift and rapid, too, my noble lords, for those who tame wild horses do not lead them by the hand as they go through their paces to make them gentle, but stop their mouths with hard bits, and spur them, until they obey the orders they are given."

"If we endure and suffer, out of our easiness and childish pity for one man's honor, this contagious sickness, then farewell to all medicine, and what follows then?"

"Commutations, uproars, with a general corruption of the whole state, as recently our neighbors in upper Germany can dearly witness. The Peasants' War fought there in 1524-1525 is still freshly pitied in our memories."

Cranmer said, “My good lords, hitherto, in all the journey of both my life and position, I have labored, and with no little effort, so that my teaching and the strong course of my authority might safely go one way. The goal of this effort was always to do well, nor is there living — I say this with a heart free from duplicity, my lords — any man who more detests, who more stirs against, both in his private conscience and his position, destroyers of a public peace, than I do.

“I pray to Heaven that the King may never find a heart with less allegiance in it than mine! Men who make evil and crooked malice their nourishment dare to bite the best men.

“I beg your lordship that in this case in which justice must reign, my accusers, whoever they are, will stand forth and face me, and freely speak out against me.”

The Duke of Suffolk said, “No, my lord, that cannot be. You are a member of the Privy Council, and as such you are a powerful man, and because of that, no man will dare to accuse you.”

Gardiner said to Cranmer, “My lord, because we have business of more importance, we will be short with you. It is his highness’ pleasure, and we have given our consent to it, in order to have a better trial of you, that you be taken from here and committed to the Tower of London.

“There you will be only a private man again, and you shall know the many who will then dare accuse you boldly. They are more numerous than, I fear, you are provided for.”

A person imprisoned in the Tower of London lost all power and privileges; he was a private man.

Cranmer said sarcastically, “Ah, Gardiner, my good Lord Bishop of Winchester, I thank you. You are always my good friend; if you get what you want, I shall find that your

lordship is both my judge and my juror. You are so merciful. I see what you want — it is my ruin.

“Love and meekness, lord, become a churchman better than ambition. Win back straying souls with moderation, and cast none away.

“I have as little doubt that I shall clear myself — no matter how much pressure you put on me to vex my patience — as you have scruples in doing daily wrongs. I could say more, but reverence for your religious position makes me modest.”

Gardiner replied, “My lord, my lord, you are a sectary — a member of a heretical sect. That’s the plain truth. Your painted gloss — your specious rhetoric — reveals, to men who understand you, mere words and weakness.”

Cromwell said, “My Lord of Winchester, you are a little, I beg your pardon, too sharp. Men who are as noble as Cranmer, however faulty, should still get respect for what they have been. It is a cruelty to oppress a falling man.”

Gardiner said sarcastically, “Good Master Secretary, I beg your honor’s mercy, you may with the least justification of anyone sitting at this table say so.”

“Why, my lord?” Cromwell asked.

“Don’t I know that you favor this new sect? You are not sound.”

The word “sound” meant 1) theologically correct and 2) loyal.

“Not sound?” Cromwell asked.

“Not sound, I say,” Gardiner replied.

“I wish that you were half as honest as I am!” Cromwell said. “Men’s prayers then would seek you, not their fears.”

“I shall remember this bold language,” Gardiner said.

“Do,” Cromwell said. “Remember your bold life, too.”

“This is too much,” the Chancellor said. “Stop this. You should be ashamed, my lords.”

“I have finished,” Gardiner said.

“So have I,” Cromwell said.

“Now I say this to you, my lord,” the Chancellor said to Cranmer, “It stands agreed, I take it, by all voices of the Privy Council, that immediately you shall be taken to the Tower of London as a prisoner, there to remain until the King’s further pleasure is known to us. Are you all agreed, lords?”

“We are,” all the members of the Privy Chamber said.

“Is there no other course of action — one that involves mercy?” Cranmer asked. “Must I necessarily go to the Tower of London, my lords?”

“What else would you expect?” Gardiner said. “You are extraordinarily troublesome.

“Let some of the guards be ready there.”

A guard entered the Privy Council.

“Is the guard for me?” Cranmer asked. “Must I go like a traitor away from here?”

“Take him into your custody,” Gardiner ordered the guard, “and see him safely in the Tower of London.”

“Wait, my good lords,” Cranmer said. “I have a little yet to say.”

He showed them the King’s ring and said, “Look there, my lords. By virtue of that ring, I take my case out of the

clutches of cruel men, and I give it to a very noble judge: the King my master.”

Lord Chamberlain said, “This is the King’s ring.”

“It is no counterfeit,” the Earl of Surrey said.

“It is the right ring, by Heaven,” the Duke of Suffolk said.

“I told you all, when you first put this dangerous stone a-rolling, it would fall upon ourselves.”

Proverbs 26:27 states, “*He that diggeth a pit shall fall therein, and he that rolleth a stone, it shall return unto him*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

The Duke of Norfolk said, “Do you think, my lords, the King will allow even the little finger of this man to be vexed?”

The Chancellor said, “It is now all too certain just how much Cranmer’s life is valued by the King — much more than we thought! I wish that I were fully out of this mess — this mistreatment of Cranmer!”

Cromwell said, “My mind told me that in seeking tales and information against this man, whose honesty the Devil and his disciples only fight against and try to overcome, you blew the fire that burns you.”

Ecclesiasticus 28:12 states, “*If thou blow the spark, it shall burn: if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched: and both these come out of thy mouth*” (1611 King James Bible).

Cromwell continued, “Now prepare yourself for the attack that you know is coming!”

King Henry VIII had been eavesdropping outside the door. Frowning, he entered the Council Chamber and took a seat.

Gardiner said, “Revered sovereign, how much are we bound in our daily thanks to Heaven — Heaven that gave

us such a Prince. You are not only good and wise, but also very religious. You are one who, in all obedience, makes the church the chief aim of his honor — you do your best to do what is best for the church — and to strengthen that holy duty, out of dear, heartfelt respect, his royal self in judgment comes to hear the case between the church and this great offender Cranmer.”

“You were always good at impromptu compliments, Bishop Gardiner of Winchester,” King Henry VIII said. “But know that I have not now come to hear such flattery spoken in my presence. Your impromptu compliments are too thin and bare to hide your offences. Your flattery cannot reach me. You play the role of a fawning Cocker Spaniel and think to win me to your side with the wagging of your tongue, but whatever you take me for, I’m sure that you have a cruel and bloodthirsty nature.”

The King then said to Cranmer, “Good man, sit down. Now let me see the proudest man, who dares to do the most, merely wag his finger at you. By all that’s holy, he would be better off dying slowly than to think even once that you do not deserve your place in the Privy Chamber.”

“May it please your grace —” the Earl of Surrey began to say.

King Henry VIII interrupted, “No, sir, it does not please me. I thought that I had men of some understanding and wisdom on my Privy Council, but I find I have none. Was it discretion, lords, to let this man, this good man — few of you deserve to be called good men — this honest man, wait like a lousy, lice-infested footboy at the chamber door? This man is as great as you are!

“Why, what a shame was this! Did my warrant tell you to forget yourselves to such an extent? I gave you power to try — put on trial — him as a counselor, not as a servant.

There's some of you, I see, who more out of malice than integrity, would try — vex — him to the utmost, if you had means and opportunity, which you shall never have while I live.”

The Chancellor said, “Thus far, my most dread sovereign, may it like your grace to let my tongue excuse all. What was purposed concerning his imprisonment in the Tower of London, was rather, if there be faith in men, meant for his trial, and fair acquittal of any supposed crimes to the world, than malice, I'm sure, in me. For him to receive a trial in which people felt safe to accuse him, he had to be imprisoned as a private man in the Tower. Otherwise, no one would dare to accuse him and so there could be no trial.”

“Well, well, my lords, respect him,” King Henry VIII said. “Take Cranmer, and treat him well — he's worthy of it. I will say thus much for him: If a Prince may be indebted to a subject, I am, for his love and service, indebted to him.

“Make for me no more trouble, but everyone embrace him. Be friends, for shame, my lords!”

They did so.

King Henry VIII then said, “Cranmer, my Lord of Canterbury, I have a request that you must not deny me. That is, I have a fair young maiden — my daughter — who still lacks baptism. You must be her godfather, and answer for her.”

A typical question the godparents at a Catholic infant baptism are asked is this: “Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?” Of course, the godparents reply, “We are.”

Cranmer replied modestly, “The greatest monarch now alive may glory in such an honor as to be the godparent of

your child. How may I, who am only a poor and humble subject to you, deserve it?"

King Henry VIII said, "Come, come, my lord, you want to spare your spoons."

He was joking that Cramer was parsimonious and did not want to be the child's godfather because he would have to give the traditional christening gift of spoons — often one for each of the twelve apostles, each of whom was represented on a spoon handle.

He continued, "You shall have two noble partners to be godparents with you: the old Duchess of Norfolk and Lady Marquess Dorset. Will these please you?"

The infant being baptized would have two godparents of the infant's sex and one godparent of the opposite sex.

King Henry VIII then said to Gardiner, "Once more, my Lord of Winchester, I order you to embrace and love this man."

Gardiner said, "With a true heart and brotherly love, I do it."

He hugged Cranmer.

Cranmer said, "And let Heaven witness how dear I hold this confirmation."

The events that had taken place since King Henry VIII had entered the Council Chamber had shown Cranmer to be once again a member in good standing of the Privy Council and to have an extraordinarily good relationship with the King.

King Henry VIII said to Cranmer, using — in this context — the friendly pronouns "thy" and "thee," "Good man, those joyful tears show thy true heart. The common opinion

of thee, I see, is verified. The common opinion says this: ‘Do my Lord of Canterbury a malicious turn, and he is your friend forever.’”

The King then said, “Come, lords, we trifle time away. I long to have my young daughter made a Christian.

“I have made you one united group, lords, and I want you to one united group remain.

“As I grow stronger, you all the more honor gain.”

— 5.4 —

Much noise and tumult were in the palace yard as people tried to get through a gate to get to a good place to see the baptism of the King’s daughter or see at least the procession to and from the place of baptism.

The porter and his assistant were trying to keep the crowd back. The procession would need room to move and already the palace yard was overly crowded.

The porter said to the people trying to get inside the palace yard, “You’ll stop your noise soon, you rascals. Do you take the court for Paris Garden? You rude slaves, stop your yelling.”

Paris Garden was one of the noisiest places in London. It was a place where bear-baiting took place — where bears were tormented by dogs — and the animals and people made much noise.

Outside the gate, a man said, “Good master porter, I belong to the larder. That’s where I work, and I need to get in.”

The porter replied, “You belong to the gallows, and so be hanged, you rogue! Is this a place to roar in?”

He ordered his assistant, “Fetch me a dozen hardwood crab-apple tree staves, aka clubs, and strong ones. These we

are holding in our hands are only switches — twigs — compared to them.”

He then said to the people wanting to get inside the palace yard, “I’ll scratch your heads with a club. You must be seeing christenings, must you? Do you look for ale and cakes here, you rude rascals?”

The porter’s assistant said, “Please, sir, be patient. It is as much impossible — unless we sweep them from the door with cannons — to scatter them, as it is to make them sleep on Mayday morning, which will never happen.”

Young people got up early on Mayday, a day of festivity, to go to the woods to gather branches to decorate their doorways and, no doubt, to meet the opposite sex.

The porter’s assistant added, “We may as well push against St. Paul’s Cathedral and try to move it away, as to try to make these people move away.”

“How did they get in? Tell me, you who can be hanged and go to the Devil,” the porter asked.

“Alas, I don’t know,” the porter’s assistant asked. “How does the tide get in? As much as one sound cudgel four feet in length — you see the poor remainder —”

He lifted up his battered cudgel and showed it to the porter, and then he continued, “— could distribute, I spared no one, sir.”

“You did nothing, sir,” the porter said.

In his answer, the porter’s assistant mentioned three men who were renowned for strength: Samson, Sir Guy of Warwick, and Colbrand.

Judges 15:16 states, “*Then Samson said, With the jaw of an ass are heaps upon heaps: with the jaw of an ass have I*

slain a thousand men” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Sir Guy of Warwick killed Colbrand, a Danish giant.

“I am not Samson, nor Sir Guy, nor Colbrand, and so I could not mow them down before me as these strong men did, but if I spared any who had a head to hit, either young or old, he or she, cuckold or cuckold-maker, let me never hope to see a chine again and that I would not for a cow, God save her!”

The porter’s assistant was punning. A chine is a piece of meat and 2) a fissure or a crack in skin — figuratively, a vulva. And in this culture, prostitutes were sometimes referred to as cows. Therefore, he was saying these things:

1) If I spared anyone, never let me see beef again, and that’s something I would not give up even if someone offered me a cow.

2) If I spared anyone, never let me see a vulva again, and that’s something I would not give up even if someone offered me a prostitute.

A man outside the gate — the one who claimed to be working in the pantry — asked, “Do you hear me, master porter?”

The porter replied, “I shall be with you presently, good master puppy.”

He then said to his assistant, “Keep the door closed, sirrah.”

The word “sirrah” was used to address a man of lower social status than the speaker.

“What would you have me do?” his assistant asked.

“What should you do, but knock them down by the dozens?” the porter replied. “Is this Moorfields where people gather in great numbers for military training? Or do

we have some strange American Indian with the great big tool — ha! ha! — come to be exhibited at court that causes the women to besiege us so?

“Bless me, what a fry of fornication — a swarm of bastards hoping to create more bastards — is at the gate! On my Christian conscience, this one christening will beget a thousand additional christenings. Here before our gate will be father, godfather, and all together.”

“The spoons will be the bigger, sir,” the porter’s assistant said.

Certainly the christening spoons would be bigger in number because of all the births that would occur in nine months. Also, a spoon is often used to dip into something wet, and so the porter’s assistant may have meant by “spoons” penises.

The porter’s assistant said, “There is a fellow somewhat near the door; by looking at his face, I think that he is a brazier.”

Braziers were brass workers whose occupation required them to be around very hot furnaces.

The porter’s assistant added, “On my conscience, I swear that twenty of the dog days now reign in his nose.”

The dog days are the very hot days of August. They are called dog days because the Dog Star rises with the Sun in August in the northern hemisphere.

He added, “All who stand about him are under the line; they need no other penance.”

“Under the line” meant “at the equator,” where it is hot. Enduring such heat was a form of penance that rendered other forms of penance unnecessary.

He continued, “That fire-drake — fiery meteor — I hit three times on the head, and three times his nose discharged against me; he stands there, like a mortar-piece, aka cannon, to blow us.

“There was a haberdasher’s wife of small intelligence near him who railed upon me until her pinked porringer — ornamentally pierced hat that was shaped like a soup bowl — fell off her head because she was kindling such a combustion in the state. In other words, her hat fell off because she was causing such a disturbance.

“I missed the meteor once, and hit that woman. She cried out ‘Clubs!’ to rally apprentices to grab clubs and come to her aid. She had seen, as I had not, in the distance some forty club-bearers who came to her aid. These club-bearers were the hope of the Strand, where she resided. They were apprentices to the merchants on the Strand, a street of fine shops.

“They battled me. I defended my place. At length they came within a broomstick’s length of me. I defied them still, when suddenly a file of boys behind them, loose shot who were on nobody’s side, delivered such a shower of pebbles that I was forced to draw my honor in, and let the enemy win the barricade. The Devil was among them, I think, surely.”

The porter said, “These are the youths who thunder at a playhouse, and fight over half-eaten apples. No audience members, except for those who are the tribulation of Tower Hill, or those who are the limbs — think of the Devil’s limbs, or helpers — of Limehouse, their dear brothers, are able to endure.”

Tower Hill and Limehouse, which was pronounced with a short, not long *i* — were rough neighborhoods.

The porter continued, “I have some of them in *Limbo*

Patrum.”

Literally, *Limbo Patrum* means “Limbo of the Fathers.” In Dante’s *Inferno*, Limbo is the first circle of Hell. It is where the just people who lived before the first coming of Christ reside in the Inferno. During Christ’s Harrowing of Hell, he released the Jewish patriarchs from the Inferno.

Figuratively, *Limbo Patrum* is a prison.

The porter continued, “And there they are likely to dance these three days, besides the running banquet of two beadles that is to come.”

One meaning of “to dance attendance on someone” in this culture is “wait for an audience with someone.” Here, it meant “wait,” possibly for a judge to give the offender his punishment. The porter was playing with words, especially “dance” and “running.” A running banquet was a light repast. After “dancing” at the prison, the prisoners would run through the public streets while two beadles — law officers — whipped them.

Lord Chamberlain walked over to the porter and his assistant and said, “Mercy on me, what a multitude of people are here! They are still growing in number, too; from all parts they are coming, as if we were holding a fair here!

“Where are these porters, these lazy knaves?

“You have done a ‘fine’ job, fellows.

“That’s a ‘trim, fine, excellent’ rabble of people you’ve let in. Are all these people your faithful friends of the suburbs? Have you favored your ‘fine’ friends by letting them in?”

The London suburbs are the locations of the brothels.

The Lord Chancellor said sarcastically, “We shall have a

great store of room, no doubt, left for the noble ladies, when they come back from the christening.”

The porter said, “If it please your honor, we are only men, and what the few of us could do without being torn to pieces, we have done. Even an army cannot control this multitude of people.”

The Lord Chamberlain replied, “As I live, if the King blames me for this, I’ll put you all in the stocks, and quickly, and on your heads I’ll clap substantial fines for neglect. You are lazy knaves, and here you are baiting bombards — harassing drunkards — when you ought to do real service and drive them away.

“Listen! The trumpets sound. They’re coming already from the christening.

“Go, break among the crowd of people, and find a way for the troop of nobles to pass through fairly, or I’ll find a Marshalsea — a prison — that shall keep you occupied for the next two months.”

The porter cried, “Make way there for the Princess.”

A man wearing clothing made of fine cloth said, “You great fellow, stand out of the way, or I’ll make your head ache.”

The porter said, “You in the fine clothing, get up off the rail; otherwise, I’ll throw you over the barricade.”

— 5.5 —

Trumpets sounded, and a procession appeared.

1. The trumpeters appeared first.
2. Then appeared two Aldermen, the Lord Mayor of London, the Garter King of Arms, Cranmer, the Duke of Norfolk with his marshal’s staff, the Duke of Suffolk, and

two noblemen bearing great standing-bowls for the christening-gifts.

3. Then appeared four noblemen bearing a canopy, under which was the Duchess of Norfolk, one of the godmothers, carrying the Princess, who was richly clothed in a mantle and other articles of clothing. A lady carried the train of the mantle worn by the Princess.

4. Then appeared the Marchioness Dorset, who was the other godmother, and some ladies.

The Garter King of Arms said, "Heaven, from your endless goodness, send prosperous, long, and always happy life to the high and mighty Princess of England, Elizabeth!"

Trumpets sounded, and King Henry VIII and his guards arrived.

Cranmer knelt and said, "And to your royal grace, and the good Queen, my noble partners — the other godparents — and I, thus pray: May all comfort and joy that Heaven ever laid up to make parents happy fall upon you hourly in this most gracious lady" — he was referring to the Princess Elizabeth."

"Thank you, good Lord Archbishop Cranmer of Canterbury," King Henry VIII said. "What is her name?"

Cranmer replied, "Elizabeth."

"Stand up, lord," King Henry VIII said.

Cranmer stood up as King Henry VIII kissed his daughter Elizabeth.

King Henry VIII said, "With this kiss take my blessing: May God protect you! Into God's hands I give your life."

"Amen," Cranmer said.

“Noble godparents of my daughter, you have been too prodigal in your christening gifts to her. I thank you heartily; so shall this lady, when she has learned to speak enough English.”

“Let me speak, sir,” Cranmer said, “for Heaven now bids me to speak, and let no one think that the words I utter are flattery, for they’ll learn that my words tell the truth — this is a prophecy.

“This royal infant — may God, who is the Mover of the universe, always be near her! — although she is in her cradle, yet now promises to bring upon this land a thousand thousand blessings, which time shall bring to ripeness.

“She shall be — but few now living can behold that goodness — a pattern to all Princes living at the same time as her, and all who shall succeed her.

“The Queen of Sheba was never more covetous of wisdom and fair virtue than this pure soul shall be. All Princely graces that constitute such a mighty masterpiece as this is, with all the virtues that accompany the good, shall ever more and more be doubled on her. Truth shall nurse her, and holy and Heavenly thoughts shall always counsel her.

“She shall be loved and feared. Her own people shall bless her; her foes shall shake like a field of wind-beaten wheat and hang their heads with sorrow.

“Good grows with her: In her days every man shall eat in safety, under his own vine, what he plants, and every man shall sing the merry songs of peace to all his neighbors.

“God shall be truly known; and those around her shall learn the perfect ways of honor from her, and those around her shall claim their greatness by the perfect ways of honor, not by blood. Merit, not birth, shall determine whether a person is great.

“Nor shall this peace sleep with her after she dies, but as when the bird of wonder — the maiden phoenix — dies, her ashes will newly create another heir, as greatly admired as herself. In this way, when Heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness that is mortal life, she shall leave her blessedness to a man who from the sacred ashes of her honor shall rise like a star and be as great in fame as she was and so stand fixed.

“Peace, plenty, love, truth, the quality of inspiring terror, all of which were the servants to this chosen infant, shall then be his, and like a vine grow to him.

“Wherever the bright Sun of Heaven shall shine, his honor and the greatness of his name shall be, and make new nations. He shall flourish, and like a mountain cedar, he shall reach out his branches to all the plains about him.

“Our children’s children shall see this, and bless Heaven.”

“You speak of wonders,” King Henry VIII said.

Cranmer continued his prophecy: “She shall live, to the happiness of England, to be an aged Princess. Many days shall see her, and yet no day shall be without an impressive deed to crown it.

“I wish that I would know no more! But she must die, she must, the saints must have her. Yet as a virgin, a most unspotted lily, she shall pass to the ground, and all the world shall mourn her.”

King Henry VIII said, “Oh, Lord Archbishop, you have made me now a man — you have now ensured my success! Never, before this happy child, did I get — or beget — anything.

“This oracle of comfort has so pleased me that when I am in Heaven I shall desire to see what this child does, and

praise my Maker.

“I thank you all.

“To you, my good Lord Mayor of London, and your good brethren, I am much beholden. I have received much honor by your presence, and you shall find me thankful.

“Lead the way, lords. You must all see the Queen, and she must thank you; otherwise, she will be sick.

“On this day, let no man think he has business to work at in his house, for all shall stay here. This little one shall make it a holiday for everyone.”

EPILOGUE (*Henry VIII*)

You readers are transported back to Jacobean England to a playhouse where *Henry VIII* has just been performed. The actor who played King Henry VIII comes out on stage and speaks this epilogue:

“It is ten to one this play can never please

“All who are here. Some have come to take their ease,

“And sleep an act or two, but those, we fear,

“We have frightened with our trumpets, so it is clear,

“They’ll say it is worthless. Others have come to hear the city

“Abused extremely, and to cry ‘That’s witty!’

“This we have not done either. Because of this, I fear,

“All the expected good applause we are likely to hear

“For this play at this time will come in

“This play’s merciful depiction of good women;

“For such a one we have showed to the good women in the audience. If they smile,

“And say that this play will do, I know that within a while

“All the best men are ours because it is bad luck and hap

“For men to withhold applause when their ladies tell them to clap.”

TRAGEDIES

Chapter XXIII: ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Antony and Cleopatra*)

MALE CHARACTERS

MARK ANTONY, OCTAVIUS CAESAR, and MARCUS AEMILIUS LEPIDUS: Triumvirs.

SEXTUS POMPEY, son of Pompey the Great.

DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS, VENTIDIUS, EROS, SCARUS, DERCETUS, DEMETRIUS, and PHILO: Friends to Mark Antony.

MAECENAS, AGRIPPA, DOLABELLA, PROCULEIUS, THIDIAS, and GALLUS: Friends to Octavius Caesar.

MENAS, MENEKRATES, and VARRIUS: Friends to Sextus Pompey.

TAURUS, Lieutenant General to Octavius Caesar.

CANIDIUS, Lieutenant General to Mark Antony.

SILIUS, an Officer under Ventidius.

EUPHRONIUS, Ambassador from Mark Antony to Octavius Caesar.

ALEXAS, MARDIAN, SELEUCUS, and DIOMEDES: Attendants on Cleopatra.

A Soothsayer.

A Farmer: a comic character.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

CLEOPATRA, Queen of Egypt.

OCTAVIA, sister to Octavius Caesar, and wife to Mark Antony.

CHARMIAN and IRAS, Attendants on Cleopatra.

MINOR CHARACTORS

Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE

In several parts of the Roman Empire.

TIME

The play begins in 40 B.C.E. (Fulvia died that year) when Octavius Caesar is 23 years old, Mark Antony is 43 years old, and Cleopatra is 29 years old. The play ends in 30 B.C.E.

CHAPTER 1 (Antony and Cleopatra)

— 1.1 —

In a room in Cleopatra's palace in Alexandria, Egypt, Demetrius and Philo, two followers of Mark Antony, were speaking.

Philo said in response to a comment by Demetrius, "No, but this dotage of Mark Antony, our general, is out of control. His excellent eyes, that over the assembled files and musters of the war have glowed like armed Mars, the god of war, now bend and turn the service and devotion of their view upon a tawny front: the brown face of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. His leader's heart, which in the scuffles of great fights has burst the buckles on his breastplate, abandons all restraint, and it has become the bellows and the fan that cool a gypsy's lust."

Gypsies were thought to have come from Egypt.

Trumpets sounded, and Mark Antony and Cleopatra entered. Cleopatra's ladies and servants accompanied her, and eunuchs fanned her. A eunuch is a castrated man — one whose testicles have been removed.

Philo added, quietly, "Look, here they come. Watch Mark Antony carefully, and you shall see in him that the triple pillar of the world has been transformed into a whore's fool. As one of the three Roman triumvirs, Mark Antony rules a third of the world. But despite Mark Antony's power, he has allowed himself to become the fool of Cleopatra. Watch him, and you shall see."

"If it is indeed love that you feel for me, tell me how much," Cleopatra said to Mark Antony.

He replied, "There's beggary in the love that can be

reckoned. If I could tell you how much I love you, I would not love you enough.”

“I want to know the extent of how far you love me,” Cleopatra said.

“Then you must discover a new Heaven and a new Earth,” Mark Antony said. “My love for you is infinite and cannot be limited by this Heaven and this Earth.”

An attendant entered the room and said to Mark Antony, “News, my good lord, has arrived from Rome.”

“This irritates me,” Mark Antony said to the attendant.

He then resumed telling Cleopatra how much he loved her: “The sum —.”

“No, hear what the ambassadors bringing the message have to say,” Cleopatra advised. “Your Roman wife, Fulvia, perhaps is angry at you, or, who knows, perhaps the very young and scarcely bearded Octavius Caesar has used the royal plural and sent his powerful orders to you: ‘Do this, or this; conquer that Kingdom, and free this one; perform what we order you to do, or else we damn you.’”

“What, my love!” Mark Antony said.

“Perhaps! Or almost certainly. You must not stay here in Egypt any longer; your dismissal from service in Egypt has come from Octavius Caesar, so therefore hear his orders, Antony. Where are Fulvia’s orders for you to return to Rome? Or should I say Caesar’s? Both? Call in the Roman ambassadors.”

She looked at Mark Antony, whose face was reddening, and said, “As I am Egypt’s Queen, you are blushing, Antony; and that blood of yours pays homage to Octavius Caesar and acknowledges that you are his servant, or else your red cheeks show your shame when shrill-tongued

Fulvia scolds you. Listen to the ambassadors!”

“Let Rome melt and flow into the Tiber River,” Mark Antony said, “and let the well-ordered and vast Roman Empire that arches over the world fall! Here is my space; this is where I belong! Kingdoms are only clay: Our dungy earth feeds beasts as well as men. The nobleness of life is to do thus —”

Mark Antony embraced Cleopatra and then continued, “— when such a mutual pair and couple as we are can do it. I command the world — and I will punish the world if it disobeys — to know that we and our love are without peer.”

“This is an excellent falsehood!” Cleopatra said. “Why did he — Mark Antony — marry Fulvia, if he did not love her? I’ll pretend to be the fool that I am not; Antony will be himself.”

Cleopatra’s comment was ambiguous. It could mean that Mark Antony would live up to his reputation of himself as a noble Roman, or it could mean that he would continue to be the fool that he is.

Mark Antony said, “But I will be stirred by Cleopatra.”

Mark Antony’s comment was ambiguous. It could mean that Cleopatra would stir him to do noble deeds, or that she would move him to do foolish deeds, or that she would stir him to do sexual deeds.

He continued, “Now, for the love of Love — Venus, goddess of sexual passion — and her soft attendants who are called the Hours, let’s not waste the time with harsh arguments. There’s not a minute of our lives that should pass without some pleasure now. What entertainment shall we have tonight?”

“Listen to what the Roman ambassadors have to say to you,” Cleopatra said.

“Damn, wrangling Queen! Everything becomes you and makes you beautiful: chiding, laughing, weeping. Every emotion fully strives to make itself, when you express it, beautiful and admired! I will listen to no messenger but yours, and all alone tonight we’ll wander through the streets and watch people. Come, my Queen; you wanted us to do that last night.”

He ordered the attendants, “Don’t speak to us.”

Mark Antony and Cleopatra and their attendants left, leaving Demetrius and Philo alone.

Demetrius asked Philo, “Does Mark Antony regard Octavius Caesar with so little respect that he can ignore his ambassadors?”

“Sir, sometimes Mark Antony is not Mark Antony. He fails to live up to the best parts of what Mark Antony should always be.”

“I am very sorry that he proves that common liars, who in Rome spread malicious gossip about him, are speaking the truth, but I will hope for better deeds from him tomorrow. Farewell, and have a good night.”

— 1.2 —

In another room in Cleopatra’s palace stood Charmian and Iras, two of Cleopatra’s female attendants, and Alexas, one of Cleopatra’s male attendants. A soothsayer who predicted fortunes was a short distance away. Charmian, Iras, and Alexas were in a playful mood.

Charmian said, “Lord Alexas, sweet Alexas, most anything Alexas, almost most absolute Alexas, where’s the soothsayer whom you praised so highly to the Queen? Oh, I

wish that I knew who will be this husband, who, you say, must decorate his cuckold's horns with bridal garlands!"

Alexas had told Charmian that the soothsayer would tell her about her future husband, whoever he would be. He had joked that she would cuckold — be unfaithful to — her husband even before they were married.

Alexas called, "Soothsayer!"

The soothsayer came closer and asked, "What do you want?"

"Is this the man?" Charmian asked Alexas. She then asked the soothsayer, "Is it you, sir, who know things?"

The soothsayer replied, "I can read a little in Nature's infinite book of secrecy."

Alexas said to Charmian, "Show him your hand so that he can read your palm."

Domitius Enobarbus, who served Mark Antony, entered the room and said to some servants, "Bring in the banquet of fruit and sweets quickly; be sure that we have enough wine to drink to Cleopatra's health."

Charmian asked the soothsayer, "Good sir, give me a good fortune."

"I do not make the future; I only foresee it."

"Please, then, foresee my future."

"You shall be yet far fairer — more beautiful — than you are."

Charmian joked, "He means that I will gain a fair amount of flesh and grow fat. Some men like fat women; they are chubby chasers."

Iras joked, “No, he means that you shall use cosmetics when you are old.”

“May my wrinkles forbid that! I would rather be wrinkled than use cosmetics!”

Alexas advised them, “Don’t vex his prescience the soothsayer; be attentive.”

“Hush!” Charmian said.

The soothsayer said to her, “You shall be more loving than beloved.”

“I much prefer to heat my body by drinking alcohol than by loving,” Charmian said.

“Listen to him,” Alexas said.

Charmian said to the soothsayer, “Now predict some excellent future for me! Let me be married to three Kings before noon, and widow all of them. Let me have a child when I am fifty years old to whom King Herod will do homage. Let me marry Octavius Caesar so that I am the equal of my mistress, Queen Cleopatra.”

In a few years, King Herod would order many newborn Jewish boys to be killed in an attempt to murder Jesus of Nazareth.

The soothsayer said, “You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.”

“Oh, excellent!” Charmian said. “I love long life better than figs.”

“You have seen and experienced a fairer former fortune than that which is yet to come.”

“Then it is likely that my children shall not have the names of their fathers because my children will be bastards,”

Charmian joked. “Please tell me how many boys and girls I will have.”

“If all of your wishes had a womb, and if all of your wishes were fertile, you would have a million.”

The soothsayer was able to joke: He was saying that Charmian had wished to have sex a million times.

“Get out, fool!” Charmian said. “I forgive you for being a witch.”

She may have meant that soothsayers, like fools and jesters, have a license to speak freely. Or she may have meant that the soothsayer’s skill in forecasting was so poor that no one could ever believe that he was a witch. Or she may have been pretending to be shocked at the soothsayer’s comment.

Alexas said to her, “You think only your sheets are privy to your private wishes.”

Charmian said to the soothsayer, “Now tell Iras her fortune.”

“We all want to know our fortunes,” Alexas said.

Enobarbus said, “My fortune and most of our fortunes tonight shall be to go to bed drunk.”

Iras showed her palm to the soothsayer and said, “There’s a palm that foretells chastity, if nothing else.”

Charmian joked, “Even as the overflowing Nile River foretells famine.”

An overflowing Nile River actually foretold feast, not famine. The Nile overflowed its banks and irrigated the dry land around it, leading to plentiful crops. Charmian was saying that Iras’ palm was moist — this was thought to be a sign of a lecherous person.

Iras replied, “Ha! You wild bedfellow, you cannot soothsay.”

“If an oily palm is not a fruitful foretelling of a fruitful womb,” Charmian said, “then I cannot scratch my ear.”

Charmian then said to the soothsayer, “Please, tell Iras an ordinary, common, workaday fortune.”

The soothsayer said, “Your fortunes are alike.”

“How are they alike?” Iras said. “Give me some particulars.”

“I have already foretold Charmian’s future,” the soothsayer said. “Your future is the same as hers.”

Iras asked, “Am I not an inch of fortune better than she?”

“Well, if you were an inch of fortune better than I, where would you choose it?” Charmian asked.

“Not in my husband’s nose.”

Iras meant that she would want the extra inch to be in a different spot of her husband’s body.

“May the Heavens amend our worser — bawdier — thoughts!” Charmian said.

She then said, “Alexas — come here.”

She said to the soothsayer, “Tell his fortune, his fortune!”

She added, “Oh, let him marry a woman who cannot go, sweet Isis, I beseech you!”

Isis is the Egyptian goddess of fertility. A woman who cannot go is a woman who cannot orgasm.

Charmian continued, “And let her die, too, and then give him a worse wife! And let a worser wife follow a worse

wife, until the worst of all follows him laughing to his grave, after he has been made a cuckold by fifty wives! Good Isis, hear and positively answer this prayer of mine, even though you deny me something of more seriousness, good Isis, I beseech you!”

“Amen,” Iras said. “Dear goddess, hear that prayer of the people! Just as it is heartbreaking to see a handsome man with an unfaithful wife, so it is a deadly sorrow to behold a foul and ugly knave uncuckolded; therefore, dear Isis, act properly and with decorum, and give him an appropriate fortune!”

“Amen,” Charmian said.

Alexas said, “I see now that if it lay in their hands to make me a cuckold, they would do it, even if they would have to make themselves whores!”

Enobarbus said, “Hush! Here comes Mark Antony.”

Charmian looked up and said, “It is not he; it is the Queen.”

Cleopatra entered the room and asked, “Have you seen my lord, Mark Antony?”

Enobarbus replied, “No, lady.”

“Has he been here?”

Charmian replied, “No, madam.”

“He was disposed to be merry,” Cleopatra said, “but suddenly a Roman thought struck him. He thought seriously about matters in Rome. Enobarbus!”

“Madam?” he replied.

“Seek him, and bring him here,” Cleopatra ordered.

Enobarbus left, and then Cleopatra asked, “Where’s

Alexas?”

“Here, at your service,” he replied. “My lord, Mark Antony, is approaching.”

Cleopatra changed her mind about seeing him. Using the royal plural, she said, “We will not look upon him. Go with us.”

Everyone left the room as Mark Antony, a messenger, and some attendants entered it.

The messenger said, “Fulvia, your wife, first came into the battlefield.”

“Was she fighting against Lucius, my brother?” Mark Antony asked.

“Yes,” the messenger replied, “but as soon as that war had ended, the situation at the time made them friends and allies. They joined their forces against Octavius Caesar. He had better success and after winning the first battle drove them out of Italy.”

“Well, what is the worst news you have brought to me?”

“The nature of bad news infects the teller,” the messenger said. “The bearer of bad news is blamed for the bad news he bears.”

“That is true when the bad news is given to a fool or a coward,” Mark Antony said. “Go on. Things that are past are done with me; what’s done is done. This is the way that it is with me: Whoever tells me the truth, although in his tale lies death, I hear him the same way I would if he flattered me.”

The messenger replied, “Quintus Labienus — this is stiff news — has, with his Parthian army, conquered parts of Asia around the Euphrates River.”

Labienus had supported Marcus Brutus and Caius Cassius, who had assassinated Julius Caesar. He had fought for Brutus and Cassius against Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar in the following civil war. After Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar had defeated Brutus and Cassius, Labienus had gone to Parthia, raised troops, and conquered territory in the Middle East.

The messenger continued, “His conquering banner flies from Syria to Lydia and to Ionia. While —”

The messenger hesitated and Mark Antony said, “While Antony, you would say.”

The messenger said, “Oh, my lord!” He was worried about criticizing Mark Antony, who was a powerful man who could have him whipped. Labienus had accomplished all this while Mark Antony had done nothing except party with Cleopatra in Egypt.

“Speak to me straightforwardly,” Mark Antony said, “and don’t tone down what everyone is saying about me. Call Cleopatra by the names that people in Rome call her. Use the words that Fulvia, my wife, used when she railed against me, and taunt my faults with such full and complete license as both truth and malice have power to utter. Tell me the truth even though you think the truth will make me angry. When our quick minds lie still, then our minds bring forth weeds; but when we tell our faults, then it is as if a field is being plowed in preparation for a future bountiful harvest. When we know our faults, then we can correct them. Fare you well, and leave us for awhile.”

“I serve you at your noble pleasure,” the messenger said and then exited.

Mark Antony called for another messenger, “What is the news from Sicyon — the news? Speak!”

Sicyon, a city in the north of the Peloponnesus in Greece, is where Antony had left his wife, Fulvia.

An attendant asked at the door, “The messenger from Sicyon — is he here?”

Another attendant said to Mark Antony, “He is waiting for your orders.”

“Let him appear before me,” Mark Antony said.

He then said to himself, “I must break these strong Egyptian fetters, or lose myself in dotage.”

Another messenger entered the room.

Mark Antony asked him, “Who are you?”

The messenger replied, “Fulvia, your wife, is dead.”

“Where did she die?”

“In Sicyon,” the messenger replied. “The length of her sickness, with what else more serious you need to know, is recounted in this document.”

He handed Mark Antony a letter.

“Leave me,” Mark Antony ordered.

The messenger exited.

Mark Antony said to himself about his late wife, “There’s a great spirit gone! Her death is something I desired. What our contempt often hurls from us, later we often wish it were ours again; what is at present a pleasure becomes with the passage of time the opposite of itself. Now that my wife is gone, I value her — she’s good. I shoved her away with my hand, but now that hand would like to pluck her back to me. I must break away from this enchanting Queen of Egypt. Ten thousand harms more than the ills I already

know about have come into existence because of my idleness.”

He then shouted, “Enobarbus!”

Enobarbus, who had stayed nearby in case he was needed, entered the room and said, “What’s your pleasure, sir?”

“I must with haste go from here.”

“Why, in such circumstances we kill all our women,” Enobarbus said. “We see how deadly an unkindness is to them. If they must suffer our departure, then death’s the word for them.”

“I must be gone.”

“Under a compelling occasion, let women die; it would be a pity to cast them away for nothing, although if we must choose between women and a great cause, women should be esteemed as nothing. Cleopatra, if she catches only the least rumor of this departure, will die instantly; I have seen her die twenty times for far poorer reasons. I think there is some life-giving spirit in death — it must commit some loving act upon her since she has such an enthusiastic quickness in dying.”

Enobarbus was in part punning. One meaning of the phrase “to die” in this society was “to orgasm.” He was saying that Cleopatra had orgasms quickly and often and enthusiastically.

Mark Antony said, “She is cunning past man’s thought.”

“Alas, sir, no,” Enobarbus replied. “Her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love; they are not faked. We cannot call her winds and waters mere sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report. This cannot be cunning in her; if it is, she can make a shower of rain as well as Jupiter, the god who

controls thunder and lightning.”

“I wish that I had never seen her,” Mark Antony said.

“Oh, sir,” Enobarbus said, “then you would have left unseen a wonderful piece of work, which not to have been blessed with would have discredited your travel. Travelers are known for bringing back fanciful tales, and many a fanciful tale can be said about Cleopatra.”

“Fulvia is dead.”

“Sir?”

“Fulvia is dead.”

“Fulvia!”

“Dead.”

“Why, sir, give the gods a thankful sacrifice,” Enobarbus said. “When the deities take the wife of a man from him, they show to the man the tailors of the earth so that they can be comforted. When old garments are worn out, there are members of the tailoring art to make new garments.”

Enobarbus was punning again. “Members” could mean members of the tailoring profession, or it could mean male members, aka penises. Old garments wear out, but members of the tailoring profession make new garments. Wives die, but male members create daughters who grow up to become wives. In this society, tailors had a reputation for bawdiness.

Enobarbus continued, “If there were no more women but Fulvia, then you had indeed a cut, and the case to be lamented.”

More puns. The word “cut” could refer to the cut of castration. If there were no women other than Fulvia, then with Fulvia’s death it would be as if Mark Antony were

castrated. The word “case” could refer to a vagina. If there were no women other than Fulvia, then with Fulvia’s death Mark Antony would lament the lack of a case.

Enobarbus continued, “This grief is crowned with consolation; your old smock brings forth a new petticoat. Indeed the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow. Of course, women other than Fulvia exist in the world, and you can replace an old smock with a new petticoat. If tears must be shed over the loss of Fulvia, the tears might as well come from chopping an onion.”

“The business Fulvia has broached in the state makes necessary my presence in Rome.”

Enobarbus replied, “And the business you have broached here cannot be done without you — especially that of Cleopatra’s, which wholly depends on your residence here.”

Again, Enobarbus was punning. Mark Antony had used “broached” with the meaning “started,” but Enobarbus was using it with the meaning “pierced.” Mark Antony had pierced Cleopatra in bed.

“No more light and bawdy answers,” Mark Antony, who well understood the meaning of Enobarbus’ puns, said.

Using the royal plural, he said, “Let our officers have notice of what we purpose to do. I shall announce the reason of our quick departure to the Queen, and get her permission for us to depart. Not only the death of Fulvia, with other more urgent and important business, strongly urge us to go to Rome, but the letters also of many of our collaborating friends in Rome urge us to return home to Rome. Sextus Pompey, son of the late Pompey the Great, has challenged Octavius Caesar, and Sextus commands the empire of the sea. He controls Sicily, and he has the power to disrupt the importation of grain to Rome and Italy. Our

slippery, unreliable, and fickle people, whose love is never given to the people who deserve their love until after the reasons to love those people have passed, begin to give the title of ‘Pompey the Great’ and all of Pompey the Great’s dignities to his son, who, high in name and power, higher than both in blood and spirit and life and energy, presents himself as the greatest soldier. If Sextus Pompey continues the way he is going, he may endanger the whole world.”

Mark Antony then referred to a belief of his unscientific age. People had observed that a horsehair placed in stagnant water would seem to move on its own. They believed that the horsehair had become a live worm that would grow into a poisonous snake. Today, we know that the horsehair attracts bacteria that then cause the horsehair to move.

He continued, “Much trouble is breeding, which, like a horsehair placed in stagnant water, has life, but has not yet grown into a poisonous serpent. Tell our men that we must quickly leave Egypt.”

“I shall do it,” Enobarbus said, and then he exited.

— 1.3 —

In another room of the palace, Cleopatra, Charmian, Iras, and Alexas were talking.

“Where is Mark Antony?” Cleopatra asked.

“I have not seen him recently,” Charmian said.

“See where he is, who is with him, and what he is doing,” Cleopatra ordered Alexas. “Do not tell him that I sent you. If you find him serious, say I am dancing; if you find him mirthful, tell him that I have suddenly become ill. Do this quickly, and return.”

Alexas exited.

“Madam,” Charmian said to Cleopatra, “it seems to me that if you love Mark Antony dearly, you are not doing what you ought to make him love you.”

“What should I do that I am not doing?” Cleopatra asked.

“In everything give him his way,” Charmian replied. “Cross him in nothing.”

“That is the advice of a fool,” Cleopatra said. “You are teaching me the way to lose him.”

“Don’t provoke him so much,” Charmian said. “I wish that you would be more patient. Remember: In time we hate that which controls us. But here comes Antony.”

Mark Antony entered the room.

“I am sick and depressed,” Cleopatra said.

“I am sorry to tell you my reason for coming here —” Mark Antony began.

Cleopatra interrupted, “Help me away, dear Charmian; I shall fall. I can’t stand this. My body cannot take it.”

“Now, my dearest Queen —” Mark Antony said.

“Please, stand further away from me,” she replied.

“What’s the matter?”

“I know, by the way you are looking at me, that there’s some good news. What does the married woman — Fulvia, your wife — say? You may go and return to her. I wish that she had never given you permission to come to Egypt! Let her not say it is I who keep you here. I have no power over you; you belong to her.”

“The gods best know —”

“Oh, never has there been a Queen as mightily betrayed as I

have been! Yet from the beginning I saw the treasons planted. I knew this day would come.”

“Cleopatra —”

“Why should I think you can be mine and true, even though you in swearing shake the throned gods, when you have been false to Fulvia?” Cleopatra complained.

She was referring to oaths made by Jupiter, King of the gods. When he swore an oath, the abode of the gods shook. Even if Mark Antony were to out-swear Jupiter, his oaths were not to be believed — so said Cleopatra.

Cleopatra continued, “It is riotous and extravagant madness to be entangled with those mouth-made vows, which break themselves in the swearing! You make vows with your mouth with no intention to keep them — you break them even as they are leaving your mouth!”

“Most sweet Queen —”

“No, please seek to give me no excuse for your leaving me. Just tell me goodbye, and go. When you begged me to be allowed to stay here, that was the time for words. You did not think of going then.”

Using the royal plural, she continued, “Eternity was in our lips and eyes, bliss was in the arch of our eyebrows, none of our body parts was so poor that it was not Heavenly in its origin. Our body parts are Heavenly still, or you, the greatest soldier of the world, have turned into the greatest liar.”

“Please, lady!” Mark Antony said.

“I wish I had your inches,” Cleopatra said. “Then you would learn that there is courage here.”

By “inches,” Cleopatra could have meant the inches of

Mark Antony's height, or the inches of his penis, or both. She was metaphorically referring to masculine courage.

"Listen to me, Queen," Mark Antony said. "The strong necessity of time commands my services in Rome for awhile; but my entire heart will remain here in Egypt with you. Shining swords raised in civil war are besetting Italy. Sextus Pompey approaches the port of Rome. His power is equal to the power of the triumvirs, and when two domestic powers are equal, then quarrels break out over trivial matters.

"People who have been hated, once they have acquired strength, newly acquire love. The condemned Sextus Pompey, rich in his father's honor, creeps quickly into the hearts of people who have not thrived under the present government. The numbers of these discontents threaten the government. Quietness has led to discontent, which having grown sick of rest, wants to purge itself with any desperate change — these discontents want to exchange peace for war.

"My more particular reason for wanting to go to Rome, and that reason for which you should most grant my going, is the death of Fulvia, my wife."

"Although age cannot give me freedom from folly, it does give me freedom from childishness," Cleopatra said. "Can Fulvia be dead?"

"She's dead, my Queen. Look here at this letter, and at your sovereign leisure read about the quarrels she awaked. At the last of the letter, best, you can read about when and where she died."

Mark Antony's use of the word "best" was deliberately ambiguous. He used it to refer to Cleopatra, whom he regarded as the dearest and best — he thought that in some ways she was better than all other women. But he realized

that Cleopatra would regard the news of his wife's death as being the best news in the letter.

“Oh, your love for her has been most false! Where are the sacred vials you should fill with sorrowful water? You should fill vials with your tears of mourning so that they can be placed in your late wife's tomb. Now I see, by how you react to Fulvia's death, how you shall react to my death.”

“Quarrel no more with me,” Mark Antony said, “but be prepared to know the things I intend to do, which I will pursue, or cease to pursue, as you shall tell me. By the fire — the Sun — that dries the mud deposited on the land by the Nile River and makes it ready for planting, I will leave here and act as your soldier-servant; I will make peace or war, whichever you prefer.”

Pretending to be about to faint, Cleopatra said, “Cut the laces of my clothing, Charmian, so I can breathe. Come; but no, don't cut the laces. I am quickly ill, and quickly well, depending on whether Antony loves or does not love me.”

Mark Antony said, “My precious Queen, stop this. Look at the true evidence of Antony's love for you. It has been honorably tested.”

“So Fulvia told me,” Cleopatra said sarcastically. She had not literally talked to Fulvia, but was simply saying that she had learned from Fulvia whether Mark Antony could stay true to one woman.

She continued, “Please, turn aside and weep for her, then bid *adieu* to me, and say the tears you shed are shed for me. Be a good actor now, and play one scene of excellent dissembling. Act as if you have perfect honor.”

Mark Antony replied, “You'll heat my blood and make me

angry. Let me hear no more of this.”

“You can act better than this, but this acting of yours is not bad.”

“Now, I swear by my sword —”

“And small shield,” Cleopatra said.

She said to her servants, “Mark Antony’s acting is improving, but this is not his best performance. Look, please, Charmian, at how this Herculean Roman acts in his performance of anger.”

Mark Antony claimed to be descended from the Greek hero Hercules, who was super-strong, but who also was a buffoon in old comedies and a raging tyrant in bad tragedies.

“I’ll leave you, lady,” Mark Antony said.

“Courteous lord, one word more,” Cleopatra said. “Sir, you and I must part, but that’s not the word I meant. Sir, you and I have loved, but that’s also not the word. I wish I could remember what the word is, but it is obliterated from my memory, and soon I will be obliterated from Antony’s memory.”

He replied, “If I didn’t already know that you are an idle Drama Queen, I would think that you are the personification of idle drama itself.”

“It is sweating labor to bear such drama so near the heart as I, Cleopatra, bear this. The pain of separation from you is like the pain of childbirth. But, sir, forgive me; when my attractive features do not appeal to you, they kill me. Your honor calls you away from Egypt; therefore, be deaf to my unpitied folly. And may all the gods go with you! Be the conquering hero! May a laurel wreath of victory sit upon your sword! And may smooth success be strewn before

your feet in the form of rushes!”

“Let us go,” Mark Antony said. “Come. Our separation so abides, and flies, that you, residing here, go yet with me, and I, hence fleeting, here remain with you. Although we will be separated, a part of you goes with me, and a part of me remains here with you. Away!”

He left.

— 1.4 —

In a room of Octavius Caesar’s house, two of the triumvirs — Octavius and Lepidus — were meeting in the presence of some servants. Octavius Caesar was reading a letter.

He said to Lepidus, “Now you may see, Lepidus, and hereafter know, that it is not Caesar’s — my — natural vice to hate our great competitor: Mark Antony. From Alexandria this letter brings the latest news. He fishes, drinks, and wastes the lamps of night in revelry and merry-making. He is not more man-like than Cleopatra; nor is the widowed Queen of Ptolemy more womanly than he. He hardly gave audience to my messengers, preferring almost to ignore them. He has barely remembered that he has partners in the other two triumvirs: us. You shall find in this letter a man who is the epitome of all vices that all men follow.”

“I cannot think that enough evils exist to darken all of Mark Antony’s goodness,” Lepidus replied. “The faults in him seem like the spots — the stars — of Heaven, which are made more fiery by night’s blackness. In these troubled times, his faults stand out and are noticed. His faults must be hereditary, rather than acquired. His faults must be what he cannot change, rather than what he chooses.”

“You are too indulgent and forgiving,” Octavius Caesar said. “Let us grant, for the sake of argument, it is not amiss

to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy and commit adultery with Cleopatra; to give a Kingdom in exchange for a joke; to sit and take turns drinking with a slave; to reel and stagger in the streets at noon; and to brawl with knaves who smell of sweat. Let us say that this is suitable for him — although his character must be rare indeed if these things cannot blemish it — yet Antony is guilty of other things. He cannot excuse his failings, not when we bear such a heavy weight of work and responsibility because he plays so delightfully and shirks his duty. If at a different time he filled his idle hours with his riotous living, then he would suffer the illnesses of gluttony and the venereal diseases of lechery and those would be enough punishment — no need for a lecture. But he wastes time that he should gain by ceasing his entertainments — we called him to come to Rome because of our positions as triumvirs. We should chide him as we berate boys, who, although they know better, use their time to pursue immediate pleasure, thereby rebelling against mature judgment.”

Seeing a messenger coming toward them, Lepidus said, “Here’s more news.”

The messenger addressed Octavius Caesar: “Your orders have been carried out; and every hour, most noble Caesar, you will receive news of developments abroad. Sextus Pompey is strong at sea and has many ships, and it appears that those men who have feared but not loved you, Caesar, love him. To the ports these discontented men go, and men say about Pompey that he has been much wronged.”

“I expected no less,” Octavius Caesar said. “Ever since the first government, we have learned that the man in power was wished-for until he achieved power, and the man who loses power, who was not loved when he had power, is loved after he loses power. The common people are like a drifting reed upon the stream. It goes forward and

backward, following the varying ebb and flow of the tide the way a page follows the heels of his master. The reed rots while following the movement of the tide, and the general public wastes its approval by frequently changing the person whom it approves.”

The messenger said, “Octavius Caesar, I bring you word that Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates, have taken command of the sea, which serves them, and which they plow and wound with the keels of their ships of every kind. They make many destructive raids on Italy. The people living on the shore turn pale with fear when they think about the pirates, and hotheaded young men revolt and serve them. Each vessel that sails forth is captured as soon as it is seen. The very name of Sextus Pompey causes more destruction than we would have suffered if we had declared war and fought against him.”

Octavius Caesar addressed the man whom he wished were present: “Antony, leave your lascivious and lecherous orgies and revelries. In the past, you fought an army led by the consuls Hirtius and Pansa. You killed the consuls, but their army defeated your army, and you and your army were forced away from the city of Modena. At that time, famine followed at your heels. Although you enjoyed an upper-class upbringing, you fought the famine — which not even savages could endure — with patient self-control. You drank the urine of horses, and you drank water from a puddle gilded with iridescent scum — water that beasts would not drink. Your palate then condescended to eat the roughest berry on the rudest hedge. Indeed, like the stag, when snow covers the pasture, you ate bark from the trees. It is reported that on the Alps you ate strange flesh that some people preferred to die rather than eat. All this — your honor now cannot live up to your honor then — you bore so like a soldier that your cheeks did not even get thin.”

“It is a pity that Mark Antony is not like that now,” Lepidus said.

“Let his shames quickly drive him to Rome,” Octavius Caesar said. “It is time we two showed ourselves in the battlefield; and to that end we immediately assemble a council of war. Pompey is thriving while we are idle.”

“Tomorrow, Octavius Caesar, I shall be able to inform you correctly which forces by sea and land I am able to assemble to fight this war.”

“Until we meet tomorrow, I will be doing the same thing. Farewell.”

“Farewell, my lord,” Lepidus said. “Whatever you should learn in the meantime of events abroad, please inform me, sir.”

“Don’t doubt that I will,” Octavius Caesar said. “I know that it is my duty.”

— 1.5 —

In Cleopatra’s palace in Alexandria, Cleopatra, Charmian, Iras, and the eunuch Mardian were speaking.

Cleopatra said, “Charmian!”

“Madam?”

Cleopatra yawned from boredom and said, “Give me mandragora — a narcotic — to drink.”

“Why, madam?”

“So that I might sleep out this great gap of time during which my Antony is away.”

“You think about him too much,” Charmian said.

“That is treason!” Cleopatra said.

“Madam, I trust that it is not so.”

Cleopatra called, “Eunuch! Mardian!”

“What’s your Highness’ pleasure?” Mardian asked.

“Not now to hear you sing. I take no pleasure in anything a eunuch has. It is well for you that, having been castrated, your thoughts do not fly forth from Egypt as mine do when I think about Antony. Do you have desires?”

“Yes, gracious madam.”

“Indeed!”

“Not in deed, madam; for I can do nothing but what indeed is chaste, yet I have strong desires, and I think about what Venus did with Mars.”

Venus, goddess of sexual desire, had an affair with Mars, god of war.

Cleopatra said, “Oh, Charmian, where do you think Mark Antony is now? Does he stand, or is he sitting? Or does he walk? Or is he on his horse? Oh, happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!”

Cleopatra was thinking that she would like to bear the weight of Antony and be ridden by him in bed.

“Do splendidly, horse! Do you know who is riding you? He is half-Atlas of this Earth; he and Octavius Caesar rule the Earth the way that the Titan Atlas holds up the sky. He is the supporting arm and protective helmet of men. He’s speaking now, or murmuring, ‘Where’s my serpent of old Nile?’ For that is what he calls me. Now I feed myself with most delicious poison. I am thinking about something I cannot at this moment have.

“Think about me, Antony, who am with Phoebus’ amorous pinches black, and wrinkled deep with time. The Sun-god

Phoebus Apollo tans me and darkens my skin the way that pinches cause bruises to darken skin, and as I grow older, I acquire wrinkles.

“Julius Caesar with the broad forehead, when you were here above the ground, I was a morsel — a delightful dish — for a monarch, and great Gnaeus Pompey used to stand and anchor his aspect — that is, stare — at my face until he died while looking at that for which he lived.”

Gnaeus Pompey was one of the sons of Pompey the Great and the older brother of Sextus Pompey.

Cleopatra’s words had an additional sexual meaning. Part of Gnaeus Pompey used to stand up and be anchored in Cleopatra until he “died” — that is, achieved an orgasm.

Returning from Mark Antony, Alexas entered the room.

He said, “Sovereign of Egypt, hail!”

“How much are you unlike Mark Antony!” Cleopatra said. “Yet, because you have come from him, the great medicine has gilded you with its tincture.”

The “great medicine” was the philosopher’s stone, which was supposed to turn metals of little monetary value into gold and which was supposed to cure disease and prolong life. By associating with Antony, Alexas had acquired a golden tint, according to Cleopatra.

She asked him, “How goes it with my splendid Mark Antony?”

“The last thing he did, dear Queen,” Alexas said, “was to kiss — the last of many doubled kisses — this pearl from the orient. His speech sticks in my heart.”

“My ear must pluck it from your heart,” Cleopatra said.

“‘Good friend,’ said he, ‘say, the firm Roman to the great

Queen of Egypt sends this treasure from an oyster. At the Queen's foot, to mend the petty gift, I will add Kingdoms to her opulent throne. Tell her that all the East shall call her mistress.' So he nodded, and soberly did mount a hungry-for-battle steed that neighed so loudly that what I would have spoken was drowned out by the beast."

"Was Antony somber or merry?"

"He was similar to the time of the year between the extremes of hot and cold; he was neither somber nor merry."

"Oh, he has a well-divided disposition! Take notice, good Charmian, it is just like the man, but take notice of him. He was not somber because that would negatively affect the troops who take their mood from his, and for the benefit of those troops he wishes to shine. He was not merry, which seemed to tell them that he remembered his joy that remained in Egypt. Instead, his mood was in between somber and merry — oh, Heavenly mixture! Whether he is somber or merry, either is becoming to him."

She then asked Alexas, "Did you meet my messengers?"

"Yes, madam, I met twenty different messengers. Why do you send so many so quickly?"

"Whoever is born on that day I forget to send a letter to Antony shall die a beggar. Only an event that will cause devastation for many future years can make me forget to write Antony."

She then requested, "Bring me ink and paper, Charmian."

Then she said, "You are welcome here, my good Alexas."

Then she asked, "Charmian, did I ever love Julius Caesar the way that I love Mark Antony?"

“Oh, that splendid Julius Caesar!”

“Be choked if you say another such emphatic sentence! Say, instead, the splendid Antony.”

“The valiant Julius Caesar!” Charmian said.

“By Isis, I will give you bloody teeth, if you compare again my man of men with Julius Caesar.”

“By your most gracious pardon, I am singing Julius Caesar’s praises exactly as you used to sing them.”

“I said those things when I was in my salad days, back when I was green in judgment, and cold in blood and sexually immature. But, come, let’s go; get me ink and paper. Antony shall have from me every day a different greeting, or I’ll unpeople Egypt. I will send Antony a letter each day until Egypt has no more people to carry my letters.”

CHAPTER 2 (Antony and Cleopatra)

— 2.1 —

Sextus Pompey was meeting with the famous pirates Menecrates and Menas in a room of his house in Sicily.

Sextus Pompey said, “If the great gods are just, they shall assist the deeds of the justest men.”

Menecrates said, “Know, worthy Pompey, that although the gods may delay aid, that does not necessarily mean that they are denying aid.”

“While we pray to the gods for their aid, the thing that we are praying for is wasting away.”

Menecrates replied, “We, who are ignorant, often pray for things that would harm us. The wise powers deny us these things for our good; and so it is a good thing then that they do not grant our prayers.”

“I shall do well,” Sextus Pompey said. “The people love me, and the sea is mine. My powers are crescent and growing, and my prophetic hope says that my powers will come to the full. Mark Antony in Egypt sits at dinner, and he will make no wars outdoors — all of the ‘wars’ he fights will be in bed. Octavius Caesar gets money where he loses hearts — his high taxes turn people against him. Lepidus flatters both Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony, and he is flattered by both; but he loves neither of them, and neither of them cares for him.”

Menas said, “Octavius Caesar and Lepidus are already engaged in military operations; they rule a mighty strength.”

“From whom have you heard this?” Sextus Pompey asked.

“It is false.”

“From Silvius, sir.”

“He is dreaming. I know Octavius Caesar and Lepidus are in Rome together, hoping for Antony. But may all the charms of love, spicy Cleopatra, soften your pale lips! Let witchcraft join with beauty, and let lust join with both! Tie up Mark Antony the libertine in a field of feasts, keep his brain befuddled with alcoholic fumes; may Epicurean cooks sharpen with unsatiating sauce his appetite, so that sleep and feeding may make him forget his honor as if he had drunk from Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in the Underworld!”

Varrus entered the room.

“How are you, Varrus?” Sextus Pompey asked.

“This news that I shall deliver is most certainly true. Mark Antony is expected to be in Rome at any hour. He may be there now because the time since he left Egypt has been long enough for him to make a longer journey.”

“I would have been happy to hear less important news,” Sextus Pompey replied.

He then said, “Menas, I did not think that this amorous surfeiter would have put on his helmet for such a petty war. His military expertise is twice that of the other two, but let us raise our opinion of ourselves because our actions have plucked the never-lust-wearied Mark Antony from the lap of the widowed Queen of Egypt.”

Menas said, “I cannot expect that Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony shall get on well. Antony’s late wife committed offences against Caesar, and Antony’s brother warred upon Caesar, although, I think, Antony did not encourage him to do so.”

“I don’t know, Menas, how lesser enmities may give way to greater. Were it not that we are opposed to and stand up against them all, it is obvious that they would fight among themselves. They have reasons enough to draw their swords against each other. But how their fear of us may cement and mend their divisions and bind up their petty differences, we do not yet know. Be it as our gods will have it! Now we must fight with our strongest forces to save our lives. Come, Menas.”

— 2.2 —

Enobarbus talked with Lepidus in a room of Lepidus’ house in Rome.

Lepidus, who wanted peace between Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony, said, “Good Enobarbus, it will be a worthy deed and shall become you well if you entreat your captain, Mark Antony, to use soft and gentle speech when he meets with Octavius Caesar.”

“I shall entreat him to answer like himself,” Enobarbus replied. “If Octavius Caesar angers him, let Antony, the taller man, look over Caesar’s head and speak as loudly as Mars, god of war. By Jupiter, were I the wearer of Mark Antony’s beard, I would not shave it today. I would have it available to be pulled as an act of insult by Octavius Caesar so that I could fight him.”

“This is not a time for private and personal quarrels.”

“Every time serves for the matter that is then born in it,” Enobarbus said. “Every time is suitable for whatever matters arise during that time.”

Lepidus said, “Small matters must be set aside for big matters.”

“Not if the small come first,” Enobarbus replied.

“Your speech is passionate, but please stir no embers up. Here comes the noble Antony.”

Mark Antony and Ventidius, engaged in conversation, entered the room.

Enobarbus said, “And over there is Octavius Caesar.”

Caesar and his colleagues Maecenas and Agrippa entered the room.

Mark Antony said, “If we settle our disagreements and come to suitable arrangements here, then we can campaign in Parthia. Look, Ventidius.”

Octavius Caesar was engaged in conversation: “I do not know, Maecenas; ask Agrippa.”

Lepidus, the peacemaker, said, “Noble friends, that which combined us and made us allies was most great and important, and let not a less important action rend us. What’s amiss, let’s hope that it can be gently heard. When we debate our trivial differences loudly, we commit murder in trying to heal wounds. So then, noble partners, I am asking you earnestly to talk about the sourest points while using the sweetest terms, and I am asking you not to allow bad temper to add to the problems you will talk about.”

“You have spoken well,” Mark Antony said to Lepidus. “If we were in front of our armies, and ready to fight, I would seek to be reconciled with Octavius Caesar.”

Caesar greeted Antony: “Welcome to Rome.”

“Thank you.”

“Sit,” Octavius Caesar said.

“Sit, sir.”

“Well, then.”

They sat.

“I have learned,” Mark Antony said, “that you are taking things ill that are not ill, or if they are, they do not concern you.”

“I must be laughed at,” Caesar replied, “if, either for nothing or for something unimportant, I should say that I am most offended by you out of everyone in the world. I would be even more of a fool if I should disparage you when I have no reason even to speak about you.”

“My being in Egypt, Octavius Caesar, what was that to you?” Mark Antony asked.

“No more than my residing here at Rome might be to you in Egypt; yet, if while you were there, you plotted against my state, your being in Egypt might be my concern.”

“What do you mean by plotted against your state?”

“You will understand what I mean when I tell you what befell me here. Your wife and brother made wars against me, and their wars were on your account; you were the reason for the wars.”

“You are mistaken,” Mark Antony said. “My brother never used my name to justify his war against you. I made inquiries into this, and I have acquired knowledge from some trustworthy sources who drew their swords with you and fought for you. Did my brother not rather flout my authority along with yours, and fight the wars against my wishes? After all, you and I have the same goals and wishes. I have written letters about this to you; previously, my letters satisfied you. If you want to create a quarrel out of bits and pieces, instead of addressing a more serious concern, you must not create a quarrel out of this.”

“You praise yourself by laying defects of judgment on me,

but you are making your excuses out of bits and pieces.”

“That is not so,” Mark Antony said. “I know you could not fail to understand — I am certain of it — this necessary thought: I, your partner in the cause against which my brother fought, could not with grateful eyes look favorably upon those wars that threatened my own peace. As for my wife, I wish you had her spirit in a wife of your own. You rule a third of the world, and you control it easily with a light hand, but you could not control such a wife.”

Enobarbus said, “I wish that we all had such wives, so that the men might go to wars with the women!”

“My wife was very uncontrollable,” Mark Antony said. “The disturbances were caused by her own impatience, but they did not lack some political shrewdness. Grieving, I grant that she caused you too much disquiet. But you must admit I could not stop her.”

Octavius Caesar said, “I wrote to you while you were riotously living in Alexandria; you put my letters in your pocket without reading them, and with taunts you forced my messenger to leave your presence.”

“Sir, your messenger came into my presence before I gave orders to have him admitted. At that time, I had newly feasted three Kings, and I was not the man that I was in the morning. After the feasting I was drunk, while that morning I was sober. The next day I told him why I had done what I had done, which was as much as to have asked him to pardon me. Let your messenger not be a reason for us to quarrel; if we must quarrel, let’s leave him out of it.”

Octavius Caesar now began to bring up his most important reason to be angry with Mark Antony: “You have broken the article of your oath; that is something you shall never have tongue to charge me with. When I make an oath, I keep it.”

“Go easy, Caesar!” Lepidus said.

“No, Lepidus, let him speak,” Mark Antony said. “The honor is sacred that he talks about now — he supposes that I lack honor. But, go on, Caesar; explain the article of my oath.”

“To lend me soldiers and aid when I required them, both of which you denied me.”

“I neglected to send them to you, rather than denied them to you,” Mark Antony said. “That happened when poisoned hours had so incapacitated me that I did not even know who I was or what I was doing.”

Caesar thought, *I can guess that the poisoned hours were blind-drunk hours that led to blackouts and incapacitating hangovers.*

Mark Antony continued, “As much as I can, I’ll play the penitent to you, but my honesty in playing the penitent shall not make poor my greatness, and my authority shall not be used without honesty.”

Caesar thought, *This is an half-assed apology, but it is an admission that he did not send the soldiers and aid that he had sworn to send to me.*

Mark Antony continued, “The truth is that Fulvia, to get me out of Egypt, made wars here. I am indirectly the cause of those wars, and for that I so far ask your pardon as befits my honor to stoop in such a case.”

Caesar thought, *This is an half-assed apology, but it is an apology.*

Lepidus said, “Mark Antony has spoken nobly.”

Maecenas said, “If it might please both of you to press no further the grievances between you, then you might

remember that this present crisis requires that you two work together.”

“Worthily spoken, Maecenas,” Lepidus said.

Enobarbus said, “Or, if you borrow one another’s friendship for the present but not for the future, you may, when you hear no more words about Sextus Pompey, return it again. You shall have time to wrangle with each other when you have nothing else to do. Pretend to be friends until Pompey is defeated, and then return to hating each other.”

“You are only a soldier and not a statesman: Speak no more,” Mark Antony ordered.

“I had almost forgotten that truth should be silent,” Enobarbus replied.

“You wrong this assembly of distinguished people; therefore, speak no more,” Mark Antony said.

“So be it,” Enobarbus said. “I will be a stone that can think but will not speak.”

“I do not much dislike the content, but I do dislike the manner of Enobarbus’ speech,” Octavius Caesar said, “for it cannot be Mark Antony and I shall remain friends — our characters differ as much as do our actions. Yet if I knew what barrel-hoop should hold us staunchly together, I would pursue it from one edge to the other edge of the world.”

Agrippa, one of Octavius Caesar’s closest associates, said, “Give me permission to speak, Caesar —”

“Speak, Agrippa.”

“You have a sister whom your mother gave birth to. She is the much-admired Octavia,” Agrippa said. “And great

Mark Antony is a widower now that his wife, Fulvia, is dead.”

“Don’t say that Mark Antony is a widower,” Octavius Caesar said. “If Cleopatra — who most likely considers Antony to be her husband — heard you, she would deservedly reprove your rashness in speaking.”

“I am not married, Caesar,” Mark Antony said, denying that he was married to Cleopatra. “Let me hear what Agrippa has to say.”

“Here is a way for you two triumvirs to be in perpetual amity, to be brothers, and to join your hearts together with an unslipping knot. Let Antony take Octavia to be his wife. Her beauty claims no worse a husband than the best of men; her virtue and general graces reveal qualities that no other woman possesses. With this marriage, all small suspicions, which now seem great, and all great fears, which now carry with them dangers, would then be nothing. Truths would be then regarded as tales, whereas now half-tales are regarded as truths: Unpleasant facts would then be regarded as tall tales, whereas now malicious gossip is regarded as truths. She would love both of you, and this love would make each of you love the other as well as love her. Please pardon what I have said because it is an idea that I have thought seriously about and is not a sudden and impulsive idea. My duty has caused me to think about a solution to your enmity.”

Mark Antony asked, “What do you say about this, Caesar?”

Octavius Caesar replied, “Caesar will not speak until he hears what Antony thinks about what has already been spoken.”

Mark Antony asked him, “If I would say, ‘Agrippa, I agree to marry Octavia,’ would Agrippa have the power to bring about the marriage?”

Octavius Caesar replied, “He would have the power of Caesar, and of Caesar’s power and influence over Octavia.”

Mark Antony said, “The purpose of the marriage is good and fair, and I hope that I may never dream of putting an impediment in the marriage’s path.”

He said to Octavius Caesar, “Let me have thy hand. Promote this marriage — this act of grace — and from this hour may the hearts of brothers govern our friendship for each other and positively affect our great plans!”

“There is my hand,” Octavius Caesar said.

They shook hands.

He continued, “I bequeath to you a sister whom no brother ever loved so dearly as I love her. May she live to join our Kingdoms and our hearts; and may our friendship for each other never again desert us!”

Octavius Caesar was still suspicious of Mark Antony. In this society, people used the words “thee,” “thou,” and “thy” among intimates. The words “you” and “your” were more formal. Mark Antony had used the intimate “thy” when talking to Caesar, but Caesar had used the formal “you” when talking to Mark Antony.

Lepidus said, “Good! Amen!”

Mark Antony said, “I did not think to draw my sword against Sextus Pompey because he has done unusually great favors for me recently.”

When Mark Antony’s mother had fled from Italy, Pompey had been a good and considerate host to her in Sicily.

Mark Antony said, “I must thank Sextus Pompey, lest I acquire a reputation for not acknowledging good deeds; once that is done, I can defy him.”

Lepidus pointed out that there was no time for that: “Time calls upon us. We must seek and fight Pompey immediately, or else he will seek and fight us.”

“Where is he?” Mark Antony asked.

“Near the mountain Misena in the Bay of Naples,” Octavius Caesar replied.

“What is his strength by land?”

“Great and increasing,” Caesar said, “but he is the absolute master of the sea.”

“So it is reported,” Mark Antony said. “I wish that we had spoken together earlier! We could have gotten a better start on opposing him and perhaps prevented him from gaining so much power! Now we must make haste. Still, before we put ourselves in arms, we need to dispatch the business — the marriage — we have talked about.”

“Very gladly,” Octavius Caesar said. “I invite you to visit and see my sister. Immediately, I will lead you there.”

“Let us, Lepidus, not lack your company,” Mark Antony said.

“Noble Antony, not even sickness would stop me from going with you.”

Everyone left except for Enobarbus and Caesar’s friends Maecenas and Agrippa. These men were able to speak to each other less formally than the triumvirs had.

“Welcome from Egypt, sir,” Maecenas said to Enobarbus.

“You are half the heart of Caesar, worthy Maecenas!” Enobarbus said, implying that Agrippa — the second of Caesar’s two great friends, was the other half.

He added, “My honorable friend, Agrippa!”

“Enobarbus, you are a good man!” Agrippa said.

“We have reason to be glad that the problems between Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony are so well resolved,” Maecenas said, adding, “You had a good time in Egypt.”

“Yes, sir,” Enobarbus said. “We shamed the day by sleeping through it, and we made the night light with drinking. We lit lamps to light the night, and the alcohol we drank at night made us light-headed.”

Maecenas said, “I have heard that eight wild boars were roasted whole for just one breakfast, and only twelve persons were there. Is this true?”

“This was but as a fly in comparison with an eagle,” Enobarbus said. “We had much more monstrous feasts, which worthily deserve to be noted.”

“Cleopatra is a very remarkable lady, if the reports about her are true.”

“When she first met Mark Antony, she pursed up — pocketed — his heart, upon the river of Cydnus,” Enobarbus said.

His words could have had another meaning: When Cleopatra first met Mark Antony on the Cydnus River, she put his “heart” in her “pocket.”

“At the Cydnus River she appeared indeed,” Agrippa said, “or the person who told me that invented interesting lies about her.”

“Let me tell you about that,” Enobarbus said. “The barge that Cleopatra sat in was like a polished throne: It seemed to burn on the water because of the reflections of the barge in the water. The poop deck was decorated with sheets of beaten gold. The sails were purple, and they were so perfumed that the winds were lovesick with them. The oars

were made of silver, and they stroked the water in rhythm to the tune of flutes, and they made the water that they beat follow faster, as if the water were amorous of their strokes.

“As for Cleopatra’s own person, it beggared all description. She lay in her pavilion, which was made of a rich fabric that contained threads of gold. Imagine a work of art depicting Venus, goddess of beauty. Imagine further that the artist’s depiction surpasses the real goddess of beauty. Cleopatra was more beautiful than that work of art.

“On each side of her stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids, with different-colored fans, whose wind seemed to make glow the delicate cheeks that they cooled, and undid what they had done. The wind from the fans seemed to heat up her cheeks as they cooled her cheeks.”

“How excellent for Antony!” Agrippa said.

“Cleopatra’s gentlewomen, like the sea-nymphs called the Nereides, like so many mermaids, tended her in the bows and took care of the tackle and ropes, and the knots they made in the ropes were ornaments. At the helm a gentlewoman who resembled a mermaid steered: The silken tackle swelled with the touches of those flower-soft hands that efficiently performed their duty. From the barge a strange invisible perfume hit the senses of the adjacent riverbanks. The city cast her people out so that they could see her; and Antony, enthroned in the marketplace, sat alone, whistling to the air — air that, except that it would cause a vacuum, would have gone to gaze upon Cleopatra, too, and made a gap in nature.”

“Cleopatra is an extraordinary Egyptian!” Agrippa said.

“Upon her landing, Antony sent to her and invited her to supper,” Enobarbus continued. “She replied that it would be better if he became her guest, and she invited him to supper. Our courteous Antony, who has never said the

word ‘no’ to a woman, after having his hair arranged ten times, went to the feast, and for his ‘ordinary’ meal pays his heart for what only his eyes eat.”

“She is a royal wench!” Agrippa said. “She made great Julius Caesar turn his sword into a plowshare and go to bed. He plowed her, and she bore him a crop: She gave birth to Caesarion, his son.”

Enobarbus said, “I saw her once hop forty paces through the public street; having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted. She made what should have been a defect a perfection; her lack of breath spoke for her.”

“Now Antony must leave her utterly,” Maecenas said.

“Never; he will not,” Enobarbus said. “Age cannot wither her, nor custom make stale her infinite variety: other women cloy — sicken with excessive sweetness — the appetites they feed, but she makes hungry where she most satisfies because the vilest things seem becoming in her — the holy priests bless her when she is lecherous.”

Maecenas said, “If beauty, wisdom, and modesty can settle the restless heart of Antony, Octavia will be a blessed prize to him.”

“Let us go,” Agrippa said. “Good Enobarbus, make yourself my guest while you abide here.”

“Sir, I humbly thank you,” Enobarbus replied.

— 2.3 —

Standing in a room in Octavius Caesar’s house were Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar; Octavia was standing in between them. Some attendants were also present.

Mark Antony said to Octavia, “The world and my great position will sometimes separate me from your bosom.”

“All the time that we are separated, I will bow my knees before the gods and pray to them for you.”

“Good night, sir,” Mark Antony said to Octavius Caesar.

He added, “My Octavia, don’t believe what the world reports about my blemishes. I have not kept to the straight and narrow road, but in the future I shall do so. I shall keep to the straight and narrow road as if I had the benefits of a carpenter’s square and ruler. Good night, dear lady.”

He said again, “Good night, sir.”

Octavius Caesar said, “Good night.”

Octavius Caesar and Octavia left the room, and a soothsayer entered it.

Mark Antony said to the soothsayer, “I understand that you wish you were in Egypt?”

“I wish that I had never left Egypt and that you had never come to Egypt!”

“If you can, tell me your reason.”

“I feel it intuitively, but I do not have the words to describe it; however, you should hurry back to Egypt.”

“Tell me,” Mark Antony said, “whose fortunes shall rise higher: Octavius Caesar’s or mine?”

“Caesar’s,” the soothsayer said. “Therefore, Antony, do not stay by his side. Your guardian spirit — the spirit that looks after you — is noble, very courageous, and unmatched, while Caesar’s is not; however, when near Caesar, your guardian angel becomes afraid, as if it were overpowered. Therefore, keep space between yourself and Caesar.”

“Speak about this no more.”

“I will speak about it to none but you; I will say no more, except when I speak to you. If you play with Caesar at any game, you are sure to lose. Because of his natural luck, he beats you even when the odds are against him. Your luster diminishes when he shines nearby you. I say again, your guardian spirit is entirely afraid to govern you while you are near Caesar, but when Caesar is away from you, your guardian spirit is noble.”

“Go now,” Mark Antony said. “Say to Ventidius that I want to speak to him.”

The soothsayer departed.

“Ventidius shall go to Parthia,” Mark Antony said. “Whether the soothsayer has occult knowledge or just luck, he is speaking the truth. Even the dice obey Octavius Caesar, and in our sports and entertainments my better ability comes in second to his luck. If we draw lots, Caesar wins. His cocks always win the battle against mine, even when the odds favor my cocks 100 percent to none. His little fighting birds always beat mine in the fighting ring, although the odds are in my favor.

“I will go to Egypt. Although I am making this marriage to Octavia to make peace with Octavius Caesar, my pleasure lies with Cleopatra in the East.”

Ventidius entered the room.

Mark Antony said, “Come, Ventidius, you must go to Parthia. Your commission to lead an army there is ready. Follow me, and receive it.”

— 2.4 —

In Rome, Lepidus, Maecenas, and Agrippa were speaking about traveling to meet with and fight — if no peace treaty could be made — Sextus Pompey.

Lepidus said to Maecenas and Agrippa, “Trouble yourselves no further. Please, encourage your generals to make haste.”

“Sir, Mark Antony will kiss Octavia, and then we’ll leave,” Agrippa said.

“Until I shall see you in your soldier’s clothing, which will become you both, farewell,” Lepidus said.

Maecenas said, “I calculate that we will be at Mount Misena in the Bay of Naples before you get there.”

“Your road is shorter,” Lepidus said. “My plan is to take a longer road. You will reach Mount Misena two days before I do.”

“Sir, may you have good success!” Maecenas and Agrippa said.

“Farewell,” Lepidus replied.

— 2.5 —

In a room of Cleopatra’s palace in Alexandria, Egypt, Cleopatra, Charmian, Iras, and Alexas were speaking. Some attendants were also present.

Cleopatra, who was moody because she was thinking of the absent Mark Antony, ordered, “Give me some music; music is the moody food of us who engage in love.”

The attendants called for music.

Mardian the eunuch entered the room. As a eunuch who had been trained to sing, he had a high but strong voice.

“No, no music,” Cleopatra said. “Let’s play billiards. Come, Charmian.”

“My arm is sore,” Charmian said. “You had better play

with Mardian.”

“A woman can play with a eunuch as well as she can play with a woman,” Cleopatra replied.

She asked Mardian, “Come, you’ll play with me, sir?”

“As well as I can, madam.”

Both Cleopatra and Mardian were giving the word “play” a sexual meaning.

Cleopatra said, “And when good will is shown, though it comes too short, the actor may plead pardon.”

Again, some words had sexual meanings. “Will” included the meaning “sexual desire.” “Come” included the meaning “orgasm.” “Short” included a reference to the size of Mardian’s penis. He had been castrated and lost his testicles. He may also have been emasculated and lost his penis.

Cleopatra said, “I’ll not play billiards now. Give me my fishing rod; we’ll go to the river. There, while music plays in the distance for me, I will catch tawny-finned fishes; my bent hook shall pierce their slimy jaws; and, as I draw them up, I’ll think each of them is an Antony, and say, ‘Ah, ha! you’re caught.’”

Charmian said, “It was funny when you and Antony wagered over who could catch the most fish. You sent a diver into the water to attach a dead, dried, salted fish to Antony’s hook, which he fervently drew up.”

“That was a funny and good time — one of many we had. I would laugh at him until he lost his patience, and that night I would laugh with him until he regained his patience, and the next morning, before it had reached nine o’clock, I would drink with him until he went to his bed, and then I would put my clothing on him, while I wore the sword he

used at the Battle of Philippi where he defeated Brutus and Cassius.”

A messenger entered the room.

“I see that you have come from Italy,” Cleopatra said to him. “Stuff your fruitful tidings in my ears that for a long time have been barren of news.”

“Madam, madam —” the messenger began.

Sensing that the messenger had bad news for her, Cleopatra interrupted, “— Antony is dead! If you say so, villain, you will kill your mistress, but you will receive gold if you tell me that he is well and free, and here you will be able to kiss my bluest veins — a hand that Kings have kissed, and have trembled while kissing.”

“First, madam, he is well,” the messenger said.

“Why, there’s more gold for you,” Cleopatra said, “but, sirrah, note that we are accustomed to say that the dead are well. If that is what you mean, the gold I give you I will melt and pour down your ill-uttering throat.”

“Good madam, listen to me,” the messenger replied.

“Well, go on, I will listen,” Cleopatra said. “But there’s no goodness in your face. If you are going to tell me that Antony is free and healthy — you have an oddly sour face to trumpet such good tidings! And if Antony is not well, you should come like a Fury crowned with snakes, not like a normal man.”

“Will it please you to listen to me?” the messenger asked.

“I have a mind to strike you before you speak,” Cleopatra replied. “Yet if you say that Antony lives, is well, and is either friends with Caesar or not captive to him, I’ll set you in a shower of gold, and rain rich pearls upon you.”

“Madam, he’s well.”

“Well said.”

“And friends with Caesar.”

“You are an honest man.”

“Caesar and he are greater friends than ever.”

“I will make you a rich man.”

“But yet, madam —” the messenger said.

Cleopatra said, “I do not like ‘But yet.’ It takes away from all the good things I previously heard. Damn ‘But yet’! ‘But yet’ is like a jailer who brings forth some monstrous malefactor. Please, friend, pour into my ear all the information you have, the good and bad together: He’s friends with Caesar, he is in a state of health, you say; and you say that he is free.”

“Free, madam! No. I made no such report. He’s bound unto Octavia.”

“For what good turn?”

“For the best turn in the bed.”

The messenger had used the word “bound” to mean “married,” but Cleopatra understood the word to mean “indebted.”

“I am pale, Charmian,” Cleopatra said.

The messenger said, “Madam, he’s married to Octavia, the sister of Octavius Caesar.”

“May you contract the most infectious pestilential disease!”

She hit the messenger and knocked him to the floor.

“Good madam, control yourself,” the messenger said.

“What did you say to me!” Cleopatra shouted. “Get out of here!”

She hit him again and said, “You are a horrible villain! Get out, or I’ll kick your eyes like balls before me; I’ll pull out all your hair.”

She grabbed his hair and dragged him on the floor while saying, “You shall be whipped with wire, and stewed in a salty brine. Your wounds shall sting in an acidic brine used for pickling.”

“Gracious madam,” the messenger said, “I who am bringing you the news did not make the match between Antony and Octavia.”

“If you say that Antony and Octavia are not married, I will give you a province and make your fortune. The blow that I have already given to you shall make up for your moving me to anger, and I will reward you with whatever gift in addition thy modesty can beg.”

“He’s married, madam,” the messenger said, telling her the truth rather than what she wanted to hear.

“Rogue, you have lived too long,” Cleopatra said as she drew a knife.

“I’ll run away,” the messenger said, looking at the knife. “What do you mean by this, madam? I have done nothing wrong.”

He ran from the room and Cleopatra’s presence.

“Good madam, keep control of yourself,” Charmian said. “The man is innocent.”

“Some innocents do not escape the thunderbolt,” Cleopatra said. “Let Egypt melt into the Nile River! Let kindly creatures all turn into serpents! Call the slave back here

again. Although I am mad, I will not bite him. Call him back here.”

“He is afraid to come back,” Charmian said.

“I will not hurt him,” Cleopatra said.

Charmian exited the room.

Cleopatra looked at her hands and said, “These hands lack nobility because they strike at a man who is lower in status than I am, especially since I myself am the cause of my being so upset. If I did not love Antony so much, I would not be so upset.”

Charmian and the messenger came back into the room.

Cleopatra said to the messenger, “Come here, sir. Although it is honest to do so, it is never good to bring bad news. You should give a host of tongues to a gracious message; but let ill tidings tell themselves to the person whom the bad tidings hurt.”

“I have done my duty,” the messenger replied.

“Is he married?” Cleopatra asked. “I cannot hate you worse than I already do, if you again say, ‘Yes.’”

“He’s married, madam.”

“May the gods damn you! Do you still say that Antony is married?”

“Should I lie, madam?”

“Oh, I wish you did lie even if half of my Egypt were submerged and made a cistern for scaly snakes! Go, and leave here. Even if you had the face of the very handsome Narcissus, to me you would appear to be very ugly. Is Antony married?”

“I crave your Highness’ pardon,” the messenger said.

“Is he married?”

“Take no offense against a person who does not wish to offend you,” the messenger said. “To punish me for what you make me do seems very unfair. Antony is married to Octavia.”

“It’s a shame that Antony’s fault should make a knave of you,” Cleopatra said. “You did not commit the act that you are sure that Antony committed. Get out of here. The ‘merchandise’ that you have brought from Rome is all too expensive for me. May you be unable to sell it, and in this way may you go bankrupt.”

The messenger exited.

Charmian said to Cleopatra, “Your good Highness, have patience.”

“In praising Mark Antony, I have dispraised Julius Caesar,” Cleopatra said.

“Many times, madam.”

“I have paid the price for it now,” Cleopatra said. “Lead me from hence. I am ready to faint. Oh, Iras! Charmian! It does not matter.”

She ordered, “Go to the messenger, good Alexas. Have him report on the face and figure of Octavia, how old she is, and her personality and character. Don’t let him leave out the color of her hair. Come quickly to me and tell me what he says.”

Alexas exited.

“Let Antony go out of my life forever — no, let him not go forever. Charmian, although Antony is painted one way like a Gorgon with snakes for hair, painted the other way he

is like Mars, the god of war.”

She ordered Mardian the eunuch, “Go and tell Alexas to bring me word of how tall Octavia is.”

She added, “Pity me, Charmian, but do not speak to me. Lead me to my chamber.”

— 2.6 —

In a house near Mount Misena in the Bay of Naples, Sextus Pompey and Menas met with Octavius Caesar, Mark Antony, Lepidus, Enobarbus, and Maecenas. Soldiers on both sides were present.

Pompey said, “I have your hostages, and you have mine, and we shall talk before we fight.”

As was customary, the two sides had exchanged important hostages before meeting. After the meeting, both sides would release their hostages at the same time. The hostages ensured the safety of the people in the meeting. Should a person at the meeting be assassinated, the hostages held by that person’s side could be killed in retaliation.

Octavius Caesar said, “It is very fitting that first we come to words before we come to blows. Therefore, we have earlier sent to you our written proposal for peace between us. If you have considered our written proposal, let us know if it will restrain your discontented sword. If it will, then you can carry back to Sicily many brave youths who otherwise must perish here.”

Sextus Pompey replied, “The three of you alone are the senators who rule this great world, and you three alone are the chief agents for the gods.”

One reason for Pompey to oppose the triumvirs was that so much power was concentrated in their hands. Rome had a Senate, but much of the power that used to belong to the

Senate now belonged to the triumvirs.

Sextus Pompey continued, "I do not know why my father, Pompey the Great, should lack revengers, since he has a son and friends; after all Julius Caesar, who at Philippi haunted the good Marcus Brutus, saw you there laboring to avenge his death."

Brutus and Cassius, among other Romans, had assassinated Julius Caesar because they believed that he wanted to be crowned King of the Romans. At the Battle of Philippi, the armies of Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony had defeated the armies of Marcus Brutus and Caius Cassius, both of whom committed suicide.

Sextus Pompey's father, Pompey the Great, fought and lost a war to Julius Caesar. Seeking refuge in Egypt, Pompey the Great was assassinated.

Sextus Pompey continued, "What was it that moved pale-faced Caius Cassius to conspire against Julius Caesar; and what made the all-honored, honest Roman Marcus Brutus, with other armed men, who were the courtiers of beautiful freedom, to drench the Capitol with the blood of Julius Caesar, but that they would have one man stay a man and not become a King? And that is what has made me rig my navy, at whose burden the angered ocean foams. With my navy I have intended to scourge the ingratitude that spiteful Rome cast on my noble father."

Pompey was becoming emotionally overwrought, so Octavius Caesar told him, "Take your time."

"You can't make us afraid, Pompey, with your sails," Mark Antony said. "We'll fight against you at sea; on land, you know how much we outnumber you."

Sextus Pompey replied, "On land, you have played funny games with numbers as you did when you bought my

father's house for a set sum but did not pay for it. But, since the cuckoo builds not for himself, remain in my father's house as long as you can."

The cuckoo does not build a nest in which to lay its eggs, preferring to lay its eggs in the nests of other birds. Sextus' words to Mark Antony contained a veiled threat: Antony could remain in Sextus' father's house until Sextus forced him to leave.

Lepidus said, "Please tell us — for what you are talking about now is off the subject we should be talking about — how you take the offer we have sent you."

"That's the point we should be talking about," Octavius Caesar said.

"Don't think that we are begging you for peace," Mark Antony said, "but do consider the benefits that you will receive if you make peace with us and accept our proposal."

Octavius Caesar added, "And think about what may follow, if you were to try to get a larger fortune."

One way for Sextus Pompey to try to get a larger fortune than what was offered to him would be to fight the armies of the triumvirs, but of course he might lose. Another possibility for a larger fortune would be to join forces with the triumvirs. He would get now what was promised to him and in the future he might get more.

Sextus Pompey said, "You have offered to give me the islands of Sicily and Sardinia; and in return I must rid all the sea of pirates and send measures of wheat to Rome. If I agree to this, then we can part with the edges of our swords unhacked and with our shields undented."

The triumvirs replied, "That's our offer."

“Know, then,” Pompey said, “that I came before you here as a man prepared to take this offer, but Mark Antony made me somewhat angry.”

He then explained a reason why he was angry at Antony.

Speaking to Mark Antony, he said, “Although I lose praise of my good deed by telling you about it, you should know that when Octavius Caesar and your brother were at war, your mother came to Sicily and did find her welcome by me friendly.”

“I have heard it, Pompey,” Mark Antony said, “and I am well prepared to give you the liberal thanks that I owe you.”

“Let me have your hand,” Pompey said.

They shook hands.

Pompey then said to Antony, “I did not think, sir, to have met you here.”

“The beds in the East are soft,” Antony said, “and I give thanks to you, who made me return to Rome sooner than I intended, because I have gained by it.”

Octavius Caesar said to Sextus Pompey, “Since I saw you last, you have changed.”

“Well, I don’t know what lines harsh fortune has cast upon my face, but I never let harsh fortune enter my heart and take away my courage.”

“This meeting has been fruitful,” Lepidus said. “We are well met here.”

“I hope so, Lepidus,” Sextus Pompey said. “Thus we are agreed. Now I want our agreement to be written and sealed among us.”

“That’s the next thing to do,” Octavius Caesar said.

“We’ll feast each other before we part, and let’s draw lots to see who shall host the first feast.”

“I will host the first feast, Sextus Pompey,” Mark Antony said.

“No, Antony, we will draw lots,” Sextus Pompey said, “but whether you host the first or the last feast, your fine Egyptian cookery shall receive fame. I have heard that Julius Caesar grew fat with feasting in Egypt.”

Julius Caesar had had an affair with Cleopatra — something that Mark Antony was touchy about.

A little angrily, Antony replied, “You have heard much.”

“I don’t mean anything negative,” Pompey said. “I have fair meanings, sir.”

“And fair words to them,” Mark Antony replied.

Antony may have been sarcastic. In using the phrase “fair words,” he may have been thinking about this proverb: “Fair words make me look to my purse.”

Pompey said, “Then so much have I heard. And I have heard that Apollodorus carried —”

Enobarbus interrupted, “— say no more about that, but yes, it is true.”

“What is true?” Sextus Pompey said.

“Apollodorus carried a certain Queen to Julius Caesar in a mattress,” Enobarbus said.

Enobarbus had interrupted because he knew that this was a touchy subject for Mark Antony. Cleopatra had started her affair with Julius Caesar after her loyal follower

Apolodorus had smuggled her, wrapped in bedding, into Julius Caesar's presence. Much later, she started her affair with Mark Antony. Enobarbus, however, was plainspoken, and so he had acknowledged the truth of what Pompey had said.

"I recognize you now," Sextus Pompey said to Enobarbus. "How are you, soldier?"

"I am well, and I am likely to continue to do well," Enobarbus replied, "for I see that four feasts are coming."

"Let me shake your hand," Sextus Pompey said. "I have never hated you. I have seen you fight, and I have envied your behavior in battle."

"Sir, I have never personally cared for you much, but I have praised you when you have deserved ten times as much praise as I have given you."

"Enjoy your plainspokenness," Sextus Pompey said. "It becomes you."

He added, "Aboard my galley I invite you all. Will you lead, lords?"

The triumvirs replied, "Show us the way, sir."

"Come," Sextus Pompey said.

Everyone departed except for Menas and Enobarbus.

Menas said to himself, "Sextus Pompey, your father would never have made this treaty."

He then said to Enobarbus, "You and I have known each other, sir. We have met."

"At sea, I think."

"We have met at sea, sir."

“You have done well by water,” Enobarbus said.

Menas replied, “And you by land.”

“I will praise any man who will praise me, although what I have done by land cannot be denied.”

“Nor what I have done by water.”

“Yes, there is something you can deny for your own safety,” Enobarbus said. “You have been a great thief by sea. You have been a pirate.”

“And you have been a great thief by land.”

“That I deny,” Enobarbus replied, “but give me your hand, Menas.”

As they shook hands, Enobarbus joked, “If our eyes had the authority to arrest people, here they might take into custody two thieves whose hands are kissing.”

“All men’s faces are true, whatever their hands are doing,” Menas said.

This is a cynical sentence. It means that all men try to appear to look honest, whether or not they are honest.

The word “true” has more than one meaning. One meaning is “honest”; another meaning is “without makeup.”

Enobarbus joked, “But there was never a fair woman who had a true face.”

He meant that beautiful women wear makeup, but in order to make a joke Menas understood “true” to mean “honest.”

“This is no slander,” Menas replied. “Beautiful women steal hearts.”

“We came here to fight you,” Enobarbus said.

“For my part, I am sorry it has turned into a drinking bout,” Menas replied. “Today Sextus Pompey laughs away his fortune.”

“If he does, I am sure that he cannot get it back again by weeping.”

“You’ve said the truth, sir,” Menas said. “We did not expect to see Mark Antony here. Tell me: Is he married to Cleopatra?”

“Octavius Caesar’s sister is named Octavia.”

“True, sir; she was the wife of Caius Marcellus.”

“But she is now the wife of Mark Antony.”

“Really, sir?”

“It is true.”

“Then Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar will forever be friends,” Menas said.

“If I had to prophesy about this unity between Caesar and Antony, I would not prophesy that they will forever be friends.”

Menas said, “I think that this marriage of Antony and Octavia was made more for political reasons than for reasons of love.”

“I think so, too,” Enobarbus said. “But you shall find that the band that seems to tie Caesar and Antony together as friends will be the very strangler of their friendship: Octavia is of a holy, cold-rather-than-hot, and gentle disposition.”

“Who wouldn’t want his wife to be like that?” Menas asked.

“A man who does not have that disposition, and that man is Mark Antony. He will go to his Egyptian dish again, and then the sighs of Octavia shall blow the fire up in Octavius Caesar, and as I said before, that which is the strength of their friendship shall prove to be the immediate author of their disunity. Antony will satisfy his lust back in Egypt. He married Octavia only because of political necessity.”

“All that you have said is probably correct,” Menas said. “Come, sir, will you go aboard Sextus Pompey’s vessel? I have a health for you. I want to toast you.”

“I shall take the drink you offer, sir,” Enobarbus said. “We have used our throats to drink in Egypt.”

“Come, let’s go.”

— 2.7 —

Music was playing on Sextus Pompey’s vessel. Two servants whose job was to serve food talked to each other. They had brought into the room wine, fruit, and desserts. Music was playing.

The first servant said, “Here they’ll be, man — on the floor. Some of their plants — the soles of their feet — are ill rooted already: The least wind in the world will blow them down. They are drunk, and they are staggering.”

“Lepidus is high-colored,” the second servant said. “His face is flushed from drinking too much alcohol.”

“They have made him drink alms-drink.”

“Whenever their differing dispositions irritate each other, Lepidus cries out, ‘No more arguing.’ He reconciles them to his entreaty, and then he reconciles himself to drinking all the toasts they propose.”

“But it raises the greater war between him and his

sobriety.”

“Why, this is what it means to have a name in great men’s fellowship. Lepidus is by far the weakest of the three triumvirs. I prefer to have a reed that will do me no service as a weapon than to have a two-edged spear I cannot throw.”

“To be called into a huge sphere of influence, and not to be seen to have influence in it is similar to a blind man’s eye sockets that are empty where the eyes should be. This pitifully ruins the cheeks.”

Octavius Caesar, Mark Antony, Lepidus, Sextus Pompey, Agrippa, Maecenas, Enobarbus, Menas, and others entered the room.

In a middle of a conversation, Mark Antony said to Octavius Caesar, “Thus do they, sir: they measure the flow of the Nile River by certain markings on an obelisk; they know, by the height, the lowness, or the mean, if dearth or foison — famine or feast — follow. The higher the Nile swells and floods, the better it is for agriculture. As the flood ebbs, the farmer scatters his grain upon the slime and ooze, and shortly afterward reaps the harvest.”

“You’ve strange serpents there,” Lepidus said.

“Yes, Lepidus,” Mark Antony replied.

“Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud by the operation of your Sun,” Lepidus said. “So is your crocodile.”

Lepidus was referring to an outdated and unscientific belief that the Sun’s shining on the mud causes the creation of living snakes. He extended this belief to also apply to crocodiles.

“That is true,” Mark Antony replied.

“Sit — and drink some wine!” Sextus Pompey said. “Drink a toast to Lepidus!”

“I am not as well as I should be, but I’ll never drop out of drinking a toast,” Lepidus said.

“Not until you go to sleep,” Enobarbus said. “I am afraid that you’ll be deep in drink until then.”

“Certainly, I have heard the Ptolemies’ pyramises are very goodly things,” Lepidus said, trying to pronounce the word “pyramids.” He added, “Without contradiction, I have heard that.”

Menas said quietly to Sextus Pompey, “May I have a word with you?”

Sextus Pompey replied, “Whisper in my ear and tell me.”

Menas said quietly, “Leave your seat and let’s talk alone, please.”

“Not now,” Sextus Pompey replied. “Leave me alone for a while.”

He said loudly, “Drink this wine in honor of Lepidus!”

Lepidus asked, “What manner of thing is your crocodile?”

Making fun of Lepidus, Mark Antony replied, “It is shaped, sir, like itself; and it is as broad as it has breadth. It is just as high as it is, and it moves with its own organs. It lives by eating that which nourishes it, and once the elements of life are out of it, its soul transmigrates into another animal.”

“What color is it?” Lepidus asked.

“It is of its own color, too.”

“It is a strange serpent.”

“True, it is. And its tears are wet.”

Octavius Caesar asked, “Will this description satisfy Lepidus?”

Mark Antony replied, “It will, because of all of the alcohol that Sextus Pompey gave him. If this description does not satisfy Lepidus, he is a complete epicure.”

The word “epicure” had two meanings. An epicure is a person who takes pleasure in eating and drinking. Applied to Lepidus in this situation, it meant “glutton for drinking.”

Also, the word “epicure” was a play on “Epicurean.” The philosopher Epicurus and his followers did not believe in an afterlife and so would not believe in the transmigration of souls.

Menas whispered to Sextus Pompey, who responded, “Damn, sir! Damn! You want to talk to me now! Go away! Do as I order you!”

Sextus Pompey said out loud, “Where’s the cup of wine I called for?”

Menas said quietly to Sextus Pompey, “If for the sake of my merit you will listen to me, rise from your stool.”

“I think you are mad,” Sextus Pompey replied. “What is the matter?”

Sextus Pompey stood up, and he and Menas walked to a place where they could talk privately.

“I have always been a good follower of yours,” Menas said. “I have always held my cap off to your fortunes.”

In this society, servants and attendants were bareheaded when in the company of those they served.

“You have served me with much faith,” Sextus Pompey acknowledged. “What else do you have to say?”

Sextus Pompey said out loud, “Be jolly, lords.”

Mark Antony said to Lepidus, who was staggering, “Watch out for the quicksands, Lepidus. Keep off them, for you are sinking.”

Menas said to Sextus Pompey, “Would you like to be lord of all the world?”

“What are you saying?”

“Would you like to be lord of all the world? That’s the second time I said it.”

“How can that ever happen?”

“Entertain the thought in your mind,” Menas said, “and although you think that I am poor, I am the man who will give you all the world.”

“Have you drunk well tonight?” Sextus Pompey asked.

“No, Sextus Pompey, I have kept myself away from the cup. You are, if you dare to be, the Earthly Jove. The god Jove is the ruler of the sky; you can be the ruler of the Earth. Whatever the ocean fences in, or the sky embraces, is yours, if you will have it.”

“Show me the way this is possible,” Sextus Pompey said.

“These three world-sharers, these competitors and associates, these triumvirs are in your vessel. Let me cut the anchor cable, and when we are away from shore, I will cut their throats. Everything then is yours.”

“All this you should have done, and not have spoken to me about it ahead of time!” Sextus Pompey said. “For me to do that would be villainous. For you to have done that would have been good service. You must know that it is not my profit that leads my honor; rather, my honor leads my profit. To me, honor is more important than profit. Repent

that your tongue has so betrayed your act. If you had done this without my knowing about it, I would afterwards have thought it well done, but now I must condemn it. Think no more about doing this, and drink.”

Sextus Pompey returned to the others.

Alone, Menas said to himself, “Because of this, I’ll never follow your weakened fortunes any more. Whoever seeks something, and will not take it when once it is offered, shall never find it again.”

Sextus Pompey said loudly, “Drink to the health of Lepidus!”

“He is unconscious. Carry him ashore,” Mark Antony said. “I’ll drink it for him, Sextus Pompey.”

Whenever someone was toasted, that person was obligated to drink a full cup of wine. Because Lepidus was incapacitated, Antony drank the wine for him.

Enobarbus said, “Here’s to you, Menas!”

“Enobarbus, welcome!” Menas replied.

Sextus Pompey said, “Fill the cup until it overflows.”

Enobarbus pointed to the attendant who was carrying off Lepidus and said, “There’s a strong fellow, Menas.”

“Why do you think so?”

“He is carrying the third part of the world, man. Do you see it? He is carrying off a triumvir who rules a third of the world.”

“The third part, then, is drunk. I wish that all of the world were drunk so that it might go on wheels and spin quickly!”

“Drink up,” Enobarbus said. “By drinking, you can

increase your own giddiness and spinning.”

“Come, let’s drink,” Menas said.

“This is not yet an Alexandrian feast,” Sextus Pompey said.

He was referring to Cleopatra’s feasts in Alexandria, Egypt.

“It ripens towards it,” Mark Antony said. “Clink the cups against each other. Here’s to Caesar!”

“I could well do without another toast,” Octavius Caesar said. “This is an unnatural labor. I wash my brain with alcohol, and it grows fouler.”

“Be a child of the time,” Mark Antony said. “Enjoy the party.”

“Drink your cup,” Caesar said. “I’ll answer by drinking mine. But I had rather fast from everything for four days than drink so much in one day.”

Enobarbus said to Mark Antony, “My brave Emperor, shall we dance now the Egyptian Bacchanals, and celebrate our wine?”

“Let’s do it, good soldier,” Sextus Pompey said.

“Come, let’s all take hands and dance until the conquering wine has steeped our senses in the soft and delicate Lethe, the river of forgetfulness.”

“Everybody, take hands,” Enobarbus said. “Make an assault against our ears with the loud music. I will put you where you will stand for dancing, and then the boy shall sing. The refrain every man shall sing as loud as his strong sides can volley.”

Music played, and Enobarbus made sure that everyone was in the proper position.

A boy sang this song:

“Come, you monarch of the vine,

“Plump Bacchus with pink, half-closed eyes!

“In your vats our cares be drowned,

“With your grapes our hair be crowned.”

Everybody sang the chorus:

“Fill our cups, until the world spins round,

“Fill our cups, until the world spins round!”

“What more can anyone wish for tonight?” Octavius Caesar said. “Sextus Pompey, good night. Mark Antony, you good brother-in-law, let me request that we leave the vessel and go on shore. Our graver and more serious business frowns at this levity. Gentle lords, let’s part. You see that we have burnt our cheeks — our faces are flushed from the alcohol we have drunk. Strong Enobarbus is weaker than the wine; and my own tongue slurs what it speaks. This wild and disorderly performance has almost made fools of us all. I don’t need to say anything more. Good night. Good Antony, give me your hand.”

They shook hands.

Sextus Pompey said to Mark Antony, “We’ll have a drinking match on shore.”

“We shall, sir,” Mark Antony replied. “Give me your hand.”

“Antony, you have my father’s house, but so what? We are friends,” the drunk Sextus Pompey said, adding, “Come, everyone, I will show you the way down into the boat.”

Enobarbus advised, “Be careful that you don’t fall.”

Everyone departed except for Enobarbus and Menas.

Enobarbus said, “Menas, I won’t go on shore.”

“No,” Menas said. “Go to my cabin.”

He ordered the musicians, “These drums! These trumpets! Flutes! Let Neptune hear us bid a loud farewell to these great fellows who are leaving. Make music and be hanged — make your music loud!”

The music played loudly.

Enobarbus tossed his cap into the air and yelled, “Yahoo! There’s my cap.”

“Yahoo!” Menas yelled, and then he said, “Noble captain, come with me.”

CHAPTER 3 (Antony and Cleopatra)

— 3.1 —

On a plain in Syria, Ventidius stood. He had triumphed in carrying out the orders that Mark Antony had given him and had won the battle against the Parthians. He had killed Pacorus, an important enemy, and his soldiers were carrying the dead body. Many soldiers were present as Ventidius spoke with Silius, an officer who served him.

Ventidius said, “Now, darting Parthia, you are struck; and now Fortune has been pleased to make me the revenger of Marcus Crassus’ death. Bear the King’s son’s body before our army. King Orodes, Pacorus, who is your son, pays with his death for the death of Marcus Crassus.”

The Parthians’ cavalry was feared. The Parthian warriors would throw spears at the enemy, and then ride away, seemingly in retreat, but they were able to shoot arrows at the enemy as they rode away. The Parthians could dart on their horses, and their spears and arrows were called darts.

The Romans had borne a grudge against the Parthians because the Parthians had succeeded in defeating and killing Marcus Crassus, one of the members of the First Triumvirate; the other members were Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar. Ventidius had avenged that death by killing in battle Pacorus, the son of Orodes, the King of the Parthians.

Silius, an officer who served Ventidius, said to him, “Noble Ventidius, while your sword is still warm with Parthian blood, pursue the fugitive Parthians; spur your horses through Media, Mesopotamia, and the shelters where the routed Parthians fly. That way, your grand captain Antony shall set you on triumphant chariots and put garlands on

your head.”

“Oh, Silius, Silius,” Ventidius replied, “I have done enough; a person of a lower rank, note well, may do too great an act: Such a person can be too successful. Learn this, Silius: It is better to leave something undone, than by our deed acquire too much fame when the man we serve is away. Both Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony have always won more in their officers than in their own person: Their officers earn most of the victories of the men they serve. Sossius, who was one of my rank who served in Syria, and who was Mark Antony’s lieutenant, because he quickly accumulated renown, which he achieved by the minute, lost Antony’s favor. Who does in the wars more than his captain can becomes his captain’s captain, and ambition, the soldier’s virtue, chooses to lose rather than gain that which darkens him. It is better to lose a battle than to gain a victory that will harm one’s career. I could do more to do Antony good, but my success would offend him, and because my success would offend him, I would get no benefit from my success.”

Ventidius was afraid that if he accomplished more than Mark Antony in war, then Mark Antony would hurt Ventidius’ military career. Mark Antony would not want Ventidius to become Mark Antony’s captain.

Silius said, “You have, Ventidius, that quality of discretion without which a soldier, and his sword, can scarcely be distinguished. What will you write to Antony?”

“I’ll humbly tell him what we have accomplished in his name, that magical word of war. I will tell him how, with his banners and his well-paid soldiers, we have jaded out of the battlefield the never-before-beaten cavalry of Parthia.”

Ventidius was punning with the word “jade.” A jade was a broken-down horse, and “to jade” meant “to exhaust.”

“Where is Mark Antony now?”

“He intends to go to Athens, Greece, where, with what haste the weight — the supply train — we must convey with us will permit, we shall appear before him. Let’s go! Pass the word to the soldiers!”

— 3.2 —

Agrippa, who served Octavius Caesar, and Enobarbus, who served Mark Antony, talked together in an antechamber in the house where Octavius Caesar was staying.

Agrippa asked, “What, are the brothers parted?”

He was referring to Sextus Pompey and the three triumvirs — Caesar, Antony, and Lepidus — who had been celebrating the peace treaty with feasts and drunkenness.

Enobarbus replied, “They have finished their business with Sextus Pompey. He has gone; the other three are sealing their copies of the peace treaty. Octavia weeps because she must leave Rome. Caesar is sad and serious; and Lepidus, since Sextus Pompey’s feast, as Menas says, is troubled with the greensickness.”

The greensickness was an anemic condition suffered by young teenaged girls, and people thought that lovesickness caused it. Enobarbus was calling Lepidus’ hangover the greensickness because Lepidus was known for very highly praising his fellow triumvirs.

“It is a noble Lepidus,” Agrippa said.

“A very fine and elegant one,” Enobarbus said.

He was engaging in wordplay. In Latin, *lepidus* meant *fine* and *elegant*.

He added, “Oh, how he loves Caesar!”

“How dearly he adores Mark Antony!” Agrippa said.

“Caesar? Why, he’s the Jupiter of men!”

“What’s Antony? The god of Jupiter!”

“Did you speak of Caesar? Wow! The nonpareil! He has no equal!” Enobarbus said.

“Oh, Antony! Oh, you Arabian bird!”

The Arabian bird was the mythological Phoenix. Only one existed at a time, and when it grew old, it burned and then a young bird arose out of the ashes.

“If you want to praise Caesar, say ‘Caesar,’” Enobarbus said. “You need say nothing more. No praise is higher than that!”

“Indeed, Lepidus plied them both with excellent praises,” Agrippa said.

“But he loves Caesar best; yet he loves Antony,” Enobarbus said. “Hearts cannot think, tongues cannot speak, numbers cannot calculate, scribes cannot write, bards cannot sing, poets cannot make verses that will adequately describe Lepidus’ love for Antony. But as for Lepidus’ love for Caesar, kneel down, kneel down, and wonder.”

“Lepidus loves Caesar and Antony.”

“They are his wings, and he is their beetle,” Enobarbus said.

Trumpets sounded, and he added, “This is the sign that soon we must mount our horses and leave. *Adieu*, noble Agrippa.”

“May you have good fortune, worthy soldier; and farewell.”

Octavius Caesar, Mark Antony, Lepidus, and Octavia entered the room.

“You need make that point no further, sir,” Mark Antony said to Octavius Caesar.

“You take from me a great part of myself,” Caesar replied, referring to Octavia, his sister, whom Antony had married. “Treat me well by treating my sister well.”

He added, “Sister, prove to be such a wife as I think you are — I would give my utmost bond that you will be a good and honorable wife.”

He then said, “Most noble Antony, let not this masterpiece of virtue, who is set between us as the cement of our friendship to keep it strong, be the ram to batter at its fortress, for we might better have been friendly without this means of forming an alliance, if on both parts Octavia is not cherished.”

“Don’t offend me by your mistrust,” Mark Antony replied.

“I mean what I said,” Octavius Caesar said.

“You shall not find, even if you search for it, the least cause for what you seem to fear, so may the gods keep you safe, and make the hearts of Romans serve your ends! We will here part.”

“Farewell, my dearest sister; may you fare well,” Caesar said to Octavia. “May the elements be kind to you, and your spirits be all of comfort! Fare you well.”

“My noble brother!” Octavia said.

She wept.

“The April is in her eyes: It is love’s spring, and these showers of tears bring it on,” Mark Antony said. “Be cheerful.”

Octavia said to her brother, “Sir, look well after my husband’s house; and ...”

She hesitated.

“What, Octavia?” Caesar asked.

“I’ll whisper it to you.”

Octavia had been previously married, but she had been widowed, and she wanted her brother to look after the house of her first husband.

Antony said to himself, “Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can her heart inform her tongue. Her tongue is like a feather of a swan’s down that stands still upon the swell at full tide. The tide neither ebbs nor flows, and so the feather stands still. Octavia’s loyalties are divided between her brother and her husband, and neither is stronger than the other.”

Enobarbus and Agrippa spoke together quietly.

Enobarbus said, “Is Caesar going to cry?”

“It looks like it. He has a cloud in his face.”

“He would be the worse for that, if he were a horse: A dark spot on the face of a horse lowers the value of the horse. Caesar being a man, the cloud lowers his value: Men ought not to cry.”

Agrippa replied, “Why, Enobarbus, when Antony found Julius Caesar dead, he cried almost to roaring; and he wept when at Philippi he found Brutus slain.”

“That year, indeed, he was troubled with a rheum that made his eyes water. What he killed willingly in wartime, he wailed — believe it — until I wept, too.”

Caesar said, “No, sweet Octavia. You shall hear from me

continually. The time shall not outrace my thinking about you — I will always be thinking about you.”

“Come, sir, come; I’ll wrestle with you in my strength of friendship for you,” Antony said.

He embraced Caesar and said, “Look, here I have you; now I let you go, and I give you to the gods.”

Caesar said, “*Adieu*; be happy!”

Lepidus said, “Let all the numerous stars light your fair way!”

“Farewell, farewell!” Caesar said.

He kissed his sister.

“Farewell!” Mark Antony said.

— 3.3 —

In a room in Cleopatra’s palace in Alexandria, Egypt, Cleopatra, Charmian, Iras, and Alexas were speaking.

“Where is the fellow — the messenger I beat?” Cleopatra asked.

“Half afraid to come,” Alexas replied.

“Nonsense,” Cleopatra said. “Nonsense.”

The messenger whom Cleopatra had previously beaten entered the room.

“Come here, sir,” she said to him.

Alexas said, “Good majesty, King Herod of Judea dare not look upon you except when you are well pleased.”

“I’ll have that Herod’s head, but how can I get it, when Antony is gone? If Antony were here, I could have him get me Herod’s head,” Cleopatra said.

She ordered the messenger, "Come near me."

"Most gracious majesty —" the messenger began.

"Did you see Octavia?" Cleopatra asked.

"Yes, dread Queen."

"Where?"

"Madam, in Rome. I looked her in the face, and saw her led between her brother and Mark Antony."

"Is she as tall as me?"

"She is not, madam."

"Did you hear her speak? Is she shrill-tongued or low-voiced?"

"Madam, I heard her speak; she is low-voiced."

"That's not so good for her; Mark Antony cannot like her long."

"Like her!" Charmian, who was loyal to Cleopatra, said. "Oh, Isis! That is impossible."

"I think so, too, Charmian," Cleopatra said. "Octavia is dull of tongue, and dwarfish!"

She asked the messenger, "What majesty is in her gait? Remember, if ever you looked on majesty. You know what a majestic walk is!"

"She creeps," the messenger said. "Her motion and her standing still are similar. She shows a body rather than a life; she seems to be more dead than alive; she seems to be a statue more than a living, breathing person."

"Is this true?"

"If it isn't, then I have no powers of observation."

Charmian said, “Not three people in Egypt have better powers of observation than this messenger.”

Cleopatra said, “He’s very knowledgeable; I do perceive it. There’s nothing for me to be worried about in Octavia yet. The fellow has good judgment.”

“He has excellent judgment,” Charmian said.

“Guess how old she is, please,” Cleopatra said to the messenger.

“Madam, she was a widow —”

“Widow! Charmian, do you hear that!”

“And I do think she’s thirty,” the messenger said.

Antony married Octavia in 40 B.C.E., when Cleopatra was twenty-nine years old. The pact of Misenum between Sextus Pompey and the three triumvirs occurred in 39 B.C.E., when Cleopatra was thirty years old. Both Octavia and Cleopatra were born in the same year: 69 B.C.E.

“Do you remember her face? Is it long or round?” Cleopatra asked.

“Round even to faultiness.”

“For the most part, too, people who have round faces are foolish,” Cleopatra said. “Her hair, what is its color?”

“Brown, madam: and her forehead is as low as she would wish it.”

This was a way of saying that she had a low forehead and would not wish it to be lower. In this society, high foreheads were valued.

“There’s gold for you,” Cleopatra said, giving the messenger money. “You must not take my former

sharpness with you ill. I will employ you to go back to Antony again. I find you very suitable for that business. Go and prepare to travel; our letters are prepared for you to deliver them.”

The messenger exited.

“He is a proper and excellent man,” Charmian said.

“Indeed, he is,” Cleopatra said. “I much repent that I so harried him. Why, I think, based on what he said, this creature Octavia is nothing for me to worry about.”

“She is nothing, madam,” Charmian said.

“The man has seen some majesty, and he should know.”

“Has he seen majesty?” Charmian said. “Isis forbid that he should say otherwise! He has served you so long!”

“I have one thing more to ask him yet, good Charmian,” Cleopatra said, “but it is not important. You shall bring him to me where I will write. All may be well enough.”

“I assure you that all will be well, madam,” Charmian said.

— 3.4 —

In a room in Mark Antony’s house in Athens, Greece, Antony and Octavia were speaking.

Mark Antony complained, “No, no, Octavia, not only that — that is excusable, that, and thousands more of similar importance — but Octavius Caesar has waged new wars against Sextus Pompey. Caesar also made his will, and read it aloud to the public, no doubt to gain the public’s favor by leaving the citizens good things. He has spoken only scantily of me. When he could not avoid praising me, he spoke his praise coldly and sickly. He has given me very little praise and credit. When he had the opportunity to praise me publicly, he spoke that praise only grudgingly.”

Octavia replied, “Oh, my good lord, don’t believe all you hear, or if you must believe it, don’t resent all you hear. If you and my brother should quarrel, an unhappier lady has never stood between two parties, praying for both. The good gods will mock and laugh at me when I pray, ‘Oh, bless my lord and husband!’ and undo that prayer by crying out as loudly, ‘Oh, bless my brother!’ When I pray that my husband wins, and I pray that my brother wins, I destroy my prayers because my prayers are contradictory. There is no middle ground at all between these opposing prayers.”

“Gentle Octavia, let your best love support the side that seeks best to preserve your love and support you,” Mark Antony said. “If I lose my honor, I lose myself. It would be better if I were not yours than to be yours so branchless — so pruned of honor. But, as you requested, you shall go and try to make peace between your brother and me. In the meantime, lady, I’ll raise the preparation of an army that shall eclipse that of your brother. Make your soonest haste; this is something you want to do.”

“Thank you, my lord,” Octavia said. “May the Jove of power make me, who am most weak, the reconciler of my brother and you! A war between you two would be as if the world should be split in two and slain men thrown into the rift to fill it up.”

“When you learn who is responsible for this rift, turn your displeasure that way — be angry at that person,” Mark Antony said. “My faults and your brother’s faults can never be so equal that your love can equally move with them. You must be angry at one of us. Provide for your journey. Choose your own company, and spend whatever amount of money you want to.”

— 3.5 —

In a room of Mark Antony’s house in Athens, Greece,

Enobarbus and Eros, one of Mark Antony's friends, spoke.

"How are you, friend Eros?"

"There's strange news come, sir."

"What news, man?"

"Octavius Caesar and Lepidus have made war upon Sextus Pompey."

"That is old news. What is the outcome? Who won?"

"Octavius Caesar, having made use of Lepidus in the war against Sextus Pompey, immediately denied him partnership and equality; Caesar would not let Lepidus partake in the glory of the action. Not satisfied with that insult, Caesar accused Lepidus of treachery in letters that Lepidus had formerly written to Sextus Pompey. Upon Caesar's own charge and with no other evidence, Caesar arrested Lepidus. The weakest triumvir is shut up in prison until death frees him."

Enobarbus replied, "Then, world, you have a pair of jaws, and no more. And if you throw between them all the food you have, they'll grind the one against the other. Caesar and Antony will come to blows; they will make war against each other. Where's Antony?"

"He's walking in the garden, and he kicks the rushes that lie before him, like this" — Eros imitated an angry Antony. "He cries, 'Lepidus, you are a fool!' — and he threatens to cut the throat of his officer who murdered Sextus Pompey."

"Our great navy's rigged and ready to sail," Domitius Enobarbus said.

"To Italy and Caesar," Eros said. "I have more to say, Domitius, but Antony, my lord, wants to see you immediately. I should have told you my news later."

“My being a minute late won’t matter. So be it. Take me to Antony.”

“Come, sir.”

— 3.6 —

In a room in Octavius Caesar’s house in Rome, Caesar, Agrippa, and Maecenas were speaking.

“Contemptuous of Rome, Mark Antony has done all this, and more, in Alexandria, Egypt. Here’s what he did. In the marketplace, on a silvered platform, Cleopatra and Antony were publicly enthroned in chairs of gold. At their feet sat Caesarion, whom they call my father’s son.”

Octavius Caesar was the great-nephew of Julius Caesar, but Julius had adopted Octavius as his son. Caesarion was reputed to be Julius Caesar’s son by Cleopatra.

Octavius added, “Also sitting at their feet were all the illegitimate children that the lust of Antony and Cleopatra has made between them. To her he gave the confirmed possession of Egypt; he also made her absolute Queen of lower Syria, Cyprus, and Lydia.”

“He did all this in the public eye?” Maecenas asked.

“In the public ground for shows,” Octavius Caesar replied. “His sons he there proclaimed the Kings of Kings. He gave to Alexander great Media, Parthia, and Armenia. To Ptolemy he assigned Syria, Cilicia, and Phoenicia. Cleopatra that day appeared wearing the attire of the goddess Isis. She has often appeared dressed that way when she gives audience — so it is reported.”

“Let Rome be thus informed,” Maecenas said. “The Romans should know about this.”

“The Roman people, who are already sick of Antony’s

insolence, will cease to think well of him,” Agrippa said.

“The Roman people already know about his actions; and they have now received Antony’s accusations.”

“Whom does he accuse?”

“Me, Caesar. He charges that, once we defeated Sextus Pompey and took Sicily as our spoils, we did not give him his part of the island of Sicily. He also says that he lent me some ships that I did not return to him. Lastly, he frets that Lepidus has been deposed from the triumvirate and that we keep all of Lepidus’ revenue.”

“Sir, these charges should be answered,” Agrippa advised.

“My reply has already been written,” Octavius Caesar said, “and the messenger has gone to deliver it to Mark Antony. I have told him that Lepidus had grown too cruel and had abused his high authority, and therefore he deserved his change of fortune from triumvir to prisoner. As for what I have conquered, I am willing to grant him part, but in turn I demand part of Armenia and the other Kingdoms he has conquered.”

“He’ll never agree to that,” Maecenas said.

“Then we will not agree to give him part of Sicily,” Caesar replied.

Octavia and a train of attendants entered the room.

She said to her brother, “Hail, Caesar, and my lord! Hail, most dear Caesar!”

“It’s a pity that I should ever call you cast away — rejected and discarded!” Octavius Caesar said.

“You have never called me that before, nor do you have cause to call me that now.”

“Why have you stolen upon us like this!” Octavius Caesar said. “We did not expect you! You came here not like Caesar’s sister should. The wife of Mark Antony should have an army for an escort, and the neighs of horses should give notice of her approach long before she appears. The trees by the road should have been full of men waiting to see you. People should grow faint as they wait and long to see you. Indeed, the dust raised by the many troops escorting you should have ascended to the roof of Heaven, but instead you have come to Rome like a maiden going to the marketplace. You have forestalled us from showing you our love for you with a great public display. Without such a public display, people may think that I do not love you. If we had known you were coming, we would have met you by sea and by land. At each stage of your journey to Rome, we would have given you a greater greeting.”

“My good lord,” Octavia said. “I was not forced to come to Rome so quietly. I did it of my own free will. My lord, Mark Antony, hearing that you were preparing for war, acquainted my grieving ear with the news. Whereupon, I begged his permission for me to return to Rome to try to make peace between you two.”

“A return that he quickly granted because you are an obstacle between his lust and him,” Octavius Caesar said.

“Do not say that, my lord.”

“I have eyes spying on him, and news of his affairs come to me on the wind,” Caesar said. “Where do you think he is now?”

“My lord, he is in Athens, Greece.”

“No, my most wronged sister,” Octavius Caesar said. “Cleopatra nodded at him, and he went to her. He has given his empire up to a whore; and they are now levying the Kings of the earth for war. Antony has assembled to fight

for them Bocchus, King of Libya; Archelaus, King of Cappadocia; Philadelphos, King of Paphlagonia; the Thracian King, Adallas; King Malchus of Arabia; the King of Pont; Herod of Judea; Mithridates, King of Comagene; Polemon and Amyntas, the Kings of Mede and Lycaonia, with a longer list of those who wield scepters.”

“I am very wretched,” Octavia said. “I have divided my heart between two friends who afflict each other!”

“You are welcome here,” her brother said. Using the royal plural, he said, “Your letters delayed the break between Antony and me until we perceived both how you were wrongly led and how we were in danger through neglecting to prepare for war. Cheer your heart. Do not be troubled by the times, which drive these strong necessities over your happiness. Instead, let things that are fated to happen occur without crying over them. Welcome to Rome; nothing is dearer to me than you are. Antony has abused you beyond what can be thought, and the high gods, to give you justice, make us who love you their agents. Be comforted as best you can; we always welcome you.”

“Welcome, lady,” Agrippa said.

“Welcome, dear madam,” Maecenas said. “Each heart in Rome loves and pities you. Only the adulterous Antony, most unrestrained in his abominations, turns you away and gives his mighty authority to a whore who clamors against us and turns Antony’s mighty authority against us.”

“Is this true, sir?” Octavia asked her brother.

“It is most certainly true,” Octavius Caesar replied. “Sister, welcome. Please, be patient and calm. You are my dear sister!”

Near Mark Antony's camp in Actium, Cleopatra and Enobarbus were speaking.

"I will talk straight with you — don't doubt it," Cleopatra said.

"But why, why, why?"

"You have spoken against my being in these wars, and say it is not fitting."

"Well, is it? Is it?"

Using the royal plural, Cleopatra replied, "The war has been declared against us, so why shouldn't we be there in person?"

"Well, I could reply with this: If we should serve with stallions and mares together, the stallions would be utterly lost; the mares would bear a soldier and a stallion. Both a soldier and a stallion would ride the mare."

"What do you mean?"

"Your presence in the battle necessarily must confuse and distract Antony; your presence would take from his heart, take from his brain, and take from his time what should not then be spared. You will fluster his heart and his head, and he will have to devote time to you. He is already criticized for levity; and it is said in Rome that Photinus, the eunuch Mardian, and your maidens are in charge of managing this war."

"May Rome sink and may the Romans' tongues that speak against us rot!" Cleopatra said, using the royal plural. "We bear the expense of the war, and, as the ruler of my Kingdom, we will appear there just like a man. Don't speak against it. I will not stay behind."

"I won't bring this up again," Enobarbus said. "I have

finished. Here comes the Emperor.”

Mark Antony and Canidius, a Lieutenant General, entered the room.

Antony said, “Isn’t it strange, Canidius, that Octavius Caesar could cross so quickly the Ionian Sea from Tarentum and Brundisium and capture the city of Toryne in Greece?”

He then asked Cleopatra, “Have you heard this news, sweet?”

“Celerity is never more wondered at than by the negligent,” she replied.

“This is a good rebuke, and it can remind even the best of men to taunt slackness,” Antony said, adding, “Canidius, we will fight Caesar by sea.”

“By sea,” Cleopatra said. “Of course!”

“Why will my lord do that?” Canidius asked.

“Because Octavius Caesar dares us to do it.”

“But my lord has dared Caesar to fight him in single combat,” Enobarbus said.

“True, and to wage this battle at Pharsalia, where Julius Caesar fought Pompey the Great,” Canidius said, “but these challenges, which do not give Caesar the advantage, he shakes off and ignores. Like Caesar, you should ignore challenges that do not give you an advantage.”

Enobarbus said, “Your ships are not well manned; your mariners are mule drivers, reapers of harvests, people who have been quickly gotten together through being drafted. In Caesar’s fleet are those who have often fought against Sextus Pompey. Their ships are nimble; yours are heavy. You will suffer no disgrace for refusing to fight Octavius

Caesar at sea because you are prepared to fight him on land.”

“I will fight him by sea — by sea,” Mark Antony replied.

“Most worthy sir,” Enobarbus said, “you thereby throw away the excellent military force you have on land. You split up your army, which mostly consists of war-scarred infantry. You leave unused your own renowned military knowledge. You quite forego the way that promises assurance of victory, and from firm security you give yourself over entirely to chance and hazard.”

“I’ll fight at sea,” Antony said.

“I have sixty ships,” Cleopatra said. “Caesar has none better.”

“Our surplus of ships we will burn,” Antony said, “and, with the rest fully manned, from the head of Actium we will beat the approaching Caesar. But if we fail, we then can beat him back by land.”

A messenger entered the room.

Mark Antony asked him, “What is your business here?”

The messenger said, “The news is true, my lord; Octavius Caesar has been sighted. Caesar has conquered Toryne.”

“Can Caesar be there in person?” Mark Antony asked. “It is impossible; it is strange that his army should be there.”

He then said, “Canidius, our nineteen legions you shall hold by land, and our twelve thousand cavalry. We will go to our ship.”

To Cleopatra, he said, “Let’s leave, my Thetis!”

Thetis was a sea-goddess and the mother of the Greek hero Achilles, who fought and died in the Trojan War.

A soldier entered the room.

Mark Antony asked him, "How are you, worthy soldier?"

"Oh, noble Emperor, do not fight by sea," the soldier said. "Trust not to rotten planks. Do you mistrust this sword and these my wounds? Let the Egyptians and the Phoenicians go swimming in the sea; we are used to conquer while standing on the earth, and fighting foot to foot."

Mark Antony said merely, "Well, well," and then he said, "Let's go!"

Antony, Cleopatra, and Enobarbus departed.

"By Hercules, I think I am in the right," the soldier said.

"Soldier, you are in the right," Canidius said, "but Antony's whole plan of military action is not based on his strengths. Our leader is led by a woman, and we are the servingmen of women."

"You keep by land the legions and the cavalry undivided, don't you?" the soldier asked.

"Marcus Octavius, Marcus Justeius, Publicola, and Caelius will fight at sea, but we keep ourselves whole and undivided by land," Canidius replied.

He added, "This speed of Caesar's shoots him forward beyond belief."

"While he was still in Rome, his military forces went out in such bits and pieces that all spies were fooled."

"Do you know who is Caesar's Lieutenant General?"

"They say, one Taurus."

"I know the man well," Canidius said.

A messenger entered the room and said, "The Emperor is

calling for Canidius to come to him.”

“The times are pregnant with news and give birth, each minute, to something new.”

— 3.8 —

On a plain near Actium on 2 September 31 B.C.E., Octavius Caesar talked with Taurus, his Lieutenant General.

“Taurus!”

“My lord?”

“Strike not by land; keep the land forces whole and undivided. Do not provoke a land battle until the sea battle is completed.”

He gave Taurus a scroll and said, “Do not exceed the orders given to you in this scroll. Our fortune lies upon this gamble.”

— 3.9 —

On another part of the plain, Mark Antony was talking to Enobarbus.

Antony said, “We are setting our squadrons on the other side of the hill, in sight of Caesar’s battle line of ships; from which place we can count the number of his ships, and proceed accordingly.”

— 3.10 —

Later, after the sea battle was nearly over and Octavius Caesar had triumphed over Mark Antony and Cleopatra, Enobarbus mourned.

“Ruined,” Enobarbus mourned. “All is ruined — ruined! I can’t bear to look any longer! The *Antoniad*, the Egyptian

flagship, with all of Egypt's sixty ships, fled and turned the rudder. Seeing it has blighted my eyes."

A soldier named Scarus walked over to Enobarbus and cursed, "Gods and goddesses, the whole assembly of them!"

"What's the matter with you?"

"The greater part of the world has been lost through utter stupidity," Scarus said. "We have kissed away Kingdoms and provinces."

"How does the battle look like now?"

"On our side it looks like the signs of a plague where death is sure to follow. Yonder ribald and debauched nag of Egypt — I hope the much-ridden Cleopatra catches leprosy! — in the midst of the fight at sea, when the two sides appeared equally matched like twins, with no advantage on either side, or perhaps we appeared to be the elder twin and so had a slight advantage, she hoisted her sails and fled as if she were a cow in June that had been bitten by a gadfly."

"I witnessed that," Enobarbus said. "My eyes sickened at the sight, and they could not endure a further view."

"Cleopatra once being sailed into the wind and having put distance between herself and Caesar's ships, the noble ruin of her magic, Mark Antony, clapped on his sea-wings — his sails — and, like a doting duck, leaving the fight at its height, fled after her. I never saw such a shameful action; experience, manhood, and honor have never before so violated themselves."

"Damn! Damn!" Enobarbus said.

Canidius walked over to the two men.

“Our fortune on the sea is out of breath, and sinks most lamentably,” Canidius said. “Had our general been what he knew himself to be, the battle would have gone well, but he has given us an example for our own flight, most grossly and blatantly, by his own flight!”

“Are you thinking about fleeing and deserting?” Enobarbus asked. “Why, then, good night to our hopes indeed.”

“Mark Antony and Cleopatra have fled toward the Peloponnesus in Greece,” Canidius said.

“It is easy to get to,” Scarus said, “and there I will await what happens next.”

“To Caesar will I surrender my legions and my cavalry,” Canidius said. “Six Kings already have surrendered and through their example show me how to yield to Octavius Caesar.”

Enobarbus said, “I’ll continue to follow the wounded fortunes of Antony, although my reason tells me not to. My reason sits in the wind against me. My scent blows toward it, and it tracks and hunts me. I should go in the opposite direction — away from Mark Antony.”

— 3.11 —

In a room of Cleopatra’s palace in Alexandria, Mark Antony, accompanied by some attendants, was mourning the lost sea battle at Actium.

“Listen!” he said. “The land orders me to tread no more upon it — it is ashamed to bear me! Friends, come here. I am so belated in the world — I am like a traveler who has failed to reach shelter before dark — that I have lost my way forever: I have a ship that is laden with gold; take that, divide it; flee, and make your peace with Octavius Caesar.”

His attendants replied, “Flee? We won’t flee!”

“I myself have fled,” Antony said, “and I have instructed cowards to run and show to the enemy the backs of their shoulders. Friends, leave me. I have myself resolved upon a course of action that has no need of you, so be gone.”

Was Antony contemplating committing suicide?

He said, “My treasure is in the harbor, take it. Oh, I followed that woman whom I blush to look upon. My very hairs mutiny: My white hairs reprove my brown hairs for rashness, and my brown hairs reprove my white hairs for fear and doting. Friends, be gone. You shall receive letters from me to some friends who will sweep your way for you so that you can make peace with Caesar. Please, do not look sad, nor make replies of reluctance. Take the opportunity that my despair provides for you. Let that be left that leaves itself — abandon me who has already abandoned himself. Go to the seaside immediately. I will give you possession of that ship and treasure. Leave me, please, for a little while, I ask you now. Leave. I, indeed, have lost the right to command you to leave; therefore, I ask you to leave. I’ll see you soon.”

The attendants left him, and he sat down.

Cleopatra entered the room. With her were her attendants Charmian and Iras, and Mark Antony’s friend Eros.

Eros said, “Gentle madam, go to him, comfort him.”

“Do, most dear Queen,” Iras said.

“Do!” Charmian said. “Why, what else should you do?”

“Let me sit down,” Cleopatra said. “Oh, Juno, Queen of the Roman gods!”

She sat down.

“No, no, no, no, no,” Mark Antony mourned to himself.

“Do you see Cleopatra here, sir?” Eros asked.

“Oh, damn, damn, damn!” Antony said, ignoring Eros.

“Madam!” Charmian said.

“Madam!” Iras said. “Oh, good Empress!”

“Sir, sir —” Eros said.

“Yes, my lord, yes,” Antony said.

Normally, Mark Antony would not call Eros ‘my lord.’ He was so discouraged that he was not even looking at Eros and therefore did not know to whom he was speaking.

Talking to himself, Mark Antony said, “Octavius Caesar at the Battle of Philippi kept his sword in his sheath as if he were a dancer and his sword was only an ornament, while I struck the lean and wrinkled Cassius; and it was I who defeated the mad Brutus. Caesar alone relied on his lieutenants to do the fighting for him, and he acquired no experience in the brave and splendid battalions of soldiers. But now — it does not matter.”

Cleopatra said to Charmian and Iras, “Stand by me. I feel faint.”

“The Queen, my lord, the Queen,” Eros said to Antony.

“Go to him, madam, speak to him,” Iras said to Cleopatra. “He is unqualified with very shame. He has lost the qualities that made him Antony.”

“Well then, sustain me,” Cleopatra said. “Help me stand up.”

She stood up.

“Most noble sir, arise,” Eros said. “The Queen approaches. Her head is bowed, and death will seize her, unless you

comfort her and by so doing save her life.”

“I have offended reputation and honor,” Mark Antony said. “I have committed a very ignoble swerving away from nobility and honor.”

Eros said, “Sir, the Queen.”

Mark Antony stood up and said to Cleopatra, “Oh, where have you led me, Queen of Egypt? See how I convey my shame out of your eyes and into my eyes? Men ought not to cry, but tears are trickling down my cheeks. I cry when I look back on what I have left behind and destroyed with my dishonor.”

“Oh, my lord, my lord, forgive my fearful sails and my fearful flight!” Cleopatra said. “I little thought that you would have followed me.”

“Queen of Egypt, you knew too well that my heart was tied by the strings to your rudder, and you should tow me after you wherever you might go,” Antony said. “You knew that you had full supremacy over my spirit, and that your beck would turn me away from doing even the bidding of the gods.”

“Oh, give me pardon!” Cleopatra said.

“Now I must send my humble entreaties to the young man — Octavius Caesar,” Mark Antony said. “I must engage in low dodges and shifty dealings of the kind lowly people must employ. I must do this — I who once played as I pleased with half the bulk of the world, making and marring fortunes. You knew how much you were my conqueror; and you knew that my sword, made weak by my infatuation for you, would always obey my infatuation for you.”

“Give me pardon, pardon!” Cleopatra said.

“Let fall not a single tear, I say,” Antony replied. “One of your tears is worth all that is won and lost. Give me a kiss; a single kiss repays me for what I have lost. We sent Euphronius, our schoolmaster, to Octavius Caesar. Has he come back? Love, I am full of lead — sorrow is heavy on my heart. Bring some wine, within there, and bring some food! Fortune knows that we scorn her most when most she offers us blows.”

— 3.12 —

In Octavius Caesar’s camp in Egypt, Caesar was speaking with his friend Dolabella. Caesar’s friend Thidias was also present, along with some attendants.

Octavius Caesar ordered, “Let the messenger sent by Mark Antony appear before us.”

An attendant left to carry out the order.

Caesar asked, “Dolabella, do you know him?”

“Caesar, the messenger is the schoolmaster to Antony and Cleopatra’s children. This is evidence that Antony’s feathers have been plucked; otherwise, he would not have sent so poor a feather from off his wing — not so many months ago, Antony had so many Kings following him that he could send a superfluous King as his messenger.”

Euphronius, Mark Antony’s messenger, entered the room.

“Approach, and speak,” Octavius Caesar ordered.

“Such as I am, I come from Mark Antony,” Euphronius said. “I was just recently as petty to his ends as is the morning dew on the myrtle leaf to the grand sea.”

“I understand,” Caesar said. “State your business.”

“Mark Antony salutes you, who are the lord of his fortunes, and he requests that he be allowed to live in Egypt. If you

will not allow that, he lessens his request, and he asks you to let him live and breathe between the Heavens and Earth as a private citizen in Athens. This is what Mark Antony requests.

“Now for Cleopatra. Cleopatra acknowledges your greatness; she submits herself to your might; and from you she asks that you allow her heirs to wear the crown of the Ptolemies and rule Egypt — she knows that the crown has been forfeited as if it were a stake in a game of dice and that you are the person who will decide who will wear that crown.”

“As for Antony, I have no ears to his request,” Octavius Caesar said. “I will not grant him what he requests. The Queen shall not fail to have me listen to her and grant her request, provided that she either drives Antony, her entirely disgraced friend, out of Egypt, or take his life there. If Cleopatra does this, I will grant her request. Take this message to both of them.”

“May Fortune pursue you!” Euphronius said.

“Take him safely through the troops,” Caesar ordered.

Euphronius and some attendants left.

Octavius Caesar said to Thidias, “Separate Antony and Cleopatra, and get Cleopatra on our side. Promise her, in our name, whatever she wants; promise additional benefits to her as needed. Women are not strong even when they have good fortune, and destitution will cause even a vestal virgin to break her vows. Use your cunning, Thidias. Decide how you will be rewarded for doing this, and we will give it to you as if we were obeying a contract.”

“Caesar, I go now,” Thidias said.

“Observe how Antony is reacting to his misfortune,”

Octavius Caesar said. “Tell me what you think his every movement tells about his state of mind.”

“Caesar, I shall.”

— 3.13 —

In a room of Cleopatra’s palace in Alexandria, Egypt, Cleopatra was speaking to Enobarbus. Charmian and Iras were also present.

Cleopatra asked, “What shall we do, Enobarbus?”

“Think, despair, and die.”

Using the royal plural, Cleopatra asked, “Is Antony or we at fault for this?”

“Only Antony is at fault because he made his sexual passion the lord of his reason. So what if you fled from that great front of war, whose opposing ranges of ships frightened each other? Why should he follow after you? The itch of his sexual passion should not then have cut short his captainship; at such a point, when half of the world opposed the other half of the world, with him being the sole cause of dispute, it was no less shameful for him than was his loss of the battle to follow after your fleeing flags, and leave his navy gazing after him in dismay.”

“Be silent. Be silent,” Cleopatra said.

Mark Antony entered the room with Euphronius, the messenger whom he had sent to Octavius Caesar.

“Is that his answer to me?” Antony asked.

“Yes, my lord.”

“The Queen shall then be courteously received by him, as long as she will yield us — me — up.”

“So he says,” Euphronius replied.

“Let Cleopatra know what Caesar says,” Antony said.

To Cleopatra, Antony said, “If you send this grizzled head to the boy Caesar, he will fill your wishes to the brim with principalities.”

“That head, my lord?” Cleopatra asked.

Mark Antony said to Euphronius, “Go back to Caesar. Tell him that he wears the rose of youth upon him, and from him the world should note something special. His coin, ships, and legions may belong to a coward, and his agents may be as successful if they were serving a child rather than serving Caesar — Caesar is taking credit for the accomplishments of his agents. I dare Caesar therefore to lay aside his gay comparisons and splendid trappings, and answer me, declined as I am in years and fortune, sword against sword, ourselves alone. I’ll write my challenge to him to fight me in single combat. Follow me.”

Mark Antony and Euphronius left the room.

Enobarbus thought to himself, sarcastically, Yes, likely enough, Caesar, who commands huge armies, will divest himself of his huge advantages, and allow himself to participate in a public spectacle and fight against a gladiator! I see that men’s judgments are part and parcel of their fortunes; I see that external circumstances and fortune draw the inner man after them so that both suffer together. I can’t believe that Mark Antony, who has experienced all measures of fortune from great to poor, can dream that Caesar, riding at the top of Fortune’s wheel, will fight in single combat Antony, who is riding at the bottom of Fortune’s wheel! Caesar, you have subdued Antony’s judgment, too.

An attendant entered the room and announced, “A

messenger has come from Octavius Caesar.”

“What! He has come with no more ceremony than that?” Cleopatra said. “See, my women! Against the fading rose, they stop their nose although previously they knelt before the rose’s bud.”

She ordered, “Admit him, sir.”

An attendant left to bring in Caesar’s messenger.

Enobarbus thought to himself, *My honor and I begin to quarrel. Loyalty that stays faithful to fools makes our faith mere folly, yet he who can endure to follow with allegiance a fallen lord conquers the person who conquered his master and by doing so earns a place in history.*

Thidias, Caesar’s messenger, entered the room.

“What is Caesar’s will?” Cleopatra asked.

“Hear it in private,” Thidias replied.

“No one is here but friends,” Cleopatra said. “Say boldly what you have to say.”

“Perhaps they are friends to Mark Antony,” Thidias said.

Enobarbus said, “Antony needs as many friends, sir, as Caesar has. If he does not have that many, his case is hopeless, and he does not need us to be his friends. If Caesar will allow it, our master will leap to be his friend. As for us, you know, whose Antony is we are, and Antony is Caesar’s.”

“So be it,” Thidias said. “Most renowned Cleopatra, Caesar asks you to not worry about the situation you are in, but to remember that he is Caesar.”

Thidias’ words were ambiguous. He wanted Cleopatra to remember that Octavius Caesar was capable of generosity.

Cleopatra knew that, but she also knew that Caesar was capable of ruthlessness.

“Go on,” Cleopatra said. “Caesar is right royal.”

Thidias said, “Caesar knows that you embraced Antony not because you loved him, but because you feared him.”

“Oh!” Cleopatra said.

“The scars upon your honor, therefore, Caesar pities and regards as blemishes forced upon you and not as blemishes you deserve.”

Cleopatra replied, “Caesar is a god, and he knows where the truth lies. My honor was not freely yielded — it was utterly conquered.”

Cleopatra’s words were ambiguous. She could mean that she gave in to Antony out of fear, or that she fell completely in love with him when he conquered her heart.

Enobarbus, who was not sure which meaning Cleopatra meant, said to himself, “To be sure of the truth of that, I will ask Antony. Sir, sir, you are so leaky, that we must leave you to your sinking, for even those dearest to you quit you.”

Thinking of rats leaving a sinking ship, he left the room.

Thidias said, “Shall I tell Caesar what you request from him? He almost begs you to ask him to give you what you want. It would much please him if you were to make a staff of his fortunes that you would lean upon, but it would warm his spirits to hear from me that you had left Antony, and put yourself under the protection of Caesar, who is the universal landlord — he now rules the world.”

“What’s your name?” Cleopatra asked.

“My name is Thidias.”

“Most kind messenger, say to great Caesar this: With you as my deputy, I kiss his conquering hand. Tell him that I am prompt to lay my crown at his feet, and at his feet to kneel. Tell him that from his breath — that all must obey — I will hear the sentence that he gives to me, the Queen of Egypt.”

“This is your noblest course,” Thidias said. “When a wise person meets with bad fortune, if the wise person accepts the bad fortune, nothing can shake the person’s wisdom — it is wise to accept what must occur. Give me permission to lay my lips on your hand and kiss it.”

“Julius Caesar, the father of Octavius Caesar, often, when he was thinking about conquering Kingdoms, bestowed his lips on that unworthy place, as if it rained kisses.”

Thidias kissed Cleopatra’s hand just as Mark Antony and Enobarbus entered the room.

Seeing the kiss, Antony was immediately angry.

Seeing the kiss, Enobarbus thought, *This messenger will be whipped. A mere messenger ought not to kiss the hand of a Queen.*

“You are giving favors to lackeys, by Jove who thunders!” Antony said to Cleopatra.

He said contemptuously to Thidias, “Who are you, fellow?”

“One who obeys the orders of the greatest man, and the worthiest to have his commands obeyed.”

Mark Antony called for attendants: “Come here!”

He then said, “Ah, you kite!”

A kite is a hawk that feeds on disgusting things. Was Antony insulting Cleopatra for allowing a lackey to kiss her hand? Or was he insulting Thidias for using a position of

power to make Cleopatra allow him to kiss her hand?

The attendants were slow in responding to Antony's call.

Antony cursed, "Gods and devils! Authority now melts from me. Just recently, I would cry 'Ho!' and Kings would start forth like boys scrambling to pick up desired trinkets strewn on the ground before them and they would ask me, 'What is your will?'"

He called to his attendants, "Have you no ears? I am still Antony."

Some attendants entered the room, and Antony ordered, "Take away from here this rascal, and whip him."

Enobarbus thought, *It is better to play with a lion's cub than with an old lion that is dying.*

Mark Antony cursed, "Moon and stars! Whip him. I would order the same even if I were to find twenty of the greatest tribute-paying rulers who acknowledge Caesar so saucy with the hand of this woman here — what's her name? What is the name of this woman who used to be Cleopatra? Whip him, fellows, until, like a boy, you see him cringe his face in pain, and whine aloud for mercy. Take him away from here."

"Mark Antony!" Thidias said.

He may have wanted Antony to know that as a messenger of Octavius Caesar, he was under the protection of Caesar and so whipping him would be a direct insult to Caesar.

"Tug him away," Antony said. "Once he has been whipped, bring him here again. This rascal of Caesar's shall run an errand and take a message from us to him."

The attendants took Thidias away.

Mark Antony said to Cleopatra, "You were half blighted

before I knew you! Have I left my pillow unused in Rome, forgone the begetting of legitimate children by Octavia, a gem of women, just so I can be abused by a woman who looks favorably on servants such as this messenger from Caesar?"

"My good lord —" Cleopatra began.

"You have always been a boggler," Antony said.

In falconry, a boggler is a falcon that does not chase just one bird, but instead chases one and then another and then another.

He continued, "But when we become hardened to our depravity — a misery! — the wise gods sew shut and blind our eyes. The gods make our clear judgments drop in our own filth. The gods make us adore our errors. The gods laugh at us while we strut to our destruction."

"Has it come to this?" Cleopatra asked.

"I found you as a cold crumb on dead Julius Caesar's platter. You were a leftover of Gnaeus Pompey's. In addition, you have enjoyed hotter lecherous hours that have not been gossiped about. I am sure that although you can guess what temperance should be, you have not experienced it."

"Why are you saying these things?" Cleopatra asked.

"You have let a fellow who will take a tip and say, 'May God reward you!' be familiar with my playfellow, your hand — which has signed Kingly documents and sealed the pledges of noble lovers!" Mark Antony said. "Oh, if I were upon the hill of Basan, I would outroar the horned herd!"

Herds of horned bulls were on the hill of Basan. Horns are the symbol of a cuckold, and so Antony was saying that because of the actions of Cleopatra, he would be the

biggest and loudest cuckold in that horned herd.

He continued, "I have savage cause to bellow, and to protest in a civilized manner would be like a neck with a noose around it thanking the hangman for being efficient in doing his job."

The attendants returned with Thidias.

"Has he been whipped?" Mark Antony asked.

"Soundly, my lord," the first attendant replied.

"Did he cry? Did he ask for mercy?"

"He did ask for mercy," the first attendant replied.

Mark Antony said to Thidias, "If your father is still alive, let him regret that you were not born his daughter, and as for you, be sorry to follow Caesar in his triumphal procession, since you have been whipped for following him. And henceforth may seeing the white hand of a lady give you a fever and make you shiver when you look at it. Go back to Octavius Caesar and tell him about your treatment here. Be sure that you say that he makes me angry with him; for he seems proud and disdainful, harping on what I am and not what he knew I was. He makes me angry, and at this time it is very easy to do it, now that my good stars, which were my former guides, have left their orbits and shot their fires into the abyss of Hell. If Caesar dislikes my speech and what has been done to you, tell him that he has Hipparchus, my freed slave, whom he may at his pleasure whip, or hang, or torture, as he shall like, to pay me back. Tell him these things. Leave and take with you your stripes — go!"

Thidias left.

"Have you finished yet?" Cleopatra asked Mark Antony.

Antony said, “Alas, our Earthly moon — Cleopatra — is now eclipsed; and it portends the fall of Antony!”

Cleopatra, an Earthly Queen, was often associated with the Moon goddess Isis. In this society, an eclipse of the Moon was thought to be a portent of imminent disaster.

“I must wait until he is finished,” Cleopatra said.

“To flatter Caesar, would you mingle eyes and flirt with a servant who helps him get dressed?” Antony asked.

“Don’t you know me yet?” Cleopatra asked.

“Are you cold-hearted toward me?”

“Ah, dear, if I am, from my cold heart let Heaven engender hail, and poison it in the source; and let the first stone drop on my neck. As the poisoned hailstone melts, so let it dissolve my life! Let the next hailstone smite my son Caesarion! By degrees let the hailstones kill all the children who have come from my womb and kill all my brave Egyptians. Let the melting of the hailstones from this storm kill them all, and let them lie without graves until the flies and gnats of the Nile River eat them and so give them burial!”

“I am satisfied,” Mark Antony said. He ceased to be jealous of and angry at Cleopatra.

He added, “Octavius Caesar has made his camp at and is besieging Alexandria, where I will oppose his fate and destiny. Our army by land has nobly held together; our divided navy has knit together again, and it sails — it is as threatening as the sea. Where have you been, my heart? Do you hear me, lady? If from the battlefield I shall return once more to kiss these lips of yours, I will appear bloody and full of vigor; my sword and I will earn our place in history. There’s hope in battle yet.”

“That’s my brave lord!”

“I will be treble-sinewed, -hearted, and -breathed — I will have the strength, courage, and endurance of three men — and I will fight ferociously. When my fortune was prosperous and happy, I allowed men to ransom their lives for jests and trifles, but now I’ll set my teeth, and send to darkness and Hell all who oppose me. Come, let’s have one more festive night. Call to me all my sad and serious captains; fill our bowls with wine once more; let’s mock the midnight bell.”

“It is my birthday,” Cleopatra said. “I had thought to have observed it poorly, but since my lord is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra. We will be festive.”

“We will yet do well.”

Cleopatra ordered, “Call all of Antony’s noble captains to my lord.”

Mark Antony said, “Do so. We’ll speak to them. Tonight I’ll force the wine to peep through their scars — their white scars will appear to be red from the wine they have drunk. Come on, my Queen; there’s sap — life — in it yet. The next time I fight, I’ll make Death love me. I will compete with Death’s pestilential scythe and kill as many as the plague kills.”

Everyone left except for Enobarbus, who said to himself, “Now Antony will outstare the lightning. To be furious is to be frightened out of fear. He is so angry that he is unable to feel fear, and in that mood a dove will peck a hawk. I have always seen that a diminution in our captain’s brain restores his heart. When his reason grows weaker, his bravery grows stronger. But when valor preys on reason, it eats the sword it fights with. Courage in battle requires a good brain if it is to be effective. I will seek some way to leave Antony and stop serving him.”

CHAPTER 4 (Antony and Cleopatra)

— 4.1 —

In Octavius Caesar's camp before Alexandria, Egypt, Caesar was discussing with his friends Maecenas and Agrippa the message that Thidias had brought from Mark Antony.

Caesar said, "He calls me 'boy,' and he chides me as if he had the power to beat me out of Egypt. He has whipped my messenger with rods. He dares me to personal combat: Caesar against Antony. Let the old ruffian know I have many other ways to die; in the meantime, I laugh at his challenge."

"Caesar must think," Maecenas said, "that when one so great begins to rage, he's hunted to exhaustion, even to falling. Give him no time to breathe, but now take advantage of his distracting anger. Never has anger protected angry people well."

"Let our top commanders know that tomorrow we intend to fight the last of many battles," Caesar said. "Within our ranks of soldiers we have enough of those who served Mark Antony just recently to capture him. See that this is done, and give the army a feast. We have enough provisions to do it, and they have earned the expense. Poor Antony!"

— 4.2 —

In a room of Cleopatra's palace at Alexandria, Mark Antony, Cleopatra, Domitius Enobarbus, Charmian, Iras, Alexas, and others were assembled.

"Caesar will not fight with me, Domitius," Mark Antony said.

“No, he won’t.”

“Why won’t he fight with me?”

“He thinks, since his fortunes are twenty times better than yours, his army against yours is twenty men to one,” Enobarbus replied.

“Tomorrow, soldier, by sea and land I’ll fight,” Mark Antony said. “Either I will live, or by bathing my dying honor in blood I will make my honor live again. Will you fight well?”

“I’ll strike, and cry, ‘Take all.’”

Enobarbus’ words were ambiguous. They could mean that he would strike fiercely at the enemy in battle, or that he would strike sail and surrender. The words “Take all” were those of a desperate gambler betting all he had left.

“Well said,” Mark Antony replied. “Come on. Call forth my household servants. Let’s feast tonight and be bounteous at our meal.”

A few male servants entered the room and Antony said to them, “Give me your hand. You have been truly honest ... so have you ... you ... and you ... and you ... you have served me well, and Kings have also served me.”

Cleopatra asked Enobarbus quietly, “What is Antony doing?”

Enobarbus quietly replied, “He has one of those odd moods that sorrow shoots out of the mind.”

Antony continued speaking to the servants: “And you are honest, too. I wish I could be made as many men as you are, and all of you were rolled up together in one Antony, so that I could do you service as good as you have done for me.”

The servants were horrified: “The gods forbid!”

“Well, my good fellows,” Antony said, “wait on me tonight. Do not scant when filling my cup with wine, and make as much of me as when my empire was your fellow — my servant — and obeyed my commands.”

“What does he mean?” Cleopatra quietly asked Enobarbus.

“He means to make his followers weep,” he quietly replied.

“Serve me tonight,” Antony said. “Maybe it is the end of your duty to me. Perhaps you shall not see me any more; or if you do, you will see a mangled ghost. Perhaps tomorrow you’ll serve another master. I look on you as one who takes his leave of you. My honest friends, I am not firing you and turning you away, but like a master who is married to your good service, I stay with you until death. Serve me tonight for two hours — I ask no more, and may the gods reward you for it!”

“What do you mean, sir, by giving your servants this discomfort?” Enobarbus said to Antony. “Look, they are crying, and I, an ass, am onion-eyed — tears are trickling from my eyes. For shame! Do not transform us into women.”

Mark Antony said, “May a witch enchant me if I meant to turn all of you into women! May grace grow where those teardrops fall! My hearty friends, you take me in too melancholy a sense — I spoke to you to comfort you. I want you to burn this night with torches and make it brilliant. Know, my hearts, I have high hope for tomorrow; and I will lead you where I expect to find victorious life instead of an honorable death. Let’s go to supper. Come, and we will drown our serious thoughts with wine.”

In Alexandria, in front of Cleopatra's palace, Mark Antony's soldiers were preparing for guard duty.

Two soldiers arrived.

The first soldier said, "Brother, good night. Tomorrow is the day of the battle."

"It will bring matters to an end, one way or the other," the second soldier said. "Fare you well. Heard you about anything strange in the streets?"

"Nothing. What is the news?"

"Probably it is only a rumor. Good night to you."

"Well, sir, good night," the first soldier said.

Two more soldiers arrived.

The second soldier said to them, "Soldiers, have an attentive watch."

"You, too," the third soldier said. "Good night."

The two groups of soldiers moved away from each other and started their guard duty.

The second soldier said, "Here we are, in the correct positions for guard duty. If our navy thrives tomorrow, I have an absolute hope that our army will stand up on land and be victorious."

"It is a brave army," the first soldier said, "and very resolute."

The sound of oboes came from underground.

"Silence!" the second soldier said. "What is that noise?"

The first soldier said, "Listen! Listen!"

"Hark!" the second soldier said.

“Music is in the air,” the first soldier said.

At the other guard post, the third soldier said, “It is coming from under the ground.”

“This is a good sign, isn’t it?” the fourth soldier said.

“No,” the third soldier replied.

At the first guard post, the first soldier said to the second soldier, “Quiet, I say! What does this mean?”

The second soldier said, “It means that the god Hercules, whom Antony loved, is now leaving him.”

“Let’s walk and see if the other guards hear what we do,” the first soldier said.

They walked to the second guard post, and the second soldier asked, “How are you, sirs?”

They all began to speak at the same time: “How are you! How are you? Do you hear this music?”

The first soldier said, “Yes, I hear the music. Isn’t it strange?”

“Do you hear the music, sirs? Do you hear it?” the third soldier asked.

“Let’s follow the noise as far as we can and still keep our guard,” the first soldier said. “Let’s see how the music finishes.”

“Agreed,” the other soldiers said. “This music is strange.”

— 4.4 —

In a room of Cleopatra’s palace were Mark Antony and Cleopatra. Attending them were Charmian and others.

Mark Antony called, “Bring me my armor, Eros!”

“Sleep a little,” Cleopatra said.

“No, my darling,” Antony replied.

He called again, “Eros, come here! Bring me my armor, Eros!”

Eros arrived, carrying Antony’s armor.

“Come good fellow, put my iron armor on me,” Mark Antony said to Eros. “If good fortune is not ours today, it is because we will deny her. Come on.”

“I’ll help, too,” Cleopatra said. She picked up a piece of armor and asked, “What’s this for? Where does it go?”

“Ah, let it be, let it alone!” Antony said. “You are the armorer of my heart — you give me courage.”

Cleopatra tried to put a piece of armor on Mark Antony, but he told her, “That is the wrong way. It goes like this.”

She replied, “I’ll help. Yes, indeed, it must go like this.”

“That’s right,” Antony said. “We shall thrive now.”

He said to Eros, “Do you see how Cleopatra is helping me, my good fellow? Go and put on your armor.”

“In a little while, sir,” Eros replied.

“Is not this buckled well?” Cleopatra said, referring to a piece of Antony’s armor.

“It is very excellently done,” Antony replied. “He who unbuckles this before I am pleased to take it off and rest shall hear a storm of blows against his armor.”

Both Eros and Cleopatra continued to help put on Antony’s armor.

Antony said, “You are fumbling, Eros. My Queen is a

squire and armor-bearer who is more skilled at this than you are. Hurry.”

He said to Cleopatra, “Oh, love, I wish that you could see me in the battle today. If you could, you would see and know war — the royal occupation! You would see a true craftsman at work in the battle!”

A soldier wearing armor entered the room, and Mark Antony said to him, “Good morning to you, and welcome. You look like a man who knows a warlike charge. We rise early to go to the business that we love, and we go to it with delight.”

The soldier replied, “A thousand soldiers, sir, early though it is, have put on their riveted armor, and they are waiting for you at the gate.”

The shouts of soldiers and the sound of trumpets came from outside the palace.

Some captains and soldiers entered the room.

“The morning is fair,” a captain said. “Good morning, general.”

All said, “Good morning, general.”

“The trumpet was well blown, lads,” Antony said. “This morning, like the spirit of a youth who intends to do something noteworthy in his life, begins early.”

He said to Cleopatra, who was still helping him put on his armor, “So. Come. Give me that. It goes this way; well done. May you fare well, dame, whatever becomes of me. This is a soldier’s kiss.”

He kissed Cleopatra and then said, “I would deserve shameful rebuke and reproach if I were to insist on a formal leave-taking. I’ll leave you now, like a man of steel.”

He said to his captains and soldiers, “You who will fight, follow me closely. I’ll take you to the battle,” and then he said to Cleopatra, “*Adieu.*”

Mark Antony, Eros, and the captains and soldiers exited.

“Please, retire to your chamber,” Charmian said to Cleopatra.

“Lead me there,” Cleopatra said. “Mark Antony goes forth gallantly. I wish that Octavius Caesar and he could determine the outcome of this great war in single combat! Then Antony ... but now ... well, let’s go.”

— 4.5 —

In Mark Antony’s camp at Alexandria, a soldier met Antony and Eros. This soldier had advised Antony to fight a land battle and not a sea battle at Actium.

The soldier said, “May the gods make this a happy day for Antony!”

“I wish that you and those scars of yours had earlier prevailed to make me fight on land!” Antony replied.

“If you had done so, the Kings who have revolted against you, and the soldier who has this morning left you, would still be following at your heels.”

“Who has left me this morning?”

“Who!” the soldier said, surprised that Antony did not already know. “One always close to you. If you call for Enobarbus, he shall not hear you; or if he does, from Caesar’s camp he will say, ‘I am not one of your soldiers.’”

“What are you saying?” Mark Antony asked.

“Sir, Enobarbus deserted. He is with Caesar.”

Eros said, “Sir, Enobarbus left behind his chests and treasure.”

“Is he gone?” Antony asked.

“Most certainly,” the soldier replied.

“Go, Eros, and send his treasure after him,” Antony ordered. “Do it. Detain no jot, I order you. Write to him — I will sign the letter — and give him gentle *adieux* and greetings. Say that I hope that he never finds another reason to change his master. Oh, my bad fortune has corrupted honest men! Hurry. Oh, Enobarbus!”

— 4.6 —

At Octavius Caesar’s camp at Alexandria were Caesar, Agrippa, Enobarbus, and others.

Caesar said, “Go forth, Agrippa, and begin the battle. Our will is that Antony be taken alive. Make sure that everyone knows that.”

“Caesar, I shall.”

He departed to carry out the order.

Octavius Caesar said, “The time of universal peace is near. If this proves to be a prosperous day, the three corners of the world — Europe, Asia, and Africa — shall bear the olive freely and enjoy peace.”

A messenger arrived and said, “Antony has come onto the battlefield.”

Caesar said, “Go order Agrippa to place those who have revolted against and deserted Antony in the front lines, so that Antony may seem to spend his fury upon himself and his own forces.”

Everyone exited except Enobarbus, who said to himself,

“Alexas revolted against Mark Antony, and he went to Judea seemingly to carry out Antony’s orders. In Judea, Alexas persuaded great Herod to support Caesar and cease to support Antony. In return for Alexas’ pains, Caesar has hanged him. Canidius and the rest who fell away from Mark Antony have employment, but no positions of honorable trust. I have done something evil, for which I accuse myself so sorely that I will never be happy again.”

A soldier of Caesar’s walked up to him and said, “Enobarbus, Antony has sent all your treasure to you, along with a gift. Antony’s messenger came while I was on guard duty, and he is now unloading his mules at your tent.”

“I give my treasure to you,” Enobarbus said.

“Stop joking, Enobarbus,” the soldier replied. “I am telling you the truth. It is best that you escort the bringer of your treasure safely out of the camp. I must attend to my duty, or I would do it myself. Your Emperor continues to act generously, like a Jove.”

The soldier left.

“I am the worst villain on the earth,” Enobarbus said to himself, “and I feel it the most. Oh, Antony, you fount of generosity, how well would you have paid me for good service, when you crown my depravity and wickedness with gold! This explodes my heart. If swift thought does not break my heart, a swifter means of breaking it shall out-strike my thought and do more damage, but guilty thoughts will break my heart, I feel. Will I fight against you? No! I will go and find some ditch in which I can die; the foulest ditch and fate best suit the latter part of my life.”

— 4.7 —

On the battlefield, Agrippa said to some of Octavius Caesar’s soldiers, “Retreat, we have advanced too far.

Caesar himself is hard pressed, and the forces against us exceed what we expected.”

In another part of the battlefield, Mark Antony and a wounded soldier named Scarus talked.

“Oh, my brave Emperor,” Scarus said, “this battle is well fought indeed! Had we fought like this in our earlier battle, we would have driven them home with blows and bandages on their heads.”

“You are bleeding a lot,” Mark Antony said.

“I had a wound here that was like a T,” Scarus said, pointing to the wound, “but now it has been made into an H.” He pronounced “H” like “aitch,” which sounded similar to “ache.” Even wounded, he was able to joke.

“The enemy soldiers are retreating,” Antony said.

“We’ll beat them so badly that they will hide in latrines,” Scarus said. “I still have room for six more wounds.”

Eros came over to them and said to Antony, “They are beaten, sir, and our superiority shows that we have won a clear victory over them.”

“Let us wound their backs, and snatch them up, as we take hares, from behind,” Scarus said. “It is good entertainment to maul a fleeing enemy soldier.”

“I will reward you once for your good humor, and ten-fold for your good bravery,” Antony replied to Scarus. “Come with me.”

Scarus replied, “I’ll limp and follow you.”

— 4.8 —

Later, Mark Antony, Scarus, and others stood under the walls of Alexandria.

Antony said, “We have beaten Octavius Caesar back to his camp. Let someone run ahead of us and let Queen Cleopatra know of our deeds in battle.”

An attendant departed to carry out the order.

Antony continued, “Tomorrow, before the Sun dawns and sees us, we’ll spill the blood that has today escaped from us. I thank you all because all of you are valiant in battle, and you have fought not as if you served my cause, but as if my cause had been your own cause. All of you have fought like the great Trojan War hero Hector.”

Hector was the greatest Trojan warrior, but he died in combat and the Trojans lost the war.

Antony continued, “Enter the city, embrace your wives and your friends, and tell them your feats in battle today while they with joyful tears wash the congealed blood from your wounds, and kiss the honored gashes and make them whole.”

He said to Scarus, “Give me your hand.”

They shook hands.

Cleopatra arrived with her attendants.

Antony said to Scarus, “To this great enchantress I’ll commend your acts and have her thank and bless you.”

Antony said to Cleopatra, “Oh, you light of the world, hug my armored neck as if you were a necklace. Leap with all your fine clothing through my armor that has withstood the enemy and enter my heart and enjoy this triumph in my panting breast.”

“Lord of lords!” Cleopatra said. “Oh, infinite virtue, have you come smiling uncaught from the world’s great snare? Have you really survived this great battle?”

“My nightingale, we have beaten them to their beds,” Antony replied.

Using the royal plural, he said, “What, girl! Although grey hairs somewhat mingle with our younger brown hairs, yet we have a brain that nourishes our nerves, sinews, and muscles and we can compete with younger men and match them goal for goal.”

Pointing to Scarus, Antony said, “Behold this man. Commend to his lips your hand and show him your favor.”

Cleopatra held her hand out to Scarus.

“Kiss it, my warrior,” Antony said.

Scarus kissed her hand.

Antony said to Cleopatra, “He has fought today as if he were a god who hated Mankind and actively sought to destroy it.”

“I’ll give you, friend,” Cleopatra said to Scarus, “a suit of armor made of gold; it belonged to a King.”

“He has deserved it, and he would deserve it even if it were decorated with valuable jewels like the chariot of the Sun-god: Phoebus Apollo,” Antony said.

He shook hands again with Scarus and said to his soldiers, “Through Alexandria make a jolly march. Let us carry our hacked shields with pride, such as becomes the men who own them. If our great palace had the capacity to hold all this host of soldiers, we all would eat together, and drink toasts to the next day’s fate, which promises royal peril and the greatest danger. Trumpeters, with a brazen din blast the city’s ears; mingle your sound with that of rattling drums. Let the noise echo from the sky so that Heaven and Earth may strike their sounds together, applauding our entry into Alexandria.”

Some sentinels stood at the guard post in Octavius Caesar's camp outside Alexandria.

The first soldier said, "If we are not relieved within this hour, we must return to the guardhouse. The night is bright and shiny with moonlight, and they say we shall begin getting ready for battle by the second hour of the morning."

"Yesterday's battle was cruel to us," the second soldier said.

Enobarbus came near the soldiers, but he did not see them.

Thinking that he was alone, he said to himself, "Oh, bear witness, night —"

"Who is this man?" the third soldier asked quietly.

"Stay hidden, and listen to him," the second soldier replied.

"Be witness to me, oh, you blessed Moon," Enobarbus said. "When men who revolt against their masters are recorded with disgrace in the history books, remember that poor Enobarbus repented his disgraceful actions before your face!"

"Enobarbus!" the first soldier said.

"Quiet!" the third soldier said.

Enobarbus continued, "Oh, sovereign mistress of true melancholy, discharge upon me the poisonous damp of night as if you were wringing out a sponge."

In this society, people believed that breathing night air was unhealthy.

"I wish that my life, which is a complete rebel to my will that prefers that I be dead, may hang no longer on me.

Throw my heart against the hard flintiness of my sin. Let my heart dry out with grief and break up into powder, and finish all my foul thoughts. Antony, you are nobler than my revolt against you is infamous. May you personally forgive me, but let the world remember me in its records as a master-leaver and a fugitive. Oh, Antony! Oh, Antony!”

Enobarbus died from excessive grief.

The second soldier said, “Let’s speak to him.”

“Let’s listen to him,” the first soldier said, “because the things he says may concern Caesar.”

“Let’s do so,” the third soldier said. “But he is sleeping.”

“No, he has fainted,” the first soldier said. “So bad a prayer as his has never been a prelude to sleep.”

“Let’s go to him,” the second soldier said.

They went to him, and the third soldier said, “Wake up, sir, wake up; speak to us.”

The second soldier said, “Do you hear us, sir?”

“The hand of death has caught him,” the first soldier said.

Drums quietly sounded.

“Listen!” the first soldier said. “The drums quietly wake up the sleepers. Let us carry him to the guardhouse. He is an important person. Our guard duty has ended.”

The third soldier said, “Come on, then. He may yet recover.”

They carried away the corpse of Enobarbus.

— 4.10 —

Mark Antony said to Scarus, “Octavius Caesar is preparing

today for a sea battle. He does not want to fight us on land.”

“He does not want to fight us by land or sea,” Scarus said. “We are prepared to fight him in both kinds of battles.”

“I wish that they would fight in the fire or in the air,” Antony said. “We would fight there, too. But these are my orders. Our infantry shall stay with us upon the hills next to the city. I have given orders for a sea battle. Our ships have left the harbor. From here, we can best see their position and watch the battle.”

— 4.11 —

Octavius Caesar said to his soldiers, “Unless we are attacked, we will not fight on land. I don’t think that we will be attacked because Antony is using his best soldiers to man his galleys. Let’s go to the valleys, and hold the best positions we can.”

— 4.12 —

Mark Antony said to Scarus, “The ships are still not joined in battle. Where that pine tree stands yonder, I will go and see what is happening. I’ll bring you word soon of how the battle is likely to go.”

He walked to the pine tree.

Scarus said to himself, “Swallows have built their nests in Cleopatra’s ships. The augurs say that they do not know and cannot tell what this means, but they look grim and dare not say what they know. Antony is valiant, and he is dejected; and, by turns, his varying fortunes give him hope, and then they give him fear, about what he has and what he has not.”

Sounds of many ships at sea were heard, and soon Mark Antony returned and said, “All is lost; this foul Egyptian —

Cleopatra — has betrayed me. My fleet has surrendered to the foe, and yonder they cast their caps up high in the air and drink together like long-lost friends. Cleopatra is a triple-turned whore! She turned from Gnaeus Pompey to Julius Caesar, from Julius Caesar to me, and from me to Octavius Caesar! Cleopatra has sold me to this novice named Octavius Caesar, and my heart makes wars only on her.”

He ordered Scarus, “Order all my soldiers to flee. For when I am revenged upon Cleopatra, my enchantress, I have done all that I will do in this life. Order them all to flee — go!”

Scarus left.

Antony said to himself, “Oh, Sun, your dawn I shall see no more. Good fortune and Antony part here; even now do we shake hands in parting. Has all come to this? The soldiers who followed me at my heels like a cocker spaniel, to whom I gave what they wished, now melt away from me and give their loyalty to blossoming Caesar. I am like a pine tree that has been stripped of its bark, although I overtopped everyone else. I have been betrayed! Oh, this false soul of Egypt! This grave enchantress — her eye summoned forth my wars, and called them home; her bosom was my crown, my chief desire in life — like a typical Egyptian whore, has, as if she were playing a game with the intention of cheating me, beguiled me and caused me total defeat.”

Antony called, “Eros! Where are you, Eros?”

Cleopatra walked over to Mark Antony.

Seeing her, he said, “You enchantress! Avaunt! Get away from me!”

“Why is my lord enraged against his love?” Cleopatra asked.

“Vanish, or I shall give you what you deserve, and thereby blemish Caesar’s triumph,” Antony said.

He meant that he was tempted to kill Cleopatra. It would give him a feeling of revenge, and it would also diminish the triumphal procession that Octavius Caesar would hold in Rome because Caesar would like to capture Cleopatra so that he could exhibit her to the Romans in his triumphal procession.

Antony said to Cleopatra, “Let Caesar capture you, and hoist you up to the shouting Roman commoners. You will walk behind his chariot, like the greatest stain of all your sex; most monster-like, you will be shown to the poorest of the poor diminutives, to idiots and cretins; and patient Octavia will rake your face up and down with her long and sharp fingernails.”

Cleopatra exited.

“It is well you have gone,” Antony said to himself, “if it is well to live, but it would be better if you died as a result of my fury because one death now might prevent many more. If you die now, your life is ended. But if you stay alive now, you will worry about being killed later and you will suffer many deaths in your imagination.”

Antony called, “Eros!”

He said to himself, “The shirt of Nessus is upon me. Teach me your rage, Alcides, you who are my ancestor and are better known as Hercules. Let me lodge Lichas on the horns of the Moon, and with those hands that grasped the heaviest club, subdue my worthiest self.”

Antony was thinking of emulating the death of club-wielding Hercules, strongman of the ancient world. A Centaur named Nessus had attempted to rape Hercules’ wife, Deianira, so Hercules had shot him with an arrow and

killed him. Nessus told Deianira to take his shirt, which was stained with his blood, and keep it because if Hercules ever ceased to love her, the shirt would cast a magical spell over him and make him love her again. Eventually, Deianira thought that Hercules had fallen out of love with her, so she gave Lichas Nessus' bloodstained shirt to take to Hercules, but when Hercules put on the shirt, Nessus' blood burned him and melted his flesh, causing him agonizing pain. He was in so much pain that he grabbed Lichas and hurled him high into the air — Lichas fell into the sea. Hercules then committed suicide by climbing onto a funeral pyre and setting it on fire.

Antony said about Cleopatra, “The witch shall die. To the young Roman boy — Octavius Caesar — she has sold me, and I have been utterly defeated because of her plot — she dies for it.”

He called again, “Eros!”

— 4.13 —

In her palace in Alexandria, Cleopatra worried about what Mark Antony might do to her. With her were Charmian, Iras, and Mardian.

“Help me, my women!” Cleopatra said. “Oh, Antony is more mad than Great Ajax, son of Telamon, was for his shield; the boar of Thessaly was never so foaming at the mouth.”

After Achilles died in the Trojan War, the Greeks decided to award his armor, including his shield, which had been created by the blacksmith god, Vulcan, to a great Greek warrior. The two contestants for the armor were Great Ajax and Ulysses. The armor was awarded to Ulysses, and Great Ajax became insane as a result. He tortured sheep, thinking that they were Ulysses and Agamemnon, the leader of the Greeks in the Trojan War. After regaining his sanity, Great

Ajax committed suicide.

The goddess Diana once sent a huge boar to ravage Thessaly because the people of Thessaly had neglected to sacrifice to her.

Charmian advised Cleopatra, “Go to the monument that will be your tomb after you die! There lock yourself, and send Antony word that you are dead. The soul and body tear not more in parting than the departure of greatness.”

Losing one’s greatness is as painful as the separation of soul from body at the time of death. Mark Antony was in pain because he had lost his greatness.

Cleopatra said, “Let’s go to the monument! Mardian, go and tell Antony that I have slain myself. Tell him that the last word I spoke was ‘Antony,’ and when you tell this tale, please make him feel pity for me. Go, Mardian, and tell me how he takes the news of my death. To the monument!”

— 4.14 —

Mark Antony and Eros spoke together in a room of Cleopatra’s palace.

Antony asked, “Eros, can you still see me?”

Antony was so discouraged by the loss of his greatness that he worried about being so diminished that he could not be seen.

“Yes, noble lord.”

“Sometimes we see a cloud that looks like a dragon,” Antony said. “A cloud sometimes looks like a bear or lion, a towering citadel, an overhanging rock, a mountain with two peaks, or a blue promontory with trees upon it that nod to the world and fool our eyes with air. You have seen such signs; they are the sights that we see in the twilight of the

evening.”

“Yes, my lord.”

“We see that which appears now to be a horse, but as quickly as thought the cloud disperses and makes the image indistinct, as water is when it enters a larger mass of water.”

“That is true, my lord.”

“My good servant Eros, your captain is now such a body of cloud. I am Antony now, but I cannot hold this visible shape, my lad. I made these wars for the Queen of Egypt — whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine; while my heart belonged to me, it had joined to it the hearts of a million followers, who are now lost. Eros, Cleopatra has stacked the deck in favor of Octavius Caesar, and she has played the cards in such a way as to allow him to trump my high card and triumph over me.”

Using the royal plural, Antony added, “No, do not weep, gentle Eros; there is something left to us — we ourselves can end ourselves. I can commit suicide.”

Mardian the eunuch arrived, bearing Cleopatra’s message.

Seeing him, Antony said, “Your vile lady has robbed me of my sword and my masculinity!”

“No, Antony,” Mardian said. “My mistress loved you, and her fortunes were mingled entirely with yours. She did not betray you.”

“Go away from here, saucy eunuch; shut up!” Antony said. “She has betrayed me, and she shall die the death of a traitor.”

“The death of one person can be paid only once,” Mardian said, “and that is a debt that she has already paid. What you

want to do has already been done for you. The last words she spoke were ‘Antony! Most noble Antony!’ In the midst of a tearing groan, the name of Antony broke in two. She spoke part of your name and died without speaking the other part. She gave up her life, but your name is buried in her.”

“Is she dead, then?” Mark Antony asked.

“Yes, she is dead.”

“Take my armor off me, Eros,” Antony ordered. “The long day’s task is done, and we must sleep.”

He said to Mardian, “Your being allowed to leave here safely pays you richly for your labor. Such a message deserves much worse. Go.”

Mardian exited.

Antony ordered Eros, “Take my armor off, pluck it off me.”

He added, “Great Ajax’ shield with its seven layers of leather cannot keep this battery of blows from my heart. Oh, split apart, my sides! Heart, for once be stronger than your container — crack the frail body that holds you!

“Hurry, Eros, hurry! I am no longer a soldier. Battered pieces of armor, leave me. You have been nobly borne.”

He ordered Eros, “Leave me and let me alone for awhile.”

Eros exited.

Antony said to himself, “I will come after you and overtake you, Cleopatra, and weep for you to pardon me. So it must be, because now all further life is torture. Since the torch of my love and my life is out, I will lie down and stray no farther. Now all labor mars what it does. Yes, it is as if I were in a trap in which the more I struggle the more firmly

I am trapped. Let me finish my life and seal it, and all is finished.”

Antony called, “Eros!”

He said to himself, “I am coming to you, my Queen.”

He called again, “Eros!”

He said to himself, “Wait for me, Cleopatra. In the Heavenly fields where souls lie on flowers, we’ll go hand in hand, and with our lively conduct we will make the ghosts gaze at us. Dido and her Aeneas shall lack followers, and all the field will be ours.”

Aeneas had had an affair with Dido, the Queen of Carthage, a great city in Africa, but Aeneas had obeyed the will of the gods and deserted Dido in order to go to Italy and fulfill his destiny of becoming an important ancestor of the Romans. While he was still alive, Aeneas had visited Dido, who had committed suicide, in the Land of the Dead, but she had refused to even talk to him.

Antony called, “Come, Eros! Eros!”

Eros returned and asked, “What does my lord want?”

“Since Cleopatra died, I have lived in such dishonor that the gods detest my baseness. I, who with my sword divided the world into quarters, and over the back of the ocean, the domain of the god Neptune, made cities with my numerous ships, condemn myself because I lack the courage of a woman; I have a less noble mind than she, who by her death told Caesar, ‘I am conqueror of myself.’ By killing herself, she — not Caesar — conquered herself. You have sworn, Eros, that when the decisive moment should come, which indeed has now come — that time when I should look behind me and see disgrace and horror inevitably overtaking me — that, on my command, you then would

kill me. Do what you promised to do; the time has come. You will strike me, but it is Caesar whom you defeat. Put color in your cheeks and gather the courage to do this.”

“The gods forbid!” Eros said. “Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts, although hostile to you, could not do? None of the Parthian spears and arrows struck you.”

“Eros, do you want to be located at a window in great Rome and see your master like this?” Antony demonstrated what he meant when he said, “Do you want to see your master with bent and tied arms, bending down his submissive neck, his face subdued and displaying the redness of shame, while the wheeled chariot of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, marks like a brand the humiliation of me, who follows behind him?”

“I do not want to see that,” Eros replied.

“Come, then; for with a wound I must be cured,” Antony said. “Draw your honest sword, which you have worn most usefully for your country.”

“Oh, sir, pardon me!”

“When I made you a free man, didn’t you swear then to do this when I ordered you? Do it now, at once; or all your preceding services are only things that you did accidentally without intending to serve me. Draw your sword, and come and strike me.”

“Turn away from me, then, your noble countenance to which the whole world pays homage.”

“As you wish,” Antony said, turning so that his back faced Eros.

“My sword is drawn,” Eros said.

“Then do at once the thing for which you have drawn it.”

“My dear master, my captain, and my Emperor, let me say, before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell.”

“You have said it, man,” Antony said. “And I say farewell to you.”

“Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?” Eros asked.

“Now, Eros.”

“Why, there then,” Eros said, stabbing himself. “Thus I do escape the sorrow of Antony’s death!”

Eros died.

Mark Antony said to himself, “Eros, you are thrice nobler than myself! You teach me, valiant Eros, to do what I should do, and what you could not — kill me. My Queen and Eros have by their brave example got before myself a noble spot in the history books, but I will be a bridegroom in my death, and run to death as if I were running to a lover’s bed. Come, then; and, Eros, your master dies your scholar. I have learned from you how to do this.”

Antony fell upon his sword. He gave himself a mortal wound, but he did not die immediately from it.

He said, “What! I am not dead? Not dead?”

He called, “Guards, come here! Oh, finish killing me!”

Dercetus, who was one of Mark Antony’s followers, and some guards entered the room.

“What’s that noise?” the first guard said.

Antony said, “I have done my work badly, friends. Oh, make an end of what I have begun.”

“The Sun that lit our world has fallen,” the second guard said.

“And his time is at its end,” the first guard said.

The guards mourned.

“Let him who loves me strike me dead,” Antony requested.

“Not I,” the first guard said.

“Nor I,” the second guard said.

“Nor anyone,” the third guard said.

The guards left the room.

Dercetus said, “Your death and bad fortune are reasons for your followers to flee away from you.”

He picked up Antony’s sword and said, “If I show this sword to Octavius Caesar and bring him news of your death, Caesar will treat me well.”

Diomedes, one of Cleopatra’s servants, entered the room and asked Dercetus, “Where’s Antony?”

“There he is, Diomedes,” Dercetus replied, pointing. “There he is.”

“Is he alive?” Diomedes asked.

Dercetus ignored him and left.

“Won’t you answer me, man?” Diomedes asked.

Antony asked, “Is that you, Diomedes? Draw your sword, and give me sword strokes that will result in my death.”

“Most absolute lord, my mistress — Cleopatra — sent me to you.”

“When did she send you?”

“Just now, my lord.”

“Where is she?”

“Locked in her monument,” Diomedes replied. “She had a prophesying fear of what has come to pass. For when she saw that you suspected that she had made an agreement with Caesar — which shall never happen — and that your rage would not abate, she sent you a message that she was dead, but fearing what might result from that message, has sent me to proclaim the truth, but I have come, I fear, too late.”

“Yes, you are too late, good Diomedes,” Mark Antony said. “Call my guards, please.”

“Guards! The Emperor’s guards! The guards! Come here. Your lord wants you!”

Some of Antony’s guards entered the room.

“Carry me, good friends, to where Cleopatra is staying; it is the last service that I shall command you to do for me.”

“We grieve, sir,” the first guard said, “that you will not outlive all your loyal followers.”

“We grieve on this mournful day,” the other guards said.

“No, my good fellows,” Antony said. “Do not please sharp fate by gracing it with your sorrows; instead, welcome whatever comes to punish us — we punish it by seeming to bear it lightly. Pick me up. I have led you often. Carry me now, good friends, and I give my thanks for all you have done for me.”

They carried Mark Antony away.

— 4.15 —

Cleopatra, Charmian, and Iras were at Cleopatra’s monument. They were on a second-floor balcony.

“Oh, Charmian, I will never leave here,” Cleopatra mourned.

“Be comforted, dear madam,” Charmian replied.

“No, I will not,” Cleopatra said. Using the royal plural, she added, “All strange and terrible events are welcome, but comforts we despise; the size of our sorrow must be in proportion to its cause — our sorrow must be as great as that which causes it.”

Below the balcony appeared Diomedes.

Seeing him, Cleopatra asked, “What has happened? Is Antony dead?”

“He will die soon, but he is not dead yet,” Diomedes replied. “Look over there. His guards have carried him here.”

Cleopatra and saw Mark Antony being carried to her by his guards.

She said, “Oh, Sun, burn the great sphere that you move in! Escape from the sphere and leave and let the world with its days and nights and its tides be always dark.”

According to Ptolemaic astronomy, the Sun and the planets were fixed in spheres that moved around the Earth, which was the center of the universe.

Cleopatra continued, “Oh, Antony, Antony, Antony! Help, Charmian! Help, Iras, help! Help, friends below! Let’s draw him up here!”

“Quiet,” Antony said. “Caesar’s valor has not overthrown Antony, but Antony’s valor has triumphed on itself. Caesar has not killed me; I have killed myself.”

“That is as it should be,” Cleopatra said. “No one but Antony should conquer Antony, but I still mourn that this happened!”

“I am dying, Queen of Egypt, dying,” Mark Antony said,

“but I ask death to wait awhile, until I lay on your lips the poor last of many thousand kisses.”

“I dare not come down to you, dear — my dear lord, pardon me — I dare not, lest I be captured,” Cleopatra said. “The imperious show of the good-fortuned Caesar never shall be decorated with me — I will not take an ignoble role in his triumphal procession in Rome. As long as knife, drugs, and serpents have edge, effect, or sting, I am safe. Your wife, Octavia, with her modest eyes and impassive judgment shall acquire no honor by looking smugly at me. But come to me, come, Antony — help me, my women — we must draw you up here. Help, good friends.”

“Be quick; soon I will be dead.”

Cleopatra and her female servants began to pull Antony up to the balcony.

“Here’s work indeed!” Cleopatra said. “How heavy is my lord! Our strength has all disappeared because of the heaviness of sorrow. If I had the great goddess Juno’s power, the strong-winged Mercury should fetch you up to Heaven, and set you by the side of Jove, King of the gods. We must lift you a little higher — mere wishing is foolish — oh, come, come, come.”

They succeeded in raising Antony to the balcony.

“Welcome, welcome!” Cleopatra said. “Die where you have lived. Come to life with my kisses. If my lips had that power, I would wear them out like this.”

She kissed Mark Antony several times.

This is a heavy and sad sight, the people around her thought.

“I am dying, Queen of Egypt, dying,” Mark Antony said. “Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.”

“No, let me speak; and let me curse so vehemently that the false hussy Fortune will break her wheel because she is so angered by my curses.”

“One word, sweet Queen,” Antony said. “From Caesar seek your honor, along with your safety.”

“My honor and my safety do not go together,” Cleopatra replied.

“Noble lady, listen to me,” Antony said. “Trust none of Caesar’s men except Proculeius.”

“I will trust my resolution and my hands, but I will trust none of Caesar’s men.”

“The miserable change of fortune I suffer now at the end of my life neither lament nor sorrow at, but please your thoughts by remembering my former good fortune when I lived as the greatest Prince of the world, and the noblest. Also know that I do not now basely die. I have not cowardly taken off my helmet and submitted myself to Caesar, my countryman. Instead, I am a Roman who by a Roman — myself — is valiantly vanquished. By committing suicide, I have conquered myself. Now my spirit is going; I can say no more.”

“Noblest of men, will you die?” Cleopatra asked. “Don’t you care about me! Shall I live in this dull world, which in your absence is no better than a pigsty? Oh, look, my women!”

Mark Antony died.

“The crown of the Earth melts,” Cleopatra said. “My lord! Oh, withered is the garland of the war. The soldier’s standard has fallen; young boys and girls are equal now with men; the marks of distinction are gone, and nothing remarkable is left beneath the visiting moon.”

Cleopatra fainted.

“Oh, be calm, lady!” Charmian said.

“Our Queen has died, too,” Iras said.

“Lady!” Charmian said.

“Madam!” Iras said.

“Oh, madam, madam, madam!” Charmian said.

“Royal Queen of Egypt!” Iras said. “Empress!”

Cleopatra regained consciousness.

“Quiet! Quiet, Iras!” Charmian said.

Cleopatra said, “I am no more than just a woman, and I am ruled by such poor passion as rules the maid who milks and does the meanest chores. It would be fitting for me to throw my scepter at the injurious and harm-doing gods and tell them that this world was the equal of theirs until they stole Mark Antony, our jewel. Nothing matters anymore. Staying calm is foolish, and being angry is fitting for a mad dog. Is it then a sin to hurry into the secret house of Death before Death dares come to us? How are you, women? Tell me! Be of good cheer! Why, how are you now, Charmian! My noble girls! Ah, women, women, look, our lamp is spent — it’s out!

“Good ladies, take heart: We’ll bury him; and then, what’s brave, what’s noble, let’s do it after the high Roman fashion, and make Death proud to take us.”

She was thinking of committing suicide.

She added, “Come, let’s go away. This corpse that contained that huge spirit is now cold. Ah, women, women! Come; we have no friend but resolution, and the quickest possible end of life.”

CHAPTER 5 (Antony and Cleopatra)

— 5.1 —

In Octavius Caesar's camp before Alexandria, Caesar was meeting with Agrippa, Dolabella, Maecenas, Gallus, Proculeius, and others in a council of war.

Caesar ordered, "Go to Mark Antony, Dolabella, and order him to surrender. Tell him that since he has been so badly defeated, he is embarrassing himself by delaying his surrender."

"Caesar, I shall," Dolabella said and then exited.

Dercetus, carrying Mark Antony's bloody sword, now walked over to Caesar.

Caesar said, "What is the meaning of this? Who are you who dares to appear before me while you are carrying an unsheathed sword?"

"I am named Dercetus. I served Mark Antony, who was most worthy to be best served. While he stood up and spoke, he was my master; and I was willing to lose my life fighting his haters. I was willing to die for him. If you please to take me into your service, I will be to Caesar what I was to him. If you do not want to take me into your service, then I surrender my life to you."

"What are you saying?" Caesar asked.

"I say, Caesar, that Antony is dead."

"The breaking of so great a thing should make a greater noise," Caesar said. "Thunder and an earthquake should occur. The round world should have shaken lions into city streets, and citizens should have been shaken into the lions' dens. The death of Antony is not a single fate; Antony

controlled half of the world.”

“He is dead, Caesar,” Dercetus said, “not by a public minister of justice, nor by a hired knife; but he has, by that selfsame hand that wrote his honor in the acts it did and with the courage that his heart lent it, split his heart. This is Antony’s sword — I robbed his wound of it. Look, his sword is stained with Antony’s most noble blood.”

“Look, sad friends,” Caesar said, pointing to the sword. “The gods may rebuke me for mourning, but these are tidings to wash with tears the eyes of Kings.”

“How strange it is,” Agrippa said, “that our human nature compels us to lament the result of actions we pursued most persistently.”

Maecenas said, “Antony’s bad and good points were equally matched.”

“A rarer spirit never steered humanity,” Agrippa said, “but the gods always give us some faults that make us fallible men. Caesar is touched by Antony’s death.”

Maecenas said, “When such a spacious mirror as Antony is set before him, Caesar must necessarily see himself in the mirror.”

“Oh, Antony!” Octavius Caesar said. “I have pursued you to this catastrophe, but we lance diseases in our bodies to cure them. I was forced to either show you my own such catastrophe or look on yours. You and I could not live together in this world, but still let me lament you, with tears as sovereign as the blood of hearts, my brother, my partner and competitor in the most exalted enterprises, my mate in empire, my friend and companion in the front lines of war, the arm of my own body, and the heart where my heart kindles its thoughts of courage — let me lament that our stars, which could not be reconciled, should divide us and

bring us to this conclusion. Hear me, good friends —”

Caesar saw an Egyptian messenger arriving, so he said, “But I will tell you at some more suitable time. This man has obviously come on important business. We will hear what he says.”

Caesar asked, “Where have you come from?”

“I have come from one who is still a poor Egyptian,” the messenger replied.

He was aware that soon Egypt would become a Roman province and would be no longer a sovereign nation.

He continued, “Queen Cleopatra is shut up in the only thing she has left: her monument, which is her tomb. She wishes to know what you intend to do so that she may prepare herself to bend the way she is forced to.”

“Tell her to have courage,” Caesar said. “She soon shall know, by some messengers of ours, how honorably and how kindly we will treat her; Caesar cannot live as an ignoble person.”

“May the gods preserve you!” the Egyptian messenger replied, and then he exited.

Using the royal plural, Caesar said, “Come here, Proculeius. Go to Cleopatra and say that we intend to give her no shame. Give to her whatever comforts and comforting words are necessary to keep her, in her grief, from defeating us by giving herself mortal wounds and committing suicide. If we can keep her alive and have her appear in our triumphal procession in Rome, the memory of my triumph will be eternal. Go, and as quickly as you can come back and tell us what she says and what you can learn about her.”

“Caesar, I shall,” Proculeius said, and then he exited.

“Gallus, go with him,” Caesar ordered.

Gallus exited.

Caesar asked, “Where’s Dolabella? He should assist Proculeius.”

“Dolabella!” the others called.

“Let him alone,” Caesar said. “I remember now that he is elsewhere employed. He shall return in time to be ready for this job.”

He added, “Go with me to my tent, where you shall see how reluctantly I was drawn into this war. I always proceeded calmly and gently in all my letters to Antony. Come with me, and see the letters I will show to you.”

— 5.2 —

Cleopatra, Charmian, and Iras were in a room in Cleopatra’s monument.

Cleopatra said, “My desolation begins to make a better life. It is paltry to be Caesar; he is not Fortune, but only Fortune’s servant: a minister of her will.”

She added, “It is great to do that thing that ends all other deeds. That thing stops accidents and changes from happening, that thing sleeps, and that thing never again tastes food from the earth — food that feeds both the beggar’s nurse and Caesar’s nurse.”

Proculeius arrived.

Proculeius said, “Caesar sends greetings to the Queen of Egypt, and he asks you to think about what fair requests you want to have him grant you.”

“What’s your name?” Cleopatra asked.

“My name is Proculeius.”

“Antony told me about you. He told me to trust you, but I have little risk of being deceived, since I will not trust anyone. If your master wants a Queen to be his beggar, you must tell him that majesty, to keep up appearances, must beg for no less than a Kingdom. If he will give me conquered Egypt so I can give it to my son, he gives me so much of what is my own that I will kneel to him with thanks.”

“Be of good cheer,” Proculeius said. “You’ve fallen into a Princely hand. Fear nothing. Give your fate freely to my lord, who is so full of grace that it flows over onto all who are in need. Let me report to him that you are willingly dependent on him and you shall find that he is a conqueror who will ask you how he can be kind to those who kneel before him and ask him for grace.”

“Please tell him that I am a vassal to his good fortune, and I send to him the greatness that he has earned. Each hour I learn how to be obedient, and I would gladly meet with him.”

“This I’ll report, dear lady,” Proculeius replied. “Have comfort because I know that your plight is pitied by him who caused it.”

Gallus and some Roman soldiers entered the room.

Gallus said, “You see how easily Cleopatra may be surprised and captured.”

He said to the soldiers, “Guard her until Caesar comes.”

“Royal Queen!” Iras said.

“Oh, Cleopatra!” Charmian said. “You have been captured, Queen.”

“Be quick, quick, my good hands,” Cleopatra said, drawing a dagger and intending to kill herself.

“Stop, worthy lady, stop,” Proculeius said, taking the dagger forcefully away from her. “Don’t do yourself such wrong. In this you are rescued, not betrayed.”

“Rescued from death?” Cleopatra said. “Rescued from the thing that keeps our dogs from suffering a lingering illness?”

“Cleopatra,” Proculeius said, “do not abuse my master’s bounty by killing yourself. Let the world see Caesar displaying his nobleness and generosity to you. If you die, he will not be able to display those qualities to you.”

“Where are you, Death?” Cleopatra asked. “Come here, come! Come, come, and take a Queen who is worth many babes and beggars — your easiest conquests!”

“Control yourself, lady,” Proculeius said.

“Sir, I will eat no food,” Cleopatra said. “I will not drink, sir. If idle talk will once be necessary, I will not talk. I will not sleep, either. This mortal house — my body — I’ll ruin, no matter what Caesar does to try to stop me. Know, sir, that I will not wait, bound, at your master’s court, nor ever be chastised by the sober eye of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up in a triumphal procession and display me to the shouting commoners of censuring Rome? I prefer that a ditch in Egypt be my gentle grave! I prefer to lie stark naked on the mud of the Nile River and let the water-flies lay their eggs in or on my skin, causing my body to swell up and become abhorrent! I prefer to make my country’s high obelisks my gibbet, where I will be hanged up in chains!”

“Your thoughts of horror go way beyond anything that Caesar shall give you cause to think,” Proculeius said.

Dolabella entered the room and said, “Proculeius, your master, Caesar, knows what you have done, and he has sent for you. As for the Queen, I will guard her.”

“This is good, Dolabella,” Proculeius said. “Be gentle to her.”

Proculeius said to Cleopatra, “I will tell Caesar whatever message you want to give him, if you want me to serve as your messenger.”

“Tell him that I want to die.”

Proculeius and the Roman soldiers exited, leaving behind Dolabella, Cleopatra, Charmian, and Iras.

“Most noble Empress, have you heard of me?” Dolabella asked.

“I cannot tell.”

“I am sure that you know about me.”

“It does not matter, sir, what I have heard or known,” Cleopatra replied. “You laugh when boys or women tell their dreams — isn’t that your custom?”

“I don’t understand, madam,” Dolabella replied.

“I dreamed that an Emperor Antony existed,” Cleopatra said. “Oh, I wish that I could sleep another such sleep, so that I might see another such man!”

“If it might please you —” Dolabella began.

Cleopatra interrupted, “His face was like the Heavens; and in his face were a Sun and a Moon, which kept their course, and lighted the little O — the Earth.”

“Most sovereign creature —” Dolabella began.

Cleopatra continued: “His legs bestrode the ocean. His

reared arm dominated the world. His voice had the properties of all the tuned spheres, and he sounded like the music of the spheres when he talked to friends, but when he meant to make the world quail and shake, his voice was like rattling thunder. As for his bounty, it had no winter; his bounty was like an autumn with a bountiful harvest — autumn is the season of plenty. His delights were dolphin-like; they showed his back above the element they lived in — he was like a dolphin whose enjoyment of the sea it lives in causes it to swim energetically and raise its back above the surface of the sea. Among his servants were Kings and Princes. Realms and islands were like coins that dropped from his pocket.”

“Cleopatra!” Dolabella said.

“Do you think there was, or might be, such a man as this man I dreamed about?”

“Gentle madam, no.”

“You lie, and the gods hear you lie,” Cleopatra said. “But, if there is, or ever were, a man such as he, his greatness would be too much to dream about. Nature lacks the material to create strange forms that can compete with those made by our imagination. Yet, if Nature could make an image of an Antony, it would be Nature’s masterpiece and it would surpass imagination — it would quite surpass imaginary beings.”

“Listen to me, good madam,” Dolabella said. “Your loss is like yourself — great — and you bear it appropriately for its greatness. I wish that I might never achieve the success I pursue unless I feel, in empathy for your grief, a grief that smites my very heart at its root.”

“I thank you, sir,” Cleopatra said. “Do you know what Caesar means to do with me?”

“I am loath to tell you what I wish you knew,” Dolabella said.

“Please tell me, sir.”

“Although Caesar is honorable —”

“— he’ll lead me, then, in triumph?”

“Madam, he will,” Dolabella said. “I know he will.”

The sound of a trumpet was heard, and Octavius Caesar, Gallus, Proculeius, Maecenas, and other followers of Caesar entered the room.

“Which is the Queen of Egypt?” Caesar asked.

Dolabella said to Cleopatra, “This is the Emperor, madam.”

This was a way for Dolabella to show respect to Cleopatra. Caesar had stated that he did not know which woman was Cleopatra. Dolabella had therefore pretended that Cleopatra did not know this man is Caesar.

Cleopatra knelt before Caesar.

“Arise, you shall not kneel,” Caesar said. “Please, rise; rise, Queen of Egypt.”

“Sir, the gods will have it thus,” Cleopatra replied. “I must obey my master and my lord.”

She stood up.

“Think no hard thoughts,” Caesar said to her. “The record of those injuries you did to us, although they are written as scars in our flesh, we shall remember as injuries done by accident and chance.”

“Sole ruler of the world,” Cleopatra said. “I cannot state my own case so well as to make it clear and innocent, but I do confess that I have the frailties that often have previously

shamed women.”

Caesar said, using the royal plural, “Cleopatra, know that we will forgive rather than punish if you do what we ask of you. Our intentions towards you are most gentle, and you shall find it to your benefit to conform with our will, but if you seek to give me a reason to be cruel by your taking Antony’s course and committing suicide, you shall bereave yourself of my good intentions, and bring destruction to your children — destruction from which I’ll guard them if you will rely on me. I’ll take my leave.”

Caesar wanted to leave, but Cleopatra kept talking.

“You may take your leave — and do whatever you want — throughout the world,” Cleopatra said. “The world is yours; and we are your signs of conquest. We are like the shields of enemy warriors that you hang in whatever place you please.”

The word “hang” referred both to the shields and to the enemy warriors.

She handed him a document and said, “Here, my good lord.”

“You shall advise me in everything that concerns Cleopatra,” Caesar said to her.

“This document is a list of the money, plate, and jewels that I possess. It is exactly valued, except that it does not list petty things. Where’s Seleucus?”

He entered the room and said, “Here I am, madam.”

“This is my treasurer,” Cleopatra said to Caesar. “Let him testify, my lord, upon his peril, that I have reserved nothing for myself. Speak the truth, Seleucus.”

“Madam,” he said to Cleopatra, “I would rather seal my

lips, than, to my peril, speak that which is not true.”

“What have I kept back for myself? What of value does not appear in this list?” Cleopatra asked.

“Enough to purchase what appears on that list.”

Caesar was amused. He also felt that this was a sign that Cleopatra wished to continue to live.

“Don’t blush, Cleopatra,” he said. “I approve of your wisdom in holding back some valuables for yourself.”

“See, Caesar!” Cleopatra complained. “See how pomp is followed! My followers will now be yours; and, if we should change positions, your followers would be mine. The ingratitude of this Seleucus makes me completely wild.”

She said to Seleucus, “Oh, slave. You can be no more trusted than a love who’s hired — a prostitute! What, are you fleeing from me? You have reason to flee from me, I promise you, but I’ll scratch your eyes even if they have wings to flee from me, you slave, you soulless villain, you dog! You are an exceptionally base man!”

“Good Queen, let us entreat you —” Caesar began.

Cleopatra interrupted, “Oh, Caesar, what a wounding shame is this. You condescended to visit me here, you gave the honor of your lordliness to me, one who is so meek, and my own envious servant increased the sum of my disgraces. Let us say, good Caesar, that I have reserved some feminine trifles, unimportant toys, things of such dignity as we give to everyday friends; and let us say that a few nobler tokens I have kept off the list of my possessions so that I can give them to your wife, Livia, and to Octavia to induce them to help me. Let us say these things. Does it follow that a servant of my own household must reveal to

you my actions? The gods! I have already fallen so far, and this causes me to fall further.”

She said to Seleucus, “Please, go away from here. If you don’t, I shall show the cinders of my spirits through the ashes of my fortune. Despite my misfortunes, I still have a little spirit left. If you were a man, you would have had mercy on me.”

“Leave us, Seleucus,” Caesar ordered.

Seleucus exited.

“People need to realize that we, the greatest, are thought, mistakenly, to be responsible for things that other people do, and, when we fall in fortune, we answer for that. Therefore, people should feel pity for us when other people, such as Seleucus, try to get credit at the expense of the good names of the greatest.”

“Cleopatra, neither what you have reserved for yourself, nor what you have acknowledged in your list of possessions, will be part of our spoils of war. These possessions still belong to you; do with them whatever you wish. Believe that I, Caesar, am not a merchant who will haggle with you about the things that merchants sell. Therefore, be cheerful. Do not let gloomy thoughts imprison you. No, dear Queen; we intend to treat you as you yourself shall advise us. Eat, and sleep. We care for you and pity you very much, and we remain your friend, and so, *adieu*.”

“My master, and my lord!” Cleopatra said.

“I am neither,” Caesar replied. “*Adieu*.”

Octavius Caesar, Gallus, Proculeius, Maecenas, Dolabella, and the other followers of Caesar exited, leaving behind Cleopatra, Charmian, and Iras.

“Caesar words me, girls, he words me,” Cleopatra said. “He is saying these things so that I will not be noble to myself and commit suicide.”

She said, “Listen, Charmian,” and whispered in her ear.

“End your life, good lady,” Iras said. “The bright day is done, and we are going into the dark.”

“Hurry once more,” Cleopatra said to Charmian. “I have given my orders already, and what I need has been acquired. Run this errand quickly.”

“Madam, I will,” Charmian said.

Dolabella came back into the room and asked, “Where is the Queen?”

“There she is, sir,” Charmian said, pointing to Cleopatra, and then she exited.

“Dolabella!” Cleopatra said.

“As I promised you,” Dolabella said, “something that my respect for you made me do, I have found out the information you wanted. Caesar intends to journey through Syria, and within three days he will send you and your children ahead of him. Make the best use you can of this information. I have done what you wanted and what I promised to do.”

“Dolabella, I shall remain your debtor,” Cleopatra said.

“I am your servant,” Dolabella replied. “*Adieu*, good Queen; I must attend on Caesar.”

“Farewell, and thanks.”

Dolabella exited.

“Now, Iras,” Cleopatra said. “What do you think? You, as

if you were an Egyptian puppet, shall be shown in a triumphal procession in Rome, as well as I. Rude workmen with greasy aprons, rulers, and hammers shall lift us up so that we can be seen. Their thick breaths, which stink because of their poor diet, will make clouds around us, and we will be forced to breathe the vapor inside us.”

“The gods forbid!” Iras said.

“This is most certain to occur, Iras,” Cleopatra said. “Lecherous bailiffs will grab at us as if we were prostitutes; and scabby rhymers will ballad us out of tune. The quick-witted comedians will perform us in impromptu plays and present our Alexandrian revels; they will act the role of Antony as if he were a drunken alcoholic, and I shall see some squeaking boy act the role of the great Cleopatra as if she were a whore.”

“Oh, the good gods!” Iras said.

“These things are sure to happen,” Cleopatra said.

“I’ll never see them because I am sure that my fingernails are stronger than my eyes.”

“Why, that’s the way to foil their scheming plans, and to conquer their most absurd intentions,” Cleopatra said.

Charmian entered the room.

“Charmian!” Cleopatra said. “My women, make me look like a Queen. Go and fetch my best clothing. I am once again — metaphorically — going to the Cydnus River to meet Mark Antony. Iras, go and fetch my clothing.”

Iras exited.

“Now, noble Charmian,” Cleopatra said, “we’ll get things over and done with, indeed. And, when you have done this chore, I’ll give you leave to play until Doomsday — the

Day of Judgment.”

Using the royal plural, she said, “Bring to us our crown and all that goes with it.”

Hearing something, she asked, “What is that noise?”

A guard entered the room and said, “A rural fellow who will not be kept from your Highness’ presence insists on seeing you. He brings you figs.”

“Let him come in,” Cleopatra said.

The guard exited to carry out the request.

“How poor an instrument may do a noble deed!” Cleopatra said. “He brings me liberty. My resolution’s fixed, and I have nothing of woman in me — I am not weak. Now from head to foot I am as unchanging as marble; now the fleeting and changing Moon is no planet of mine.”

The guard entered the room, leading a farmer who carried a basket.

“This is the man,” the guard said.

“Go, and leave him here,” Cleopatra said.

The guard exited.

“Have you the pretty snake of the Nile there, the snake that kills without causing pain?” Cleopatra asked.

The pretty snake of the Nile was an asp. Its poison caused the victim to feel sleepy and then die.

“Yes, I have it,” the farmer said, “but I would not be the party who should desire you to touch it, for its bite is immortal; those who die of it seldom or never recover.”

The farmer often misused words. He had said “immortal,” but he had meant “mortal.”

“Do you remember anyone who has died from its bite?”

“Very many, both men and women,” the farmer replied. “I heard about one of them no longer ago than yesterday. She was a very honest woman, but somewhat given to lie, as a woman should not do, except in the way of honesty.”

The farmer’s words had an additional meaning. “Lie” could be understood as “lie with a man,” and “honest” could mean “chaste,” so the farmer was saying, “She was a very honest woman, but somewhat given to lie with a man, as a woman should not do, except with her husband.”

The farmer continued: “I heard how she died of the snake’s bite and what pain she felt; truly, she made a very good report concerning the snake, but he who will believe all that women say shall never be saved by half that women do, but this is most fallible, this snake’s an odd snake.”

The farmer had misused another word. He had said “fallible,” but he had meant “infallible.”

“Go now,” Cleopatra said. “Farewell.”

“I hope that you will satisfied with the snake,” the farmer replied.

He set down his basket but did not leave.

“Farewell,” Cleopatra said.

“You must know something,” the farmer said. “You must understand that the snake will do what a snake does — it will bite.”

“Yes, yes,” Cleopatra said. “Farewell.”

“Know that the snake is not to be trusted except in the keeping of people who know how to deal with snakes because, indeed, there is no goodness in a snake.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Cleopatra said. “I will be careful.”

“Very good. Give it nothing to eat, please, because it is not worth the feeding.”

“Will it eat me?” Cleopatra asked. She wanted the snake to bite her.

“You must not think I am so simple that I don’t know the Devil himself will not eat a woman,” the farmer said. “I know that a woman is a dish for the gods, if the Devil does not dress her for the table. But, truly, these same whoreson Devils do the gods great harm when it comes to women; for out of every ten women that the gods make, the Devils mar five.”

“Well, leave now,” Cleopatra said. “Farewell.”

“Yes, indeed,” the farmer said. “I hope that you are pleased with the snake.”

The farmer exited as Iras returned, carrying Cleopatra’s royal robe, crown, and other items.

“Give me my robe, and put my crown on me,” Cleopatra said. “I have longings in me to be immortal. I shall never again drink the wine of Egypt.”

Charmian and Iras began to dress her.

“Smartly, smartly, good Iras; be quick,” Cleopatra said. “I think I hear Antony calling me. I see him rouse himself to praise my noble act. I hear him mock the luck of Caesar, which the gods give men to excuse their wrath to come. Those whom the gods would destroy, they first make fortunate. Husband, I am coming. Let my courage prove that I deserve the title of Antony’s wife! I am fire and air; my other elements — earth and water — I give to baser life. Are you done dressing me? Come then, and take the

last warmth of my lips. Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, farewell for a long time.”

Cleopatra kissed both of them, and Iras dropped dead from grief.

Cleopatra said, “Have I the poison of the asp on my lips? Have you fallen? If you and Nature can so gently part, the stroke of death is like a lover’s pinch, which hurts, and which is desired. Do you lie still? If you vanish like this from the earth, you tell the world it is not worth saying farewell to.”

Charmian said, “Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain, so that I may say that the gods themselves are weeping!”

“This thought I have proves that I am base,” Cleopatra said. “If Iras meets Antony with his curled hair before I do, he will demand a kiss from her and spend that kiss that is my Heaven to have.”

She withdrew an asp from the basket and held it to her breast and said, “Come, you mortal wretch, with your sharp teeth immediately untie this intricate knot of life. You poor venomous fool, be angry and dispatch me. Oh, I wish that you could speak so that I could hear you call great Caesar a politically outmaneuvered ass!”

By killing herself, Cleopatra was frustrating Octavius Caesar’s plans to force her to be in his triumphal procession in Rome.

“Oh, Eastern star!” Charmian said. She was calling Cleopatra Venus.

“Silence! Silence!” Cleopatra said. “Do you not see my baby at my breast, sucking the nurse so that she will fall asleep?”

“Oh, my heart, break!” Charmian said.

“As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle — oh, Antony!”
Cleopatra said.

She took another snake from the basket and held it to her arm, saying, “I will take you, too. Why should I stay —”

Cleopatra died.

Charmian finished the sentence for her: “— in this vile world? So, fare you well. Now, Death, boast. In your possession lies an unparalleled lass.”

She closed Cleopatra’s eyelids and said, “Soft eyes, close. Golden Phoebus — the Sun — will never be beheld again by eyes so royal! Your crown’s awry. I’ll straighten it, and then play.”

Some guards rushed into the room.

The first guard said, “Where is the Queen?”

“Speak softly,” Charmian replied. “Don’t wake her.”

The first guard said, “Caesar has sent —”

Charmian finished the sentence: “— too slow a messenger.”

She held an asp to her arm and said, “Oh, Death. Come quickly; hurry! I partly feel you.”

The first guard called, “Come here! All’s not well! Caesar’s been fooled.”

The second guard said, “Dolabella was sent here from Caesar; call him.”

“What deed is this!” the first guard said. “Charmian, is this well done?”

“It is well done,” she replied, “and this deed is fitting for a Princess descended from so many royal Kings. Ah,

soldier!”

Charmian died.

Dolabella came into the room and asked, “What is going on here?”

The second guard replied, “Everyone is dead.”

Dolabella said, “Caesar, your suspicions have come true in this room. You yourself are coming to see performed the dreaded act that you so sought to stop.”

Outside the room came cries: “Make way for Caesar! Make a path for Caesar!”

Octavius Caesar and others entered the room.

Dolabella said to Caesar, “Oh, sir, you are too accurate an augur; that which you feared would happen has happened.”

“Bravest at the end, Cleopatra guessed at our purposes, and, being royal, she took her own way,” Caesar said. “How did they die? I do not see them bleed.”

“Who was the last person to be with them?” Dolabella asked.

“A simple farmer, who brought her figs,” the first guard said. He pointed and added, “This was his basket.”

“They were poisoned, then,” Caesar said.

“Oh, Caesar,” the first guard said. “Charmian was alive just now; she stood and spoke. I found her straightening the diadem on her dead mistress. Tremblingly, Charmian stood and then suddenly dropped to the floor.”

“Women are weak, but these women were noble,” Caesar said. “If they had swallowed poison, we would know it because their bodies would be swollen, but Cleopatra looks

like she is sleeping. She looks as if she would catch another Antony in her strong net of grace.”

Dolabella said, “Here, on her breast, there are small holes and a trickling of blood. The same is true of her arm.”

“This is an asp’s trail,” the first guard said, “and these fig-leaves have slime upon them, such as the asp leaves in the caves of the Nile.”

“Most probably Cleopatra died from the asp’s bite,” Caesar said, “for her physician tells me she had pursued innumerable experiments to find easy ways to die. Pick up her bed; and carry her dead women servants from the monument. She shall be buried by her Antony. No grave upon the earth shall embrace in it a pair of lovers as famous as these two. Tragic catastrophes such as these distress those who cause them; and their story is no less in pity than is the glory of the man who caused them to be lamented. Our army shall in solemn show attend this funeral, and then we shall go to Rome. Dolabella, ensure that this great ceremony is conducted with dignified splendor.”

Chapter XXIV: CORIOLANUS

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Coriolanus*)

Male Characters

Caius Martius, *later named Coriolanus; Coriolanus means "Conqueror of the City of Corioli."*

Cominius, Titus Lartius, *Roman Generals against the Volscians.*

Menenius Agrippa, *friend to Coriolanus; Menenius is an elderly man who is like a father to Coriolanus.*

Sicinius Velutus, Junius Brutus, *old men who are Tribunes of the people.*

Young Martius, *son to Coriolanus.*

A Roman Herald.

Tullus Aufidius, *General of the Volscians.*

Lieutenant to Aufidius.

Conspirators with Aufidius.

A Roman named Nicanor.

A Volscian named Adrian.

A Citizen of Antium.

Two Volscian Guards.

Female Characters

Volumnia, *mother to Coriolanus.*

Virgilia, *wife to Coriolanus.*

Valeria, *a noble lady of Rome, friend to Virgilia.*

Gentlewoman, *attendant of Virgilia.*

Minor Characters

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Aediles, Lictors, Soldiers, Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants.

Scene

Rome and the Volscian country to the south, with the Volscian towns of Corioli and Antium.

Time

Very early Roman Republic. As a young man, Coriolanus helped depose the last King of Rome: Lucius Tarquinius Superbus (flourished 6th century BCE; died 495 BCE). After being deposed, Tarquin fought a number of battles as he tried unsuccessfully to return to Rome and become King again. Coriolanus fought in the last of those battles. Tarquin is traditionally the seventh and last king of Rome, and some scholars believe him to be a historical figure. His reign is dated from 534 to 509 BCE. Rome at this time is far from being an empire.

Note

The patricians are the aristocracy.

The plebeians are the common people.

CHAPTER 1 (Coriolanus)

— 1.1 —

A gang of mutinous citizens, armed with staves, clubs, and other weapons, stood on a street in Rome. These impoverished citizens were plebeians, or common people; the wealthy citizens of Rome were patricians. The Senators of Rome were patricians.

The first citizen said, “Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.”

The other citizens replied, “Speak, speak.”

“You are all resolved to die rather than to starve?” the first citizen asked.

“We are resolved,” the other citizens replied.

“First, you know that Caius Martius is chief enemy to the people.”

“We know it. We know it.”

“Let us kill him,” the first citizen said, “and we’ll have grain at our own price. Is it a verdict? Are we agreed that we shall kill Caius Martius?”

“No more talking about it. Let it be done. Let’s go! Let’s go!”

The second citizen said, “One word, good citizens.”

The first citizen said, “We are accounted poor — both impoverished and bad — citizens. In contrast, the patricians are accounted good citizens. The food that those in authority feast on to excess on would relieve our hunger. If they would give us just the leftovers, as long as they are

wholesome and haven't yet gone bad, we might think that they had relieved us humanely, but they think we are too dear — they think that relieving our hunger would be too expensive. The leanness that afflicts us, the spectacle of our misery, is like an item on a balance sheet that shows their abundant net wealth; our suffering is a gain to them. As long as we don't have enough, the patricians will have more than enough.

“Let us revenge this with our pitchforks, before we become as lean as rakes, for the gods know I speak this out of my hunger for bread, not out of thirst for revenge.”

The second citizen asked, “Would you proceed especially against Caius Martius?”

The other citizens replied, “Against him first: He's a very dog — a ruthless enemy — to the common people.”

“Have you considered what service he has done for his country?” the second citizen asked.

“Yes, very much,” the first citizen said, “and we could be happy to give him a good reputation for it, except that he pays himself with being proud.”

“Don't speak maliciously,” the second citizen requested.

“I say to you that what Martius has done that has made him famous, he did it to that end: He did it in order to become famous. Though soft-hearted men can be content to say he did it for his country, he did it to please his mother and in part because of his pride — and he is proud, even up to the altitude of his virtue.”

Roman virtue consisted largely of being valiant. The Romans highly valued courage, and no one denied that Martius was courageous.

“What Martius cannot help in his nature, you account a

vice in him,” the second citizen said. “You must in no way say he is covetous.”

“If I must not say he is covetous, I need not be barren of accusations,” the first citizen said. “Martius has enough faults, and more, to tire whoever tries to state them all. If I were to list all his faults, I would grow weary before I had named them all.”

Shouts were heard coming from where the Roman Senators had been meeting. Other groups of plebeians were rebelling out of hunger, and the Senators had met to discuss the crisis.

“What shouts are these?” the first citizen asked. “The plebeians on the other side of the city have risen in mutiny. Why are we staying here prating in idle conversation? To the Capitol!”

“Let’s go!” the other citizens said.

Menenius Agrippa, one of the patricians in Rome, walked over to the common citizens.

“Wait!” the first citizen said. “Who is coming here?”

“It is worthy Menenius Agrippa,” the second citizen said. “He is one who has always loved the people.”

“He’s one who is honest enough,” the first citizen said. “I wish all the rest were honest like him!”

Actually, Menenius could be outspoken in his criticism of the plebeians, but he was willing to talk to them. A patrician didn’t have to do much to get the approval of many plebeians.

“What work, my countrymen, is in hand?” Menenius asked. “Where are you going with your cudgels and clubs? What is the matter? Tell me, please.”

“Our business is not unknown to the Senate,” the first citizen said. “The Senators have had knowledge for a fortnight of what we intend to do, which now we’ll show them in deeds. They say poor petitioners have strong breaths; they shall know we have strong arms, too.”

The strong breaths meant bad breaths, and also strong language.

“Why, masters, my good friends, my honest neighbors,” Menenius said, “will you ruin yourselves?”

“We cannot, sir, because we are ruined already,” the first citizen said. “We are starving.”

“I tell you, friends, the patricians take most charitable care of you,” Menenius said. “As for your needs, your suffering in this famine, you may as well strike at the Heavens with your staves as lift them against the Roman state, whose course will continue on the way it takes, cracking asunder ten thousand curbs of stronger link than can ever appear in your impediment against Rome. The Roman government will continue, no matter how many common citizens mutiny against it. The Roman government is far stronger than you.

“As for the dearth of food, the gods, not the patricians, cause the famine, and bowing your knees in prayer to them, and not using your arms to lift weapons against the Senate, must help.

“Alas, you are carried away by calamity to the point of mutiny against the Senate, where more care is given to you than you know, and you slander the helmsmen who guide the state and who care for you like fathers, when you curse them as enemies.”

“Care for us! That is true, indeed!” the first citizen said, sarcastically. “They have never cared for us yet. They

allow us to starve, while their storehouses are crammed with grain. They make edicts for usury, to support usurers. They repeal daily any wholesome act of law established against the rich, and they provide more piercing, oppressive statutes daily, to chain up and restrain the poor. If the wars don't eat us up, they will; and there's all the love they bear us."

Menenius replied, "Either you citizens must confess that you yourselves are wondrously malicious, or be accused of folly. I shall tell you a pretty tale. It may be that you have heard it so much that it is stale to you, but since it serves my purpose, I will venture to make it a little staler by telling it to you once more."

"Well, I'll hear it, sir," the first citizen said, "yet you must not think to fob off our degrading misfortune with a tale. But since it pleases you to tell the tale, deliver it."

Menenius said, "There was a time when all the body's members rebelled against the belly, accusing it like this: They said that like a gulf or pit the belly remained in the midst of the body, idle and inactive, always stowing away in cupboards the food, never bearing any labor with the rest of the body's parts, doing nothing while the other parts did such instrumental tasks as seeing and hearing, devising, instructing, walking, feeling, and mutually working together in order to minister to the appetites and desires common to the whole body. The belly answered —"

Menenius paused, and the first citizen asked, "Well, sir, what answer did the belly make?"

"Sir, I shall tell you," Menenius replied.

He twisted his belly fat into a smile, and said, "The belly answered with a kind of smile, which never came from the lungs."

A belly smile that comes from the lungs is a belly laugh.

Menenius repeated, “The belly answered with a kind of smile, which never came from the lungs but just like this — for, you see, I may make the belly smile as well as speak —”

Menenius farted and then said, “— it tauntingly replied to the discontented members, the mutinous parts that envied what the belly possessed.

“The belly’s response was exactly as fitting and suitable as the way you malign our Senators because they are not like you.”

Should the belly mock the complaining members of the belly? Should the citizens malign the Senators?

If the answer to both questions is no, then the Senators ought not to be mocked because the famine was not caused by them. Also, the belly ought not to mock the other members of the body because in fact those members are starving.

If the answer to both questions is yes, then the Senators ought to be mocked because they are holding back food from the citizens. Also, the belly ought to mock the citizens because that accurately expresses the attitude of the belly — the Senators — toward the other parts of the body — the citizens.

“That is your belly’s answer!” the first citizen said. “Why, the head crowns our body like a King, the eye is vigilant, the heart provides counsel, the arm acts as our soldier, the leg acts as our steed, the tongue acts as our trumpeter, and other furnishings and petty helps make up this fabric of our body, and if they —”

“What then?” Menenius interrupted. “By God, this fellow

speaks and speaks! What then? What then?”

“— and if they should be restrained by the cormorant — greedy — belly, the belly that is the sink and sewer of the body —”

“Well, what then?” Menenius interrupted.

“The former agents — the parts of the body I just mentioned — if they did complain, what could the belly answer?” the first citizen asked.

“I will tell you,” Menenius replied. “If you’ll bestow a small part — of what you have little — of your patience awhile, you’ll hear the belly’s answer.”

“You’re taking your sweet time telling us,” the first citizen complained.

“Note this, good friend,” Menenius said. “Your most grave belly was deliberate, and took thought, and was not rash like his accusers, and thus answered: ‘It is true, my incorporate, joined-in-one-body friends,’ said he, ‘that I receive first all the food that you live upon, and that is fitting because I am the storehouse and the workshop of the whole body, but, if you remember, I send it through the rivers of your blood, even to the court of the heart and to the throne of the brain, and, through the channels and various parts of man. The strongest muscles and the smallest and least important veins receive from me that natural competency — sufficient supply — whereby they live. And although all at once, you, my good friends’ — this said the belly, listen to me carefully —”

“Yes, sir,” the first citizen said. “We are listening carefully.”

“The belly said, ‘Although all at once you cannot see the big picture and you cannot see what I deliver out to each

member, yet I can compile records for an auditor that will show that all of you from me receive the flour — the best part of the food — and leave me only the bran.’

“What do you say to this?”

One answer could have been that the citizens’ bellies were lean, and Menenius’ belly was not.

The first citizen said, “It was an answer. How do you apply this parable to our situation?”

Menenius replied, “The Senators of Rome are this good belly, and you are the mutinous members. If you examine the Senators’ counsels and their cares, and if you digest and understand things rightly that concern the welfare of the common people, you shall find no public benefit that you receive unless it proceeds — comes — from the Senators to you and in no way from yourselves.

“What do you think, you, the big toe of this assembly?”

One answer could have been that the citizens worked and were productive and so provided some things for themselves — and for the patricians.

The first citizen said, “Am I the big toe? Why am I the big toe?”

“Because, being one of the lowest, basest, poorest, of this most ‘wise’ rebellion, you go foremost, like a big toe.

“You rascal, who are worst in blood to run, lead first to win some advantage.”

A rascal is a poor hunting dog. Menenius was insulting the first citizen by calling him a dog that is poorly bred and poor at hunting, but that leads the pack of dogs when there is some reward to be gotten.

Menenius then said to the citizens, “But make ready your

stout bats and clubs: Rome and her rats are at the point of battle. One side must suffer pain.”

Caius Martius, whom the plebeian citizens had earlier talked about killing, walked over to Menenius and the group of citizens.

Menenius greeted him: “Hail, noble Martius!”

Martius replied, “Thanks.”

Then he turned to the plebeians and said, “What’s the matter, you dissentious rogues, you who, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion, make yourselves scabs?”

The first citizen said sarcastically, “We always have your good words about us.”

Martius replied, “He who will give good words to you will flatter those who are beneath abhorring. What would you have, you curs, who like neither peace nor war? War frightens you, and peace makes you proud and rebellious.

“He who trusts to you, where he ought to find that you are lions, finds that you are hares. Where there are foxes, you are geese.”

In this society, one kind of sword was known as a fox.

Martius continued, “You are no surer, no, than is the coal of fire upon the ice, or an icy hailstone in the hot sun. Your virtue is to respect as a worthy man a criminal who is punished; your virtue is also to curse the just man who punished the criminal.

“Whoever deserves greatness deserves your hatred because your desires are the appetite of a sick man who desires most that which would increase his evil illness.

“He who depends upon your favors swims with fins of lead and hews down oaks with flimsy rushes. Hang all of you!

Should I trust any of you?

“With every minute you change your mind, and call a man noble who was just now the object of your hatred, and you call a man vile who was just now a hero wearing a garland of honor.

“What’s the matter that in several places in the city you cry out against the noble Senators, who, under the gods, keep you in awe, you who otherwise would feed on one another?”

Rather than engage in dialogue with a plebeian, Martius asked Menenius, “What’s their seeking? What do they want?”

“They want grain at prices they themselves set,” Menenius replied. “They say that the city has large stockpiles of grain.”

“Hang them! They say!” Martius said. “They’ll sit by the fire, and presume to know what’s done in the Capitol; who’s likely to rise, who thrives and who declines; side with or against factions; and give out conjectural marriages, making some parties strong and making those parties that stand not in their liking feeble below their cobbled shoes.

“They say there’s grain enough! I wish that the nobility would lay aside their pity and let me use my sword. I’ll make a quarry of heaps of dead bodies with thousands of these hacked-into-pieces slaves; I’ll make a quarry as high as I can throw my lance.”

In this society, the word “quarry” was used to refer to a heap of dead animals; for example, a heap of deer that had been killed in a hunt.

Menenius said, “No need, these plebeians are almost thoroughly persuaded not to rebel because although they

abundantly lack discretion, the better part of valor, yet they are surpassingly cowardly. But I ask you, what does the other troop of rebelling plebeians have to say?"

"That troop has dissolved, hang them!" Martius said. "They said they were an-hungry."

"An-hungry" was a nonstandard way of saying "hungry." By saying the plebeians used the word "an-hungry," Martius was saying that they were hicks.

Martius continued, "They sighed forth proverbs — that hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must eat, that food was made for mouths, that the gods did not send grain for the rich men only. With these shreds of clichés, they vented their complaints."

In this society, the word "vented" meant "expressed" — and "farted."

Martius continued, "Their complaints were answered, and a petition was granted them, a strange one — to break the heart of generosity, and make bold power look pale."

In this society, the word "generosity," in addition to its usual meaning, referred to the patricians. The Latin word "*generosus*" means "of noble birth."

Martius felt that the patricians had been overly generous in meeting the demands of the plebeians, and the patricians would pay for their generosity. In this society, "to break the heart of generosity" could mean "to crush the nobility." "To break the heart" could mean either "to crush the spirit" or "to take the life."

Martius continued, "They threw their hats into the air as if they wanted to hang them on the horns of the Moon, shouting their emulation."

In this society, "emulation" meant "envy." The plebeians

envied — and hated — the patricians, according to Martius.

Menenius asked, “What has been granted to the plebeians?”

“Five Tribunes of their own choice to defend their vulgar wisdoms,” Martius replied. “One of the Tribunes they elected is Junius Brutus, another is Sicinius Velutus, and I don’t know the others — damn!”

“The rabble would have first unroofed the city before it so prevailed with me. The rabble will in time overthrow the patricians’ power and bring forth greater reasons that argue in favor of insurrection.”

Menenius said, “This is strange.”

Menenius, like Martius, was against the plebeians having Tribunes.

Martius ordered the plebeians, “Go, get you home, you fragments!”

In this society, “fragments” were bits and pieces of leftover food.

A messenger arrived; he had been rushing to find Martius.

The plebeians stayed to find out what the messenger wanted.

The messenger asked, “Where’s Caius Martius?”

“Here I am. What’s the matter?”

“The news is, sir, the enemy Volscians have taken up arms against us.”

“I am glad of it,” Martius said. “Now we shall have means to vent — get rid of — our musty superfluity.”

Literally, “musty superfluity” meant “moldy excess food.” Martius used it metaphorically to mean “bad-tempered

excess plebeians.”

Martius said, “Look, our best elders are coming.”

The patricians Cominius, Titus Lartius, and some Senators walked over to them, as did the plebeians Junius Brutus and Sicinius Velutus, two of the newly chosen Tribunes.

The first Senator said, “Martius, what you recently told us is true: The Volscians are up in arms.”

Martius said, “They have a leader, Tullus Aufidius, who will put you to it. He is a military leader who will put you to the test. I sin in envying his nobility, and if I were anything but what I am, I would wish that I were only he.”

Cominius said, “You have fought against each other.”

“If one half of the world fought the other half in a war, and he was on my side, I would revolt and go to the other side — I would fight all my wars only against him. He is a lion that I am proud to hunt.”

“Then, worthy Martius,” the first Senator said, “fight under the command of Cominius in these wars.”

“So you have formerly promised,” Cominius said.

“Sir, so I have,” Martius replied, “and I will do what I have promised.”

He then said, “Titus Lartius, you shall see me once more strike at Tullus Aufidius’ face.”

Seeing that Titus Lartius was wounded, he said, “Are you stiff and sore from your wound? Will you not fight in this war?”

“Caius Martius,” Titus Lartius said, “if I have to, I’ll lean upon one crutch and fight with the other before I stay behind and not fight in this war.”

“You are a true-bred man!” Martius said.

The first Senator said to Martius, “I request your company at the Capitol, where, I know, our greatest and most powerful friends are waiting for us.”

Titus Lartius said to Cominius, “You lead us.”

He then said to Martius, “You follow Cominius. We will follow you. It is right and worthy that you have priority before us.”

Cominius approved: “Noble Martius!”

The first Senator said to the group of plebeians, “Go from hence to your homes; be gone!”

Martius said, “No, let them follow us. The Volscians have much grain; take these rats thither to gnaw in their granaries.”

He said sarcastically to the group of plebeians, “Worshipful mutineers, your valor well puts forth shoots — it is very promising. Please, follow us.”

The patricians departed to go to the Capitol. The group of plebeians did not follow them, but stole away to their homes.

Sicinius and Brutus, the two plebeian Tribunes, stayed behind and talked.

“Was any man ever as proud as is this Martius?” Sicinius asked.

“He has no equal.”

“When we were chosen Tribunes for the people —”

Brutus interrupted: “Did you notice his sneering lips and eyes?”

“No, but I did notice his taunts.”

“Once moved to anger, Martius will not refrain from scoffing at and criticizing the gods,” Brutus said.

“He will mock the modest Moon,” Sicinius said.

The Moon is modest because the Moon-goddess is Diana, a virgin.

Brutus said, “May the present wars devour him. He is grown too proud to be so valiant. He takes too much pride in his courage, and his pride, taken together with his courage, makes him dangerous to us.”

Sicinius said, “Such a nature, tickled and gratified by good success, disdains the shadow that he treads on at noon.”

At noon, shadows are underfoot, but during the afternoon, the shadows lengthen.

Sicinius continued, “But I wonder whether his insolence will allow him to endure being given orders by Cominius.”

“Fame, at which Martius aims, and whose goddess has already well graced him, cannot be better held nor more attained than by a place below the first,” Brutus said, “for what miscarries shall be General Cominius’ fault, even though he performs to the utmost of a man. If Cominius fails, people will with giddy censure then cry out, ‘Oh, if only Martius had been in charge of the war!’”

Sicinius said, “Besides, if things go well, Martius shall get much of the credit. People have such a good opinion of Martius that they will rob Cominius of the praise that he deserves.”

“Yes,” Brutus said, “half of all Cominius’ honors will go to Martius, even though Martius does not earn them, and all of Cominius’ faults in the war shall lead to people giving

honor to Martius, even though Martius indeed does not deserve any honor for anything he does.”

“Let’s go from here, and hear how the orders for war are made, and see in what fashion, more than his self-importance, Martius acts during this present situation,” Sicinius said.

Brutus replied, “Let’s go.”

— 1.2 —

Tullus Aufidius and some Volscian Senators met in the city of Corioli.

The first Senator said, “So, your opinion is, Aufidius, that the Romans know about our plans and know how we are proceeding.”

“Isn’t this also your opinion?” Aufidius said. “What plans have ever been thought of in this state that could be brought to bodily act before Rome had the means to circumvent them? The Romans always know what we plan to do.

“Four days have not passed since I received a letter from Rome. Let me read the words. I think I have the letter here; yes, here it is.”

He read the letter out loud:

“They have drafted soldiers for an army, but it is not known whether the army will head east or west. The famine in Rome is great, the people are rebellious, and it is rumored that three people — Cominius; your old enemy Martius, who is in Rome worse hated than you hate him; and Titus Lartius, a very valiant Roman — lead these forces prepared for war to wherever it is bent. Most likely it is headed for you. Consider this information carefully.”

The Volscian territory lay southeast and southwest of

Rome.

The first Senator said, “Our army’s in the field. We have never yet doubted Rome was ready to fight us.”

“Nor did you think it folly to keep your great plans veiled until when they necessarily must reveal themselves,” Aufidius said. “It seems that in the hatching — the planning stages — our plot became visible and known in Rome.

“Because of the discovery by the Romans of our plot, we shall fall short of our aim, which was to capture many towns almost before Rome would know what we were up to.”

The second Senator said, “Noble Aufidius, take your commission. Hurry to your bands of warriors. Let us stay here alone to guard Corioli. If the Romans lay siege to us, bring your army here to remove the Romans, but I think you’ll find that the Romans will not be prepared for us.”

“Oh, don’t think that the Romans will not be prepared,” Aufidius replied. “I speak from certain knowledge and experience that they will be prepared. What’s more, some parcels of their army are in the field already, and they are coming only toward us.

“I now leave your honors. If we — my army and me — and Caius Martius chance to meet, it is sworn between us that we shall continue to strike blows at each other until one of us can do so no more.”

The Senators said, “May the gods assist you!”

“And keep your honors safe!” Aufidius said.

“Farewell,” the first Senator said.

“Farewell,” the second Senator said.

Everyone said, "Farewell."

— 1.3 —

In a room in Martius' house, Volumnia and Virgilia sat on low stools and sewed. Volumnia was Coriolanus' mother, and Virgilia was his wife and the mother of his son.

Volumnia said, "Please, daughter-in-law, sing, or express yourself in a more cheerful way. If my son were my husband, I would more freely rejoice in that absence wherein he won honor than in the sexual embraces in his bed where he would show most love. When he was still only tender-bodied and the only son of my womb, when youth with its beauty drew all eyes his way, when a mother would not allow him to be even an hour out of her sight even if Kings would beg her for an entire day to do so, I, considering how honor would befit such a person, and considering that a person's attractiveness was no better than something picture-like to hang by the wall, if the desire for renown made the person not stir and take action, was pleased to let him seek danger where he was likely to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his brows bound with an oaken wreath as a reward for saving the life of a Roman soldier. I tell you, daughter-in-law, my heart sprang not more in joy at first hearing I had given birth to a boy than when I first saw that he had proven himself to be a man."

Virgilia said, "But what if he had died in the war, madam, what then?"

"Then his good reputation would have become my son," Volumnia replied. "I would have found my child in his good reputation. Hear me profess what I sincerely believe: If I had a dozen sons, each in my love alike and none less dear than your and my good Martius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously

indulge himself out of combat.”

A gentlewoman entered the room and said to Volumnia, “Madam, the lady Valeria has come to visit you.”

Virgilia said to Volumnia, “Please, give me permission to retire and be by myself.”

“Indeed, you shall not,” Volumnia replied. “I think I hear coming toward us the sound of your husband’s drum, I think I see him pluck Aufidius down by the hair. I think I see the Volscians shunning Martius, running away from him as children run away from a bear. I think I see him stamp his feet like this” — she stamped her feet — “and call like this: ‘Come on, you cowards! You were begot in fear, although you were born in Rome.’ I think I see him wipe his bloody brow with his mailed, aka armored, hand, and then he goes forth, as if he were a harvestman who has been tasked to mow either all the tops of wheat or all the heads of enemy soldiers, or else lose his wages.”

Virgilia said, “His bloody brow! Oh, Jupiter, King of the gods, let there be no blood!”

“Go away, you fool!” Volumnia said. “Blood becomes a man more than guilt becomes his trophy. The breasts of Hecuba, Queen of Troy, when she suckled her son Hector, who was the greatest soldier of Troy in the Trojan War, did not look lovelier than Hector’s forehead when it spit blood at the Grecian sword, scorning what had wounded it.”

She then said to the gentlewoman, “Tell Valeria that we are fit and ready to bid her welcome.”

The gentlewoman exited in order to carry out the order.

Virgilia said, “May the Heavens bless my lord and protect him from the deadly enemy warrior Aufidius!”

Volumnia said, “Martius will beat Aufidius’ head below his

knee and tread upon his neck.”

The gentlewoman returned with Valeria. With them was a male usher.

Valeria said, “My ladies both, good day to you.”

“Sweet madam,” Volumnia said.

“I am glad to see your ladyship,” Virgilia said.

“How are you both?” Valeria asked. “You are obviously housekeepers. You stay at home and do housework.”

She asked Virgilia, “What are you sewing here? A fine spot of embroidery, indeed! How is your little son?”

“I thank your ladyship,” Virgilia said. “My son is well, good madam.”

Volumnia said, “He had rather see the swords, and hear a drum, than look upon his schoolmaster.”

“On my word, he is his father’s son,” Valeria said. “I’ll swear, he is a very good-looking boy. Truly, I looked at him for an entire half an hour on Wednesday. He has such a resolute bearing. I saw him run after a colorful butterfly, and when he caught it, he let it go again; and he chased after it again; and he fell down and rolled over and over, and again he chased and caught it, and whether his fall enraged him, or for whatever reason, he clenched his teeth together and tore it. I swear to you that he mammed it! — he tore the butterfly to pieces!”

Volumnia said, “He had one of his father’s moods.”

“Indeed, he is a noble child,” Valeria said.

Virgilia, the child’s mother, said, “Madam, he is a crack — a young rascal.”

“Come, lay aside your stitchery,” Valeria said. “I must have you play the idle housewife with me this afternoon.”

Good Roman wives stayed at home while their husbands were away.

“No, good madam,” Virgilia said, “I will not go out of doors.”

“Not go out of doors!” Valeria said.

“She shall, she shall,” Volumnia said.

“Indeed, no, if you please,” Virgilia said. “I’ll not go over the threshold until my lord — my husband — returns from the wars.”

“Bah, you confine yourself at home most unreasonably,” Valeria said. “Come, you must go and visit the good lady who lies in — you must visit the good lady who is soon to give birth.”

“I will wish her a speedy recovery for after she gives birth,” Virgilia replied, “and I will visit her with my prayers, but I cannot go there physically to visit her.”

“Why, I ask you?” Volumnia said.

“It is not to save labor, nor is it that I lack charity,” Virgilia replied.

“You want to be another Penelope,” Valeria said, “yet, they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses’ absence only filled Ithaca full of moths.”

Penelope was the wife of Ulysses, who spent ten years fighting at Troy, and then, because of misfortunes such as captivity, spent another ten years getting back to his home island of Ithaca. He was away so long that people thought he had died, and young men courted his wife, Penelope, who remained faithful to him. Pressed to marry one of the

suitors, she said that she would choose one to marry after she had finished weaving a shroud for Ulysses' father. Each day she wove, and each night she unwound the work she had done. Moths are parasites. Moths ate the yarn, and young suitors ate Ulysses' cattle and drank his wine.

Valeria continued, "Come; I wish the cambric cloth you are embroidering were as sensitive to pain as your finger, so that out of pity you might stop pricking it with your needle. Come, you shall go with us."

"No, good madam, pardon me," Virgilia said. "Indeed, I will not go out of doors."

"In truth, if you go with me I'll tell you excellent news about your husband."

"Oh, good madam, there can't be any news yet. Not enough time has passed."

"Truly, I am not jesting with you," Valeria said. "News from him came last night."

"Indeed, madam?" Virgilia asked.

"I am earnest, it is true. I heard a Senator speaking about it. This is the news: The Volscians have an army in the field; against that enemy army, General Cominius has gone to fight, with one part of our Roman army. Your husband and Titus Lartius are camped before the enemy city of Corioli; they have no doubt that they will prevail and make this a brief war. This is true, on my honor; and so, I ask you, go with us."

"Please excuse me, good madam," Virgilia said. "I will obey you in everything hereafter."

"Let her alone, lady," Volumnia said. "As she is now, she will only make uneasy our mirth, which will be better without her."

“Truly, I think she would make our mirth uneasy,” Valeria said.

She said to Virgilia, “Fare you well, then.”

She then said to Volumnia, “Come, good sweet lady.”

She tried once more to persuade Virgilia to go with them: “Please, Virgilia, turn your solemnity out of doors, and go along with us.”

“No, at a word, madam; indeed, I must not,” Virgilia said. “I wish you much mirth and enjoyment.”

“Well, then, farewell,” Valeria said.

— 1.4 —

Martius and Titus Lartius stood in front of the enemy city of Corioli. With them were some Roman Captains and soldiers.

A messenger rode up on horseback to them.

“Yonder comes news,” Martius said. “I bet that the two armies — ours and theirs — have met in battle.”

“I bet my horse against yours that they have not,” Lartius replied.

“Done,” Martius said.

“Agreed,” Lartius replied.

Martius asked the messenger, “Tell us, has our General met the enemy?”

“They lie within sight of each other,” the messenger said, “but they have not spoken — fought — as of now.”

“So, the good horse is mine,” Lartius said.

“I’ll buy him from you,” Martius said.

“No, I’ll neither sell him nor give him to you, but I will lend him to you for half a hundred years,” Lartius said.

He ordered the trumpeter, “Summon the townspeople to a parley.”

Martius asked the messenger, “How far off lie these two armies?”

“Within a mile and a half.”

“Then we shall hear their alarum — their call to arms — and they will hear ours. Now, Mars, god of war, I pray to you, make us quick in our work, so that we with swords steaming with our enemies’ hot blood may march from this city in order to help our friends on the battlefield!”

He ordered the trumpeter, who had stayed quiet until Martius had finished speaking, “Come, blow your blast.”

The trumpet sounded, and on the city wall appeared two Senators of Corioli.

Martius asked, “Is Tullus Aufidius within your walls?”

A Senator of Corioli replied, “No, nor is there a man who fears you less than he. How much is the amount that we other men fear you? That’s lesser than a little.”

In other words, Aufidius feared Martius even lesser than a little.

Drums sounded from the battlefield.

The Coriolian Senator said, “Listen! Our drums are calling forth our youth to fight. We’ll break down our walls rather than allow them to impound us like animals. Our gates, which now seem to be securely shut, we have bolted with thin, hollow rushes. They’ll open by themselves.”

A call to arms sounded.

The Coriolian Senator said, “Listen, you. That call to arms came from far away. That is where Aufidius is. Listen, he is doing notable work among your army, which you have cloven and divided in two.”

Martius said, “They are at it! They are fighting!”

“Let their noise be our instructions,” Lartius said. “Let the noise call us to arms, too! Ladders, ho!”

Some Volscian soldiers marched out of the city gates.

Martius said, “They don’t fear us; instead, they issue out of their city to fight us. Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight with hearts more impervious and better tested than shields.

“Advance, brave Titus. The Volscians disdain us much more than we had imagined, and that makes me sweat with wrath.

“Come on, my fellows. Any man who retreats I’ll take for a Volscian, and he shall feel the edge of my sword.”

They two sides fought, and the Romans were beaten back to their trenches.

Enraged by his soldiers being beaten back, Martius cursed and said, “May all the contagion of the south light on you, you shames of Rome!”

In this society, people believed that a warm wind from the south carried contagious plague northward.

Martius continued, “You herd of — may boils and plagues plaster you all over, so that your stench may make you abhorred further than you can be seen and one of you be able to infect another although the plague germs must travel against the wind for a mile! You souls of geese that bear the shapes of men, how you have run from slaves

whom apes would beat! Infernal Pluto, god of the Underworld! Hell!

“All of you have your wounds in the back, which is suitable for the cowards you are. Your backs are red because of your flight, and your faces are pale because of your fear that makes you shake!

“Mend yourselves and charge home to the hearts of the enemy soldiers, or, by the lightning fires of Heaven, I’ll leave the foe in peace and make my wars against you.

“Look to it! Come on! If you’ll stand fast and stop fleeing, we’ll beat the enemy back and follow them to their wives, just like they followed us to our trenches.”

The Romans regrouped, and the trumpets sounded. The Volscians fled, and Martius followed them to the gates of Corioli.

Martius shouted, “So, now the gates are open. Now prove to be good seconds and supporters. It is for the followers — we who chase the fleeing Volscians — that Lady Fortune widens and opens the gates, not for the fliers. Watch me, and do as I do.”

Martius went through the gates and into the enemy city.

The first soldier said, “That is foolhardy. I won’t do that.”

The second soldier said, “Nor will I.”

The gates closed, and Martius was shut inside the enemy city, alone.

The first soldier said, “See, they have shut him in.”

“He is shut in the cooking pot, I am sure. His goose is cooked,” the second Roman soldier said.

Titus Lartius, who had been fighting elsewhere, arrived and

asked, “What has become of Martius?”

“He has without a doubt been slain, sir,” the second Roman soldier said.

“Following the fliers at their very heels,” the first Roman soldier said, “with them he entered their city, and suddenly they clapped their gates shut. He is alone in their city, and he alone must fight all the soldiers in the city.”

“Oh, noble fellow!” Lartius said. “He is able to feel fear and pain, which his sword cannot, and yet he is more courageous than his sword, and, even when his sword bends, he stands firm.

“You are lost, Martius. A perfect precious red jewel — a carbuncle — even if it were as big as you are, would not be as rich a jewel. You were a soldier even as Cato the Censor wished for, not fierce and terrible only in the strokes of your sword, but also with your grim looks and the thunder-like percussion of your voice, fear of both of which made your enemies shake, as if the world were feverous and trembled.”

Lartius’ praise of Martius as being a soldier of the kind that Cato the Censor wished for was remarkable, both because that kind of soldier is remarkable and because Cato the Censor lived over three hundred years in the future.

The reign of the last Roman King — whom Coriolanus fought against — ended in 509 BCE. Cato the Censor lived from 224-149 BCE.

The gates of the city opened, revealing Martius, bleeding and still fighting the enemy soldiers.

“Look, sir,” the first Roman soldier said.

“It is Martius!” Lartius said. “Let’s rescue him and take him away, or else let’s fight beside him.”

The Roman soldiers entered the city, fighting.

— 1.5 —

Some plebeian Roman soldiers held spoils they had looted from Corioli.

A plebeian Roman said about his haul, “I will carry this to Rome.”

“And I this,” a second plebeian Roman said.

“A murrain on it! I thought this was silver,” a third plebeian Roman said.

A murrain is a plague that afflicts cattle.

Martius and Lartius, accompanied by a trumpeter, arrived.

Looking at the plebeian Romans who were looting although Cominius was still fighting outside the city, Martius said, “Look here at these movers and shakers who price their honors at a cracked coin! Cushions, lead spoons, products made of iron valued at a coin of little worth, jackets that hangmen would not take but would instead bury with those who wore them, these base slaves, before the fight is not done, loot and pack up. Down with them!

“Listen, what noise Cominius, the General, is making as he and his troops fight! Let’s go to him!

“Over there on the battlefield is the man whom my soul most hates, Aufidius, piercing our Romans, so then, valiant Titus Lartius, take enough numbers of soldiers to hold securely the city while I, with those who have the spirit, hasten to help Cominius.”

“Worthy sir, you are bleeding,” Lartius said. “Your exertion in battle has been too violent for a second course of fighting.”

“Sir, don’t praise me,” Martius said. “I’m not even warmed up. Fare you well. The blood I drop is rather medicinal than dangerous to me. To Aufidius I will appear like I look now, bloody, and I will fight him.”

In this society, physicians treated some patients, such as those suffering from too much cholera, by bleeding them. By removing some of the patients’ blood, physicians hoped to cure the patients.

Lartius said, “May now the fair goddess, Lady Fortune, fall deeply in love with you, and may her great spells misguide your opponents’ swords! Bold gentleman, may prosperity be your servant!”

“May she be your friend no less than those she places highest! May she regard you as one of her best friends!” Martius said. “So, farewell.”

“You are the worthiest, Martius!” Lartius said.

Martius exited.

Lartius ordered, “Go, sound your trumpet in the marketplace. Call there all the officers of the town, where they shall learn what I will order them to do. Let’s go!”

— 1.6 —

Near the camp of the Roman General Cominius stood Cominius and several Roman soldiers. They had just finished a strategic retreat from the enemy Volscians.

Cominius said, “Catch your breath, my friends. You have fought well. We have come off the battlefield like Romans. We were neither foolish nor foolhardy while standing up to and opposing the enemy, nor were we cowardly as we retired from the battlefield. Believe me, sirs, we shall be charged again. We will fight again. While we have been fighting, we have heard conveyed by gusts of wind at

intervals the charges of our friends against the enemy. You Roman gods, make the outcome of their battle as we wish our own, so that both our Roman armies, with smiling faces in the front lines as we meet each other, may give you thankful sacrifice.”

A messenger arrived, and Cominius asked, “What news do you bring?”

The messenger said, “The citizens of Corioli have issued out of the city and met Lartius and Martius in battle. I saw our army driven back to their trenches, and then I went away to carry this news to you.”

“Although you speak truth, I think you speak not well. This is bad news,” Cominius said. “How long is it since this happened?”

“More than an hour, my lord,” the messenger answered.

“They are not even a mile distant,” Cominius said. “A short time ago, we heard their drums. How could you in traveling a mile consume an hour, and bring your news so late to me?”

“Volscian spies saw me and chased me, so I was forced to wheel three or four miles out of my way to escape from them, else I would have, sir, brought my report to you half an hour ago.”

Seeing someone coming, Cominius said, “Who’s yonder? Who’s that man who is so bloody that it seems as if he has been skinned? Oh, gods, he has the form and bearing of Martius, and I have at previous times seen him looking like this.”

Martius shouted to him, “Have I come too late to fight?”

“The shepherd does not know how the sound of thunder differs from the sound of a small tabor drum more than I

know the sound of Martius' tongue from the sound of the tongues of every lesser man."

Martius walked over to him and asked, "Have I come too late to fight?"

Cominius said, "Yes, if you are not covered with the blood of enemy soldiers, but are instead wearing your own blood as if you were wearing a cloak."

Martius said, "Oh, let me hug you in arms as sound as when I wooed, and with a heart as merry as when my bride's and my wedding day was done, and candles burned and showed us the way to our bed!"

Cominius said, "Flower of warriors, how is Titus Lartius?"

"He is a man who is busy making decrees, condemning some to death and some to exile, ransoming this man, pitying that man, and threatening another man. He holds Corioli in the name of Rome as if Corioli were like a fawning greyhound on a leash that can be loosed at will. Lartius commands Corioli, which respects his command; Lartius can treat Corioli as well or as badly as he pleases."

Cominius said, "Where is that slave who told me the warriors of Corioli had beaten you back to your trenches? Where is he? Call him here before me."

"Let him alone," Martius said. "He did inform you of the truth, but as for our 'gentlemen,' aka the common rank and file — a plague on them! Tribunes for them! — the mouse never shunned the cat as they flinched away from rascals worse than they."

"How were you able to prevail over the enemy?" Cominius asked.

"Do I have time enough now to tell you?" Martius asked. "I don't think so. Where is the enemy? Are you lords and

masters of the battlefield? If not, why have you ceased to fight until you are victorious?”

“Martius, we have been fighting at a disadvantage and have strategically retired from the battlefield.”

“How are their soldiers grouped?” Martius asked. “Do you know on which side they have placed their best and most trusted soldiers?”

“My best guess, Martius,” Cominius said, “is that the bands of the best men in the front lines are the Antiates, soldiers from their main city of Antium, and over them Aufidius, their very heart of hope, has the command.”

“I ask you,” Martius said, “by all the battles in which we have fought, by the blood we have shed together, by the vows we have made to endure as friends, that you directly set me against Aufidius and his Antiates, and that you do not delay now, but instead, filling the air with swords raised high and with arrows and spears, we put ourselves to the test and try our best to defeat the enemy this very hour.”

“Though I could wish that you were conducted to a gentle bath and balms applied to your wounds, yet I can never dare to deny you what you ask for,” Cominius said. “Take your choice of those soldiers who best can aid your action.”

“The soldiers who best can aid my action are those who are the most willing. If any such are here — it would be a sin to believe that they are not — who love this paint, this blood, with which you see that I am smeared, and if any soldiers fear less for their own personal safety than they fear a bad reputation — a reputation for cowardice — and if any think that a brave death outweighs a bad life and that his country is dearer than himself, then that sole soldier or as many who are so minded wave their swords like this” — he waved his sword in the air — “to express his disposition, and follow Martius.”

The Roman soldiers all shouted and waved their swords, and they lifted Martius up in their arms and threw their hats in the air.

Exulting, Martius said, “Oh, me alone! Do you regard me as the best soldier? Do you want to make me the point of your sword? If these shows are not just outward appearances, but reveal what you have inside you, which of you is not able to defeat four Volscians? All of you are able to hold your own against the great Aufidius and bear a shield as hard as his. A certain number, although I give thanks to you all, I must select from all of you. The rest shall bear the business in some other fight, as occasion will demand. Let’s march. I shall quickly choose the troops I will command; I will choose those men who are best suited to fight the enemy.”

“March on, my fellows,” Cominius said. “Match this impressive display with your actions in battle, and you shall have a share in all the loot with us.”

— 1.7 —

Titus Lartius had stationed guards inside Corioli, and now he was marching with a Lieutenant, other soldiers, and a scout to the sound of drums and trumpets toward Cominius and Caius Martius.

Lartius ordered the Lieutenant, “Let the gates be guarded. Perform your duties, as I have given them to you. If I send for them, dispatch those centuries — battalions of a hundred soldiers each — to come to our aid. The rest of the soldiers will serve to hold the town for at least a short time. If we lose the battle in the field, we cannot keep the town.”

“Don’t worry about us, sir,” the Lieutenant said.

“Go now, and shut your gates upon us,” Lartius ordered.

He then said to his guide, "Come; take us to the Roman camp."

— 1.8 —

Trumpets sounded on the battlefield as Martius and Aufidius met.

Martius said, "I'll fight with none but you because I hate you worse than I hate a promise-breaker."

"We hate alike," Aufidius said. "In all Africa there is not a serpent I abhor more than your fame and envy."

By "fame and envy," Aufidius meant 1) envied fame, 2) fame that I envy, and 3) fame and malice.

People in this society sometimes used hendiadys (hen-di-a-dys), in which one idea is expressed by two words joined with "and." Other societies often prefer to have one word modify the other. For example, "nice and warm" equals "nicely warm," and "sound and fury" equals "furious sound," and "fame and envy" equals "envied fame."

In this society, one meaning of "envy" was "malice."

Aufidius said, "Find steady footing and prepare to fight."

"Let the first one who flinches die as the other's slave, and may the gods doom him afterward!" Martius said.

"If I flee from you, Martius, cry 'holloa' and hunt me as if I were a hare."

"Within these past three hours, Tullus Aufidius, I fought by myself, alone, within the walls of your Corioli, and I did whatever work I pleased to do. This is not my blood that you see covering my face like a mask. If you want revenge for your soldiers whose blood I have shed, force your strength to reach its highest point."

“Even if you were the Hector who was the whip of your bragged-about ancestors, you would not escape me here,” Aufidius replied.

The Trojans’ best warrior, Hector, was the whip that scourged the Greek warriors during the Trojan War. After Troy fell to the Greeks, Aeneas and other Trojans journeyed to Italy and became important ancestors of the Romans.

Martius and Aufidius fought, and some Volscians came to Aufidius’ aid. Martius fought fiercely and drove them back, and the Volscians carried Aufidius away with them.

Aufidius said to the Volscians who had come to his aid, “Your actions have been meddlesome, and not valiant, and you have shamed me with your damned assistance.”

— 1.9 —

Trumpets sounded a retreat. The battle was over, and the Romans had won. Accompanied by Roman soldiers, Cominius talked to Martius, whose left arm was in a sling.

Cominius said to Martius, “If I were to tell you about the work that you did this day, you would not believe your own deeds, but I’ll report what you have done where Senators shall mingle tears with smiles; where great patricians shall listen and shudder out of fear, and in the end admire what you have accomplished; where ladies shall be frightened, and, gladly thrilled, hear more; and where the dull Tribunes, who, with the musty, stinking plebeians, hate your honors, shall say this, which is against what is in their hearts, ‘We thank the gods our Rome has such a soldier.’

“Yet you came to only a morsel of this feast, having fully dined before. At Corioli you had a feast of fighting, and here you came in only near the end of the meal.”

Titus Lartius, with his soldiers, returned after pursuing enemy soldiers.

Lartius said, “General Cominius, Martius here is the steed; we are only the caparison — the cloth spread over the saddle. Had you beheld —”

“Please, now, say no more,” Martius said. “My mother, who has a charter — the right — to extol and praise those who share her blood, grieves me when she praises me. I have done as you have done; that is, I have done what I can do. I have been induced to fight for the same reasons as you have been; that is, I have fought for my country.

“That man who has only effected his good will has rivaled my act. Any man who has carried out his resolution to fight well for his country has done what I have done.”

“You shall not be the grave of your deserving,” Cominius said. You shall not bury the praise that you deserve. Rome must know the value of her own hero. It would be a concealment worse than a theft of your honor, no less than a slander, to hide your accomplishments in battle and to be silent about them. Your vouched-for accomplishments deserve more than the spire and top of praises — such praises as we give to you seem modest in comparison to the praises you deserve. Therefore, I ask you, in token of what you are, and not to reward what you have done — to hear me praise you before our army.”

“I have some wounds upon my body,” Martius said, “and they smart to hear themselves remembered.”

“If your wounds would not be remembered,” Cominius said, “they well might fester because of infection from ingratitude, and they well might treat themselves with death rather than getting proper medical attention.

“Of all the horses — we have taken a good number of good

horses — and of all the treasure we have acquired on this battlefield and in the city of Corioli, we render to you a tenth. Before the treasure is distributed to the army in common, you shall have your choice of treasure and carry it away.”

“I thank you, General,” Martius said, “but I cannot make my heart consent to take a bribe to pay my sword. I refuse to take a tenth of the horses and treasure, and I will take only my share of what is distributed to the army in common. I will take only an equal share with those who have beheld the doing of my deeds.”

Drums and trumpets sounded, and the soldiers cried, “Martius! Martius!” They also threw their hats and lances in exultation. Cominius and Lartius took off their hats and stood bareheaded to show their respect for Martius.

Martius said, “May these same military instruments, drums and trumpets, which you profane by playing them to honor me, never sound again! When drums and trumpets shall on the battlefield prove themselves to be flatterers, then let all the people in courts and cities be composed entirely of false-faced flatterers! When steel grows as soft as the flattering parasite’s silk, let the parasite be given an ovation for his ‘deeds’ in the wars!

“No more, I say! Because I have not washed my nose that bled, or because I have foiled and defeated some debilitated wretch — deeds that without being noticed were done by many others here — you shout out for me hyperbolic acclamations as if I loved for my small accomplishments to be fed with praises seasoned with lies.”

“You are too modest,” Cominius said. “You are crueler to your good reputation than you are grateful to us who portray you truly. With your forbearance, if you are incensed against yourself, we will put you, like one who

intends to harm himself, in manacles, and then we will reason safely with you.

“Therefore, be it known, as it is known to us, to all the world that Caius Martius wears this war’s garland — he has won the most honor in battle. In token of this, my noble steed, which is known to the camp, I give to him, with all his trim equipment; and from this time, for what he did at Corioli, call him, with all the applause and clamor of the host, MARTIUS CAIUS CORIOLANUS! Bear the addition nobly forever!”

The additional name “Coriolanus” meant “conqueror of Corioli.”

Usually, the Romans put names in this order: personal name, family name, and addition — Caius Martius Coriolanus. Cominius presumably put the family name Martius first because it derived from the name of Mars, god of war.

The trumpets and drums sounded.

Everyone present shouted, “Martius Caius Coriolanus!”

From now on, and especially after the honor of the additional name was announced in Rome, Martius would be known as Coriolanus.

“I will go and wash,” Coriolanus said to Cominius, “and when my face is clean and fair, you shall see whether I blush or not. However it be, I thank you. I mean to sit upon your steed, and at all times to undercrest your good addition to the fairness of my power. I will treat the name ‘Coriolanus’ as it were an additional mark of honor on my coat of arms, and I will do my best and use all my power to live up to that name.”

A heraldic achievement fully displays all the heraldic

components that the bearer of a coat of arms is entitled to. The coat of arms appears on the escutcheon, or shield. Above the shield appears the helmet. Above the helmet appears the crest, which is a symbol or device. A crest may be a sculpture of an animal. The motto appears at either the bottom or the top of the heraldic achievement.

An addition is a mark of honor added to a coat of arms. It is also an additional name given to a Roman as a mark of honor. For example, Publius Cornelius Scipio became Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus after defeating the Carthaginians in North Africa. His name contained these elements: personal name, family name, and addition. His family name consisted of two names: Cornelius Scipio. Scipio indicated a branch of the Corneli family.

Coriolanus said that he would “undercrest your good addition.” He meant that he would protect and defend the additional name that he had been given. Under the crest are the helmet and the shield, which are defensive armor. The crest itself is ornamental.

Cominius said, “So, let’s now go to our tent, where, before we sleep, we will write to Rome about our success.

“You, Titus Lartius, must go back to Corioli. Send to us in Rome the best citizens of Corioli, with whom we may negotiate for their own good and ours.”

“I shall, my lord,” Lartius said.

Coriolanus said, “The gods begin to mock me. I, who just now refused very Princely gifts, am bound to beg for something from my lord General.”

“Take it; it is yours,” Cominius said. “What is it?”

“I once stayed here in Corioli at a poor man’s house,” Coriolanus said. “He treated me kindly. During the battle,

he cried out to me. I saw him taken prisoner. But then Aufidius came within my view, and wrath overwhelmed my pity. I request you to give my poor host freedom.”

“Well begged!” Cominius said. “Even if he had butchered my son, he would be as free as is the wind. Set him free, Titus Lartius.”

Lartius asked Coriolanus, “Martius, what is his name?”

“By Jupiter! I have forgotten it,” Coriolanus said. “I am weary; yes, my memory is tired. Have we no wine here?”

“Let’s go to our tent,” Cominius said. The blood upon your face dries; it is time that your wounds should be looked after. Come.”

Did Coriolanus remember the name of his poor host in Corioli later? Was the poor host set free?

There is no indication that these things happened.

— 1.10 —

Tullus Aufidius, bloody, stood in the camp of the Volscians with some soldiers.

“The town of Corioli has been taken!” he said.

“It will be delivered back on good condition,” the first soldier said.

By “on good condition,” he meant “on good and favorable terms”; the peace treaty that the Volscians and the Romans would make would be fair.

In his answer, Aufidius used “condition” to mean “state.” “Good condition” meant “satisfactory state.”

“Condition!” he said. “I wish I were a Roman; for I cannot, being a Volscian, be what I am — I can’t continue to live

as a defeated Volscian. Condition! What good condition can a treaty find in the defeated party who is at the mercy of the winning party?

“Five times, Martius, I have fought against you, and every time you have beaten me, and you would continue to defeat me every time, I think, if we were to fight each other as often as we eat.

“By all the natural elements, I swear that if I ever again meet Martius beard to beard, he’s mine, or I am his. My emulation of him — my desire to surpass him — has not that honor in it that it had. I used to think that I would crush him in an equal fight, true sword to true sword, but now I am willing to potch — stab — at him in whatever way wrath or treachery will give me the opportunity to kill him.”

“He’s the devil,” the first soldier said.

“He’s bolder, though not so subtle,” Aufidius said. “My valor’s poisoned because I suffer stain only by him; he is the only one who surpasses me and hurts my reputation in battle. In order to get back at him, my valor shall betray its own honorable nature.

“I want so much to kill Martius that even if he were asleep or in a sanctuary, even if he were not wearing armor or holding weapons, even if he were in a temple or the Capitol where people are guaranteed their safety, even if he were in a temple while priests are praying or making sacrifices to the gods, even if he were in places and during times when all fury is prohibited, I would ignore all these rotten, decayed-with-age privileges and customs and give in to my hatred of Martius. Wherever I find him, even if it were at my home, with my brother guarding and protecting him, even there, against the laws of hospitality that protect guests, I would wash my fierce hand in the blood of

Martius' heart.

“Go to the city and learn how it is guarded and who are the people who must be hostages for Rome.”

“Won't you go to the city?” the first soldier asked.

“People are waiting for me at the cypress grove south of the city mills,” Aufidius said. “Please bring me word there how the world goes so that in accordance with its pace I may spur on my journey.”

“I shall, sir,” the first soldier said.

CHAPTER 2 (Coriolanus)

— 2.1 —

In Rome, Menenius was talking with Sicinius and Brutus, two Tribunes of the plebeians.

“The augur tells me we shall have news tonight,” Menenius said.

Augurs interpreted omens and forecast the future.

“Good or bad?” Brutus asked.

“Not according to the prayer of the people, for they do not love Martius,” Menenius replied.

“Nature teaches beasts to know their friends,” Sicinius said.

“Please, tell me whom does the wolf love?” Menenius asked.

“The lamb,” Sicinius answered.

“Yes, to devour him,” Menenius said, “as the hungry plebeians would love to devour the noble Martius.”

“He is indeed a lamb that baas like a bear,” Brutus said.

“He’s a bear indeed, and he lives like a lamb,” Menenius said.

In other words, they disagreed in their evaluations of Martius. Brutus believed that Martius was a bear and not a lamb — Martius was dangerous to the plebeians. Menenius believed that Martius was a dangerous bear on the battlefield but a lamb — at least to the patricians — off it.

Menenius continued, “You two are old men. Tell me one thing that I shall ask you.”

Menenius was saying that since the Tribunes were old men, they *ought* to be wise men. He was implying that they were *not* wise men.

“We will, sir,” they replied.

“What extreme wickedness makes Martius morally deficient that you two don’t have in abundance?” Menenius asked.

Brutus replied, “He’s poor in no one fault, but well stocked with all of them. He lacks no fault, for he has them all.”

“He especially has pride,” Sicinius said.

“And he tops all others in boasting,” Brutus said.

“This is strange now,” Menenius said. “Do you two know how you are thought of here in the city, I mean by us on the right-hand file? Do you?”

The best soldiers were on the right-hand file. By “us,” Menenius meant those whom he considered the best citizens of Rome: the patricians.

Sicinius and Brutus asked, “How are we thought of?”

“Because you talked about pride just now,” Menenius said, “I need to ask you whether you will be angry if I tell you.”

The two Tribunes replied, “Well, well, sir, well. How are we regarded?”

“Why, it is no great matter,” Menenius said, “for a very small pretext will rob you of a great deal of patience. Give your dispositions the reins and let them run freely, and be angry at your pleasures, at least if you take it as pleasurable to you in being so. You blame Martius for being proud?”

“We are not the only ones who do, sir,” Brutus replied.

“I know you can do very little alone,” Menenius said, “for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wondrously feeble: your abilities are too much like those of an infant for you two to do much alone. You talk of pride: I wish that you could turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks, so you could look at yourselves and make an interior survey of your good selves! I wish that you could!”

“Suppose that we could see ourselves. What then, sir?” Brutus asked.

“Why, if you could see yourselves, then you would discover a pair of undeserving, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias fools, as any in Rome.”

A wisdom story stated that men carry two bags: one in front, and one in back. In the front bag, men carry knowledge of their neighbors’ faults. In the back bag, men carry knowledge of their own faults.

“Menenius, you are well enough known, too,” Sicinius said.

Sicinius meant that Menenius’ faults were also well known.

“I am known to be a whimsical and moody patrician, and one who loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying, diluting Tiber River water in it. I am said to be somewhat imperfect because I tend to favor the complainant, who speaks first, in a case of law. I am said to be hasty and tinder-like — quick-to-anger — upon too trivial a reason. I am said to be one who converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning: I stay up late and get up late. I am said to be a man who utters what I think, and I expend my malice in my breath and words.

“Meeting two such wealsmen as you are — I cannot call you Lyncurguses — if the drink you give me touch my

palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I express in my face what I think.”

Wealmen are public servants who are supposed to be devoted to the weal — the well-being — of the state. “Weal” sounds like “well,” and the two Tribunes said “well” frequently.

Lycurgus was a statesman who created the constitution of Sparta in Greece. Lycurgus was given credit for wisdom, something that Menenius felt the two Tribunes lacked.

Menenius continued, “I can’t say your ‘worships’ have reported the matter well, when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables.”

He meant that much of what they said was asinine, especially when it came to their opinion of Martius. He may also have been saying that as Tribunes they used many words such as “whereas.”

Menenius continued, “And although I must be content to endure those who say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly when they tell you that you have good faces.”

Lies may be intrinsically sinful, but not all sins are deadly sins. Menenius was saying that the two Tribunes’ faces revealed that they were bad men, and that anyone who looked at their faces and told them that they were good men was committing a deadly sin.

Sins can be venial, or they can be mortal: deadly. A deadly sin leads to damnation. Mortal sins deprive the soul of the grace — mercy — of God. Venial sins are less serious and do not damn the soul.

Menenius continued, “If you see my character as I have described it in this map of my microcosm — my face that reveals my little world — it follows that I am known well

enough, too! As you have said, people know my character. Therefore, what harm can your bisson conspectuities — your bleary or almost-blind sight — glean out of this character of mine, if — or since — I am known well enough, too?”

Menenius was saying that one of his well-known faults was a kind of honesty. If he disliked something, it showed on his face. For example, if he disliked wine that someone had given him, his dislike showed on his face. His honesty also appeared in his words. Other people might flatter the two Tribunes by saying that the two Tribunes were good men, and Menenius might be forced to tolerate these people’s use of flattery, but Menenius himself would tell — and just now had told — the two Tribunes that they were bad men. So what can the two Tribunes learn by looking at Menenius’ honest face — a face that everyone knew revealed what he was thinking? They would learn harm — what Menenius really thought about them.

“Come, sir, come, we know you well enough,” Brutus said.

Brutus was trying to get along with Menenius, but Menenius did not want that.

Menenius replied, “You don’t know me, yourselves, or anything. You are ambitious for poor knaves’ hats and legs. You want them to doff their hats and bend their legs as they show respect to you.

“You wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a case between a woman who sells oranges and a man who sells wine taps, and then you adjourn the case, which concerns three pence, to a second day of hearing.

“When you are hearing a matter between one side and another side, if you happen to become sick with the colic, you make faces like over-expressive actors, you set up the blood-red flag and declare war against all patience, and as

you roar for a chamber pot, you dismiss the controversy bleeding the more entangled by your hearing.”

The court case was bleeding because it was unfinished and unhealed and because the two Tribunes had made the case worse through their hearings into the case. In addition, whatever was excreted into the chamber pot was mixed with blood.

Menenius continued, “All the peace you make in their cause is calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones.”

Brutus said, “Come, come, you are well understood to be a much better joker for the dinner table than a necessary statesman in the Capitol.”

“Our very priests must become mockers,” Menenius said, “if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best to the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honorable a grave as to stuff the pincushion of a person who repairs old clothes, or to be entombed in an ass’ pack-saddle.

“Always you must be saying that Martius is proud, but Martius, even regarded at a low estimate of his true worth, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion, the Greek Noah, although it is very likely that some of the best of your predecessors were people who inherited their jobs as hangmen.”

Being a hereditary hangman was a lowly occupation.

Menenius continued, “Good day to your ‘worships.’ More conversation with you two would infect my brain, since you are the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians. I will be bold and take my leave of you.”

Menenius moved a short distance away, but he saw Volumnia, Virgilia, and Valeria coming toward him.

Menenius said, “How are you now, my as fair as you are noble ladies — the Moon-goddess, if she were Earthly, would be no nobler than you. Where do you follow your eyes so quickly?”

Volumnia replied, “Honorable Menenius, my boy — Martius — is approaching. For the love of Juno, let’s go.”

Juno was the goddess who was the wife of Jupiter, King of the gods.

“Ha! Martius is coming home!” Menenius said.

“Yes, worthy Menenius,” Volumnia said, “and he is coming home with the most prosperous approbation. Everyone is acclaiming his military success.”

Menenius threw his hat in the air and said, “Take my hat, Jupiter, and I thank you. Hooray! Martius is coming home!”

Volumnia and Virgilia said, “It is true.”

“Look, here’s a letter from him,” Volumnia said. “The state has received another letter, his wife another one, and, I think, there’s one at home for you.”

Menenius said, “I will make my house reel with my happiness tonight: a letter for me!”

“Yes, certainly there’s a letter for you,” Virgilia said. “I saw it.”

“A letter for me!” Menenius said. “It gives me another seven years of health, during which time I will curl my lip at the physician. The most sovereign prescription in the medical textbook of Galen is but quackery, and compared to this preservative of a letter bearing good news about

Martius, Galen's most sovereign prescription has no more reputation than that of a dose of medicine for a horse. Isn't Martius wounded? He has been accustomed to come home wounded."

"Oh, no, no, no," Virgilia said.

"Oh, he is wounded," Volumnia said. "I thank the gods for it."

"So do I, too, if the wound is not too serious," Menenius said. "As long as he brings a victory home in his pocket, the wounds become him."

Wounds acquired in a victory are better regarded than wounds acquired in a defeat.

"On his brows, Menenius, he comes the third time home with the oak garland," Volumnia said.

Martius was coming home crowned in glory, wearing a garland of honor on his head.

Menenius asked, "Has he disciplined — beaten — Aufidius soundly?"

"Titus Lartius writes that they fought together, but Aufidius got away alive," Volumnia replied.

"And it was time for him to run away, too, I'll warrant him that," Menenius said. "If Aufidius had stayed by Martius, I would not have been so fidiused for all the chests in Corioli, and all the gold that's in them."

Menenius had used the name of Aufidius to create a new word, "fidiused," which meant "treated like Martius would treat Aufidius." Fittingly, the word "fidiused" had decapitated the name of Aufidius.

Menenius asked, "Is the Senate possessed of this information? Has it been informed?"

“Good ladies, let’s go,” Volumnia said.

She then said to Menenius, “Yes, yes, yes; the Senate has letters from the General, wherein he gives my son the whole credit for the victory of the war. Martius has in his actions in this war outdone his former deeds doubly.”

“Truly, there are wondrous things spoken about him,” Virgilia said.

“Wondrous things!” Menenius said. “Yes, there are, I promise you, and he truly deserves the wondrous things said about him.”

“May the gods grant that all these wondrous things said about him are true!” Virgilia said.

“True!” Volumnia said. “Of course, they are true!”

“True!” Menenius said. “I’ll be sworn they are true. Where is he wounded?”

He said to the two Tribunes, who were nearby and listening, “God save your good worships! Martius is coming home, and he has even more cause to be proud than before.”

He asked again, “Where is Martius wounded?”

Volumnia replied, “In the shoulder and in the left arm there will be large scars to show the people, when he shall stand for his place — when he shall campaign to be elected Consul. He received seven hurts in his body in the final battle in which the tyrant Tarquinius Superbus was repulsed.”

Menenius began counting, “One in the neck, and two in the thigh.” He calculated mentally and said, “There’s nine wounds that I know of.”

Volumnia said, “He had, before this most recent military

expedition, twenty-five wounds on his body.”

“Now it is twenty-seven wounds,” Menenius said. “Every gash was an enemy’s grave.”

The sounds of Martius’ entry into Rome filled the air.

Menenius said, “Listen! The trumpets!”

Volumnia said, “These are the ushers of Martius. Before him Martius carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears. Death, that dark spirit, lies in Martius’ muscular arm, which, being advanced, declines, and then men die. Martius’ arm, holding a sword, is raised, and then it falls and an enemy soldier dies.”

Trumpets sounded. Cominius the General and Titus Lartius appeared. In between them was Martius, the newly named Coriolanus, crowned with an oaken garland. Also present were Captains and soldiers, and a herald.

The herald announced, “Know, Romans, that all alone Martius fought within the gates of Corioli, where he has won, along with fame, a name added to Caius Martius; following these names is this name of honor: Coriolanus.”

The herald said to Caius Martius Coriolanus, “Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!”

Trumpets sounded.

The crowd shouted, “Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!”

Coriolanus said, “No more of this shouting; it offends my heart. Please, no more.”

Cominius said to him, “Look, sir, your mother!”

Coriolanus said to Volumnia, his mother, “You have, I know, prayed to and pleaded with all the gods for my

prosperity!”

He knelt before his mother. In this society, it was proper for a child to kneel before his parents to show respect; it would be highly improper for a parent to kneel before a child.

“No, my good soldier, get up,” Volumnia said to him. “My gentle Martius, worthy Caius, and newly named because of your deeds in battle — what is your new name? Is it Coriolanus I must call you? But, oh, remember your wife!”

Coriolanus had remembered his wife, who was much less outspoken than his mother.

He gently teased Virgilia, his wife, who was crying from happiness, “My gracious silence, I greet you! Would you have laughed if I had come home in a coffin, you who weep to see me in my triumph? My dear, such weeping eyes as you have, the widows in Corioli wear, and the mothers who now lack sons.”

Menenius said, “Now, may the gods crown you!”

Coriolanus replied, “And may they continue to keep you alive.”

To Valeria, he said, “Oh, my sweet lady, pardon me for not speaking to you earlier.”

“I know not where to turn,” Volumnia said. “Oh, welcome home. And welcome, General, and welcome to all of you.”

“A hundred thousand welcomes,” Menenius said. “I could weep and I could laugh. I am both light and heavy, both happy and sad. Welcome.”

Looking at the two Tribunes, Menenius said, “May a curse gnaw at the very root of the heart of anyone who is not glad to see you three: Coriolanus, Cominius, and Lartius! You are three whom Rome should dote on, yet, by the faith of

men, we have some old crabapple trees here at home that will not be grafted to your relish — they will not be altered so that they like you.”

He continued, “Yet welcome, warriors. We call a nettle but a nettle, and we call the faults of fools simply folly. We must call things what they are; some things we cannot change.”

Cominius said, “That is always true; it is always right.”

Coriolanus said, “Menenius is always right — always.”

The herald shouted for the crowd to step aside and give the procession room to move forward, “Give way there, and let’s go on!”

To Volumnia and Virgilia, Coriolanus said, “Give me your hand, and give me yours. Before I shade my head in our own house, the good patricians must be visited, from whom I have received not only greetings, but along with those greetings new honors.”

Volumnia said, “I have lived to see you inherit exactly what I wished for and all the buildings of my fancy; the castles I built in the air have become real. There’s only one thing lacking, which I don’t doubt that our Romans will give to you.”

Coriolanus knew what she meant: a Consulship. The position of Consul was the highest political position in the Roman Republic.

“Know, good mother,” Coriolanus said, “I had rather be the Romans’ servant in my own way than sway with them and rule them in their own way.”

Cominius said, “Let’s go on — to the Capitol!”

Cornets sounded, and everyone left except the two

Tribunes: Brutus and Sicinius.

“All tongues speak about Coriolanus, and the people who have bleared eyesight put on spectacles in order to see him,” Brutus said. “A prattling nursemaid who has been sent into a rapture lets her baby cry while she chats about Coriolanus. The untidy kitchen wench pins her richest lockram around her dirty neck and clambers up the walls to eye him.”

Lockram was an inexpensive Breton linen cloth. The “richest” lockram fabric would not be very rich.

Brutus continued, “Benches in front of shops, frameworks projecting from storefronts, and windows are smothered with people, leaden roofs are filled with people, and the roof ridges are filled with people of all kinds sitting astride the ridges as if they were horses. All these people are alike in wanting to see Coriolanus.

“Seldom-seen flamens — priests devoted to a particular god — press among the popular throngs and puff and breathe hard in order to win a vulgar station: one among the common crowd.

“Also, veiled dames commit the war of white and damask-pink — their complexion — in their nicely made-up cheeks to the wanton spoil of Phoebus’ burning kisses. They expose their cheeks to the Sun and risk getting a sunburn — something regarded as unattractive in our society.

“Such a pother and fuss are being made over Coriolanus that it is as if whatsoever god is leading him had slyly crept into his human physical faculties and given him the graceful posture and bearing of that god.”

“I am sure that he will quickly be made Consul,” Sicinius said.

“Then our political positions as Tribune may as well, during his powerful time as Consul, go and sleep,” Brutus said. “While he is Consul, he won’t allow us to have any influence.”

“He cannot temperately transport his honors from where he should begin and where he should end; instead, he will lose those honors he has won,” Sicinius said. “He cannot behave in such a way as a politician must behave in order to be popular and to stay in office.”

“In that there’s comfort,” Brutus said.

Sicinius said, “Don’t doubt that the commoners, for whom we stand, will because of their long-standing hostility toward Coriolanus forget for the least cause and reason these new honors of his. That Coriolanus will give them that cause or reason I have little doubt — he will be proud to do it.”

“I heard him swear that if he were to run for Consul, he would never appear in the marketplace or wear the threadbare garment of humility,” Brutus said.

People running for the political office of Consul customarily wore a toga with no tunic underneath. This both showed humility and also made it easy to display wounds that the candidate had acquired while fighting in battles for Rome.

Brutus continued, “He also swore that he would not show, as the custom is, his wounds to the people — he would not beg for anything from people with stinking breaths.”

“That’s true,” Sicinius said.

“It is what he said; these are his words,” Brutus said. “He would prefer to miss out on being Consul rather than to carry his election with anything except the petition of the

gentry to him, and the desire of the nobles.”

“I can wish for nothing better than for him to continue to hold that intention and to put it into execution.”

“It is very likely that he will,” Brutus said.

“If that happens, the end result for him will be what we want: a sure destruction,” Sicinius said.

“A sure destruction is sure to be the end result, whether for him or for our political authorities. To achieve the end we desire, we must remind the common people that Coriolanus has always hated them. We can tell the common people that Coriolanus always would have made them mules to serve his army, he always would have silenced those who pleaded on their behalf, and he always would have taken away their freedoms. He has always held them, in human action and capacity, to have no more soul or fitness for the world than camels in the war, which receive only their provender for bearing burdens, and only sore blows when they sink under their burdens.”

“As you say, if we remind the common people of these things at some time when Coriolanus’ soaring insolence shall stir and move and vex the people — which time shall not be wanting, if Coriolanus were to be provoked and incited to act that way, and that’s as easy to do as to sic dogs on sheep — that will be his fire to kindle their dry stubble, and their blaze shall darken him forever.”

A messenger walked over to them.

Brutus asked, “What’s the matter?”

“You have been sent for to go to the Capitol,” the messenger said. “It is thought that Martius shall be elected Consul. I have seen the dumb — incapable of speaking — men throng to see him and the blind to hear him speak.

Matrons have flung gloves, and ladies and maidens have flung their scarfs and handkerchiefs, upon him as he passed. The nobles have bent their knees as if they were before the statue of Jupiter, King of the gods, and the commoners have made a shower and thunder with their hats and shouts. I never saw anything like this.”

Brutus said to Sicinius, “Let’s go to the Capitol. We will carry with us ears and eyes that seem appropriate for what is going on at this time, but we will also carry with us hearts for the outcome that we are looking forward to.”

That event was the downfall of Coriolanus’ Consulship.

“I am with you,” Sicinius replied.

— 2.2 —

Two officers — civil servants — spoke together at the Capital, where the Roman Senators would meet. They were laying down cushions on which the Senators would sit.

The first officer said, “Come, come, they are almost here. How many are running to become Consuls?”

“Three, they say,” the second officer said, “but everyone thinks that Coriolanus will be elected.”

“He’s a brave fellow,” the first officer said, “but he’s proud with a vengeance, and he is not a friend to the common people. He does not love them — he is not a friend to them.”

“Truly, there have been many great men who have flattered the common people, but who never were friends to them, and there are many whom the common people have loved, although the common people don’t know why. If the common people love without knowing why, they hate upon no better grounds. Therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him manifests the true knowledge

he has about their dispositions and inclinations, and owing to his noble carelessness and aristocratic indifference he lets them plainly see it.”

“If he did not care whether he had their love or not,” the first officer said, “he would have wavered impartially between doing them neither good nor harm, but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it to him, and he leaves nothing undone that may fully reveal that he is their enemy. Now, to seem to cultivate the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, which is to flatter them in order to get their love.”

“Because of his deeds in battle, Coriolanus has deserved worthily of his country,” the second officer said, “and his ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been accommodating and courteous to the people, and having uncovered their heads and held their hats in their hands as a mark of respect to the common people, without any further deed to recommend them at all to the common people and win their estimation and good report, but he has so planted his honors in their eyes, and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent, and not confess so much, would be a kind of ungrateful and ingrate-ful injury. To report anything other than respect for Coriolanus would be an act of malice, that, being obviously undeserved by Coriolanus, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard it.”

“Let’s speak no more about Coriolanus,” the first officer said. “He is a worthy man. Let’s move out of the way; they are coming.”

Trumpets sounded.

Cominius the Consul arrived with Menenius, Coriolanus, Roman Senators, and others, including the Tribunes Sicinius and Brutus as well as some lictors. Lictors were

magistrates' assistants, and they carried fasces, the magistrates' symbols of power. The fasces consisted of rods bound together around an ax; they were a symbol of strength in unity.

Coriolanus stood as the Senators took their places and sat on the cushions.

Menenius said, "Having decided what to do about the Volscians and to send for Titus Lartius, it remains, as the main point of this our after-meeting, to reward and repay the noble service of Coriolanus, who has thus defended and upheld his country; therefore, may it please you, most reverend and grave elders, to request the present Consul, who is also the most recent General in our fortunate and valued successes, to report a little of that worthy work performed by Caius Martius Coriolanus, whom we are met here both to thank and to commemorate with honors appropriate to him."

Coriolanus sat.

"Speak, good Cominius," the first Senator said. "Leave nothing out despite the speech's length, and make us think that Rome is lacking in resources to reward Coriolanus rather than that we are unwilling to stretch our resources so that we can reward him properly."

The first Senator then said to the Tribunes, "Masters of the common people, we request that your ears listen very kindly to what is said here and afterward, we request that you use your friendly influence and mediation with the common people to report and grant what is said and transacted here."

Sicinius replied, "We are convened here to consider a pleasing matter, and we have hearts that are favorably inclined to honor and advance the theme of our assembly."

Brutus added, "And we will sooner be happy to do that if Coriolanus bears in his mind a higher value for the common people than he has hitherto prized them at."

"That's off topic," Menenius said. "That's definitely off-topic. I wish that you had remained silent rather than bring that up. Will it please you to hear Cominius speak?"

"Very willingly," Brutus said, "but yet my cautionary remark is more pertinent than the rebuke you give it."

"Cominius loves your people," Menenius replied, "but don't try to make him their bedfellow."

He then said, "Worthy Cominius, speak."

Coriolanus stood up and attempted to leave so that he would not hear the speech praising him.

Menenius said to him, "No, keep your place. Stay here."

The first Senator said, "Sit, Coriolanus; never be ashamed to hear what you have nobly done."

"I beg your honors' pardon," Coriolanus said. "I would prefer to have my wounds heal again than to hear told how I got them."

Brutus said, "Sir, I hope that my words did not cause you to attempt to leave."

"No, sir," Coriolanus replied. "Yet often, when blows have made me stay, I have fled from words. You did not flatter me, and therefore you did not hurt me, but I love your people as they weigh. I love them according to their worth."

This was dangerous dialogue for someone who did not think the plebeians were worth much and who would run for Consul, and so Menenius said to Coriolanus, "Please now, sit down."

Coriolanus replied, “I would rather have someone scratch my head in the sun when the alarum — the call to battle — were sounding than to idly sit and hear my nothing-much deeds monstrously exaggerated.”

Then Coriolanus exited.

Menenius said to the Tribunes, “Masters of the people, how can Coriolanus flatter your multiplying spawn — in which there are a thousand bad ones to one good one — when you see now that he would rather risk all his limbs in warfare to gain honor than to use one of his ears to hear about the honor he gained?”

He then said, “Proceed, Cominius.”

Cominius said, “I shall lack the voice needed to speak adequately; the deeds of Coriolanus should not be uttered feebly.

“We Romans believe that valor is the most important virtue, and the virtue that most dignifies the person who has it. If this is true, no one individual in this world can match the man I speak of — Coriolanus.

“When Coriolanus was sixteen years old and the deposed King Tarquin had assembled an army to reestablish himself in Rome, he fought beyond the mark of other warriors. Our then military leader with absolute power temporarily granted to him because of the emergency, whom with all praise I point at” — he pointed to Titus Lartius — “saw Coriolanus fight. He saw when Coriolanus with his Amazonian chin — beardless like the chins of the warrior women known as the Amazons — drove the bristled, bearded lips of the enemy soldiers before him. He stood over and defended an overpowered Roman soldier and in the Consul’s view slew three opposing soldiers. He met Tarquin himself and struck him so hard that he fell on his knee. In that day’s feats, when Coriolanus might have acted

like a woman in the scene and cried and ran away, he proved to be best man on the battlefield, and for his reward his brow was bound with an oaken garland of honor.

“Having entered his manhood on that battlefield, he waxed and grew like a sea, and in the brunt of seventeen battles since that first battle he easily surpassed all other warriors to win the honor of wearing the garland.

“As for this last battle, in front of and in Corioli, let me say that I cannot speak too much in his praise. He stopped the soldiers who were fleeing and by his rare example made the coward soldiers turn terror into entertainment. Just like weeds fall before a vessel under sail in a river, so men obeyed him and fell below his prow. His sword was death’s stamp; whenever and wherever his sword marked a man, it took that man’s life. From his face to his foot, he was a thing that seemed made of blood, and his every motion was regularly accompanied by the cries of the dying. Alone he entered the mortal — deadly — gate of the city of Corioli, which he painted red with the blood of those who met their unavoidable destiny. Without the aid of other soldiers, he came out of the city, and with a sudden reinforcement of troops he struck Corioli like a malignant planet astrologically inflicting plague on a part of the Earth. Now the city was all his.

“When, by and by, the din of war on the battlefield began to pierce his ready and vigilant sense of hearing, then immediately his spirit, redoubled in strength, re-quickened what in flesh was fatigued, and to the battlefield outside the city he came, where he ran steaming with blood over the lives of men, as if it were a perpetual slaughter, and until we called both battlefield and the city ours, he never stood still to ease his breast and catch his breath with panting.”

“What a worthy man!” Menenius said.

The first Senator said, "He surely will measure up to and befit the honors that we confer on him."

"Our spoils of war he kicked at and scorned and rejected," Cominius said, "and he looked upon precious things as if they were the common muck of the world. He covets less than poverty itself would give; he rewards his deeds with the doing of them, and he is content that time well spent is an end in itself. Coriolanus is not a man who fights in order to be rewarded with plunder."

"Coriolanus is very noble," Menenius said. "Let him be called for to appear here."

The first Senator said, "Call Coriolanus."

An officer said, "Here he is."

Coriolanus stepped forward.

Menenius said to him, "The Senators, Coriolanus, are well pleased to make you Consul."

"I owe them always my life and my services," Coriolanus said.

"All that remains for you to be elected Consul is that you speak to the common people," Menenius said.

"I ask you to allow me to overleap and not do that customary action, for I cannot put on the gown of humility, stand without a tunic underneath my gown, and entreat the common people, for the sake of my wounds, to give me their votes. I hope that it may please you to allow me to not do that customary action."

Sicinius said, "Sir, the people must have their votes in the election; neither will they abate one jot of ceremony. The common people want all the customary actions to be performed."

Menenius said to Coriolanus, “Do not challenge the Tribunes or the common people. Please, accommodate the custom and take to yourself, as your predecessors have, your honor with your observance of the formality. You can keep your honor although you observe the custom.”

Many patricians were willing to pretend to be friends to the common people in order to get their votes and become Consul, but with no intention of helping the common people after being elected. Coriolanus was unwilling to be hypocritical. He disliked most common people, and he felt that he deserved to be Consul without any votes from the common people, and he did not care who knew it.

“It is a part that I shall blush in acting, and this custom might well be taken from the people,” Coriolanus said.

He did not believe that the common people ought to have votes in electing a Consul.

Brutus said to Sicinius, “Did you hear that?”

Coriolanus said, “Must I brag to the common people that thus I acted, and thus I did? Must I show them the no-longer-aching scars of healed wounds that I prefer to hide from them? Must I show them the scars as if I had received the scars only so that I could get their votes!”

“Do not insist on not observing the custom,” Menenius said to Coriolanus.

He then said, “We commit to you, Tribunes of the people, our intentions toward the common people, and to our noble Consul we wish all joy and honor.”

Menenius wanted the two Tribunes to speak positively to the common people they represented about electing Coriolanus Consul.

The Senators shouted, “To Coriolanus may all joy and

honor come!”

Cornets sounded. Everyone except Sicinius and Brutus exited.

Brutus said, “You see how Coriolanus intends to treat the common people.”

“May they perceive his intent!” Sicinius said. “He will request their votes from them, as if he were contemptuous that what he requested from them should be theirs to give.”

“Come, we’ll inform them of our proceedings here,” Brutus said. “I know that they are waiting for us at the marketplace.”

— 2.3 —

Seven or eight citizens stood talking together in the forum — an open-air plaza and marketplace.

The first citizen said, “Once and for all, if Coriolanus requires and asks for our voices of approval and our votes, we ought not to deny them to him.”

“We may, sir, if we will,” the second citizen said.

The third citizen said, “We have legal power in ourselves to deny him our votes, but it is a legal power that we have no permission and no moral power to use because if Coriolanus shows us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we need to metaphorically put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them; so, if he tells us about his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance and appreciation of them.”

The common people had received instructions from the two Tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus, to support Coriolanus. They had also received instructions to talk to Coriolanus in small groups rather than one big group. That way, Coriolanus

would have to ask many times for votes rather than ask just once.

The third citizen continued, “Ingratitude is monstrous, and for the multitude to be ungrateful and ingrate-ful would be to make a monster of the multitude. Since we are members of the multitude, we would be making ourselves out to be monstrous members.”

The first citizen said, “It won’t take much help to make the patricians think less of us than they already do. Remember, when we stood up for ourselves about the grain famine, Coriolanus himself did not refrain from calling us the many-headed multitude.”

“We have been called that by many people,” the third citizen said. “It’s not that some of our heads are brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our minds are so diversely colored, and I truly think that if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their agreement about one single route to fly would be to immediately fly to all the points of the compass.”

“Do you think so?” the second citizen asked. “Which way do you think my wit would fly?”

“Your wit will not as quickly go out as another man’s will,” the third citizen said. “Your wit is strongly wedged up in a blockhead, but if it were at liberty, it would surely go southward.”

Southward was thought to be a place of illness-causing vapors.

“Why that way?” the second citizen asked.

The third citizen replied, “To lose itself in a fog, where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth

part would return for conscience's sake, to help to get you a wife. You are such a blockhead that you need a wife to take care of you."

"You are never without your jokes," the second citizen said. "It's OK — have your little joke."

"Are you all resolved to give Coriolanus your votes?" the third citizen asked. "But that doesn't matter, for the majority carries the election even if a few people don't give him their vote. I say that if Coriolanus would favor and support the common people, there was never a worthier man."

Coriolanus arrived, wearing the customary clothing used to get votes. With him was Menenius.

The third citizen said, "Here comes Coriolanus, and he is wearing the gown of humility. Closely observe his behavior. We are not to stay all together, but to go to where he is standing, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests to individual citizens. Each of us will receive an individual honor in giving him our own votes with our own tongues: He will thank each of us individually for giving him our vote. Therefore follow me, and I will give you instructions about how you shall go to him."

"We will obey you," the common citizens said.

The common citizens exited.

In the middle of a conversation, Menenius said to Coriolanus, "Oh, sir, you are not right. Don't you know that the worthiest men have done this?"

"What must I say to the common citizens?" Coriolanus asked. "'I beg you, sir'? A plague upon it! I cannot bring my tongue to say such sentences as that or these: 'Look, sir,

at my wounds! I got them in my country's service, when a certain number of your brethren roared in fright and ran away from the noise of our own drums rather than stay and fight.' My tongue is not a horse that has been trained to obey. My tongue will not speak at the pace a trainer wants it to speak."

"Oh, me! Oh, the gods!" Menenius said. "You must not speak about that. You must ask the common citizens to think kindly about you."

"Think kindly about me!" Coriolanus said. "Hang them! I wish that they would forget me, like they forget the moral precepts that our clergymen throw away by casting them to the common citizens."

"You'll ruin everything," Menenius said. "I'll leave you now. Please, speak to them, I beg you, in a wholesome manner."

He exited.

By "wholesome," Menenius meant "decent," but Coriolanus pretended that he had meant "clean."

Coriolanus said, "I will ask them to wash their faces and to keep their teeth clean."

Two citizens walked over to him, and Coriolanus said, "So, here comes a brace — a pair — of citizens."

A third citizen then walked over to him.

Coriolanus said to the third citizen, "You know the cause, sir, of my standing here."

The third citizen said, "We do, sir; tell us what has brought you to it."

"My own desert."

Coriolanus believed that he deserved to be Consul.

“Your own desert?”

“Yes, but not my own desire.”

“Why not your own desire?” the third citizen asked.

“Sir, it was never my desire to trouble the poor with begging,” Coriolanus replied.

“You must know that if we give you anything, we hope to gain something from you,” the third citizen said.

“Well, then, please tell me your price for the Consulship,” Coriolanus said.

The first citizen replied, “The price is to ask for it kindly.”

The word “kindly” meant “courteously,” and also “with a recognition of kinship between you and us plebeians.”

“Kindly!” Coriolanus said. “Sir, I ask you to let me have it. I have wounds to show you, which you shall be permitted to see in private.”

He then said to the second citizen, “I want your good vote, sir; what do you say?”

“You shall have it, worthy sir,” the second citizen said.

“It’s a deal, sir,” Coriolanus said. “There’s in all two worthy votes I have begged. I have your alms. *Adieu.*”

Now that he had their votes, he wanted no more to do with them.

The third citizen said, “This is somewhat odd.”

The second citizen said, “If we had our votes back again — but it doesn’t matter.”

The citizens might have withheld their votes from

Coriolanus if they had them back again, or they might have made him grovel a little or a lot more.

The three citizens exited, and two new citizens arrived.

Coriolanus said to them, "Please tell me now, if it may agree with the tune of your voices that I may become Consul. I have here the customary gown."

"You have deserved nobly of your country," the fourth citizen said, "and you have not deserved nobly."

"What is the answer to your riddle?" Coriolanus asked.

"You have been a scourge to her enemies, and you have been a rod to her friends," the fourth citizen said. "You have not indeed loved the common people."

"You should judge me as being all the more virtuous because I have not been common in my love," Coriolanus said. "I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, as if they were my comrades-in-arms, in order to earn a dearer estimation of myself from them; it is a form of behavior they account gentle and noble, and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practice the insinuating nod and take off my hat to them most hypocritically and counterfeitly; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man and give it bountifully to the desirers. Therefore, I ask you to vote for me so I may become Consul."

Coriolanus was wrong about the common citizens. They wanted a friend in high office, not just someone who would treat them politely during the campaign and then ignore them after being elected to high office.

The fifth citizen said, "We hope to find that you are our friend, and therefore we give you our votes heartily."

"You have received many wounds for your country," the

fourth citizen said.

“I will not authenticate your knowledge by showing them to you,” Coriolanus said. “I will make much of your votes for they are important to me, and so I will trouble you no further.”

Both citizens said, “May the gods give you joy, sir, heartily!”

The two citizens exited.

“Very sweet votes!” Coriolanus said sarcastically, disliking having to ask the common citizens for their votes, which he wanted given to him without his having to ask for them. “Better it is to die, better it is to starve, than to beg for the reward that already we have deserved. Why should I stand here in this woolvish — like a wolf wearing sheep’s wool — toga, to beg their needless votes from every Tom, Dick, and Harry who appears? The Senators want me to be Consul, and that should be an end to the election — I should not need the votes of the plebeians! But custom calls for me to be here and to wear this woolen toga and to beg for votes. If we should do in all things whatever custom calls for, then the dust on ancient traditions would lie unswept, and mountainous error would be too highly heaped up for truth to see over it.”

To some extent, Coriolanus was correct. If Rome always followed ancient tradition, then it would still have a King. But by tradition the patricians had always had the power in Rome, and the plebeians felt that that ought not to be the case.

Coriolanus said to himself, “Rather than to fool it here in the forum like I am, let the high office and the honor go to a man who would willingly do this. But I am halfway through. I have endured the first half, and so the second half I will do.”

Three more citizens walked over to him.

Coriolanus said to himself, "Here come more votes."

He said loudly, "I want your votes. For your votes I have fought; I have stayed up at night and guarded you in return for your votes. For your votes I bear two dozen or so wounds. I have seen the sights and heard the sounds of thirty-six battles. For your votes I have done many things, some less, some more. I want your votes. Indeed, I want to be Consul."

The sixth citizen said, "Coriolanus has acted nobly, and he must not go without any honest man's vote."

"Therefore, let him be Consul," the seventh citizen said. "May the gods give him joy, and make him a good friend to the common people!"

The citizens said, "Amen, amen. May God save you, noble Consul!"

They exited.

"Worthy votes!" Coriolanus said.

Menenius arrived, accompanied by Sicinius and Brutus.

Menenius said to Coriolanus, "You have stood in the forum for your allotted time, and the Tribunes endow you with the people's voices of approval and votes. It remains that, wearing the official regalia, you at once meet the Senators."

"Is this done?" Coriolanus asked.

Sicinius replied, "You have discharged the custom of requesting votes. The people admit you to the office of Consul, and you are summoned to meet the Senators at once to ratify your election."

"Where?" Coriolanus asked. "At the Senate House?"

“Yes, there, Coriolanus,” Sicinius replied.

“May I change these garments?”

“You may, sir,” Sicinius replied.

“That I’ll do immediately; and, knowing myself again, I will go to the Senate House,” Coriolanus said.

“I’ll keep you company,” Menenius said to Coriolanus.

He then asked the two Tribunes, “Will you go along with us?”

“We will stay here and meet the common people,” Brutus replied.

Sicinius said, “Fare you well.”

Coriolanus and Menenius exited.

Sicinius said to Brutus, “He has the Consulship now, and by his looks I think it is dear to his heart.”

“Coriolanus wore his humble clothing with a proud heart,” Brutus said. “Will you dismiss the common people?”

Some citizens walked over to the two Tribunes.

“Hello, my masters!” Sicinius said. “Have you chosen to vote for Coriolanus?”

“He has our votes, sir,” the first citizen said.

“We pray to the gods that he may deserve your love and respect,” Brutus said.

“Amen, sir,” the second citizen said. “To my poor unworthy notice, he mocked us when he begged for our votes.”

“Certainly he jeered at us downright,” the third citizen said.

“No, it is his way of speaking,” the first citizen said. “He did not mock us.”

The second citizen said, “There is no one among us, except yourself, who doesn’t say that Coriolanus used us scornfully. He should have showed us his marks of merit, his wounds that he received for his country.”

“Why, so he did, I am sure,” Sicinius said.

“No, no,” the citizens replied. “No man saw them.”

“He said he had wounds,” the third citizen said, “which he could show in private; and with his hat, thus waving it in scorn, ‘I want to be Consul,’ says he. ‘Ancient custom, except by your votes, will not so permit me; give me your votes therefore.’ When we granted him our votes, he said, ‘I thank you for your votes — your most sweet votes. Now that you have left your votes with me, I have no further use for you.’ Was not this mockery?”

Sicinius asked, “Were you too ignorant to see it, or seeing it, were you of such childish friendliness that you gave your votes to him?”

Brutus asked, “Couldn’t you have told Coriolanus — as you were instructed to say — that when he had no power, but was only a petty servant to the state, he was your enemy and always spoke against your liberties and the rights that you bear in the body of the commonwealth, and now, arriving to a position of power and state authority, if he should still malignantly remain a steadfast foe to you the plebeians, your votes might be curses to yourselves?”

“You should have said that as his worthy deeds claim no less than what he stood for, so his gracious nature ought to have consideration for you in return for your votes and his gracious nature ought to transform his malice towards you into love and respect, speaking out for you as your patron.”

Sicinius said, “If you had said this, as you were previously advised to say, you would have tested his spirit and found out which way he was inclined — for you or against you. From him you would have plucked his gracious promise, which you might, as occasions had warranted, have held him to. Or else what you said would have galled his surly, arrogant nature, which does not easily endure any conditions tying him to anything. By so putting him in a rage, you would have been able to take advantage of his anger and passed by him, leaving him unelected.”

Brutus said, “Did you perceive that he solicited you in frank and open contempt when he needed your love and respect, and do you think that his contempt shall not be bruising to you, when he has power to crush you? Why didn’t your bodies have any heart among you? Or did you have tongues that cried out against the rule of reason and good sense?”

“Have you before now denied your votes to the asker?” Sicinius said. “And now again you have bestowed your voices of approval and votes — which candidates are supposed to plead for — to a person who did not ask for them, but instead mocked you.”

“Coriolanus has not been confirmed as Consul,” the third citizen said. “We may still deny him office.”

“And we will deny him office,” the second citizen said. “I’ll get five hundred voices to protest against him taking office.”

The first citizen said, “I will get twice five hundred citizens and their friends to add to your five hundred.”

Brutus said, “Go immediately, and tell those friends that they have chosen a Consul who will take from them their liberties and rights. This Consul will make them of no more voices — or votes — than dogs that are as often beaten for

barking as they are kept to do that barking.”

Brutus was saying that Coriolanus would expect the citizens to “bark” at the enemy during wartime, but if the citizens “barked” for civil rights, the new Consul would have them beaten.

“Let the citizens assemble,” Sicinius said, “and on a sounder judgment let all of them revoke your simple-minded election of Coriolanus as Consul. Emphasize Coriolanus’ pride, and his old hatred for you plebeians; in addition, don’t forget with what contempt he wore the humble suit of clothing and how in his suit of clothing he scorned you. But the respect you have for him, as you thought upon his services he had rendered to Rome, took away from you the apprehension of his present and proud carriage, which very sarcastically and without the gravitas a Consul needs, he fashioned after the inveterate hate he bears you. You respected him so much because of his military prowess that you did not see at first his haughty bearing that disqualifies him to be a Consul.”

Brutus said, “Lay the fault on us, your Tribunes; say that we urged that no obstruction should cause you not to support him, but that you must cast your votes for him.”

Sicinius said, “Say that you chose him more because we commanded you to than because you were guided by your own true emotions, and say that your minds, preoccupied with what you must do rather than with what you should do, made you go against the grain of your own desires to vote him in as Consul: Lay the fault on us.”

“Yes, don’t spare us,” Brutus said. “Say that we lectured to you. We told you how young he was when he began to serve his country, how long he continued to serve his country, and what stock he springs from — the noble family of Martius, from which family came Ancus Martius,

Numa's daughter's son, who, after great Hostilius, here in Rome was King. From the same noble family came Publius and Quintus, who had conduits constructed that brought our best water here. And the nobly named Censorinus, who was twice chosen Censor by the people, was his great ancestor."

Numa Pompilius was King of Rome from 715-673 B.C.E., Tullus Hostilius was King of Rome from 673-642 B.C.E., and Ancus Martius was King of Rome from 642-617 B.C.E. They were Rome's second, third, and fourth Kings.

Brutus and Sicinius knew that some of the people they had mentioned as being among Coriolanus' ancestors would worry the citizens. Some of his ancestors were Kings, and the common people would worry that Coriolanus, who was aristocratic and proud and who looked down upon the plebeians, would want to be King.

The job of a Censor in Rome was to keep the official list of all the citizens; the Censor also supervised public morals. Running afoul of the Censor would cause major problems for any plebeian unlucky enough to be in that position.

Brutus, however, wanted to protect his and Sicinius' butts. Despite bringing up things that they knew would worry the plebeians against Coriolanus and his ancestors, they did mention one good thing that two people Coriolanus was related to had done: the construction of the aqueducts to bring water to Rome.

A Consul can be a friend to the plebeians and do good things for them, but Coriolanus was not a friend to the plebeians.

Sicinius said, "One thus descended, who has in addition worked hard in his own right to achieve high office, we Tribunes commended to your remembrances and asked you to vote for, but you have found, metaphorically weighing in a set of scales his present proud bearing with his past, that

he's your fixed enemy, and therefore you revoke your sudden and hasty approbation."

Brutus said, "Say that you would never have elected Coriolanus as Consul — harp continually on that — except because of us Tribunes urging you to vote for him. Quickly, when you have gathered a good number of your fellow citizens who regret Coriolanus' election, go to the Capitol."

"We will do so," the citizens said. "Almost all repent the way they voted in this election."

The citizens exited.

Brutus said, "Let them go on. It is better to risk this mutiny than to wait for a greater mutiny — and a greater risk — that would, no doubt, occur later.

"If, as Coriolanus' nature is, he falls into a rage with their refusal to give him their votes, we will both observe and take advantage of his anger."

"Let's go to the Capitol," Sicinius said. "We will be there before the stream of the common people, and this mutiny shall seem, as partly it is, their own, although we have goaded them on to rebel."

Brutus and Sicinius had done a good job of covering their butts. The citizens would make clear to the patricians that the two Tribunes had urged them to vote for Coriolanus.

CHAPTER 3 (Coriolanus)

— 3.1 —

On a street in Rome walked Coriolanus, dressed as a Consul. With him were Menenius, many patricians, Cominius, Titus Lartius, and many other Senators. They were walking to the forum.

Coriolanus said, “So Tullus Aufidius has raised a new army?”

“He has, my lord,” Lartius said, “and it was that which caused our coming to terms swifter than we had expected to.”

“So then the Volscians stand as they did at first, before the most recent battle, ready, when time and occasion shall prompt them, to make inroads and raids upon Rome again,” Coriolanus said.

“They are worn out and exhausted, lord Consul,” Cominius said, “and so it is hardly likely that in our lifetimes we shall see their battle banners wave again.”

“Did you see Aufidius?” Coriolanus asked.

“On a guarantee of safe conduct, he came to me,” Lartius said, “and he cursed the Volscians because he said that they had so vilely yielded the town of Corioli to us. He has retired to Antium, the capital city of the Volscians.”

“Did he speak about me?” Coriolanus asked.

“He did, my lord,” Lartius said.

“What did he say?” Coriolanus asked.

“He spoke about how often he had met you in battle, sword

to sword. He said that of all things upon the Earth he hated you the most. He said that he would pawn his fortunes and possessions with no hope of ever recovering them provided that he might be called your vanquisher.”

“And he is living at Antium?” Coriolanus asked.

“Yes, at Antium,” Lartius replied.

“I wish I had a reason to seek him there, so I could oppose his hatred fully,” Coriolanus said.

He then said to Lartius, “Welcome home.”

The two Tribunes, Sicinius and Brutus, walked toward them.

Seeing them, Coriolanus said, “Look, these are the Tribunes of the people. They are the tongues of the common mouth; they are the advocates of the common people. I despise them because they dress themselves in authority, against all noble endurance. We patricians find them disgusting.”

“Go no further,” Sicinius said.

“What are you saying?” Coriolanus asked.

“It will be dangerous for you to go on,” Brutus said, “Go no further.”

“What is the reason for this change?” Coriolanus asked.

“What is the matter?” Menenius asked.

“Hasn’t Coriolanus been approved by both the nobles and the common people?” Cominius asked.

“Cominius, he has not,” Brutus said.

Coriolanus knew that the nobles had approved of his being elected Consul, so the common people must have changed

their minds and votes, like children would. He asked, “Have I had children’s voices of approval and their votes?”

“Tribunes, give way,” the first Senator said. “Coriolanus shall go to the marketplace.”

“The people are incensed against him,” Brutus said.

“Stop,” Sicinius said, “or all will fall into turmoil.”

“Are these your herding animals?” Coriolanus asked the two Tribunes. “Must these common people have votes, these common people who can give their votes and immediately take them back again? What are your offices? What are your duties? Since you are their mouths, why can’t you rule their teeth? Have you not set them on against me?”

Coriolanus was comparing the common people to animals. First, he compared them to a herd, and then he compared them to dogs that had been set on against a man — they had been ordered to attack a man the way that dogs attacked bears in bear-baitings.

“Be calm, be calm,” Menenius advised him.

“This is a planned, premeditated thing, and it grows by plot. Its purpose is to curb the will of the nobility. If we suffer it, we will live with people who cannot rule and will not ever be ruled.”

“Don’t call it a plot,” Brutus said. “The people cry that you mocked them, and recently, when grain was given them gratis, you complained; you scorned the suppliants for the people, and you called them time-servers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.”

“Why, this was known before the election,” Coriolanus said.

“Not to them all,” Brutus said.

“Have you informed them since then?” Coriolanus asked.

“What!” Brutus said, pretending to be shocked by such a question. “I inform them!”

“You are likely to do such business,” Coriolanus said.

“I am not unlikely, in every way, to do your business better than you do,” Brutus said.

“Why then should I be Consul?” Coriolanus said. “By yonder clouds, let me deserve so ill as you, and make me your fellow Tribune.”

Sicinius said to Coriolanus, “You show too much of that characteristic about which the people rise in revolt. If you will pass to where you are bound — the marketplace and the Consulship — you must inquire your way, which you are out of, with a gentler, more courteous spirit, or never be so noble as a Consul, nor join and cooperate with Brutus as a Tribune. To become Consul, you must treat the common people much better.”

“Let’s be calm,” Menenius advised.

“The common people have been deceived and misled,” Cominius said. “Proceed. This petty bickering is not suitable for Rome, nor has Coriolanus deserved this so dishonorable obstacle that has been laid treacherously in the plain way of his merit. Coriolanus deserves to be Consul.”

“You tell me about grain!” Coriolanus said to Brutus. “This was my speech, this is what I said, and I will speak it again —”

“Not now, not now,” Menenius said.

“Not in this heat, sir, now,” the first Senator said.

A hot day can make tempers rise, and so can a hot argument.

“Now, as I live, I will speak it again,” Coriolanus said. “As for my nobler friends, I beg their pardons. As for the mutable, rank-scented many, let them know that I do not flatter, and therefore they can use me to behold themselves. For them, I am a mirror, and I will let them know what they really are. I say again, in soothing and flattering the common people, we nourish against our Senate the cockle — the weeds — of rebellion, insolence, sedition, which we ourselves have plowed, sowed, and scattered, by mingling them with us, the honored number, who do not lack virtue, no, nor power, except that which they — the patricians — have given to beggars.”

“Say no more,” Menenius said.

“Say no more words, we beg you,” the first Senator said.

“What! No more!” Coriolanus said. “I have shed my blood for my country, not fearing outward force, and so my lungs shall coin words until their decay against these scabs, these common people, which we disdain should afflict us, yet we patricians as a group sought the precise way to catch them.”

“You speak of the common people as if you were a god able to punish them, and as if you were not a man of their infirmity,” Brutus said. “You speak as if you were a god, not a mortal.”

“It would be well that we let the people know it,” Sicinius said.

“Know what?” Menenius asked. “Coriolanus’ words spoken in anger?”

“Anger!” Coriolanus said. “Even if I were as patient as the midnight sleep, by Jove, everything I said would still be

what I think in my mind!”

“It is a mind that shall remain a poison where it is, and not poison any further,” Sicinius said.

He meant that Coriolanus would not be allowed to become Consul, and therefore would not have the influence that would allow him to spread what the two Tribunes considered to be the poison of his mind. Sicinius spoke as if he had the power to ensure that that happened.

“Shall remain!” Coriolanus said. “Do you hear this Triton of the minnows? Do you hear this big shot of the little people? Do you hear his absolute ‘shall’?”

Triton is a minor sea-god.

The absolute “shall” was Sicinius saying — or at least implying — that Coriolanus absolutely shall not be allowed to become Consul.

Cominius said, “What Sicinius said goes beyond the power of the Tribunes. He was out of order.”

Coriolanus said, “‘Shall’! Oh, good but very unwise patricians! Why, you grave but reckless Senators, have you thus allowed the many-headed monster Hydra — the plebeians — here to choose an officer, who with his peremptory ‘shall,’ being but the monster’s noisy horn, does not lack the spirit to say he’ll turn your current in a ditch, and make your channel his? He intends to use your power and your resources for his own purposes. If he has power, then bow down to him in your ignorance; if he has no power, then awaken and snap out of your dangerous lenity to the common people. If you are wise, then don’t be like common fools; if you are not wise, let the plebeians have cushions and sit by you as fellow Senators.

“You are plebeians, if they are Senators — and they are no

less than Senators, when, with the voices of the plebeians and the patricians blended together, the greatest taste most palates theirs. The taste of the legislation passed will be most pleasing to the plebeians; in other words, you will see that the plebeians have more power than the patricians. The plebeians choose their magistrate, this Tribune, and he is such a one as puts his 'shall,' his popular 'shall' of the plebeians against a graver bench — the Senate — than ever frowned in Greece. By Jove himself, it makes the Consuls base and of lower rank, and my soul aches to know, when two authorities are roused up, and neither is supreme, how soon destruction and chaos may enter between the gap of both and use the one to destroy the other.”

Cominius said, “Well, let’s go on to the marketplace.”

Coriolanus said, “Whoever gave that advice to give the plebeians the grain of the storehouse gratis, as it used to happen sometimes in Greece —”

Menenius said, “Well, well, no more of that.”

“— though there in Greece the people had more absolute power,” Coriolanus said, “I say that they nourished disobedience and fed the ruin of the state.”

“Why, shall the people give one who speaks like this their vote?” Brutus said. “Should the common people vote for someone like Coriolanus?”

“I’ll give my reasons for my belief, reasons that are much worthier than their votes,” Coriolanus said. “They know the grain was not our recompense to them for good service rendered. They are well assured that they never did service for the grain. After being drafted into the war, even when the navel — the vital center — of the state was threatened, they would not thread the gates and fight. This kind of ‘service’ did not deserve grain gratis. During the war, their mutinies and revolts, wherein they showed the most valor

— certainly more valor than they showed in actual battles against the enemy — did not speak well for them. The accusation that they have often made against the Senate, that the patricians hoarded grain, has no basis in fact, and this accusation could never be the motive of our so generous donation. Well, what then? How shall this monster of many stomachs digest and understand the Senate's courtesy? Let deeds express what's likely to be their words: 'We requested the grain, we plebeians outnumber the patricians, and because the patricians truly feared us, they gave us what we demanded.' Thus we debase the nature of our seats and make the rabble call our cares fears, and this will in time break open the locks of the Senate and bring in the crows to peck the eagles."

"Come, that's enough," Menenius said.

"It's more than enough, with over-measure," Brutus said.

"No, take more," Coriolanus said. "What may be sworn by, both divine and human, seal and confirm what I end with! This double worship, this divided authority of patrician and plebeian, where with reason the patricians disdain the plebeians, where without any reason the plebeians insult the patricians, where gentry, title, wisdom, cannot reach an agreement except by the yea and nay of the ignorance of common people — this divided authority of patrician and plebeian must neglect real necessities, and give way the while to unstable trivialities.

"When planning is barred like this, it follows that nothing is done according to plan. Therefore, I beg you — you who wish to be less fearful than discerning, you who love the constitution of the government more than you fear a violent change that is necessary to preserve it, you who prefer a noble life to a long life, and you who wish to risk curing a sick body with a dangerous medicine when the body is sure to die without it — I beg you to at once pluck out the

multitudinous tongue and deprive the common people of a say in the government. Don't let the common people lick the sweet that is their poison. Your dishonor in granting power to the plebeians mangles true judgment and bereaves the state of that integrity and unity that should become and dignify it because since the plebeians have power, the Senate does not have the power to do the good it would do for the evil common people who now control it."

Brutus said, "Coriolanus has now said enough."

"He has spoken like a traitor, and he shall be held accountable for it as traitors are," Sicinius said.

"You wretch, may despite overwhelm you!" Coriolanus said. "What should the common people do with these bald — devoid of hair and of intelligence — Tribunes? The common people lean and depend on the Tribunes, and they fail in their obedience to the greater bench — the Senate. In a rebellion, when what is not right but could not be avoided became law, the Tribunes were elected. In a better hour, let it be said that what was the right thing to do was in fact done, and now let us throw the Tribunes' power in the dust."

"This is manifest treason!" Brutus shouted.

"Make this man a Consul!" Sicinius said. "No!"

"Aediles, come here!" Brutus shouted.

Aediles could make arrests.

An Aedile appeared.

Brutus pointed at Coriolanus and said, "That man needs to be arrested!"

Knowing that one Aedile could not accomplish that task, Sicinius ordered him, "Go, call the common people."

Sicinius then said to Coriolanus, “In the name of the common people, I myself arrest you because you are a traitorous rebel, an enemy to the public commonwealth. Obey me, I order you, and follow me to your trial.”

“Get away from me, you old goat!” Coriolanus said.

The Senators said, “We’ll be the surety for him. We’ll guarantee that he shows up in court.”

“Aged sir, keep your hands off him,” Cominius said.

“Get away from me, you rotten thing,” Coriolanus said, “or I shall shake your bones out of your garments!”

“Help, citizens!” Sicinius shouted.

A rabble of plebeian citizens arrived with the Aediles.

“On both sides we need more respect,” Menenius said.

Sicinius pointed to Coriolanus and said to the Aediles and the common people, “Here’s the man who would take from you all your power.”

“Seize him, Aediles!” Brutus ordered.

“Down with him! Down with him!” the plebeians shouted.

The Senators shouted, “We need weapons! Weapons! We need weapons!”

All was a mass of confusion, with everyone shouting.

“Tribunes!”

“Patricians!”

“Citizens!”

“What!”

“Sicinius!”

“Brutus!”

“Coriolanus!”

“Citizens!”

“Peace! Peace! Peace!”

“Stay! Wait! Peace!”

“What is going to happen?” Menenius said. “I am out of breath; ruin and destruction are near; I cannot speak. You Tribunes, talk to the people! Coriolanus, be calm! Speak, good Sicinius.”

“Hear me, people,” Sicinius shouted. “Peace!”

“Let’s hear our Tribune,” the plebeians shouted. “Peace! Speak! Speak! Speak!”

“You are on the point of losing your liberties,” Sicinius said to the plebeians. “Martius would take them all from you — Martius, whom recently you have voted for Consul.”

This was not what Menenius had wanted Sicinius to say.

Menenius said, “Damn! Damn! Damn! This is the way to kindle a fire, not to quench one.”

The first Senator said, “This is the way to unbuild the city and to lay all flat.”

“What is the city but the people?” Sicinius asked.

“True,” the plebeians shouted. “The people are the city.”

“By the consent of all,” Brutus said, “we were established the people’s magistrates. We were elected Tribunes.”

“You so remain,” the plebeians said.

“And so you are likely to remain,” Menenius said.

“That is the way to lay the city flat,” Coriolanus said. “That is the way to bring the roof to the foundation, and take that which is still orderly laid out and turn it into heaps and piles of ruin.”

“This talk deserves death,” Sicinius said.

“Either let us maintain and uphold our authority, or let us lose it,” Brutus said. “We do here pronounce, upon the part of the common people, by whose power we were elected to wield power on their behalf, that Martius deserves immediate death.”

Brutus did not refer to Martius by his honorable new name: Coriolanus.

“Therefore lay hold of him,” Sicinius ordered the Aediles. “Carry him to the Tarpeian rock, and from that cliff throw him down to his destruction.”

“Aediles, seize him!” Brutus ordered.

“Surrender, Martius, surrender!” the plebeians shouted.

“Listen to me speak one word,” Menenius said. “I beg you, Tribunes, hear me speak a single word.”

“Quiet! Quiet!” the Aediles shouted.

Menenius said to Brutus, “Be that which you seem to be, truly your country’s friend, and temperately proceed to what you would thus violently redress.”

Brutus replied, “Sir, those cold ways, which seem like prudent helps, are very poisonous where the disease is violent.”

Brutus ordered the Aediles, “Lay hands upon him, and carry him to the rock.”

“No, I’ll die here,” Coriolanus said. He drew his sword and

said, "Some among you have seen me fight. Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen me do to others. Fight me if you dare."

"Down with that sword!" Menenius said to Coriolanus.

Menenius then said, "Tribunes, withdraw for awhile."

Brutus ordered, "Lay hands upon him."

Cominius shouted, "Help Martius! Help him, all of you who are noble! Help him, young and old!"

"Down with him! Down with him!" the plebeians shouted.

The two sides fought, and the Tribunes, Aediles, and plebeians were beaten back. They retreated.

Menenius said to Coriolanus, "Go, get you to your house! Be gone! Leave! All will be lost and ruined, if you don't leave!"

"Get you gone," the second Senator said.

"Stand fast," Cominius said. "Let's make a stand. We have as many friends as enemies."

"Shall it come to that?" Menenius asked.

"May the gods forbid!" the first Senator said. "Please, noble friend, Coriolanus, go home to your house; leave it to us to cure this disease."

"Because this is a sore upon us," Menenius said, "you cannot treat yourself. Leave, I beg you."

Cominius said to Coriolanus, "Come, sir, come along with us."

Coriolanus said about the plebeians, "I wish that they were barbarians — as they are, although they were littered in Rome. I wish that they were not Romans — as they are not,

although they were calved in the porch of the Capitol building —”

“Leave,” Menenius said. “Don’t express your worthy rage with your tongue. One time will owe another — another time will come that will make up for this time.”

Coriolanus said, “On fair ground I could beat forty of them.”

Cominius said, “I myself could take on a brace — a pair — of the best of them. Yes, I myself could take on the two Tribunes. But now the odds are against us — they are beyond calculation, and manhood is called foolery when it stands against a falling building. Will you leave from here before the ragtag crowd returns? Their rage rends like obstructed waters that flow over the banks that normally hold them in.”

“Please, be gone,” Menenius said to Coriolanus. “I’ll try whether my old intelligent, good judgment is in fashion with those who have but little. This quarrel must be patched with cloth of any color. I need to find a way — any way that works — to talk us out of this mess.”

“Let’s leave,” Cominius said to Coriolanus.

Coriolanus and Cominius exited.

The first patrician said, “This man, Coriolanus, has marred his fortune.”

“His nature is too noble for the world,” Menenius said. “He would not flatter Neptune even if it would get him possession of Neptune’s trident, and he would not flatter Jove even if it got him Jove’s power to thunder.”

Neptune was the god of the sea; a symbol of his power was his trident — his three-pronged spear.

Jove was Jupiter, King of the gods. His weapon of choice was the thunderbolt.

Menenius continued, “His heart’s his mouth. He expresses in words wherever he feels and holds nothing back.”

A proverb of the time stated, “What the heart thinks the tongue expresses.”

According to Ecclesiasticus 21:26, “*The heart of fools is in their mouth: but the mouth of the wise is in their heart*” (King James Version).

Menenius continued, “Whatever his breast forges, that is what his tongue must vent and express. And, when he is angry, he forgets that he ever heard the name of death.”

He heard some noises; the plebeians were returning.

He said, “Here’s goodly work!”

The second patrician said, “I wish they were in bed!”

“I wish they were in the Tiber River!” Menenius said. “What the Hell! Why couldn’t Coriolanus speak civilly to them?”

Brutus and Sicinius returned, along with the rabble of plebeian citizens.

Sicinius said, referring to Coriolanus, “Where is this viper who would depopulate the city and be every man himself?”

“You worthy Tribunes —” Menenius began.

Sicinius interrupted, “He shall be thrown down from the Tarpeian rock with rigorous, pitiless hands. He has resisted the law, and therefore the law shall scorn him by denying him any trial other than the severity of the public power that he so sets at naught.”

The first citizen said, “He shall well know that the noble Tribunes are the people’s mouths, and we the people are the Tribunes’ hands.”

The citizens said, “He shall, that’s certain.”

“Sir, sir —” Menenius began.

“Be quiet!” Sicinius ordered.

Menenius said, “Do not cry havoc, where you should hunt only with modest warrant.”

To cry havoc is to give the command to kill indiscriminately, not sparing the rich nobles. Menenius was saying that the Tribunes did not have the authority to cry havoc; their authority was much less.

Sicinius said, “Sir, how comes it that you have helped to make this rescue?”

He was using “rescue” in a legal sense — Menenius had helped Coriolanus to escape the legal authorities who had arrested him. Of course, force had been used in this escape.

“Hear me speak,” Menenius said. “I know the Consul’s worthiness, and I can also name his faults —”

“Consul!” Sicinius said. “What Consul?”

“The Consul Coriolanus,” Menenius replied.

“He a Consul!” Brutus said.

“No! No! No! No! No!” the citizens shouted.

“If, with the Tribunes’ permission, and yours, good people, I may be heard, I would like to say a word or two,” Menenius said. “Listening a moment to me shall cause you no further harm than a little loss of time.”

“Speak briefly then,” Sicinius said, “for we are determined

to execute this viperous traitor.”

People in this society believed that vipers were born by eating their way out of their mother’s body. Vipers were symbols of treachery.

Sicinius continued, “To banish him from Rome would be but one danger, and to keep him here in Rome would mean our certain death; therefore, it is decreed that he dies tonight.”

The “one danger” of banishment that Sicinius was thinking of was a bad relationship between Coriolanus’ family and the plebeians.

Menenius said, “Now may the good gods forbid that our renowned Rome, whose gratitude towards her deserving children is enrolled in Jove’s own book, should now, like an unnatural dam, eat up her own!”

A dam is an animal mother.

“He’s a disease that must be cut away,” Sicinius said.

“Oh, he’s a limb that has only a disease,” Menenius said. “It would be mortal to cut it off and amputate it; to cure it is easy. What has he done to Rome that deserves death? He has killed our enemies, and he has lost blood — the blood he has lost, I dare to say, is more by many an ounce than the blood that he has in his body now — he dropped his blood for his country. And if he were to lose what blood he has left because his country took it from him, then all of us — all who do it and all who allow it to be done — would bear a brand, a mark of infamy, until the end of the world.”

Genesis 4:15 states about Cain, who murdered Abel, his brother, “*And the LORD said unto him [Cain], Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any*

finding him should kill him” (King James Version).

The sign for Cain was a mark of infamy, although it protected him. Exodus 20:13 states, “*Thou shalt not kill*” (King James Version). Modern translations often state, “*You shall not murder.*” Murder is morally wrong, and although Cain had sinned by murdering Abel, God did not want the violence to be perpetuated, and so God protected Cain’s life.

Sicinius said, “What you said is clean *kam*. It is completely crooked.”

“*Kam*” is a Welsh word for “crooked.”

Brutus said, “It is completely awry. When he loved his country, it honored him.”

Menenius said, “The service of the foot, after it has become infected with gangrene, is not at that time respected for what it was before it was infected.”

“We’ll listen no more to you,” Brutus said. “Pursue him to his house, and pluck him out of it, lest his infection, being of a catching nature, spreads further.”

“One word more, one word,” Menenius said. “This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find the harm of unthinking swiftness, will too late tie leaden weights to its heels. Swift rage, unaccompanied by thought, leads to bad consequences. Proceed by the process of law, lest factions break out — because Coriolanus is beloved by many — and Romans sack great Rome.”

Brutus began, “If that were true —”

“What are you saying?” Sicinius said. “Have we not had a taste of Martius’ ‘obedience’? Our Aediles smote? Ourselves resisted? Come on!”

“Consider this,” Menenius said. “He has been bred in the wars ever since he could draw a sword, and he is ill schooled in refined language; he throws good flour and bad bran — good words and bad words — together without distinction. Give me permission, and I’ll go to him, and undertake to bring him to where he shall peacefully answer the charges against him in a lawful courtroom, even if the outcome means the utmost peril to him — even if the outcome is being sentenced to death.”

“Noble Tribunes,” the first Senator said, “it is the humane way: The other course of action will prove too bloody, and the end of it is unknown to the beginning. You don’t know how it will end.”

“Noble Menenius,” Sicinius said, “you then act as the people’s officer. You bring Martius to the court to stand trial.”

Sicinius then ordered, “Masters, lay down your weapons.”

Brutus said to Sicinius, “Don’t go home. This needs to be done quickly.”

Sicinius said to Menenius, “Meet us in the marketplace. We’ll wait for you there, where, if you don’t bring Martius, we’ll proceed in our first way: We will find him and execute him.”

“I’ll bring him to you,” Menenius replied.

He said to the Senators, “Let me ask for your company: Coriolanus must come to the marketplace, or the worst will follow.”

The first Senator said, “Please, let’s go to him.”

— 3.2 —

Coriolanus talked with other patricians in a room of his

house.

Coriolanus said, “Let them pull all Rome down about my ears, give me death on the wheel or at wild horses’ heels, or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock, so that the precipice stretches down beyond the range of sight, yet I will always be like this to them. I will continue to act as I always have.”

He was unwilling to change even if it meant that Rome must lie in ruins or that he would be executed either by being tied to a wheel and being beaten to death or by having his limbs tied to four horses that then rode away in different directions.

“You do the nobler act by doing this,” a patrician said. “It is better to act like the patrician you are than to bow down to the plebeians.”

Coriolanus said, “I wonder that my mother does not approve more of my actions, for she has been accustomed to call the plebeians woolen vassals — poor people who wear coarse clothing made of wool. She also called the plebeians things created to buy and sell with coins of little value, to show bare heads in assemblies after taking off their hats to show respect to their betters, to yawn, to be still and to wonder, when one of my rank stood up to speak about peace or war.”

While he was talking, his mother, Volumnia, entered the room.

Seeing her, Coriolanus said, “I am talking about you. Why did you wish me to be milder when talking to the plebeians’ Tribunes? Would you have me be false to my nature? You should rather say that I should play the man I am. It is better for you to advise me to be myself.”

“Oh, sir, sir, sir,” Volumnia said. “I wish that you had put your power well on, before you had worn it out,”

metaphorically comparing the Consulship to clothing.

She continued, "It would have been better for you to have officially been declared Consul before you began to act like yourself. Now your Consulship is gone."

"Let it go," Coriolanus said.

"You might have been enough the man you are, with striving less to be so," Volumnia said. "You could have been the man you are without showing so openly your contempt for the two Tribunes. Lesser had been the thwartings of your purposes and inclinations, if you had not shown the plebeians how you were disposed before they lacked the power to cross and thwart you. If you had been officially declared Consul, the two Tribunes would not have been able to stop you from being yourself."

"Let them hang," Coriolanus said.

"Yes, and burn, too," Volumnia said.

Menenius and some Senators entered the room.

"Come, come," Menenius said to Coriolanus. "You have been too rough, somewhat too rough. You must return and mend things."

"There's no remedy," the first Senator said. "You must do that, for if you don't, our good city will be cloven in the middle, divide into hostile factions, and perish."

"Please," Volumnia said to Coriolanus, "listen to him. I have a heart as little yielding and submissive as yours, but I have still a brain that leads my use of anger to better advantage. My brain lets me know the right time to show my anger."

"Well said, noble woman," Menenius said. "Before he should thus stoop to the herd, except that the violent

feverous seizure of the time craves it as medicine for the whole state, I would put on my armor, which because of my old age I can scarcely wear. But because of the times we live in, he must do what he does not want to do.”

“What must I do?” Coriolanus asked.

“Return to the Tribunes,” Menenius replied.

“Well, what then?” Coriolanus asked. “What then?”

“Repent what you have spoken,” Menenius replied.

“Repent for them!” Coriolanus said. “I cannot do it for the gods, so must I then do it for the plebeians?”

“You are too uncompromising,” Volumnia said, “though therein you can never be too noble, except when crises declare themselves. I have heard you say that honor and craftiness, like inseparable friends, grow together in wartime. Grant that, and then tell me what each of them loses by the other that makes it impossible for the two to be inseparable friends in peacetime.”

“Bah! Bah!” Coriolanus said.

“On the contrary, she asked a good question,” Menenius said.

“If it is honorable in your wars to be deceitful in order to achieve your most important goals, how is it less or worse to use deceitfulness in peacetime since the use of deceit is necessary both in war and in peace?” Volumnia asked.

“Why are you urging this?” Coriolanus asked. “Why are you urging me to be deceitful?”

“Because now it is incumbent on you to speak to the common people,” Volumnia said. “You must not say what your own feelings make you want to say, and you must not say those things that your heart prompts you to say; instead,

you must use such words that are only learned by rote in your tongue, although such words are only bastard syllables that have nothing whatsoever to do with what you are truly thinking.

“Now, this use of deceit no more dishonors you at all than to capture a town with gentle words, a town whose capture otherwise would make you trust to the fortune of war and to hazard much blood.

“I would be deceitful and appear to be what I am not if my honor required the use of deceit to protect my fortunes and my friends. In saying this, I am the representative of your wife, your son, these Senators, and the nobles. But you prefer to show the louts of Rome how you can frown than to spend a fawning look and a fawning word upon them so that you can get their friendship and safeguard that which the lack of their friendship might ruin. You prefer to frown at the plebeians rather than to act civilly to them so that you get their support and safeguard both your life and your Consulship.”

“Noble lady!” Menenius said. “Come, go with us; speak civilly to the Tribunes. You may heal not only what is dangerous now, but also the loss of what is past. You may not only protect Coriolanus’ life now, but also get back for him his Consulship.”

Volumnia acted out what she wanted her son to do as she described the actions: “I beg you now, my son, go to them, with this hat in your hand, and thus far having held it out ... play along with them ... with your knee kissing the stones ... for in such business action is eloquence, gestures speak more persuasively than words, and the eyes of the ignorant are more learned than their ears ... nodding your head and often bowing in all directions, thus correcting your proud heart, and making it as humble as the ripest mulberry that will not endure the handling.”

Mulberries are so soft when ripe that they are crushed when they are picked. Because of this, they became a symbol for submissiveness.

Volumnia continued, “Then say to them that you are their soldier, and because you were bred in broils and raised in wars, you do not have the soft way of acting that, you confess, it would be suitable for you to use — just as they claim — when you ask them for their good friendship, but you will adapt yourself, truly, and be hereafter their friend, so far as you have power and person.”

“If you do this, just as she said,” Menenius said, “why, the plebeians’ hearts would be yours, for they give pardons as freely as they speak words to little purpose.”

“Please,” Volumnia said, “go now, and be ruled by my advice, although I know you would rather follow your enemy into a fiery gulf than flatter him in a ladies’ chamber.”

She looked up and said, “Here comes Cominius.”

Cominius walked over to them and said, “I have been in the marketplace; and, sir, it is fitting that you get yourself a strong party of armed supporters, or that you defend yourself by calmness of words and actions, or that you defend yourself by absence. You need bodyguards, you need to placate the plebeians with your words and actions, or you need to keep away from the marketplace. Everything is in upheaval; all the plebeians are angry.”

“Only fair speech will work,” Menenius said. “Coriolanus must speak civilly to the plebeians.”

“I think that will work, if Coriolanus can restrain his spirit enough to do that,” Cominius said.

“He must, and he will,” Volumnia said.

She said to Coriolanus, "Please, say now that you will, and then go and do it."

"Must I go show the plebeians my unbarbed scone — my uncovered head?" Coriolanus asked. "Must I take off my hat and show them respect? Must I with base tongue give my noble heart a lie that it must bear? Well, I will do it. Yet, if there were but only this body to lose — this body that will fill a single plot of earth when I die, this clay that is Martius, the plebeians should grind it to dust and throw it against the wind."

Something that Coriolanus valued more than his life was at stake: the approval of his mother.

Coriolanus continued, "Go to the marketplace! You have now given me such a part to play that I can never perform convincingly."

"Come, come, we'll prompt you," Cominius said.

Volumnia said, "Please, sweet son, you have said that my praises made you first a soldier, so in order to have my praise for this, perform a part you have not played before. Do this for me."

"Well, I must do it," Coriolanus said. "Go away, my natural temperament, and let some harlot's spirit possess me! Let my throat of war, which harmonized with my drum, be turned into a piping voice as small in volume and as high in pitch as that of a eunuch or the virgin voice that lulls babies asleep! Let the smiles of knaves camp in my cheeks, and let schoolboys' tears obstruct my eyes! Let a beggar's tongue make motion through my lips, and let my armed knees, which bowed and bent only while in my stirrups, bend like the knees of a beggar who has received an alms!"

As he spoke, he grew angrier and angrier, and now he said, "I will *not* do it, lest I cease to honor my own truth and by

my body's action teach my mind a most irremovable and base degradation.”

“Do as you choose, then,” Volumnia said. “For me, your parent, to beg for anything from you is more to my dishonor than it would be for you to beg for anything from the plebeians.

“Let all go to ruin. Let your mother rather feel your pride than fear your dangerous obstinacy, for I mock at death with as big a heart as yours. Do as you wish. Your valiantness comes from me, for you sucked it from my breasts, but your excessive pride comes from yourself.”

“Please, be calm,” Coriolanus said. “Mother, I am going to the marketplace. Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves, I'll climb on a platform and lie and cheat their hearts from them, and I will come home beloved by all the tradesmen in Rome. Look, I am going. Give my kind regards to my wife. I'll return as Consul, or never again trust what my tongue can do in the way of flattery.”

“Do as you will,” Volumnia said.

She exited.

“Let's go!” Cominius said. “The Tribunes are waiting for you. Prepare yourself to answer them mildly, for they are prepared with accusations that I hear are stronger than those already charged against you.”

“The word is ‘mildly,’” Coriolanus said. “Please, let's go. Let them invent accusations against me. I will answer in accordance with my honor.”

“Yes, but also mildly,” Menenius said.

“Well, mildly let be it then,” Coriolanus replied. “Mildly!”

Sicinius and Brutus spoke together in the marketplace.

Brutus said, “We will attack him with all the force we can on this point: Coriolanus seeks tyrannical power. If he evades us there, we will emphasize his malice toward the common people, and that the plunder gotten when he invaded the territory of the Antiates was never distributed among the soldiers.”

An Aedile walked over to them.

Brutus asked the Aedile, “Will Coriolanus come?”

“He’s coming,” the Aedile replied.

“Who is accompanying him?” Brutus asked.

“Old Menenius, and those Senators who have always favored him.”

Sicinius asked the Aedile, “Do you have a catalogue of all the votes that we have procured set down by majority vote?”

The two Tribunes were rigging things in the plebeians’ favor. There were two ways of voting. Voting by tribes involved majority rule. Each tribe would vote according to what the majority in that tribe wanted. Since the plebeians outnumbered the patricians, this method of voting favored the plebeians. Another method of voting gave more weight to wealthy voters than impoverished voters and so favored the patricians.

“I have it,” the Aedile replied. “It is ready.”

“Have you collected the voters by tribes?” Sicinius asked.

“I have,” the Aedile replied.

“Bring the people here to the marketplace immediately,” Sicinius said, “and when they hear me say, ‘It shall be so in

the right and strength of the common people,' whether it be for death, for fine, or for banishment, then if I say 'Fine' let them cry 'Fine,' and if I say 'Death' let them cry 'Death.' The common people must insist on their long-established rights and prerogatives and on the exercise of power in the truth of their cause."

"I shall inform them," the Aedile said.

Brutus said, "And when at such time they have begun to cry out what we have ordered them to cry out, let them not cease, but with a confused din force the immediate execution of whatever punishment we happen to sentence Coriolanus to."

"Very well," the Aedile said.

Sicinius said, "Make them be strong, and make them be ready for this cue whenever we happen to give it to them."

"Go and do these things," Brutus said.

The Aedile exited.

Brutus said, "Let's immediately make him angry. He has been used always to conquer, and to have his pennyworth of answering back. Once he is angry, he cannot be reined again and returned to temperance. Once he is angry, he speaks what's in his heart; and what is in his heart seems likely — with our help — to break his neck."

Sicinius looked up and said, "Well, here he comes."

Coriolanus, Menenius, and Cominius, along with Senators and other patricians, walked into the marketplace.

"Speak calmly, I beg you," Menenius said to Coriolanus.

"Yes, like an hostler, a stableman, who for the poorest coin will endure being called a knave so many times that it would fill up the pages of a book," Coriolanus replied to

Menenius.

He then said loudly so all could hear him, “May the honored gods keep Rome safe, and may they keep the chairs of justice occupied by worthy men! May they plant love among us! May they fill our large temples with the ceremonies of peace, and may they not fill our streets with war!”

“Amen, amen,” the first Senator said.

“That is a noble wish,” Menenius said.

The Aedile returned, leading the plebeians.

Sicinius ordered, “Draw near, you common people.”

“Listen to your Tribunes,” the Aedile ordered. “Listen to them. Be quiet, I say!”

“First, hear me speak,” Coriolanus said.

The two Tribunes replied, “Well, speak. Quiet, everyone!”

“Shall I be charged any further than this present time?” Coriolanus asked. “Will everything be determined here?”

“I ask you,” Sicinius said, “whether you submit yourself to the people’s voices. Do you recognize the authority of their officers and are you willing to suffer lawful censure for such crimes as shall be proved upon you?”

Coriolanus paused and then said, “I am willing. I agree to all of those things.”

“Citizens,” Menenius said, “Coriolanus says that he is willing. Consider the military service he has done in war, and think upon the wounds his body bears, which show like graves in the holy churchyard.”

“It is as if I were scratched by briars,” Coriolanus said.

“They are scars that will make people laugh, not cry.”

Menenius said, “Consider further, that when he speaks not like a citizen, you find him like a soldier: Do not take his rougher accents for malicious sounds, but as I say, take them as being such as become a soldier, rather than as showing malice toward you.”

“Well, well, say no more,” Cominius said.

Coriolanus asked, “Why is it that having been elected Consul with all your votes, I am so dishonored that the very same hour I was made Consul you take the Consulship away from me?”

“You answer to us,” Sicinius said. “We do not answer to you. We will ask the questions. You are the one on trial.”

“Speak, then,” Coriolanus replied. “It is true that I ought to answer the charges. That is why I am here.”

Sicinius said, “We charge that you have contrived to take from Rome all established political offices and you have contrived to insinuate yourself into possession of a tyrannical power. On account of these actions, you are a traitor to the people.”

Instantly angry, Coriolanus said, “What! Traitor!”

“Speak temperately,” Menenius said. “Remember your promise.”

“May the fires in the lowest Hell enfold the common people!” Coriolanus said to Sicinius. “You call me their traitor, you insulting Tribune! If twenty thousand deaths sat within your eyes, and if your hand clutched as many millions of deaths, and if in your lying tongue were both numbers of deaths, I would say ‘You lie’ to you with a voice as freely, openly, and frankly as I pray to the gods.”

“Do you hear this, people?” Sicinius asked.

“To the rock, to the rock with him!” the plebeians shouted.

They wanted the death penalty for Coriolanus.

“Quiet!” Sicinius ordered. “We do not need to add new charges against him. What you have seen him do and heard him speak — beating your officers, cursing yourselves, opposing laws with strokes of his sword, and here defying those whose great power must try him — even this, which is so criminal that it is worthy of the death penalty, deserves the most extreme death.”

Brutus said, “But since he has served Rome well —”

“What are you babbling about service?” Coriolanus asked.

“I am talking about something that I know,” Brutus said.

“You?” Coriolanus asked.

Brutus was saying that he knew something about civil service, but Coriolanus believed that military service was much more valuable and much more worthy of respect.

“Is this how you keep the promise that you made your mother?” Menenius asked Coriolanus.

“Know, please —” Cominius said.

Coriolanus interrupted, “I’ll know no further. Let them pronounce against me the sentence of the steep Tarpeian death, vagabond exile, flogging, being imprisoned and starving to death with only one grain of wheat to eat per day. I would not buy their mercy at the price of one fair word nor check my courage for what they can give, even if I could have it by saying ‘Good morning’ to them.”

Sicinius said, “Inasmuch as he has, as much as in him lies, from time to time shown malice against the people, seeking

means to pluck away their power, and he has now at last given hostile strokes of his sword, not only in the presence of dreaded justice, but also on the ministers who distribute that justice, we immediately banish him in the name of the people and in the power of us the Tribunes from our city. He must never again enter our gates of Rome or he will be thrown down from the Tarpeian cliff. In the people's name, I say it shall be so."

The plebeians shouted, "It shall be so! It shall be so! Let him leave Rome! He's banished, and it shall be so!"

Cominius said, "Hear me, my masters, and my common friends —"

"Coriolanus has been sentenced; there's nothing more to be heard," Sicinius said.

"Let me speak," Cominius said. "I have been Consul, and I can show for Rome her enemies' marks upon me. I love my country's good with a respect more tender, more holy and profound, than my own life, my dear wife's reputation, her womb's increase and treasure of my loins — our children. Then if I would speak that —"

"We know your drift," Sicinius said. "Speak what?"

"There's no more to be said, except that Coriolanus is banished," Brutus said, "as an enemy to the people and his country. It shall be so: He shall leave Rome."

"It shall be so!" the plebeians shouted. "It shall be so!"

"You common cry — pack — of curs!" Coriolanus shouted. "I hate your breath as I hate the reeking vapor of the rotten swamps! I prize your friendship as I prize the dead carcasses of unburied men that corrupt my air! I BANISH YOU! I allow you to remain here with your uncertainty! Let every feeble rumor shake your hearts! Let

your enemies, with the nodding of the plumes on their helmets fan you into despair! Continue to have the power to banish your defenders until the only ones left are you, who are enemies to yourselves! Eventually, your ignorance, which you won't know you have until you experience its effects, will deliver you as very abject and humbled captives to some nation that won you without a battle — without blows!

“Despising, because of you, this city of Rome, thus I turn my back. There is a world elsewhere.”

Coriolanus exited. With him went Cominius, Menenius, the Senators, and the other patricians.

The Aedile shouted, “The common people's enemy is gone! He is gone!”

“Our enemy is banished!” the plebeians shouted. “He is gone! Yea! Yea!”

They threw their hats into the air.

Sicinius said, “Go, see him exit through the city gates, and follow him, as he has followed you, with all disdain and scorn. Give him deserved vexation and torment. Let a guard go with us through the city to protect us if need be from the patricians.”

“Come on! Come on!” the plebeians shouted. “Let's see him exit through the city gates. Come on! May the gods preserve our noble Tribunes! Come on!”

CHAPTER 4 (*Coriolanus*)

— 4.1 —

Coriolanus, Volumnia, Virgilia, Menenius, Cominius, and the young nobles of Rome stood in front of the city gates. The young, as opposed to the old, nobles of Rome especially supported Coriolanus.

Coriolanus said to his family and friends, “Come, set aside your tears. Let’s have a brief farewell: The beast with many heads — the plebeians — butts me away. Mother, where is your long-established courage? You were always accustomed to say that a crisis was the trier of spirits, that common men could bear common chances, that when the sea was calm all boats alike showed mastership in floating. You were always accustomed to say that after suffering a grievous wound, acting as if one were gently wounded required a noble cunning. You were always accustomed to load me with precepts that would make invincible the heart that memorized and learned them.”

“Oh, Heavens! Oh, Heavens!” his wife, Virgilia, cried.

“No, please, woman —” Coriolanus began to say.

Volumnia interrupted, “Now may the red pestilence — typhus — strike all tradesmen in Rome, and may all occupations perish!”

“What! What! What!” Coriolanus said. “I shall be loved when I am missed. No, mother, resume that spirit you had when you were accustomed to say that if you had been the wife of Hercules, you would have done six of his twelve labors and saved your husband so much sweat.

“Cominius, do not droop. *Adieu*.

“Farewell, my wife, and my mother. I’ll do well yet.

“You old and true Menenius, your tears are saltier than a younger man’s, and the salt is venomous to your eyes.

“My sometime General, I have seen you stern, and you have often beheld heart-hardening spectacles. Tell these sad women that it is as foolish to bewail strokes that cannot be avoided as it is to laugh at them.

“My mother, you know well my hazards have always been your solace; you have always enjoyed the risks I have faced. Believe this and don’t take it lightly: Although I go alone, like a lonely dragon that makes his swamp feared and talked about more than seen — your son will either exceed the commonplace and do something remarkable or else he will be caught with cautelous — crafty and deceitful — baits and plots.”

“My first son,” Volumnia said, “where will you go? Take good Cominius with you for a while. Determine on some course of action to follow rather than expose yourself to each chance event that arises in the way before you.”

“Oh, the gods!” Coriolanus said, exasperated because his mother was worrying excessively about him.

“I’ll go with you for a month and plan with you where you shall rest and reside so that you may hear from us and we may hear from you,” Cominius said. “That way, if the time thrusts forth an occasion when your exile is repealed, we shall not send over the vast world to seek a single man, and lose the opportunity to bring you home. Otherwise, the opportunity will cool in the absence of the person who needs the opportunity, and Rome may decide not to allow you to return from exile.”

“Fare you well,” Coriolanus said to Cominius. “You have too many years upon you and you are too full of the wars’

excesses to go roving with one who is yet unbruised. Accompany me only to the gate.”

Coriolanus was, of course, “bruised.” He had many scars from his war wounds.

Coriolanus continued, “Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and my friends who have been tested and have been found noble. When I am outside the gate, bid me farewell, and smile. Please, come with me to the gate.

“While I remain above the ground, you shall always hear from me, and you shall never hear of me anything but what is like me formerly. I shall not change.”

“What you have said is worthy, as any ear can hear,” Menenius said. “Let’s not weep. If I could shake off just seven years from my old arms and legs, I swear by the good gods that I would accompany you every foot of your exile.”

“Give me your hand,” Coriolanus said. “Come.”

— 4.2 —

Sicinius, Brutus, and an Aedile met on a street in Rome.

Sicinius ordered the Aedile, “Tell the plebeians all to go home; Coriolanus has gone, and we’ll go no further. The nobility are vexed; they have sided with Coriolanus.”

“Now that we have shown our power,” Brutus said, “let us seem humbler after it is done than when it was happening. We have gotten what we wanted, and so there is no need for us to make more enemies and to make our enemies more bitter by flaunting our power.”

“Tell the plebeians to go home,” Sicinius said. “Say that their great enemy is gone, and they have stood strong with their earlier strength.”

“Dismiss them and tell them to go home,” Brutus said.

The Aedile exited.

Brutus looked up and said, “Here comes Coriolanus’ mother.”

“Let’s not meet her,” Sicinius said.

“Why?” Brutus asked,

“They say she’s so mad that she’s insane.”

“They have seen us,” Brutus said. “Keep walking.”

It was too late for them to escape. Volumnia, Virgilia, and Menenius quickly walked over to the two Tribunes.

Volumnia said, “Oh, you’re well met. May the plague that the gods hoard until it is time to punish evildoers be your recompense for the ‘friendship’ you have shown to Coriolanus!”

“Quiet! Quiet!” Menenius said. “Don’t be so loud.”

Volumnia said, “If I could speak despite my weeping, you should hear — actually, you shall hear some of what I have to say to you.”

Brutus attempted to leave, but Volumnia blocked his way and said, “Do you want to be gone? That is not going to happen.”

Sicinius attempted to leave, but Virgilia blocked his way and said, “You shall stay, too. I wish I had the power to say the same thing to my husband.”

“Are you acting like men?” Sicinius asked.

Volumnia replied, “Yes, fool; is that a shame? Listen, fool. Wasn’t a man my father? Did you have foxship — cunning ingratitude — enough to banish Coriolanus, who struck

more blows for Rome than you have spoken words? Each of us has his or her own heritage.”

“Oh, blessed Heavens!” Sicinius said.

“Coriolanus had more noble blows than you ever had wise words, and those blows were for Rome’s good,” Volumnia said. “I’ll tell you what — but I will let you go. ... No, I won’t — you shall stay, after all, and listen to me. I wish my son were in Arabia, and your tribe were before him as he held his good sword in his hand.”

“What about it?” Sicinius asked.

“What about it!” Virgilia said. “He would make an end of your posterity. In Arabia, he would not have to obey Roman law, and he would kill all your descendants.”

“Bastards and all,” Volumnia said. “Coriolanus is a good man — consider the wounds that he bears because he fought for Rome!”

“Come, come, peace,” Menenius said.

Sicinius said, “I wish that Coriolanus had continued to serve his country as he began, and that he had not unknot by himself the noble knot he made.”

The knot was a bond between Coriolanus and Rome.

“I wish he had,” Brutus said

“You wish he had!” Volumnia said. “It was you two Tribunes who incensed the rabble against him. You cats! You can judge as fitly of his worth as I can of those mysteries that Heaven will not allow the Earth to know.”

“Please, let us go,” Brutus said.

“Now, please, sir, get you gone,” Volumnia said. “You have done a ‘brave’ deed. Before you go, hear this: As far

as the Capitol exceeds the meanest house in Rome, so far my son — this lady’s husband here, this lady, do you see — whom you have banished, exceeds you all.”

“Well, well, we’ll leave you,” Brutus said.

“Why are we staying here to be tormented by someone who lacks her wits?” Sicinius said.

“Take my ‘prayers’ with you,” Volumnia said.

The Tribunes exited.

Volumnia said, “I wish that the gods had nothing else to do but to confirm my curses and bring them about! If I could see my curses being carried out once a day, it would unclog my heart of what lies heavy in it.”

Clogs were heavy pieces of wood attached to prisoners to keep them from running away.

“You have told them home truths,” Menenius said, “and indeed you have cause to curse them. You’ll dine with me?”

“Anger is my food,” Volumnia said. “I dine on myself, and so I shall starve with feeding.”

In this culture, “to starve” meant 1) “to die” as well as 2) “to be very hungry.” Therefore:

1) “I dine on myself, and so I shall die with feeding” meant “I shall consume myself with anger until I die.”

2) “I dine on myself, and so I shall be very hungry with feeding” meant “I consume myself with anger, and if I eat food, I will feel better and starve my anger by no longer feeling angry.” The implication was that she would not eat food in order to prevent the possibility that eating food would lessen her anger.

“Come, let’s go,” Volumnia said. “Leave behind this faint whimpering. Instead, lament as I do; I am like Juno in my anger.”

Juno was the wife of Jupiter, King of the gods. Her anger was implacable. In mythology, a contest was held to determine which goddess — Juno, Venus, or Minerva — was the most beautiful; Paris, Prince of Troy, judged that beauty contest. Juno lost the contest, and thereafter she hated the Trojans. Her anger was so implacable that she also hated the Romans because Aeneas, a Trojan who had survived the fall of Troy, made his way to Italy and became an important ancestor of the Roman people.

Volumnia said, “Come, come, come.”

Menenius said, “Damn! Damn! Damn!”

— 4.3 —

A Roman and a Volscian met on a road between Rome and Antium.

“I know you well, sir,” the Roman said, “and you know me. Your name, I think, is Adrian.”

“That is right, sir,” the Volscian replied. “Truly, I have forgotten you.”

“I am a Roman; and my services are, as your services are, employed against the Romans. Do you know me now?”

“Are you Nicanor?” the Volscian asked.

“Yes, I am he, sir,” the Roman replied.

“You had a bigger beard when I last saw you, but your face is well corroborated by your tongue. What’s the news in Rome? I have a note from the Volscian state telling me to seek you out there. Our meeting now has saved me a day’s journey.”

“There have been in Rome strange insurrections,” the Roman said. “The common people have opposed themselves against the Senators, patricians, and nobles.”

“You say ‘has been’! Is it ended, then? Our government does not think so. The Volscians are preparing for war, and they hope to come upon the Romans in the heat of their division.”

“The main blaze of it is past, but a small thing would make it flame again,” the Roman said. “The nobles are so taking to heart the banishment of that worthy Coriolanus that they are in a ripe readiness to take all power from the people and to pluck from them their Tribunes forever. This lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost mature for the violent breaking out. The insurrection can break out in violence again at any time.”

“Coriolanus has been banished!” the Volscian said.

“Yes, he has been banished, sir.”

“You will be welcome in Antium with this intelligence, Nicanor.”

“The day serves well for the Volscians now,” the Roman said. “I have heard it said that the fittest time to corrupt a man’s wife is when she’s fallen out with her husband. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will appear well in these wars because his great opponent, Coriolanus, is now no longer wanted by his country.”

“Aufidius cannot choose other than to appear well in these wars,” the Volscian said. “With Coriolanus gone, Aufidius will certainly triumph. I am very fortunate that I have accidentally encountered you. You have ended my business, and I will merrily accompany you home.”

“I shall, between this time and suppertime, tell you very

strange things that are going on in Rome, all tending to the good of the Romans' adversaries. Did you say that your government has an army ready?"

"It is a very royal army," the Volscian said. "The military centurions and their soldiers, individually enrolled, already taken into service and on the payroll, are ready to be on foot and marching at an hour's warning."

"I am filled with joy to hear of their readiness, and I am the man, I think, who shall set them on to immediate action," the Roman said. "So, sir, we are heartily well met, and I am very glad to have your company."

"You take my words from me, sir," the Volscian said. "I have the most cause to be glad of your company."

"Well, let us go together," the Roman said.

— 4.4 —

Wearing ragged clothing, in disguise, and with his face partially hidden, Coriolanus stood in front of Aufidius' house in Antium. He did not know he was standing in front of Aufidius' house.

He said to himself, "A good-looking city is this Antium. City, it is I who made your widows. I have heard many an heir of these beautiful buildings groan and drop in the face of my onslaughts. I hope that no one recognizes me, lest your widowed wives with kitchen spits and boys with stones slay me in petty battle."

A citizen of Antium appeared.

Coriolanus said to him, "May God save you, sir."

"And you," the citizen replied.

"Direct me, if you will, to where great Aufidius resides. Is he in Antium?"

“He is, and he is feasting the nobles of the state at his house this night,” the citizen replied.

“Which is his house, please?”

“This one here in front of you.”

“Thank you, sir,” Coriolanus said. “Farewell.”

The citizen exited.

Coriolanus said to himself, “Oh, world, you have slippery, fickle turns of fortune! People who are firmly sworn friends now, whose double — both two and duplicitous — chests seem to wear one heart, whose house, whose bed, whose meal, and whose exercise, are always together, who twin, as it were, in inseparable friendship, shall within this hour, because of a quarrel over an eighth of a penny, break out into bitterest enmity.

“And people who are the fellest — mightiest — foes, whose passions and whose plots have broken their sleep and made them stay awake, each of them thinking how to take the other, will by some chance or some trifle not worth an egg become dear friends and both will join their interests together and have their children unite the two families through marriage.

“So it is with me. I hate my birthplace, which is Rome, and now I love this enemy town, which is Antium. I’ll enter this house and talk to Aufidius. If he slays me, he does what is fair and just. But if he gives me the opportunity, I’ll do his country service.”

— 4.5 —

Inside Aufidius’ house, servants were serving the feast for Aufidius’ guests.

The first servant called out, “Wine, wine, wine! What

service is here! I think our fellow servants are asleep!”

The second servant called out, “Where’s Cotus? My master is calling for him. Cotus!”

Coriolanus walked into the room and said, “This is a good house. The feast smells good, but I don’t look like a guest.”

In fact, he looked like a beggar because of his disguise and the ragged clothing he was wearing.

The first servant saw Coriolanus and said to him, “What do you want, friend? Where have you come from? This is no place for you. Please, go to the door and wait with the other beggars for handouts.”

Coriolanus said to himself, “I have deserved no better reception than this because I am Coriolanus.”

Noticing Coriolanus, who was still present, the second servant said to him, “Where have you come from? Is the porter blind? He must be if he allows such fellows as you to enter the house. Please, go outside.”

“Go away!” Coriolanus, whose bearing was that of a proud noble, not of a humble beggar, said.

“Me go away!” the second servant said. “You go away!”

“Now you are being troublesome to me,” Coriolanus said.

“Are you so brave?” the second servant replied. “I’ll have you talked with immediately.”

A third servant entered. Seeing Coriolanus, he asked the first servant, “What fellow’s this? Who is he?”

“As strange a fellow as I ever looked on,” the first servant said. “I cannot get him out of the house. Please, call my master to come and speak to him.”

The third servant said to Coriolanus, “What business have you to do here, fellow? Please, leave the house.”

“Let me just stand here,” Coriolanus said. “I will not hurt your hearth.”

“Who are you?” the third servant asked.

“A gentleman,” Coriolanus said.

Looking at Coriolanus’ ragged clothing, the third servant said, “You are a marvelously poor gentleman.”

“That is true,” Coriolanus said. “I am.”

“Please, poor gentleman,” the third servant said, “take up some other station; here’s no place for you. Please, leave this house.”

“Do what work you have to do,” Coriolanus said. “Go, and get fat on cold leftovers.”

He pushed the third servant away.

“Won’t you leave?” the third servant asked.

He said to the second servant, “Please, tell my master what a strange guest he has here.”

“I shall,” the second servant said.

He exited to go speak to Aufidius.

The third servant asked Coriolanus, “Where do you dwell?”

“Under the canopy,” Coriolanus replied, referring to the canopy of stars at night.

“Under the canopy!” the third servant said.

“Yes.”

“Where’s that?” the third servant asked. Canopies can be

also be ornamental cloths that are hung over beds, so the third servant was not sure what Coriolanus meant by “under the canopy.”

Coriolanus replied, “The city of kites and crows.”

Kites and crows are predatory birds. Coriolanus may have been referring to the wilderness where he slept, or he may have been referring to Rome, which now he hated because of the predatory Tribunes, or he may have been referring to both.

“In the city of kites and crows!” the third servant said. “What an ass it is — what an ass you are! Then you dwell with proverbially stupid jackdaws, too?”

Coriolanus said, “No, I don’t serve your master.”

Coriolanus meant that the jackdaws, aka fools, were the servants, but the third servant thought that he meant that the master — Aufidius — was a jackdaw, aka fool.

The third servant said, “What, sir! Do you meddle with my master?”

The third servant used “meddle” in the sense of “have anything to do with,” but a slang meaning of “meddle” was “have sex with.” Coriolanus used the word in that sense in his next sentence.

Coriolanus said, “Yes, it is a more honest service than to meddle with your lady boss, Aufidius’ wife. You babble, and you babble. Go and serve food with your serving platter, and get out of here!”

Coriolanus hit him, and the third servant ran out of the room.

The second servant returned with Aufidius. The third servant exited to perform a task.

Aufidius said, “Where is this fellow?”

“Here, he is, sir,” the second servant replied, pointing to Coriolanus. “I would have beaten him like a dog, except that it would have disturbed the lords within.”

Although they had fought each other face to face in battle, Aufidius did not recognize Coriolanus. In battle, they had worn helmets.

“Where have you come from?” Aufidius asked the disguised Coriolanus. “What do you want? What is your name? Why don’t you speak? Speak, man. Tell me your name.”

In his answer, Coriolanus called Aufidius by his praenomen — his first, personal name: Tullus. This is remarkably familiar. Usually, only intimate friends and family would use the praenomen.

Coriolanus revealed his face, which had been partially covered up, and said, “If, Tullus, you still do not know who I am, and, seeing me, do not think that I am the man I am, necessity commands me to tell you my name.”

Not recognizing him, Aufidius asked, “What is your name?”

“It is a name that is unmusical to the Volscians’ ears, and it is harsh in sound to your ears.”

“Tell me, what’s your name?” Aufidius asked again. “You have a grim appearance, and your face is commanding. Although your tackle’s torn, you show that you are a noble vessel.”

Aufidius was speaking metaphorically. Tackle is a ship’s rigging, and a vessel is both a ship and the container of a soul. Aufidius was saying that although Coriolanus’ clothing was torn, he was obviously a fine man.

Aufidius asked again, "What's your name?"

"Prepare your eyebrows to frown," Coriolanus said. "Don't you know yet who I am?"

"I don't know who you are. What is your name?"

"My name is Caius Martius, who has done to you in particular and to all the Volscians in general great hurt and mischief; evidence of that can be seen in my surname, which is Coriolanus: the conqueror of Corioli. The painful and painstaking service, the extreme dangers and the drops of blood I have shed for my thankless country are requited only with that surname; my surname is a good memorial, and it is evidence for the malice and displeasure that you should bear me.

"Only that name remains to me. Rome's dastardly nobles permitted the common people to indulge their cruelty and envy. All of Rome's nobles have forsaken me, and they have devoured the rest of what I had. They allowed the voices of slaves to whoop me out of Rome. I was tormented as I left Rome to enter exile; it was as if the common people were hunting me.

"Now this crisis has brought me to your hearth, not out of hope — don't mistake my intention — to save my life, for if I had feared death, of all the men in the world I would have avoided you; instead, I have come here out of absolute spite. I want to fully repay those people who banished me, and that is why I stand here before you.

"If you have a vengeful heart within you, a vengeful heart that will revenge the wrongs committed against you and will stop those shameful injuries seen throughout your country, then immediately take action and make my misery serve your purposes. Use my misery so that my revengeful services may prove to be benefits to you, for I will fight against my corrupted country with the temper and passion

of all the devils in Hell.

“But if it happens that you dare not do this and you are too tired to try any more your fortunes in war, then in a word I say that I am too weary to love being any longer in this world, and so I present my throat to you and to your long-established hatred of me. In this case, if you don’t cut my throat, you would show that you are just a fool, since I with hatred have always sought to meet you on the battlefield, have drawn barrels of blood out of your countrymen’s chests, and I cannot live but to your shame, unless I live to do you service.”

“Oh, Martius, Martius!” Aufidius replied. “Each word you have spoken has weeded from my heart a root of long-established malice.

“Even if Jupiter should speak divine things from yonder cloud, thundering to say that all you have said is true, I would not believe his thunder more than I would believe you, all-noble Martius.

“Let me twine my arms about your body, against which my grainy ash-wood spear a hundred times has broken against your armor and scarred the Moon with splinters.”

At this point, two former enemies became allies. A man who had loved Rome now hated Rome, and a man who had hated Coriolanus now loved Coriolanus. Such things are unusual, as is scarring the Moon, whose goddess is the virgin Diana, with splinters, which are phallic symbols.

Aufidius continued, “Here and now I hug the anvil of my sword — I have swung my sword against your armored body so many times that it is as if I were a blacksmith hammering a sword on an anvil.

“I will contend as hotly and as nobly with your love and friendship as ever in ambitious strength I contended against

your valor.

“You should know first, you first of all men, that I loved the maiden I married; never did a man sigh truer breath. But I see you here, you noble thing, and my rapt heart dances more than when I first saw my wedded wife step across my threshold.

“Why, you Mars, you god of war! I tell you that we have an army on foot; and I had intended once more to hew your shield from your brawny arm or lose my arm in attempting to do it.

“You have thoroughly beaten me in battle twelve separate times, and I have each night since dreamed of encounters between yourself and me. In my sleep, we have been down on the ground wrestling together, unbuckling helmets, grabbing each other’s throat with our fists, and I have awakened half dead with nothing.

“Worthy Martius, if we had no quarrel with Rome, except that you have been banished from it, we would muster into our army all our males from age twelve to age seventy, and like a bold flood overwhelming its banks we would pour war into the bowels of ungrateful Rome.

“Oh, come with me, go inside the great hall, and take our friendly Senators by the hands. They now are here, taking their leaves of me; I am prepared to march against your territories, although not to march against Rome itself.”

Coriolanus said, “You bless me, gods!”

Aufidius said, “Therefore, most perfect sir, if you will have the leading of your own revenge, take one half of my commission and my soldiers, and set down — as best as your experience tells you, since you know your country’s strength and weakness — your plan in your own way. Decide whether to knock against the gates of Rome, or

violently visit them in their remote territories in order to frighten them before you destroy them. But come to the dining hall. Let me present and commend you first to those who shall say yes to your desires. A thousand welcomes! And you are more a friend now than you ever were an enemy, although, Martius, you were quite an enemy. Give me your hand. You are very welcome!”

Coriolanus and Aufidius exited.

The first servant said, “Here’s a strange alteration in their relationship!”

“By my hand,” the second servant said, “I had thought to have struck Coriolanus with a cudgel, and yet my mind warned me that his clothes were making a false report of him. My mind warned me that he was not a beggar, although he was dressed in rags.”

“What an arm he has!” the first servant said, “He turned me around with his finger and his thumb, just like someone would set a top spinning.”

The second servant said, “I knew by his face that there was something in him: He had, sir, a kind of face, I thought — I don’t know how to describe it.”

“He did have such a face,” the first servant said. “He looked as it were — I wish I would be hanged if I didn’t think there was more in him than I could think.”

“So thought I, I’ll be sworn,” the second servant said. “He is simply the rarest man in the world.”

“I think he is,” the first servant said, “but a greater soldier than he you know of.”

“Who, my master?” the second servant said.

The servants were starting to compare Coriolanus and their

master: Aufidius. Coriolanus was the better soldier, but the servants were reluctant to admit that, lest they get in trouble, so they praised Aufidius as well. They discussed the two men cautiously, using “he” and “him” rather than names in case they were overheard. Such use of pronouns leads to ambiguity. “Our General,” however, is not ambiguous; it refers to Aufidius.

“It’s not important,” the first servant said. “It doesn’t matter.”

“He is worth six of him,” the second servant said.

“That’s not true,” the first servant said, “but I take him to be the greater soldier.”

“Truly, one cannot tell how to say that,” the second servant said. “For the defense of a town, our General is excellent.”

“Yes, and for an assault, too,” the first servant said.

The third servant arrived and said, “Oh, slaves, I can tell you news — news, you rascals!”

The other servants said, “What is it? Tell us.”

“I would not be a Roman, of all nations,” the third servant said. “I would just as soon be a man condemned to die.”

“Why?” the other two servants asked.

“Why, here is the man who was accustomed to thwack — beat — our General.”

“Why do you say ‘thwack our General?’” the first servant said.

The third servant, worried about getting into trouble for disparaging Aufidius, said, “I do not say ‘thwack our General,’ but he was always good enough for him.”

The second servant said, "Come, we are fellows and friends: We can talk openly."

Although the second servant felt that the servants could speak openly to each other about the respective merits of Coriolanus and Aufidius, he continued to use the pronouns "he" and "him," rather than names: "He was always too hard for him; I have heard him say so himself."

The first servant said, "He was too hard for him, to say the plain truth. Before Corioli he slashed him and notched him like a piece of meat about to be cooked."

The second servant said, "If he had been a cannibal, he could have broiled and eaten him, too."

"What other news do you bring?" the first servant asked.

The third servant said, "Why, he is made so much of here within, it is as if he were the son and heir to Mars, the god of war. He sits at the upper end of the table in a place of honor. The Senators don't ask him a question without first taking off their hats as a mark of respect. Our General himself treats him as if he were a mistress. Our General himself sanctifies himself by touching his guest's hand — it's as if his guest were sacred. Our General himself also rolls his eyes in admiration of his guest's conversation.

"But the bottom — the conclusion — of the news is that our General is cut in the middle and is now only one half of what he was yesterday because now his guest has the other half, by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and drag the porter of the gate of Rome by the ears. He will mow all down before him, and leave the ground over which he passes stripped bare."

The second servant said, "And he's as likely to do it as any man I can imagine."

“Do it!” the third servant said. “He will do it because, you see, sir, he has as many friends as enemies. These friends, sir, as it were, dare not, you see, sir, show themselves, as we term it, his friends while he’s in directitude.”

The third servant had perhaps meant to say “dis-rectitude,” which would mean “a state of unrighteousness.” Certainly, in Rome Coriolanus was in a state of disgrace.

“Directitude!” the first servant said, “What’s that?”

The third servant ignored the question and said, “But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again, and the man in blood, they will run out of their burrows, like rabbits after a rain, and all will revel with him.”

Coriolanus’ crest would be up like that of a fighting cock; he would not be crestfallen. “In blood” was a hunting term meaning “in full vigor and cry.”

“When will this happen?” the first servant asked.

“Tomorrow, today, immediately,” the third servant said. “The war drum will be struck up this afternoon: It is, as it were, a part of their feast, and it will be done before they wipe their lips.”

The second servant said, “Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is good for nothing except to rust iron, increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers.”

Tailors had the reputation of being cowardly and effeminate. The second servant was saying that peace tended to breed such men.

The first servant said, “Let me have war, say I. War exceeds peace as much as day exceeds night; it is full of spritely walking — military marching — and it is audible with military music, and it is full of vent.”

One meaning of “to vent” was “to get rid of.” Earlier, Martius had spoken of venting “musty superfluity.” Literally, “musty superfluity” meant “moldy excess food.” Metaphorically, it meant “excess people.” If the fittest survive, the people who die are not the most fit. For Martius, those people would be the plebeians.

The first servant continued, “Peace is a total paralysis; it is lethargy. Peace is mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible.”

By “mulled,” he meant like “like mulled wine.” Peace stupefies people.

The first servant continued, “Peace is a begetter of more bastard children than war is a destroyer of men.”

The second servant said, “That’s true. As war, in some way, may be said to be a plunderer and a rapist, so it cannot be denied that peace is a great maker of cuckolds and unfaithful wives.”

“Yes,” the first servant said, “and it makes men hate one another.”

The third servant said, “The reason that peace makes men hate each other is because in peaceful times they need one another less. For my money, I prefer the wars. I hope to see the lives of Romans regarded as cheap as the lives of Volscians. Lots of us died in the last war; here’s hoping lots of them die in this war.”

The third servant heard some noise and said, “They are rising from the table; they are rising.”

The servants said, “Let’s get to work.”

— 4.6 —

Sicinius and Brutus talked together in a public place in Rome.

Sicinius said, "We have not heard anything about Coriolanus, and we need not fear him. The remedy for the disease he caused Rome was the common people, who are now tame and quiet in the present peace of Rome; previously, while Coriolanus was in Rome, the common people were wildly disturbed. Here and now we make his friends blush because the world goes well and peacefully; his friends would rather, even if they themselves suffered by it, behold dissentious numbers of people crowding streets than see our tradesmen working within their shops and going about their proper occupations in a friendly and peaceful fashion."

"We stood up to him at a good time," Brutus said.

He looked up and asked, "Is that Menenius coming toward us?"

"It is he, it is he," Sicinius replied. "Oh, he has grown very friendly to us lately."

"Hail, sir!" the Tribunes said.

"Hail to you both!" Menenius replied.

"Your Coriolanus is not much missed, except by his friends," Sicinius said. "The commonwealth stands, and it would continue to stand even if he were angrier at it."

"All is well," Menenius replied, "and it might have been much better, if Coriolanus could have compromised and become amenable."

"Where is he?" Sicinius asked. "Have you heard?"

"No, I have heard nothing," Menenius replied. "His mother and his wife have also heard nothing from him."

A few citizens walked over to them and said to the two Tribunes, "May the gods preserve you both!"

“Good evening, our neighbors,” Sicinius said.

In this culture, evening was anytime after noon.

“Good evening to you all,” Brutus said. “Good evening to you all.”

The first citizen said, “We ourselves, our wives, and our children, on our knees, are bound to pray for you both.”

“Live, and thrive!” Sicinius said to the citizens.

“Farewell, kind neighbors,” Brutus said. “We wish that Coriolanus had loved you as we do.”

“Now may the gods keep you!” the citizens said.

“Farewell, farewell,” the two Tribunes said.

The citizens exited.

“This is a happier and more comely, more graceful time than when these fellows ran about the streets, crying out in confusion,” Sicinius said.

“Caius Martius was a worthy officer in the war,” Brutus said, “but he was insolent, overcome with pride, ambitious past all thinking, self-loving —”

“And desiring one solitary throne, from which he could rule without assistance or assistants,” Sicinius said.

“I don’t think that is true,” Menenius said.

“We should by this time, to all our lamentations, if Coriolanus had become Consul, found it to be true,” Sicinius said.

“The gods have well prevented it, and Rome sits safe and still and quiet without him,” Brutus said.

An Aedile walked over to them and said, “Worthy

Tribunes, there is a slave, whom we have put in prison, who reports that the Volscians with two separate armies have entered the Roman territories, and with the deepest malice of the war are destroying what lies before them.”

“It is Aufidius,” Menenius said. “Having heard of our Martius’ banishment, he thrusts forth his horns again into the world. When Martius stood up for Rome, Aufidius kept his horns hidden and did not allow them to be seen.”

“Why are you talking about Martius?” Sicinius asked.

“Go see to it that this spreader of rumors is whipped,” Brutus said. “It cannot be true that the Volscians dare to break the peace treaty they made with us.”

“Cannot be true!” Menenius said. “We have it on historical record that it very well can be true, and three times in my lifetime the Volscians have dared to break the peace treaty they made with us.

“But question the fellow rationally before you punish him. Ask him where he heard this, lest you shall chance to whip your source of good information and beat the messenger who bids us to beware of what is in fact to be dreaded.”

“Don’t tell us that,” Sicinius replied. “I know this gossip cannot be true.”

“It isn’t possible,” Brutus said.

A messenger arrived and said to them, “The nobles in great earnestness are all going to the Senate House. Some news has come that changes their countenances.”

“It is this slave,” Sicinius said. “Go whip him in front of the people’s eyes. Nothing but his report is causing this distress.”

“Worthy sir,” the messenger said, “The slave’s report has

been corroborated, and more news, more fearsome than the slave's, has been delivered.”

“What more fearsome news?” Sicinius asked.

The messenger replied, “It is spoken freely out of many mouths — how probable the news is I do not know — that Martius, who has allied himself with Aufidius, leads an army against Rome, and he vows revenge as spacious as the gulf between the youngest thing and the oldest thing.”

“This is most likely!” Sicinius said sarcastically.

“This rumor has been spread only so that the weaker sort may wish good Martius home again,” Brutus said.

“That is the trick behind the spreading of this rumor,” Brutus said.

“This rumor is unlikely to be true,” Menenius said. “Coriolanus and Aufidius can no more be reconciled and be united than can the most violent extremes.”

A second messenger arrived and said, “You are sent for to go to the Senate. A fearsome army, led by Caius Martius joined with Aufidius, rages upon our territories, and their soldiers have already overpowered everything in their path, consumed it with fire, and taken what lay before them.”

Cominius arrived and said to the two Tribunes, “Oh, you have made ‘good’ work!”

“What is the news?” Menenius asked. “What is the news?”

Cominius said to the two Tribunes, “You have helped to rape your own daughters, to melt the city leaden roofs upon your heads, to see your wives raped and dishonored in front of your eyes —”

Menenius interrupted, “What is the news? What is the news?”

Cominius continued, “— your temples burned to their foundations, and your rights and liberties, on which you insisted, confined into the tiny hole made by an auger.”

An auger is a drilling tool.

“Please, tell us now your news,” Menenius said. “You Tribunes have made ‘fair’ work, I am afraid. Please, Cominius, what is your news? If Martius should have joined with the Volscians —”

Cominius interrupted, “If! Martius is their god: He leads them like a thing made by some deity other than nature, some deity that shapes man better; and the Volscians follow him, against us brats, with no less confidence than boys pursuing summer butterflies or butchers killing flies.”

Menenius said to the two Tribunes, “You have made ‘good’ work, you and your apron-men; you who stood up so much for the votes of workers and the breath of garlic-eaters!”

“Apron-men” were men who worked while wearing aprons; for example, a sword maker would sometimes wear a protective apron. Members of the working class often ate garlic as a spice and because of its medicinal qualities.

Cominius said, “Like an earthquake, he will shake your Rome about your ears.”

“Just like Hercules shook down mellow fruit when he retrieved golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides as one of his famous labors,” Menenius said. “You Tribunes have made ‘fair’ work!”

“But is this true, sir?” Brutus asked.

“Yes, it is true,” Cominius replied, “and you’ll look pale with fear before you find it other than true. All the regions smilingly and joyfully revolt, and all who resist are mocked for valiant ignorance, and they perish as faithful and loyal

fools. Who is it can blame Martius? Your enemies and his find something worthwhile and admirable in him.”

“We are all ruined and destroyed, unless the noble man has mercy on us,” Menenius said.

“Who shall ask for mercy?” Cominius asked. “The Tribunes cannot do it for shame; the people deserve the same kind of ‘pity’ from him as the wolf deserves from the shepherds. As for his best friends, if they should say now to him, ‘Be good to Rome,’ they would exhort him even as would those who had deserved his hate, and they therein would show themselves to be like his enemies. Previously, his best friends had not done enough to defend him.”

“That is true,” Menenius said. “If he were putting to my house the brand of fire that would consume it, I would not have the audacity to say, ‘Please, stop.’ You two Tribunes have done a ‘fine’ job, you and your craftsmen! You craftiness has worked out ‘well’!”

Cominius said, “You two Tribunes have brought fear and trembling upon Rome, which has never been so incapable of helping itself.”

“Don’t say that we brought this fear and trembling upon Rome,” the two Tribunes said.

“Why not?” Menenius asked. “Did we patricians do this? We loved Martius, but like beasts and cowardly nobles, we gave way to your mobs of people who hooted him out of the city.”

“But I fear they’ll roar — in fear — him in again,” Cominius said. “Tullus Aufidius, second in fame among men, obeys Coriolanus’ every command as if he were his second-in-command. Desperation is all the policy, strength, and defense that Rome can make against them and their armies.”

A troop of citizens arrived.

Menenius said, “Here come the mobs. And is Aufidius with Coriolanus? You are the ones who made the air unwholesome, when you threw your stinking greasy hats in the air while hooting at Coriolanus’ exile. Now he’s coming; and there is not a hair upon one of his soldiers’ heads that will not prove to be a whip. As many heads as you threw coxcombs — fools’ hats — up in the air will he tumble down and pay you for your votes. It doesn’t matter; if he burns us all into one piece of charcoal, we have deserved it.”

The citizens said, “Indeed, we hear fearsome news.”

The first citizen said, “As for my own part, when I said, ‘Banish him,’ I said it was a pity.”

“And so did I,” the second citizen said.

“And so did I,” the third citizen said, “and, to say the truth, so did very many of us. What we did, we did for the best, and although we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our will.”

“You are ‘good’ things, you voters!” Cominius said.

“You Tribunes have made ‘good’ work, you and your cry — pack — of dogs!” Menenius said. “Shall we go to the Capitol?”

“Yes, what else can we do?” Cominius said.

Cominius and Menenius exited. So did the messengers.

Sicinius said to the citizens, “Go, masters, go home. Don’t be dismayed. Cominius and Menenius are part of a faction that would be glad to have this news be true that they so pretend to fear. Go home, and show no sign of fear.”

“May the gods be good to us!” the first citizen said. “Come,

masters, let's go home. I always said that we were in the wrong when we banished Coriolanus."

"So did we all," the second citizen said. "But, come, let's go home."

The citizens exited.

"I do not like this news," Brutus said.

"Nor do I," Sicinius said.

"Let's go to the Capitol," Brutus said. "I would give half my wealth to have this news be a lie!"

"Please, let's go," Sicinius said.

— 4.7 —

Aufidius and his Lieutenant talked together in their military camp, which was a short distance from Rome.

"Do my soldiers still fly to Coriolanus the Roman?" Aufidius asked.

"I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but your soldiers use him as the grace before their meal, their talk while sitting at the dining table, and their thanks at the end of the meal. And you are darkened and eclipsed in this military campaign, sir, even by your own soldiers."

"I cannot help it now," Aufidius said, "unless I use means by which I would lame the foot of our design against Rome. He bears himself more prouder, even to my own person, than I thought he would when I first embraced him, yet his nature in being proud is no changeling: His nature is proud, and he is true to his nature. I must excuse what cannot be amended."

"Yet I wish, sir — I mean as far as you are concerned — that you had not shared your commission with him, but

either had led the army by yourself, or else had let him lead the army by himself.”

“I understand you well,” Aufidius said, “and you may be sure that when Coriolanus comes to his reckoning, he does not know what I can charge against him. Although it seems, and so he thinks it is, and it is no less apparent to the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly and shows good management for the Volscian state, fights like a dragon, and achieves victory as soon as he draws his sword, yet he has left undone something that shall break his neck or put at hazard my neck, whenever we come to our reckoning.”

The Lieutenant said, “Sir, I ask you, do you think he’ll conquer Rome?”

“All places yield to him before he begins a siege, and the young nobility of Rome are on his side. The Senators and older patricians support him, too. The Tribunes are no soldiers, and the Tribunes’ people will be as rash in the repeal of his exile as they were hasty to expel him from Rome. I think he’ll be to Rome as is the osprey — the fish hawk — to the fish. The fish hawk takes its prey by sovereignty of nature; it is so majestic that fish surrender to it.

“At first Coriolanus was a noble servant to the Romans, but he could not carry his honors equably. Whether it was pride, which always corrupts the fortunate man who enjoys uninterrupted success; whether it was defect of judgment, causing him to fail in the management of those opportunities that he was lord of; or whether it was his nature, which is not to be other than one thing, causing him not to be able to move from the military helmet to the Senatorial cushion, but commanding peace always with the same austere demeanor as he controlled the war ... it is one of these faults — Coriolanus has touches of all these faults ... just a touch, not the entire vice, for I dare to absolve him

of that accusation — but it is one of these faults that made him feared, and therefore hated, and therefore banished. But he also has a merit — valor — that makes one choke while pointing out his faults.

“Our virtues lie in the interpretation of the time; how they are regarded depends on how they are interpreted at a particular time. What is a virtue in war may not be a virtue in peace.

“And power, which is in itself most commendable, has not a tomb as obvious and evident as a speaking platform to extol what it has done; extolling one’s virtue is a certain way to have that virtue lightly regarded.

“A person who reaches the top of the Wheel of Fortune will soon decline. A powerful person who spends time boasting about his accomplishments instead of accomplishing new things will cease to be powerful. A person who writes his autobiography is likely to die soon. After a powerful person dies, people speak good things about him.

“One fire drives out one fire; one nail drives out one nail; Rights by rights falter; strengths by strengths fail. One force can be overpowered by a stronger force of the same kind. The strong man meets a stronger man.

“Come, let’s go.

“When, Caius, Rome is yours, then you will be at your poorest, for then you shortly will be mine.”

CHAPTER 5 (Coriolanus)

— 5.1 —

Menenius, Cominius, Sicinius, and Brutus talked together in a public place in Rome. Others were present. Previously, Cominius had pleaded with Coriolanus to spare Rome, but he had gotten nowhere.

“No, I’ll not go plead to Coriolanus,” Menenius said. “You heard what he said to Cominius, who was formerly his General, and who loved him with close personal affection. Coriolanus has called me his father, but what of that?”

“Go, you who banished him. A mile before you reach his tent, fall down and walk on your knees to him — that is the way to reach his mercy.

“Since he was reluctant to hear Cominius speak, I’ll stay at home.”

“He pretended not to know me,” Cominius said.

“Do you hear this?” Menenius asked.

“Yet at one time he called me by my name,” Cominius said. “I brought up our old friendship, and the drops of blood that we have bled together. He would not answer to the name ‘Coriolanus.’ He forbade all names. He was a kind of nothing; he seemed to want to be without a title until he had forged for himself a new title out of the fire of burning Rome.”

Menenius said to the two Tribunes, “Why, you have done ‘good’ work! You are a pair of Tribunes who have wrecked Rome in order to make charcoal cheap. People won’t need to buy charcoal because they can warm themselves at their own hearth as their house burns down — that is a ‘noble

accomplishment' you will be remembered for!"

Cominius said, "I reminded Coriolanus how royal it is to pardon someone when a pardon is not expected. He replied that my implied request for him to spare Rome was a barefaced, shameless, paltry petition of a state to one whom the state had punished."

"Very well," Menenius said. "Could he say less?"

"I attempted to awaken his regard for his personal friends," Cominius said. "His answer to me was that he could not take the time to pick them out of a pile of stinky musty chaff. He said that it was folly, for one poor kernel of grain or two, to leave the offensive chaff unburned and so always have to smell it."

Mathew 3:12 speaks of God, Who is good and will gather the kernels of grain: "*Whose fan is in his hand, and he will th[o]roughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*" (King James Version).

Menenius said, "For one poor kernel of grain or two! I am one of those; his mother, his wife, his child, and this worthy fellow Cominius, too — we are the grains.

"You Tribunes are the musty chaff; and your stink is smelled above the Moon and to the high Heavens. We will be burned because of you."

"Please, be calm," Sicinius said. "Even if you refuse to give us your aid in this crisis in which help was never so greatly needed, yet do not upbraid us with our distress. But, surely, if you would be your country's pleader, your good tongue, more than the army we can raise on such short notice, might stop our countryman Coriolanus from attacking Rome."

“No, I’ll not meddle in this,” Menenius said.

“Please,” Sicinius said. “Go to Coriolanus, and plead to him to spare Rome.”

“What should I do if I go to him?” Menenius asked.

“Just try and see what your friendship with Martius can do for Rome,” Brutus replied.

Menenius said, “Well, let’s say that Martius makes me return to Rome, just as he made Cominius return, without having listened to me, what then? I will return to Rome only as an unhappy friend, grief-stricken because of his unkindness. What if this comes to be true?”

“You will still receive thanks from Rome in the full measure of what your good will intended to do,” Sicinius said.

“I’ll undertake this embassy,” Menenius said. “I think he’ll hear me out. Still, his biting his lip and rejecting good Cominius much disheartens me.”

He thought a moment and then said, “Coriolanus was not approached at the right time; he had not dined. When our veins are unfilled, our blood is cold, and then we pout upon the morning and we are unlikely to give or to forgive, but when we have stuffed the digestive tract and these conveyances of our blood with wine and food, we have suppler, more flexible souls than we have during our priest-like fasts; therefore, I’ll watch and wait until he has dined well and so will be amenable to our request, and then I’ll talk to him.”

“You know the road that leads directly to his kindness, and you cannot lose your way,” Brutus said.

“Indeed,” Menenius said, “I’ll test him, and let the result be what it may. I shall before long have knowledge of the

outcome of my going to him.”

Menenius exited.

Cominius said, “Coriolanus will never listen to Menenius.”

“He won’t?” Sicinius asked.

Cominius replied, “I tell you that it’s as if Coriolanus sat on a throne of gold, his eyes red and inflamed as if they would burn Rome; and his sense of the injury done to him is the jailer to his sense of pity. I kneeled before him; very faintly he said ‘Rise,’ and he dismissed me like this” — he demonstrated — “with a wave of his speechless hand. He sent after me a written note detailing what he would do, and what he would not do, what he would concede, and what he would not concede. He has sworn an oath that we must yield to his conditions.

“So now all hope is vain . . . unless his noble mother and his wife can revive hope. I hear that they intend to solicit him to give mercy to his country. Therefore, let’s leave here, and with our fair entreaties hasten them on to visit Coriolanus.”

— 5.2 —

Two guards were stationed at the entrance of the Volscian military camp before Rome. Menenius walked up to them.

“Stop! From where have you come?” the first guard said.

“Stop, and go back where you came from,” the second guard ordered.

Menenius said, “You guard like men should; you do well. But with your permission, let me say that I am an officer of state, and I have come to speak with Coriolanus.”

“From where have you come?” the first guard asked again.

“From Rome.”

“You may not pass, you must return to Rome,” the first guard said. “Our General will listen no more to anyone who comes from Rome.”

“You’ll see your Rome embraced with fire before you’ll speak with Coriolanus,” the second guard said.

“My good friends,” Menenius said, “if you have heard your General talk about Rome and about his friends there, it is more than likely that the sound of my name has touched your ears. My name is Menenius.”

“Even if that is your name, you must go back to Rome,” the first guard said. “The virtue of your name is not here passable and sufficient to get you entry into our camp. Your name is not a password that will gain you entry into our camp.”

“I tell you, fellow, the General is my loving friend. I have been the book of his good acts, and in me men have read about his unparalleled name, perhaps amplified and exaggerated, for I have always bolstered my friends, of whom he’s the chief, with all the size that truth would allow without collapsing. Indeed, sometimes, like a ball being bowled on a tricky, deceptive green, I have tumbled past the mark, and in his praise I have almost endorsed a falsehood; therefore, fellow, I must have leave to pass.”

“Indeed, sir, if you had told as many lies in his behalf as you have uttered words in your own, you would not pass here; no, even if it were as virtuous to lie as to live chastely,” the first guard said. “Therefore, go back to Rome.”

“Please, fellow, remember that my name is Menenius, and I have always sided with the faction of your General.”

“Even if you have lied in his behalf, as you say you have,” the second guard said, “I am one who, telling the truth under his command, must say that you cannot pass. Therefore, go back to Rome.”

“Has he dined, can you tell me?” Menenius asked. “For I would not speak with him until after dinner.”

“You are a Roman, are you?” the first guard asked.

“I am, as your General is,” Menenius replied.

“Then you should hate Rome, as he does,” the first guard said. “Can you, when you have pushed out your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance, given your enemy your shield, think to confront his revenges with the easy groans of old women, the virginal, supplicating palms of your daughters, or with the palsied intercession of such a decayed dotant — dotard, dullard, and one who dotes on Coriolanus — as you seem to be? Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in, with such weak breath as this? No, you are deceived; therefore, go back to Rome, and prepare for your execution. You are condemned: Our General has sworn not to give you reprieve and pardon.”

“Sirrah, if your Captain knew I were here, he would treat me with respect,” Menenius said.

“Sirrah” was a title used to address someone of a social rank inferior to the speaker.

“Come on, my Captain does not know you,” the first guard said.

His Captain was Aufidius.

“I mean, your General,” Menenius said.

“My General does not care for you,” the first guard said.

“Go back to Rome, I say, go. Lest I let make you bleed the last remaining half-pint of blood an old man like you has, go back. That’s all that you will get from us guards — the command to go back to Rome.”

“But, fellow, fellow —”

Coriolanus and Aufidius arrived; they had heard loud voices.

Coriolanus asked, “What’s the matter?”

Menenius said to the first guard, “Now, you rogue, I have news for you. You shall know now that I am held in respect; you shall perceive that a Jack guardant — a rascal guard — cannot use his office to keep me from my son Coriolanus. Judge, after seeing how he receives me, whether you risk being hanged or suffering some other death that will take longer and involve crueler suffering. Look at what happens now, and faint in fear of what’s going to happen to you.”

Menenius then said to Coriolanus, “May the glorious gods sit in hourly synod about your particular prosperity, and may they love you no worse than your old father Menenius does!

“Oh, my son, my son! You are preparing fire for us. Look at my tears — here’s water to quench the fire. I was only with great difficulty persuaded to come to you, but being assured none but myself could move you, I have been blown out of your Roman gates with sighs; and solemnly and earnestly appeal to you to pardon Rome and your imploring countrymen. May the good gods assuage your wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet guard here — this guard, who, like a blockhead and an obstacle, has denied my access to you.”

“Go away!” Coriolanus ordered.

“What! Go away?” Menenius said.

“Wife, mother, child, I know none of them,” Coriolanus said. “My affairs are made subservient to the affairs of others. Although I am personally responsible for my revenge, my ability to grant remissions belongs to the Volscians.

“That we have been familiar friends, ungrateful forgetfulness — at first Rome’s and now mine — shall poison our friendship, rather than pity shall note and remember how much we have been friends. Therefore, be gone. My ears against your petitions to me are stronger than your Roman gates are against my army. Yet, because I was your friend, take this letter along with you. I wrote it for your sake.”

Coriolanus gave Menenius a letter and then continued, “I would have sent it to Rome. I will not hear you speak another word, Menenius.”

He then said, “Aufidius, this man was my beloved friend in Rome, yet you see how I treat him now!”

“You have a resolute mind,” Aufidius said.

Coriolanus and Aufidius exited.

“Now, sir, is your name Menenius?” the first guard asked.

“It is a spell, you see, of much power,” the second guard said, sarcastically. “You know the way back to Rome.”

“Did you hear how we are scolded for keeping your greatness away from Coriolanus?” the first guard asked.

“What reason, do you think, I have to faint out of fear?” the second guard asked.

Menenius replied, “I care neither for the world nor for your General. As for such things as you, I can scarcely think

there are any since you are so slight. He who has a will to commit suicide and die by his own hand does not fear death from the hands of another person. Let your General do his worst. As for you, be what you are, live for a long time, and may your misery increase with your age! I tell you, as I was told, go away!”

Menenius exited.

The first guard said, “He was a noble fellow, I’ll give him that.”

“The worthy fellow is our General,” the second guard said. “He’s the rock, the oak that is not to be shaken by the wind.”

One of Aesop’s fables taught the lesson that pride can lead to a fall: “The humble reed that bends in the wind is stronger than the proud oak that breaks in a storm.”

— 5.3 —

Coriolanus, Aufidius, and others met in the Volscian military camp.

Coriolanus said, “Tomorrow we will encamp our army before the walls of Rome. Aufidius, as you are my partner in this action, you must report to the Volscian lords how plainly and openly I have borne this business.”

Aufidius acknowledged, “You have respected only the Volscian ends and purposes; you have stopped your ears against the petition of the Roman people; you have never allowed any Roman to make to you a private whisper — no, not even by such friends who thought that you surely would allow them to speak to you.”

Coriolanus said, “This last old man, whom with a cracked and broken heart I have sent to Rome, loved me more than a father loves his son; indeed, he made a god of me. The

Romans' last resort was to send him, for whose old love I have, although I showed a sour disposition to him, once more offered the conditions I first sent to the Romans, which they refused and cannot now accept as a point of honor. I did that only to show grace to him, who thought he could do more. A very little I have yielded to, but hereafter I will not listen to fresh embassies and suits, neither from the state nor private friends."

He heard a noise and asked, "What shouting is this?"

He guessed the cause of the noise and said to himself, "Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow at the same time it is made? I will not."

Wearing mourning clothing, Virgilia, Volumnia, Valeria, and some attendants arrived. With them was Martius' son, young Martius.

Coriolanus said to himself, "My wife comes foremost; then my mother — the honored mold wherein this trunk of mine was framed — and holding her hand is the grandchild to her blood. But leave me, all affection and emotion! All bond and privilege of human nature, break and get away from me! Let it be virtuous to be obstinate and unyielding.

"What is that curtsy worth? Or those doves' eyes, which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and I am not made of stronger earth than other men. My mother bows to me, as if Olympus, the home of the gods, would nod in supplication to a molehill, and my young boy has a look of intercession, to which great human nature cries, 'Deny it not.'

"Let the Volscians plow Rome and harrow Italy. I'll never be such a gosling as to obey natural instinct, but I will stand firm, as if a man were author and parent of himself and knew no other kin."

Virgilia said, "My lord and husband!"

“These eyes are not the same as those I wore in Rome,” Coriolanus replied.

He meant that he had changed and no longer looked at her the same way that he had looked at her previously to being exiled from Rome.

His wife replied, “The sorrow that shows us thus changed makes you think so. Our sorrow has changed us so much that you think you have new eyes.”

Coriolanus said to himself, “Like a dull, unintelligent actor now, I have forgotten my part, I am at a loss for words, and I am completely disgraced.”

He recovered enough to say, “Best of my flesh, forgive my cruelty, but do not, because I have asked you for your forgiveness, say to me, ‘Forgive our Romans.’”

His wife kissed him.

Coriolanus said, “Oh, when I was exiled, you gave me a kiss that has lasted as long as my exile and that is as sweet as my revenge! Now, by the jealous Queen of Heaven, Juno, goddess of marriage and punisher of the unfaithful, I swear that when I left Rome, I carried away that kiss from you, dear; and my true lips have virgined it — been chaste — ever since.

“You gods! I prate, and I leave unsaluted and ungreeted the noblest mother of the world. Sink, my knee, in the earth.”

He knelt and said to Volumnia, his mother, “Let my knee do its duty and make a deeper impression in the earth than other sons make so that I can acknowledge my respect for you more than common sons acknowledge their mothers.”

His mother replied, “Oh, stand up, blessed one, while with no softer cushion than the flint, I kneel before you and improperly show my maternal respect to you, as I have

been ‘mistaken’ all this while about the respect owed between the child and parent. Previously, I thought that you ought to kneel to show me respect, but now I ‘know’ that I ought to kneel to show you respect.”

This was shocking: A child ought to kneel to show respect to his parent; it is wrong for a parent to kneel to show respect to her child.

“What is this?” a shocked Coriolanus said. “You are on your knees to me! This is a rebuke to me!

“Let the pebbles on the barren beach rise up and strike the stars!

“Let the mutinous winds blow the proud cedars so that they strike against the fiery Sun!

“Let impossibility be murdered, in order to make what is impossible only slight work. Let the laws of nature be destroyed so that impossible things happen!”

Coriolanus valued valor and honor. Suicide can be honorable in some situations. A parent kneeling humbly to her son is not an honorable situation. He stood up and raised his mother.

“You are my warrior,” his mother said. “I helped to frame — shape and train — you.”

She then asked him, “Do you know this lady?”

The lady was her friend Valeria.

Coriolanus replied, “She is the noble sister of Publicola, an important Roman patrician. She is Rome’s Moon, whose goddess is the virgin Diana. She is as chaste as the icicle that’s crystalized by the frost from purest snow and hangs on Diana’s temple. She is dear Valeria!”

Moving Coriolanus’ son forward, Volumnia said, “This

boy is a poor miniature of yourself, but with the execution of enough time he may show that he is completely like yourself.”

Coriolanus said to his son, “May Mars, the god of soldiers, with the consent of supreme Jove, King of the gods, infuse your thoughts with nobleness so that you may prove to be incapable of dishonor and so that you may prove to stand out in the wars like a great sea-beacon, withstanding every gust of wind, and saving those who see you!”

Volumnia said to Coriolanus’ son, “Get on your knee, young sir.”

He knelt.

“That’s my brave and splendid boy!” Coriolanus said.

“Even he, as well as your wife, this lady, and myself, are petitioners to you,” Volumnia said.

“Please, be quiet,” Coriolanus said. “Or, if you must ask, remember this before you ask: The thing I have forsworn to grant may never be regarded by you as denials to all of you. I cannot grant what I have sworn not to grant. Do not ask me to dismiss my soldiers, or to bargain and come to terms with Rome’s working class.

“Don’t tell me in which ways I seem unnatural. Don’t try to alleviate my rages and revenges with your colder reasons.”

“Oh, say no more, no more!” Volumnia said. “You have said you will not grant us anything, for we have nothing else to ask, except that which you already deny us. Yet we will ask it, so that, if you fail to give us our request, the blame may hang upon your hardness; therefore, hear us out.”

Coriolanus said, “Aufidius, and you Volscians, listen, for we’ll hear nothing from Rome in private.”

He sat down and then asked his mother, “What is your request?”

“Even if we would be silent and not speak, our mourning clothing and the state of our mourning bodies would betray what kind of life we have led since your exile. Think to yourself how much more unfortunate than all living women are we who have come here, since the sight of you, which should make our eyes flow with joy and our hearts dance with comforts, constrains them instead to weep and shake with fear and sorrow because the mother, the wife, and the child see the son, the husband, and the father tearing his country’s bowels out.

“And your enmity’s most deadly to poor us. You ban us from praying to the gods, which is a comfort that all but we can enjoy. How can we pray for the safety of our country, to which we are bound, and at the same time pray for victory for you, to whom we are also bound? Either we must lose our country, which is our dear nurse, or else we must lose you, who is our comfort in our country. We must find an inevitable calamity, even though we have our wish, whichever side should win: For either you must, as a traitor who helps a foreign power, be led with manacles through our streets, or else you must triumphantly tread on your country’s ruin, and bear the palm of victory for having ‘bravely’ shed the blood of your wife and children.

“As for myself, son, I do not intend to wait on fortune; I will not wait until these wars determine who is victorious. If I cannot persuade you rather to show a noble grace to both countries — that of the Romans and that of the Volscians — than to seek the end of one of those countries, you shall no sooner march to assault your country than you will tread — believe that what I say is true — on your mother’s womb that brought you into this world.”

She was threatening to commit suicide if he continued to

march on Rome.

“Yes, and on my womb, too,” Coriolanus’ wife said. “My womb that brought forth for you this boy to keep your name living in time.”

Coriolanus’ young son said, “He shall not tread on me; I’ll run away until I am bigger, but then I’ll fight.”

Coriolanus said, “He who does not want to feel a woman’s tenderness must not see a child or a woman’s face. I have sat too long.”

He stood up.

“No, do not go from us like this,” his mother said. “If it were the case that our request did tend to save the Romans, and by so doing destroy the Volscians whom you serve, you might condemn us as being poisonous to your honor. But that is not the case; our suit is that you reconcile the two sides: the Romans and the Volscians. While the Volscians may say, ‘This mercy we have shown,’ the Romans may say, ‘This mercy we have received.’ And each person on either side will give the all-hail to you and cry, ‘May you be blest for creating this peace!’

“You know, great son, that how a war will end is uncertain, but this is certain: If you conquer Rome, the benefit that you shall thereby reap is such a name whose repetition will be dogged with curses. The history books will have this written in them: ‘The man was noble, but with his last attempt at doing a great deed he wiped his nobility out; he destroyed his country, and his name remains abhorred to the ensuing age.’

“Speak to me, son.

“You have sought the fine strains of honor in order to imitate the graces of the gods. You wanted to tear with

thunder the wide cheeks of the blowing air.”

In maps of the time, illustrations showed wind issuing from the puffed-out cheeks and open mouth of Aeolus, god of the winds.

Volumnia continued, “And you wanted to load your sulphur into a thunderbolt that would split only an oak tree.”

In saying that the thunderbolt split an oak tree — rather than a man — she was leading up to an important point: An important grace of the gods is mercy, and that is the grace that her son ought to seek.

Volumnia continued, “Why don’t you speak? Do you think it is honorable for a noble man always to remember wrongs?”

“Daughter, speak: He does not care that you are weeping.

“Speak, boy. Perhaps your childishness will move him more than can our reasons and arguments.

“There’s no man in the world more bound to his mother; yet here he lets me prattle like one publicly humiliated in the stocks.”

The stocks were pieces of wood with half-circles carved out of one edge; when two pieces of wood were put together, the half-circles would form circles. A person would be restrained by having his or her feet, hands, and/or head put in the circles. The person being punished might plead, but the people punishing him would ignore his or her pleas.

Volumnia continued, “You have never in your life showed your dear mother any courtesy when she, poor hen, fond of no second brood, has clucked you to the wars and safely back home, loaded with honor. Say my request’s unjust,

and kick me away, but if my request is just, then you are not honest and honorable, and the gods will plague you because you keep back from me the respect that a child ought to give to a mother.”

Coriolanus started to leave.

Volumnia said, “He turns away. Get down on your knees, ladies; let us shame him with our knees. To his surname ‘Coriolanus’ belongs more pride than pity to our prayers. He is a man of Corioli, not the conqueror of Corioli. Get down, ladies.”

The three ladies and Coriolanus’ son knelt.

Volumnia continued, “Let’s make an end of it. This is the last appeal we will make. And so we will go home to Rome, and die among our neighbors.

“Coriolanus, look at us. This boy, who cannot tell what he wants to have, but who kneels and holds up his hands because we ladies do, argues for our petition with more strength than you have to deny it.”

She paused; Coriolanus remained silent.

She then said, “Come, let us go, ladies. This fellow — Coriolanus — had a Volscian for his mother. His wife is in Corioli and his ‘child’ who is beside me resembles him simply by chance.

“Yet give us our dismissal, Coriolanus. I am hushed until our city is set on fire, and then I’ll speak a little.”

The little she would speak would be to curse her son as she died.

Coriolanus held her hand; he was silent for a short time.

Then he said, “Oh, mother, mother! What have you done? Behold, the Heavens open, the gods look down, and they

laugh at this unnatural scene.”

The scene was unnatural because the mother’s successful pleading put her son’s life at risk.

Coriolanus continued, “My mother! Mother! You have won a happy victory for Rome, but as for your son — believe it, oh, believe it, you have prevailed with him in a way that is very dangerous and perhaps mortal to him. But, let it come.

“Aufidius, although I cannot make true wars, wars that are true to my promise, yet I’ll frame a suitable peace. Now, good Aufidius, if you were in my place, would you have heard a mother less? Or granted less, Aufidius?”

Aufidius replied, “I was moved by it.”

“I dare to swear that you were,” Coriolanus said, “and, sir, it is no little thing to make my eyes sweat compassion.”

He was crying.

Coriolanus continued, “But, good sir, advise me what peace treaty you would like to make. As for me, I’ll not return to Rome; instead, I’ll go back with you. Please, stand by me in this affair.

“Oh, mother! Oh, wife!”

As Coriolanus talked with his wife and his mother, Aufidius said to himself, “I am glad you have set your mercy and your honor at war inside yourself. Out of that I’ll manipulate things so that I regain my former fortune.”

Coriolanus said to his mother and his wife, “Yes, and soon. But we will drink together, and you shall bear a better witness back to and in Rome in your own person than words. We will give Rome a new peace treaty, which will have fair terms as did the old peace treaty, and which will be counter-signed and sanctioned.

“Come, go inside the tent with us. Ladies, you deserve to have a temple built to you. All the swords in Italy and all her military allies could not have made this peace.”

— 5.4 —

Menenius and Sicinius talked together in a public place in Rome.

Menenius said, “Do you see yonder the corner of the Capitol; do you see yonder cornerstone?”

“Why, what about it?” Sicinius asked.

“If it is possible for you to move the huge cornerstone with your little finger, then there is some hope that the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with Coriolanus. But I say there is no hope for this happening. Our throats are sentenced and wait for execution.”

“Is it possible that so short a time can alter the character of a man!” Sicinius asked.

“There is a difference between a grub and a butterfly, yet the butterfly was a grub. This Martius has grown from a man to a dragon. He has wings; he’s more than a creeping thing.”

“He loved his mother dearly.”

“So did he love me,” Menenius said, “and he no more remembers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse remembers its dam. The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes. When he walks, he moves like a war machine, and the ground shrinks before his treading. He is able to pierce body armor with his eye. He talks like a death knell, and his expression of disapproval is an assault. He sits in his chair of state, as if he were a statue of the Greek conqueror Alexander the Great. What he orders to be done is finished at the same time he finishes commanding it to be done. He

lacks nothing that a god has except eternity and a Heaven to be enthroned in.”

“He also lacks the mercy of a god, if your report about him is true,” Sicinius said.

“I paint his character as it really is. Note what mercy his mother shall bring from him: There is no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger. Our poor city shall find that to be true, and all this is due to you.”

“May the gods be good to us!” Sicinius said.

“In such a case the gods will not be good to us,” Menenius said. “When we banished Coriolanus, we did not respect the gods, and now that he is returning to break our necks, the gods do not respect us.”

A messenger arrived and said to Sicinius, “Sir, if you want to save your life, flee to your house. The plebeians have got Brutus, your fellow Tribune, and they are dragging him up and down, all while swearing that if the Roman ladies do not bring good news home, they’ll give him death, killing him slowly, inch by inch.”

A second messenger arrived.

Sicinius asked, “What’s the news?”

“Good news, good news,” the messenger replied. “The ladies have prevailed, the Volscians have left their military camp, and Martius has gone. A merrier day has never yet greeted Rome. No, not even the day when the Tarquins were expelled.”

“Friend,” Sicinius asked, “are you certain this is true? Is it most certainly true?”

“I am as certain I know this news is true as I am certain I know the Sun is fire,” the messenger said, “Where have

you been lurking that you doubt this news? The swelling, wind-blown tide never hurried through the arch of a bridge as the relieved people hurry through the gates of Rome to greet the returning ladies. Why, listen!”

Musical instruments could be heard playing loudly in celebration. Romans shouted in joy.

The messenger continued, “The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries, fifes, tabors, and cymbals and the shouting Romans make the Sun dance. Listen!”

The crowd of people shouted loudly.

“This is good news,” Menenius said. “I will go and meet the ladies. This Volumnia is worth a city full of Consuls, Senators, and patricians. She is worth a sea and land full of Tribunes such as you. You have prayed well today. This morning I’d not have given a small coin for ten thousand of your throats.”

The music and the shouting continued.

Sicinius said to the second messenger, “First, may the gods bless you for your tidings; next, accept my thankfulness.”

The second messenger replied, “Sir, we all have great cause to give great thanks.”

“Are the ladies near the city?” Sicinius asked.

“They are almost at the gates,” the second messenger replied.

“We will meet them and join in the joy.”

— 5.5 —

Two Senators escorted Volumnia, Virgilia, and Valeria on a street near the gate of Rome. Many other people were present.

The first Senator shouted, “Behold our patroness, the life of Rome! Call all your tribes together, praise the gods, and make triumphant fires; strew flowers before the ladies. Unshout the noise that banished Martius, and recall him to Rome with the welcome of his mother. All cry, ‘Welcome, ladies, welcome!’”

All cried, “Welcome, ladies, welcome!”

— 5.6 —

Tullus Aufidius and some attendants were in a public place in the Volscian city of Antium.

Aufidius said, “Go and tell the lords of the city that I am here. Deliver this paper to them. After they have read it, tell them to go to the marketplace, where I in their hearing and in the hearing of the commoners will vouch for the truth of what I have written. Martius, whom I accuse, by this time has entered the city gates and intends to appear before the people, hoping to establish his innocence with words. Hurry and complete your task.”

He gave the paper to an attendant, who exited along with the other attendants.

Some people who were conspiring with Aufidius against Coriolanus arrived.

Aufidius greeted them, “You are very welcome here!”

The first conspirator asked, “How is it with our General?”

Was he referring to Aufidius, or to Coriolanus?

Aufidius replied, “Just as it is with a man who has been poisoned by his own alms and slain as a result of his own charity.”

Aufidius’ alms had been to treat Coriolanus well when he first arrived in Antium as an exile; Coriolanus’ alms had

been to make a peace treaty with Rome. Either man could end up slain on this day. The common people of Antium would refer to Coriolanus as their General, but Aufidius' co-conspirators could very well refer to Aufidius as their General.

“Most noble sir,” the second conspirator said, “if you still have the same intent wherein you wished us to be your accessories, we'll deliver you from your great danger.”

“Sir, I cannot tell right now what I will do,” Aufidius said. “We must proceed according to what we find out about the common people. We will find out how the common people feel, and we will proceed accordingly.”

The third conspirator said, “The common people will remain uncertain while there's rivalry between you and Martius, but the fall of either of you will make the survivor the heir and winner of all.”

“I know it,” Aufidius said, “and my pretext to strike at him can be interpreted favorably. I raised Martius to a high position in our society, and I pawned my honor for his loyalty. Being so heightened and raised to a position of power, he watered his new plants — those men on whom he conferred honors — with dews of flattery, thereby seducing my friends. To achieve this end, he bowed his nature, which was never before known to be other than rough, unswayable, frank, and uncontrollable.”

The third conspirator said, “Sir, his obstinacy when he ran to be elected Consul, which he lost by lack of stooping and lack of showing humility —”

“I was going to mention that,” Aufidius said. “Being banished because of his lack of humility, he came to my hearth and presented his throat to my knife. I took him in, made him my equal partner in serving the Volscian state, and gave way to him in all his own desires. Indeed, I let

him choose my best and freshest men from out of my files of soldiers, so he could accomplish his projects. I served his undertakings in my own person. I helped to reap the fame that he harvested as only his own. I took some pride in doing myself this wrong, until, at the end, I seemed to be his follower and not his partner, and he patronized me with a look of approval as if I had been no more than a mercenary — a hired soldier.”

“So he did, my lord,” the first conspirator said. “The army marveled at it, and, at the end, when he had conquered Rome and we looked for spoil no less than we looked for glory —”

“That was the thing for which my muscles shall be strained to the utmost against him,” Aufidius said. “For a few drops of women’s tears, which are as cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labor of our great military action; therefore, he shall die, and in his fall I’ll regain my old position of honor. But, listen!”

Drums and trumpets sounded, and the common people shouted as they escorted Coriolanus.

The first conspirator said to Aufidius, “Your native town you entered like a messenger, and you were given no welcomes home, but now when he returns, the air is split with noise.”

The second conspirator said, “And long-suffering fools, whose children he has slain, tear their base throats by shouting and giving him glory.”

The third conspirator said, “Therefore, while you have your opportunity, before he expresses himself and moves the common people with his words, let him feel your sword. We will back you up with our swords. When he lies prostrate, dead, you can tell his story in a way that favors you, and we shall bury his explanations with his body.”

“Say no more,” Aufidius said. “Here come the lords.”

The lords of the city walked over to Aufidius and his fellow conspirators.

“You are very welcome home,” the lords said to Aufidius.

“I have not deserved it,” Aufidius said. “But, worthy lords, have you carefully read the paper I wrote?”

“We have,” the lords said.

“And we grieve to read it,” the first lord said. “What faults he made before the most recent fault, I think might have been given light, easy-to-bear punishment. But he ended the war where things stood at the war’s beginning; he gave away the benefit of our levies of soldiers.

“He answers us with our own charge: He returns to us only money for the expenses we laid out for the war, and he says that he acted under the authority we gave him.

“We should have conquered Rome and made great profit, but we get only a peace treaty, which we had before the war started, although Rome had yielded to our soldiers — this admits no excuse.”

“He is approaching,” Aufidius said. “You shall hear what he has to say.”

Coriolanus arrived, marching with a drum and flying colors; the common people accompanied him.

“Hail, lords!” Coriolanus said. “I have returned as your soldier. I am no more infected with my country’s love than when I departed from here, and I still remain under your great command. You need to know that my endeavors on your behalf have been prosperous; with bloody passage I led your wars even to the gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought home more than counterpoise a full and a

third part the expenses of the military action: The spoils amount to the cost of the war plus one third more. We have made peace with no less honor to the Antiates than shame to the Romans, and we here deliver, subscribed by the Roman Consuls and patricians, together with the seal of the Roman Senate, the peace terms we have settled on.”

He offered the lords a scroll.

“Don’t read it, noble lords,” Aufidius said, “but tell the traitor that in the highest degree he has abused the powers you gave him.”

“‘Traitor’!” Coriolanus said. “What are you saying?”

“Yes! Traitor, Martius!” Aufidius said, not using the honorary title “Coriolanus.”

“‘Martius’!” Coriolanus said.

“Yes, Martius, Caius Martius,” Aufidius said. “Do you think I’ll honor you with that robbery — the name ‘Coriolanus’ you stole in Corioli?”

“You lords and heads of the state, he has perfidiously betrayed your business, and given up, for certain drops of salty tears, Rome — which I say is your city — to his wife and mother. He has broken his oath and resolution as if they were a thread of rotten silk, never counseling other officers of the war, but at his nurse’s — his mother’s — tears he whined and howled away your victory, with the result that pages blushed because they were embarrassed for him and men of courage looked wondering at each other in astonishment.”

“Do you hear this, Mars, god of war!” Coriolanus said.

“Don’t name that god, you boy of tears, any more!” Aufidius said.

Coriolanus snorted and said, “Infinite liar, you have made my heart swell and grow too big for my chest. You call me ‘boy’! You slave!

“Pardon me, lords, it is the first time that I was ever forced to scold and use violent language.”

Coriolanus may have meant that it was the first time he did this in this city.

He continued, “Your judgments, my grave lords, must accuse this cur — this dog — of lying. His own understanding — the understanding of a man who wears striped scars made by my sword upon his body, stripes that he will bear to his grave — shall also show that he is lying.”

The first lord said, “Both of you, be quiet, and hear me speak.”

Angry, Coriolanus said, “Cut me to pieces, Volscians; men and lads, stain — discolor and dishonor — the edges of all your swords with my blood.

“‘Boy’! You false hound!

“If you Volscians have written your histories correctly, you can read in them that, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I fluttered your Volscians in Corioli.

“Alone I did it. ‘Boy’!”

Aufidius said, “Why, noble lords, will you be reminded of his blind luck, which was your shame, by this unholy braggart, before your own eyes and ears?”

All the conspirators shouted, “Let him die for it!”

The common people began to shout:

“Tear him to pieces!”

“Do it immediately!”

“He killed my son.”

“He killed my daughter.”

“He killed my cousin Marcus.”

“He killed my father.”

The second lord shouted, “Peace! Be quiet! Let there be no outrage! Peace!

“The man is noble and his fame is spread across the earth. His recent offences against us shall have a judicious and judicial hearing.

“Stand back, Aufidius, and do not trouble the peace.”

Coriolanus said, “Oh, I wish that I had him, with six Aufidiuses, or better, his entire tribe of relatives, in a place where I could use my sword lawfully!”

“Insolent villain!” Aufidius shouted.

The conspirators shouted, “Kill him! Kill him! Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!”

The conspirators drew their swords and killed Coriolanus.

Aufidius stood on Coriolanus’ body.

The lords cried, “Stop, stop, stop, stop!”

“My noble masters, hear me speak,” Aufidius said.

The first lord said, “Oh, Tullus —”

The second lord said, “You have done a deed that will make valor weep.”

“Don’t tread on him,” the third lord said. “Masters, be quiet; sheathe your swords.”

Aufidius said, “My lords, when you shall know — as in this rage, which was provoked by him, you cannot — the great danger that this man’s life put you in, you’ll rejoice that he is dead. If it pleases your honors to call me before your Senate, I’ll show that I am your loyal servant, or else I will endure your heaviest punishment.”

The first lord said, “Bear away from here Coriolanus’ body, and mourn for him. Let him be regarded as the most noble corpse that a herald ever followed to his tomb.”

In this society, a herald would follow the corpse of an important person in a funeral and declaim the dead man’s titles and accomplishments.

The second lord said, “Coriolanus’ own anger takes away from Aufidius a great part of the blame. Let’s make the best of it.”

“My rage is gone,” Aufidius said, “and I am struck with sorrow. Take his corpse up. Help, three of the chiefest soldiers; I’ll be one of the people carrying the corpse. Beat the drum so that it sounds mournfully. Let your steel pikes trail on the ground. Though in this city he widowed and made childless many people who to this hour bewail the injury, yet he shall have a noble memorial and be nobly remembered. Assist me.”

They lifted the corpse and carried it away, accompanied by all. A dead march — solemn music played at a funeral — sounded as they walked away.

Chapter XXV: HAMLET

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Hamlet*)

MALE CHARACTERS

GHOST of Hamlet's father.

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.

HAMLET, Prince, son to the late King Hamlet, and nephew to the present King Claudius. Queen Gertrude is his mother.

POLONIUS, counselor to the King. Polonius is old, and his children are Ophelia and Laertes.

HORATIO, friend to Hamlet. Attended University of Wittenberg with Hamlet.

LAERTES, son to Polonius.

VOLTEMAND, CORNELIUS, Danish ambassadors sent to Norway.

ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, childhood friends to Hamlet.

OSRIC, a foolish courtier.

A Gentleman.

A Priest.

MARCELLUS, BARNARDO, officers.

FRANCISCO, a soldier.

REYNALDO, servant to Polonius.

Players (actors).

First Player, acts the part of the King.

Second Player, acts the part of the Queen.

Third Player, acts the part of the King's nephew, Lucianus.

Fourth Player, speaks the Prologue.

Two Clowns, gravediggers.

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway.

A Captain.

English Ambassadors.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.

OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE

Elsinore in Denmark, the royal castle and its surroundings.

CHAPTER 1 (*Hamlet*)

— 1.1 —

At a guard post of the King of Denmark's castle at Elsinore, Francisco stood guard. The time was midnight, and the weather was cold.

Barnardo walked over to Francisco and asked, "Who's there?"

Francisco replied, "No, *you* answer *me*. I am the sentinel. Stand still, and identify yourself."

"Long live the King!" Barnardo replied. This was enough to show that he was a friend and not an enemy.

"Are you Barnardo?" Francisco asked.

"I am he."

"You have come very promptly at your appointed time to relieve me."

"The bell just now struck twelve," Barnardo said. "Go to bed, Francisco."

"For this relief, much thanks. It is bitterly cold, and I am sick at heart."

"Have you had a quiet guard?"

"Not even a mouse is stirring."

"Well, good night. If you meet Horatio and Marcellus, the partners of my watch, tell them to come quickly."

"I think I hear them," Francisco said. "Stop! Who's there?"

Horatio and Marcellus walked over to the two guards.

Horatio, who was a friend to Prince Hamlet, answered Francisco's question: "Friends to this country."

Marcellus added, "And loyal liegemen to the King of Denmark."

"May God give you a good night," Francisco said.

"Farewell, honest soldier," Marcellus said, and then he asked, "Who has relieved you?"

"Barnardo is taking my place. May God give you a good night."

Francisco departed.

Marcellus called, "Hey! Barnardo!"

Barnardo replied, "Hello. Is Horatio there?"

Horatio replied, "Here is a piece of him," and then he stuck out his hand to shake hands with Barnardo.

"Welcome, Horatio," Barnardo said. "Welcome, good Marcellus."

"Has this thing appeared again tonight?" Marcellus asked.

"I have seen nothing."

"Horatio says it is only our fantasy," Marcellus said. "He will not believe that this dreaded sight, which we have seen twice, is real. Therefore, I have entreated him to come along with us to watch all through this night. That way, if this apparition comes again, he may see it with his own eyes and speak to it."

"Tush, tush," Horatio said. "It will not appear."

"Sit down awhile," Barnardo replied, "and let us once again assail your ears, which are so fortified against and disbelieving of our story about what we have seen during

two nights.”

“Well, let us sit down,” Horatio said, “and let us hear Barnardo tell his story.”

“Last night, when the yonder same star that’s west of the Pole Star had made its course to illuminate that part of the night sky where now it burns, Marcellus and I, the bell then striking one — ”

The ghost walked onto the scene.

“Quiet! Stop talking!” Marcellus said. “Look there! Here it comes again!”

“The ghost has the same shape it had,” Barnardo said. “It looks exactly like King Hamlet, the King who is dead.”

“You are a scholar,” Marcellus said. “Speak to it, Horatio.”

As a scholar, Horatio knew the proper Latin words to use to ward off the ghost if it turned out to be malevolent.

“Doesn’t it look like the late King?” Barnardo asked. “Look at it closely, Horatio.”

“It looks very much like the late King,” Horatio said. “This sight harrows me with fear and wonder. It is as if my skin were being raked with a harrow.”

“The ghost wants to be spoken to,” Barnardo said.

Ghosts cannot speak until after they are spoken to.

“Question it, Horatio,” Marcellus said.

Horatio asked the ghost, “What are you that is usurping this time of night, and is usurping that fair and warlike form in which the majesty of the buried King of Denmark did sometimes march? By Heaven, I order you to speak!”

Marcellus said, “The ghost is offended and does not

“speak.”

“Look!” Barnardo said. “It is stalking away!”

“Stay!” Horatio shouted. “Speak, speak! I order you to speak!”

The ghost stalked out of sight.

“It is gone,” Marcellus said, “and it will not answer you.”

“What now, Horatio!” Barnardo said. “You tremble and look pale. Isn’t this something more than fantasy? What do you think about it?”

“Before my God, I would not believe this without my having seen it with the sensible and true evidence of my own eyes,” Horatio said.

“Didn’t it resemble the late King Hamlet?” Marcellus asked.

“It resembles the late King just as much as you resemble yourself,” Horatio replied. “The ghost was wearing the very same armor that the late King was wearing when he combatted the ambitious King of Norway. The ghost frowned exactly the same way the late King frowned when once, in an angry and physical argument, he smote the Polish soldiers who were crossing the ice on their sleds. It is strange.”

“Twice before, and exactly at this dead, dark, and dreary hour,” Marcellus said, “the ghost has walked with a martial stride during our watch.”

“I do not know what exactly to think,” Horatio said, “but in general my opinion is that this ghost is a sign of some strange and violent disturbance coming to our state.”

“Please, sit down, and tell me, he who knows,” Marcellus said, “why each night the citizens of our country toil in a

strict and most observant watch. Also tell me why bronze cannon are cast each day and why implements of war are being purchased in foreign marketplaces. Why have shipwrights been drafted to do their work every day with no Sabbath as a day of rest? What is the meaning of all this? What is so important that this sweaty haste results in such work being done both during the night and during the day? Who can tell me this?"

"I can," Horatio replied. "Our last King, the late King Hamlet, whose image just now appeared to us, was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway and his competitive pride challenged to a combat. Our valiant King Hamlet — this side of our known world knew him to be valiant — slew this Fortinbras in that combat.

"By a sealed and legal agreement, well ratified by law and the code of heraldry, Fortinbras forfeited, with his life, all the lands that he personally possessed to the conqueror.

"Our King Hamlet had likewise risked some of his personally owned lands, enough to equal the amount of land waged by Fortinbras. If Fortinbras had defeated and killed King Hamlet, Fortinbras would have acquired those lands. Instead, King Hamlet defeated and killed Fortinbras, thereby acquiring the lands that Fortinbras had wagered. All of this was in accordance to the legal contract that the two men had made.

"King Hamlet died and left those lands he had won to his son, Prince Hamlet. Old Fortinbras had wagered all his lands, and so he had no lands to leave to his son, young Fortinbras.

"Now, sir, young Fortinbras, who is hot and full of undisciplined and unrestrained mettle, has in the outskirts of Norway here and there sharked up a list of lawless reprobates, indiscriminately adding them to his army the

way that a shark indiscriminately adds fish to its belly. These landless and lawless reprobates will serve as the food that propels some enterprise that has a stomach in it — the enterprise needs these soldiers the way that a stomach needs food.

“That enterprise is no other than — as is well evident to our country — to take from us, by force and compulsion, those lands lost by his father, the elder Fortinbras.

“This, I take it, is the main reason for our preparations, the cause of this our watch and the fountainhead of this furious activity and turmoil in the land.”

“I think that what you have said is correct,” Barnardo said. “It is appropriate that this portentous figure — this ghost — comes armed during our watch; the ghost is very much like the late King who was and is the cause of these wars.”

“This sight of the ghost troubles the mind’s eye,” Horatio said. “In the most high and flourishing state of Rome, a little before the very mighty Julius Caesar fell, the graves stood open without their tenants and the dead, wrapped in sheets, squeaked and gibbered in the Roman streets. They were deadly portents just like meteors that trail trains of fire, dews of blood, and threatening signs in the Sun. In addition, the Moon, that moist planet that has power over the empire of Neptune, Roman King of the Seas, because it controls the tides, was almost completely blotted out because of an eclipse — it seemed as if it were the Day of Judgment.

“These same portents that foretold the assassination of Julius Caesar, these same portents that are precursors of fierce events, these same portents that are harbingers that always precede calamities and are prologue to a coming disaster — Heaven and Earth have joined together to show these same portents to Denmark and to the Danes.”

Horatio looked up and said, “But wait — look! Look, the ghost is coming here again!”

The ghost stalked closer to the three men.

“I’ll cross its path even though it blasts and destroys me,” Horatio said.

He said to the ghost, “Stay, illusion! If you can make any sound, if you can use your voice, speak to me. If I can do any good thing that will bring ease to you and honor to me, speak to me.”

The ghost opened its mouth, but a rooster — aka a cock — crowed.

Horatio continued, “If you have knowledge about evil coming to your country, which, perhaps, foreknowing may allow us to avoid, ghost, speak! Or if you have buried during your life ill-begotten treasure in the womb of the Earth, for which, they say, you spirits often walk in death, tell us about it.”

The ghost moved away, and Horatio called, “Stay, and speak!”

The ghost ignored Horatio, who then said, “Stop it, Marcellus.”

“Shall I strike at it with my pike?” Marcellus asked.

“Yes, if it will not stand still.”

Looking in one direction, Barnardo said, “It is here!”

Looking in another direction, Horatio said, “It is here!”

Marcellus said, “It is gone!”

The ghost could not be seen.

Marcellus added, “We do it wrong when we act so

majestically and imperiously and threaten it with a show of violence. After all, the ghost is as invulnerable as the air and when we strike at it with our pikes we do it no harm. The ghost mocks our vain blows and maliciousness.”

“It was about to speak, but the cock crowed,” Barnardo said.

“And then it started like a guilty thing hearing a fearful summons,” Horatio said. “I have heard that the cock, which is the trumpeter to the morning, does with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat awaken Phoebus Apollo, the god of day. Hearing the cock’s warning, any spirit that is wandering out of its boundary hurries back to its place of confinement, whether in sea or fire, or in earth or air. What we have just witnessed is evidence that what I have heard is true.”

“The ghost faded when the cock crowed,” Marcellus said. “Some say that when that season comes in which the birth of our Savior is celebrated, the bird of dawning — the cock — sings, aka crows, all night long. And then, they say, no spirit dares to stir abroad. The nights are wholesome. No planets exert an evil influence, no fairy casts a spell, and no witch has the power to charm — because Christmas is so sanctified and gracious a time.”

“So I have heard and I do in part believe it,” Horatio said. “But, look, the morning, clad in a russet-colored mantle, walks over the dew of yonder high hill in the East. Let us end our watch. I advise that we tell what we have seen tonight to young Prince Hamlet. I believe, upon my life, that this spirit, which will not speak to us, will speak to him.

“What do you think? Do you agree that we should inform him about it? Do you agree that our friendship to Hamlet and our duty make it necessary for us to tell Hamlet what

we have seen?”

“You are right,” Marcellus said. “Let us tell Hamlet what we have seen, please. I know where we can easily find him this morning.”

— 1.2 —

In a room of state in the castle were King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes (Polonius’ son), Voltmand, and Cornelius. Also present were other lords and some servants. Hamlet was dressed in black, the color of mourning.

Using the royal plural, King Claudius said, “Although the memory of the death of King Hamlet, our dear brother, is still green and fresh, and although it was fitting for us to bear our hearts in grief and for our whole Kingdom to be knit together in one brow of woe, yet discretion has so far fought with nature that we with wisest sorrow think about the late King Hamlet and at the same time remember our own position in the living world. Therefore, our former sister-in-law have we, as if with a defeated joy — with one eye smiling and the other eye dripping tears of sadness, with mirth at a funeral and with dirge at a marriage, with delight and dole weighing equally — married and taken as our wife, and no one has objected to our marriage. Our former sister-in-law is now our Queen, the imperial female sharer of the crown of this nation preparing for war. We have not gone against your very mature wisdom, which has freely approved this marriage all along. To all of you, we give our thanks.

“Now we must talk about young Fortinbras, who holds our worth in little regard, or who thinks that because of the death of our dear brother, the late King Hamlet, our nation is disturbed and is in disorder. These mistaken thoughts of his are allied with his dream of gaining personal advantages

by threatening Denmark. Young Fortinbras has not failed to pester us with messages that demand the surrender of those lands that were lost by his father, in accordance with the law, to our most valiant brother. So much for what he is demanding: All this you know.

“Now for new information concerning what we ourselves have decided — that is the main purpose and business of this meeting. We have here written a letter to the King of Norway, who is the uncle of young Fortinbras. His uncle became King of Norway after his father, the elder Fortinbras, died. Powerless and bedridden, the current King of Norway scarcely hears about his nephew’s intentions and actions — I have written him to ask that he stop young Fortinbras from proceeding further in this business. The King of Norway has the power to do that because the levies of soldiers — everyone who has joined young Fortinbras — are citizens of Norway and therefore subject to his rule. We now send you, good Cornelius, and you, Voltmand, as bearers of this greeting and as ambassadors to the aged King of Norway; we give to you no further personal power to do business with the King of Norway. You can do no more than the scope that these detailed documents allow. Farewell, and show your duty to me in your speed in accomplishing this task. We need not hear a long and flowery address of etiquette.”

“In delivering these documents and in all other things, we will show our duty,” Cornelius and Voltmand said together.

“We do not doubt it,” King Claudius said. “Heartily we say farewell to you.”

Cornelius and Voltmand departed.

King Claudius continued, “And now, Laertes, what’s the news with you? You told us that you had some request to

make of us; what is it, Laertes? You cannot speak of anything reasonable to the King of Denmark, and waste your words. What can you reasonably request, Laertes, that shall not be my gift rather than your request? The head is not more closely related to the heart, the hand is not more instrumental to the mouth, than is the throne of Denmark to your father. We — the entire monarchy and ourself — value your father highly. What would you like to have, Laertes?”

“My dread lord,” Laertes said, “I request your leave and permission for me to return to France. From there willingly I came to Denmark to do my duty and be present at your coronation, yet now that this duty is done, I must confess that my thoughts and wishes bend again toward France and I hope that you will grant me permission to return there.”

“Have you your father’s permission?” King Claudius asked.

He then asked, “Polonius, what do you say about this?”

“He has, my lord, made laborious petitions to wring from me my slow permission for him to return to France. Finally, I gave him my consent. I stamped my seal of approval upon his request. I ask you, therefore, to allow him to go.”

“Take your fair hour, Laertes,” King Claudius said. “Let your time of youth be yours to spend as you will in accordance with your best qualities. You have our permission to return to France.”

He then said, “But now, my nephew Hamlet, who is also my son —”

Hamlet thought, *A little more than kin, and less than kind. In other words: The nearer in kin, the less in kindness. And in yet other words: The closer the relationship, the greater the dislike. Am I your son? I say no. To call me your son is*

more than our actual relationship will allow. I do not accept you as my father. I also do not regard you as kind in the sense of being benevolent. The word "kind" also refers to the natural quality of family members; they should be united in a community of love toward each other. You and I do not have that. You married my mother, who is your brother's widow; I do not consider such a marriage natural — it is incestuous.

“How is it that the clouds still hang on you?” King Claudius asked Hamlet.

“That is not true,” Hamlet replied. “I am too much in the Sun.”

He thought, *And I do not like being called your son.*

Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, said, “Good Hamlet, take off and put away your night-colored clothing, and let your eye look like a friend on the King of Denmark. Do not forever with your downcast eyes seek for your noble father in the dust. You know that everything that lives must die, passing through nature to eternity.”

“Yes, that is a universal truth,” Hamlet said.

“If you know that, why does it seem that you are having such a hard time accepting your father's death?”

“Madam, ‘seem’?” Hamlet replied. “I really am having such a hard time accepting my father's death. The word ‘seem’ does not apply to me. It is not alone my inky-black cloak, good mother, nor the customary and conventional suits of solemn black, nor the windy sighs of forced breath, no, nor the fruitful river of tears flowing from the eyes, nor the dejected expression of the visage, together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief, that can denote me truly. All of these indeed seem; they can be appearances of something that is not truly felt. They are actions that a man

might act out hypocritically, but I have that within myself that surpasses show and goes beyond appearances. These other things are only the trappings and the suits of woe.”

“It is sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet, to give these mourning duties to your father,” King Claudius said. “But, you must know that your father lost his father. That father also lost his father. With the loss of each father, the survivor is bound in filial obligation to do as the funeral services demand and to grieve for some time. However, to persevere in obstinate sorrow is a course of impious stubbornness; it is unmanly grief. It shows a will most incorrect and in opposition to Heaven, a heart unsupported by religious belief, a mind lacking the virtue of patience, an understanding ignorant and uneducated. When we know that something must occur and is in fact as common as the most ordinary thing that we can sense, why should we in our peevish opposition take it to heart and mourn it excessively? Ha! It is a transgression and sin against Heaven, a transgression and sin against the dead, a transgression and sin against nature, and a most absurd and sinful transgression against reason, whose common theme is the death of fathers. Everyone who has witnessed death in the first corpse to the corpse of the person who died today has cried, ‘This must be so.’”

The first corpse was a murder victim. Cain killed Abel, his brother. This story is recounted in Genesis 4:8.

King Claudius continued, “We ask you to please throw to earth this unprevailing sorrow — it can gain nothing — and think of us as of a father. Let the world take note that you are the most immediate to our throne. Denmark is an elective monarchy, but we now use our voice to say that we want you to succeed us on the throne. I feel the love for you that a biological father bears his son.

“We know that you want to go back to school in

Wittenberg, but that is in opposition to what we desire. And so we beseech you to change your mind and remain here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye. You are our most important courtier, our kinsman, and our son.”

Queen Gertrude said, “Please do what I want you to do, Hamlet. Please stay here and do not return to Wittenberg.”

“I shall to the best of my ability obey you, madam,” Hamlet replied.

“Why, that is a loving and a fair reply,” King Claudius said. “Be a member of the royal family and stay here in Denmark.”

He said to Queen Gertrude, “Madam, come. This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet to our wishes sits smiling in my heart. To celebrate this, each time that we, the King of Denmark, will take a drink today, the great cannon will fire into the clouds, and the Heavens will all bruit and spread the King’s toast again, re-speaking it with Earthly thunder. Come, let’s go now.”

Everyone except Hamlet left the room.

Hamlet said to himself, “Oh, I wish that this too, too solid flesh would melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew! Would that my body would waste away on its own! Or I wish that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon — his eternal law — against self-slaughter! Exodus 20:13 states, ‘*Thou shalt not kill,*’ and that includes a prohibition against killing oneself. Oh, God! God! How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable seems to me the entire business of this world! Ha! This world is an unweeded garden, which goes to seed; things rank and gross in nature entirely possess it. That it should come to this!

“My father is only two months dead — no, not so much, not even two months. My father was so excellent a King;

he was, compared to this King Claudius, Hyperion the god of the Sun compared to a lustful half-man, half-goat satyr. My father was so loving to my mother that he would not allow the winds of Heaven to blow against her face too roughly. Heaven and Earth, must I remember! Why, my mother would hang on my father, as if increase of affection had grown by what it fed on: and yet, within a month — let me not think about it! Frailty, your name is woman! She wore new shoes when she followed my father's body as it went to the tomb. She cried like Niobe, who wept after all of her sons and all of her daughters died in a single day. A little, short month later, before those shoes were old, she married my uncle — oh, God, even a beast that lacks the ability to reason would have mourned longer!

“My mother married my uncle. He is my father's brother, but he is no more like my father than I am like the super-strong Hercules. She married my uncle within a month of my father's death. Even before the salt of very unrighteous tears had left the red flush of her bitter eyes, she married him. Oh, most wicked speed, to hasten with such dexterity and jump into incestuous sheets! It is not good, and it cannot come to be good. But break, my heart, because I must hold my tongue.”

Horatio, Marcellus, and Barnardo walked over to Hamlet.

Horatio greeted Hamlet: “Hail to your lordship!”

“I am glad to see you well,” Hamlet said. “You are Horatio, if I am not mistaken.”

“I am Horatio, my lord, and I am your poor servant ever.”

“Sir, my good friend, I'll change that name with you,” Hamlet said.

He meant that he would change the name “servant” to the name “friend.” John 15:15 states, “*Henceforth call I you*

not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his master doeth: but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father, have I made known to you."

Or, possibly, he meant that he would exchange names with Horatio — he would be Horatio's servant.

Either way, Hamlet and Horatio were friends.

Hamlet added, "And what brings you here from Wittenberg, Horatio?"

He then noticed Marcellus and greeted him, "Marcellus!"

Marcellus replied, "My good lord."

Hamlet said, "I am very glad to see you. Good day, sir."

He then again asked Horatio, "What brings you here from Wittenberg?"

"A truant disposition, my good lord," Horatio replied.

"I would not hear your enemy say that about you," Hamlet said, "and I will not allow you to do my ear the violence that would make it trust your own report against yourself. I know that you are no truant. But what is your business here in Elsinore? We'll teach you to drink deep before you depart. Danes are famous for their deep drinking."

"My lord, I came to see your father's funeral," Horatio replied.

"Please, do not mock me, fellow student," Hamlet said. "I think your purpose in coming here was to see my mother's wedding."

"Indeed, my lord, the marriage quickly followed the funeral."

"Thrift, thrift, Horatio!" Hamlet said. "The hot baked meat

pies for the funeral feast were set down cold on the tables for the marriage feast. I would prefer to have seen my worst enemy in Heaven before I had seen that day, Horatio! My father! I think I see my father!”

Startled, and thinking of the ghost, Horatio said, “Where, my lord?”

“In my mind’s eye, Horatio.”

“I saw him some time ago,” Horatio said. “He was a good-looking King.”

“He was a man — the ideal of man; he was perfect in every way,” Hamlet said. “I shall not look upon his like again.”

“My lord, I think I saw him last night,” Horatio said.

“Saw? Whom?”

“My lord, I think I saw the King your father.”

“The King my father!”

“Control your wonderment for a while,” Horatio said. “Listen with attentive ears until I can tell you what a marvelous thing I have seen with these gentlemen as witnesses.”

“For God’s love, let me hear,” Hamlet said.

“These gentlemen, Marcellus and Barnardo, had twice on their watch, in the dead vast and middle of the night, encountered something strange. A figure like your father, armed exactly like him from top to toe, appeared before them, and with solemn march stalked slowly and stately by them. Three times he walked by their troubled and fear-surprised eyes, as close as the length of his truncheon. They, melted almost to jelly because of their fear, stood silently and did not dare to speak to him. This they fearfully and secretly told me, and I kept the watch with them the

third night. Exactly as they had said, at the time they had stated and dressed the way that they had described, the apparition appeared. Each word they had spoken proved to be true and good. I was acquainted with your father. My hands are not more similar than was the apparition to your father.”

“But where did this happen?” Hamlet asked.

“My lord, this happened upon the platform — the platform where the guns of the fort are mounted. That is where we kept our watch,” Marcellus replied.

“Didn’t you speak to the ghost?” Hamlet asked.

“My lord, I did,” Horatio replied, “but it did not answer me. Once I thought that it lifted its head up and looked as if it were about to speak, but just then the cock crew loudly to announce the morning, and at the sound of the cock it shrunk hastily away and vanished from our sight.”

“It is very strange.”

“As I live, my honored lord, it is true, and we thought that it was our duty to let you know about it,” Horatio said.

“Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me,” Hamlet replied.

He asked Marcellus and Barnardo, “Do you have the watch tonight?”

“We do, my lord,” they replied.

“Was the ghost armed?” Hamlet asked.

“It was armed, my lord,” they replied. “It was wearing armor.”

“From top to toe?”

“My lord, from head to foot,” they replied.

“Then you did not see his face?”

“My lord, we did see the ghost’s face,” Horatio said. “The face guard of its helmet was up.”

“How did he look?” Hamlet asked. “Did he frown and look fierce, like a warrior?”

“His countenance was more sorrowful than angry,” Horatio replied.

“Was his face pale or a healthy red?”

“Very pale.”

“And he fixed his eyes upon you?” Hamlet asked.

“Most constantly,” Horatio said.

“I wish I had been there.”

“It would have much amazed you.”

“Very likely, very likely,” Hamlet said. “Did it stay long?”

“As long as someone with moderate haste might count to a hundred,” Horatio replied.

“Longer, longer,” Marcellus and Barnardo objected.

“Not when I saw it,” Horatio said.

“His beard was grizzled, wasn’t it?” Hamlet asked.

“It was, as I have seen it in his life,” Horatio said, “a sable silvered. His beard was black but streaked with white.”

“I will watch with you tonight,” Hamlet said. “Perhaps it will walk again.”

“I predict it will,” Horatio said.

“If it assumes my noble father’s person, I’ll speak to it, even if Hell itself should gape and order me to be silent,”

Hamlet said. "Please, if you have not already told someone what you saw, continue to keep what you saw secret. Whatever you see happen tonight, look at it closely but do not talk about it. I will reward your friendship. And so, farewell. Upon the guard platform, between eleven and twelve tonight, I'll visit you."

"We will do our duty to your honor," they replied.

"Give me your friendship, as I give you mine," Hamlet said. "Farewell."

Everyone except Hamlet departed.

Hamlet said to himself, "My father's spirit dressed in armor! All is not well; I suspect some foul play that the ghost wishes to inform me about. I wish that it were night! Until then, my soul, sit still. Foul deeds will rise, although all the Earth overwhelm them, to men's eyes. No matter how people try to hide foul deeds, they will become unhidden."

— 1.3 —

Laertes and Ophelia were in a room of Polonius' house. Laertes was preparing to return to France, and they were saying their goodbyes to each other.

"My luggage is on board ship," Laertes said. "Farewell. And, sister, if the winds are blowing in the right direction and a ship is ready to sail to France, do not sleep but instead write and send a letter to me."

"Can you doubt that I will write to you?" Ophelia asked.

"As for Hamlet and his trifling flirting with you, know that it is a temporary liking and a passing fancy and a youthful amorous sport. It is a violet in the springtime of youthful nature. It is an early flowering; it is not permanent. It is sweet, but it is not lasting. It is the perfume and pastime of

a minute. Hamlet's feeling for you is no more than that."

"No more than that?" Ophelia asked.

"Think that it is no more than that," Laertes said. "As we grow, we do not grow only in physical size and strength of our temple the body, but we also grow in our mind and soul — our inward nature also grows and expands. Perhaps he loves you now, and now no stain or deceit does besmirch the honorableness of his will, but you must be aware and fear that because he is a great and important person his will is not his own. He himself is subject to his birth and rank, and so he cannot do as other, lesser people do. He may not, as unvalued and unimportant persons do, choose for himself whom to marry because the safety and health of this whole state of Denmark depend on his choice, and therefore his choice must be circumscribed — his choice must meet the approval of that body of citizens of whom he is the head.

"Therefore, if he says he loves you, you will be wise to believe it only to the extent that a man in his particular position can act on what he says, which is only as far as the general approval of the important citizens of Denmark will allow him to act.

"So weigh what loss your honor may sustain, if you listen to his songs of love with too credulous and believing ears. Weigh what loss your honor may sustain if you lose your heart to him, or if you open your chaste treasure — your virginity — to his uncontrolled demands.

"Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister, and keep yourself in the rear of your affection, out of the shot and danger of desire. Don't display your affection, and so keep yourself safe. The most modest maiden is prodigal enough, if she unmask her beauty to the Moon; she ought not to unmask her beauty to someone who will take advantage of her.

“The mere fact of virtue itself is not enough to escape malicious and destructive gossip. The cankerworm injures the young flowers of the spring very often before their buds have been disclosed, and in the morning and liquid dew of youth contagious infections are most imminent. Youth is a time of great promise — and great danger.

“Be wary therefore. The best safety lies in fear of danger. If you are not afraid of danger, you are not wary of danger, and so you can fall into danger. Youth often acts contrary to its better nature even when no temptation is near.”

“I shall keep the content of this good lesson in and as a watchman for my heart,” Ophelia replied, “but, my good brother, do not do as some pastors who lack grace do: They show me the steep and thorny way to Heaven, while like reckless libertines puffed up with pride, they tread the primrose path of wanton amusement — they do not take their own advice.”

“Don’t worry about me,” Laertes said, adding, “I have stayed too long.”

He heard a noise, looked up, and said, “Our father is coming.”

Polonius entered the room, and Laertes said, “A double blessing is a double grace; occasion smiles upon a second leave. I get to have two farewells from my father.”

“Are you still here, Laertes?” Polonius said. “For shame! The wind is blowing in the sails of your ship, and everyone is waiting for you!

“Well, take my blessing and my advice with you. Listen to what I have to say to you and engrave my words in your heart.

“Do not needlessly broadcast your thoughts, and do not act

on any reckless thought.

“Be friendly, but do not be overly friendly. You need not be familiar with everybody.

“When you have friends who have proven themselves to be true throughout trials, keep them close to your soul with hoops of steel, but do not shake hands with every new and untested young man you meet.

“Beware of being involved in a quarrel, but once you are in the quarrel, act in such a way that the person arguing with you regrets it.

“Listen to every man, but give few men your recommendation.

“Listen to every man’s opinion, but reserve your judgment and form your own opinions carefully.

“Buy as good clothing as you can afford, but do not buy clothing with fancy trimmings. You need to buy rich — not gaudy — clothing. What a man wears often reveals what a man is. In France, people of the best rank and station know and practice this wisdom — they have good taste in clothing.

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be, because when you make a loan, you often lose both your money and your friend, and if you borrow money you do not practice the virtue of thrift.

“Practice this above all: To your own self be true. If you do this, it must follow, as the night follows the day, that you cannot then be false to any man.

“Farewell, and may my blessing help you to practice what I have said!”

“Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord,” Laertes said to

his father.

“It is time for you to go,” Polonius said. “Your servants are waiting for you.”

“Farewell, Ophelia,” Laertes said, “and remember well what I have said to you.”

“Your words are locked in my memory, and you have the key. I will remember your words until you give me permission to forget them.”

“Farewell,” Laertes said, and then he departed.

“What is it, Ophelia, that Laertes has said to you?” Polonius asked.

“If it please you, he told me something concerning Lord Hamlet.”

“This makes me remember something,” Polonius said. “I have been told that Hamlet has very often recently spent private time with you, and that you yourself have been most free and bounteous of your time and have spent it with Hamlet. If what I have heard is true, and I have been told these things as a warning to be careful and protective of you, I must tell you that you are not acting in such a way that my daughter ought to act — you must protect your honor. What is going on between you and Hamlet? Tell me the truth.”

“He has, my lord, of late made many tenders of his affection to me. He has let me know that he is fond of me.”

The word “tender” means “offer.” The word can mean “an offer of love,” which is how Ophelia is using it, or it can mean “an offer of money,” which is one of the ways Polonius will use it. The word “tender” can also refer to offers of other things.

“Affection! Ha! You speak like a green and inexperienced girl who is untried in such perilous circumstances. Do you believe his tenders of affection, as you call them?”

“I do not know, my lord, what I should think.”

“By the Virgin Mary, I’ll teach you what to think. Think of yourself as a baby who has mistaken these tenders for true pay, but these tenders are counterfeit — they are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly — take better care of yourself. If you do not — and here I think I am overusing the word ‘tender’ — you’ll tender me a fool.”

By “tender me a fool,” Polonius meant three things: 1) Ophelia will make a fool of herself, 2) Ophelia will make Polonius look like a fool, and 3) Ophelia will present Polonius with a fool — a bastard grandchild.

“My lord, he has made me his tenders of love in an honorable fashion.”

“Aye, ‘fashion’ you may call it,” Polonius said. “Ha!”

“And Hamlet has given confirmation of his tenders of love to me, my lord, with almost all the holy vows of Heaven.”

“Hamlet’s words are traps to catch woodcocks, which are very stupid birds. I know how the soul, when the blood burns, gives with careless generosity such vows of love to the tongue. These flares, daughter, give more light than heat, but both light and heat are as quickly extinguished as they are made. You must not mistake these quickly ending flares for real fire and real love.

“From this time on, do not spend so much time with Hamlet. Keep your maidenly presence away from him. You are the protectress of a treasure — your virginity — and you need not enter into negotiations for it just because a besieger wants you to.

“As for Lord Hamlet, remember that he is young and he has much more freedom to do what he wants than you do. In short, Ophelia, do not believe the vows that Hamlet makes to you. His vows of love are brokers who dress in holy vestments but who act as panderers to entice you into unholy acts of sin.

“This is all I have to say. From this time forth, I do not want you, in plain words, to misuse any of your free time by spending it in conversation with Lord Hamlet. Make sure that you do what I am telling you to do. Come along with me now.”

“I shall obey you, my lord,” Ophelia said to her father.

— 1.4 —

On the platform where the guards performed their duty, Hamlet, Horatio, and Marcellus stood.

“The air bites sharply,” Hamlet said. “It is very cold.”

“It is a nipping and sharp air,” Horatio agreed.

“What time is it now?” Hamlet asked.

“I think that it is not yet midnight,” Horatio replied.

“No, the bell struck twelve,” Marcellus said.

“Really?” Horatio said. “I did not hear it. It is drawing near the time that the ghost is accustomed to walk.”

Trumpets sounded, and cannons fired.

“What does this noise mean, my lord?” Horatio asked Hamlet.

“King Claudius stays awake tonight in order to carouse. He drinks many toasts, and he dances swaggering dances. As he drains his draughts of Rhine wine, the kettledrum and

trumpet thus bray out the triumph of his pledge. The kettledrum and trumpet are signals to fire the cannon.”

“Is this a Danish custom?” Horatio asked.

“Yes, indeed it is,” Hamlet said, “but in my opinion, although I am a native of Denmark and to the manner born, it is a custom that would be more honorable in being breached than in being observed. This heavy-headed reveling with its drunken practitioners makes other nations both in the East and in the West criticize and censure us. They call us drunkards, and they stain our names and titles by calling us swine. These drunken revels take away from our achievements, even those that are worthiest of the greatest praise. They cause us to lose the best and most valuable part of our national character.

“It often happens in particular men that they have some vicious defect of nature. This defect may, for example, be present from their birth because of their heredity — wherein they are not guilty, since no one can choose his origin. They are born with an unbalanced personality that often breaks down the fences and forts of reason. Or they may develop a personality flaw or a bad habit that excessively influences and perverts what would be their decent behavior.

“As I say, these certain men are contaminated by one flaw of the personality, whether it comes from nature or from nurture or from the workings of fate. Although in everything else they are completely virtuous and completely pure in grace — as complete as it is possible for a living man to be — yet the general opinion of everybody focuses on that one fault. A very small amount of evil can throw a shadow over all his many good qualities and hurt his reputation.”

Horatio said suddenly, “Look, my lord! Here comes the

ghost!”

The ghost approached the men.

“May angels and ministers of grace defend us!” Hamlet said.

He said to the ghost, “You may be a spirit of health, an angel — or a damned goblin, a demon. You may bring with you airs from Heaven or blasts from Hell. Your intentions may be wicked or they may be charitable. But you have come here in such a shape as invites questioning, and so I shall speak to you. Because of the shape you have assumed, I will call you names that I hope will inspire you to speak to me. I will call you Hamlet, King, father, royal Dane. Oh, answer me! Let me not burst in ignorance; instead, tell me why your canonized bones — your bones that have been properly buried in a Christian graveyard and coffined in your death — have burst their funeral shroud. Tell me why the sepulcher, in which we saw you quietly buried, has opened its ponderous and marble jaws, and vomited you into the world of the living again. What is the meaning of this? Why are you, dead corpse, who is dressed again in a full suit of steel armor, revisiting the fitful gleams of flickering moonlight and making the night hideous? Why do you make we fools of nature so horribly tremble as we think about things that lie beyond the reaches of our souls? Why are you walking in the night? Why? What do you want us to do?”

The ghost motioned to Hamlet to follow him.

Horatio said, “It is beckoning you to follow and go away with it as if it had something important to tell you and you alone.”

“Look,” Marcellus said. “With a courteous motion, it waves at you to go to a more private place away from here. But do not go with it.”

“No, by no means,” Horatio said.

They were afraid for Hamlet. An evil spirit could tempt him to commit suicide.

“It will not speak to me here,” Hamlet said, “and so I will follow it.”

“Do not, my lord,” Horatio said.

“Why, what should I be afraid of?” Hamlet asked. “I do not value my life as much as I do a pin. As for my soul, what can the ghost do to that — my soul is as immortal as the ghost is. It is again motioning to me to go with it. I will follow it.”

“What if it tempts you toward the sea, my lord,” Horatio asked, “or to the dreadful summit of the cliff that juts out over the sea? Suppose that it then assumes some other horrible form that might deprive you of your reason and make you insane? Think about this. Such a scene — you looking down many fathoms to the sea and hearing it roar — puts thoughts of desperation into every brain that sees and hears it.”

“The ghost is still waving at me to follow it,” Hamlet said.

He said to the ghost, “Lead on. I will follow you.”

“You shall not go, my lord,” Marcellus said.

Marcellus and Horatio physically restrained Hamlet, who told them, “Take away your hands.”

“Listen to us,” Horatio said. “You shall not follow the ghost.”

“My fate cries out,” Hamlet replied, “My destiny is calling to me. Every petty artery in my body is now as hardy as the Nemean lion’s sinews. The Nemean lion was invulnerable, and so Hercules was unable to pierce its skin. He had to kill

the lion by strangling it. The ghost still motions for me to come with it. Get your hands off me, gentlemen, or by Heaven, I'll make a ghost of whoever hinders me! I say, stay away from me!"

Marcellus and Horatio let go of Hamlet, who said to the ghost, "Go on; I'll follow you."

Hamlet and the ghost departed.

Horatio said, "Hamlet grows desperate and reckless with imagination and delusions."

"Let's follow him," Marcellus said. "We ought not to obey his orders to stay away from him. Obeying those orders would not be right."

"Yes, let's follow him," Horatio said. "What will be the result of this?"

"Something is rotten in the state of Denmark," Marcellus said.

"Heaven will take care of it," Horatio replied.

"Let's follow him," Marcellus said.

They went in the direction that Hamlet and the ghost had taken.

— 1.5 —

Hamlet stopped walking and asked the ghost, "Where are you leading me? I'll go no further."

"Listen to me carefully," the ghost said.

"I will."

"The hour has almost come when I must return to the sulfurous and tormenting flames of Purgatory."

“Alas, poor ghost!”

“Do not pity me,” the ghost said. “Instead, listen carefully to what I shall tell you.”

“Speak; I am bound by filial duty to hear you.”

“When you hear what I have to say, you will be bound to seek revenge.”

“What?”

“I am your father’s spirit. I am doomed for a certain time to walk during the night, and during the day I am confined to fast in fires, until the foul sins I committed in my days of life are burnt and purged away. If I were not forbidden to tell the secrets of my prison-house, I could tell you things whose lightest word would harrow your soul, freeze your young blood, and make your two eyes, like falling stars, start from their sockets, and part your carefully arranged locks of hair and make each individual hair stand on end like the quills of the bad-tempered porcupine. But this revelation of the mysteries of Purgatory must not be made to ears of flesh and blood. Listen, listen, listen to me if you ever have loved your dear father —”

“Oh, God!”

“— revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.”

“Murder!”

“Murder most foul,” the ghost said. “Murder is foul at best, but my murder was very foul, strange, and unnatural. My murder is unnatural because it goes against the natural bonds of kinship.”

“Quickly tell me what happened,” Hamlet said, “so that I, with wings as swift as thinking or the thoughts of love, may sweep to my revenge.”

“I find you apt and eager,” the ghost said. “You would have to be duller than the overgrown weeds that root themselves in ease on the banks of the Lethe River, whose water souls drink to forget past events, not to be moved by what I have to say.

“Now, Hamlet, listen. It was reported that as I was sleeping in my garden, a serpent bit me. The whole ear of Denmark is by a false account of my death rankly abused. Know, you noble youth, that the serpent that stung your father’s life now wears his crown.”

“Oh, my prophetic soul! I suspected this! My uncle!”

“Yes, your uncle is the cause of my death. He is an incestuous and adulterous beast. He used his knowledge of witchcraft, and he used traitorous gifts — wicked wit and gifts have the power to seduce! — to win to his shameful lust the will of my most seemingly virtuous Queen Gertrude, your mother.

“Oh, Hamlet, how she fell! She took her love from me, whose love was of such quality that it kept the vow I had made to her when I married her, and she gave it to a wretch whose natural gifts were poor in comparison to those of mine. True virtue can never be seduced even if lust dresses itself up with a Heavenly appearance, but lust, even if it has a Heavenly appearance, can first gorge itself in a celestial bed, and then gorge itself with garbage.

“But, wait! I think that I smell the morning air, so I must be brief. As I was sleeping — I thought safely — within my garden, as was my habit each afternoon, your uncle stole into my garden, carrying a vial of the poisonous juice of the cursed hebenon plant, and he poured the leprous poison into the shells of my ears. This poison so hates the blood of man that as quickly as it courses through the veins of the body, it makes the healthy and wholesome blood curdle

like acid when dropped into milk. Quickly, my skin became like the bark of a tree. My skin became leprous; a vile and loathsome crust covered all my smooth body.

“That is how I, while sleeping, lost my life, my crown, and my queen, all because of a brother’s hand. My life was cut short even in the blossom of my sin. I died without receiving the sacrament of holy communion, without confessing and being absolved from my sins, and without being anointed with holy oil. I was not given my last rites. I was not able to make a reckoning of my sins before I died, but instead I was sent to give an account of my sins with all my imperfections on my head. Oh, horrible! Oh, horrible! Most horrible!

“If you have any natural feeling in you, do not tolerate this. Do not allow the royal bed of Denmark to be a couch for lustfulness and damned incest. But, whatever you do, do not allow your mind to be corrupted by contact with your uncle, and do not plot to harm your mother. Leave her to Heaven and to her conscience — allow those thorns that lodge in her bosom to prick and sting her.

“Farewell now! The glowworm shows that the morning is near — the glowworm’s ineffectual fire begins to pale.

“*Adieu, adieu!* Hamlet, remember me.”

The ghost departed.

Hamlet said to himself, “Oh, all you host of Heaven — you angels! Oh, Earth! What else shall I call on? Shall I call on Hell? Damn! Do not break, my heart. And you, my sinews, do not grow instantly old, but instead keep me standing upright.

“Shall I remember you! Yes, you poor ghost, I will remember you for as long as memory holds a seat in this distracted globe — this head — of mine. Remember you!

Yes, from the tablet of my memory I'll wipe away all trivial and foolish records, all quotations from books, all ideas, all past impressions and observations that I have copied and written there in my youth. The only thing that shall live on in the book and volume of my brain will be your commandment. It will not be mixed with baser matter. Yes, by Heaven!

“Oh, most pernicious woman! Oh, villain, villain, smiling, damned villain! My tablet — it is fitting that I write down that a person may smile, and smile, and still be a villain. At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark.”

Hamlet wrote on a tablet, and then he said, “So, uncle, there you are. Now to my watchword, aka motto — the words that I will live by. The ghost said, ‘*Adieu, adieu!* Remember me.’ I have sworn to remember it.”

Horatio called, “My lord! My lord!”

Marcellus called, “Lord Hamlet!”

“May Heaven protect Hamlet!” Horatio said.

Hamlet said to himself, “So be it.”

Horatio called, “Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!”

A falconer uses the words “Hillo, ho, ho” to call his falcon to return to him.

Hamlet called back, “Hillo, ho, ho, boy! Come, bird, come.”

Horatio and Marcellus walked over to Hamlet.

“How are you, my noble lord?” Marcellus asked.

“What happened, my lord?” Horatio asked.

“Something to be wondered at,” Hamlet replied.

“My good lord, tell us what happened,” Horatio requested.

“No; you’ll reveal it.”

“Not I, my lord,” Horatio said. “I swear it by Heaven.”

“I also swear that I will not reveal it,” Marcellus said.

“What do you say then to this?” Hamlet said. “Would anyone ever think —”

He stopped and then asked, “But you will keep this secret?”

Horatio and Marcellus replied, “Yes, we will. We swear it by Heaven, my lord.”

Hamlet thought about revealing to them what the ghost had said, but in the midst of speaking he changed his mind and said something obvious: “All complete and total villains dwelling in Denmark are ... complete and total knaves.”

“No ghost, my lord, needs to come from the grave to tell us this,” Horatio said. “We already know it.”

“Why, you are right,” Hamlet said. “You are in the right, and so, without any more explanation at all, I think it fitting that we shake hands and part. You shall do as your business and desire shall point you; every man has business and desire, such as it is. As for me, I will go and pray.”

“These are wild and excited words, my lord,” Horatio said.

“I’m sorry that they offend you,” Hamlet said. “I am heartily sorry — yes, heartily.”

“I am not offended,” Horatio replied.

“By Saint Patrick you say that you are not offended,” Hamlet said, “but my words are about offense — and a lot of offense. Regarding this vision here, it is an honest and genuine ghost — I can tell you that. As for your desire to

know what happened between the ghost and me, stifle that desire as much as you are able to. And now, good friends, as you are friends, scholars, and soldiers, grant me one poor thing I request.”

“What is it, my lord?” Horatio said. “We will grant it.”

“Never make known what you have seen tonight,” Hamlet said.

“My lord, we will not,” both Horatio and Marcellus said.

“Swear it,” Hamlet said.

“Truly, my lord, I will not reveal what I have seen tonight,” Horatio said.

“Neither will I, truly,” Marcellus said.

“Swear it upon the cross made by the hilt of my sword,” Hamlet said.

Hamlet drew his sword.

“We have sworn, my lord, already,” Marcellus said.

“Swear upon the cross made by the hilt of my sword,” Hamlet repeated.

The ghost’s voice came from under the ground: “Swear!”

“Ah, ha, boy!” Hamlet said, excitedly. “Do you say so? Are you there, truepenny — true and honest fellow?”

He said to Horatio and Marcellus, “Come on — you hear this fellow in the cellars — swear.”

“Propose the oath you want us to swear to, my lord,” Horatio said.

“Swear by my sword that you will never speak of this that you have seen.”

The ghost's voice came from under the ground, but from a different spot than before: "Swear!"

Hamlet said about the ghost's voice, "*Hic et ubique?* [Latin for 'Here and everywhere?'] Then we'll shift our ground and move to a different spot. Come over here, gentlemen, and lay your hands again upon my sword. Swear by my sword that you will never tell what you have heard."

The ghost's voice came from under the ground, and again it came from a different spot than before: "Swear by his sword!"

"Well said, old mole!" Hamlet said. "Can you dig and work in the earth so fast? You are a worthy miner! Once more, let us move, good friends."

"Oh, day and night," Horatio said, "but this is wondrously strange!"

"Since the ghost is a stranger, welcome it," Hamlet said. "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of by philosophers."

He then said to both Horatio and Marcellus, "But come; swear here, as you have sworn oaths before, never, so help you God, no matter how strange or odd I act, as I perhaps hereafter shall think fitting to act in an antic and insane manner, that you, seeing me at such times, never shall do or say anything that reveals that you know that I am putting on an act. Swear that you will not fold your arms like this [Hamlet folded his arms], or shake your heads like this [Hamlet shook his head], or say some mysterious phrase such as 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, if we would,' or 'If we wanted to speak,' or 'There are people who could say more if they wanted to,' or such other ambiguous hint. In short, you will do nothing and you will say nothing that hints that you know that I am putting on an act. Swear this upon the grace and mercy that you will need on the Day of

Judgment.”

The ghost’s voice came from under the ground: “Swear!”

Horatio and Marcellus put their hands on Hamlet’s sword and swore not to tell what they had seen, not to tell what they had heard, and not to reveal that Hamlet was faking it when he acted as if he were insane.

“Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!” Hamlet said.

Hamlet then said to Horatio and Marcellus, “With all my love, I commend myself to you. Whatever so poor a man as Hamlet may do to express his love and friendship to you, God willing, he shall not stint to do. Let us go in together. Keep your fingers always on your lips, I ask you.”

Hamlet made a ‘shh!’ sign with his finger on his lips, and then he added, “The time is disorder’d. Oh, cursed spirit, I regret that I was ever born to set it right!”

Horatio and Marcellus wanted Hamlet to enter the castle first, but Hamlet said to them, “No, let’s go in together.”

CHAPTER 2 (*Hamlet*)

— 2.1 —

In a room of his house, old Polonius was talking to Reynaldo, who was one of his servants. Laertes was now living in Paris, and Polonius was sending Reynaldo to him.

“Give him this money and these letters, Reynaldo,” Polonius said.

“I will, my lord.”

“You shall do a marvelous and wise thing, good Reynaldo, if, before you visit him, you inquire about his behavior in Paris.”

“My lord, I intend to do that.”

“Well said; very well said,” Polonius said. “Look, sir, first inquire for me and find out which Danes are in Paris. Find out how they came to be there, who they are, how much money they have, and where they are living, what company they keep, and what are their expenses. If you find out that they know my son, you will learn more about him by using roundabout and vague questioning than if you were to question them directly about him. Pretend that you do not know him well, but that you have heard of him. You can say, ‘I know his father and his friends, and I know him a little.’ Do you understand me, Reynaldo?”

“Yes, very well, my lord.”

“‘— and I know him a little, but —’ you may say ‘— not well, but if this person is the man I mean, he’s very wild. He is addicted to so and so.’ You can then charge him with whatever false accusations you please, but be careful not to charge him with any rank and disgraceful accusations that

would dishonor him. Be careful not to do that. But, sir, you may charge him with such wanton, wild, and usual slips and faults that are commonly made by young men who are enjoying their first taste of liberty.”

“Such as gambling, my lord?” Reynaldo asked.

“Yes, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling and fighting, visiting prostitutes — you may go so far as these things.”

“My lord, that would dishonor him.”

“In faith, no,” Polonius said, “as long as you moderate the faults. You must not charge him with a major scandal, such as that he visits prostitutes every night — that is not what I want you to do. Instead, I want you to lightly talk about the slips and faults that come when a young man is first given his freedom — they are the flash and outbreak of a fiery mind, the wildness of an untamed young man, the things that happen to most young men.”

“But, my good lord —”

“You want to know why I want you to do this?”

“Yes, my lord. I would like to know that.”

“This is my scheme, and I believe that it is a legitimate scheme. You will charge my son in conversation with these slight sullies, as if they were like some spots of dirt that have soiled embroidery as it was being made. Young men often acquire slight sullies in the process of maturing. Listen to me. The person to whom you are talking, the person from whom you are seeking information about my son’s conduct, if he has ever seen my son commit any of the sins that we have mentioned, he will confirm my son’s fault, and he will call you ‘good sir,’ or something similar, or ‘friend,’ or ‘gentleman,’ according to the form of

address used by his social class and his country.”

“Very good, my lord.”

“And then, sir, he will do this — he will do — what was I about to say? By the Mass, I was about to say something. Where did I leave off?”

“You said that the person I was speaking to would confirm your son’s fault, if he is guilty, and would call me ‘good sir,’ or something similar, or ‘friend,’ or ‘gentleman.’”

“Yes,” Polonius said. “He will confirm my son’s fault by saying something like this: ‘I know the gentleman. I saw him yesterday, or the other day, or this day, or that day. And as you said, he was gambling, or drinking to excess, or playing court tennis.’ Or perhaps he will say, ‘I saw him enter such a house of sale.’ *Videlicet* [Latin for ‘That is to say’], a brothel. And so forth.

“Do you see? Your bait of falsehood will capture the prize of truth. We men of wisdom and of foresight use roundabout courses and devious tests to find out information and truth. If you follow this lecture and my advice, you shall learn the truth about my son. You understand me, don’t you?”

“I do, my lord,” Reynaldo replied.

“May God be with you,” Polonius said. “Farewell.”

“Goodbye, my lord.”

“Use your eyes when you are with my son. Go along with whatever he wants to do.”

“I shall, my lord.”

“And let him ply his music, whatever his music might be.”

“That is good advice, my lord.”

“Farewell!”

Reynaldo left the room just as Ophelia, Polonius’ daughter, entered it. Ophelia looked distressed.

“How are you, Ophelia! What’s the matter?”

“Oh, my lord, my lord, I have been so frightened!”

“Frightened by what, in the name of God?”

“My lord, as I was sewing in my private chamber, Lord Hamlet — with his jacket all unbuttoned, no hat on his head, wearing dirty stockings without garters so that his stockings had fallen down and were like fetters around his ankles, pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other, and with a look so piteous that it seemed as if he had been released from Hell so that he could speak of his horrors — came to me.”

“Is he insane because he loves you?” Polonius asked.

“My father, I do not know,” Ophelia replied, “but truly, I am afraid that that is true.”

“What did he say?”

“He took me by the wrist and held me hard, and then he backed up until he was at his arm’s length, and holding his other hand over his brow, he stared at my face as if he were going to draw it. He stayed like that a long time, but at last, shaking my arm a little, and waving his head up and down three times, he sighed so piteously and profoundly that it seemed to shatter his entire body and end his life. Having finished that, he let me go, and turning his head over his shoulder, he left my private chamber without the use of his eyes. He went out of doors without looking where he was going — he kept staring at me as he left.”

“Come with me,” Polonius said. “I will go and seek the

King. Hamlet is in the very ecstasy and madness of love, whose violent nature destroys itself and leads the will to desperate undertakings as often as any passion under Heaven that afflict our natures. This madness has enough violence that it can cause self-destruction. I am sorry that Hamlet is insane. Have you spoken to him any hard words recently?"

"No, my good lord," Ophelia replied. "I have done only what you commanded me to do. I returned his letters, and I have declined to let him visit me."

"That has made him insane," Polonius said. "I am sorry that I have not observed him with better heed and judgment. I was afraid that he was trifling with you and that he wanted to ruin you. Curse my suspicious nature! By Heaven, old people are just as likely to be overly suspicious as young people are to be indiscreet."

"Come, let's go to the King. We must give him this information. He will not want to hear it, but it might cause more harm to keep it secret than to reveal it."

— 2.2 —

In a room in the castle, King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern were speaking. Also present were various attendants.

"Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!" King Claudius said. "We have much wanted to see you, but in addition, we need you to do something for us and so we sent a message to you to come quickly to us. You must have heard something about a change in Hamlet. We can say that he has been transformed since he is different both outside and inside. Neither the exterior nor the inward man resembles what it was."

"What the cause of this transformation, other than his

father's death, can be, I cannot dream. Therefore, I ask you both, since from childhood you have been brought up with him, and since you know his youth and behavior so well, to agree to stay here in our court for a little while. That way, you two can encourage Hamlet to engage in pleasurable activities, and we hope that you can learn whether there is something, unknown to us, that is afflicting him — something that, once we know what it is, we can set to rights.”

“Good gentlemen,” Queen Gertrude said, “Hamlet has talked a lot about you, and I am sure that there are not two men living with whom he is friendlier. If it will please you to show us so much gentlemanly courtesy and good will as to spend time with us for a while, and to help us, we will reward your visit with such thanks as only a King can give.”

Rosencrantz replied, “Both your majesties can, by the sovereign power you have over us, simply command rather than request us to do something.”

“But we will both obey you,” Guildenstern said, “and here we give up ourselves, and we fully and freely lay our service at your feet. Command us as you will.”

“Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern,” King Claudius said.

“Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz,” Queen Gertrude said, adding, “I ask you to immediately visit my too-much-changed son.”

She said to the attendants, “Go, some of you. Take these gentlemen to where Hamlet is.”

“May the Heavens make our presence and our actions pleasant and helpful to him!” Guildenstern replied.

“Amen!” Queen Gertrude said.

Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and some attendants departed.

Polonius entered the room and said, “The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord, have returned. They are joyful.”

“You have always been the father of good news,” King Claudius said.

“Have I, my lord?” Polonius replied. “I assure my good liege that I perform my duty to both my God and my King as carefully as I guard my soul.”

He added, “I think, or else this brain of mine is not as able as it used to be to follow a track or scent that requires a knowledge of men and political affairs, that I have found the cause of Hamlet’s lunacy.”

“Tell us the cause,” King Claudius said. “I very much want to know that.”

“First allow the ambassadors to come here and give you their news,” Polonius said. “My news shall be the fruit — the dessert — to that great feast.”

“You may do the honors of welcoming the ambassadors and bringing them in here,” King Claudius replied.

Polonius left to do his duty.

King Claudius said to Queen Gertrude, “He tells me, my dear Gertrude, that he has found the head and source — the cause — of your son’s illness.”

“I doubt that it is anything but what we most suspect it is: his father’s death and our very quick marriage.”

“Well, we shall question Polonius thoroughly.”

Polonius returned, bringing with him King Claudius' ambassadors to Norway: Voltmand and Cornelius.

King Claudius said, "Welcome, my good friends! Tell me, Voltmand, what news do you bring us from our fellow ruler the King of Norway?"

"I bring very fair greetings from him to you, and I bring a very fair answer to your requests of him. Immediately after our first meeting with him, he sent out men to stop his nephew from drafting men into an army. The King of Norway had thought that his nephew was raising an army to attack Poland, but after an investigation, he found that the army was actually being raised to attack your highness. Once he learned that, he was aggrieved and angry that he had been deceived in his sickness, old age, and lack of strength. He sent orders to young Fortinbras to stop preparing for war and to appear before him. Fortinbras came to the castle, received a rebuke from the King of Norway, and in the end vowed to his uncle the King that he would never again plan to make war against your majesty. Hearing this, the old King of Norway, overcome with joy, gave him an annuity of three thousand crowns, and he gave him permission to use his soldiers to make war against Poland. With that in mind, he gave us a document that entreats you for permission for Fortinbras' army to cross Denmark so the soldiers can make war against Poland."

Voltmand handed King Claudius a document and said, "The King of Norway hopes that you will give your permission to this enterprise. This document lays down guarantees for the safety of Denmark if you allow the Norwegian army to cross it."

"We like this well," King Claudius said, using the royal plural. He added, "And when we have more time to consider this matter, we will read this document carefully, send an answer to the King of Norway, and think about the

far-reaching consequences that can follow what we decide.

“In the meantime, we thank you for your successfully undertaken labor. Go and rest now; at night we’ll feast together. Most welcome home!”

Voltemand and Cornelius departed.

Polonius said, “This business is well ended. My liege, and madam, to make a speech about what a King should be, what duty is, why day is day, night is night, and time is time, would accomplish nothing but to waste night, day, and time. Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit, and tediousness is the limbs and outward flourishes, I will be brief. Your noble son is mad; he is insane. Mad call I it; because, to define true madness, what is true madness except to be nothing else but mad? But let that go.”

Queen Gertrude said, “More matter, with less art. More content, with fewer rhetorical flourishes.”

Polonius replied, “Madam, I swear I use no rhetorical flourishes at all. That Hamlet is mad, it is true. It is true that his madness is a pity, and it is a pity that it is true. But these are rhetorical flourishes, so I will stop using them, because I do not want to use rhetorical flourishes.

“Let us grant that Hamlet is mad, then. What now remains is to discover the cause of this effect, or I should better say, to discover the cause of this defect, because this defective effect has a cause. Thus it remains, and that is the remainder. Perpend. Listen carefully. I have a daughter — I have her while she is mine, which is until she marries — who, in her duty and obedience to me, you see, has given me this. Now gather, and think about this.”

He began to read a letter — written by Hamlet to Ophelia — out loud:

“To the celestial, and my soul’s idol, the most beautified Ophelia,

“That’s an ill word, a vile word; ‘beautified’ is a vile word: but you shall hear the rest of the letter. Here it is:

“In her excellent white bosom, this letter, & etc.”

Queen Gertrude asked, “Did Hamlet write this letter to her?”

“Good madam, wait awhile,” Polonius said. “As I said that I would do, I will read the rest of the letter:

“Doubt that the stars are fire;

“Doubt that the Sun does move;

“Suspect truth to be a liar;

“But never doubt I love.

“Oh, dear Ophelia, I am bad at writing poetry like this. I do not have the art to count my groans — or to make them scan as poetry. However, believe that I love you best — oh, most best — believe it. Adieu.

“Yours evermore, most dear lady, while this complex body belongs to him, HAMLET.

“This letter, in obedience to me, my daughter has shown me. Hamlet also wrote other letters to her. My daughter has told me about his courting of her and at what times and places these acts of courtship occurred.”

“How has she reacted to his courtship of her?” King Claudius asked.

“What do you think about me?”

“I think that you are a faithful and honorable man,” King Claudius said.

“I hope to prove to be that,” Polonius replied. “But what would you have thought if, after I had seen this hot love on the wing — and I perceived it, I must tell you, before my daughter told me — what would you, or my dear majesty your Queen here, have thought if I had been like a notebook and simply recorded the information in my brain and kept silent about it? What if I had closed my eyes to it and kept mute and dumb, or if I had looked upon this love and done nothing? What would you have thought? No, I did not keep quiet. Instead, I took action and I said to my daughter, ‘Lord Hamlet is a Prince, and he is out of your league. This must not be.’ I then gave her orders to lock herself away from his presence, to admit no messengers from him, to receive no tokens of love. She did all these things. Hamlet, repelled by her — a short tale to say — fell into a sadness and depression, then into a fast because of loss of appetite, from thence into insomnia, from thence into a debility, from thence into a delirium, and, by this decline after decline, he finally fell into the madness wherein now he raves, and all of us mourn for him.”

King Claudius asked Queen Gertrude, “Do you think that this is true?”

“It very likely is.”

“Has there ever been a time — I’d like to know — that I have positively said, ‘It is so,’ and it turned out not to be so?” Polonius asked.

“Not that I know of,” King Claudius replied.

Polonius said, “Take my staff of office from my hand, if what I have said turns out not to be true. If I have relevant evidence, I will follow it and will find where the truth is hidden even if it were hidden in the center of the Earth.”

“How may we test whether this is true?” King Claudius asked.

“You know that sometimes Hamlet walks for four or so hours together here in the lobby,” Polonius said.

“So he does indeed,” Queen Gertrude said.

“At one of those times, I’ll loose my daughter so she can go to him.”

Polonius was unaware of the implications of the word “loose.” On a farm, an animal can be loosed so that it will have sex.

He continued, “King Claudius, you and I will be hidden behind an arras — a wall hanging — and we will witness their encounter. If we find out that Hamlet does not love my daughter and that his love for her is not the reason why he is mad, then let me be no longer a minister of state in your court; instead, I will take care of a farm and wagons.”

“We will try your plan,” King Claudius said.

“Look,” Queen Gertrude said. “Hamlet, the poor wretch, is coming here while reading.”

“Leave now,” Polonius said to King Claudius and Queen Gertrude. “Please leave now. I will talk to him alone. Please allow me to do that.”

King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, and the remaining servants left the room, leaving behind Polonius and Hamlet.

Polonius asked, “How is my good Lord Hamlet?”

“I am well. May God have mercy on you.”

“Do you know who I am, my lord?”

“I know you very well,” Hamlet replied. “You are a fishmonger — a seller of fish.”

“I am not, my lord,” Polonius said.

“In that case, I wish that you were as honest as a fishmonger.”

“Honest, my lord?”

“Yes, sir,” Hamlet said. “To be an honest man, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.”

“That’s very true, my lord.”

Hamlet read out loud from his book, “*For if the Sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion —*”

People in Hamlet’s time and society believed that the Sun shining on — kissing — a corpse causes maggots to come into existence — they did not realize that flies laid eggs on the corpse and maggots hatched out of those eggs.

Hamlet then asked, “Do you have a daughter?”

“I have, my lord.”

“Do not allow her to walk in the Sun. Conception is a blessing, but it would not be a blessing if your daughter were to conceive. Friend, be careful concerning your daughter.”

Hamlet was punning — and speaking inappropriately — about Polonius’ daughter: Ophelia. “Walk in the Sun” can mean “walk in public” or “be made pregnant by the Sun” — if the Sun can bring to life maggots, why can’t it bring to life a human infant? “Conception” can mean “(the ability) to form ideas” or “(the ability) to become pregnant.” “Conceive” can mean “form ideas” or “become pregnant.” Also, Hamlet transitioned from saying the term “kissing carrion” to talking about Ophelia. “Carrion” is a contemptuous term for flesh available for sexual pleasure.

Polonius thought, *How about that! He is still thinking and talking about my daughter. But he did not recognize me at*

first; he said that I was a fishmonger. He is far gone, far gone in his madness. Truly in my youth I suffered very deep distress because I was in love; my distress was very close to this distress that Hamlet is feeling. I'll speak to him again.

Polonius asked, "What are you reading, my lord?"

"Words, words, words."

"What is the matter, my lord?"

"Between whom?"

"I mean the subject matter that you are reading, my lord."

Hamlet replied, "I am reading about slanders, sir. The satirical rogue — the author — says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes discharge thick amber sap and plum-tree gum, and they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with very weak legs. Although I most powerfully and potently believe all of these things, sir, yet I do not think that it is courteous to have it thus written down. You yourself, sir, should be as old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward."

Polonius thought, *Though these words are mad, yet there is some sort of meaning in them. Hamlet is ill; he should not be in this cold air.*

Polonius asked, "Will you walk out of this air, my lord?"

"Into my grave," Hamlet replied.

"Indeed, your grave is out of this air," Polonius said.

He thought, *How pregnant with meaning his replies sometimes are! Madness often hits on a happiness of meaning, although reason and sanity could not so quickly and happily come up with that meaning. I will leave Hamlet, and I will quickly contrive a meeting between my*

daughter and him.

He said to Hamlet, “My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you. Goodbye.”

“You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part with — except my life, except my life, except my life.”

“Fare you well, my lord.”

Hamlet said as Polonius walked away, “These tedious old fools!”

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern entered the room.

Polonius said to them, “You must be seeking the Lord Hamlet; there he is.”

Rosencrantz replied, “May God save you, sir!”

Polonius departed.

Guildenstern said to Hamlet, “My honored lord!”

Rosencrantz said to Hamlet, “My most dear lord!”

Hamlet replied, “My excellent good friends! How are you, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how are you two?”

Rosencrantz replied, “We are ordinary children of the Earth.”

“We are happy in that we are not too happy,” Guildenstern said. “We are not on the button at the very top of Fortune’s cap. We are not riding high on Fortune’s wheel.”

“Are you down so low that you sit at the soles of her shoes?” Hamlet asked.

“We live neither high nor low, my lord,” Rosencrantz said.

“Then do you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors?” Hamlet asked.

“Indeed, we are the privates of her army. We are ordinary.”

“If you are her privates, you must live in the vicinity of her private and secret parts. This is not a surprise. Lady Fortune is a strumpet,” Hamlet said.

Many people regarded Lady Fortune as being a strumpet — a whore or promiscuous woman. She both gave and withheld good things indiscriminately. She was a fickle goddess — she was faithful to no man.

Hamlet asked them, “What’s the news?”

“There is no news, my lord, except that the world’s grown honest,” Rosencrantz said.

“Then Doomsday — the Day of Judgment — must be near,” Hamlet said. “That is the only thing that could make all the people of the world turn honest. But your news is not true. Let me make my question more specific: What have you, my good friends, done to be sent by Lady Fortune to this prison here?”

“Prison, my lord!” Guildenstern said.

“Denmark’s a prison,” Hamlet said.

“In that case, the world is a prison,” Rosencrantz said.

“The world is a spacious and fine prison,” Hamlet said. “In this world are many places of confinement, prison wards, and dungeons — and Denmark is one of the worst.”

“We think that that is not so, my lord,” Rosencrantz said.

“Why, then, it is not a prison to you,” Hamlet said, “because there is nothing either good or bad, except that thinking makes it so. To me, Denmark is a prison.”

Hamlet thought, *There is nothing either good or bad, except that thinking makes it so. How much truth, if any, does that statement have? One's attitude can affect how we regard something. If I feel that Denmark is a prison to me, then it is a prison to me. But is it true that no objective right and no objective wrong exist?*

“Why, then your ambition makes Denmark a prison; it is too narrow for your mind,” Rosencrantz said.

“Oh, God, I could be confined in a nutshell and consider myself a King of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams,” Hamlet replied.

“Such dreams indeed are ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream,” Guildenstern said.

“A dream itself is but a shadow,” Hamlet replied.

“Truly, and I think that ambition is of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow,” Rosencrantz said.

“If that is correct, then only beggars have solid bodies because beggars have no ambition,” Hamlet said. “Our Kings and heroes are then the shadows of the beggars because Kings and heroes are ambitious and therefore shadows, and they must be the shadows of something. The shadows of the heroes are stretched out like shadows early in the morning or late in the afternoon. But perhaps we should go inside the court because my reasoning powers are going wacky.”

“We'll attend you and be your servants,” Rosencrantz and Guildenstern said.

“No,” Hamlet said. “I will not class you with the rest of my servants because, to tell you honestly, I am most dreadfully attended to. But, in the direct way that friends talk to one

another, let me ask you this: Why are you here at Elsinore?"

"To visit you, my lord," Rosencrantz said. "No other reason."

"I am poor even in thanks, but I thank you," Hamlet said. "But surely, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny."

Did Hamlet mean that his thanks were not worth a halfpenny because he lacked power in Denmark — his uncle, not Hamlet, had become King after Hamlet's father died? Or did Hamlet mean that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern did not deserve even his poor thanks, which were worth only a halfpenny? If so, Hamlet was already suspecting that King Claudius was using Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to spy on him. If Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were spying on Hamlet, then the two men deserved no thanks from Hamlet.

Hamlet then asked, "Weren't you sent for and asked to come to the court? Did you come here of your own free will? Did you come here voluntarily or were you asked to come here? Come, deal justly with me. Come, come; speak up."

Guildenstern asked, "What should we say, my lord?"

Hamlet replied, "Why, anything except something that is to the purpose."

Hamlet did not expect a straight answer — a true answer — from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

He then said, "You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks that your modesties have not craft enough to color. You cannot hide the truth. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you."

“For what purpose, my lord?” Rosencrantz asked.

“That you must teach me,” Hamlet replied. “But let me ask you solemnly, by the rights of our fellowship, by the harmonious friendship of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved friendship, and by whatever is more dear than a better proposer than I could mention to you, be even and direct with me. Answer me truthfully: Did someone send for you, or not?”

Rosencrantz whispered to Guildenstern, “What do you think we should say?”

Hamlet thought, *I will keep my eyes on you two.*

He said out loud, “If you regard me as a friend, answer me truthfully.”

“My lord, we were sent for,” Guildenstern said.

“I will tell you why,” Hamlet said. “No doubt you have promised not to speak honestly to me, and if I tell you why you were sent for, then you do not have to tell me why, and so you can keep your promise to the King and Queen.

“I have recently — but I do not know why — lost all my mirth, neglected my usual occupations; and indeed my mood is so depressed that this good structure, the Earth, seems to me a sterile promontory. I am so depressed that this very excellent canopy, the air — listen to me — this splendid overhanging firmament, this majestic roof decorated with the golden fire we call the Sun — why, it appears as no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors.

“What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and movement, how expressive and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension and understanding, how like a god! Man is

the beauty of the world! Man is the paragon — the pattern of excellence — of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?”

Hamlet thought, *Genesis 3:19 states, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth: for out of it wast thou taken, because thou art dust, and to dust shalt thou return.”*

He continued, “Man does not delight me — no — nor does woman, although by your smiling I judge that you seem to think so.”

“My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts,” Rosencrantz said.

“Why did you laugh, then, when I said, ‘Man does not delight me’?”

“I was thinking, my lord, that if you do not delight in man, then some actors who are coming here will receive a Lenten entertainment from you,” Rosencrantz replied. “Lent is a time of fasting and a time when the theaters are closed, and so a Lenten entertainment is a poor entertainment. On our way here, we passed a troupe of actors who are coming here to offer you their service.”

“He who plays the King shall be welcome; his majesty shall receive tribute from me,” Hamlet said. “The adventurous knight shall use his rapier and small shield. The lover shall not sigh for free but shall be paid. The eccentric man shall perform his part and end it in peace. The clown shall make laugh audience members who laugh easily when their lungs are tickled. The boy actor playing the lady shall speak the part freely and well, or the blank verse of the part shall limp because it is badly spoken.

“Which actors are they?”

“You have seen them before,” Rosencrantz replied. “You used to enjoy seeing them — they are the tragedians of the city.”

“Why are they traveling on tour?” Hamlet asked. “Their performing in their home city is better both for their reputation and for their profit.”

“I think that they have been banned from performing in their home city because of some recent political unrest and disturbances.”

“Do they have the same reputation that they had when I was in the city?” Hamlet asked. “Are they as popular now as they were then?”

“No, indeed, they are not,” Rosencrantz said.

“Why not? Have they grown rusty?”

“No, they are as good as they have ever been, but there is, sir, a nest of children, little baby hawks, who squawk louder than anyone else, and who are most excessively applauded for it. These child actors are now the fashion, and they so abuse the common stages — so people call the public theaters — that many fashionable gentlemen wearing rapiers scarcely dare to attend the theaters featuring adult actors because of the goose-quills wielded by poets writing plays for the child actors. In short, the fashionable gentlemen are afraid to attend the theaters featuring adult actors because the poets writing plays for the child actors will satirize them.”

“What? These rival actors are children?” Hamlet asked. “Who takes care of them? How are they maintained financially? Will they pursue the profession of acting no longer than they can sing? Will they stop acting once their voice breaks? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow up and become adult actors — as is very likely, if

their means of financial support are no better than they are now — their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own future profession?”

“Truly, both sides have been doing a lot of arguing,” Rosencrantz said, “and the nation holds it to be no sin to incite them to quarrel. There was, for a while, no money bid for a new play unless the plot led to a fight between the adult actors and the playwrights who write for the child actors.”

“Is this possible?” Hamlet asked.

“Oh, there has been much throwing about of brains,” Guildenstern said. “Much mental activity has been expended in this quarrel.”

“Do the child actors triumph?”

“Yes, they do, my lord,” Rosencrantz said. “They carry the victor’s crown the way that Hercules once carried the entire world when he took the burden off Atlas.”

“This change in popularity is not very strange,” Hamlet said. “My uncle is now King of Denmark, and those people who would make faces at him while my father still lived and ruled as King, now give twenty, forty, fifty, or a hundred ducats apiece for miniatures of his portrait.

“Such things commonly happen, but why? By God’s blood, there is something in this that is more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. Scientific inquiry may be able to find the cause.”

Trumpets sounded. The troupe of actors blew trumpets in towns and before castles to advertise their presence.

Guildenstern said, “There are the actors.”

Hamlet said to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, “Gentlemen,

you are welcome to Elsinore. Let us shake hands. Come on. The proper accompaniment of welcome is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply with all of that by shaking your hands. I will greet the actors with a friendly welcome, and I do not want you to think that I welcome them more than I welcome you. You are welcome, but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.”

“In what, my dear lord?” Guildenstern asked.

“I am not insane all the time,” Hamlet said. “I am only mad when the wind is blowing from the north-north-west. When the wind is blowing from the south, I know a hawk from a handsaw.”

Such words could only make Rosencrantz and Guildenstern suspect that Hamlet was mad, or on the verge of madness, all the time, but Hamlet may have given the two men a hidden warning. He knew the difference between two dissimilar things such as a hawk and a handsaw, and so he also knew the difference between two dissimilar things such as an enemy and a friend.

Polonius walked over to the three men.

“May you gentlemen be well,” Polonius said.

“Listen, Guildenstern — and you, too, Rosencrantz,” Hamlet said. “I want a hearer at each of my ears. That great big baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling clothes.”

“Perhaps this is the second time of his life that he has to wear them,” Rosencrantz said, “because they say that an old man becomes a child for the second time.”

“I will prophesy that he has come here to tell me of the arrival of the actors,” Hamlet said. “Wait and see.”

He then pretended to be in the middle of a conversation:

“You are correct, sir. On Monday morning — that was the time indeed.”

“My lord, I have news to tell you,” Polonius said to Hamlet.

“My lord, I have news to tell you,” Hamlet replied. “When Roscius was an actor in Rome —”

The famous Roman actor Roscius died in 62 B.C.E.

“A troupe of actors have come here, my lord,” Polonius said.

“Buzz, buzz! Yawn! This is old news!” Hamlet said.

“On my honor —” Polonius began to say.

“— then came each actor on his ass,” Hamlet said.

“— they are the best actors in the world,” Polonius said, “whether for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral plays, pastoral-comical plays, historical-pastoral plays, tragical-historical plays, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral plays, plays that observe the unities of action and time and place, or plays that do not. Seneca’s tragedies are not too heavy and serious for them, and Plautus’ comedies are not too light for them. For the law of writ and for the liberty, these are the only men — these actors perform well whether they are strictly following prescribed rules or performing more freely and loosely.”

“Oh, Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure you had!” Hamlet said.

“What a treasure he had, my lord?” Polonius asked.

“Why,” Hamlet said, and then he sang these lines:

“One fair daughter he had and no more,

“Whom he loved surpassingly well.”

Polonius thought, *He is still thinking about my daughter.*

“Am I not right, old Jephthah?” Hamlet asked Polonius.

Jephthah was a King of Israel who made a rash vow. When he went off to fight the Ammonites, he vowed to God that if he were victorious that he would then sacrifice to God the first thing that he saw coming out of the door of his house when he returned from battle. The first thing that he saw coming of the door of his house was his daughter, and he sacrificed her.

“If you call me Jephthah, my lord,” Polonius said, “I have a daughter whom I love surpassingly well.”

“No, that does not follow,” Hamlet said.

One can wonder whether Jephthah should have kept his vow and just how much he loved his daughter.

“What follows, then, my lord?”

“Why,” Hamlet said, and then he sang this line:

“As by lot God wot [knows].”

Hamlet added, “And then, you know,” and he sang this line:

“It came to pass most like it was —”

He added, “The first row of the pious chanson will show you more.”

This is the beginning of the pious chanson, aka religious ballad:

I read that many years ago,

When Jepha Judge of Israel.

*Had one fair daughter and no more,
Whom he loved so passing [surpassingly] well.
And as by lot God wot
It came to pass most like it was
Great wars there should be,
And who should be the chief, but he, but he.*

The ballad then told the rest of the story. In the story were many rows, aka conflicts. The first conflict was that between nations: Israel versus Ammon. Other conflicts were between duty to God and duty to kin — in this case, a daughter.

In Dante's *Paradise*, Dante the Pilgrim travels throughout the universe until he reaches the Mystic Empyrean, the dwelling place of God. On the Moon, he speaks to Piccarda Donati, who tells him that Jephthah's vow was blind and rash, and he did evil by keeping it. Far better would have been for him to say, "My vow was wrong," and not keep it. Such a vow as Jephthah's is not the kind that God approves. Piccarda's main advice to Dante, and to Christians, is to not make rash vows.

Like Jephthah, Hamlet must decide where his duty lies. What is his duty to his father? What is his duty to God? Do these duties conflict? If they conflict, what ought he to do?

When Hamlet said, "The first row of the pious chanson will show you more," the word "row" could mean "line" or even "stanza." Reading the first line or stanza of the religious ballad will provide more information, but it will not tell the entire story. Of course, "row" can also mean "quarrel" or "conflict."

We can predict the consequences of our actions, but often

we do not know what the consequences — even the serious consequences — will be. Jephthah probably thought that a dog, not his daughter, would be the first thing he saw coming out of the door of his house after he returned from war. Often, we do not know the consequences of our actions until we do the actions. Hamlet must choose to act — or choose not to act — with incomplete information.

Hamlet added, “Look, my abridgement is coming.”

Hamlet’s conversation was being shortened by the arrival of the actors, who also abridge, or shorten, time by putting on entertaining plays that make time pass quickly.

The actors walked up to the group of men.

“You are welcome, masters; welcome, all,” Hamlet greeted them. He recognized each of them. “I am glad to see that you are well. Welcome, good friends. Oh, my old friend! your face is valenced — fringed — with a beard since I saw you last. Have you come here to beard me in Denmark?”

This was a joke. To beard someone was a major insult — someone would pull out a few hairs from the beard of someone and throw them in his face.

Hamlet said to a boy who played female characters, “What, my young lady and mistress! By Our Lady the Virgin Mary, your ladyship is nearer to Heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a heel on a shoe. You have grown taller. Pray to God that your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.”

This was another joke by Hamlet. Gold coins of the time bore the face of a King enclosed in a circle. Dishonest people would sometimes trim gold from the edges of coins. If they trimmed too much gold off the edge, so that the trimming — or crack — went inside the circle, then the coin became uncurrent — no longer legal tender. When the

boy reached puberty and his voice began to crack, he would no longer be able to play the parts of female characters.

Hamlet's joke included a bawdy aspect. The ring is an O, which is a symbol for a vagina. If the O is cracked, aka entered, the woman loses her virginity.

Hamlet continued, "Masters, you are all welcome. We'll even have a go at it — the recitation of a speech — like French falconers, whose falcons fly at anything, including the first thing they see. We won't wait; instead, we'll have the recitation of a speech right now. Come, give us a taste of the quality of your acting; come, give us a passionate speech."

The first actor asked, "What speech do you want to hear, my lord?"

"I heard you recite a speech once," Hamlet replied, "but it was never acted; or, if it was, it was acted only once because the play, I remember, pleased not the millions. It was like caviar to the general public — too refined a taste for them to be able to enjoy. But it was — as I regarded it, and others, whose judgments in such matters are better than mine — an excellent play, well organized in the scenes, set down with as much modest restraint as cunning skill. I remember that one critic said that there were no sharp flavors, aka bawdy bits, in the lines to make them spicy, and there was nothing in the lines that might make the author guilty of affectation. The critic called the play unpretentious, as wholesome as sweet, and with much more natural grace than affectation and showiness.

"One speech in it I chiefly loved: It was Aeneas' tale to Dido. I especially liked the part where he speaks about the slaughter of Priam."

Hamlet was referring to the end of the Trojan War, which had started when Paris, a Prince from Troy, had run away

with Helen, the wife of King Menelaus of Sparta in Greece. For ten years a Greek army besieged Troy but was unable to conquer it. Finally, Odysseus came up with the idea of the Trojan Horse. A Greek named Epeus built a huge, hollow horse that the Trojans thought was an offering to the goddess Athena. Inside the hollow horse Greek soldiers hid. The Trojans pulled the Trojan Horse inside the city, and at night the Greek soldiers came out of the horse and went to the city gates and let in the rest of the Greek army, which had pretended to sail back to Greece. One of the Greeks inside the Trojan Horse was Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles. After Achilles died at Troy, Pyrrhus went to fight in the Trojan War to avenge the death of his father. During the fall of Troy, its King, Priam, wore ancient armor and carried a weapon although he was much too old to fight. Pyrrhus found and killed the aged King Priam, whose son Paris had run away with Helen and started the war.

Hamlet said, “If you remember the speech, begin at this line — let me see, let me see,

“The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast —”

Hyrcania was famous for its ferocious tigers.

Hamlet said, “Wait, that’s not right, but it does begin with ‘Pyrrhus’ —

“The rugged and terrifying Pyrrhus, he whose sable armor,

“Black as his purpose, resembled the night

“When he lay hidden in the ominous horse,

“Has now this dread and black complexion smeared

“With a color more calamitous; from head to foot

“Now is he totally red; he is horridly covered

“With the blood of Trojan fathers, mothers, daughters,

sons,

“Baked and crusted from the fires in Trojan streets,

“Fires that lend a tyrannous and damned light

“To their King’s murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,

“And glazed with coagulated gore,

*“With eyes like carbuncles that glow in the dark, the
Hellish Pyrrhus*

“Old grandfather Priam seeks.”

Hamlet said to the first actor, “Continue from where I left off.”

Polonius said to Hamlet, “Before God, my lord, I say that your recitation was well spoken, with both good delivery and good taste.”

The first player recited this speech:

“Quickly Pyrrhus finds Priam

*“Striking at Greeks with blows that fall short; his antique
sword,*

“Which will not obey his arm, lies where it falls,

“Refusing to obey his will. Unequally matched,

“Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage he strikes and misses;

“But with the whiff and wind of his deadly sword

*“The enfeebled father Priam falls. Then the senseless
citadel of Ilium — Troy —*

“Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top

“Falls to its base, and with a hideous crash

*“Deafens the ears of Pyrrhus. Look! His sword,
“Which was falling on the milky-white head
“Of revered Priam, seemed in the air to stick.
“So, like a painted portrait of a tyrant, motionless, Pyrrhus
stood,
“And as if he had lost interest in what he was doing,
“Did nothing.
“But, as we often see, predicting some storm,
“A silence in the Heavens, the high clouds stand still,
“The bold winds are without speech and the orb below is
“As quiet as death, as soon as the dreadful thunder
“Rends the air, likewise, after Pyrrhus’ pause,
“Aroused vengeance sets him back to work.
“Never did the Cyclopes’ hammers fall as they created
“The armor of Mars, god of war, that they forged for
eternal strength
“With less remorse than Pyrrhus’ bleeding sword
“Now falls on Priam.
“Get out, you strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,
“In general council ought to take away Fortune’s power;
“You ought to break away all the spokes and the rim from
her wheel,
“And bowl the wheel’s round hub down the hill of Heaven,
“As low as to the fiends!”*

Polonius said, “This is too long.”

Hamlet replied, “It shall go to the barber’s to be cut, along with your beard.”

Hamlet then said to the first actor, “Please, continue. This critic here prefers dancing and singing or a bawdy tale, or else he falls asleep. Continue. Recite the part about Hecuba.”

Hecuba was Priam’s wife, the Queen of Troy. She had bore many sons to him, including Hector, the Crown Prince of Troy, whom she had witnessed Achilles killing. Following the fall of Troy, she was made a slave woman, and according to some accounts, she went insane.

The first actor recited this line:

“But who, oh, who had seen the mobled Queen —”

Hamlet asked, “The mobled Queen?”

The word “mobled,” which was little used, meant “muffled.” Hecuba’s face was muffled.

“That’s a good word,” Polonius said. “‘Mobled Queen’ is good.”

The first actor continued,

“Runs barefoot up and down, threatening the flames

“With blinding tears; a rag upon that head

“Where recently a crown had stood, and for a robe,

“About her thin and totally exhausted-by-excessive-childbirth loins,

“A blanket, which she in the alarm of fear had caught up.

“Any person who had seen Hecuba in this state, with bitter

words

“Would have railed treasonously against Lady Fortune’s rule.

“But if the gods themselves had seen her

“When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport

“By chopping with his sword her husband’s limbs,

“The instant burst of clamor that she made,

“Unless mortal troubles move them not at all,

“Would have made tearful the burning eyes — the stars — of Heaven,

“And would have brought sympathetic suffering to the gods.”

Polonius said to Hamlet, “Look, the actor’s face has changed color — it is pale — and he has tears in his eyes. Please, let us hear no more.”

“Very good,” Hamlet said to the first actor. “I’ll have you speak the rest of the speech soon.”

Hamlet then said to Polonius, “My good lord, will you see that the actors are well accommodated? Listen to me. Let them be well treated because they are the summary and brief chronicles of the time. It would be better for you to have a bad epitaph after you die than their ill will while you live.”

“My lord, I will treat them according to their desert.”

“By God, man, treat them better than that!” Hamlet said. “If you treat people according to what they deserve, who would escape being whipped? Treat them according to your own honor and dignity. The less they deserve, the more

merit is in your generosity to them. Take them to their quarters.”

Hamlet’s “insanity” involved his being very rude to others, but he wanted the actors to be well taken of.

“Come, sirs,” Polonius said to the actors.

“Follow him, friends,” Hamlet said. “We’ll have a play tomorrow.”

Polonius and all the actors began to leave, but Hamlet began to speak to the first actor, so Polonius and all the other actors stopped at the door.

Hamlet said to the first actor, “Listen to me, old friend. Can you and the other actors play the *Murder of Gonzago*?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“We’ll have that tomorrow night,” Hamlet said. “You could, if I asked you to, memorize a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would write and insert in the play, couldn’t you?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Very good,” Hamlet said. “Follow that lord, whose name is Polonius, and don’t make fun of him.”

Polonius and the actors departed.

Hamlet said to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who had quietly listened to the recitation of the poetry, “My good friends, I’ll leave you until tonight. You are welcome to Elsinore.”

“Thank you, my good lord,” Rosencrantz said.

“May God be with you,” Hamlet replied.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern departed.

“Now I am alone,” Hamlet said to himself. “Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! Is it not monstrous that this actor here, performing what is only a fiction, a dream, and a pretense — not the reality — of suffering, could force his inner being to be so in harmony with his acting that he could make his face turn pale, bring tears to his eyes, make his entire body seem to be suffering with grief, make his voice broken, and use his whole being to serve his acting. And all for nothing that actually affects him! He did all this for Hecuba! What is Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her? What would he do, if he had the motive and the cue for suffering that I have? My uncle, who has married my mother, has murdered my father! This actor would drown the stage with tears and burst everyone’s ears with horrifying speeches. He would make the guilty insane, horrify the innocent, astonish the ignorant, and bewilder everyone’s eyes and ears.

“Yet I, who am a dull and muddy-spirited rascal, mope, like John the daydreamer, not stirred to action by my cause and unable to say anything. I can do or speak nothing, no, not for a King, upon whose property and most dear life damned destruction was made.

“Am I a coward? Who calls me villain? Who breaks my head? Who plucks hairs from my beard, and blows them in my face? Who tweaks me by the nose? Who tells me that I lie in my throat as deep as to the lungs? Who does these things to me? Ha!

“By God, I should swallow these insults. I must have the anger of a pigeon, and I must lack the courage that would make me resent such bitter oppression, or else by now I would have fed the slave’s offal to the kites — birds of prey — and made them fat. The slave I mean is King Claudius — that bloody, bawdy villain! He is a remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, unnatural villain! Oh,

vengeance!

“Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave, that I, the son of a dear father who has been murdered, prompted by Heaven and Hell to seek my revenge, must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words, and curse, exactly like a prostitute or a lowly kitchen scullion! Damn!

“Get busy, my brain, and think of a plan!

“I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play have by the artistry of the scene been so struck to the soul that they have immediately confessed their evil deeds and crimes. Murder, although it has no tongue, will speak very miraculously — murder will out! I’ll have these actors perform a play with a plot something like the murder of my father with my uncle as a member of the audience. I’ll observe his looks; I’ll probe him deeply — to the quick. If he flinches, I will know my course of action. I will know what I should do.

“The spirit — the ghost that claims to be my father — that I have seen may be the Devil in disguise. The Devil has the power to assume a pleasing shape. Perhaps, because my spirit is weak and melancholy — and the Devil can powerfully influence people who have such moods — he is deluding me so that I will do something that will make me damned.

“I need more substantial evidence than what I have received from the ghost. I can get such evidence by watching my uncle as he watches the play. The play is the thing whereby I’ll learn the conscience of the King.”

CHAPTER 3 (Hamlet)

— 3.1 —

In a room of the castle, King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern were meeting the following day.

King Claudius asked Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, “Can’t you, by having conversations with Hamlet, learn from him why he is putting on and assuming this mental confusion and grating so harshly all his days of quiet with turbulent and dangerous lunacy?”

King Claudius was growing suspicious that perhaps Hamlet’s insanity was not real, but just an act.

“He confesses that he feels mentally confused,” Rosencrantz said, “but he will not say from what cause.”

“Also, we do not find that he is willing to be questioned,” Guildenstern said. “Instead, with a crafty madness, he keeps himself aloof and will not answer our questions when we try to have him make some confession about how he truly feels.”

“Did he receive and welcome you well?” Queen Gertrude asked.

“He was exactly like a gentleman,” Rosencrantz said.

“But he had to force himself to be welcoming,” Guildenstern said.

“He did not ask questions, but he freely answered our questions,” Rosencrantz said.

Rosencrantz was contradicting what Guildenstern had said just a little earlier. He was hoping not to have to reveal that

Hamlet had found out that the King and Queen had sent for Guildenstern and him. He did not want the King and Queen to ask what questions Hamlet had asked Guildenstern and him.

“Did you persuade him to engage in any entertainment?” Queen Gertrude asked.

“Madam, it so happened that we overtook and passed certain actors as we traveled here. We told him about these actors, and he seemed joyful to hear about them. They are here in the castle, and I believe that they already have his orders to perform a play for him tonight.”

“That is true,” Polonius said. “Hamlet asked me to entreat your majesties to hear and see the play.”

“I will with all my heart,” King Claudius said, “and I am happy to hear that Hamlet wants to see a play. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, you good gentlemen, give him further encouragement and stimulate his desire to engage in such entertainments.”

“We shall, my lord,” Rosencrantz said.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern left the room.

“Sweet Gertrude, leave us, also,” King Claudius said. “We have privately sent for Hamlet to come here so that, as if it were by accident, he may here come face to face with Ophelia. Her father and I, lawful spies, will hide ourselves so that, seeing them while we ourselves are unseen, we may frankly judge their encounter and learn from Hamlet’s behavior whether the affliction of his love for her is or is not the cause of his mental disturbance.”

“I shall obey you,” Queen Gertrude said to King Claudius.

She added, “Ophelia, I hope and wish that your beauty and charms are the happy cause of Hamlet’s wildness. I also

hope that your virtues will bring him around to his usual self again, to both his and your benefit.”

“Madam, I hope that Hamlet returns to his usual self,” Ophelia replied.

Queen Gertrude left the room.

Ophelia’s father, Polonius, said, “Ophelia, walk over here.”

He then said to King Claudius, “Gracious majesty, if it so please you, we will hide ourselves.”

He gave a book to Ophelia and said, “Take this religious book and read it so that you have an excuse for being alone. We are often to blame in this — it has been found to be true — that with the appearance of devotion and pious behavior we do sugar over — hide — the work of the Devil himself.”

Polonius meant that they were using a religious book in an act of deception; the book would assist Polonius and King Claudius in spying on Hamlet when he thought that he was talking privately to Ophelia.

King Claudius heard Polonius’ words and thought, *His words are too true! How painful a whipping that speech gives my conscience! The harlot’s cheek, beautified with plastered-on cosmetics, is not uglier to the thing that beautifies it than is my deed to my most painted — hypocritical — words. This is a heavy burden! The whore disguises her ugliness with makeup, and I disguise my ugly sin with pretty but hypocritical words. My conscience is guilty.*

Polonius said, “I hear Hamlet coming. Let us hide ourselves, my lord.”

They hid behind an arras: a wall hanging.

Of course, Hamlet could not hear King Claudius' thoughts, but they helped confirm what the ghost had told Hamlet.

Hamlet entered the room and said, "To be, or not to be: That is the question. To exist or not to exist. Is it nobler in the mind to suffer the missiles and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing them end them?"

To take up arms — weapons — to fight a sea is futile. Using weapons to fight a sea of troubles is useless — unless the weapons are used to end one's own life, thereby ending one's troubles.

Hamlet was asking which course was better to take: Is it better to commit suicide or to endure a life of troubles?

"To die is to sleep; it is no more than that. If by sleeping we could end the heartache and the thousand natural shocks such as pain and illness that flesh is heir to, then that would be a consummation — an end — that we could devoutly wish for.

"To die is to sleep. To sleep is perhaps to dream. This is an obstacle because in that sleep of death what dreams may come to us after we have shuffled off and gotten free from this mortal coil, this business of humanity? Those dreams must make us hesitate and think before ending this life. Those dreams are why we endure unhappiness during a long life. Who would bear the whips and scorns of time, the wrongs inflicted on us by an oppressor, insulting treatment by proud men, the pangs of unrequited love, the delay and ineffectiveness of the law, the insolence of those who hold office, and the spurns given to those of patient merit by those who are unworthy? Who would bear these insults when he could secure his release from life with a mere dagger? Who would bear burdens, and grunt and sweat under a weary life, except that the dread of something after

death, the unknown country from whose bourn no traveller returns to live his life, confounds and bewilders our will and makes us prefer to bear those ills we have instead of flying to others that we know not of?

“Thus conscience makes cowards of us all, and thus the natural color of resolution is covered over with the sickly and pale cast of thought about the evil things that may come to us after we die. And so enterprises of great gravity and importance turn awry because of these thoughts and so these enterprises of great gravity are never carried out.”

Hamlet saw Ophelia and said to himself, “But I must stop my private reflections now.”

He said out loud, “The fair and beautiful Ophelia! Nymph, in your prayers be sure to remember all my sins.”

“My good lord, how have you been for all this long time?”

“I humbly thank you for asking,” Hamlet said. “I have been well, well, well.”

“My lord, I have remembrances of yours that I have longed for a long time to give back to you. Please, take them back now.”

“No, not I,” Hamlet replied, “I never gave you anything.”

He thought, *I am much different from the man who gave you those remembrances.*

“My honored lord, you know very well you gave me these remembrances, and when you gave them to me you spoke perfumed words of such sweet breath that they made the things richer. Now that their perfume is lost, take these remembrances back because to the noble mind rich gifts grow poor when givers prove unkind.”

Certainly, Hamlet in his “madness” had been unkind

recently, especially to Ophelia's father.

Ophelia handed Hamlet some letters and said, "There, my lord."

Hamlet asked, "Do you mean that? Are you honest? And are you chaste?"

"My lord!"

"Are you fair and beautiful?"

"What does your lordship mean?"

"I mean that if you are chaste and beautiful, your chastity should permit no approach to your beauty. Your chastity should protect your beauty. Women are vulnerable because of their beauty."

"Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce — a better relationship or association — than with chastity?"

"Yes, it can," Hamlet said. "The power of beauty can transform honesty from what it is to a bawd — a prostitute. This power of beauty is stronger than the power of chastity to make beauty chaste. At one time, this was a paradox, but now our times have shown that it is true. Beauty is likely to make a chaste woman a whore. Virtue by itself is unlikely to keep a beautiful woman chaste."

Hamlet hesitated. He may have thought about his mother.

He then said, "I loved you once."

"Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so."

"You should not have believed me. Virtue, grafted onto our nature — which comes from that old sinner named Adam — cannot change our nature so much that we do not relish sin."

He hesitated again and then said, “I did not really love you.”

“I was all the more deceived,” Ophelia replied.

“Get you to a nunnery,” Hamlet said. “Why would you want to be a breeder of sinners?”

Hamlet wanted Ophelia to become a nun and never to bear children. In his present mood, he wanted Humankind to die out, and one way for it to die out was for women to stop giving birth. The word “nunnery” was slang for brothel, but Hamlet was not using the word in that sense — he did not want Ophelia to do anything that could result in the continuation of the human species.

Hamlet continued, “I am myself decent enough, but yet I could accuse myself of such things that it would have been better if my mother had not given birth to me. I am very proud, revengeful, and ambitious. I have more sins ready for me to commit than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I am do while crawling between Earth and Heaven? We are arrant knaves, all of us; believe none of us. Go and live in a nunnery.”

He stopped and then asked, “Where’s your father?”

“At home, my lord.”

“Let the doors stay shut against him, so that he may play the fool nowhere but in his own house. Farewell.”

Ophelia prayed for Hamlet: “Oh, help him, you sweet Heavens!”

Hamlet said to her, “If you do marry, I’ll give you this curse for your dowry. Even if you are as chaste as ice and as pure as snow, you shall not escape gossip and slander. You shall have a bad reputation. Get you to a nunnery, go.

Farewell.

“Or, if you must marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters — horned cuckolds — you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly, too. Farewell.”

Ophelia prayed, “Heavenly powers, restore him to sanity!”

“I have heard much about your paintings, too,” Hamlet said.

He was referring to the use of cosmetics that women “painted” on their faces.

“God has given you women one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig, you amble, and you lisp, and you call God’s creatures by the wrong name — a chaste woman becomes a whore, and a husband becomes a cuckold — and you pretend that you do wanton acts out of ignorance.

“Whatever. I’ll speak no more about it; it has made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages. Those who are married already — all but one couple — shall live and continue to be married couples. The rest shall stay as they are and remain single. To a nunnery, go.”

The one couple was King Claudius and Queen Gertrude.

Hamlet stormed off.

Ophelia said, “Oh, what a noble mind is here overthrown by madness! The courtier’s, soldier’s, scholar’s eye, tongue, sword are overthrown. The expectancy and rose — our finest hope and the apparent heir to the throne — of our fair state are overthrown. The mirror of attractiveness and the pattern of perfect behavior are overthrown. The observed of all observers — the honored and respected object of every courtier — is quite, quite overthrown!

“And I, of ladies most dejected and wretched, who sucked the honey of his musical vows, see that noble and most sovereign reason that used to formerly jangle like sweet bells is now out of tune and harsh. I see that his unmatched form and feature in the full flower of his youth has been blasted by madness.

“I am filled with sorrow because I have seen what I have seen, and because I see what I see!”

King Claudius and Polonius came out of hiding.

“Love?” King Claudius said. “Hamlet’s emotions do not incline that way. In addition, the things that he said, although they lacked form a little, did not sound mad. There is something in Hamlet’s soul, over which his melancholy sits on brood the way a bird sits on eggs, and I suspect that what will hatch and be disclosed will be something dangerous. To prevent that danger, I have just now decided to send Hamlet to England. There he shall demand the tribute that England has not sent to Denmark. Perhaps the seas and different countries with various sights will expel this thing, whatever it is, that is in his heart and has bothered his brain so much that it makes him unlike his usual self.”

King Claudius asked Polonius, “What is your opinion? What do you think?”

“Your plan is good,” Polonius replied, “but I still believe that the origin and commencement of his grief has sprung from rejected love.”

Polonius said to his daughter, “How are you, Ophelia? You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said: We heard everything.”

He then said to King Claudius, “My lord, do as you please; however, if you think it fit, after the play let the Queen his

mother be alone with him to entreat him to reveal his grief. Let her be outspoken with him, and I'll be hidden, if it pleases you, where I can hear their conversation. If she does not find out what is the matter with him, then send him to England, or confine him wherever your wisdom shall think best."

"We will do as you suggest," King Claudius said. "It shall be so. Madness in great ones must not unwatched go."

— 3.2 —

Hamlet talked with the actors in a hall in the castle and gave them advice on how to perform their roles. First, he talked about speaking the lines he had specially written for the play, but quickly he talked about acting in general.

"Speak the speech, please, as I recited it to you, trippingly on the tongue," he said. "If you speak it in a pompous oratorical style as so many actors do, I prefer that the town-crier speak my lines.

"Also, do not saw the air too much with your hand, like this," he said, making an overly dramatic gesture. "Instead, do everything moderately. In the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.

"I am offended to my soul when I hear a robust wig-wearing fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, those audience members who buy the cheapest tickets and watch the play while standing up rather than while seated. For the most part, the groundlings are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumbshows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for overacting the role of the blustery character Termagant; such performances out-Herod Herod — that ranting and raving tyrant of old-fashioned plays. Please, avoid such overacting."

“Yes, your honor,” the first actor replied.

“Do not be too tame either, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Use your own judgment. Suit the action to the words, and suit the words to the action. Remember this especially: Do not overstep the moderation of nature. Anything overdone goes against the purpose of acting, whose end, both at the beginning and now, was and is, to hold, as it were, a mirror up to nature. Acting should be a mirror to virtue and to vice, and acting should show things as they really are at the time. Acting should be a mirror to our aging world. A realistic statue will show the wrinkles of an aged man, and a play should show the wrinkles of an aged world.

“If acting is overdone, or if it falls short, even if it makes the ignorant and undiscerning laugh, it cannot but make the judicious grieve. The censure of one judicious man must in your allowance outweigh a whole theater filled with ignorant and undiscerning audience members.

“There are actors whom I have seen and have heard others praise, and that highly, not to say blasphemously, who, neither having the accent of Christians — ordinary decent people — nor the gait of Christian, pagan, or any other man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought that some of Nature’s journeymen — not God — had made men and had not made them well. That is how abominably these bad actors imitated humanity.”

“Sir, I hope that we have corrected that failing moderately well,” the first actor said.

“Correct that fault entirely,” Hamlet replied. “And let those who play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them — no ad-libbing. Some clowns will laugh in order to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh, too. These bad clowns do this even though, when they ad-lib,

some necessary issue in the play needs to be addressed. Such behavior is villainous, and it shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool who does such things.”

He then said to the actors, “Go and get yourselves ready to perform.”

The actors left the room as Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern entered it.

Hamlet asked Polonius, “How are you, my lord? Will the King watch this play?”

“Yes, and the Queen, too. They are ready to see it right away.”

“Tell the actors to get ready quickly.”

Polonius left to carry out his errand.

Hamlet asked Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, “Will you two help to hasten the actors?”

“We will, my lord,” Rosencrantz said.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern left the room.

Hamlet called, “Horatio!”

Horatio walked into the room and said, “Here, sweet lord. I am at your service.”

“Horatio, you are as well-adjusted a man as I have talked to and dealt with.”

“Oh, my dear lord!”

“No, do not think that I am flattering you,” Hamlet said, “for what advancement may I hope to receive from you, who have no revenue but your good spirits to feed and clothe you?”

“Why should anyone flatter the poor? No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp the way that a fawning dog licks its master’s hand or face. Let people bend the ready hinges of their knees to rich and powerful people so that profit may follow fawning. Do you understand me?”

“Ever since my dear soul has been able to make choices and to distinguish between and evaluate men, she has chosen to be friends with you. You have been a person who has suffered — experienced — everything, and yet you have suffered — been harmed by — nothing. You are a man who has taken Lady Fortune’s buffets and rewards with equal thanks. Blessed are those whose blood and judgment are so well commingled. Such people are not a pipe for Lady Fortune’s finger to sound what note she please. You are not at her mercy; she cannot make you exuberant or miserable; you keep a steady head no matter what because you are not the slave of our emotions. Such men I hold in my heart of hearts — I hold you in my heart of hearts. But I am rambling on about this.

“King Claudius will see a play tonight. One scene of it depicts almost exactly the circumstances that I have told you of my father’s death.

“Please, when that scene is being acted, use your senses to closely examine my uncle. We will get that fox out of his kennel. If his hidden guilt does not reveal itself when the actors recite a speech that I have written, then it is a damned ghost from Hell that we have seen, and those things I have imagined are as foul as the workshop of the blacksmith god: Vulcan.

“Observe him very carefully, and I will rivet my own eyes on his face. Afterward, we will compare what we have seen and concluded. We will decide whether he is guilty or innocent of the murder of my father.”

“I will, my lord,” Horatio said. “If he gets away with anything while this play is playing, I will answer for it.”

Hamlet heard people approaching, so he said, “They are coming to the play; I must be empty-headed and play the fool now. Find yourself a place where you can observe my uncle’s face.”

King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and others entered the hall. Some members of the King’s Guard were carrying torches to provide light.

“How fares our kinsman Hamlet?” King Claudius asked.

By “fares,” King Claudius meant “does,” but “fare” can mean “food” and Hamlet deliberately misinterpreted “fares” as “dines.”

“Excellently, truly,” Hamlet replied. “My fare is the fare of the chameleon, which is thought to live on air. I eat the air, which is crammed with promises. You cannot feed capons — castrated cocks that are fattened to serve as food — with air and promises.”

Hamlet was saying that he was being fed with promises; Hamlet was not King of Denmark — all he had was King Claudius’ recommendation that Hamlet become King after Claudius died.

“This answer does not answer my question, Hamlet,” King Claudius said. “These words are not for me — they are not mine.”

“No, nor mine now,” Hamlet said.

He meant that since he had released the words into the air, they no longer belonged to him.

Hamlet asked Polonius, “My lord, you acted once in the

university, didn't you say?"

"That I did, my lord; and I was thought to be a good actor."

"What role did you play?"

"I played the role of Julius Caesar. I was killed in the Capitol; Brutus killed me."

"It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there."

As usual, Hamlet was insulting Polonius. A "calf" was a fool.

Hamlet asked, "Are the actors ready?"

"Yes, my lord," Rosencrantz said. "They are ready when you are."

"Come here, my dear Hamlet, and sit by me," Queen Gertrude said.

"No, good mother, here's metal more attractive," Hamlet said, referring to Ophelia.

He was referring to Ophelia as if she were a magnet that was attracting him.

Polonius said to King Claudius, "Did you hear that?"

Hamlet did not want to sit by his mother because he wanted a clear view of King Claudius' face during the play. If he had sat by his mother, she would have been between him and the King.

Hamlet said to Ophelia, "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?"

As usual, the "mad" Hamlet was rude to Ophelia. "Lie in your lap" could be understood as "have sex with you in the missionary position."

Ophelia understood that meaning of Hamlet's words, and

she replied, “No, my lord.”

Hamlet said, “I mean, may I lie with my head upon your lap?”

Ophelia replied, “Yes, my lord.”

Hamlet asked her, “Did you think I meant country matters?”

The phrase “country matters” refers to sex. Sex is common among animals on a farm. When Hamlet said “country matters,” he stressed the first syllable of “country.”

“I thought nothing, my lord.”

“That’s a fair thought to lie between maidens’ legs,” Hamlet said.

“What is, my lord?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing” is “no thing.” A penis is a thing, and a maiden has no thing between her legs. Nothing is also a zero, and a zero is an O, and an “O” is a symbol for what lies between a maiden’s legs.

Ophelia, who understood what Hamlet was saying, said to him, “You are merry, my lord.”

“Who, I?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Oh, God, I am your only joke-maker. What should a man do but be merry? Look at how cheerful my mother looks, and my father died not even two hours ago.”

“Your father died four months ago, my lord.”

“As long ago as that?” Hamlet said. “Let the Devil wear

black, and I will have a suit of sables.”

According to Hamlet’s society, the Devil is black. Hamlet was joking again. Hamlet would give the Devil his black mourning clothes because Hamlet’s father had died four months ago, which Hamlet was pretending to be a long time and so Hamlet would no longer need black mourning clothes. Hamlet would replace the black mourning clothes with sable furs — but since “sable” as a heraldic term means “black,” he would still be wearing the color of mourning.

Hamlet continued, “Oh, Heavens! My father died two months ago, and he has not been forgotten yet? Then there is hope that the memory of a great man may outlive his life by half a year, but, by the Virgin Mary, he must build churches to keep his memory alive, or else he shall be forgotten just like the hobby-horse, about which this lyric is sung: ‘*For, oh, for, oh, the hobby-horse is forgotten.*’”

Trumpets sounded, and the actors performed a dumbshow — they pantomimed part of the play that was to follow:

An Actor-King and an Actor-Queen who were very loving walked to the acting area. The Queen embraced the King, and he embraced her. She knelt and made a show of protestations of love to him. He helped her stand up, and he rested his head on her neck. He then lay down upon a bank of flowers and fell asleep. She, seeing him asleep, left him. Immediately came in a fellow who took off the King’s crown, kissed it, and then poured poison in the King’s ears. The fellow exited. The Queen returned and found the King dead. She grieved passionately. The Poisoner, with some two or three others, came in again and pretended to lament with her. The dead body was carried away. The Poisoner wooed the Queen with gifts: She seemed loath and unwilling for awhile, but in the end she accepted his love.

The actors then exited.

“What is the meaning of this dumbshow, my lord?”
Ophelia asked Hamlet.

“By the Virgin Mary, this is sneaking *mallecho*; *mallecho* means mischief,” Hamlet replied.

Malhecho is Spanish for “mischief.”

“Probably this dumbshow depicts the plot of the play,”
Ophelia said.

The Prologue — an actor who recited the prologue to the play, often telling the audience members its meaning — entered.

“We shall learn the plot of the play from this fellow,”
Hamlet said. “The actors cannot keep a secret; they’ll tell everything.”

“Will he tell us the meaning of this dumbshow we just saw?” Ophelia asked.

“Yes, or any show that you’ll show him. If you are not ashamed to show him, he is not ashamed to tell you what it means.”

Ophelia, who understood that Hamlet was talking about showing private parts, said to him, “You are wicked. You are wicked. I’ll watch the play.”

The Prologue said these few words:

“For us, and for our tragedy,

“Here stooping to your clemency,

“We beg your hearing patiently.”

Usually, play prologues are longer and more informative.

Hamlet asked, “Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?”

The posy of a ring is the words written on the inside of a finger ring. Here is an example: “Love me, and leave me not.”

Ophelia said, “This prologue is brief, my lord.”

“It is as brief as a woman’s love,” Hamlet said.

Two actors walked into the acting area. One actor played the “King,” and the other actor played the “Queen.”

The Actor-King recited these lines:

“Full thirty times has Phoebus’ cart — the Sun — gone round

“Neptune’s salt wash — the Ocean — and Tellus’ orbed ground — the Earth,

“And thirty dozen moons with borrowed light from the Sun

“About the world have times twelve thirties been,

“Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands

“Unite mutually in most sacred bonds.”

Hamlet thought, *This is an old-fashioned play. It has many references to mythology. Neptune is the Roman god of the sea, Tellus is a Roman Earth goddess, and Hymen is the Roman god of marriage.*

This play uses an elevated style of language. All the playwright is trying to say here is that this King and Queen have been married for thirty years. However, the playwright does not use elevated language well. Attempts to use elevated and fancy language sometimes result in bad writing.

The Actor-Queen recited these lines:

*“So many journeys may the Sun and Moon
“Make us again count over before our love is done!
“Let us live our married life for another thirty years!
“But, woe is me, you are so sick lately,
“So far from cheerfulness and from your former state,
“That I distrust your health. Yet, though I distrust it,
“Do not let that discomfort you, my lord,
“For women’s fear and love holds quantity;
“In neither aught, or in extremity.
“Either there is none of either, or too much of both.
“Now, what my love is, experience has made you know;
“And as my love is measured, my fear is so.
“I love you much, so I worry much about your health.
“Where love is great, the littlest doubts become fear;
“Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.
“The more I love you, the more I fear for you.”*

The Actor-King recited these lines:

*“Truly, I must leave you, love, and soon, too;
“My vital organs their functions cease to do:
“And you shall live in this fair world after I am dead,
“Honored, beloved; and perhaps one as kind
“For your new husband shall you —”*

The Actor-Queen interrupted by reciting these lines:

“Oh, confound the rest!

“Such love must necessarily be treason in my breast:

“In a second marriage let me be accurst!

“None wed the second husband except those who killed the first.”

Hamlet thought, *Wormwood, wormwood. This is bitter medicine. According to the Actor-Queen, when a widow remarries, it is as if she had killed her first husband.*

The Actor-Queen continued,

“The motives that lead to a second marriage

“Are mean considerations of worldly advantages, but none of love:

“A second time I kill my first husband dead,

“When a second husband kisses me in bed.”

The Actor-King recited these lines:

“I do believe you think those things that now you speak;

“But what we decide to do are vows we often break —

“People change their minds.

“What we decide to do is but the slave to memory,

“Of violent birth, but poor validity.

“We can forget our vows;

“We strongly mean to keep them at first but then we forget.

“Vows now, like unripe fruit, stick on the tree;

“But they fall, unshaken,

“When they become mellow and lose their passion.

“Most necessary it is that we forget

“To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.

“A vow to do something is a debt we owe to ourselves.

“What we vow to do we vow in the heat of passion.

“Once the passion is over, we forget the vow.

“The violent excess of either grief or joy

“Destroys the power to carry out the vow.

“Where joy most revels, grief does most lament.

“A person with the greatest capacity for joy also has the greatest capacity for grief.

“But grief turns to joy, and joy turns to grief, with little cause.

“This world is not for ever, nor is it strange

“That even our loves should with our fortunes change.

“For it is a question left us yet to prove,

“Whether love decides our fortune, or fortune decides our love.

“When the great man’s fortunes decline, you will see his best friend flee from him;

“When a poor man’s fortune improves, he makes friends out of former enemies.

“And therefore does friendship on fortune tend;

“For a man who does not need anything shall never lack a friend,

*“But when a man who is in need seeks help from a hollow,
insincere friend,*

*“The needy man turns his hollow, insincere friend into his
enemy.*

“But, to end orderly where I had begun,

“Our desires and destinies do so contrary run

“That our plans and designs always are overthrown;

“Our thoughts are ours, their ends are none of our own:

“So you think you will no second husband wed,

*“But your thoughts will die when your first husband is
dead.”*

The Actor-Queen recited these lines:

“May Earth not give food to me, nor Heaven light!

*“May entertainment and sleep stay away from me both day
and night!*

“May to desperation turn my trust and hope!

“May a hermit’s life in prison be all I ask for and receive!

“May everything that brings joy

“Meet an opponent who can these things destroy.

*“May everything both here and hereafter — in this life and
in the afterlife — bring me lasting strife,*

“If, once I am a widow, I ever again become a wife!”

Hamlet thought, *How could she break her promise now,
after saying these words?*

The Actor-King recited these lines:

“You have sworn deeply. Sweet, leave me here awhile.

“My spirits grow dull, and I would like to beguile

“The tedious day with sleep.”

He fell asleep.

The Actor-Queen recited these lines:

“May sleep rock gently and soothe your brain,

“And may ill fortune never come between us twain!”

The Actor-Queen exited.

Hamlet ask his mother, “Madam, how do you like this play?”

Queen Gertrude replied, “The lady protests too much, I think. Too much protesting makes the content of her words suspected.”

“Oh, but I am sure that she’ll keep her word,” Hamlet lied.

King Claudius asked Hamlet, “Do you know the plot of the play? Is there any offence in it?”

By “offense,” King Claudius meant “anything offensive,” but Hamlet deliberately misinterpreted the word “offense” to mean “crime.”

“No, no, the actors are only jesting; they are poisoning in jest — it is all make believe. There is no offence in the world.”

“What is the title of this play??”

“*The Mousetrap*,” Hamlet replied. “By the Virgin Mary, how did it get its name? Tropically.”

He thought, “*Tropically*” means “*figuratively*.” *A trope is a figure of speech, and the play is figuratively a trap that I*

have set for King Claudius. Perhaps I should have used this word: "Trapically."

Hamlet added, "This play depicts a real-life murder committed in Vienna. Gonzago is the Duke's name; his wife's name is Baptista. You shall see this soon enough. It is a knavish piece of work, but so what? As for your majesty and we who have free souls, this play is not about us. Let the guilty wince and kick like a horse whose saddle sore is stung; all of us are innocent."

An actor playing the role of Lucianus entered.

Hamlet said, "This is Lucianus, the King's nephew."

Ophelia said to him, "You are as good as a chorus that explains everything, my lord."

"I could provide commentary on what happens between you and your lover," Hamlet replied. "I could be like the guy who narrates a puppet show if I saw your puppet and your lover's puppet having intercourse."

"You are keen, my lord, you are keen," Ophelia said.

By "keen," she meant "sharp."

Hamlet replied, "It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge."

"Edge" could mean "sharp edge of a knife," but Hamlet used "edge" with its meaning of "sharp sexual desire."

If Ophelia were to take off Hamlet's edge, she would groan during the pain of breaking her hymen and later she would groan as she gave birth.

Ophelia commented, "Always better, and worse."

She meant that Hamlet's responses to her were wittier — and more offensive — than her comments to him.

Having in mind that brides promised in the marriage ceremony to take their husbands for better or for worse, Hamlet replied, “So you women mis-take your husbands.”

Women mis-take their husbands when they do not keep their vows, and when they substitute one husband for another.

He then said to the actor, “Begin, murderer; stop making your damnable faces, and begin. Come: *The croaking raven does bellow for revenge.*”

Hamlet was misquoting — perhaps deliberately — two lines from the play *The True Tragedy of Richard III*: “The screeching raven sits croaking for revenge / Whole herds of beasts come bellowing for revenge.”

The actor playing Lucianus said these lines:

“Thoughts evil and black, hands apt, poison, and a time suitable;

“Opportunity perfect, with no creature seeing;

“You mixture rank and poisonous, made of weeds collected and combined at midnight,

“Three times blasted with the bane of the goddess of witchcraft, Hecate,

“Your natural magic and dire property

“Do usurp and kill wholesome life immediately.”

The actor playing Lucianus poured the poison into the ears of the Actor-King.

Hamlet said, “He is poisoning him in the garden for his estate. His name’s Gonzago. The story is popular, and it is written in good Italian. You shall see soon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago’s wife.”

Ophelia said, “The King rises. He is standing up.”

“What, is he frightened by false fire!” Hamlet asked. “Is he frightened by the firing of a gun loaded with blanks? Is he frightened by a mere play?”

“How are you, my lord?” Queen Gertrude asked.

“Stop the play!” Polonius ordered.

“Get me some light so I can leave!” King Claudius ordered.

People shouted, “Lights, lights, lights!”

Members of the King’s Guard stepped forward with their torches.

Everyone except Hamlet and Horatio left the hall.

Hamlet was in a giddy mood. He had watched King Claudius closely during the play and had reached a decision about whether the King was guilty of the murder of Hamlet’s father.

Hamlet sang these verses to Horatio, who had also watched King Claudius closely during the play:

“Why, let the wounded deer go weep,

“The hart, unhurt, play;

“For some must stay awake, while some must sleep:

“So runs the world always.”

Hamlet then said, “Would not the success of this play, sir, and a forest of feathers — if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk and run against me — with two Provincial roses, aka large rosettes, on my razed, slashed-in-accordance-with-fashion, shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry — a pack — of players, sir? A successful play and the appropriate costume should get me a share of the profits in a company of

actors.”

Actors of the time wore many feathers as part of their costumes. Rosettes were worn on the shoes; they hid the ties of the shoes. Razed shoes were fashionable shoes that had been slashed and inlaid with different colored silks and that were then stitched and perhaps embroidered.

“Those things might get you half a share,” Horatio said.

“A whole share is what I would get,” Hamlet replied.

He then sang these extempore — just now made up — verses:

“For you do know, this realm was deprived, oh, Damon dear,

“Of Jove himself, the King of gods and men past;

“And now reigns here

“A very, very — pajock.”

The song was about Hamlet’s father, whose murder had deprived Denmark of its rightful King. “Damon” was a traditional name in pastoral poetry for a shepherd. A “pajock” was an unusual word that meant “a base and contemptible fellow.”

Horatio said, “You might have rhymed.”

The rhyme would have been with “past”: ass.

“Oh, good Horatio,” Hamlet said. “I will bet a thousand pounds that the ghost spoke the truth. Did you notice King Claudius’ face?”

“Very well, my lord.”

“Did you see how he reacted to the talk about the poisoning?”

“I watched him very closely, my lord.”

“Ah, ha!” Hamlet, still giddy from the success of the trap, said.

He shouted, “Come, let’s have some music! Come, bring the flute-like recorders!”

He sang these verses:

“For if the King likes not the comedy,

“Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.”

The word “*perdy*” was colloquial for “*par dieu*,” which is French for “By God.”

Hamlet shouted, “Come, bring some music!”

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern entered the hall.

“My good lord, may I have a word with you?” Guildenstern asked.

“Sir, you may have as many words as would fill a whole history,” Hamlet replied.

“The King, sir —” Guildenstern began.

Hamlet interrupted: “Yes, sir, what about him?”

“— is in his private chamber now; he is very much not his usual self.”

“Is he drunk?” Hamlet asked.

“No, my lord,” Guildenstern said. “He is angry. He is filled with choler.”

“You should know to tell this to a doctor, not to me,” Hamlet said. “If I were to be his doctor, I would purge him, and his purgation might make him angrier.”

Hamlet's society existed before the age of modern medicine. Doctors in Hamlet's society believed that the human body had four humors, or vital fluids. Each humor made a contribution to the personality, and for a human being to be sane and healthy, the four humors had to be present in the right amounts. If a man had too much of a certain humor, it would harm his personality and health.

Blood was the sanguine humor. A sanguine man was optimistic.

Phlegm was the phlegmatic humor. A phlegmatic man was calm.

Yellow bile was the choleric humor. A choleric man was angry.

Black bile was the melancholic humor. A melancholic man was gloomy.

When a man was ill, doctors would try to get the four humors back into balance by purging him, often through bloodletting or through the use of laxatives.

When Hamlet talked about purging King Claudius, he meant using his sword to purge so much of the King's blood that the King would die.

Another type of purgation was purging one's sins through prayer and confession, but Hamlet wanted King Claudius to suffer for his sins, not be purged of them.

"My good lord," Guildenstern replied, "talk sense to me and do not wildly run away from the topic of discussion."

"I am tame, sir," Hamlet said. "Tell me what you have to tell me."

"The Queen, your mother, whose spirit is greatly afflicted, has sent me to you."

“You are welcome.”

“My good lord,” Guildenstern said, “your courteous words are not of the right kind. You need to listen to me and to make serious answers. If you are willing to give me a serious answer, then I will do your mother’s errand and give you the message that she wanted me to give you. If you are not willing to give me a serious answer, then I will ask for your permission to leave and I will return to your mother, and you and I need not have any other conversation.”

“Sir, I cannot.”

“Cannot what, my lord?” Rosencrantz said.

“Make you a serious answer. My intelligence is diseased; however, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall get — or rather, as you say, my mother shall get. Therefore, let’s have no longer delay, but instead let’s get to the point. My mother, you say —”

“This is what she says,” Rosencrantz replied. “She says that your behavior has amazed and astonished her.”

“Oh, what a wonderful son, who can so astonish a mother!” Hamlet said. “But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother’s admiration? What else did she say? Tell me.”

“She wants to speak with you in her private chamber, before you go to bed,” Rosencrantz replied.

“We shall obey even if she were ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?” Hamlet said.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern had once been Hamlet’s friends, but he did not now regard them as his friends. Hamlet realized that they were loyal to King Claudius, not to him. Therefore, Hamlet used the royal plural to let them know that he no longer wished to continue this topic of

conversation. He also contemptuously used the word “trade,” which meant “business.”

“My lord, you once were friends with me,” Rosencrantz said.

“And I still am,” Hamlet lied, “by these pickers and stealers.”

The “pickers and stealers” were his fingers. The Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer has this vow that the catechumen makes: “To keep my hands from picking and stealing.” The word “picking” in this context means “pilfering.”

“My good lord, what is your cause of distemper?” Rosencrantz asked. “You do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you will not tell your griefs to your friends. Your mind would be healthier and freer if only you would tell your troubles to your friends.”

“Sir, I lack advancement,” Hamlet replied.

Earlier, after Hamlet had called Denmark his prison, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern had suggested that Hamlet’s ambition — to be King — had made him feel that way. Hamlet had denied it.

“How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?” Rosencrantz said. “King Claudius has stated publicly that he wants you to be King after he dies.”

“Yes, but sir, ‘While the grass grows’ — the proverb is somewhat musty,” Hamlet replied.

Hamlet meant that the proverb — while the grass grows, the horse starves — was so well known that he need not state all of it.

The actors, carrying recorders — musical instruments resembling flutes — entered the hall.

“Oh, the recorders!” Hamlet said.

He requested of an actor, “Let me see one.”

He then said to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, “Step over here so that I can have a few private words with you.”

They went a little distance from the actors, and Hamlet asked them, “Why do you go about to recover — to gain — the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?”

Hamlet was accusing them of trying to lead him into a trap. In doing so, he used hunting terminology. A hunter would recover the wind — that is, go upwind so that the animals being hunted would catch his scent and then move away from him toward the hunters who were waiting downwind and so could not be scented. The animals would walk into a toil — a trap — set by the hunters.

“Oh, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my friendship for you is too unmannerly,” Guildenstern said.

He meant that his friendship and concern for Hamlet were responsible if he had seemed to have bad manners.

“I do not well understand that,” Hamlet replied.

What he did not well understand was how Rosencrantz and Guildenstern could now say that they were his friends.

Hamlet asked Guildenstern, “Will you play upon this pipe — this recorder?”

“My lord, I cannot.”

“Please.”

“Believe me, I cannot.”

“I beg you to.”

“I do not know how to play it, my lord.”

“It is as easy as lying,” Hamlet said. “Cover these holes in the pipe with your fingers and thumb, and then give it breath with your mouth, and it will put forth most eloquent music. Look here, these are the holes.”

“But I cannot use them to make anything resembling harmony,” Guildenstern said. “I have not the skill.”

“Why, see here,” Hamlet said. “See how unworthily you are treating me! You want to play upon me; you seem to know my stops; you want to push my buttons and learn my secrets; you want to sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass or range.”

“Sound me” was a pun that meant both “play me and make me give forth sounds” and “probe or fathom me to find out what is hidden in my depths.”

Hamlet continued, “Much music — excellent voice — is in this little instrument called the recorder, yet you cannot make it speak. Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, although you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.”

Again Hamlet was punning. “To fret” means “to irritate,” and frets are the ridges on some stringed instruments that are used to produce notes.

Hamlet wanted Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to know that he would not allow their tricks to be successful with him.

Polonius entered the hall, and Hamlet said to him, “God bless you, sir!”

“My lord, the Queen wants to speak with you, and that immediately,” Polonius said.

Hamlet replied, “Do you see yonder cloud that’s almost in the shape of a camel?”

It was night, and they were inside the hall of the castle, but Polonius believed that Hamlet was insane and he did not want to upset him.

Polonius replied, “By the Mass, the cloud is like a camel, indeed.”

“I think that it is like a weasel,” Hamlet said.

“It has a back like a weasel,” Polonius said.

The back of a camel and the back of a weasel are not similar.

“Or like a whale?” Hamlet asked.

“Very like a whale,” Polonius replied.

“Then I will come to my mother by and by — soon.”

He thought, *They play along with my fooling — my acting like a madman — to the top of my bent.*

The “top of a bent” is a term from archery. It means “the greatest extent that a bow can be bent.”

Hamlet repeated, “I will come by and by.”

“I will tell her that,” Polonius said.

“‘By and by’ is easily said,” Hamlet said.

Polonius left the hall.

Hamlet said to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, “Leave me, friends.”

They departed, leaving Hamlet alone.

Hamlet said to himself, “Now is the very witching time —

the time when witches appear — of night, when churchyards yawn and Hell itself breathes out contagion upon this world. Now I could catch the contagion and drink hot blood and be tempted to commit murder and do such bitter business as the day would quake to look on.

“Be careful, Hamlet!

“Now I will go to my mother. Oh, heart, do not lose your natural feeling of love for your mother. Do not ever let the soul of Nero enter this firm bosom. Nero, Emperor of Rome, committed matricide — he had his own mother put to death.

“Let me be cruel, but not unnatural. I will speak daggers to my mother, but I will not use any daggers. My tongue and soul in this will be hypocrites; let my soul pretend to be more savage than it is, and let my tongue pronounce the words that will make me seem more savage than I am.

“I will rebuke her mightily with words, but I will not put into deeds what I say in words.”

— 3.3 —

In a room in the castle, King Claudius talked with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

“I do not like the way that Hamlet is behaving,” King Claudius said. “It is not safe for us to allow his madness free range. Therefore prepare yourselves to perform a commission I will give to you. Speedily I will give you a commission to go to England, and Hamlet shall go to England with you. The terms of our estate may not endure a hazard so dangerous as does hourly grow out of his lunacies. Hamlet’s madness is a threat to me the King.”

“We will make the necessary preparations,” Guildenstern said. “It is a very holy and religious concern to want to

keep safe the numerous subjects who depend upon your majesty. If something were to happen to you the King, it would have a bad effect upon your country and your subjects.”

“An individual with one life is bound by natural law to use all its strength and intelligence to keep itself from harm,” Rosencrantz said. “But much more bound is a spirit upon whose well-being the lives of many people depend and rest. A King does not die alone, but like a whirlpool, his death pulls with it what is near. It is like a massive wheel fixed on the summit of the highest mountain. To the wheel’s huge spokes are fastened ten thousand lesser things. When the wheel falls down the mountain, each of the ten thousand lesser and petty things is harmed in the boisterous catastrophe. The general public groans when a King sighs. Never does a King sigh alone.”

“Prepare yourselves to travel quickly,” King Claudius said. “We will put fetters upon this fear, which now goes too free-footed. We will not allow Hamlet to roam freely in Denmark.”

“We will hurry,” Rosencrantz and Guildenstern said.

They exited as Polonius entered the room.

“My lord,” Polonius said, “Hamlet is going to his mother’s private chamber. Behind the arras I’ll hide myself so I can hear their conversation. I am sure that she will berate him soundly.

“As you said, and wisely was it said, it is a good idea that someone other than a mother, since nature makes them partial to their sons, should listen to their conversation from a hidden spot.”

Actually, hiding and listening to the conversation of Queen Gertrude and Hamlet had been Polonius’ idea. He was

flattering King Claudius by saying that the idea was the King's and that it was a wise plan.

Polonius said, "Fare you well, my liege. I'll call upon you before you go to bed and tell you what I learn."

"Thanks, my dear lord," King Claudius said.

Polonius exited, leaving King Claudius alone.

King Claudius said to himself, "My offence is so rank that it stinks to Heaven. It has the primal eldest curse upon it: a brother's murder — the murder of Abel by Cain. I cannot pray, although my desire to pray is as strong as my will and determination.

"My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent. And, like a man who has two tasks to do, I stand and pause as I consider which I shall first begin, and as I pause I neglect both tasks. I can pray and ask forgiveness of my sins and do what I can to make things right, or I can continue to pursue the path I am on and enjoy the fruits of my sin.

"So what if this cursed hand of mine is thicker than itself because it is coated with my brother's blood? Don't the sweet Heavens have enough rain to wash it as white as snow?"

King Claudius was thinking of part of Isaiah 1:18: "*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*"

He continued, "What is the purpose of mercy except to confront the face of evil? Doesn't mercy forgive committed sins? And what's in prayer but this two-fold force: to pray for help to keep us from committing sins, and to pray for forgiveness of those sins we have committed."

King Claudius was thinking of Mathew 6:13: "*And lead us*

not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

He continued, “I can look up; I have hope. I have committed the sin, and so I know what kind of prayer I must make. But what form of prayer can serve my turn? ‘Forgive me my foul murder’? I cannot pray that because I still have the things for which I committed the murder: my crown, everything I was ambitious for, and my Queen. May one be pardoned and still keep the things that one acquired by committing the sin?

“In the corrupted currents of this world, a guilty hand that is coated with ill-gotten gold from committing a sin may shove aside justice. Often we see that parts of the spoils of a crime are used to bribe officials who ought to uphold the law, but it is not that way in Heaven. There, no one can avoid proper punishment. Here, no one can be forced to give evidence against himself. In Heaven, all evidence is revealed and we who are guilty are compelled to confess our sins and give the evidence that convicts us — we confess the bared teeth and frowning forehead of our faults.

“What then? What remains that I can do? I can see what repentance can do. What can repentance not do? But what can repentance do if one cannot repent?

“My state is wretched! My bosom is black as death! My soul has been caught, and as it struggles to be free, it is caught more firmly!

“Help me, angels!”

He hesitated and then said, “Let me make an effort with all my might! Bow, stubborn knees! Heart, which is held in place with strings of steel, be as soft as the sinews of a newborn babe!

“All may yet be well.”

King Claudius knelt and attempted to pray.

Hamlet entered the room and saw King Claudius on his knees.

Hamlet said to himself, “Now I can easily kill the King, now while he is praying, and so I will do it.”

He drew his sword and said to himself, “I will kill him, he will go to Heaven, and so I will have my revenge.

“Let me think about this. A villain murders my father, and in return for that murder, I, my father’s sole son, send this same villain to Heaven.

“The villain should pay me to do that! Being sent to Heaven is a reward; sending someone to Heaven is not revenge.

“He murdered my father when my father was unprepared for death and for being judged. My father was full of bread; he was not fasting in penitence for his sins. My father died when all his sins were in full flower and as flush as May.

“Who knows this villain’s spiritual account except Heaven? But according to our society and our way of thinking, he is heavy with sin.

“Would I be revenged if I were to kill him while he is purging his sin? He would be in a state of grace, and he would be prepared for death and for being judged. My father would suffer, while this villain enjoys Paradise.

“No. That would not be revenge. Sword, I will put you away.”

He sheathed his sword, and then he said quietly, “Sword, a more horrid opportunity shall arise and I will use you then. I will use you when this villain is drunk and asleep, when

he is furious, when he is enjoying incestuous pleasure in his bed, when he is gambling, when he is swearing, or when he is doing some act that has no taste of salvation in it. That is when I will trip him so that his heels will kick out at Heaven as he falls headfirst into Hell. When he dies, I want his soul to be as damned and black as Hell, to where it will go. I want his soul to be eternally damned.

“My mother is waiting for me.

“King Claudius, this physic, this medicine, merely prolongs your wretched life for a short while longer.”

Hamlet exited.

King Claudius, who was unaware that Hamlet had been in the room, rose from his kneeling position and said to himself, “My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: Words without thoughts never to Heaven go. Words without true repentance are useless and meaningless. Unless there is true repentance, there is no forgiveness.”

— 3.4 —

In the Queen’s private chamber, Queen Gertrude and Polonius were talking.

Polonius said, “Hamlet will be here very soon. Speak frankly to him: Tell him his rude behavior has been too outrageous to bear with, and tell him that your grace has screened him from and stood between him and severe criticism.

“I will hide myself here behind this arras. I’ll be quiet now. Please, be forthright when you speak to him.”

Hamlet called from outside the room, “Mother, mother, mother!”

Queen Gertrude said to Polonius, “Don’t worry about me.

Hide. I can hear him coming.”

Polonius hid behind the wall hanging.

Hamlet entered the room and asked, “Now, mother, what’s the matter?”

“Hamlet, you have your father much offended.”

She was referring to King Claudius.

“Mother, you have my father much offended.”

He was referring to the late King Hamlet.

“Come, come, you answer me with an idle tongue.”

“Go, go, you question me with a wicked tongue.”

“Why, what are you saying, Hamlet!”

“What’s the matter now?”

“Have you forgotten who I am?”

“No, by the cross on which Christ hung, I have not forgotten who you are. You are the Queen, you are your husband’s brother’s wife. And — I wish that it were not so! — you are my mother.”

According to the Book of Common Prayer, “*A woman may not marry with her [...] Husband’s Brother.*” Hamlet was accusing his mother of a forbidden marriage.

Queen Gertrude said, “I will not speak to you while you are like this. I will bring you some people to whom you can speak.”

She stood up, but Hamlet forced her to sit back down.

He said, “Come, come, and sit yourself down. You shall not budge from here. You may not leave until I set up a mirror in front of you that will make you see the inmost

part of yourself.”

“What are you going to do?” Queen Gertrude asked. “Are you are going to murder me?”

She screamed, “Help! Help!”

Polonius screamed from behind the wall hanging, “Help! Help! Help!”

Hamlet drew his sword and said, “What is this! A rat? They get killed because they are always making noise and drawing attention to themselves. This rat is dead. I will bet a ducat that it will soon be dead; I will take a ducat for killing it.”

He thrust his sword through the wall hanging and stabbed Polonius.

Polonius moaned, “I have been killed!”

He fell and died.

“What have you done?” Queen Gertrude said.

“I am not sure,” Hamlet replied. “Is it the King?”

“What a rash and bloody deed this is!”

“A bloody deed!” Hamlet replied. “Almost as bad, good mother, as to kill a King, and marry his brother.”

“As kill a King!” a shocked Queen Gertrude said.

“Yes, lady, that is what I said.”

Hamlet was shocked that his mother had allowed someone to spy on what he thought was a private conversation with her. In his shock, he voiced his fear that his mother was complicit in Claudius’ murder of King Hamlet, although the ghost had not told him that. Witnessing his mother’s reaction to the accusation that she had helped kill her first

husband, Hamlet became convinced that she was innocent of that sin.

Hamlet lifted the wall hanging and found Polonius.

He said to the corpse, “You wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell! I mistook you for your better: I thought you were the King. Take your fortune. You have learned that to be too inquisitive is to put yourself in danger.”

He said to his shocked mother, “Stop wringing your hands. Be quiet! Sit down, and let me wring your heart. I will do that if your heart can be penetrated by feeling — if damned habitual sins have not hardened your heart like brass so that no feeling can penetrate it.”

“What have I done, that you dare wag your tongue so loudly and so rudely against me?”

“You have committed an act that blurs the grace and blush of modesty, calls virtue hypocritical, takes off the rose — female perfection — from the fair forehead of an innocent love and sets a blister — the branding of a prostitute — there, and makes marriage-vows as false as the oaths of people who gamble with dice,” Hamlet replied. “You have committed a deed that plucks the soul out of and makes void marriage vows and turns sweet religion into a confused and meaningless pile of words. Heaven’s hot face glows with shame above the Earth. Heaven is sorrowful, just as it will be on Judgment Day, because it is sickened by your act.”

“Tell me,” Queen Gertrude said, “what act have I committed that roars so loud, and thunders in these, your words that introduce your accusation of my act?”

On a necklace, Hamlet wore a miniature portrait of his father: the late King Hamlet. On a necklace, Queen Gertrude wore a miniature portrait of her husband: the

present King Claudius.

Hamlet took the miniature portraits and held them side-by-side.

He said, “Look here, upon this picture, and upon this one. They are counterfeits — mere pictures — of two brothers.

“See, what a grace was seated on this brow — the brow of my late father. He is like the ancient mythological gods. He has the curled hair of Hyperion, the Sun-god. He has the forehead of Jove himself, King of gods and men. He has eyes like those of Mars, the god of war — eyes that threaten and command. He has a stance like that of the herald Mercury, messenger to the other gods, newly alighted on a hill so high that it kisses Heaven. My late father had a group of features and a form indeed, on which every god did seem to set his seal, to give the world assurance that this was a model man.

“That man was your first husband.

“But look now at the other portrait. Here is your second and present husband. He is like a moldy ear of corn, infecting his wholesome brother.

“Have you eyes?

“Could you leave this fair mountain — my father — to feed and gorge yourself on this barren moor? Ha! Do you have eyes?

“You cannot call it love because at your age the heyday in the blood — the passionate sexual period of life — is tame. It’s humble, and it waits upon reason. It obeys reason, and what reason would step from this, my father, to this, your second husband?

“Sense, surely, you have, or else you would not have the power of motion; but surely, that sense is paralyzed.

“Madness would never err in this way, and never has reason been so enthralled to sexual passion but that it was still able to make a choice between two such different alternatives.

“Your senses, madness, and reason could never choose King Claudius over the late King Hamlet.

“What devil was it then that thus has tricked you while you were playing Blind Man’s Bluff?

“Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight, ears without hands or eyes, smelling without any of the other senses, or even just a sickly part of one true sense could not be so unaware as to choose King Claudius over the late King Hamlet.

“For shame! Where is your blush? Rebellious Hellish sexual desires, if you can mutiny in a matron’s bones, then to flaming youth let virtue be like wax, and melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame when the compulsive ardor of sexual desire gives the impetus to perform sexual misdeeds since frosty old age itself actively burns just like youthful sexual desire and since reason becomes a panderer for the passion. If old people are ruled by their sexual passion, what hope do young people have to resist such passion?”

“Oh, Hamlet, speak no more,” Queen Gertrude said. “You made my eyes look deep into my soul, and there I see such black and engrained spots whose tincture — color — will not be washed away.”

What sin is Queen Gertrude speaking about? She is not complicit in the murder of her first husband. Is she speaking only of her hasty second marriage or of something in addition to that? Adultery while her first husband was still alive, perhaps?

Hamlet replied, “No, it will not be washed away. And you

are living in the rank sweat of a bed stained with the fluids of sex, stewed in corruption, honeying and making love over the nasty sty —”

Hamlet was punning again. The word “stewed” also referred to stewed prunes, which were served in brothels; as a result, “stews” became a slang word for brothels.

“Oh, speak to me no more,” Queen Gertrude said. “These words of yours, like daggers, enter my ears. No more, sweet Hamlet!”

“King Claudius is a murderer and a villain; he is a slave who is not worth one-twentieth of a tithe — ten percent — of your first husband. He is an unscrupulous monster among Kings; he is a cutpurse of the empire and the throne. From a shelf he stole the precious crown and put it in his pocket!”

The word “tithe” has religious significance because a Christian is supposed to tithe — give ten percent of income to charity and/or the church. In addition, the number “ten” has religious significance because ten is composed of three threes and one one. Three is the number of the Trinity, and one is the number of the Unity that is the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost become the one true God.

“No more!” Queen Gertrude pleaded.

“He is a King made of bits and pieces —”

The ghost entered the room.

Hamlet saw the ghost and prayed, “Save me, and hover over me with your wings, you Heavenly guards!”

He then said to the ghost, “What does your gracious figure want?”

Queen Gertrude could not see the ghost. To her, it seemed as if Hamlet were speaking to empty air.

She said, “Hamlet is mad! He is insane!”

Hamlet said to the ghost, “Have you come to reproach your tardy son, who, surprised by you in a time and while feeling the emotions that are important in fulfilling your dread command, is still not yet carrying out that command? Tell me!”

Hamlet was filled with emotion, but he was not doing what the ghost wanted him to do. The ghost wanted Hamlet to get revenge on King Claudius, and the ghost did not want Hamlet to hurt his mother. Hamlet had passed up an opportunity to kill King Claudius, and he was now emotionally hurting his mother.

The ghost said to Hamlet, “Do not forget what I told you. The purpose of this visitation is to whet your almost blunted purpose. But, look, your mother is bewildered. Step in between her and her soul as it fights frightening images. The imagination works strongest in the weakest bodies. Speak to her, Hamlet.”

The ghost wanted Hamlet to take care of his mother and then to turn his attention to killing King Claudius.

“How are you, lady?” Hamlet asked his mother.

“How are *you*, Hamlet?” Queen Gertrude replied. “Why are you looking at nothing and speaking to empty air? Your eyes look wild as they wildly look, and your hair, like sleeping soldiers suddenly awakened by an alarm, is shocked and stands on end. Oh, gentle son, sprinkle cool patience upon the heat and flame of your distemper and illness. What are you looking at?”

“I am looking at him — at him!” Hamlet said as he pointed

to the ghost. “Look, can’t you see how pale he is as he stares! If his appearance and his reason for appearing here could conjoin together and preach to stones, they would make them responsive to his words.”

He said to the ghost, “Do not look at me unless with piteous action you divert my stern deeds. If that happens, then what I have to do may lack the true color. Perhaps clear tears will flow instead of red blood.”

When Hamlet first saw the ghost, the ghost had told Hamlet not to pity him. The ghost wanted violent action and blood instead of pity and tears.

“To whom are you speaking?” Queen Gertrude asked.

“Do you see nothing there?”

“I see nothing at all; yet I see everything that there is to see.”

“Did you hear anything?”

“No, nothing but ourselves.”

“Why, look there! Look at how it is moving away! It is my father, wearing the clothing he used to wear when he was alive! Look, he is leaving now — he is going out the door!”

The ghost exited.

“This is only the invention of your brain,” Queen Gertrude said. “Madness is very cunning and skillful in creating things without bodies.”

“Madness!” Hamlet said. “My pulse, just like yours, temperately keeps time, and makes as healthful music. What I have said is not the result of madness. Put me to the test, and I will repeat everything that I have said — that is an act that madness would run away from.”

“Mother, for the love of Heaven, do not apply a soothing ointment to your soul by believing that it is my madness speaking and not your sin. The flattering ointment will only put a skin over the ulcerous place while rank corruption, undermining everything underneath the layer of skin, infects unseen.

“Confess your sins to Heaven. Repent what sins are past; avoid the temptations to come. And do not spread compost on the weeds to make them ranker.

“Forgive me this virtuous sermonizing of mine because in the fatness and grossness of these pury — corpulent and purse-proud — times virtue itself must beg pardon from vice. Yes, virtue must bow and woo for permission to do vice good.”

“Oh, Hamlet, you have broken my heart in two.”

“Throw the worse part of your heart away, and live all the purer with the other half,” Hamlet replied.

He added, “Good night, but do not go to my uncle’s bed. If you do not really have a particular virtue, act as if you have it. The monster custom eats up all understanding of evil when we habitually do evil deeds, but it is angelic in this: When one practices fair and good actions, they become habitual. Doing evil deeds can become a habit, but so can doing good deeds. We can put on good or bad habits the way that we put on good or bad clothing. It is our choice.

“Refrain from having sex with King Claudius tonight, and that shall lend a kind of easiness to the next abstinence. The abstinence after that will be even easier. Habit can almost change the stamp of nature — our inborn characteristics.

“Habit can either welcome the Devil, or powerfully throw him out.

“Once more, good night. And when you are desirous to be blessed and ask for God’s blessing, I’ll beg a blessing from you like a dutiful son.”

Hamlet pointed to the corpse of Polonius and said, “I repent killing this lord, but Heaven has been pleased to punish me with this corpse and to punish this corpse with me. It has been the will of Heaven that I be punished and that I punish Polonius. I have acted as Heaven’s agent and minister of justice, and Heaven has punished me. I will dispose of him, and I will atone for the death I gave him.

“So, again, good night.

“I must be cruel only to be kind. Thus bad begins and worse remains behind. The death of Polonius is a bad beginning, and worse is still to come.

“One word more, good lady.”

“What shall I do?” Queen Gertrude asked.

“Here are things that I tell you NOT to do, no matter what happens,” Hamlet said. “Let the bloated King tempt you again to go to bed. Let him pinch your cheek wantonly. Let him call you his mouse. Let him, because he gave you a few filthy kisses or stroked your neck with his damned fingers, convince you to disentangle everything for him. Tell him that I am not mad essentially, but am mad only in craft and cunning.”

He said sarcastically, “It would be good for you to let him know that I am faking my madness because who would hide from a toad, from a bat, or from a tomcat such dear information concerning him? Who would do such a thing? A queen, fair, sober, and wise?”

With more sarcasm, he added, “No, to spite sense and secrecy, you ought to climb on top of a house with a basket

of birds, open the basket and let the birds fly out. Then you ought to imitate the experimenting ape in the famous story and climb into the basket, jump out and try to fly like the birds, and break your neck when you fall to the ground.”

“Be assured, Hamlet,” Queen Gertrude said, “if words are made of breath, and breath is made of life, I have no life to breathe what you have said to me. I will not tell my husband what you have told me.”

“I must go to England; do you know that?”

“Yes, I had forgotten, but it has been so decided.”

“The letters are sealed, and my two schoolfellows, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whom I will trust as I trust fanged venomous snakes, bear the mandate — King Claudius’ letter to the English King. They must sweep my way clear and carry me off and lead me into some trap.

“So be it. It will be fun to have the engineer be hoist with his own petard — blown up with his own bomb. Things shall go badly for me unless I can outwit the enemy and use the enemy’s own bomb to blow him at the Moon. Oh, it is very sweet when two plots — the King’s and mine — meet head-on.

“This man — the dead Polonius — shall cause me to be sent to England in a hurry and shall cause me to begin my plotting. I’ll lug the guts into the neighboring room.

“Mother, good night.

“Indeed, this counselor is now very still, very secret, and very grave, although when he was alive he was a foolish prating knave.”

Hamlet said to the corpse, “Come, sir, I will draw toward an end with you.”

He added, "Good night, mother."

Hamlet then began to drag away the corpse of Polonius.

CHAPTER 4 (Hamlet)

— 4.1 —

In a room of the castle, King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern were meeting.

“There’s a reason for these sighs, these profound heaves,” King Claudius said to Queen Gertrude, who was upset by her encounter with Hamlet. “You must translate them into language we can understand; it is fitting that we understand the reason for these sighs.

“Where is your son?”

Queen Gertrude said to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, “Leave us alone here for a little while.”

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern left the room.

“Ah, my good lord, what I have seen tonight!” Queen Gertrude said.

“What, Gertrude? How is Hamlet?”

“Hamlet is as mad as the sea and wind, when both contend in a storm to see which is the mightier. In his lawless and uncontrollable fit, Hamlet heard something stir behind the arras. He whipped out his rapier and cried, ‘A rat, a rat!’ Then, suffering from a delusion, he killed Polonius, the unseen good old man.”

“What a heavy and grievous deed!” King Claudius said. “I would have been killed, if I had been there. Hamlet’s liberty is full of threats to everyone: to you yourself, to us the King, to everyone.

“How shall this bloody deed be explained? Responsibility for it will be laid on us, whose providence should have kept

this mad young man restrained and out of circulation, but we loved him so much that we would not understand what was the best course of action. Instead, I acted like someone suffering from a foul disease, who rather than let knowledge of it become public, let it remain uncured with the result that eventually it fed even on the essential substance of life.

“Where has Hamlet gone?”

“He is removing the body he has killed,” Queen Gertrude said. “Even in his madness, he weeps over the corpse and feels remorse. This remorse is like some pure gold that shows itself in a mine of base metals.”

“Gertrude, come away!” King Claudius said. “The Sun no sooner shall touch the mountains and bring the morning than we will ship Hamlet away from here. We must, with all our majesty and skill, both accept responsibility for and excuse Hamlet’s vile deed.”

He called, “Guildenstern!”

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern returned to the room.

King Claudius said to them, “Friends, go and get some men to assist you. Hamlet in his madness has slain Polonius, and he has dragged him away from his mother’s private chamber.

“Go and find Hamlet. Speak politely and respectfully to him, and bring the body into the chapel. Please, hurry and do this.”

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern left the room to carry out their orders.

King Claudius said, “Come, Gertrude, we’ll call up our wisest friends, and we will let them know both what we mean to do and what has been unfortunately done. Oh,

come away! My soul is full of discord and dismay.”

— 4.2 —

In another room of the castle, Hamlet said to himself, “The corpse has been safely stowed away.”

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern called, “Hamlet! Hamlet! Hamlet!”

“What noise is that?” Hamlet said. “Who is calling for me? Oh, here they come.”

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern entered the room.

“What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?” Rosencrantz asked.

“I have mixed it with dust, to which it is kin,” Hamlet said.

He was thinking of Genesis 3:19: “*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*”

Hamlet had not buried the corpse; he had simply placed it in a dusty room.

“Tell us where it is, so that we may take it from there and carry it to the chapel,” Rosencrantz said.

“Do not believe it,” Hamlet said.

“Believe what?” Rosencrantz asked.

“That I will do what you want me to do and not do what I want to do,” Hamlet said. “When a sponge demands something, what reply should the son of a King make?”

“Do you think that I am a sponge, my lord?” Rosencrantz asked.

A sponge is a parasite who lives off other people. A sponge soaks up other people's money and other good things.

“Yes, sir, you are a sponge who soaks up the King's favor, his rewards, his powers. But such officers do the King best service in the end. He keeps them, like an ape does an apple, in the corner of his jaw. The ape first puts them in his mouth and then later swallows them. When the King needs what you have gleaned, he will squeeze you, and, you, sponge, shall be dry again.”

Hamlet was warning Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that King Claudius was using them. Once King Claudius was done using them, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern would be discarded. Although Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were hoping for rewards from their master, serving a dangerous master would likely harm them.

“I do not understand you, my lord,” Rosencrantz said.

“I am glad that you do not,” Hamlet replied. “Fools are unable to understand irony.”

“My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the King,” Rosencrantz said.

“The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body,” Hamlet said.

Hamlet meant more than one thing here.

First, Polonius' physical body was with King Claudius because it was in the King's castle, but King Claudius was not with Polonius' body because Polonius' spiritual body was in Heaven.

Second, King Claudius' physical body was with him, but the body politic — what makes a King a true King — was not with him.

Hamlet added, “The King is a thing —”

Guildenstern exclaimed, “A thing, my lord!”

Hamlet continued, “— of nothing. Take me to him.”

He then shouted, “Hide, fox, and all after!”

He ran off, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ran after him.

— 4.3 —

King Claudius said to some lords, “I have sent Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to seek Hamlet, and to find the body of Polonius. How dangerous it is that this man goes loose! Yet we must not put the strong arm of law on him. Hamlet is beloved by the unreasoning multitude of people. They use their eyes, not their reason and judgment, to decide whom to like. In such cases, they focus on the punishment given to the offender and not on the offense that the offender committed.

“To make everything go smoothly and evenly, my suddenly sending Hamlet away must seem like the result of careful deliberation.

“Desperate diseases require desperate cures, or they are not cured.”

Rosencrantz entered the room. Guildenstern stayed with Hamlet, guarding him, outside.

“How are you?” King Claudius asked him. “What has happened?”

“Hamlet will not tell us where he stowed the corpse of Polonius.”

“Where is Hamlet?”

“Outside, my lord. He is being guarded. What do you want done with him?”

“Bring him here before us,” King Claudius said.

“Guildenstern!” Rosencrantz called. “Bring in my lord.”

Hamlet and Guildenstern entered the room.

“Now, Hamlet, where’s Polonius?” King Claudius asked.

“At supper.”

“At supper! Where?”

“Do not ask where he eats, but where he is eaten,” Hamlet said. “A certain convocation of politic — shrewd — worms is even now gnawing at him.”

Hamlet was punning on the Diet of Worms, which was held in the German city of Worms in 1521. The word “diet” means “council.” Holy Roman Emperor Charles V presided over the Diet of Worms.

Hamlet continued, “Your worm is your only Emperor for diet. We fatten all other creatures so that we can eat them and grow fat ourselves, and we ourselves grow fat so that we can feed maggots. A fat King and a lean beggar are only two different courses at a meal; they are two dishes on one table. That’s the end for us.”

“Alas! Alas!” King Claudius said.

“A man may fish with a worm that has eaten part of a King, and then he can eat the fish that has fed on that worm.”

“What do you mean by this?”

“Nothing except to show you how a King may progress through the guts of a beggar,” Hamlet replied.

“Where is Polonius?”

“In Heaven; send someone there to see,” Hamlet replied. “If your messenger does not find him there, then seek him in the other place yourself. But indeed, if you do not find him within this month, you shall smell him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.”

King Claudius said to some attendants, “Go seek the corpse there.”

“He will stay until you come,” Hamlet said to the attendants as they were leaving the room.

“Hamlet, because of this deed, for your own personal safety — which we dearly care for, just as we dearly grieve for this deed that you have done — we must send you away from here with fiery quickness. Therefore prepare yourself to travel. The ship is ready, and the wind is blowing in the right direction, your companions are waiting for you, and everything is ready for you to go to England.”

“For England?”

“Yes, Hamlet.”

“Good.”

“So it is, as you would know if you knew our motives.”

“I see a cherub who sees them,” Hamlet replied.

He suspected King Claudius’ motives, and he was reminding King Claudius that God and the angels in Heaven know everything.

Hamlet continued, “Let’s go to England!”

He said to King Claudius, “Farewell, dear mother.”

King Claudius replied, “Your loving father, Hamlet.”

“You are my mother. Father and mother are man and wife;

man and wife are one flesh; and so, you are my mother.

“Let’s go to England!”

Hamlet exited.

King Claudius ordered Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, “Follow him closely; persuade him to board the ship quickly. Do not delay. I’ll have him leave here tonight. Away! Everything else needed for this journey to happen has been sealed and done. Please, hurry.”

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern left the room.

King Claudius motioned with his hands, and everyone departed, leaving him alone.

King Claudius had written a letter to the King of England, a letter that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern would carry on board ship. Now he held an imaginary one-sided conversation with the English King:

“King of England, if you value at all my friendship — as you should, because of my great power ... your country can still feel the raw and red scar that it received from the Danish sword, and you are paying homage and tribute to us to keep our soldiers away — because of this, you cannot coldly set aside and ignore our royal command, which is described in full in a letter: the immediate death of Hamlet. Do it, King of England — kill Hamlet.

“Hamlet rages like a fever in my blood, and you must cure me. Until I know that Hamlet is dead, whatever else happens, I will never be happy.”

— 4.4 —

On a plain in Denmark, young Fortinbras, one of his Captains, and an army of soldiers were marching.

Fortinbras ordered, “Go, Captain, and give the Danish King

my greetings. Tell him that, in accordance with our agreement, Fortinbras craves safe conduct and an escort as he marches across Denmark. You know the rendezvous. If his majesty wants to see us, we will pay his respects to him in person. Tell him that.”

“I will do so, my lord,” the Captain replied.

Fortinbras ordered his army, “March onward. Do nothing to cause trouble.”

Fortinbras and his army marched onward, leaving the Captain behind.

Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and others arrived.

Hamlet said to the Captain, “Good sir, whose soldiers are these?”

“They are Norwegian, sir,” the Captain replied.

“Please tell me where they are marching, sir.”

“They are marching to fight in a part of Poland.”

“Who commands them, sir?”

“Fortinbras, the nephew to the aged King of Norway.”

“Will his army fight the heartland of Poland, or will it fight some frontier?”

“To speak truly, and with no exaggeration, we go to fight to gain a little patch of ground that has in it no profit but the name. Whoever wins the battle will gain nothing but reputation — he will win the name of conqueror. I would not rent it for five — five! — ducats. It would not bring in more to either the King of Norway or the King of Poland if it were sold outright. It is a worthless piece of land.”

“Why, then the King of Poland will never defend it.”

“Yes, he will,” the Captain said. “He has already stationed soldiers there.”

“Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats will not settle this straw — this trivial matter,” Hamlet said. “This is the abscess that results from having too much wealth during peacetime. The abscess festers inside the body and the man dies without other people knowing why.

“I humbly thank you, sir.”

The Captain replied, “May God be with you, sir,” and departed.

Rosencrantz asked Hamlet, “Will it please you to go, my lord?”

“I’ll be with you very quickly. Go ahead of me a little distance,” Hamlet replied.

Everyone started traveling again, leaving Hamlet alone.

Hamlet said to himself, “Everything denounces me and spurs me on to get my delayed revenge! What is a man, if his chief happiness and all he does with his time is simply to sleep and eat? He is a beast — no more than that. Surely, He Who made us with such a fine power of reasoning, which we can use to learn from the past and plan for the future, did not give us that capability and God-like reason to go unused by us and get moldy. Now, whether it be due to an animal’s forgetfulness or from some cowardice caused by thinking in too much detail on the outcome of our action — a thought that, divided into four parts, has but one part wisdom and three parts cowardice — I do not know why I yet live to say, ‘This thing is something I have to do.’ It should have been done already. After all, I have the reason — a cause — and the will and the strength and the means to do it.

“Examples as weighty as Earth exhort me to take action and get revenge. Witness this army of such size and expense that is being led by a delicate and tender Prince with a spirit that is puffed up with divine ambition and who makes a face at and scorns the unknown outcome of his war. He is exposing what is mortal and unsure to all that fortune, death, and danger dare. And for what? For an eggshell.

“Rightly to be great is not to stir without great argument, but greatly to find quarrel in a straw when honor is at stake.”

Hamlet thought, *It is true that the way to get a reputation is not by refraining from making war unless you have a good reason for making war, but by making war over a trifle — a straw — when honor is at stake.*

If Fortinbras had said that this trifle of land in Poland is not worth fighting for and so I will remain at home instead of going to war, he would gain no reputation. But since he is willing to go to war and get lots of soldiers killed and lots of money spent over a trifle, he will gain a reputation. But will it be a negative or a positive reputation?

Or perhaps the right way to be great is to not make war unless you have an excellent reason for making war, but people mistakenly think that the right way to be great is to make war over a trifle — a straw — when honor is at stake. But will it be negative or positive greatness?

Hamlet said, “But what about me? I am not concerned with trifles and straws. I have a father who has been murdered, a mother whose character has been stained, and incentives both in my mind and in my emotions to take action and get revenge, and what have I done? I have slept and done nothing. Meanwhile, to my shame, I see the imminent death of twenty thousand men, who, merely for Fortinbras’

fantasy and illusion of fame, go to their graves as if the graves were beds. They will die while fighting for a plot of land that is not big enough to contain all the soldiers fighting over it and which is not big enough to provide tombs and graves for all the soldiers who will die fighting over it.

“Oh, from this time forth, my thoughts will be bloody, or they will be worth nothing!”

— 4.5 —

In a room in the castle at Elsinore, Queen Gertrude was talking with Horatio and a gentleman about Ophelia.

“I will not speak with her,” Queen Gertrude said.

“She is insistent, indeed distraught,” the gentleman said. “Her state of mind ought to be pitied.”

“What does she want?”

“She speaks a lot about her father; she says that she hears there’s tricks in the world; and she makes sounds, and she beats her heart,” the gentleman said. “She takes offense at trifles and straws, and she speaks ambiguously and says things that are only half-sensible. Her speech is nonsense, but because it is nonsense her hearers attempt to make sense of it. They work hard at understanding it, and they interpret her words to fit what they think. Her winks, and her nods, and her gestures convince them that her words must have meaning. Although they are not sure what that meaning is, they think that it must be an unhappy meaning.”

Horatio advised Queen Gertrude, “It is a good idea to talk to her because she may cause ill-breeding minds to make dangerous conjectures.”

“Let her come in,” Queen Gertrude said.

The gentleman left to tell Ophelia to come into the room.

Queen Gertrude thought, *To my sick soul — sin's true nature is sickness — each trifle seems to be the prologue to some great misfortune. So full of artless jealousy is guilt, it spills itself in fearing to be spilt. Guilt is so full of uncontrolled suspicion that it reveals itself because it so much fears to be revealed. The guilty act guilty because they are so afraid of being found out to be guilty.*

Ophelia entered the room.

“Where is the beautiful majesty of Denmark?” Ophelia asked.

“How are you, Ophelia?”

Ophelia sang, *“How should I your true love know*

“From another one?”

“By his cockle hat and staff,

“And his sandal shoon.”

Ophelia was singing about a lover who was dressed like a pilgrim. In his hat he wore a “cockle,” aka scallop shell, he carried a staff, and he wore sandals for his shoes. A pilgrim was someone who was going or had gone on a pilgrimage or journey to a religious site. Pilgrims who were returning from a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James in Compostela, Spain, wore a cockle shell in their hat. Lovers sometimes disguised themselves as religious pilgrims to get access to those whom they loved.

“Alas, sweet lady, what is the meaning of this song?” Queen Gertrude asked.

“What did you say?” Ophelia asked. “Please, listen.”

She sang, *“He is dead and gone, lady,*

“He is dead and gone;

“At his head a grass-green plot,

“At his heels a tombstone.”

“But, Ophelia —” Queen Gertrude started to say.

“Please, listen,” Ophelia replied.

She sang, *“White his shroud as the mountain snow —”*

King Claudius entered the room.

Queen Gertrude said to him, “Alas, look here, my lord.”

Ophelia sang, *“Sprinkled all over with sweet flowers*

“Which bewept to the grave did go

“With true-love showers.”

“How are you, pretty lady?” King Claudius asked.

“May God reward you,” Ophelia replied. “They say the owl was a baker’s daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but we do not know what we may become. May God be at your table!”

According to an old legend, Christ, who appeared to be a beggar, asked a baker for food. The baker was a charitable person who put a large piece of dough in an oven to bake, but his daughter criticized him for putting such a large piece of dough in the oven — she wanted the beggar to be given less food. Because the baker’s daughter was not charitable, she was turned into an owl.

“She is distressed about her father,” King Claudius said.

“Please, let’s have no words about this,” Ophelia said, “but when they ask you what it means, say this.”

She sang, *“Tomorrow is Saint Valentine’s Day,*

*“All in the morning early,
“And I a maiden at your window,
“To be your Valentine.
“Then up he rose, and donned his clothes,
“And opened up the chamber-door;
“Let in the maiden, that out a maiden
“Never departed more.”*

According to a folk belief, the first young person of the opposite sex that young men and young women would see on Saint Valentine’s Day would be their one true love.

“Pretty Ophelia!” King Claudius said.

“Indeed, la, without an oath,” she said, “I’ll make an end of it.”

She sang, *“By Gis and by Saint Charity,*

“Alack, and fie for shame!

“Young men will do it, if they come to it;

“By Cock, they are to blame.

“Quoth she, ‘Before you tumbled me,

“‘You promised me to wed.’

“He answers,

“‘So would I have done, by yonder Sun,

“‘If you had not come to my bed.’”

“Gis” meant “Jesus.” “Do it” meant “to have sex.” “Cock” meant “God” — and an obvious additional meaning. “Tumbled me” meant “to have sex with me”; in this

context, it included the meaning of “took my virginity.”

“How long has she been like this?” King Claudius asked.

“I hope all will be well,” Ophelia said. “We must be patient, but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him in the cold ground. My brother shall know about it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.”

Ophelia exited from the room.

“Follow her closely; watch her closely, please,” King Claudius said to Horatio.

Horatio followed Ophelia, leaving the King and Queen alone.

“Oh, this is the poison of deep grief,” King Claudius said about Ophelia’s insanity. “It springs entirely from her father’s death. Oh, Gertrude, Gertrude, when sorrows come, they come not singly like spies sent separately ahead to scout the land, but in whole battalions. First, her father was slain. Next, Hamlet, your son, has gone, and he was the most violent author of his own just exile. The people are confused; their thoughts and whispers are muddied and troubled and unhealthy and suspicious about the death of good Polonius. We have acted foolishly by hurrying to secretly inter him. Poor Ophelia is insane, divorced from her rational judgment, without which we are pictures — mere images of human beings — or mere beasts. Finally, and just as serious as all of these other ills, Ophelia’s brother — Laertes — has in secret returned to Denmark from France. He broods over his bewilderment, he does not seek the truth but remains ignorant of it. He has gossip-mongers buzzing in his ears and telling him pestilential stories about his father’s death. Because Laertes does not know the truth, he must of necessity believe me to be guilty

because he must blame someone. This is a supposition that he will tell others. Oh, my dear Gertrude, this multitude of troubles is killing me over and over just like a cannon fires and kills many soldiers with grapeshot — many small pieces of metal that are fired all at once and that scatter and kill.”

They heard a noise in the castle.

“What is that noise?” Queen Gertrude asked. She was alarmed.

“Where are my Swiss guards?” King Claudius asked. “Let them guard the door!”

A messenger entered the room.

“What is the matter?” King Claudius asked.

“Save yourself, my lord,” the messenger said. “The ocean, rising above its limits, does not overwhelm the flat, low-lying coastal lands with more impetuous haste than young Laertes, advancing with an army of rebels, overwhelms your military officers. The rabble call him lord, and, as if the world were now going to begin again, with all traditions and established customs that ratify and prop up civilization having been forgotten, they cry, ‘We choose Laertes to be King.’ They throw their hats into the air, they applaud with their hands, and their tongues cry to the clouds, ‘Laertes shall be King! Laertes shall be King!’”

“How cheerfully they cry like hounds as they follow a false trail!” Queen Gertrude said. “These false Danish hounds are tracking counter — they are following the scent the wrong way! They trace the trail backwards!”

Laertes was looking for the person who had killed his father, but Hamlet’s trail led away from Elsinore and toward England. Laertes and his followers were heading

toward Elsinore.

They heard noises, and King Claudius said, “The doors have been broken.”

Laertes and a number of his armed followers rushed into the room.

“Where is this King?” Laertes asked, contemptuously.

He said to his armed followers, “Sirs, all of you stand outside the room.”

His followers protested, “No, let us come in.”

Laertes replied, “Please, if you don’t mind.”

“We will obey,” his armed followers said.

As they left the room, Laertes said to them, “I thank you. Guard the door.”

He then said to King Claudius, “Oh, you vile King, give me my father!”

“Be calm, good Laertes,” Queen Gertrude said, holding on to him.

“Any drop of my blood that is calm proclaims me to be a bastard,” Laertes replied. “Any drop of my blood that is calm cries that my father is a cuckold and that my mother is a harlot with the brand of a whore on her forehead. If I am truly my father’s son, and if my mother has been faithful to her husband, then every drop of my blood is outraged by his death.”

“What is the reason, Laertes, that your rebellion looks so giant-like?” King Claudius asked. “This rebellion is like that of the giants Otus and Ephialtes, who tried to make war on the Olympian gods.

“Let him go, Gertrude. Do not fear for our person. Such divinity protects a King that treason can only peep at what it would like to do; it can act but little of what it wants to do.”

And yet Claudius had succeeded in murdering his brother, King Hamlet.

King Claudius continued, “Tell me, Laertes, why you are so incensed and angry? Let him go, Gertrude.”

She let go of Laertes.

“Speak, man,” King Claudius said.

“Where is my father?” Laertes asked.

“Dead.”

“But your father was not killed by the King,” Queen Gertrude said.

“Let him ask whatever he wants to ask,” King Claudius said to her.

“What is the cause of his death?” Laertes asked. “I’ll not be trifled with and misled. To Hell with loyalty and allegiance! I will make vows to the blackest Devil! I will damn my conscience and grace to the profoundest pit! I dare to be damned for all eternity on Judgment Day. I am resolved: I do not care about this world or the next. Let come what will come, but I will be revenged most thoroughly for the murder of my father.”

“Who shall prevent you?” King Claudius asked.

“I swear that not all the world can stop me,” Laertes replied. “And as for my resources, I’ll manage them so well that although limited, they will go a long way.”

“Good Laertes, if you desire to know with certainty the

cause of your dear father's death, are you determined that in your revenge, like a gambler sweeping up all the money — including that belonging to winners as well as to losers — on a table, you will punish both friends and foes?"

"I will punish none but my father's enemies," Laertes replied.

"Would you like to know who are his friends and who are his enemies?"

"To my father's friends, I will open wide my arms, and like the kind life-rendering pelican, I will feed them with my blood — I am willing to die for them."

According to a folk tradition, the pelican fed its young with its own blood.

"Why, now you are speaking like a good child and a true gentleman," King Claudius said. "I will prove to you that I am guiltless of your father's death and that I grieve most sincerely for it. I will show my innocence to you as clearly as your eyes see daylight."

Laertes' men outside the door shouted, "Let her come in!"

Laertes said, "What's going on? What noise is that?"

Ophelia entered the room.

Immediately recognizing that Ophelia was insane, Laertes said, "Oh, heat, dry up and ruin my brains! Excessively salty tears, burn out the ability of my eyes to see! I would rather lose both my mind and my sight than to see Ophelia like this!

"By Heaven, Ophelia's madness shall be avenged! I will put my revenge into one side of a set of scales until it outweighs the harm done to you! Oh, rose of May! Dear maiden, kind sister, sweet Ophelia! Oh, Heavens! Is it

possible that a young maiden's wits should be as mortal as an old man's life?

"Nature is exquisite in love, and when love is exquisite, it sends some precious part of itself after the thing it loves."

Laertes believed that Ophelia had gone mad because of the death of their father and that she had sent her sanity to join his spirit. This is a poetic way of saying that Ophelia's grief over the death of her father had driven her insane.

Ophelia sang, "*They bore him barefaced on the bier;*

"Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;

"And in his grave rained many a tear —

"Fare you well, my dove!"

"If you had your wits and urged me to get revenge for the death of our father, you could not speak more persuasively," Laertes said.

Ophelia said to the King and Queen, "You must sing, '*A-down a-down.*'"

Then she said to her brother, Laertes, "And you must sing, '*A-down-a.*'"

These words were the refrain to her song.

Ophelia then said, "Oh, how the wheel — the refrain — becomes it! It is the false steward, who stole his master's daughter."

Ophelia's thoughts and songs were about the death of a loved one and about betrayal by a lover or "lover."

"This nonsense has more meaning in it than sensible speech has," Laertes said.

Ophelia said about the imaginary flowers she was

“holding,” “There’s rosemary; that is for remembrance. Please, love, remember. And here are pansies; that is for thoughts.”

She “presented” the imaginary flowers signifying remembrance to Laertes.

“Here is a lesson in madness,” Laertes said. “She has fittingly linked thoughts and remembrance.”

Ophelia said, “There’s fennel for you, and columbines.”

She “presented” the imaginary flowers signifying deceit (fennel) and marital infidelity (columbine) to Queen Gertrude.

Ophelia said, “There’s rue for you.”

She “presented” the imaginary rue — an herb — signifying sorrow and repentance to King Claudius.

Ophelia said, “And here’s some rue for me. We may call rue ‘herb-grace of Sundays.’ Oh, you must wear your rue for a different reason. There’s a daisy.

“I would give you some violets, but they all withered when my father died. They say that he made a good end —”

She sang, “*For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.*”

The themes of Bonny Robin songs include lovers and unfaithfulness.

“She turns sadness and affliction, suffering, and Hell itself to charm and to prettiness,” Laertes said.

Ophelia sang, “*And will he not come again?*”

“*And will he not come again?*”

“*No, no, he is dead:*”

“Go to your deathbed:

“He never will come again.

“His beard was as white as snow,

“All flaxen was his head:

“He is gone, he is gone,

“And we cast away moan:

“God have mercy on his soul!”

She added, “And may God have mercy on all Christian souls, I pray. May God be with you.”

She exited from the room.

“Do you see this, God?” Laertes prayed.

“Laertes, I must share in your grief, or you deny me something that is my right,” King Claudius said. “Go and talk to your wisest friends. Let them judge the issue between you and me. If they find that I am implicated — whether directly or indirectly — in the death of your father, I will give you my Kingdom, my crown, my life, and all that I call mine, in recompense. But if they find me innocent, then be patient and let us work together to give your soul what it most wants: revenge.”

“Let this be so,” Laertes replied. “My father’s means of death and his obscure funeral — he had no trophy, sword, or painting of his coat of arms over his bones, and he had no noble rite or formal ostentation — all cry out, as if my father’s soul were shouting from Heaven to Earth, and so I demand an explanation of them.”

“And so you shall receive an explanation,” King Claudius said. “And where the offence is, let the great axe fall. Please, come with me.”

They departed together.

— 4.6 —

In another room in the castle, Horatio said to a servant, “Who are they who would speak with me?”

“Sailors, sir,” the servant replied. “They say they have letters for you.”

“Let them come in.”

The servant left to get the sailors.

Horatio said to himself, “I do not know from what part of the world I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.”

Some sailors entered the room.

The first sailor said, “God bless you, sir.”

“Let Him bless you, too,” Horatio replied.

“He shall, sir, if it please Him,” the first sailor said.

He handed Horatio a letter and said, “There’s a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador who was bound for England. This letter is for you, assuming that your name is Horatio, as I am told it is.”

The letter was from Hamlet, who had told the sailors that he was an ambassador instead of telling them that he was a Prince and presumably the next in line to be King.

Horatio read the letter out loud.

“Horatio, when you shall have looked over this letter, give these fellows some way to have contact with the King: They have letters for him. Before we were two days out at sea, a pirate ship ready to do battle chased us. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we were forced to be brave and fight, and the pirates threw grappling irons to our ship. I crossed the

lines to the pirate ship, and then the pirate ship and our ship separated with the result that I became the pirates' only prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy — like merciful thieves — but they knew what they were doing. In return for their mercy, I am to do a good turn for them.

“Let the King have the letters I have sent and then come to me with as much speed as you would use to flee from death. I have words to speak in your ear that will make you speechless; yet they are much too light for the seriousness of the matter. These good fellows will bring you to where I am.

“Rosencrantz and Guildenstern still hold their course for England. Of them I have much to tell you.

“Farewell.

“He whom you know to be your friend,

“HAMLET.”

Horatio said to the sailors, “Come, I will give you help to deliver these letters of yours, and I will do that as quickly as possible so that you may take me to the man whose letters you brought.”

— 4.7 —

In another room of the castle, King Claudius and Laertes were talking together, alone.

King Claudius said, “Now you must agree that I am not guilty of the death of your father, and you must regard me as a friend since you have heard and learned that the man who has slain your noble father has tried to kill me.”

“It looks that way,” Laertes replied. “But tell me why you did not try to punish the man who committed these deeds

that are so criminal and punishable by death. Regard for your own safety, as well as wisdom and everything else, ought to have provoked you and made you punish him.”

“I had two special reasons,” King Claudius said. “To you they may seem very weak, but to me they are strong.

“The first reason is that the Queen his mother dotes on him. As for me — my virtue or my plague, whichever it is — she is such a part of my life and soul that, just like a star moves only in its orbit-sphere, I must be with her and move with her.

“My other reason, explaining why I could not try him in a public court, is that the general public loves him. They dip his faults in their affection, and they are like a spring that turns wood to stone by petrifying it; they convert his metaphorical fetters — his faults — to graces. And so my arrows, which are too slight to be used in such a wind, would have returned again to my bow — they would not have hit the target I aimed at.”

“And so I have lost a noble father, and my sister has been driven into a desperate condition,” Laertes said. “Her worth, if praises may go back again to what she used to be, offered a conspicuous challenge — as if she stood on a mountain — to others to equal her perfections. But my revenge will come.”

“Don’t toss and turn at night because of thinking about revenge,” King Claudius said. “Don’t think that I am made of stuff so flat and dull that I will let my beard be shook with danger and think that it is a joke and a game. You shortly shall hear more.”

By sending Hamlet to England, King Claudius was hoping that Hamlet would soon be killed. King Claudius thought that he could soon tell Laertes that the man who had killed his father was dead.

King Claudius continued, “I loved your father, and I love myself, and that, I hope, will teach you to imagine —”

A messenger entered the room, and King Claudius broke off what he was saying to Laertes and instead asked the messenger, “What is it? What is the news?”

“I bring letters, my lord, from Hamlet. This letter is to your majesty; this letter is to the Queen.”

“From Hamlet! Who brought them?”

“Sailors, my lord, they say,” the messenger replied. “I did not see them. These letters were given me by Claudio; he received them from the person who brought them.”

King Claudius said, “Laertes, you shall hear this letter.”

He ordered the messenger, “Leave us.”

The messenger exited.

King Claudius read out loud the letter that Hamlet had written to him:

“High and mighty one,

“You need to know that I have been set naked — without any possessions — on the land of your Kingdom. Tomorrow I shall beg for permission to see your Kingly eyes. At that time, I shall, after first asking your pardon to do so, recount the occasion of my sudden and very strange return to Denmark.

“HAMLET.”

King Claudius asked, “What does this mean? Have all the rest come back to Denmark, too? Or is this some trick, and Hamlet has not returned?”

“Do you know the handwriting?”

“It is Hamlet’s handwriting,” King Claudius said. “He writes, ‘Naked’! And in a postscript here, he writes that he is ‘alone.’ Do you know anything about this?”

“I know nothing about it, my lord,” Laertes replied. “But let Hamlet come. It warms the very sickness in my heart to know that I shall live and tell him to his teeth, ‘You did this: You killed my father. And now you die.’”

“If the contents of this letter are true, Laertes — as how could they be otherwise? — will you allow yourself to be ruled by me? Will you do what I tell you to do?”

“Yes, my lord,” Laertes said, “as long as you do not overrule my desires and order me to make peace with Hamlet.”

“I want you to be at peace with yourself,” King Claudius said. “If Hamlet has now returned to Denmark, rejecting his voyage to England and with no intention of undertaking it in the future, I will persuade him to undertake an exploit that will result in his death, and no one shall suspect ill play. Even his mother will think that Hamlet died by accident.”

“My lord, I will do what you tell me to do,” Laertes said. “I will especially do it if you can arrange for me to be the cause of Hamlet’s death.”

“I have an idea,” King Claudius said. “You have been much talked about since your travels, and Hamlet has heard what people have said about you. They praise a skill in which you shine. None of your other good points made Hamlet as envious as that one skill, although in my opinion, that skill is not the best of those things in which you excel.”

“What skill is that, my lord?” Laertes asked.

“It is a mere ribbon in the cap of youth,” King Claudius

said, “and yet it is a necessary skill, too. Light and careless clothing is as becoming to young people as is dark and serious clothing that denotes well being and seriousness to the old. Some things are suitable for young men, and other things are suitable for old men.

“Two months ago, a gentleman of Normandy visited here, I’ve seen and served against the French, and they can ride well on horseback, but this gallant Norman’s skill on horseback had witchcraft in it. He seemed to grow into his seat, and he made his horse do such wondrous things that it was if he and his horse were one being, like a Centaur. He performed better than I ever imagined that a man could perform on horseback. Whatever I was able to conceive in my imagination, he outperformed.”

“He was a Norman?”

“Yes, a Norman.”

“I bet my life that his name was Lamond.”

“The very same.”

“I know him well,” Laertes said. “He is the ornament and jewel indeed of all his nation.”

“He said that he knew you, and he praised highly your skill in the exercise of the defensive arts. He especially praised your skill with the rapier. He cried out that it would indeed be a sight if anyone could match you. The fencers of France, he swore, would lack motion, guard, and eye, if you opposed them.

“Sir, Lamond’s report about you inflamed Hamlet with such envy that he could do nothing but wish and beg that you would return to Denmark so that he could fence with you.

“Now, out of this ...” King Claudius started to say, and

then he hesitated.

“What can come out of this, my lord?” Laertes asked.

“Laertes, was your father dear to you?” King Claudius asked. “Or are you like the painting of a sorrow — a mere face without a heart?”

“Why are you asking me this?”

“It is not the case that I think you did not love your father,” King Claudius said. “But I know that time causes love to come into being, and I see from well-attested examples that time diminishes the spark and fire of love. There lives within the very flame of love a kind of wick that will burn and diminish and so will abate and lessen love. Love burns out; nothing remains the same. Even goodness, growing to excess, can die from that excess. Love can die slowly over time, and love can burn out through over-intensity.

“When should we do those things we ought to do? We should do them when we ought to do them. What we want and ought to do is subjected to weakenings and delays; there are as many weakenings and delays as there are tongues, and hands, and impediments.

“We have an awareness of what we ought to do and what we should do. Unless we take action and do those things, we are hurting ourselves. Taking the easy way out by not taking action may seem to be a kind of relief, but that is only appearance, not reality.

“But, to go to the quick — the most sensitive and painful part — of the ulcer, Hamlet is coming back to Elsinore.

“What are you willing to do that will show yourself to be your father’s son in deed and not just in words?”

“I am willing to cut Hamlet’s throat in the church,” Laertes replied.

“No place, indeed, should be a sanctuary for a murderer,” King Claudius said.

He meant that no place should be a sanctuary for Hamlet, but if Laertes were to murder Hamlet, then King Claudius’ sentence would apply also to Laertes.

King Claudius continued, “Revenge should have no bounds.”

He meant that Laertes’ revenge should have no bounds, but his sentence could apply also to Hamlet’s revenge.

King Claudius continued, “But, good Laertes, will you do what I want you to do? Will you stay hidden within your chamber? When Hamlet returns, he will learn that you are here. I will have other people praise your excellence in fencing; their praise will be added to that of the Norman.

“We will then finally bring you two together, and place bets on the duel. Hamlet is carelessly trusting; he is very magnanimous and he does not engage in deceitful practices, and so he will not closely inspect the swords. Therefore, you can easily — or, if need be, use some trickery to — choose a sword that has not been blunted. In the duel, you will kill him and avenge your father.”

“I will do it,” Laertes said. “And, to make sure I kill Hamlet, I’ll anoint my sword with poison. I bought an ointment from a mountebank — a travelling quack. The ointment is so poisonous and deadly that if a knife that has been dipped in it draws blood, there is no mixture of medicines so strong that it can save the person who has been scratched.

“I will touch the point of my sword with this contagion, with the result that, if I touch him even slightly, he will die.”

“Let me think further about this,” King Claudius said. “Let me figure out which time and which method are most likely to work. If this plot should fail, and if our part in it should become known, it would have been better for us not to have tried it. Therefore, we should have a backup plan to kill Hamlet, in case this plan fails to work.

“Think! Let me see. We’ll make a solemn wager on your respective skills — I have it!

“When in your duel you both are hot and dry — make the duel very active to achieve that end — and so Hamlet calls for something to drink, I’ll have prepared a chalice of poisoned drink for him for the occasion. If Hamlet merely sips from the chalice, he will die, even if he escapes being injured by your poisoned sword.”

Queen Gertrude entered the room.

King Claudius asked, “How are you, sweet Queen?”

“One woe treads upon another woe’s heel, so fast they follow,” she replied. “Ophelia, your sister, has drowned, Laertes.”

“Drowned! Where?”

“There is a willow that is growing slantingly over a brook,” Queen Gertrude replied. “The grey undersides of its leaves are reflected in the glassy waters of the stream. There Ophelia came with fantastic garlands of crow-flowers, non-stinging nettles, daisies, and long purple flowers that rudely speaking shepherds give a crude name, but that our chaste maidens call dead men’s fingers.

“There, as she clambered on the boughs to hang her coronet weeds, an envious branch broke, and she and her flowery trophies fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide, and for a while they bore her up like a mermaid, during

which time she chanted snatches of old tunes, like one who is incapable of understanding the danger she was in, or like a creature born and equipped to live in water, but before long her clothing, heavy with their drink, pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay down to muddy death.”

“Alas, then, she is drowned!” Laertes exclaimed.

“Drowned! Drowned!” Queen Gertrude said.

“Too much water you have had, poor Ophelia,” Laertes said, “and therefore I forbid my tears to fall, but yet crying with grief is our way; nature must have her custom, let shame say what it will. When these tears are gone, the womanish part of me will be out of my body.”

He said to King Claudius, “*Adieu*, my lord. I have a speech of fire, which would like to blaze, except that this folly of tears puts it out.”

He exited from the room.

King Claudius said, “Let’s follow him, Gertrude. How much effort I had to make to calm Laertes’ rage! Now I fear this will start it up again. Therefore let’s follow him.”

CHAPTER 5 (*Hamlet*)

— 5.1 —

In a churchyard, two people — a gravedigger and his friend — talked about Ophelia's death.

“Is she to be buried in Christian ground although she willfully sought her own salvation?” the gravedigger asked.

People who were known to have committed suicide were not given Christian burials; they were not buried on consecrated ground such as that of the churchyard.

The gravedigger had said that Ophelia had sought her own salvation, but perhaps he meant that she had sought her own damnation since suicide was thought to be a violation of the commandment “*Thou shalt not kill*” (Exodus 20:13, King James Version). Or perhaps he meant her own destruction.

“I tell you she is,” the friend said, “and therefore make her grave without delay. The coroner has sat on her, and he has ruled that she will get a Christian burial. He has ruled that she is not guilty of committing suicide.”

By “sat on her,” the friend meant “has held an inquest on her.”

“How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?”

“Why, the coroner has made the decision.”

“It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be anything else,” the gravedigger said.

Se offendendo means “self-offense,” but perhaps the gravedigger meant *se defendendo*, which means “self-

defense.”

The gravedigger continued, “For here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act has three branches. They are to act, to do, and to perform. *Argal*, she drowned herself wittingly.”

By *Argal*, the gravedigger meant *Ergo*, which is Latin for “therefore.”

“But listen, Mr. Gravedigger —”

“Allow me to explain. Here lies the water. Good. Here stands the man. Good. If the man goes to this water, and drowns himself, it is, whatever he may think about it, the end of him — note that.

“But if the water comes to him and drowns him, he does not drown himself; *argal*, he who is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.”

“But is this law?” the friend asked.

“Yes, truly, it is. It is the coroner’s inquest law.”

“Do you want to know the truth?” the friend asked. “If she had not been a gentlewoman, she would have been buried outside of consecrated ground.”

“Why, that’s right,” the gravedigger said. “It’s the more pity that great folk should have legal approval in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their fellow Christians. Come, give me my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: They hold up Adam’s profession.”

“Was Adam a gentleman?”

“He was the first who ever bore arms,” the gravedigger said.

“Why, he had none. There is no way that Adam, the first man, ever had a coat of arms.”

“What, are you a heathen?” the gravedigger asked. “How do you understand the Scripture? The Scripture says, ‘Adam digged.’ How could Adam dig without arms?”

“I’ll put another question to you: If you cannot answer it correctly, confess —”

The usual expression was “Confess and be hanged.”

The friend interrupted, “— what is your question?”

“What man is he who builds stronger than the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?”

“The gallows-maker,” the friend answered, “because the gallows outlives a thousand tenants.”

“I like your wit well, truly,” the gravedigger said. “The gallows is a good answer. It does well, but how does it do well? It does well to those who do ill; now you do ill to say that the gallows is built stronger than the church. *Argal*, the gallows may do well to you.

“Come on, try again. Come on.”

“Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?”

“Yes, tell me the correct answer, and then you can knock off for the day.”

“That’s a good reward. I can tell you the answer now.”

“Tell me.”

“I don’t know the answer.”

Hamlet and Horatio arrived on the scene and listened to the gravedigger and his friend talk.

“Cudgel your brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating. Even if you hit its back with a stick, it will walk slowly,” the gravedigger said. “But when you are asked this question next time, answer ‘a gravedigger.’ Why? Because the houses that he makes last until Doomsday. Go, get you to Yaughan the bartender. Fetch me a tankard of liquor.”

The gravedigger’s friend departed.

The gravedigger sang as he dug, punctuating the song with the grunts of working:

“In youth, when I did love, did love,

“I thought it was very sweet,

“To contract [grunt] the time, for [grunt] my advantage,

“Oh, I thought, there [grunt] was nothing [grunt] meet.”

“Has this fellow no respect for his occupation? Doesn’t he realize that he is singing while he digs a grave?” Hamlet asked Horatio.

“He has grown accustomed to graves, and so he is free and easy around them,” Horatio said.

“That is true,” Hamlet said. “The hand that does little work is more sensitive because it is not calloused. People who do not have to work for a living can afford to be sensitive.”

The Gravedigger sang these verses:

“But age, with his stealing steps,

“Has clawed me in his clutch,

“And has shipped me back into the land,

“As if I had never been born.”

The gravedigger threw a skull out of the grave he was digging.

Hamlet said, “That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once. Look at how the knave jowls — throws — it to the ground, as if it were Cain’s jawbone. Cain did the first murder: According to folk tradition, he used the jawbone of an ass to kill Abel, his brother.”

Hamlet thought, *Now an ass is wielding the jawbone of Cain.*

Hamlet continued, “This skull might be the head of a politician, a schemer, whom this ass now lords over as a benefit of his office. This skull may have belonged to a schemer who would have circumvented God, might it not?”

The first schemer was Cain, who in Genesis 4:9 would not give God a straight answer: “*And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?*”

“It might be, my lord,” Horatio replied to Hamlet.

“Or it might be the skull of a courtier, who could once say, ‘Good morning, sweet lord! How are you, good lord?’ This might be the skull of my Lord Such-a-one, who praised my Lord Such-another-one’s horse, when he meant to borrow it, might it not?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Why, that’s right,” Hamlet said. “And it might be the skull of my Lady Worm. It now lacks a lower jaw, and it is knocked about with a gravedigger’s spade.

“Here’s a fine alteration in fortune, a movement of the Wheel of Fortune, if we had the ability to see it. Was the cost of bringing these bones to full maturity so little that we are justified in using them in throwing games? My bones

ache when I think about that.”

The gravedigger sang these lines:

“A pickaxe, and a spade, a spade,

“And furthermore a shrouding sheet:

“Oh, a pit of clay for to be made

“For such a guest is meet.”

He threw another skull out of the hole he was digging.

Hamlet said, “There’s another skull. That might be the skull of a lawyer. Why not? Where be his quiddities now, his quillets — his subtleties and quibbles — his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he allow this rude knave now to knock him about the hole with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him that he is bringing a lawsuit against him for the crime of battering. Ha!

“The fellow whose skull this is might have been in his time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries — and his all that other legal mumbo-jumbo.

“Is this the fine, aka end, of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine, aka handsome, pate full of fine, aka finely ground, dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones, too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The documents for his lands will hardly lie in this box — his legal deeds will hardly fit in his grave, which is now his deed-box. He used to own all those properties, but now all he has is a grave.”

“A grave, and not a jot more, my lord,” Horatio said.

“Is not parchment made of sheepskins?” Hamlet asked.

“Yes, my lord, and of calfskins, too.”

“Those who seek assurance in parchment are sheep and calves — they are fools.”

He added, “I will speak to this fellow.”

He said to the gravedigger, “Whose grave is this?”

“Mine, sir,” the gravedigger answered.

He sang, “*Oh, a pit of clay for to be made*

“*For such a guest is meet.*”

“I think it is your grave, indeed,” Hamlet said, “because you lie in it.”

Hamlet and the gravedigger began to pun on two meanings of “lie” — “tell an untruth” versus “lie down.”

“You lie out of it, sir, and therefore it is not yours,” the gravedigger replied. “As for my part, I do not lie in it, and yet it is mine.”

The gravedigger would not lie down permanently in the grave, but it was his grave to dig.

“You do lie in it because you are in it and you say it is yours,” Hamlet said. “This grave is for the dead, not for the quick; therefore, you lie.”

“It is a quick and lively lie, sir,” the gravedigger said. “It will go away again — from me to you. If I am lying, then you are lying.”

The gravedigger was punning on two meanings of “quick” — “be fast” versus “be alive.”

“Who is the man for whom you are digging this grave?” Hamlet asked.

“I am digging it for no man, sir.”

“For which woman, then?”

“For no woman, either.”

“Who is to be buried in it?”

“One who was a woman, sir, but rest her soul, she’s dead.”

Hamlet said to Horatio, “How strict in his use of language this knave is! We must speak as carefully as if we were navigating at sea, or equivocation will undo us.

“By the Lord, Horatio, for the past three years I have taken a note of it; people nowadays have grown so refined and finicky and picky that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier that the peasant kicks the sore on the heel of the courtier.”

Hamlet asked the gravedigger, “How long have you been a grave-maker?”

“Of all the days in the year, I came to be a gravedigger on that day that our most recent King Hamlet fought and defeated old Fortinbras.”

“How long ago was that?”

“Don’t you know that?” the gravedigger asked. “Every fool knows that. It was the very day that young Hamlet was born — the young Hamlet who is mad, and who was sent to England.”

“Why was he sent to England?” Hamlet asked.

“Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there, or if he does not, it’s great matter there.”

“Why?”

“His madness will not even be noticed in England,” the

gravedigger said. “The men of England are as mad as Hamlet.”

“How did he become mad?”

“Very strangely, they say.”

“How strangely?”

“By losing his wits.”

“For what reason? Upon what ground?”

“Upon what ground? Why, here in Denmark,” the gravedigger replied. “I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.”

“How long will a man lie in the earth before he rots?”

“Assuming that he is not rotting before he dies — we have many diseased corpses nowadays that will hardly keep together before they are buried — he will last you some eight or nine years. A tanner will last you nine years.”

“Why does he take longer to rot than another corpse?”

“Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great long while,” the gravedigger said. “Water is a grievous decayer of a nasty dead body.”

He picked up a skull and said, “Look at this skull now; this skull has lain in the earth twenty-three years.”

“Whose skull was it?” Hamlet asked.

“A whoreson mad fellow’s it was,” the gravedigger replied. “Whose do you think it was?”

“I don’t know.”

“May a pestilence fall on him because of his being a mad rogue!” the gravedigger said. “He poured a glass of Rhine

wine on my head once. This same skull, sir, was the skull of Yorick, the King's jester."

"This skull?"

"Yes."

"Let me see it," Hamlet said.

The gravedigger gave Hamlet the skull.

Holding it, Hamlet said, "Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio. He was a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent imagination. He carried me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorrent in my imagination it is to realize that this is his skull! I feel ready to vomit. Here used to be those lips that I kissed I don't know how often. Where are your jokes now, Yorick? Where are your gambols? Where are your songs? Where are your flashes of merriment that used to make the people sitting at the table roar with laughter? No one is now ready to mock your own grinning? Are you quite down in the mouth?"

"Now go to a lady's chamber, and tell her that although she paints on her makeup an inch thick, to this — a grinning skull — she must at last come; make her laugh at that.

"Please, Horatio, tell me something."

"What, my lord?"

"Do you think that Alexander the Great, conqueror of all the world that was known to him, looked like this when he was in the earth?"

"Yes, I am sure that he did."

"Did he smell like this? Ugh!"

Hamlet put down the skull.

“Yes, I am sure that he did, my lord.”

“To what base uses we may return when we die, Horatio!” Hamlet said. Why, can’t my reason trace the noble dust of Alexander from the time of his burial until it stops up a bung-hole — a hole from which liquid is poured from a cask or barrel?”

“To think that is to think too much about it.”

“No, indeed, not a jot,” Hamlet said. “We can trace his journey without excessive ingenuity; we can trace what is likely and reasonable. We are made of dust, and to dust we return. Alexander the Great died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned to dust. The dust is earth; of earth we make loam, which we use to make bricks and stoppers; of that loam, whereof Alexander’s dust is an ingredient, might they not make a stopper for a beer-barrel?”

“Imperious Julius Caesar, dead and turned to clay, might stop a hole in a wall to keep the wind away. Oh, that that earth, which stormed the world, should patch a wall to expel the winter storm!

“But let’s be quiet! Let’s be quiet! Let’s stand aside and out of the way. Here comes the King.”

A funeral procession entered the graveyard. The procession consisted of a priest, the corpse of Ophelia, Laertes, King Claudius and Queen Gertrude, a priest, and others.

Hamlet said, “I see the Queen, the courtiers, but whose corpse is this whom they follow? And with such truncated rites? This shows that the corpse they are following did with desperate hand take its own life. Because of the mourners, I can see that the corpse was highborn.

“Let us hide here for awhile, and watch.”

Hamlet and Horatio hid themselves.

Laertes asked, "What other funeral rites can be performed?"

Hamlet said to Horatio, "That is Laertes, a very noble youth. Look and listen."

Again, Laertes asked, "What other funeral rites can be performed?"

The priest replied, "I have performed her obsequies as far as I am permitted. Her death was suspicious. If not for the King's command, she would have been buried in unsanctified ground and have stayed there until the sound of the last trumpet on the Day of Judgment. Instead of charitable prayers being said over her corpse, shards of pottery, flints, and pebbles would have been thrown on her. However, she has been allowed to have her virgin's garland, flowers strewn on her maiden's grave, the bell rung as she was carried to her grave, and a few other burial rites."

"Can't anything else be done for her?" Laertes asked.

"No more can be done," the priest said. "We would profane the service of the dead if for her we were to sing a solemn Mass and do other things we do for peacefully departed souls."

"Lay her in the earth," Laertes said, "and from her fair and unpolluted flesh may violets spring! I tell you, churlish priest, that my sister shall be a ministering angel while you lie howling in Hell."

Hamlet realized whose corpse was being buried: "What, the beautiful Ophelia!"

Queen Gertrude scattered flowers and said, "Sweets to the sweet. Farewell! I hoped that you would be my Hamlet's wife. I thought that I would strew your bride-bed and not

your grave with flowers, sweet maiden.”

“May treble woe fall ten times treble on that cursed head whose wicked deed deprived you of your most ingenious sense,” Laertes said. “Don’t throw earth on her corpse just yet. Wait until I have held her once more in my arms.”

He jumped into the grave and said, “Now pile your dust upon the living and dead, until you have made a mountain on this flat area — a mountain higher than old Mount Pelion, or the blue, sky-reaching head of Mount Olympus.”

Hamlet came forward and said, “Who is he whose grief bears such an emphasis? Who is he whose phrases of sorrow conjures the wandering planets, and makes them stand still like wonder-wounded hearers?”

“This is I: Hamlet the Dane.”

By calling himself “Hamlet the Dane,” Hamlet was asserting his right to the throne. “Hamlet the Dane” meant “Hamlet, rightful ruler of Denmark.”

Hamlet thought that Laertes was deliberately showing excessive grief, something that Hamlet considered to be the equivalent of a rhetorician’s trick.

Laertes climbed out of the grave and said to Hamlet, “May the Devil take your soul!”

Laertes began to grapple with Hamlet, who said, “You are not praying well. Please, take your fingers away from my throat. Although I am not irascible and rash, yet I have something dangerous in me that you in your wisdom ought to fear. Keep your hands off me.”

King Claudius ordered his attendants, “Separate them.”

Queen Gertrude said, “Hamlet, Hamlet!”

A number of people began to speak, “Gentlemen —”

Horatio said to Hamlet, "My good lord, be calm."

The attendants separated Hamlet and Laertes.

"I will fight Laertes upon this theme until my eyelids can no longer move," Hamlet said. "I will fight him until the least sign of life has left my body."

"Oh, my son, what theme do you mean?" Queen Gertrude asked.

"Love for Ophelia," Hamlet replied. "I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers could not, with all their quantity of love, make up the sum of the love I felt for her."

Hamlet then said, "Laertes, what will you do for her?"

King Claudius said, "Hamlet is mad, Laertes."

"Laertes, for the love of God," Queen Gertrude said, "have patience with Hamlet."

"By God's wounds," Hamlet said to Laertes, "show me what you will do. Will you weep? Will you fight? Will you fast? Will you hurt yourself? Will you drink bitter vinegar? Will you eat a crocodile? Whatever you say that you will do, I will actually do it.

"Did you come here to whine? To outdo my love for Ophelia by leaping in her grave? If you will be buried alive with her, then so will I. And, if you prate about mountains, let them throw millions of acres on us, until our ground, singeing its top against the burning Sun, makes Mount Ossa look like a wart! If you rant with your mouth, I'll rant as well as you."

"This is a display of Hamlet's madness," Queen Gertrude said. "And thus for awhile the fit will work on him, but soon he will droop and be silent. He will be as patient as the female dove when her nestlings, covered with golden-

yellow down, hatch out of their eggs.”

Hamlet said to Laertes, “Sir, listen to me. What is the reason that you are treating me this way? I have always respected you. But it does not matter. No matter how hard he tries, even Hercules can’t keep cats from meowing — and the dog will have its day.”

Hamlet exited.

King Claudius said, “Please, Horatio, go with him and look after him.”

Horatio followed Hamlet.

King Claudius said quietly to Laertes so that Queen Gertrude did not hear, “Strengthen your patience by remembering what we talked about last night. We will put our plan into action quickly. Ophelia’s grave shall have a long-lasting monument. We will have an hour of quiet, and then we will put our plan into action. Until then, be patient.”

— 5.2 —

Hamlet and Horatio talked together in a hall in the castle.

“So much for that,” Hamlet said. “Now let me tell you the other part of my story. Do you remember the background?”

“I remember, my lord,” Horatio replied.

“Sir, in my heart, while I was on the ship sailing to England, there was a kind of fighting that would not let me sleep. I thought that I lay more uncomfortably than failed mutineers in fetters. I then acted rashly — and let me praise rashness because rash actions sometimes serve us well when our carefully planned plots falter. That should teach us that a divinity shapes what happens to us although we ineffectually and roughly try to shape what happens to us.”

“That is most certain and true,” Horatio replied.

“Rashly, I got up from my cabin, with my long sea-coat wrapped about me. In the dark I groped to find Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. I found them, and I took the letter that King Claudius had given to them to give to the King of England. Finally, I withdrew to my own room again, where I made so bold — my fears making me forget my manners — to unseal the letter, which was their grand commission.

“Written in the letter I found, Horatio — oh, royal knavery! — an exact command, garnished with many different sorts of reasons about what is good for the King of Denmark and what is good for the King of England, too, with a description of the danger I would be if I remained alive, that the King of England, as soon as he had read this letter should without delay — even a delay to sharpen the axe — cut off my head.”

“Unbelievable!” Horatio said.

“Here’s the letter itself,” Hamlet replied, handing Horatio the document. “Read it when you have time. Do you want to know what I did?”

“Yes, please.”

“Being thus surrounded with villainies to ensnare me and before I could even begin to consciously think about it, my brain leapt into action — I sat down, thought up a new commission that would supposedly come from King Claudius, and wrote it in an official hand — bureaucrats have to have good handwriting. I used to think, as our statesmen do, that it was base and beneath me to have good handwriting. I even wanted to unlearn what I had learned. But, sir, good handwriting now did me good service. I also imitated the flowery language that King Claudius used in the letter. My forgery of an official letter was quite good. Do you want to know what I wrote?”

“Yes, my good lord.”

“I wrote an earnest command from King Claudius to the King of England. I wrote that as the King of England was his faithful tributary, as love and friendship ought to flourish between them like the palm tree, as peace ought to come with rural prosperity, and as peace ought to join them in friendship like a comma joins two parts of a sentence, and I wrote many other ‘as’es of great charge — or asses carrying a great burden. The commandment was that the bearers of the letter ought to be put to death immediately — without first being given time to go to a priest for confession, penance, and absolution.”

“Official letters have official seals,” Horatio said. “How did you seal this letter?”

“Why, even in that was Heaven provident,” Hamlet replied. “I had my father’s signet ring in my possession; it was a replica of that Danish seal. I folded up the letter the same way as the original letter, signed it with the name of King Claudius, used my father’s signet ring to form an impression on the wax that sealed the letter, and replaced it safely. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern did not realize that the letter had been replaced.

“The following day, pirates attacked us, and you know what happened after that.”

“So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to their deaths,” Horatio said.

“Why, man, they made love to this employment given to them by King Claudius,” Hamlet said. “They were eager to serve him and carry out his orders. Their deaths will not disturb my conscience; their deaths will occur because of their own actions. It is dangerous for the baser sort of people to come in between the thrusts of dangerous rapiers wielded by angry and powerful enemies.”

“Why, what a King is this Claudius!” Horatio said.

“Claudius has killed my father the King and whored my mother, he came in between me and the circle of nobles who selected the next King and thus dashed my hope to be King, he has tried to get me killed with trickery despite our being kin. Don’t you think I have a right to take action? Wouldn’t it be perfect if I were to get revenge against him? Wouldn’t it be damnable to allow this canker — this cancer, this malignant sore — of our human nature to commit further evil?”

“King Claudius will soon learn what has happened in England. He will learn that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead,” Horatio said.

“He will learn that soon, but I can act quickly,” Hamlet replied. “A man’s life’s is so short that he can do no more than to say ‘One’ before he dies. But I am very sorry, good Horatio, that I forgot myself when I saw Laertes. I should not have spoken to him the way I did. He and I are suffering the same kind of grief. By looking at the reflection of my cause, I see the portrait of his.”

Both Hamlet and Laertes were mourning the death of Ophelia, and both were mourning the death of their fathers. In Laertes’ case, however, it was Hamlet who had killed his father.

Hamlet continued, “I’ll court Laertes’ favor and try to be friends with him. But the passionate expression of his grief over Ophelia’s death certainly put me into a towering passion and anger.”

Horatio said, “I hear someone. Who is coming here?”

Osric, a foolish courtier, entered the room.

Osric took off his hat to show respect to Hamlet, who was

higher in society than he was.

“Your lordship is very welcome back to Denmark,” Osric said to Hamlet.

“I humbly thank you, sir,” Hamlet replied.

Hamlet, who had little or no respect for Osric, asked Horatio, “Do you know this mosquito?”

“No, my good lord.”

“You are lucky, because it is unfortunate to know him,” Hamlet said. “He has much land, and it is fertile. Let a beast be the lord of beasts, and a plate for him shall be put on the King’s dining table. This man is a chatterer, but as I say, he enjoys the possession of a large quantity of dirt.”

“Sweet lord, if your lordship is at leisure, I would like to impart a thing to you from his majesty,” Osric said.

“I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit,” Hamlet said.

Osric was using fancy language, and so Hamlet was using fancy language as a form of mockery.

Hamlet added, “You have already shown courtesy to me by taking off your hat. That is enough courtesy. You may put your hat on your head again.”

Osric, who was a stickler for the rules of etiquette, replied, “I thank your lordship, but it is very hot.”

This was an excuse for him not to put on his hat in front of Prince Hamlet.

“No, believe me, it is very cold,” Hamlet said. “The wind is blowing from the north.”

“It is rather cold, my lord, indeed,” Osric said.

“But yet I think that it is very sultry and hot for my temperament,” Hamlet said.

“Exceedingly, my lord,” Osric replied. “It is very sultry, as it were — I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty asked me to tell you that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the message —”

“Please,” Hamlet said. He motioned for Osric to put on his hat.

“No, my good lord,” Osric said. “I am more comfortable like this, believe me.”

He added, “Sir, Laertes is newly come to court. Believe me, he is a perfect gentleman, full of most excellent distinguishing characteristics, of very pleasing manners and handsome appearance. Indeed, to speak justly of him, he is the model of gentlemanly behavior, for you shall find in him the container of whatever parts a gentleman would want to see in another gentleman.”

Hamlet continued to satirize Osric’s elevated language: “Sir, Laertes suffers no loss when you describe him, although, I know, to mention each item in his inventory of good qualities would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and still lag behind because of his many excellences. But, in the truth of extolling his great qualities, I take him to be a soul of greatness. His infusion of such rare excellences are such that, to speak true diction of him, his only equal is the image in his mirror; and whoever would try to match him would be only his shadow, nothing more.”

“Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him,” Osric said.

“What is the concernancy, sir?” Hamlet said. “Why does this concern us? Why do we wrap the gentleman with our gasping breath — breath that gasps with admiration for him?”

“Sir?” Osric asked.

“Is it not possible to speak in another tongue?” Horatio asked. “Can’t you two use a simpler language? Not even Osric can understand this language. Eventually, you will have to use simpler language.”

Hamlet continued to use fancy language: “What imports the nomination — the naming — of this gentleman?”

“Of Laertes?”

“Osric’s purse is empty already,” Horatio said. “All his golden words are spent.”

“Yes, I mean him, sir,” Hamlet said.

“I know you are not ignorant —” Osric started to say.

“I wish you did know that I am not ignorant, sir,” Hamlet interrupted, “but yet, truly, if you did know that I am not ignorant, it still would not give me much credit. Well, sir?”

Osric tried to continue: “You are not ignorant of Laertes’ excellence —”

Hamlet interrupted, “I dare not confess that I know his excellence, lest I should be thought to be saying that I share his excellence. In order for me truly to understand his excellence, I would have to possess and demonstrate that I possess that excellence.”

“I mean, sir, Laertes’ excellence with his weapons,” Osric said. “In the opinion of people who are in his service, he is unequalled in excellence with them.”

“What’s his weapon?” Hamlet asked.

“Rapier and dagger,” Osric replied.

“That’s two of his weapons, but that is fine,” Hamlet said.

“King Claudius, sir, has wagered six Barbary horses that you can defeat Laertes, who has in turn impawned six French rapiers and daggers, with their accessories, including belts, straps attaching the sword to the belt, and so on. Three of the carriages, truly, are very well designed, very appropriate for the hilts, very finely wrought carriages, and very richly decorated.”

“What do you mean by the word ‘carriages?’” Hamlet said.

“I knew that you would need explanatory notes in the margins — or footnotes or endnotes — before you were done talking to him,” Horatio said to Hamlet.

“The carriages, sir, are the hangers,” Osric said.

Osric was mistaken. Hangers were the straps attaching the sword to the belt. Carriages were wheeled structures used to transport cannon.

“The word would be more appropriate if we could carry cannon by our sides instead of swords,” Hamlet said. “Until then, I prefer that we continue to use the word ‘hangers.’”

“But let us move on. King Claudius has bet six Barbary horses, and Laertes has bet six French swords and their accessories, including three richly decorated ‘carriages.’ The things wagered show it is Denmark versus France.

“But what is this wager about? Why is this stuff — ‘impawned,’ you call it — being wagered?”

“King Claudius, sir, has bet that in a dozen bouts between yourself and Laertes, Laertes shall not defeat you by three bouts. Whoever touches the other with their blunted rapier will get a hit and win that bout. If Laertes wins eight bouts, he wins the bet; if you win five bouts, you win the bet for King Claudius. The bouts can begin right away if you vouchsafe — give me — your answer.”

“What if I answer ‘no’?” Hamlet asked.

“I mean, my lord, if you vouchsafe the opposition of your person in trial,” Osric said.

“Sir, I will walk here in the hall,” Hamlet replied. “If it please his majesty, it is the time of day for exercise with me. Let the foils — the rapiers — be brought, if the gentleman Laertes is willing, and if King Claudius wants the fencing match to proceed. I will win the fencing match for King Claudius if I can; if I cannot, I will gain nothing but my shame and the hits that Laertes will give me.”

“Should I give this answer to the King?” Osric asked.

“Yes, sir,” Hamlet said. “Add to it whatever rhetorical flourishes you wish to add.”

“I commend my duty to your lordship,” Osric said.

The verb “commend” can mean either “present, aka offer” or “praise.” Osric meant he was presenting his duty to Hamlet — a fancy way of saying that he would run the errand for Hamlet.

“Yours,” Hamlet replied. This was a dismissal.

Osric put his hat on his head and left to run the errand.

Hamlet said to Horatio, “He does well to commend — to praise — his duty himself; no one else would praise it for him.”

“This young lapwing runs away with the eggshell on his head,” Horatio said.

Lapwings were proverbially young and stupid birds. They left the nest quickly after hatching from their eggs — so quickly that it were as if they still had a piece of the eggshell on top of their head.

Hamlet said about Osric's excessive sense of etiquette and formality, "He used to bow courteously to his mother's nipple, before he sucked it.

"This drossy age — this shoddy age with no sense of real nobility — dotes on Osric and many more of the same company, but they have only got the tune of the time and the outward habit of encounter. They look the part of a courtier, and they can make some of the sounds of a courtier, but they have no substance. They have a kind of yeasty collection of rhetorical tricks that helps them mingle with — and impose on — men of very carefully considered and winnowed opinions. If all you do is blow on Osric and others like him, you blow away the bubbles and nothing remains."

A lord entered the hall and said, "My lord, his majesty sent his compliments to you by young Osric, who brings back to him the news that you will attend him in the hall. He sent me to ask you if your pleasure is still to fence now with Laertes, or if you want to fence later."

"I am constant to my purpose," Hamlet said. "I will do whatever pleases the King. If he wants me to fence now, I am ready. If he wants me to fence later, I will fence later. Now or later are both fine, as long as I am as fit and ready to fence as I am now."

"The King and Queen and all the others will come down to the hall now," the lord said.

"In happy time," Hamlet said. "Now is as good a time as any."

"The Queen wants you to be courteous to Laertes before you begin to fence," the lord said.

"She well instructs me," Hamlet said. "I will do as she wishes."

The Lord exited from the hall.

Horatio said, “You will lose this wager, my lord.”

“I do not think so,” Hamlet replied. “Ever since Laertes went to France, I have been continually practicing fencing. I shall win at the odds given — Laertes has been given a handicap. You cannot imagine how ill I feel here in my heart, but that does not matter.”

“My good lord —” Horatio began to say.

“It is only foolishness,” Hamlet interrupted. “It is such a kind of misgiving, such as would perhaps trouble a woman.”

“If your mind feels uneasy, listen to it,” Horatio replied. “I will stop them from coming here, and I will tell them that you are not ready to fence.”

“No,” Hamlet said. “We defy omens and the interpretation of omens. There’s a special providence in the fall of a sparrow.”

Hamlet was thinking of the Bible. Matthew 10:29-31 recounts the words of Jesus when he was reassuring his disciples, “*Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*”

Hamlet continued, “If death comes now, death will not come later. If death does not come later, death will come now. If death does not come now, then death must come later. The readiness is all. Since no man knows anything about what he leaves, what does it matter if he dies now?”

Again, Hamlet was thinking of the Bible. Matthew 24:44 states, “*Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as*

ye think not the Son of man cometh.” We must always be ready for death. And since we do not know what we leave behind, we ought not to fear an early death. An early death may stop us from having a long and wretched life.

Hamlet heard a noise and said, “But let’s say no more.”

King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Laertes, some lords, Osric, and some attendants entered the hall. The attendants brought such items as rapiers.

“Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me,” King Claudius, who was holding Laertes’ hand, said.

King Claudius put Laertes’ hand into Hamlet’s hand.

Hamlet said politely to Laertes, “Give me your pardon, sir; I’ve done you wrong. But pardon it, as you are a gentleman. This presence — this assembly of people — knows, and you must have heard, how I am punished with sore distraction — severe mental distress. What I have done that might roughly awake your natural filial feelings, honor, and disapproval, I here proclaim was done due to my madness.

“Was it Hamlet who wronged Laertes? Never was it Hamlet. If Hamlet is taken away from himself, and when he is not himself he does wrong Laertes, then Hamlet does not do it — Hamlet denies doing it. Hamlet is not responsible for his action.

“Who does it, then? His madness. If this is true, then Hamlet is one of the people who are wronged. His own madness is poor Hamlet’s enemy.

“Sir, in front of this audience, I proclaim my innocence and I disavow all intended and intentional evil. Let this free me so far in your most generous thoughts — believe that I have shot my arrow over the house, and hurt my brother. I have

not done anything with the intention to hurt you.”

How are Hamlet and Laertes like brothers? They both loved Ophelia, and they both suffered the death of Ophelia and the killing of their father.

Laertes replied, “I am satisfied so far as natural feeling goes, although the deaths of my father and my sister ought to drive me to seek revenge — but I am not satisfied so far as my honor is concerned. I will not be reconciled with you until some elder masters, of known honor, give me a statement based on precedent that favors peace and reconciliation and will keep my name and reputation unsullied. But until that time, I accept your offered friendship as friendship, and I will not wrong or spurn it.”

Despite his words, Laertes was still planning to kill Hamlet in the fencing contest.

“I am grateful that you accept my offered friendship,” Hamlet said. “And I will frankly and freely participate in this wager between brothers.”

He said to the attendants, “Give us the foils — the rapiers.”

“Give me a foil,” Laertes said.

“I’ll be your foil, Laertes,” Hamlet said. “Against the background of my ignorance of fencing, your skill shall, like a star in the darkest night, stick out as fiery indeed.”

Hamlet was punning on the word “foil.” One meaning of “foil” was “rapier”; another was “setting for a rich gem.” The foil was designed to show off the rich gem to best advantage.

“You mock me, sir,” Laertes said.

“No, I swear it by this hand,” Hamlet said, holding up a hand.

“Give them the foils, young Osric,” King Claudius said.

He added, “Kinsman Hamlet, do you know the wager?”

“Very well, my lord,” Hamlet said. “Your grace has wagered on the weaker side.”

“I do not fear betting on you to win,” King Claudius replied. “I have seen you both fence. But since Laertes is better, we therefore have odds. Laertes has a handicap.”

Laertes said, “This rapier is too heavy; let me see another.”

He was being careful to get the rapier whose point was not blunted and to whose point poison had been applied.

“I like this rapier well,” Hamlet said. “These foils are all the same length?”

“Yes, my good lord,” Osric answered.

A fencer with a longer rapier than the other fencer would have an unfair advantage.

“Set the flagons of wine upon that table,” King Claudius ordered. “If Hamlet gives the first or second hit, or after having lost the first two bouts wins the third bout, let all the battlements their cannon fire. The King shall drink to Hamlet’s better breath and enhanced vigor, and he will throw a union in the cup of wine. This union shall be richer than any that four successive Kings of Denmark have worn in their crown.”

A union is a very valuable pearl, one valuable enough to be worn in the crown of a King. The wine would dissolve the pearl, something that was supposed to honor Hamlet, who would drink the wine.

King Claudius continued, “Give me the cups. And let the kettledrum speak to the trumpet, and the trumpet speak to the cannoneers outside, and the cannons speak to the

Heavens, and the Heavens speak to the Earth, and let them all say, 'Now the King drinks to Hamlet.'

"Come, begin the fencing contest. You judges, keep a close eye on the contest."

"Come on, sir," Hamlet said to Laertes.

"Come on, my lord," Laertes replied.

They fenced.

"One," Hamlet said. "I have hit you. I have touched you with the point of my rapier."

"No," Laertes said.

"Judgment," Hamlet requested of the judges.

"A hit, a very palpable hit," Osric said.

"Well, so be it," Laertes said. "Let us fence again."

"Wait," King Claudius said. "Give me a drink. Hamlet, this pearl is yours. Here's to your health."

King Claudius drank, and kettledrums and trumpets sounded and the cannons fired.

King Claudius put the pearl and some poison in a cup of wine and said, "Give Hamlet the cup."

"I'll play this bout first," Hamlet said. "Set the cup of wine aside for awhile."

He said to Laertes, "Come on."

They fenced, and Hamlet said, "Another hit; what do you say?"

"A touch, a touch, I do confess it," Laertes replied.

"Our son shall win," King Claudius said.

“He’s sweaty, and out of breath,” Queen Gertrude said. “Here, Hamlet, take my handkerchief and rub your brows. The Queen drinks to your fortune, Hamlet.”

She picked up the cup of poisoned wine.

“Good madam,” Hamlet saluted her.

“Gertrude, do not drink,” King Claudius said.

“I will, my lord,” Queen Gertrude said. “Please, pardon me.”

She drank.

King Claudius thought, *It is the poisoned cup: it is too late to save her life.*

Hamlet said to his mother, “I dare not drink yet, madam, but I will by and by.”

“Come, let me wipe your face,” she said.

“My lord, I’ll get a hit against him now,” Laertes said.

“I do not think so,” the King replied.

Hamlet’s skill in fencing had impressed Laertes, who thought, *And yet it almost goes against my conscience to kill him.*

To use poison in what was supposed to be a friendly fencing contest was a violation of honor, as was using an unblunted rapier against an opponent who was using a blunt rapier.

“Come on, let us fight the third bout, Laertes,” Hamlet said. “You are only dallying, not fencing. Please, make your thrust with the utmost force that you can. I am afraid that you are treating me as if I were a child.”

“Do you think that?” Laertes said. “Come on and fence!”

They fenced.

“Nothing, either way,” Osric said. “No hits scored.”

“Have at you now!” Laertes said.

They fenced, and Laertes wounded Hamlet. They wrestled, dropped their rapiers, and picked up each other’s rapier. Hamlet now had the poisoned rapier.

“Part them; they are incensed,” King Claudius ordered.

“No,” Hamlet said.

He said to Laertes, “Come, let us fence again.”

They fenced, and Hamlet wounded Laertes.

Queen Gertrude fell.

“Look after the Queen!” Osric shouted. “Stop the fencing!”

“Both Hamlet and Laertes are bleeding,” Horatio said. “The points of their rapiers ought to have been blunted.”

He asked Hamlet, “How are you, my lord?”

Osric asked Laertes, “How are you, my lord?”

Laertes replied, “Why, I am like a famously foolish woodcock captured in my own trap, Osric. I am justly killed because of my own treachery.”

“How is the Queen?” Hamlet asked.

“She fainted when she saw them bleed,” King Claudius said.

“No, no, the drink, the drink — oh, my dear Hamlet — the drink, the drink! I am poisoned,” Queen Gertrude said.

She died.

“Villainy!” Hamlet shouted. “Lock the door! Treachery!”

Find the source of the treachery!”

“It is here, Hamlet,” Laertes said. “Hamlet, you are slain. No medicine in the world can do you any good. You have not half an hour of life left. The treacherous instrument is in your hand; its sharp point has been dipped in poison. The foul trickery has turned itself on me. Here I lie, never to rise again. Your mother has been poisoned. I will live no more. The King — the King’s to blame.”

“The sharp point of this rapier!” Hamlet said. “Dipped in poison, too! Then, venom, do your work.”

Hamlet stabbed King Claudius.

People shouted, “Treason! Treason!”

“Defend me, friends,” King Claudius pleaded. “I am only wounded.”

“Here, you incestuous, murderous, damned Dane, drink the rest of this poisoned potion.”

Hamlet forced King Claudius to drink the poison.

As King Claudius died, Hamlet said to him, “Is your union here? Follow my mother.”

Even now Hamlet was able to pun. “Union” meant both “valuable pearl” and “marriage between King Claudius and Queen Gertrude.”

“He is justly served,” Laertes said. “It is a poison he himself mixed. Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet. My death and my father’s death will not fall upon you, and your death will not fall on me. We will forgive each other.”

“May Heaven absolve you of blame!” Hamlet said. “I follow you. I am dead, Horatio. Wretched Queen, *adieu!*”

“Those of you who look pale and tremble at this mischance, who are only mutes or audience to this act, if I only had time — this fell sergeant, death, is strict in his arrest and will not give me time — I could tell you ... but let it be.

“Horatio, I am dead, but you live. To those who do not know, tell them about me and my reasons for acting the way I have.”

“No,” Horatio said. “Don’t believe that I will do that. I am more an ancient Roman than a Dane. I am willing to commit suicide. There is still some poisoned wine left in the cup.”

Horatio picked up the cup, but Hamlet grabbed his arms and said, “As you are a man, give me the cup. Let go — by Heaven, I will have it.”

He wrestled the cup away from Horatio and said, “Good Horatio, I shall leave a badly wounded reputation behind me unless people understand why I acted the way I have acted. If you have ever regarded me as a friend in your heart, absent you from happiness for awhile — stay out of Paradise for awhile — and in this harsh world draw your breath in pain. That way, you can tell other people my story.”

The sound of marching soldiers and the sound of firing cannons were heard.

Hamlet asked, “What warlike noise is this?”

Osric came back from the door and said, “Young Fortinbras, coming victorious from Poland, gives this warlike volley to salute the also newly arrived ambassadors from England.”

“I am dying, Horatio,” Hamlet said. “The potent poison

quite conquers my spirit. I will not live to hear the news from England. But I do prophesy that the nobles will select Fortinbras to be the next King of Denmark. He has my dying voice and recommendation; I want him to succeed me. So tell him my story, as I have urged you, with all its occurrences, greater and lesser.”

He paused and then said, “The rest is silence.”

He gave a long sigh and died.

“Now stops a noble heart,” Horatio said. “Good night, sweet Prince, and may flights of angels sing you to your rest!”

Drums sounded, and Horatio asked, “Why are the drums coming toward us?”

Young Fortinbras, the English ambassadors, and others entered the hall.

“Where is what I have come to see?” Fortinbras said.

“What is it you want to see?” Horatio replied. “If you want to see sights of woe or wonder, sorrow or disaster, cease your search.”

Fortinbras looked at all the dead bodies and said, “This quarry cries on havoc.”

The word “quarry” was a hunting term that meant “a heap of slain animals.” “To cry on havoc” meant “to loudly proclaim great slaughter.”

Fortinbras continued, “Proud death, what feast is being prepared in your eternal cell, that you so many Princes at a shot so bloodily have struck down?”

An English ambassador said, “This sight is dismal; and our news from England has come too late. The ears — those of King Claudius — are senseless that should have listened to

our news. We came here to tell him that his commandment has been fulfilled — Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead. From whom should we now have our thanks?”

“Not from King Claudius’ mouth, even if he were alive to thank you,” Horatio said. “He never gave the order for their death.

“But since you, Fortinbras, who have come from the war in Poland, and you, ambassadors from England, have all here arrived opportunely at this bloody time, please give orders that these bodies be placed high on a platform so that people can view them, and let me speak to the yet unknowing world and say how these things came about.

“You shall hear about carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts, about divine justice administered by what seem to be accidents, about slaughters due to chance, about deaths instigated by cunning and foul means, and, in this upshot, about purposes mistook that fell back on their inventors’ heads.

“I can tell you about all of these things.”

“Let us make haste to hear what you have to say,” Fortinbras said. “We will call the noblest people to be in the audience.

“As for me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune. I have some still-remembered rights in this Kingdom, and now circumstances allow me to claim my rights. I have some claim to be the King of Denmark.”

“Of that I shall also have cause to speak,” Horatio said. “And I will talk about the words that Hamlet said as he lay dying; he gave you his voice and recommendation, and those will encourage other nobles to make you King.

“But let what I have recommended be immediately done.

Men's minds are wild because they do not know Hamlet's story. More misfortunes may happen unless we stop plots and correct errors."

"Let four Captains bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the platform," Fortinbras said. "Hamlet was likely, had he been put on the throne, to have proved to be most royal. To mark his passing, soldiers' music and the rites of war — such as saluting him with a volley of shots — will speak loudly for him.

"Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this becomes a battlefield, but here it is much amiss.

"Go, order the soldiers to shoot a volley of shots to honor Hamlet."

Marching music sounded. They carried away the bodies, and a salute of gunshots sounded.

AFTERWORD (*Hamlet*)

A question: According to Hamlet's own beliefs, will he end up in Heaven or in Hell?

Chapter XXVI: JULIUS CAESAR

PREFACE (*Julius Caesar*)

For hundreds of years, the Romans had a republic rather than a kingdom. Many influential Romans, however, were afraid that Julius Caesar wanted to be King of the Romans, and they were determined to stop him. Shakespeare's play tells what happened to Caesar and to those people who conspired against him.

In Shakespeare's plays based on history, he collapses time. The events of *Julius Caesar* appear to take place in six days, but in reality, they took place in three years. Here are some dates:

In 48 BCE, Julius Caesar defeated Pompey at the Battle of Pharsalia.

On March 17, 45 BCE Julius Caesar defeated Pompey's sons at the Battle of Munda.

In October 45 BCE, Julius Caesar celebrated his victory over Pompey's sons in a triumphal procession in Rome. In *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare had this triumphal procession occur on 15 February 44 BCE — the day of the Feast of Lupercal, a festival of fruitfulness and fertility.

In 44 BCE on the Ides of March (March 15), Julius Caesar was assassinated in Rome. His assassins included Caius Cassius and Marcus Junius Brutus.

In the first week of October 42 BCE, Caius Cassius committed suicide at Philippi after an engagement with the troops of Mark Antony and Octavian.

On 23 October 42 BCE, a second engagement occurred at Philippi, and Marcus Junius Brutus committed suicide.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Julius Caesar*)

Male Characters

Julius Caesar

Octavius Caesar, Marcus Antonius, M. Aemilius Lepidus,
triumvirs after the death of Julius Caesar

Cicero, Publius, Popilius Lena, Senators

Marcus Brutus, Caius Cassius, Casca, Trebonius, Ligarius,
Decius Brutus, Metellus Cimber, Cinna, conspirators
against Julius Caesar

Flavius and Marullus, tribunes

Artemidorus, a sophist of Cnidos

A Soothsayer

Cinna, a poet

Another Poet

Lucilius, Titinius, Messala, Young Cato, Volumnius,
friends to Brutus and Cassius

Varro, Clitus, Claudius, Strato, Lucius, Dardanius, servants
to Brutus

Pindarus, servant to Cassius

Female Characters

Calpurnia, wife to Caesar

Portia, wife to Brutus

Minor Characters

Commoners, or Plebeians, of Rome; Senators, Guards,
Attendants, etc.

CHAPTER 1 (Julius Caesar)

— 1.1 —

On a street in Rome, some skilled workers, including a carpenter and a cobbler, were celebrating the triumphal procession of Julius Caesar, who had defeated his political rival, Pompey, and Pompey's two sons, in a civil war. Now Julius Caesar held the power in Rome, and some Roman citizens worried that he wanted to be King. To be King, he would have to do away with the Roman Republic.

Two Roman tribunes named Flavius and Marullus arrived. They were angry at the commoners for celebrating Julius Caesar's victory.

Flavius said to the commoners, "Get away from here! Go home, you idle creatures, go home! Is this a holiday? Don't you mechanicals — you laborers — know that you ought not walk on these streets on a work day unless you are wearing work clothes and carrying the tools of your profession?"

He asked one of the laborers, "Tell me, what is your trade?"

"Why, sir, I am a carpenter."

Marullus said to him, "Where are your leather apron and your ruler? Why are you wearing your best clothing?"

He asked another laborer, "You, sir, what trade do you follow?"

"Truly, sir, compared to a fine workman, I am only, as you would say, a cobbler."

Marullus misheard him: "A bungler? No doubt. But what trade do you follow?"

The cobbler, who was in a joking mood, replied, "A trade,

sir, that I hope I may practice with a safe conscience. I am indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.”

Marullus, understanding this to mean that the person repaired bad souls, asked again, “What trade do you follow, you knave? You worthless knave, what trade do you follow?”

The cobbler replied, “Sir, please do not be out with me, but if you are out, sir, I can mend you.”

The cobbler smiled, thinking, *That was a good joke: “Sir, please do not be out of patience with me, but if you are out of shoes — that is, if your shoes are worn out — sir, I can mend you — that is, I can mend your shoes or I can improve your character.”*

Marullus, who did not understand the joke, said, “What do you mean by that? What do you mean by ‘mend me,’ you saucy fellow!”

“Why, sir, I can cobble you.”

Flavius interrupted, “So you are a cobbler, are you?”

“Truly, sir, I make my living by using the awl to pierce holes. I meddle with no tradesman’s matters, nor women’s matters, except with an awl to pierce holes.”

The cobbler smiled, thinking, *That is another good joke. I use a tool like an awl to pierce a woman’s hole.*

He added, “I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I recover — that is, repair — them. As proper men as have ever trod upon cowhide have trod upon my handiwork — many men of standing have trod the ground while wearing my shoes.”

Flavius asked, “But why aren’t you working in your shop today? Why are you leading these men about the streets?”

The cobbler joked, “Truly, sir, I am trying to wear out their shoes, to get myself more work. But, indeed, sir, we are taking a holiday today so that we can see Julius Caesar and rejoice in his triumph.”

Marullus said, “What is there to rejoice at? What conquest of foreign foes has he made? What captured enemies has he brought to Rome to be displayed in captive bonds beside his chariot-wheels? You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things! You hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome — don’t you remember Pompey? You used to often climb up on walls and battlements, climb up towers and look out windows, and climb chimney-tops, with your infants in your arms, and there you used to sit the entire day, with patient expectation, to see great Pompey pass through the streets of Rome. When you saw his chariot appear, you used to shout all together and make the Tiber River tremble underneath her banks as your shouts echoed along its overhanging riverbanks. And now you put on your best clothing? And now you call this a holiday? And now you strew flowers in the way of the man who comes in triumph over Pompey’s blood? Caesar defeated and killed Pompey’s two sons. You workmen, go away from here! Run to your houses, fall upon your knees, and pray to the gods to hold back the plague that ought to come to punish this ingratitude.”

Flavius said, “Go, go, good countrymen, and, to expiate this fault of yours, assemble all the poor men of your sort, take them to the banks of the Tiber River, and weep your tears into the river until the lowest part of the stream rises up to the highest riverbanks.”

The commoners departed.

Flavius said to Marullus, “The commoners seem to be moved in the right way — they vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness. You go down that way towards the Capitol —

the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill — and I will go this way. If you see any statues decorated with Caesar’s trophies, strip them.”

Marullus asked, “May we do so? You know it is the Feast of Lupercal. Now is when we hold a feast day to honor the fertility god Lupercus. Won’t it be sacrilegious to strip the statues?”

Flavius replied, “It doesn’t matter. Let no statues be hung with Caesar’s trophies — with decorations to honor Julius Caesar. I will go around and drive away the commoners from the streets. You do the same thing when you see many commoners gathered together. We need to restrain these early signs of enthusiasm for Caesar. That will keep him from flying so high above us that we will all feel servile and fearful. If we can pluck some of his feathers now, we can keep him from flying high above us.”

— 1.2 —

In a public place in Rome were standing Julius Caesar, Calpurnia (Caesar’s wife), Brutus, Portia (Brutus’ wife), Mark Antony, Decius Brutus, Cicero, Caius Cassius, and Casca. A great crowd of people, among them a soothsayer (fortune teller), were around them. Trumpets occasionally sounded. Marullus and Flavius now came walking up to the group of people; they had arrived too late to keep the commoners from gathering around Caesar.

Caesar said, “Calpurnia!”

Casca ordered, “Everyone, be quiet. Caesar is speaking.”

Caesar said again, “Calpurnia!”

Calpurnia replied, “Here I am, my lord.”

“Mark Antony will be one of the young men running naked through the streets and touching spectators with leather

things to celebrate the Feast of Lupercal,” Caesar said. “Make sure that you stand directly in Mark Antony’s way when he runs.”

He then called, “Antony!”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Do not forget when you are running naked through the streets to touch Calpurnia because our wise men say that barren women, when touched in this holy chase, will be cured of the curse of sterility.”

“I shall remember to do so,” Antony replied. “When Caesar says, ‘Do this,’ it will be done.”

“Let us proceed,” Caesar said. “We will observe all the rites.”

The soothsayer in the crowd called, “Caesar!”

“Who is calling me?” Caesar asked.

Casca ordered, “Let all noise stop. Again, be quiet!”

“Who in the press of people is calling my name? I hear a voice, shriller than all the music, crying, ‘Caesar!’ Speak to me. Caesar is ready to listen to you.”

The soothsayer called, “Beware the Ides of March — beware March 15.”

“Which man is saying that?” Caesar asked.

One of Caesar’s friends, Brutus, replied, “A soothsayer tells you to beware the Ides of March.”

“Set him before me; let me see his face.”

“Soothsayer, come from the crowd,” Cassius said. “Look at Caesar.”

“What have you to say to me now?” Caesar asked. “Speak once again.”

“Beware the Ides of March.”

“He is a dreamer,” Caesar said. “Let us leave him. Let us pass him.”

Everyone departed except for Brutus and Cassius. The two men were brothers-in-law. Cassius was married to one of Brutus’ three sisters.

Cassius asked Brutus, “Will you go and see the progress of the race?”

“No,” Brutus replied.

“Please, do so.”

“I am not a merry fellow who is fond of games,” Brutus said. “I lack the quick and lively spirit that Mark Antony has in abundance. But do not let me stop you from enjoying the race, Cassius.”

“Brutus, I have lately been observing you. You no longer look at me with that gentleness and show of friendship that you used to have for me. You are intent on having your own way, and you are treating me less than as a friend although I still love and respect you.”

“Cassius, do not be deceived. If I have veiled my face and not shown my true feelings, I do so because I turn my troubled looks only upon myself. Recently, I have been vexed with greatly conflicting emotions that concern only myself. This perhaps has changed my behavior. But my good friends should not therefore grieve — and I count you, Cassius, among my good friends. Do not interpret my neglect of my friends as meaning anything more than that I am at war with myself and therefore I forget to show my friendship to my friends.”

“Then, Brutus, I have much misunderstood your feelings. Because of that, I have not told you certain important thoughts of great value — they are worthy cogitations. Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your own face?”

“No, Cassius, I cannot. The eye cannot see itself unless it is reflected by something such as a mirror or a calm surface of water.”

“That is true, and it is very much to be lamented, Brutus, that you have no such mirrors as will reflect your hidden worthiness to your eye, so that you might see your reflection. I have heard many people of the highest importance in Rome, except for immortal Caesar, speak about you and wish that noble Brutus could see what they see.”

“Into what dangers are you trying to lead me, Cassius, that you want me to seek within myself for qualities that are not in me?”

“Good Brutus, listen to me. Since you know that the best way to see yourself is by reflection, I will be your mirror and without exaggeration reveal to yourself things about yourself that you do not know. Do not be suspicious of me, noble Brutus. Regard me as dangerous if you know that I am a common laughingstock, or if you know that I am accustomed to cheapen my friendship by promising it with clichéd oaths to every new person who comes along, or if you know that I pretend to be friends with men and hug them hard and afterwards slander them, or if you know that I make professions of friendship to everyone after I have had a few drinks.”

A great shout arose in the distance.

“What does this shouting mean?” Brutus asked. “I am afraid that the Roman people have chosen Caesar to be their King.”

“Are you afraid of that?” Cassius asked. “Then I have to think that you do not want Julius Caesar to be King.”

“I do not want Caesar to be King, Cassius, although I love and respect Caesar. But why are you keeping me here so long? What is it that you want to say to me? If you want me to do something for the general good — the public welfare — then I would do it even if it meant that I would die. I pray that the gods help me only as long as I love the name of honor more than I fear death.”

“I know that virtue is in you, Brutus, as well as I know your outward appearance,” Cassius said. “Honor is what I want to talk to you about. I cannot tell what you and other men think about this life, but speaking for myself, I would rather be dead than live in awe of someone who is just a man like myself. I was born as free as Caesar; so were you. We both have eaten as well as Caesar, and we both can endure the winter’s cold as well as he. I remember that once, on a raw and gusty day, when the troubled Tiber River was raging against the restraint of her banks, Caesar said to me, ‘Do you dare, Cassius, to now leap in with me into this angry flood, and swim to that point over there?’ Hearing that, fully dressed as I was, I plunged in and bade him to follow me. He also jumped into the river. The torrent roared, and we fought against it with strong arms, throwing it aside and making progress and competing against each other and the river. But before we could arrive at the point that Caesar had proposed, he cried, ‘Help me, Cassius, or I will sink and drown!’ Aeneas, our great ancestor, had put his aged father upon his shoulder and carried him away from the flames of Troy. I did the same thing: I put the tired Caesar upon my shoulder and carried him out of the Tiber River. And this man — Caesar — has now become a god, and Cassius is only a wretched creature who must bend his body and bow whenever Caesar carelessly nods at him. Caesar had a fever when he was in Spain, and when the fit

was on him, I noticed how he shook. It is true: This god did shake. He went pale, color fled from his coward lips, and that same eye whose glance awes the world lost its luster. I heard him groan — indeed, I did — and that tongue of his that makes the Romans take notice of him and even copy his speeches into their books cried, ‘Give me something to drink, Titinius,’ as if he were a sick girl. By the gods, it amazes me that a man of such a feeble constitution has outraced the world and seized power and carried away the victor’s crown of palm leaves.”

The crowd of people around Caesar shouted again.

“I hear another great shout!” Brutus said. “I do believe that these shouts are for some new honors that are heaped on Caesar.”

“Caesar straddles the world like the Colossus of Rhodes — a huge statue that is said to have spanned the entrance to the harbor of the Greek island of Rhodes,” Cassius said. “We petty men walk under Caesar’s huge legs and peep about and find ourselves dishonorable graves. Men at some time are masters of their fates: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, if we find that we are only underlings.

“Think of the names Brutus and Caesar. What is special about that ‘Caesar’? Why should that name be sounded more than yours? Write them together. Your name is as fair a name as his name. Say the two names. Your name fills the mouth as well as his name. Weigh the two names. Your name is as heavy as his name. Conjure up spirits with the two names. The name ‘Brutus’ will raise a spirit as quickly as will the name ‘Caesar.’

“Now, in the names of all the gods at once, what meat has this Caesar eaten that he is grown so great? Our era should be ashamed! Rome, you have lost the breed of noble-

blooded men! You are not raising men of notable worth! Since the great flood that Zeus, King of gods and men, sent to punish Humankind — a great flood that only one man and only one woman survived — when has there ever been an era in which only one man was considered great! When could people say until now, when they talked about Rome, that her wide walls contained only one man? Now Rome indeed has plenty of room, because only one man is in it.

“You and I have heard our fathers say that there was a Brutus once who would have allowed the eternal devil to rule Rome exactly as much as he would have allowed a King to rule Rome!”

Cassius was referring to an ancestor of Brutus — Lucius Junius Brutus — who had driven the last King out of Rome in the 6th century BCE and had founded the Roman Republic.

Brutus replied, “That you do love and respect me, I have no doubt. What you would persuade me to do, I have some idea. How I have thought of this and of these times, I shall tell you at a later time; at present, I will not, so respectfully I ask you not to try to persuade me to do anything. I will think about what you have said. What you have to say to me later, I will patiently listen to, and I will find a suitable time when we can meet and discuss such important matters.

“Until then, my noble friend, think about this: Brutus would prefer to be a villager than to be known as a son of Rome under the hard conditions that this time is likely to lay upon us.”

“I am glad that my weak words have struck even this much show of fire from Brutus,” Cassius said.

“The games are done and Caesar is returning,” Brutus said.

“As Caesar and the others walk by us, grab Casca’s

sleeve,” Cassius said. “He will, after his sour fashion, tell you what has happened that is worthy of note today.”

Caesar and his band of followers walked toward Brutus and Cassius.

“I will do as you say,” Brutus said. “But, look, Cassius, an angry spot glows on Caesar’s brow, and all the rest look like they have been scolded. Calpurnia’s cheek is pale; and Cicero looks around with fiery and angry eyes like a ferret hunting rats. We have seen him look this way in the Capitol after some Senators have opposed him in debate.”

“Casca will tell us what has happened.”

Caesar said, “Antony!”

“Caesar?” Antony answered.

“Let me have men about me who are fat, who smoothly comb their hair, and who sleep throughout the night. Cassius over there has a lean and hungry look; he thinks too much. Such men are dangerous.”

“Do not fear him,” Antony said. “He is not dangerous. He is a noble Roman and has a good reputation.”

“I wish that he were fatter!” Julius Caesar replied. “But I do not fear him. Yet if I had any tendency to be afraid, I do not know the man I would avoid as quickly as that lean Cassius. He reads much. He is a great observer, and he looks at the deeds of men and understands the men’s motives. He does not love to watch plays the way that you do, Antony. He does not listen to music. He seldom smiles, and when he does smile, he smiles as if he is mocking himself because he is smiling at something. Such men as he are never comfortable when they see a greater man than themselves, and therefore they are very dangerous.

“I am telling you what ought to be feared rather than what I

fear; for always I am Caesar and I am afraid of nothing.

“Come over to my right side because my left ear is deaf, and tell me truly what you think about Cassius.”

Everybody left except for Brutus, Cassius, and Casca, who said to Brutus, “You pulled me by my cloak. Do you want to speak to me?”

“Yes, Casca. Tell us what happened just now. Why does Caesar look so serious?”

“Why, you were with him, weren’t you?”

Brutus replied, “If I had been with him, I would not now be asking you what happened.”

“Why, the crown of a King was offered to Caesar, who pushed it away with the back of his hand, and then people began to shout.”

“What was the second shout we heard for?”

“Why, that was for the same reason. Caesar was offered the crown a second time.”

Cassius said, “The people shouted three times. What was the last cry for?”

“Why, for that same reason, too.”

Brutus asked, “Was the Kingly crown offered to Caesar three times?”

“Yes, it was,” Casca answered. “Caesar pushed it away three times, each time gentler than the previous time. Each time he pushed it away, the crowd of respectable people around me shouted.”

Cassius asked, “Who offered Caesar the crown?”

“Why, Antony,” Casca replied.

“Tell us how everything happened, noble Casca,” Brutus requested.

“I can as well be hanged as tell you how it happened,” Casca said. “It was mere foolery, and so I did not pay attention to it. I saw Mark Antony offer Caesar a crown — and yet it was not a crown — it was one of these coronets. As I told you, Caesar pushed it away the first time Antony offered it to him — but, for all that, I think that Caesar wanted to have it. Then Antony offered it to him again, and again Caesar pushed it away — and again I think that he hated to let go of it. And then Antony offered it the third time, and Caesar pushed it away the third time. Each time he refused the crown, the rabble hooted and clapped their chapped hands and threw into the air their sweaty caps and breathed out a huge amount of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown. Their stinking breath almost choked Caesar — he fainted and fell down at it. As for myself, I dared not laugh for fear of opening my lips and breathing in the bad air.”

“Did you say that Caesar fainted?” Cassius asked.

“He fell down in the marketplace, and foamed at the mouth, and was speechless.”

“It is very likely that he has the falling sickness — epilepsy,” Brutus said.

Cassius said, “No, Caesar does not have the falling sickness, but you and I and honest Casca, we have the falling sickness. We have fallen.”

“I do not know what you mean by that, but I am sure that Caesar fell down,” Casca said. “If the rag-tag people did not applaud him and hiss him, accordingly as he pleased or displeased them, as they are accustomed to treat the actors in the theater, I am no true man.”

“What did Caesar say when he regained consciousness?” Brutus asked.

“Before he fell down, when he perceived that the common herd was glad that he refused the crown, he opened his jacket and offered them his throat to cut. If I had been a common laborer, I wish I would go to Hell among the rogues if I had not taken him at his word. If I had been a common laborer, I would have cut his throat. Caesar fell then. When he came to himself again, he said that if he had done or said anything amiss, he wanted the crowd of people to think it was because of his infirmity. Three or four young women who were standing near me cried, ‘Alas, good soul!’ and forgave him with all their hearts, but we do not need to pay any attention to them. If Caesar had stabbed their mothers, they would have done the same thing.”

“And after that, he went away, sad and serious?” Brutus asked.

“Yes.”

“Did Cicero say anything?” Cassius asked.

“Yes, he spoke Greek.”

“To what purpose? What was the content of what he said?”

“I don’t know. If I could tell you that, I would never look you again in the face; however, those who understood Greek smiled at one another and shook their heads. As for myself, it was Greek to me and I did not understand it. But I can tell you some news: Marullus and Flavius, because they pulled decorations off the statues of Caesar, have been deprived of their positions as Tribunes who speak for the people — they have been silenced. Farewell. There was more foolery, if I could remember it.”

“Will you eat with me tonight, Casca?” Cassius asked.

“No, I have promised to eat with someone else.”

“Will you dine with me tomorrow?”

“Yes, if I am still alive and you haven’t changed your mind and your dinner is worth eating.”

“Good. I will expect you tomorrow.”

“Do so. Farewell, both of you.”

He left.

“What a blunt fellow has Casca grown to be!” Brutus said.

“He had a quick mind when he was going to school.”

“He still has a quick mind when it comes to taking action in any bold or noble enterprise,” Cassius said. “However, he pretends to be insensitive and careless. This rudeness of his is a sauce to his good intelligence; it gives men the stomach to digest his words with better appetite.”

“You know him well,” Brutus said. “At this time I will leave you. Tomorrow, if you want to speak with me, I will go to your house, or, if you prefer, you can come to my house. I will stay there until you come.”

“I will come to your house tomorrow,” Cassius said. “Until then, think of the state of the world.”

Brutus left.

Cassius said to himself, “Well, Brutus, you are noble, yet I see that your honorable metal and mettle may be bent into a new shape. Because such a thing can happen, it is fitting that noble minds keep company always with other noble minds because who is so firm and incorruptible that he cannot be seduced and corrupted? Caesar has a grudge against me and barely tolerates my presence, but he loves and respects Brutus. If I were Brutus and he were Cassius, he would not be able to manipulate me. I will this night

throw through his windows several letters, written in different kinds of handwriting so that they look like they have come from several citizens. The letters will testify to the great opinion that Roman citizens hold of you, Brutus, and your name. They will also hint at the ambition of Caesar. Soon, Caesar had better brace himself because we will shake him and undermine him or suffer the consequences of failure. If we do not stop Julius Caesar from becoming King, worse days will follow.”

— 1.3 —

On a street in Rome, Casca, with his sword drawn, met Cicero. Thunder sounded and lightning flashed.

Cicero recognized Casca and said, “Good evening, Casca. Did you escort Caesar home? Why are you breathless? And why do you stare in that way?”

“Are you not moved when all the realm of the Earth shakes like a thing unsteady and insecure? Cicero, I have seen tempests when the scolding winds have split knotty oaks, and I have seen the ocean swell and rage and foam as if it were ambitious and wanted to be exalted with the threatening storm clouds. But never until tonight, never until now, have I gone through a tempest that drops fire! Either a civil war is going on in Heaven, or else the world, too saucy and insolent toward the gods, has incited them to send destruction upon it!”

“Why, have you seen you anything more wonderful than lightning and thunderbolts?” Cicero asked.

“I have seen a common slave — you know him well by sight — hold up his left hand, which did flame and burn like twenty torches joined together, and yet his hand, not feeling the fire, remained unburned. In addition — I have not since sheathed my sword — near the Capitol I met a surly lion that glared at me, and went by me without

annoying me. Also, a hundred women looking like ghosts huddled together in a group because of their fear — they swore that they saw men all enclosed in fire walk up and down the streets. And yesterday the bird of night — the owl, a bird of bad omens — sat even at noonday in the marketplace, hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies occur all together, let men not say, ‘These things have their reasons for occurring; they are natural.’ I believe that they are omens of things to come.”

“Indeed, it is a strange time,” Cicero, who was unimpressed, said. “But men tend to interpret things however it suits them and they miss the things’ true meaning.”

He paused, and then asked, “Will Caesar go to the Capitol tomorrow?”

“He will,” Casca replied. “He told Antony to send word to you that he will be there tomorrow.”

“Good night then, Casca,” Cicero said. “This disturbed and stormy sky is not good to walk in.”

“Farewell, Cicero.”

Cicero left, and Cassius walked up to Casca.

Cassius asked, “Who’s there?”

“A Roman,” Casca answered.

“Casca, by your voice.”

“Your ear is good,” Casca said. “Cassius, what a night is this!”

“It is a very pleasing night for honest men.”

“Who ever knew that the Heavens could be so menacing?”

“Those who have realized that the Earth is full of faults,” Cassius said. “For my part, I have walked about the streets, submitting myself to the perilous night, and, with my jacket open, Casca, as you see, have bared my chest to the thunderbolt. And when the zigzag blue lightning seemed to open the breast of Heaven, I presented myself as a target just where the flashing thunderbolt was aimed.”

“Why did you so much test the Heavens?” Casca asked. “It is the duty of men to fear and tremble when the mightiest gods send such dreadful signs and omens to terrify us.”

“You are dull and stupid, Casca, and those sparks of life that should be in a Roman you do not have, or else you do not make use of them. You look pale and gaze and are afraid and throw yourself in a state of wonder to see the strange impatience of the Heavens, but if you would consider the true cause for why we see all these fires, why we see all these gliding ghosts, why we see birds and beasts depart from their usual natures, why we see old men, fools, and children make predictions and prophesy, why we see all these things change from their ordained behavior, their natures, and preformed faculties with which they were born and turn instead to unnatural behavior — why, you shall find that Heaven has infused them with these spirits and given them these powers to make them instruments of fear and warning about some unnatural state of affairs. I could, Casca, name to you a man who is very much like this dreadful night — this night that thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars like the lion in the Capitol. He is a man no mightier than you or me in personal action, yet he has prodigiously grown and is as much to be afraid of as these strange events are.”

“You mean Caesar, don’t you, Cassius?” Casca asked.

“Let it be who it is. Romans today have the strong bodies of their ancestors, but unfortunately, we lack the minds of

our fathers, and so the spirits of our mothers govern us instead. The yoke that has been placed on us and our endurance of this oppression show us to be like women.”

“Indeed, the rumor is that the Senators tomorrow intend to establish Caesar as King,” Casca said. “He shall wear his crown at sea and on land, in every place, except here in Italy.”

“I know where I will wear this dagger then,” Cassius said, displaying his dagger to Casca. “I will wear it in my heart. Cassius will deliver Cassius from bondage by committing suicide. By giving us the ability to commit suicide, you gods, you make the weak the strongest. By giving us the ability to commit suicide, you gods, you defeat tyrants. Neither stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass, nor airless dungeons, nor strong links of iron can confine a strong mind. But if a man grows weary of these worldly bars to freedom, he never lacks the power to kill himself. If I know this, then let everyone else in the world know it, too: That part of tyranny that affects me I can shake off whenever I want. Suicide is a way of escaping oppression.”

Thunder sounded.

“I can also escape tyranny,” Casca said. “So can every slave or prisoner. Each person’s hand has the power to free that person from tyranny.”

“But why should Caesar be a tyrant?” Cassius asked. “Poor man! I know he would prefer not to be a wolf, but he sees that the Romans are acting like sheep. He would be no lion if the Romans were not acting like hinds — female deer or peasants. People who want to quickly make a big fire start the fire with little pieces of straw. What trash is Rome, what rubbish and what offal are its citizens, when it serves as kindling to illuminate so vile a thing as Caesar! But what has my grief made me do? I may be speaking too freely to a

person who is willing to be one of Caesar's slaves. In that case, news of what I have said will reach Caesar, and I will be punished. But I am armed, and I am indifferent to danger."

"You are speaking to Casca, and I am a man who is not a flattering tattletale. Shake my hand."

They shook hands, and Casca said, "If you are forming a faction against Caesar to set to rights all these wrongs, I will do as much as any of you."

"We have a deal," Cassius said. "Listen, Casca. I have already persuaded some of the noblest-minded Romans to undertake with me a dangerous enterprise whose outcome will be honorable. Right now, they are waiting for me at Pompey's porch — the colonnade outside Pompey's Theater. Because this night is filled with bad weather and things to be feared, no one is stirring or walking in the streets. This night is very bloody, fiery, and most terrible, just like the work we have in hand."

Seeing a man walking toward them, Casca said, "Hide because someone is walking quickly toward us."

Cassius looked and said, "It is Cinna. I recognize him by the way he walks. He is a friend."

Cassius then asked, "Cinna, where are you so quickly going?"

"To find you. Who's that? Metellus Cimber?"

Metellus Cimber's grievance against Julius Caesar was that Caesar had sent into exile Metellus Cimber's brother, Publius.

"No, it is Casca. He is now a part of our faction. Are the others waiting for me, Cinna?"

“I am glad that Casca is one of us,” Cinna said. “What a fearful night this is! Two or three of us have seen strange sights tonight.”

“Are the others waiting for me? Tell me that.”

“Yes, they are waiting for you,” Cinna replied. “Cassius, if only you could persuade the noble Brutus to join our faction —”

“Don’t worry,” Cassius said. “Good Cinna, take this letter and place it on the seat of the Praetor’s chair. Brutus holds the office of Praetor, and he will find it. Throw this letter through his window. Use wax to affix this letter to the statue of Brutus’ ancestor Lucius Junius Brutus. Once all of that is done, go to Pompey’s porch, where you shall find us. Are Decius Brutus and Trebonius there?”

“Everyone is there except for Metellus Cimber. He left to seek you at your house. Well, I will hurry and do with these letters what you have asked me to do.”

“Once you are done, meet us at the porch of Pompey’s Theater.”

Cinna departed, and Cassius said, “Come, Casca, you and I will before daybreak visit Brutus at his house. Three parts of him are ours already, and the next time we meet him, he will be entirely on our side.”

“Brutus sits high in all the people’s hearts — they respect him,” Casca said. “If we act without him, we will be thought to be criminals, but if he acts with us, what we do will change, like alchemy changes lead to gold, to virtue and to worthiness.”

“You understand Brutus and his worth and why we so greatly need him to be our side,” Cassius said. “Let us go now because it is after midnight. Before day we will

awaken him and make sure that he is on our side.”

CHAPTER 2 (Julius Caesar)

— 2.1 —

Brutus was alone in his garden. He called for his young servant to come to him, “Lucius!”

He said to himself, “Tonight is stormy, so I cannot, by looking at the progress of the stars, tell how close to dawn it is.”

Again he called, “Lucius, I say!”

He said to himself, “I wish that I were able to sleep as soundly as he does.”

Again he called, “When are you coming, Lucius, when? Wake up, I say! Lucius!”

A sleepy Lucius went to Brutus and asked, “Did you call, my lord?”

“Get me a candle for my study, Lucius. When you have lit it, let me know.”

“I will, my lord.”

Lucius departed.

Brutus considered the reasons for assassinating Julius Caesar: “He will have to be killed. As for myself, I have no personal reason to kill him. I would kill him only for the general good. Caesar wants to be crowned as King. How that might change his nature, there’s the question. Adders come out of hiding and sun themselves on a sunny day — and then you must be careful where you walk. Crown him as King? If we do that, we give him power — we give him a sting that he may use to hurt people at his discretion. Power is abused when the powerful lack compassion. To

speaking the truth about Caesar, I have never known him to be swayed by his emotions more than by his reason. But it is well known that people change after they acquire power. When a man starts to climb and acquire power, he starts low on the ladder. When he reaches the top of the ladder, he turns his back on those who are lower than himself. He looks at the clouds, scorning the base degrees by which he did ascend. Caesar may become like such men. To prevent that, we can kill him. We cannot justify killing him because of what he is now. We can justify killing him only because of what he may become later. Caesar, if he were given increased power, would begin to perform excesses of tyranny. We should think about Caesar the way we think about a serpent's egg. After the serpent is hatched, it will become dangerous, as is its nature. Therefore, it is best to kill the serpent while it is still in the eggshell."

Lucius came back and said, "The candle is burning in your study, sir. Searching the window for a flint to light the candle with, I found this letter, thus sealed up. I am sure that it did not lie there when I went to bed."

Lucius handed Brutus the letter.

"Go back to bed. It is not yet day. Isn't tomorrow, boy, the Ides of March — March 15?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Look at the calendar, and tell me the date."

"I will, sir."

Lucius left to consult the calendar.

Brutus said to himself, "The meteors whizzing in the air give off so much light that I may read by them."

He opened the letter and read out loud, "*Brutus, you are sleeping. Wake up and see yourself. Shall Rome, et cetera.*"

Speak, strike, and correct political abuses!”

He repeated some words from the letter: “Brutus, you are sleeping. Wake up!”

He said, “Such calls to action have been often dropped where I have picked them up. I must try to understand what is meant by ‘Shall Rome, et cetera.’ I need to fill in the gaps. Shall Rome submit to the power of one man? What, Rome? My ancestors did from the streets of Rome drive the last King of Rome out. ‘Speak, strike, and correct political abuses!’ Am I being entreated to speak and to strike? Rome, I make you a promise: If the correction of political wrongs will follow the speaking and the striking, Brutus will do everything that is asked of him here.”

Lucius came back and said, “Sir, tomorrow is the Ides of March.”

Brutus said, “Good.”

Knocks sounded on the gate.

Brutus said, “Go to the gate; somebody is knocking.”

Lucius left to go to the gate and see who was knocking.

Brutus said to himself, “Since Cassius first did incite me to oppose Caesar, I have not slept. Between the acting of a dreadful thing and the first thought of doing it, the entire interim is like a hallucination or a hideous dream. The person is conflicted and debates within himself, and he is like a little Kingdom that suffers from civil war.”

Lucius came back and said, “Sir, your brother-in-law Cassius is at the gate, and he wants to see you.”

“Is he alone?”

“No, sir. Some men are with him.”

“Do you know them?”

“No, sir. Their hats are pulled down about their ears, and half of each man’s face is buried in his cloak, and so I was not able to recognize any of the men.”

“Let them in.”

Lucius left to let the men in to see Brutus.

Brutus said to himself, “They are the faction of conspirators. Conspiracy, are you ashamed to show your dangerous brow by night, when evils are most common and free to roam about? By day, where will you find a cavern dark enough to hide your monstrous face? You need not seek a cave, conspiracy. You can hide your monstrous faces behind smiles and friendliness. If you were to go on your way with your monstrous face revealed, not even the darkness of Erebus, a part of the Underworld, could hide you enough to keep your plot from being detected and stopped.”

The conspirators entered the garden: Cassius, Casca, Decius Brutus, Cinna, Metellus Cimber, and Trebonius.

Cassius said, “I am afraid that we have come too early and disturbed your rest. Good morning, Brutus. Do we trouble you?”

“I have been up for an hour; I have been awake all night,” Brutus said. “Do I know these men who have come along with you?”

“Yes, you know all of them,” Cassius said. “Every man here respects you, and everyone wishes that you had that opinion of yourself that every noble Roman has of you.”

Cassius began to name the men who had come with him: “This is Trebonius.”

“He is welcome here,” Brutus said.

“This is Decius Brutus.”

“He is welcome, too.”

“This is Casca, this is Cinna, and this is Metellus Cimber.”

“They are all welcome,” Brutus said. “What cares have kept you awake all night?”

Cassius replied, “Can I speak to you privately?”

Cassius and Brutus moved away a little and whispered to each other.

Decius Brutus said to the conspirators with him, “This way lies the East. Isn’t this the point where the Sun rises?”

“No,” Casca said.

“Pardon me,” Cinna said, “but the Sun does rise there. The gray lines that streak the clouds show that the Sun is rising there.”

“You shall confess that you are both deceived,” Casca said. “Here, where I am pointing my sword, the Sun rises. It is further to the South because we are still so early in the year. Two months from now, the Sun will rise at a point further North. Due East is here, where the Capitol stands.”

An impartial observer might think that if the conspirators did not even know where the Sun rose that this might be an ominous omen of their future.

Brutus and Cassius had finished their private conversation.

Brutus said to the conspirators, “Let me shake your hands, each of you.”

“And let us swear our commitment,” Cassius said.

“No, let us not swear an oath,” Brutus said. “We do not need to. We have the sad looks on citizens’ faces, the suffering of our own souls, and the evil abuses of our times. If these are weak motives for what we are planning to do, then let us stop now and every man go home to his bed of idleness. If these are weak motives for what we are planning to do, then let the tyranny that looks down on us from a great height continue its reign until each man of us drops like men chosen to be punished at a tyrant’s whim. But if we have good motives, as I am sure that we do, motives that bear enough fire to kindle cowards and to steel with valor the melting spirits of women, then, countrymen, what else do we need to spur us to action? We have good motives that lead us to correct the errors of our times. What other bond do we need than that of Romans who are capable of keeping secrets and have given their word and will not back down from what they have said that they will do? What other oath do we need than that of one honest man to another that we will do what we promised to do or die while trying to do it? Let priests swear and cowards and men who are overly cautious and old and feeble carcass-like men and such suffering souls as welcome wrongs. Let untrustworthy men swear oaths for bad causes. We ought not to stain the impartial virtue of our enterprise or our indomitable will with the belief that either our cause or our actions require an oath. All of us know that every drop of blood that a noble Roman has would be guilty of an act of baseness if the Roman would break the smallest particle of any promise that he had made.”

“What about Cicero?” Cassius said. “Shall we talk to him and see if he wants to join our conspiracy? I think he will stand very strong with us.”

“Let us not leave Cicero out,” Casca said.

“No, by no means,” Cinna said.

“Let us have him as a member of our conspiracy,” Metellus Cimber said, “for his silver hairs will buy for us a good reputation and persuade people to commend our deeds. People will say that he came up with the conspiracy and we followed his lead. Our youth and wildness shall in no way be mentioned; people will instead talk about Cicero’s maturity.”

“Don’t mention Cicero,” Brutus said. “Let us not tell him about our plot because he will never follow anything that other men begin.”

Brutus had much influence with the other conspirators.

“Then we will leave him out of our conspiracy,” Cassius said.

“Indeed, he is not fit to be in our conspiracy,” Casca said.

“Shall only Caesar be killed?” Decius Brutus asked.

“Decius, that is an important question,” Cassius said. “I don’t think it is wise to allow Mark Antony, who is so well beloved by Caesar, to outlive Caesar. We shall find that Antony is a dangerous plotter. He has resources, and if he adds to them, they may be great enough to hurt all of us. To prevent Antony from becoming a great enemy to us, we should kill both Caesar and Antony.”

“If we do that, our actions will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,” Brutus said. “To cut the head off and then hack the limbs will make it seem like we killed at first with anger and subsequently killed with envy. Antony is but a limb of Caesar. Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius. We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar. His spirit is tyrannous. In the spirit of men there is no blood, and I wish that we could kill Caesar’s spirit without dismembering Caesar’s body! Unfortunately, Caesar’s body must bleed! Gentle friends, let us kill Caesar’s body

boldly, but not wrathfully. When we kill, it ought to be like we are making a sacrifice to the gods, not like we are butchering an animal and throwing pieces of meat to the dogs. Let's carve Caesar as a sacrificial dish fit for the gods, not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds. And let our hearts, our subtle masters, stir up our limbs to an act of rage, and afterward be seen to chide them. This shall make our purpose appear to be necessary — and not envious. If the commoners understand that, we shall be called purgers of an evil, not murderers of a man. As for Mark Antony, let us not worry about him because he can do no more than Caesar's arm can do after Caesar's head is cut off."

"Still, I fear him," Cassius said. "For in the deeply rooted love that Antony bears to Caesar —"

"Good Cassius, do not worry about Antony," Brutus said. "If he loves Caesar, all that he can do is what he can do to himself. He can mourn Caesar and commit suicide. Even that is too much to ask him to do because he spends his time enjoying entertainments, wild pleasures, and too much company."

"We need not fear Antony," Trebonius said, "so we need not kill him. Let Antony live, and later he will laugh at what we do."

A clock struck.

"Quiet!" Brutus said. "Count the number of times the clock strikes."

They listened.

"The clock struck three times," Cassius said.

"It is time to go," Trebonius said.

"It is not certain whether Caesar will go to the Capitol today or not," Cassius said, "because he has grown

superstitious lately. His opinion now is much different from what he formerly and strongly believed about visions, dreams, and omens. It may be the case that these apparent omens of disaster, the unusual terror of this night, and the persuasion of his fortune tellers may keep him from going to the Capitol today.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Decius Brutus said. “If he decides not to go to the Capitol, I can persuade him to go. He loves to hear about tales of traps — how unicorns can be trapped by charging at a man who moves aside and lets the unicorn’s horn deeply penetrate a tree, how bears can be trapped by being fascinated with a mirror, how elephants can be trapped when they fall into holes, how lions can be trapped in nets, and how men can be trapped by flatterers. But when I tell Caesar that he hates flatterers, he agrees with me, and he is then most flattered. Let me work on him. I can persuade him to act the way we want him to act, and I will bring him with me to the Capitol.”

“No, not you alone,” Cassius said. “All of us will be there to bring him to the Capitol.”

“By eight o’clock?” Brutus said. “Is that the hour we decided on?”

“That is the hour,” Cinna said. “Do not fail to be there by then.”

“Caius Ligarius bears a grudge against Caesar because Caesar berated him for speaking well of Pompey,” Metellus Cimber said. “I am surprised that none of you has thought of inviting him to join our conspiracy.”

“Metellus Cimber, go and visit him,” Brutus said. “He respects me, and I have done favors for him. Send him to visit me, and I will persuade him to join our conspiracy.”

“Morning is coming,” Cassius said. “We will leave now,

Brutus. Friends, scatter yourselves; do not walk in a group. Everyone, remember what you have promised to do, and show yourselves true Romans.”

“Good gentlemen, look fresh and merry,” Brutus said. “Don’t let your faces reveal our plot. Instead, act as our Roman actors act. Act with unflagging spirits and your usual dignified behavior. Good night to each of you.”

The conspirators departed, leaving Brutus alone in his garden.

Brutus called, “Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep? It does not matter. Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber. You have no problems or fantasies of the imagination that worry the brains of men under stress and therefore you are able to sleep so soundly.”

Portia, Brutus’ wife, now walked up to him.

“Brutus, my lord!”

“Portia, is something wrong? Why are you up now? It is not good for your health to expose yourself to the raw and cold morning.”

“It is not good for your health, either,” Portia said. “You are acting strangely and ignoring me. You abruptly got out of our bed, Brutus, and yesterday, at supper, you suddenly arose, and walked about, musing and sighing, with your arms folded across your chest, and when I asked you what the matter was, you stared at me rudely. I asked you again, and then you scratched your head and very impatiently stamped your foot. Again I asked you, yet you would not answer my question. Instead, with an angry wave of your hand, you gave me a sign to leave you, and so I did. I was afraid to strengthen your impatience and anger that already seemed too much enflamed, and I hoped that you were simply in a bad mood, which sometimes happens to every

man. But your bad mood will not let you eat, talk, or sleep. If your bad mood could change your face and body as much as it has changed your personality, I would not be able to recognize you, Brutus. My dear husband, tell me what is bothering you.”

“I am ill. That is all,” Brutus said.

“Brutus, you are wise, and if you were suffering from ill health, you would do something to restore yourself to good health.”

“Why, so I do,” Brutus said. “Good Portia, go to bed.”

“Is my Brutus sick? Is it healthy to walk around uncovered and breathe the unhealthy vapors of a dank morning? What, is my Brutus sick, and therefore he steals out of his wholesome bed to dare the vile contagion of the night and give the diseased and unpurified-by-the-Sun air a chance to add to his sickness? No, my Brutus. You do not normally act like that. You have some sickness inside your mind, which, by the right and virtue of my position as your wife, I ought to know about.”

Portia knelt before her husband and said, “Upon my knees, I urge you, by my once-commended beauty, by all your vows of love and that great vow that married us and made us one, that you tell me, who is yourself and your half, why you are burdened by trouble. I also urge you to tell me about the men tonight who came to talk to you — the some six or seven men who kept their faces hidden even from darkness.”

“Do not kneel before me, gentle Portia,” Brutus said.

“I would have no reason to kneel before you,” Portia, still kneeling, said, “if you still acted like the gentle Brutus whom I married. Tell me, Brutus, why aren’t you telling me your secrets? Shouldn’t a wife know them, or is there

some exception to a marriage contract? Am I made one with you only partially — only when it comes to eating meals with you, to be a comfort to you in bed and sleep with you, and to talk to you sometimes? Do I dwell only in the suburbs of your good pleasure? The Roman suburbs are where the whorehouses are, and if I dwell only in the suburbs of your good pleasure, then I, Portia, am only Brutus' harlot and not his wife."

"You are my true and honorable wife, and you are as dear to me as are the ruddy drops of blood that visit my sad heart."

"If what you are saying is true, then I ought to know your secrets. I grant I am a woman; but I am a woman whom Lord Brutus took to be his wife. I grant I am a woman, but I am a woman who is well reputed — I am the daughter of Marcus Porcius Cato, who fought for Pompey in the civil war and who chose to commit suicide rather than be captured by Julius Caesar. Can you think that I am no stronger than other women when I have such a father and such a husband? Tell me your secrets; I will not reveal them. I have done something to prove my trustworthiness — I have given myself a voluntary wound here in my thigh. Can I bear that pain with patience, and yet not be able to keep my husband's secrets?"

"Oh, you gods, make me worthy of this noble wife!"

Knocks sounded on the gate.

Brutus said, "Listen! Someone is knocking! Portia, go inside for a while. Soon, I will tell you the secrets of my heart. Everything that I have promised to do I will tell you. I will tell you everything that has been affecting the way I look and act. For now, quickly leave me."

Brutus asked, "Lucius, who was knocking?"

Lucius and Caius Ligarius, who held a handkerchief against his nose and mouth, walked up to Brutus.

Lucius said, "Here is a sick man who would speak with you."

Brutus said, "He is Caius Ligarius, whom Metellus Cimber spoke about."

He told Lucius, "Boy, go back inside."

Then he said, "Caius Ligarius! How are you?"

"Please accept my 'good morning' from my feeble and ill tongue," he replied.

"What a time have you chosen to be ill, brave Caius, and use a handkerchief as a protection against drafts!" Brutus said. "I wish that you were not sick!"

"I am not sick, if Brutus has in mind an exploit that is worthy of the name of honor."

"Such an exploit have I in mind, Ligarius, if you have a healthy ear to hear it."

"By all the gods that Romans bow before, I here discard my sickness!" Ligarius said. "Soul of Rome! Brave son, derived from honorable loins! You, like an exorcist, have raised my deadened spirit. Tell me what to do, and I will try to do impossible things — and I will do them, too. What needs to be done?"

"A piece of work that will make sick men whole."

"But are not some men whole whom we must make sick?"

"That must we also do," Brutus said. "What must be done, Caius Ligarius, I shall tell you as we are walking to the person to whom it must be done."

“Start walking,” Ligarius said, “and with a heart newly fired, I will follow you. I don’t know yet what needs to be done, but I am happy nevertheless because it is Brutus who is leading me.”

“Follow me, then,” Brutus said.

— 2.2 —

Julius Caesar was alone in a room in his house. Outside, the storm continued to thunder and lightning.

Caesar said to himself, “Neither Heaven nor Earth has been at peace tonight. Three times my wife, Calpurnia, has in her sleep cried out, ‘Help! They are murdering Caesar!’”

He heard a noise and asked, “Who is there?”

A servant entered the room and said, “My lord?”

Caesar ordered, “Go and tell the priests to perform a sacrifice immediately. After they are done, return and tell me what they have learned from the sacrifice.”

“I will, my lord.”

The servant departed, and Calpurnia entered the room.

She said to her husband, “What do you mean to do today, Caesar? Are you thinking of going to the Capitol? Today, you will not leave this house.”

“Caesar shall go forth today. The things that have threatened me have never looked anywhere but at my back. Whenever they see the face of Caesar, they vanish.”

“Caesar, I have never paid attention to omens, yet now they frighten me. Someone in our house — besides the things that we have heard and seen — has told me the most horrid sights that the watchman has seen. A lioness has given birth in the streets. Graves have yawned and yielded up their

dead. Fierce fiery warriors have fought upon the clouds in ranks and squadrons and square formations — these soldiers drizzled blood upon the Capitol, and the noise of battle hurtled in the air. Horses neighed, and dying men groaned, and ghosts shrieked and squealed in the streets. Caesar! These things are unnatural, and I fear them.”

“How it is possible to avoid something that the mighty gods have decreed? Today Caesar shall go forth. These predictions and omens apply to the world in general as well as to Caesar.”

“When beggars die, no comets are seen. The Heavens themselves blaze to announce the death of princes,” Calpurnia replied.

“Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once. Of all the wonders that I yet have heard, it seems to me the very strangest that men should fear death because death, a necessary end, will come when it will come.”

The servant returned, and Caesar asked him, “What do the augurers — the tellers of futures — say?”

“They would not have you go out of the house today,” the servant said. “Plucking the entrails of a sacrificial offering, they could not find a heart within the beast.”

“The gods do this to shame cowards — they dislike cowards,” Caesar said. “Caesar would be a beast without a heart, if he would stay at home today for fear. No, Caesar shall not stay home. Danger knows full well that Caesar is more dangerous than he is. We are two lions that littered in the same day. I am the elder and more terrible of us two, and Caesar shall go forth today.”

“Your wisdom is eaten up by overconfidence,” Calpurnia said. “Do not go forth today. Say that it is my fear that

keeps you in the house, and you yourself are not afraid. We will send Mark Antony to the Senate, and he shall say you are not well today.”

She knelt and said, “Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this. Do what I want you to do. Stay at home today.”

Caesar raised her to her feet and said, “Mark Antony shall say I am not well, and, because you want me to, I will stay at home.”

Decius Brutus entered the room.

Caesar said, “Here’s Decius Brutus — he shall tell the Senators the news.”

“Caesar, all hail!” Decius Brutus said. “Good morning, worthy Caesar. I have come to walk with you to the Senate House.”

“You have come at a good time,” Caesar said. “You can carry my greeting to the Senators and tell them that I will not come today. To say that I cannot come is false, and to say that I dare not come is false. I will not come today. Tell the Senators that, Decius.”

“Say that he is sick,” Calpurnia said.

Julius Caesar immediately decided not to have this said about him, although he had just told Calpurnia that Mark Antony would tell the Senators that he — Caesar — was not well. He disliked appearing weak.

“Shall Caesar send a lie?” Julius Caesar said. “I have made extensive conquests in war — should I be afraid to tell gray-bearded Senators the truth? Decius, go tell them that Caesar will not come.”

“Most mighty Caesar, let me know the reason why you are not coming, lest I be laughed at when I tell them you are

not coming.”

“The cause is in my will: I will not come,” Caesar said. “That is enough to satisfy the Senators. But for your private satisfaction, because I respect you, I will let you know my reason. Calpurnia here, my wife, wants me to stay at home. She dreamt this night that she saw my statue, like a fountain with a hundred spouts, running with pure blood. Many vigorous Romans came smiling, and bathed their hands in the blood. This she interprets as a warning and a portent. She believes that evils are imminent, and on her knee she has begged me to stay at home today.”

“This dream has been misinterpreted,” Decius Brutus said. “The vision is fair and fortunate — it foretells good fortune. Your statue spouting blood through many holes, blood in which so many smiling Romans bathed, signifies that from you great Rome shall suck reviving blood, and that great men shall strive to get honors from you and souvenirs to venerate, and that they will be your servants. This is the true meaning of Calpurnia’s dream.”

“You have well interpreted the dream,” Caesar said.

“Yes, I have, as you shall know when you have heard what I have to tell you now,” Decius Brutus said. “The Senators have decided to give this day a crown to mighty Caesar. If you send them word that you will not come to the Senate today, they may change their minds. Besides, if you do not come to the Senate today, someone is likely to joke, ‘We should adjourn the Senate until after Caesar’s wife has had better dreams.’ If Caesar stays at home, won’t the Senators and people whisper, ‘Caesar is afraid’? Pardon me, Caesar, but my high hopes for your advancement make me tell you this, and my respect for you has outweighed my manners.”

“How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia!” Caesar said. “I am ashamed I yielded to them. Give me my cloak,

for I will go.”

Publius, an old Senator, entered the room.

Caesar said, “Look, Publius has come to fetch me.”

“Good morning, Caesar,” Publius said.

“Welcome, Publius,” Caesar said.

Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Trebonius, and Cinna entered the room.

“What, Brutus, are you up so early, too?” Caesar said, adding, “Good morning, Casca.”

Caesar then said, “Caius Ligarius, Caesar was never so much your enemy as that illness that has made you lean.”

Ligarius had supported Pompey in the civil war, but Caesar had pardoned him.

Caesar asked, “What time is it?”

“Caesar, the clock has struck eight o’clock,” Brutus answered.

“I thank you for your trouble and courtesy in coming here to accompany me to the Senate House,” Caesar said.

Mark Antony entered the room.

“Look! Even Antony, who revels long into the nights, is up,” Caesar said. “Good morning to you, Antony.”

“And to you, most noble Caesar,” Antony replied.

Caesar ordered a servant, “Set out some wine.”

He said to his guests, “I am to blame for making you wait. Cinna, Metellus, and Trebonius, I want to talk with you for an hour today. Remember to talk to me later today. Stay near me so that I will remember.”

“Caesar, I will,” Trebonius said. He thought, *I will be so near to you that your best friends shall wish I had been further away.*

“Good friends, let us go in this other room, and you can drink some wine with me, and then we, like the friends we are, will leave together.”

Brutus thought, *We are now only like friends — we are not really friends. Caesar, this makes my heart ache.*

— 2.3 —

On a Roman street on which Caesar would soon walk, Artemidorus read a letter that he had written:

“Caesar, beware of Brutus; take heed of Cassius; do not go near Casca; keep an eye on Cinna; do not trust Trebonius; pay attention to Metellus Cimber; Decius Brutus does not like you; you have wronged Caius Ligarius. All of these men are of the same mind, and that mind is opposed to Caesar. Unless you are immortal, watch out for yourself. Your overconfidence gives conspiracy an opportunity. May the mighty gods defend you! Your good friend, Artemidorus.”

Artemidorus said to himself, “I will wait here until Caesar passes by, and I will give him this letter as if it were a petition — a request that a wrong be righted. My heart laments that good men cannot live safely out of the way of the teeth of jealous rivals. If you read this, Caesar, you may live. If you do not read this, the Fates are on the side of traitors.”

— 2.4 —

On a Roman street, Portia ordered Lucius, “Boy, run to the Senate House. Do not stay — go now! Why are you still here?”

“I need to know what errand you want me to do, madam,” Lucius said.

“If I could, I would have had you there and back again before I could tell you what you should do there,” Portia said.

She said to herself, “Firmness of mind, come to me and support me! Set a huge mountain — a barrier — in between my heart and my tongue! I have a man’s mind, but a woman’s might. How hard it is for women to keep secrets!”

She said to Lucius, “Are you still here?”

“Madam, what do you want to do? Run to the Capitol, and nothing else? And then return to you, and nothing else?”

“Yes, run there and back, boy. Tell me if Brutus looks well. When he left here, he looked ill. Also, see what Caesar is doing. See which petitioners crowd against him.”

She thought that she heard a noise and said, “Listen, boy! What is that noise?”

“I don’t hear anything, madam.”

“Please, listen carefully. I heard a sound like a fight or a battle, and the wind brought it from the Capitol.”

“Madam, I hear nothing.”

The soothsayer walked up to Portia and Lucius.

Portia said to him, “Come here, fellow. From which way have you come?”

“I have come from my own house, good lady,” the soothsayer replied.

“What time is it?”

“About nine o’clock, lady.”

“Has Caesar gone to the Capitol?”

“Madam, not yet. I am going to find a spot to stand to see him pass on his way to the Capitol.”

“You have some request to make to Caesar, haven’t you?”

“That I have, lady,” the soothsayer replied. “If it will please Caesar to be so good to Caesar as to hear me, I shall beg him to befriend himself.”

“Why, do you know of any harm that is intended towards him?”

“None that I know will happen, but much that I fear may happen,” the soothsayer replied. “Good morning to you. I must go. Here the street is narrow, and the throng of people who follow Caesar at the heels — Senators, Praetors, common people — will crowd a feeble man almost to death. I’ll go to a place with more room, and there I will speak to great Caesar as he comes along.”

Portia said, “I must go inside. How weak a thing is the heart of a woman! Brutus, may the Heavens help you in your enterprise!”

She had said that aloud. Afraid, she thought, *The boy Lucius must have heard me.*

She said out loud so that Lucius would hear her, “Brutus has a petition that Caesar will not grant.”

She added, “I am growing faint. Run, Lucius, and commend me to my lord. Say that I am cheerful, then return to me and tell me what he says to you.”

CHAPTER 3 (Julius Caesar)

— 3.1 —

In front of the Capitol, Julius Caesar and many others were standing. Among them were Artemidorus and the soothsayer, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Decius Brutus, Metellus Cimber, Trebonius, Cinna, Mark Antony, Lepidus, Popilius Lena, Publius, and others.

Caesar said to the soothsayer, “The Ides of March have come.”

“Yes, Caesar, but they have not yet gone,” the soothsayer replied.

“Hail, Caesar!” Artemidorus said. “Read my petition.”

Eager to deflect Caesar’s attention from Artemidorus, Decius Brutus, one of the conspirators, said to Caesar, “Trebonius asks you to read this humble petition at your leisure.”

“Caesar, read my petition first,” Artemidorus said. “My petition concerns you personally. Read it, great Caesar.”

“What concerns myself, I will read last,” Caesar said.

“Please do not wait,” Artemidorus said. “Read it now.”

“What, is the fellow insane?” Caesar said.

Publius said to Artemidorus, “Fellow, get out of the way.”

Cassius said to Artemidorus, “Why are you urging Caesar to read your petition in the street? Go to the Capitol with your petition.”

Caesar and several other people went to the Senate House.

Popilius Lena, a Roman Senator, said to Cassius, who had stayed behind, "I hope that your enterprise today thrives."

"What enterprise, Popilius?"

"Fare you well," Popilius Lena said and then followed Caesar.

Brutus asked Cassius, "What did Popilius Lena say to you?"

"He said that he hopes our enterprise may thrive. I fear that our plot has been discovered."

"Popilius is going up to Caesar," Brutus said. "Let's see what happens."

Cassius said, "Casca, be quick of action. We fear that our plot has been revealed."

He said to Brutus, "What shall we do? If our plot is known, either Cassius or Caesar will die. If we fail to kill Caesar, I will kill myself."

"Cassius, be steady and resolute," Brutus replied. "Popilius Lena is not telling Caesar about our plot. Look, Popilius is smiling, and Caesar's expression has not changed."

Cassius said, "Trebonius knows the right time to play his part in this plot. Look, Brutus, he is drawing Mark Antony out of the way."

Trebonius and Mark Antony left.

Decius Brutus asked, "Where is Metellus Cimber? He needs to go and immediately make his petition to Caesar."

"He is ready," Brutus said. "Crowd near Metellus Cimber and second his petition."

Cinna said, "Casca, you will be the first to raise your hand

and stab Caesar.”

“Are we all ready?” Caesar asked. “What is now amiss that Caesar and his Senate must set to rights?”

Metellus Cimber said, “Most high, most mighty, and most powerful Caesar, Metellus Cimber kneels before you with a humble heart —”

He knelt, but Caesar said, “I must stop you, Metellus Cimber. This stooping and bowing might thrill the blood of ordinary men and influence them to turn aside ancient customs and laws and change them like the whims of children making up rules for a game. Do not be so foolish as to think that Caesar’s spirit can rebel against its true nature because of these things that influence fools. I refer to sweet words, knee-bending bows, and cringing like a cocker spaniel. Your brother, Publius Cimber, has been banished from Rome by my decree. If you bow and pray and fawn for him, I will kick you out of my way as if you were a cur. Know that Caesar is not doing the wrong thing by keeping your brother in exile, and without good cause and reasons he will not be convinced to allow your brother to return from exile.”

Metellus Cimber replied, “Is there no voice more worthy than my own to speak more sweetly in great Caesar’s ear and urge the return of my banished brother?”

Brutus knelt and kissed Caesar’s hand and said, “I kiss your hand, but not in flattery, Caesar. I urge that Publius Cimber may immediately be recalled from exile.”

An impartial observer could think that Brutus was kissing Caesar’s hand in betrayal.

“What are you saying, Brutus!” Caesar said.

“Grant your pardon, Caesar,” Cassius said, falling to

Caesar's feet. "Caesar, grant your pardon. I, Cassius, fall to your feet and beg that Publius Cimber be allowed to return to Rome and to have all Roman rights restored to him."

"If I were like you, I could be persuaded to change my mind," Caesar said. "But I am as constant as the Northern star, the pole star that sailors use to navigate their ships. The Northern star's fixed and permanent position has no equal in the Heavens. The skies are painted with innumerable sparks of stars. They are all fire and each of them shines, but of all the stars only one continually keeps his position. It is the same with people in the world. Many men live on Earth, and men are flesh and blood, and capable of understanding, yet in all the numbers of men I know of only one who — unassailable — keeps the same position, undisturbed by the motion of other men, and that man is me. Let me demonstrate this, here and now. I banished Publius Cimber, and I continue to banish him."

Cinna said, "Caesar —"

Caesar said, "Stop! Would you try to lift Mount Olympus, the abode of the gods?"

Decius Brutus said, "Great Caesar —"

Caesar said, "Why are you pleading with me when even my good friend Brutus is kneeling before me and not swaying me?"

Casca said, "Speak, hands, for me!"

Casca would not speak with words, but with his sword.

Casca stabbed Caesar first, and then all of the other conspirators stabbed Caesar.

When Brutus stabbed Julius Caesar, Caesar looked him directly in the eyes and said, "*Et tu, Brute!* You, too, Brutus? Then let Caesar fall and die!"

He fell before a statue of Pompey.

Over Caesar's dead body, Cinna shouted, "Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead! Run around, proclaim Caesar's death, cry it about the streets."

Brutus said to the non-conspirators present, "People and Senators, do not be frightened. Don't run away. Stay here. Ambition's debt is paid. Caesar was ambitious, and he has died for it."

"Go to the speakers' platform, Brutus, and speak," Casca said.

Decius Brutus said, "Cassius should also speak from one of the speakers' platforms."

"Where is old Publius?" Brutus asked.

"He is here, stunned by this mutiny," Cinna said.

"Let us stand close together in case some friend of Caesar's should happen —" Metellus Cimber began to say.

"We have no need of defending ourselves," Brutus said.

He added, "Publius, be of good cheer — don't worry. We mean you no harm. We will not hurt you or any other Roman. Tell the other Romans that, Publius."

"And leave us now, Publius," Cassius said, "lest the people, rushing here, should hurt an elderly man such as you."

"Do as Cassius tells you, Publius," Brutus said. "No one should suffer from the consequences of this deed except we who committed it."

Trebonius walked up to the conspirators.

"Where is Mark Antony?" Cassius asked.

"He has fled to his house, stupefied," Trebonius replied.

“Men, wives, and children stare, cry out, and run in the streets as if it were Doomsday — the Day of Judgment.”

“Fates, we will know your pleasures — we will know what you have in store for us,” Brutus said. “That we shall die, we know, but men are concerned about the time of their death and how to prolong their lives.”

“Why, he who cuts off twenty years of life cuts off so many years of fearing death,” Cassius said.

“If that is true, then death is a benefit,” Brutus said. “We are Caesar’s friends because we have shortened the time that he will fear death. Stoop, Romans, stoop, and let us bathe our hands in Caesar’s blood up to the elbows and smear our swords with his blood. Then we will walk forth, all the way to the Forum, and, waving our red and bloody weapons over our heads, let us all cry, ‘Peace, freedom, and liberty!’”

“Stoop, then, and wash your hands in Caesar’s blood,” Cassius said.

The conspirators bloodied their hands and swords with Caesar’s blood.

“For many ages hereafter, this our lofty scene will be acted in celebration in countries that do not yet exist and with languages not yet known!” Cassius said.

Brutus said, “How many times shall Caesar bleed again in plays, although he now lies — worthless as dust — at the base of this statue of Pompey!”

“As often as the plays are given,” Cassius said, “that often shall we conspirators be called the men who gave their country liberty!”

An impartial observer who knew future history would think that no, the conspirators’ attempt to keep Rome a republic

would fail. Octavius Caesar would become Caesar Augustus, the first Roman Emperor. Now, he is better known as Caesar Augustus than as Octavius.

“Shall we leave now?” Decius Brutus asked.

“Yes,” Cassius said. “Let all of us go now. Brutus shall lead, and we will follow his heels with the very boldest and best hearts of Rome.”

A servant came toward the group of conspirators.

Brutus said, “Wait! Who is coming here? It is a friend of Mark Antony’s.”

The servant knelt and said, “Brutus, thus did my master order me to kneel before you. Thus Mark Antony ordered me to fall down; and, with me kneeling before you, he ordered me to say this to you: ‘Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and honorable. Caesar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving. Say that I feared Caesar, honored him, and loved him. If Brutus will swear that Antony may safely come to him, and be convinced that Caesar deserved to die, then Mark Antony shall not love the dead Caesar as well as he loves the living Brutus. With all true faith, he will follow the fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus through the hazards of this unfamiliar state of affairs.’ So says my master Antony.”

“Your master is a wise and valiant Roman,” Brutus said. “I have never thought any less of him. Tell him that if it will please him to come here, we will explain everything to his satisfaction. I swear that he will depart from us untouched and unharmed.”

“I will bring him here immediately,” the servant said, and then exited.

“I know that Mark Antony will be a good friend to us,”

Brutus said.

“I hope that he will,” Cassius said, “but yet I greatly fear him. My suspicions always are accurate.”

“Here comes Antony,” Brutus said.

Mark Antony went to the group of conspirators.

Brutus said, “Welcome, Mark Antony.”

Looking at Caesar’s bloody corpse, Mark Antony said, “Oh, mighty Caesar! Do you lie so low? Are all your conquests, glories, triumphs, and spoils shrunk to this little measure of ground that your body lies on? Farewell.”

Mark Antony then said to the conspirators, “I do not know, gentlemen, what you intend, who else must bleed and die, who else you consider to be rank. If you intend to kill me, this is the hour to kill me and these are the weapons to use to kill me: There is no hour as fit as the hour of Caesar’s death, nor no instruments of death half as worthy as your swords, made rich with the most noble blood of all this world. I do beg of you, if you have a grudge against me, now, while your reddened hands do reek and smoke with hot blood, to kill me and feel your pleasure. Even if I were to live a thousand years, I shall not find myself as ready to die as I am now. No place to die will please me as much as this place, no way to die will please me as much as here by Caesar to be cut down by you — the choice and master spirits of this age.”

“Antony, do not beg us to kill you,” Brutus said. “Though now we must appear bloody and cruel, as, by the blood on our hands and by the blood on the corpse of Caesar you see we do, yet all you can see is only our hands and this bleeding business they have done. You cannot see our hearts, which are full of pity for Caesar and full of a greater pity for the wrongs that Caesar committed against Rome.

As fire drives out fire, so pity drives out pity. Our greater pity drove out our lesser pity, and we killed Caesar. As for you, do not be afraid — for you, Mark Antony, our swords are blunted. Our arms, which have the power to harm, and our hearts, which are filled with brotherly love, embrace you with kind love, good thoughts, and respect.”

“Your voice and your opinion shall be as strong as any man’s when it comes to deciding how to distribute new political offices and awards,” Cassius said.

“Be patient until we have appeased and soothed the multitude of people, who are beside themselves with fear, and then we will explain to you the reasons why I, who loved Caesar when I struck him, have killed him,” Brutus said.

“I do not doubt your wisdom,” Mark Antony said.

He proceeded to shake the conspirators’ hands, saying, “Let each man give me his bloody hand to shake. First, Marcus Brutus, I will shake hands with you. Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand and shake it. Now, Decius Brutus, yours. Now yours, Metellus. Yours, Cinna; and, my valiant Casca, yours. Though I shake your hand last, you are not last in my respect, good Trebonius.”

He added, “Gentlemen — what shall I say? My reputation now stands on such slippery ground that you must consider me in one of two bad ways. You must consider me to be either a coward or a flatterer.”

He looked at the corpse of Caesar and said, “That I did love you, Caesar, is true. If your spirit looks upon us now, shall it not grieve you more than your death, to see your Antony making his peace, shaking the bloody fingers of your foes — your most noble foes — in the presence of your corpse? Had I as many eyes as you have wounds, weeping as fast as your wounds stream forth your blood, it would become me

better than to close in terms of friendship with your enemies. It is much better that I cry than shake hands with your enemies. Pardon me, Julius! Here were you hunted down like a deer, brave heart. Here you fell, and here your hunters stand, marked by your slaughter and reddened by your life stream of blood. The world was the forest of this deer, and you were the dear of this world. The world was Caesar's territory, and Caesar was the life stream of the world. How like a deer, struck by many princes, do you lie here!"

"Mark Antony —" Cassius began to say.

"Pardon me, Caius Cassius," Mark Antony said, "Even the enemies of Caesar shall say what I just said. So then, when a friend of Caesar says it, it is a cool and moderate assessment."

"I do not blame you for praising Caesar in that way," Cassius said, "but what agreement do you mean to have with us? Will you be one of our friends, or shall we proceed and not depend on you?"

"I shook your hands in friendship just now, but I was, indeed, distracted when I looked down at the corpse of Caesar. I am friends with you all and I respect you all, with the hope that you shall give me reasons why and in what way was Caesar dangerous."

"If we cannot do that, then this corpse here would be a savage spectacle," Brutus said. "Our reasons are so full of serious consideration that, Antony, even if you were the son of Caesar, you would be persuaded that we had justly killed Caesar."

"That is all I seek," Mark Antony said, "and I ask that I be allowed to take Caesar's corpse to the Forum, and I ask that on the speakers' platform, as becomes a friend, I be allowed to speak at Caesar's funeral."

“You shall, Mark Antony,” Brutus said.

Cassius said, “Brutus, may I have a word with you?”

Brutus and Cassius went a short distance away from Mark Antony, and Cassius said, “You do not know what you are doing. Do not allow Antony to speak at Caesar’s funeral. Don’t you realize how much the people may be moved by Antony’s speech?”

“I beg your pardon,” Brutus said. “I myself will speak first, and I will explain the reasons why Caesar had to die. Before Antony speaks, I will say that he speaks by our leave and with our permission, and that we want Caesar to have all the proper funeral rites and lawful ceremonies. This shall do us more good than harm.”

“I am afraid of what may happen,” Cassius said. “I am against Antony’s speaking at Caesar’s funeral.”

Brutus said, “Mark Antony, here, take Caesar’s body. You shall not in your funeral speech blame us. Instead, speak all the good you can of Caesar, and say you do it with our permission, or else you shall not have any hand at all in his funeral. You shall speak on the same speakers’ platform where I am going now, and you shall speak after I have finished my speech.”

“So be it,” Mark Antony said. “I desire no more than that.”

“Prepare the body then, and follow us.”

Everyone, except for Mark Antony, left.

Kneeling by the corpse of Caesar, Mark Antony said, “Pardon me, you bleeding piece of earth, that I am meek and gentle with these butchers! You are the ruins of the noblest man who ever lived in the tide of times — the ebb and flow of history. Woe to the hands that shed this valuable blood! I now prophesy over your wounds, which,

like speechless mouths, open their ruby lips, to ask my tongue to speak. I prophesy that a curse shall light upon the bodies of men. Domestic fury and fierce civil strife shall paralyze all the parts of Italy. Blood and destruction shall be so common and dreadful objects shall be so familiar that mothers shall only smile when they see their infants cut to pieces by the hands of war. All pity will disappear because people are so accustomed to witnessing deadly deeds. Caesar's spirit, searching for revenge, with Ate — the Roman goddess of vengeance coming hot from Hell — by his side, shall in these territories with a monarch's voice cry 'Havoc,' and let loose the dogs of war. This foul deed shall result in men becoming stinking carrion above the earth, groaning for burial."

A servant came toward Mark Antony.

"You serve Octavius Caesar, don't you?" Mark Antony asked.

Octavius Caesar was the grand-nephew and adopted heir of Julius Caesar, to whom Calpurnia had given no children.

"I do, Mark Antony."

"Julius Caesar wrote for him to come to Rome."

"Octavius Caesar received his letters, and he is coming. He told me to say to you by word of mouth —"

The servant saw the corpse of Julius Caesar and exclaimed, "Oh, Caesar!"

"Your heart is big," Mark Antony said. "Go away a short distance and cry. Sorrow, I see, is catching. My eyes, seeing those tears of sorrow in your eyes, have started to cry. Is your master coming?"

"He will sleep tonight within 21 miles of Rome."

“Go back to him quickly,” Mark Antony said, “and tell him what has happened. Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome, not a Rome of safety for Octavius yet. Hurry now, and tell him. But wait. Stay here for a while. You shall not return to Octavius until I have carried this corpse into the Forum. In my speech, I shall see how the people take the assassination of Caesar by these bloody men. You shall report back to Octavius what happens.

“Now help me to carry Caesar’s body.”

The two men carried Caesar’s body to the Forum where the funeral orations would be given.

— 3.2 —

In the Forum were Brutus, Cassius, and many common citizens of Rome.

The citizens shouted, “We will be satisfied! Let us be given a satisfactory explanation!”

“Then follow me,” Brutus said, “and listen to what I have to say, friends.”

He added, “Cassius, you go to the other street. Let us divide the audience. Half will hear you speak, and half will hear me speak.”

He said to the citizens, “Those who will hear me speak, let them stay here. Those who will follow Cassius, go with him. Here in public, we will tell you the reasons why Caesar had to die.”

The first citizen said, “I will hear Brutus speak.”

Another citizen said, “I will hear Cassius speak, and we will compare their reasons after we have heard both Brutus and Cassius speak.”

Cassius left, and several citizens followed him to hear him

speak.

Brutus went to the speakers' platform.

The third citizen said, "The noble Brutus has ascended to the speakers' platform. Silence!"

"Be patient until the end of my speech," Brutus said. "Romans, countrymen, and friends! Hear me explain my reasons for killing Caesar, and be silent so that you can hear me. Believe me because of my honor. Have respect for my honor so that you may believe me. Use your wisdom to critique what I say, and use your intelligence so that you may the better judge me.

"If there is in this assembly any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love for Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demands why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Would you prefer that Caesar were living and that you all die as slaves, or would you prefer that Caesar were dead so that you can all live as free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him. As he was successful in war, I rejoice at it. As he was valiant, I honor him. But as he was ambitious, I slew him. Caesar has received tears for his love, joy for his success in war, honor for his valor, and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that he wants to be a slave? If any of you are like that, speak up, because that man have I offended. Who is here so barbarous that he would prefer not to be a Roman? If any of you are like that, speak up, because that man have I offended. Who is here so vile that he will not love his country? If any of you are like that, speak up, because that man have I offended. I pause for a reply."

The citizens shouted, "None of us is like that, Brutus."

"Then I have offended no one," Brutus said, "I have done no more to Caesar than you would do to me if I were to

become a tyrant. The reasons for Caesar's death are recorded on a roll of parchment in the Capitol. Caesar's glory is not belittled when he has earned it, and neither are his offenses, for which he suffered death, exaggerated."

Mark Antony and others arrived, carrying Caesar's body.

Brutus said, "Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony, who, though he had no hand in Caesar's death, shall receive the benefit of Caesar's dying: a place in the commonwealth, just as each of you has.

"With these final words, I depart: I slew my best friend for the good of Rome, and I still possess the dagger that killed him. I will use it to kill myself when my country needs my death."

The Roman citizens shouted, "Live, Brutus! Live! Live!"

The first citizen shouted, "Let us carry Brutus in triumph home to his house."

The second citizen shouted, "Let us create a statue of him and place it among the statues of his ancestors."

The third citizen shouted, "Let him be Caesar and rule us."

The fourth citizen shouted, "Caesar's better qualities shall be crowned in Brutus!"

The first citizen shouted, "We'll bring him to his house with shouts and clamors."

Brutus began, "My countrymen —"

The second citizen shouted, "Peace, silence! Brutus speaks."

The first citizen shouted, "Quiet!"

"Good countrymen, let me depart alone," Brutus said.

“And, for my sake, stay here with Antony. Honor Caesar’s corpse, and listen to Antony’s speech about Caesar’s glories. Mark Antony, by our permission, is allowed to make this funeral speech. I ask you to stay and listen to him. Not a man should depart, except for myself, until after Antony has spoken.”

Brutus left.

The first citizen said, “Let us stay and hear Mark Antony speak.”

The third citizen said, “Let him go up onto the speakers’ platform. We will listen to him. Noble Antony, go up and speak.”

Mary Antony said, “I am indebted to you, thanks to Brutus,” as he climbed onto the speakers’ platform.

The fourth citizen asked, “What did he say about Brutus?”

The third citizen said, “He said that he is indebted to all of us, thanks to Brutus.”

The fourth citizen said, “If he is wise, he will speak no harm of Brutus here.”

The first citizen said, “Julius Caesar was a tyrant.”

The third citizen said, “That’s for certain. We are blessed that Rome is rid of him.”

The second citizen said, “Quiet. Let us hear what Antony has to say.”

“You gentle Romans —” Mark Antony shouted above the noise.

The citizens shouted, “Quiet! Let us hear him!”

“Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears,” Mark

Antony said. "I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often buried with their bones. So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus has told you that Caesar was ambitious. If this is true, it was a grievous fault, and grievously has Caesar answered for it. Here, with the permission of Brutus and the rest of the conspirators — for Brutus is an honorable man, and so are they all, all honorable men — I have come to speak at Caesar's funeral. Caesar was my friend, faithful and just to me. But Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honorable man. Caesar brought many captives home to Rome, and the money paid to ransom them filled the public treasury. Did this in Caesar seem ambitious? When the poor have cried, Caesar has wept. Ambition should be made of sterner stuff. Yet Brutus says he was ambitious, and Brutus is an honorable man. You all did see that on the Lupercal I three times presented Caesar with a Kingly crown, which he did three times refuse. Was this ambition? Yet Brutus says Caesar was ambitious, and, to be sure, Brutus is an honorable man. I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke, but I am here to speak what I do know. You all did love him once, not without cause. What cause then keeps you from mourning for him? Oh, Reason, you have fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason. Bear with me. My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar, and I must pause until it comes back to me."

The first citizen said, "I think that there is much sense in what Antony says."

"If you think correctly about this, Caesar has been done great wrong," the second citizen said.

"Has he, friends?" the third citizen said. "Then I fear that a worse man will replace him."

"Did you hear what Antony said?" the fourth citizen asked. "Caesar would not take the crown; therefore, we can be

certain that he was not ambitious.”

“If Caesar was not ambitious, then some people are going to pay for his death,” the first citizen said.

“Poor soul!” the second citizen said. “Antony’s eyes are as red as fire from crying.”

“There’s not a nobler man in Rome than Antony,” the third citizen said.

“Now let us listen to him — he begins again to speak,” the fourth citizen said.

“Only yesterday the word of Caesar might have overcome the opposition of the world,” Antony said. “Now he lies there, and no one has the humility to show him respect. Friends, if I were disposed to stir your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage, I would do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong, who, you all know, are honorable men. I will not do them wrong. I instead choose to wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you, rather than wrong such honorable men. But here’s a parchment document with the seal of Caesar that I found in his study. It is his will. If you could hear his will and testament — which, pardon me, I do not intend to read out loud — you would go and kiss dead Caesar’s wounds and dip your handkerchiefs in his sacred blood. Indeed, you would even beg for one of his hairs as a memento, and, dying, you would mention it in your wills, and bequeath it as a rich legacy to your children.”

“We will hear the will,” the fourth citizen shouted. “Read it out loud, Mark Antony!”

“The will, the will!” the citizens shouted. “We will hear Caesar’s will!”

“Have patience, gentle friends,” Antony said. “I must not read Caesar’s will out loud. It is not fitting that you know

how much Caesar loved you. You are not wood, you are not stones, you are men. Being men, hearing the will of Caesar will inflame you — it will make you mad. It is good you do not know that you are his heirs, for, if you did, what would come of it!”

“Read the will!” the fourth citizen shouted. “We’ll hear it, Antony! You shall read us the will — Caesar’s will!”

“Will you be patient?” Antony asked. “Will you stay awhile? I said too much when I told you about Caesar’s will. I fear that I wrong the honorable men whose daggers have stabbed Caesar — I do fear it.”

“They were traitors!” the fourth citizen shouted, adding scornfully, “Honorable men!”

The citizens shouted, “The will! Caesar’s last will and testament!”

“The conspirators were villains, murderers!” the second citizen shouted. “The will! Read the will out loud!”

“You will compel me, then, to read the will?” Antony said. “Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar, and let me show you him who made the will. Shall I descend from the speakers’ platform? Will you give me permission to descend?”

“Come down,” several citizens said.

“Descend,” the second citizen said.

“You have our permission,” the third citizen said.

Mark Antony came down from the speakers’ platform and stood over Caesar’s corpse.

“Make a ring around Caesar’s corpse,” the fourth citizen said. “Stand around the corpse.”

“Stand back from the bier,” the first citizen said. “Stand back from the body.”

“Give Antony, most noble Antony, room,” the second citizen said.

“Do not crowd me,” Antony said. “Stand farther away.”

“Stand back. Give him room. Fall back,” several citizens said.

“If you have tears, prepare to shed them now,” Antony said, touching Caesar’s cloak. “You all know this cloak. I remember the first time that Caesar put it on. It was on a summer’s evening, in his tent, that day he conquered the Nervii, enemies of Rome who lived in northern Gaul.

“Look! In this place ran Cassius’ dagger through. See what a rent the malicious Casca made. Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed, and as he plucked his cursed steel away, see how the blood of Caesar followed it, as if it were rushing out of doors to find out if it were Brutus who so unkindly knocked, because Brutus, as you know, was Caesar’s angel — Caesar trusted Brutus as if Brutus were his guardian angel. Judge, gods, how dearly Caesar loved Brutus! This was the cruelest and most unkindest cut of all because when the noble Caesar saw him stab, ingratitude, which is stronger than traitors’ weapons, quite vanquished Caesar. That is when Caesar’s mighty heart burst. Caesar covered his face with his cloak and at the base of Pompey’s statue, on which was splashed Caesar’s blood, great Caesar fell. What a fall was there, my countrymen! At that time, I, and you, and all of us fell down, while bloody treason triumphed over us.”

The Roman citizens wept, and Antony said, “Oh, now you weep, and I see that you feel the blow of pity. These are gracious tears. Kind souls, you are crying when you see only the wounded cloak of Caesar. Look now!”

With a swift movement, Antony uncovered Caesar's corpse and said, "Here is Caesar himself, marred, as you see, with the wounds of traitors."

"Oh, pitiful sight!" the first citizen said.

"Oh, noble Caesar!" the second citizen said.

"Oh, woeful day!" the third citizen said.

"Oh, traitors, villains!" the fourth citizen said.

"Oh, most bloody sight!" the first citizen said.

"We will be revenged," the second citizen said.

"Revenge! Go! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay! Let not a traitor live!" the citizens shouted.

"Wait, countrymen," Antony said.

"Quiet!" the first citizen shouted. "Let us hear the noble Antony!"

"We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him," the second citizen shouted.

"Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up to such a sudden flood of mutiny," Antony said. "These men who have done this deed are honorable. I don't know what personal grievances they had against Caesar that made them kill him. These men are wise and honorable, and will, no doubt, answer you with reasons for why they killed Caesar. I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts: I am not an orator, as Brutus is. As all of you know, I am a plain and blunt man, who loves my friend. These men who gave me permission to speak about Caesar know that I am no orator. I have neither intellectual cleverness, nor rhetorical skill, nor authority, nor rhetorical gestures, nor eloquence, nor the power of speech to stir up the blood of men. I only speak directly and to the point. I tell you that which you

yourselves do know. I show you sweet Caesar's wounds — those poor dumb mouths — and I ask them to speak for me, but if I were Brutus, and Brutus were Antony, then Antony would have the rhetorical power to enrage your spirits and make every wound of Caesar speak so that even the stones of Rome would rise and mutiny and riot.”

“We'll riot,” the Roman citizens said.

“We'll burn the house of Brutus,” the first citizen said.

“Let's go!” the third citizen said. “Let's find the conspirators!”

“Wait, countrymen,” Antony said. “Listen to me.”

“Quiet!” the citizens shouted. “Hear what Antony, most noble Antony, has to say!”

“Why, friends, you go to do you not know what,” Antony said. “Why does Caesar deserve your love and respect? You do not know yet. Therefore, I must tell you. You have forgotten the will I told you of.”

“That's true,” the citizens said. “The will! Let's stay and hear the will!”

“Here is the will in my hand,” Antony said, “and it bears Caesar's seal. To every Roman citizen he gives — to each man — seventy-five drachmas.”

“Most noble Caesar!” the second citizen said. “We'll revenge his death!”

“Oh, royal Caesar!” the third citizen shouted.

“Hear me patiently,” Antony said.

“Quiet!” the citizens shouted.

“In addition, Caesar has left you all his gardens, his private

summer houses, and newly planted orchards, on this side of the Tiber River,” Antony said. “He has left them to you and to your heirs forever. They will be public pleasure gardens in which you can walk and relax. Here was a Caesar! When will there come another like him!”

“Never, never!” the first citizen shouted. “Let’s go! We’ll cremate Caesar’s corpse in the holy place and then with the firebrands set fire to the traitors’ houses. Let’s carry Caesar’s corpse to the holy place!”

“Fetch fire!” the second citizen said.

“Tear apart benches for wood!” the third citizen said.

“Tear apart shutters and anything we can use for wood to burn,” the fourth citizen said.

The citizens departed, carrying Caesar’s corpse.

“Now let it work,” Antony said. “Troubles and riots, you have started. Take whatever course you will.”

A servant came up to Mark Antony, who asked, “What news do you have for me?”

“Sir, Octavius has already come to Rome.”

“Where is he?” Antony asked.

“He and the soldier Lepidus are at Julius Caesar’s house.”

“And there will I immediately go to visit him,” Antony said. “He comes just as I had wished. The goddess Fortune is merry, and in this mood she will give us anything.”

“I heard him say that Brutus and Cassius have ridden like madmen through the gates of Rome.”

“Probably they have heard that the people are rioting because I persuaded them to riot,” Antony said. “Take me

to Octavius.”

— 3.3 —

Cinna the poet — not Cinna the conspirator — walked alone on a street in Rome. The poet was named Helvius Cinna; the conspirator was named Cornelius Cinna.

Cinna said to himself, “I dreamt last night that I feasted with Caesar, and bad omens now weigh on my imagination. I have no wish to wander out of doors, and yet something leads me forth.”

A mob of citizens arrived.

“What is your name?” the first citizen asked Cinna.

“Where are you going?” the second citizen asked.

“Where do you live?” the third citizen asked.

“Are you a married man or a bachelor?” the fourth citizen asked.

“Answer every man directly,” the second citizen said.

“Yes, and briefly,” the first citizen said.

“Yes, and wisely,” the fourth citizen said.

“Yes, and truly — you had better!” the third citizen said.

“What is my name?” Cinna the poet repeated. “Where am I going? Where do I live? Am I a married man or a bachelor? Then, to answer every man directly and briefly, wisely and truly — wisely I say, I am a bachelor.”

“That’s as much as to say that they who marry are fools — you’ll get a blow from me for saying that, I think,” the second citizen said. “Now answer us directly.”

“Directly, I am going to Caesar’s funeral,” Cinna the poet

said.

“As a friend or as an enemy?” the first citizen said.

“As a friend,” Cinna the poet said.

“That matter is answered directly,” the second citizen said.

“Where do you live — briefly?” the fourth citizen asked.

“Briefly, I live by the Capitol,” Cinna the poet said.

“What is your name, sir, truly?” the third citizen asked.

“Truly, my name is Cinna.”

“Tear him to pieces! He’s a conspirator!” the first citizen shouted.

“I am Cinna the poet! I am Cinna the poet!”

“Tear him to pieces because of his bad verses!” the fourth citizen shouted.

“I am not Cinna the conspirator!”

“It does not matter — his name’s Cinna,” the fourth citizen said. “Pluck his name out of his heart, and let the rest of him go.”

“Tear him to pieces!” the third citizen cried.

The mob killed Cinna the poet.

“Let’s carry firebrands to Brutus’ house and to Cassius’ house and burn them down!” the third citizen shouted.

“Some of us will go to Decius’ house, and some to Casca’s house and some to Ligarius’ house. Let’s go!”

CHAPTER 4 (Julius Caesar)

— 4.1 —

In a house in Rome, Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus were seated at a table. They had joined together to seize power and to divide the Roman territory into three parts — Europe, Asia, and Africa — that they would rule separately. Currently, they were making a list of people in Rome who would die. By killing many men, and exiling others, they hoped to stop opposition.

Mark Antony had a wax tablet in his hands. In the wax were written many names. Whenever they decided that a man had to die, Antony made a mark by that person's name.

“These men, then, shall die,” Antony said. “Their names are pricked.”

Octavius said to Lepidus, “Your brother also must die. Do you consent, Lepidus?”

“I do consent —” Lepidus began.

“Make a mark by his name, Antony,” Octavius said.

Lepidus continued, “— on the condition that Publius — your sister's son, Mark Antony — shall not live.”

“He shall not live,” Antony agreed. “Look, with a mark I damn him to die. But, Lepidus, go to Caesar's house. Bring his will here, and we shall alter it to reduce his legacies and keep money for ourselves.”

“Will you two be here?” Lepidus asked.

“We will be either here or at the Capitol,” Octavius said.

Lepidus left.

Antony said, “Lepidus is an insignificant and undeserving man who is fit only for running errands. Is it fitting that when we divide the Roman territory into three parts — Europe, Asia, and Africa — that he get one of those parts?”

“You have thought him worthy,” Octavius said. “And you allowed him to vote on who should die in our harsh sentences of death and of exile.”

“Octavius, I have seen more days than you. I am older and more experienced,” Antony said. “It is true that we are laying honors on Lepidus so that he can bear the burden of our unpopular actions that shall give us power. He — not us — will be blamed for them. He shall bear the load of honors we give him as the ass bears gold. He will groan and sweat under the load, he will be driven or led where we want him to go, and when he has brought our treasure where we want it to be, then we will unload the treasure and set him loose, like an ass without a burden, to shake his ears and to graze in a pasture.”

“You may do as you like,” Octavius said, “but he is a tried and valiant soldier.”

“So is my horse, Octavius, and because of that I do give him his feed. My horse is a creature that I teach to fight, to turn, to stop, to run directly on — I guide his bodily motion. And, to some extent, so is Lepidus. He must be taught and trained and bid to go forth. He is a barren-spirited fellow — he has no ideas of his own. He feeds on curiosities, artifices, and fashions or styles. He becomes interested in things only after they are out of date. So do not talk about Lepidus except as a tool whom we may use.

“But now, Octavius, listen to important matters. Brutus and Cassius are raising armies. We must immediately raise our own armies and march against them. Therefore, let our

forces be combined into one army, and let us get support from our allies and friends, and make the most of our resources. We need to immediately go into council and decide how we can uncover secret plans and how we can best fight open dangers.”

“Let us do so,” Octavius said. “We are like a bear that is tied to a stake, and surrounded by baying enemies. And some people who smile at us, I fear, have in their hearts millions of mischiefs.”

— 4.2 —

In a camp near Sardis in western Turkey, in front of Brutus’ tent, Brutus, Lucilius, Lucius, and some soldiers met Titinius and Pindarus, one of Cassius’ slaves.

Brutus cried, “Halt!”

Lucilius cried, “Pass on the order to the troops to halt!”

“How are you, Lucilius?” Brutus asked. “Is Cassius near?”

“He is near,” Lucilius replied. “Pindarus has come to bring you greetings from him.”

“Cassius has sent a good man to greet me,” Brutus said.

He said to Pindarus, “Your master, because of some change in himself, or because of the bad conduct of some of his officers, has given me some good reasons to wish that some things that have been done, had not been done. But, if he is near, he will be able to talk to me and explain things.”

“I do not doubt but that my noble master will appear, as usual, deserving of respect and honor,” Pindarus said.

“I do not doubt it,” Brutus said.

He added, “Lucilius, tell me how Cassius greeted you.”

“He received me with courtesy and with respect enough,” Lucilius said, “but not with such evidence of close friendship nor with such free and friendly conversation as he has displayed in the past.”

“You have described a hot friend cooling,” Brutus said. “It is always the case, Lucilius, that when friendship begins to sicken and decay, the friend treats you with an unnatural politeness. Plain and simple friendship is not deceitful or phony. But hollow, insincere men, like horses eager to run before the race begins, make a big show and promise of their spirit, but when the race begins, they lose their spirit and like deceiving and worthless nags, they cease to run.”

He added, “Is Cassius’ army coming here?”

“His army intends to camp in Sardis tonight,” Lucilius answered. “The greater part — including all the cavalry — is coming with Cassius.”

“Look,” Brutus said. “Cassius has arrived. Let us march at a dignified pace and meet him.”

Cassius cried, “Halt!”

Brutus cried, “Halt! Pass the order down the line of soldiers.”

“Halt!” the first soldier cried.

“Halt!” the second soldier cried.

“Halt!” the third soldier cried.

Cassius was angry. He said to Brutus, “Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.”

“May the gods judge me,” Brutus replied. “Do I wrong my enemies? No! So how could I wrong a brother?”

“Brutus, this dignified manner of yours hides wrongs. And

when you do them —”

Brutus interrupted, “Cassius, calm down. Speak about your grievances quietly. I know you well. The eyes of both our armies here should perceive nothing but friendship between us, so let us not argue in public. We will order the soldiers to move away a little, and then in my tent, Cassius, you can tell me about your grievances.”

“Pindarus, order our commanders to lead their soldiers a little distance away from here,” Cassius ordered.

“Lucilius, you do the same,” Brutus said. “Let no man come to our tent until Cassius and I have finished our conference. Order Lucius and Titinius to guard our door.”

— 4.3 —

Inside Brutus’ tent, Brutus and Cassius argued.

“Here is a way that you have wronged me,” Cassius said. “You have found guilty and publicly disgraced Lucius Pella for taking bribes here from the Sardians. I sent you letters on behalf of Lucius Pella because I know the man, and you ignored my letters.”

“You wronged yourself to write letters in behalf of such a man,” Brutus said.

“In such a time as this, it is not suitable for every trivial offence to get its punishment,” Cassius said.

“Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself are much condemned for having an itchy palm — for selling and trading official positions for gold to people who do not deserve such positions.”

“I have an itchy palm!” Cassius said. “You are Brutus who speaks this; if you were not Brutus, I swear by the gods, this speech would be your last.”

“Your name, Cassius, protects this corruption by giving it an appearance of respectability, and therefore it goes unpunished,” Brutus said.

“Unpunished!”

“Remember the Ides of March,” Brutus said. “Did not great Julius Caesar bleed for the sake of justice? Who among us stabbed Caesar except in the cause of justice? We struck the foremost man of the entire world because he allowed robbers to go free. Shall we now contaminate our fingers with base bribes? Shall we sell the vast capacity we have for being honorable so we can acquire the trash and money that may be grasped by taking bribes? I would prefer to be a dog, and howl at the Moon, than to be such a Roman.”

“Brutus, do not provoke me,” Cassius said. “I will not endure it. You forget yourself when you hedge me in with your rules and limit my freedom of action. I am a soldier. I am more experienced and abler than yourself to make treaties.”

“No, you are not, Cassius.”

“I am.”

“I say you are not.”

“Test my patience no more, or I shall forget myself,” Cassius said. “Be concerned about your health, and tempt me no further.”

“Go away, insignificant man!” Brutus said.

“Is it possible that you can say that to me?” Cassius asked.

“Listen to me, for I will speak,” Brutus said. “Am I required to give way to your rash anger? Shall I be frightened when a madman stares at me?”

“Gods, must I endure all this?”

“All this?” Brutus said. “Yes, and more. Rage until your proud heart breaks. Go and show your slaves how angry you are, and make your slaves tremble. Must I give in to you? Must I show respectful attention to you? Must I stand here and cringe because you are in a testy mood? By the gods, you shall digest the poison of your temper, even though it makes you burst. From this day on, I’ll use you for my entertainment — I will laugh at you when you are hotheaded.”

“Has it come to this?” Cassius said.

“You say you are a better soldier,” Brutus said. “Prove it. Make your boasting come true, and I shall be well pleased. For my own part, I shall be glad to learn from noble men.”

“You wrong me in every way,” Cassius said. “You wrong me, Brutus. I said, an elder soldier, not a better. Did I say ‘better’?”

“If you did, I don’t care,” Brutus said.

“When Julius Caesar was alive, he would not have dared to have angered me in this way.”

“Be quiet,” Brutus said. “You would not have dared to provoke his anger.”

“I would not have dared!” Cassius said.

“No.”

“What? Dared not to provoke him!”

“No, because you would fear for your life,” Brutus replied.

“Don’t take my friendship for you for granted. I may do something that I shall be sorry for.”

“You have already done something that you should be sorry for — you have taken bribes,” Brutus said. “There is

no terror, Cassius, in your threats. I am not afraid of them because I am so secure in my honesty and integrity that your threats pass by me like the idle wind, which I do not fear or respect.

“I sent to you to tell you to send me certain sums of gold, which you denied me. I can raise no money by vile means.”

An impartial observer might think about these things: Brutus can raise no money by vile means. Is it OK for Cassius to raise money by vile means and then give the money to Brutus? Is it OK for Cassius to raise money by accepting bribes and then give the money to Brutus? What if the only way to raise money is through vile means?

“By Heaven,” Brutus continued, “I had rather turn my heart and the drops of my blood into money than to wring from the hard hands of peasants their vile coins by tricks and deceitful means. I sent to you for gold to pay my legions of soldiers, and you denied me that money. Was that done like Cassius? Would I have done that to you? When Marcus Brutus grows so greedy as to keep such wretched bits of metal from his friends, then be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts — dash me to pieces!”

“I did not deny you the money.”

“You did.”

“I did not,” Cassius said. “He who brought my answer back to you was a fool. Brutus, you have broken my heart. A friend should put up with his friend’s weaknesses, but you make my weaknesses greater than they are.”

“I do not until you inflict your weaknesses on me.”

“You no longer like me.”

“I do not like your faults.”

“A friendly eye could never see such faults,” Cassius said.

“A flatterer’s eye would not, even if they should appear to be as huge as the high mountain that is Olympus.”

“Come to me, Antony and young Octavius, come,” Cassius said. “Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius because Cassius is weary of the world. He is hated by one he loves, defied by his brother, rebuked like a slave. All my faults are observed, written down in a notebook, learned by heart, and memorized so that they can be thrown in my teeth. I could weep my spirit from my eyes and die of grief! There is my dagger, and here is my naked breast. Within is a heart more precious than the mine of Plutus, the god of riches. My heart is richer than gold. If you are a Roman, cut my heart out. I, who denied you gold, will give you my heart. Strike me like you struck at Caesar because I know that when you hated him the worst, you loved him better than you ever loved Cassius.”

“Sheathe your dagger,” Brutus said. “Be angry whenever you will — your anger shall have free expression. Do what you will — I will take your abuse as a mere whim or bad mood. Cassius, you are yoked — partners — with a lamb that carries anger like the flint carries fire. When the flint is struck hard, it shows a hasty spark, and then immediately is cold again. So it is with anger and me.”

“Has Cassius lived to be only mirth and laughter — a joke — to Brutus, when grief and anger vex him?”

“When I said that, I was ill-tempered, too.”

“Do you admit it?” Cassius said. “Give me your hand.”

They shook hands.

“I give you my heart, too,” Brutus said.

“Oh, Brutus!”

“What’s the matter?”

“Aren’t you friendly enough to bear with me, when my bad temper, which I inherited from my mother, makes me forget how I should behave?”

“Yes, Cassius. From henceforth, whenever you are angry at Brutus, he will think your mother is angry, and leave it at that.”

Despite their precautions, gossip about their argument had spread among the soldiers, and now a poet came to Brutus’ tent and demanded to talk to Brutus and Cassius. The poet did not know that Brutus and Cassius had already patched up their quarrel.

The poet said, “Let me go in to see the generals. There is some argument between them, and they ought not to be alone together.”

Lucilius, one of the guards outside Brutus’ tent, said, “You shall not go to them.”

The poet replied, “Nothing but death shall stop me.”

The poet entered the tent, followed by Lucilius, Titinius, and Lucius.

“What is this!” Cassius said. “What is the matter?”

“For shame, you generals!” the poet said. “What do you mean? Love each other, and be friends, as two such men as you should be. I have seen more years, I’m sure, than either of ye.”

Brutus and Cassius made fun of the poet, although older men ought to be respected.

“Ha!” Cassius said. “How vilely does this rude man rhyme!”

“Get out of here,” Brutus said. “Saucy fellow, go!”

“Bear with him, Brutus,” Cassius said. “This is just the way he is.”

“I will allow him to be eccentric when he realizes that there is a proper time and place for it,” Brutus said. “What place has war for these idiot rhymesters?”

He said to the poet, “Get out!”

The poet left.

“Lucilius and Titinius, order the commanders to prepare to pitch camp for their companies tonight,” Brutus ordered.

Cassius ordered, “Then return immediately to us — and bring Messala with you.”

Lucilius and Titinius left to carry out their orders.

“Lucius, bring us a bowl of wine,” Brutus ordered.

Lucius left to carry out his errand.

“I did not think you could have been so angry,” Cassius said.

“Oh, Cassius, I am sick with many griefs.”

“If you surrender to the chance evils that befall us, you are not making use of your Stoic philosophy that ought to teach us to bear such evils patiently and without complaining.”

“No man bears sorrow better than I do,” Brutus said. “Portia is dead.”

“Portia?”

“She is dead.”

“How did I escape your killing me when I quarreled with you?” Cassius asked. “This is an unbearable loss of

someone who touched and loved you! From which illness did she die?”

“Unable to endure my absence, and grieving because young Octavius and Mark Antony have made themselves so powerful — news of their power arrived with news of her death — she despaired and, while her servants were absent, she put hot coals in her mouth and swallowed fire.”

“That is how she died?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, you immortal gods!”

Lucius returned, carrying wine and a candle.

“Speak no more about her,” Brutus said to Cassius. “Give me a bowl of wine. With this drink, I bury all unkindness between us, Cassius.”

He drank.

“My heart is thirsty for peace between us,” Cassius said.

He added, “Fill the cup, Lucius, until the wine overfills it. I cannot drink too much of Brutus’ love.”

He drank.

Brutus heard approaching footsteps and said, “Come in, Titinius!”

Lucius left, and both Titinius and Messala entered Brutus’ tent.

“Welcome, good Messala,” Brutus said. “Now let us sit around this candle here, and discuss our needs.”

“Portia, are you really gone?” Cassius said to himself.

“No more, please,” Brutus said to Cassius.

He added, “Messala, I have here received letters that state that young Octavius and Mark Antony are marching against us with a mighty army. They are marching toward Philippi, a city in northeastern Greece.”

“I have letters that say the same thing,” Messala replied.

“Do they say anything else?” Brutus asked.

“That by proclamation of the death sentence and bills of outlawry, Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus have put to death a hundred Senators. They were declared outlaws and their property was seized.”

“There our letters do not agree well,” Brutus said. “My letters speak of seventy Senators who have died because of their proscriptions. Cicero is one of those who died.”

“Cicero!” Cassius said.

“Cicero is dead by order of Octavius, Mark Antony, and Lepidus,” Messala said.

He then asked Brutus, “Have you received any letters from your wife, my lord?”

“No, Messala.”

“Have any of the letters you have received contained news about her?”

Brutus did not want to talk about his late wife. He replied again, “No, Messala.”

“That is strange, I think,” Messala said.

“Why are you asking about her? Have you heard anything about her in the letters you have received?” Brutus asked.

“No, my lord.”

Brutus decided that eventually he would have to talk about

his late wife, so he might as well start now. He said to Messala, "Now, as you are a Roman, tell me the truth."

"Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell you. It is certain that she is dead and that she died in a strange manner."

To a close friend such as Cassius, Brutus could reveal his feelings. In front of other people, he would act like a Stoic philosopher. He said, "Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala. I have known that she must die one day, and so I have the patience to endure her death now."

"Just like you are doing now, great men should endure great losses," Messala said.

"I also know Stoic philosophy," Cassius said. "But yet I could not bear such a great loss as patiently as you are bearing it."

"Well, let us return to the work we must do while we are alive," Brutus said. "What do you think about marching to Philippi immediately?"

"I do not think it is a good idea," Cassius said.

"Why not?" Brutus asked.

"It is better that the enemy come to us. That way, he will exhaust his supplies and weary his soldiers, doing himself harm, while we, staying here, will be full of rest, in a good defensive position, and fresh."

"Good reasons must, of necessity, give way to better reasons," Brutus said. "The people between Philippi and here have been forced to help us. They have only grudgingly given us supplies. Our enemy's army, marching through them, shall increase as people join the army. They will march against us refreshed, with newly added soldiers, and encouraged by the people's support. We can stop these advantages for their army if we march to and fight at

Philippi. Those people who would support our enemy will be cut off from our enemy's army."

"Listen to me, good brother," Cassius started to object.

"Pardon me," Brutus said. "I am not finished. You must know that we have gotten all that our allies can give us. Our armies are large, and our cause is at its peak. The enemy armies grow larger every day; they have not yet peaked. We are at our peak and are ready to decline. There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Neglected, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat, and we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures. Now is the time for us to take action and march against our enemies, not to sit back and let our enemies come to us."

"Then, as you wish, march to meet them," Cassius said. "My army and I will also march and meet them at Philippi."

"The deepest part of night has crept upon our talk," Brutus said. "We must obey natural necessity and get at least a little sleep. Is there anything else we should talk about?"

"No," Cassius said. "Good night. Early tomorrow we will rise and march to Philippi."

"Lucius!" Brutus called.

Lucius appeared.

"Bring me my robe."

Brutus added, "Farewell, good Messala. Good night, Titinius. Noble, noble Cassius, good night to you, and sleep well."

"My dear brother!" Cassius said. "This night began badly.

May there never again come such division between our souls, Brutus!”

Lucius appeared, carrying Brutus’ robe.

“All is well,” Brutus said.

“Good night, my lord,” Cassius said.

“Good night, good brother,” Brutus said.

Titinius and Messala said, “Good night, Lord Brutus.”

“Farewell, everyone,” Brutus said.

Everyone except Brutus and Lucius left.

“Give me my robe,” Brutus said. “Where is your lute?”

“Here in the tent,” Lucius said.

“I can tell by the way you speak that you are sleepy,” Brutus said. “Poor boy, I don’t blame you. You are tired because you have been kept awake so long. Call Claudius and one other of my men. I’ll have them sleep on cushions in my tent in case I need them.”

“Varro and Claudius!” Lucius called.

Varro and Claudius entered Brutus’ tent.

Varro asked, “Does my lord need me?”

“Please, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep,” Brutus said. “It may happen that I shall wake you by and by to carry a message to my brother Cassius.”

“If it is OK with you, we will stand and wait here until you need us,” Varro said.

“No,” Brutus said. “Lie down and sleep, good sirs. Perhaps I shall not need you.”

Brutus put his hand in the pocket of the robe that Lucius had brought to him and said, "Look, Lucius, here's the book I have been looking for. I put it in the pocket of my robe."

Varro and Claudius lay down to sleep.

"I was sure your lordship did not give the book to me," Lucius said.

"Bear with me, good boy," Brutus said. "I am very forgetful. If you can stay awake a while, will you play a tune or two on your lute?"

"Yes, my lord, if you want me to," Lucius said.

"I do, my boy. I trouble you too much, but I am grateful that you are willing to play for me."

"It is my duty, sir."

"I ought not to make you do more than you can do," Brutus said. "I know that young boys need their rest."

"I have slept for a while, my lord, already."

"That was well done, and you shall sleep again. I will not hold you long," Brutus said. "If I live through this, I will be good to you."

Lucius played and sang a song. But he was tired and fell asleep.

"This is a sleepy tune," Brutus said. "Oh, murderous slumber, you have arrested this boy's playing and made him sleep although he was playing music. Gentle boy, good night. I will not do you wrong and wake you. You might break your lute, and so I will take it from you and put it here, where it will be safe, and so, good boy, good night."

He looked at his book and said, "Let me see. Isn't the

corner of the page turned down where I stopped reading? Here it is, I think.”

The ghost of Julius Caesar entered Brutus’ tent, causing the candle’s flame to quiver.

“How badly this candle burns!” Brutus said. “Wait! Who comes here? I think it is the weakness of my eyes that shapes this monstrous apparition that comes toward me. Are you anything? Are you a god, an angel, or a devil, you who make my blood run cold and my hair stand up? Speak to me and tell me what or who you are.”

“I am your evil spirit, Brutus,” Caesar’s ghost said.

“Why have you come to me here?”

“To tell you that you shall see me at Philippi.”

“Then I shall see you again?”

“Yes, at Philippi.”

Recovering his courage, Brutus said, “Why, I will see you at Philippi, then.”

The ghost disappeared.

“Now that I have regained my courage, you have vanished,” Brutus said. “Evil spirit, I want to talk to you!”

Brutus called, “Boy, Lucius! Varro! Claudius! Sirs, awake! Claudius!” He wanted to know if they had seen the ghost.

Still asleep and dreaming, Lucius said, “The strings, my lord, are out of tune.”

“He thinks he is still playing his lute,” Brutus said. “Lucius, wake up!”

“My lord?”

“Were you dreaming, Lucius?” Brutus asked. “Is that why you cried out?”

“My lord, I do not think that I cried out.”

“Yes, you did,” Brutus said. “Did you see anything?”

“I saw nothing, my lord.”

“Go to sleep again, Lucius,” Brutus said.

Then he called, “Claudius!”

To Varro, he called, “Wake up!”

“My lord?” Varro and Claudius asked together.

“Why did you cry out, sirs, in your sleep?”

“Did we, my lord?” they asked.

“Yes. Did you see anything?”

“No, my lord, I saw nothing,” Varro said.

“Neither did I, my lord,” Claudius said.

“Go and present my compliments to my brother Cassius. Tell him to order his troops to advance early this morning. We will follow him and his troops.”

“It shall be done, my lord,” Varro and Claudius replied, and then they left to carry the message to Cassius.

CHAPTER 5 (Julius Caesar)

— 5.1 —

On the plains of Philippi, Octavius was talking to Mark Antony. Their troops were camped on the plains.

“Now, Antony, our hopes are answered,” Octavius said.

“The enemy forces have made a tactical mistake. You said that the enemy would not come down from their strong defensive position, but would instead stay on the hills and upper regions. They did not do that. Their armies are close to us. They mean to challenge us at Philippi here. They are responding to our challenge even before we have made it.”

“I can put myself in their place and know what they are thinking,” Antony said. “I know why they are doing this. They would like to approach us from different directions and make a surprise attack against us with a show of bravery, thinking to make us believe that they are courageous, but they are not brave.”

A messenger arrived and said, “Prepare yourselves, generals. The enemy marches toward us and makes a gallant show. They are wearing red vests — their bloody signs of battle — over their armor. Some action will have to be taken immediately.”

“Octavius, lead your army slowly to the left side of the level field,” Antony said.

“My army will take the right side of the battlefield. You and your army will take the left side,” Octavius replied.

“Why are you opposing me in this urgent matter?” Antony said.

“I am not opposing you, but my army and I will take the right side of the battlefield.”

Brutus, Cassius, Lucilius, Titinius, Messala, and others approached to talk to Mark Antony and Octavius before the battle began.

Brutus said, “They are willing to talk.”

“Stay here, Titinius,” Cassius said. “Brutus and I will talk to them.”

“Mark Antony, shall we give the order to attack?” Octavius Caesar asked.

“No, Caesar, we will respond when they attack. Let you and I go forward. Their generals would have some words with us.”

Octavius said to his officers, “Don’t move until we give the signal.”

“Words before blows,” Brutus said. “Is that the way it is, countrymen?”

“We do not love words better than battle, as you do,” Octavius said.

“Good words are better than bad strokes, Octavius,” Brutus replied.

“To accompany your bad strokes, Brutus, you gave good words,” Antony replied. “Your dagger put a hole in Caesar’s heart as you cried out, ‘Long live Caesar! Hail, Caesar!’”

“Antony, we do not yet know what kind of blows you will strike, but we do know that your words rob the bees around Hybla, a town in Sicily that is famous for its honey,” Cassius said. “Your words leave those bees honeyless.”

“But not stingless,” Antony said.

“Oh, yes, and soundless, too,” Brutus said. “For you have stolen their buzzing, Antony, and very wisely you threaten before you sting.”

“Villains, you gave no warning before your vile daggers crashed against each other in the body of Julius Caesar,” Antony replied. “You grinned like apes, and fawned like hounds, and bowed like slaves. You kissed Caesar’s feet, while damned Casca, like a dog, stood behind Caesar and

stabbed him in the neck. You flattered Caesar as you murdered him!”

“We are flatterers!” Cassius said. “Now, Brutus, thank yourself. Antony’s tongue would not be insulting us in this way today, if you had listened to me and let us kill Antony when we killed Julius Caesar.”

“Get to the point,” Octavius Caesar said. “If arguing makes us sweat, settling the argument in battle will make us drip redder drops — our blood! Look, I am drawing my sword against conspirators. When do you think that I will sheathe my sword again? Not until Julius Caesar’s three and thirty wounds are well avenged, or until another Caesar — me — has been killed by the swords of traitors.”

“Caesar, it is impossible for you to die at the hands of traitors unless you yourself bring traitors here. We are not traitors; we are loyal to Rome,” Brutus said.

“I hope that it is impossible for me to die at the hands of traitors,” Octavius Caesar said. “I was not born to die on Brutus’ sword.”

“Even if you were the noblest of your family, young man, you could not die more honorably than on my sword,” Brutus said.

“Octavius is a peevish schoolboy, unworthy of such honor,” Cassius said, knowing that Octavius was only 21 years old. “He is allied with Mark Antony, who is known for partying and reveling.”

“Cassius — you never change,” Antony said.

“Antony, let’s leave,” Octavius said.

To Brutus and Cassius, Octavius said, “We hurl defiance in your teeth. If you dare fight today, come to the battlefield. If not, come when you have stomachs for fighting.”

Octavius and Antony left.

Cassius said, “Why, now the wind is blowing, the swells are billowing, and the ships are floating. The storm has started, and everything is at stake.”

“Lucilius!” Brutus said.

“Yes, my lord?”

“I want to speak to you.”

Brutus and Lucilius talked privately.

Cassius said, “Messala!”

“Yes, my general?”

“Messala, this is my birthday; on this very day was Cassius born. Give me your hand, Messala. Be my witness that against my will, as Pompey was, am I compelled to risk everything in one battle. Pompey fought at Pharsalia against his better judgment — he was defeated. You know that I used to strongly believe in the Greek philosopher Epicurus and his teachings. He believed that omens were mere superstitions. Now I change my mind, and I partially believe in things that do presage the future. As we travelled here from Sardis, on our foremost standard — our foremost flag — two mighty eagles fell, and there they perched, gorging and feeding from our soldiers’ hands. From Sardis to Philippi, they accompanied us. This morning, they flew away and are gone. And in their steads do ravens, crows, and kites — all kinds of scavenger birds — fly over our heads and look down on us, as if our corpses will soon be food for them. Their shadows seem to be a deadly canopy, under which our army lies, ready to die.”

“Do not believe that this is an omen,” Messala said.

“I only partially believe it,” Cassius said. “I am of good

spirits and resolved to face all dangers very courageously.”

“That is right, Lucilius,” Brutus said, ending their private conversation.

“Now, most noble Brutus,” Cassius said, “may the gods today be friendly to us, so that we, lovers of peace, may live on to reach old age! But since the affairs of men are always uncertain, let us consider the worst that may befall us. If we lose this battle, then this is the very last time we shall speak together. What are you determined to do if we lose the battle?”

“As a Stoic, I blame Marcus Porcius Cato for the death that he gave himself,” Brutus said. “He opposed Julius Caesar, and rather than surrender to him he committed suicide. I am not sure why, but I find it cowardly and vile to commit suicide out of fear of what may happen. I plan to be patient and accept without complaining whatever the gods send to us.”

“Then, if we lose this battle, you will accept being led as a prisoner in triumph through the streets of Rome?” Cassius asked.

“No, Cassius, no,” Brutus said. “Do not think, noble Roman, that Brutus will allow himself to go bound to Rome. I bear too great a mind for that — I am too proud to allow that to happen. But this day must end that work the Ides of March began. Whether we shall meet again, I do not know. Therefore, let make our final farewells. So, farewell forever, Cassius! If we meet again, then we shall smile. If we do not meet again, then this parting was well done.”

“Forever, and forever, farewell, Brutus!” Cassius said. “If we do meet again, we will smile indeed. If not, it is true that this parting was well done.”

“Why, then, lead on,” Brutus said. “I wish that a man might

know how this day will end before it happens! But it is enough that the day will end, and then we will know the end. Let us go now.”

— 5.2 —

The battle had not yet started.

Brutus gave Messala some written orders and said, “Ride, Messala, ride, and give these orders to Cassius’ legions on the other side. Let them set on and fight at once because I see only faint courage in the soldiers in Octavius’ army. A sudden attack by my wing will defeat them. Ride, Messala. Let all our soldiers attack now.”

— 5.3 —

Later, in Cassius’ part of the battlefield, Cassius and Titinius were talking.

“Look, Titinius, some of our soldiers have turned cowards and are fleeing! I myself have turned enemy to my own soldiers. This standard bearer here of mine was running away, and so I killed the coward, and took the flag from him.”

“Cassius, Brutus gave the orders to attack too early,” Titinius said. “Having some advantage over Octavius’ army, he took it too eagerly and his soldiers began to loot, while we are surrounded by Antony’s army.”

Pindarus came running and said, “Run further off, my lord, run further off. Mark Antony is at your tents, my lord. Run, therefore, noble Cassius, run further off. Retreat.”

“This hill is far enough away,” Cassius said. “Look, Titinius. Are those my tents where I see fire?”

“Yes, they are, my lord.”

“Titinius, if you are my friend, mount my horse, and ride

quickly to the troops there and bring back news of whether those troops are our friends or our enemies.”

“I will be here again as quickly as thought.”

Titinius left.

“Go, Pindarus, get higher on that hill,” Cassius ordered. “My sight has always been poor. Watch Titinius, and tell me what happens.”

Pindarus climbed higher on the hill.

Cassius said to himself, “This day is the day I breathed first. This is the day that I was born. Time has come round, and where I began, there I shall end. My life has run its circle, and I will die today.”

He called to Pindarus, “What do you see?”

“My lord!”

“What is happening?”

“Titinius is surrounded by horsemen who quickly ride toward him. He is riding quickly toward them. Now they are almost on him. Titinius! Now some horsemen dismount. Now, he dismounts, too. He has been captured.”

Shouts rose in the air.

“Listen,” Pindarus said, “The enemy soldiers are shouting for joy.”

“Come down and don’t look any more,” Cassius said. “I am a coward because I have lived so long that I have seen my best friend captured before my eyes!”

Pindarus came down from higher on the hill.

“Come here,” Cassius said. “In Parthia I took you prisoner and then I made you swear that if I did not kill you that

whatever I ordered you to do you would attempt to do it. Come now, and keep your oath. Now you can earn your freedom. Take this good sword that ran through Caesar's bowels and helped to kill him — plunge this good sword into my chest. Don't talk. Don't hesitate. Here, take the hilt of the sword, and wait until I have covered my face."

Cassius covered his face with some clothing.

"Now plunge the sword into my chest."

Pindarus stabbed Cassius, who said, "Caesar, you are revenged with the sword that killed you."

Cassius died.

Pindarus said to himself, "So, I am free, yet this is not the way I wanted to gain my freedom. Cassius, I will run far from this country. I will go where no Roman shall ever take note of me."

He ran away.

Titinius, wearing a wreath of victory, and Messala rode toward Cassius' corpse.

"The armies have simply changed their positions," Messala said to Titinius. "Brutus' army defeated Octavius' army, and Antony's army defeated Cassius' army."

"This news of Brutus' victory will well comfort Cassius," Titinius said.

"Where did you leave him?" Messala asked.

"He was disconsolate and in despair with Pindarus, his slave, on this hill," Titinius said.

"Is not that he who is lying on the ground?"

"He does not lie like a living person," Titinius said. "Oh,

my heart!”

“Is that Cassius?”

“No, but he was Cassius,” Titinius said. “Messala, Cassius lives no more. Oh, setting Sun, just as in your red rays you will sink tonight, so in his red blood Cassius’ day has set. The Sun of Rome has set! Our day is over. Clouds, the dews of evening, and dangers come. Our deeds are done! Mistrust of my success has done this deed — Cassius mistook good news for bad news and so killed himself.”

“Mistrust of good success has done this deed,” Messala said. “Oh, hateful error, you are the child of melancholy. You make men think thoughts that are false. Error is quickly conceived, but it kills its mother and nothing good can come from it.”

“Pindarus! Where are you, Pindarus?” Titinius said.

“Seek him, Titinius,” Messala said, “while I go and meet the noble Brutus, and tell him what has happened here. I may as well say that I will thrust this report into his ears because piercing steel and poisoned darts shall be as welcome to the ears of Brutus as the news of the suicide of his friend.”

“Hurry, Messala,” Titinius said. “I will look for Pindarus while you are gone.”

Messala rode away.

“Why did you send me to your camp, brave Cassius?” Titinius said to Cassius’ corpse. “Didn’t I meet your friends? And didn’t they put on my brows this wreath of victory, and tell me to give it to you? Didn’t you hear their joyful shouts? You misunderstood everything! You mistook very good news for very bad news! But let me put this wreath of victory upon your brow. Brutus told me to

give it to you, and I will do what he asked. Brutus, come quickly, and see how I respected Caius Cassius.”

He took Cassius’ sword and said, “Give me your permission to kill myself, gods — this is what is expected of a Roman. Come, Cassius’ sword, and find Titinius’ heart.”

Titinius killed himself with Cassius’ sword.

Messala returned with Brutus, young Cato, Strato, Volumnius, and Lucilius. Young Cato’s father was Marcus Porcius Cato, who had supported Pompey and had killed himself rather than surrender to Julius Caesar. Young Cato’s sister was Portia, Brutus’ late wife.

“Where, Messala, does Cassius’ body lie?” Brutus asked.

“Over there,” Messala said. “Titinius was mourning the corpse.”

“Titinius is facing upward,” Brutus said.

“He is dead,” young Cato said.

“Julius Caesar, you are powerful even now,” Brutus said. “Your spirit walks abroad and turns our swords so that they pierce our own bodies.”

“Look, noble Titinius has crowned the dead Cassius with a wreath of victory.”

“Are there still two Romans living such as these?” Brutus asked. “The last of all the Romans, fare you well! It is impossible that Rome should ever breed your equals. Friends, I owe more tears to this dead man than you shall see me pay. I shall find time to mourn you properly. Cassius, I shall find time. Come, let us send his body to the nearby island of Thasos. We will not hold his funeral in our camps because it would dishearten and demoralize us.

Lucilius, come, and come, young Cato, let us return to the battlefield.”

He added, “Labeo and Flavius, set our troops in battle formation. It is three o’clock, and, Romans, before night falls we will try our fortunes in a second fight.”

— 5.4 —

The armies were fighting each other. Brutus, Messala, Flavius, young Cato, and Lucilius and others were fighting.

“Keep fighting, countrymen,” Brutus shouted. “Hold your heads up high!”

Brutus, Messala, and Flavius left to fight on another part of the battlefield.

“Who is of such bastard blood that he will not hold his head up high?” young Cato shouted. “Who will go with me? I will shout my name in the battlefield — I am the son of Marcus Cato! I am a foe to tyrants, and my country’s friend! I am the son of Marcus Cato!”

Cato fought fiercely, but an opposing soldier killed him.

“And I am Brutus, Marcus Junius Brutus! I am Brutus, my country’s friend!” Lucilius shouted. “Know that I am Brutus!”

Lucilius wanted Brutus to be safe. By saying that he was Brutus, he knew that the opposing soldiers who heard him would focus on him, not on the real Brutus.

He saw the corpse of young Cato and said, “Oh, young and noble Cato, are you down? Why, now you die as nobly as Titinius. And you, being Marcus Cato’s son, will be honored.”

One of Antony’s soldiers said to Lucilius, “Surrender, or die!”

“I prefer to die,” Lucilius said. “Here is some money. Take it, and kill me. I am Brutus. Kill me and win honor because you have killed me.”

“We must not kill you,” the soldier said. “You are nobly born.”

A second soldier of Antony’s shouted, “Make room for us! Get out of the way! Carry the news to Antony that Brutus has been captured.”

The first soldier said, “I will tell him. Here he comes now.”

Antony arrived, and the first soldier said, “Brutus has been captured, my lord.”

“Where is he?” Antony asked.

“He is somewhere safe,” Lucilius said. “I have been pretending to be him. Brutus is safe enough, and I assure you that no enemy shall ever take the noble Brutus alive — may the gods defend him from so great a shame! When you find him, whether he is alive or dead, he will be found to be noble Brutus — he will behave in accordance with his own true and noble nature.”

“This man is not Brutus, friends,” Antony told his soldiers, “but he is, I assure you, a prize no less in worth. Keep this man safe and show him kindness. I prefer that such men be my friends than my enemies. Go and see whether Brutus is alive or dead and come to Octavius’ tent and tell us your news.”

— 5.5 —

Brutus, Dardanius, Clitus, Strato, and Volumnius knew that they had lost the battle. Strato was one of Brutus’ servants.

Brutus said, “Come here, poor friendly survivors of this battle, and last of my living friends, and rest on this rock.”

Clitus said, “Statilius showed the torchlight to us — a signal that all was going well in another part of the battle — but, my lord, he did not return to us. He must have been either captured or killed.”

“Sit down and rest, Clitus,” Brutus said. “‘Killed’ is the word most likely to be accurate. Today, killing has been fashionable. Clitus, let me speak privately to you.”

Brutus whispered to Clitus, who replied, “What, I, my lord? No, not for all the world.”

“Be quiet, then,” Brutus said. “Say no more.”

“I’ll rather kill myself than do what you asked me to do.”

Brutus went to Dardanius and said, “Listen to me.”

Brutus whispered to Dardanius, who said, “Shall I do such a deed?”

Clitus said, “Oh, Dardanius!”

Dardanius said, “Oh, Clitus!”

“What evil thing did Brutus ask you to do?”

“To kill him, Clitus. Look, he is meditating about what to do.”

“That noble vessel is so full of grief that it trickles out of his eyes,” Clitus said.

“Come here, good Volumnius,” Brutus said, “and listen to me.”

“What is it, my lord?”

“Why, this, Volumnius. The ghost of Caesar has appeared to me twice by night: once at Sardis, and, once last night here on the battlefield of Philippi. I know that my hour of death has come.”

“No, my lord,” Volumnius said.

“I am sure it has, Volumnius,” Brutus said. “You see how the world goes. Our enemies have beaten us back to the pit. It is much better for us to leap into the pit ourselves than to wait until they push us in. Good Volumnius, you know that we two went to school together. For the sake of our old friendship, I ask you to please hold my sword while I run on it and kill myself.”

“That’s not a job for a friend, my lord,” Volumnius said.

Noises made it clear that enemy soldiers were approaching.

“Run, run, my lord,” Clitus said. “We can wait here no longer.”

“Farewell to you; and you; and you, Volumnius. Strato, you have been asleep all this while. Farewell to you, too, Strato. Countrymen, my heart rejoices that in all my life I have found only men who were true to me. I shall gain glory on this losing day — more glory than Octavius and Mark Antony shall gain with their dishonorable and vile victory. So farewell now. Brutus’ tongue has almost ended its life’s history. Night hangs upon my eyes, and my bones want to rest. My body has labored hard to bring me to this hour of death.”

The noise of enemy soldiers grew nearer. Some of Brutus’ soldiers shouted on the battlefield, “Run! Run for your lives!”

“Run, my lord, run!” Clitus pleaded.

“Go now! I will follow you,” Brutus said.

Clitus, Dardanius, and Volumnius fled.

“Please, Strato, stay here by me,” Brutus said. “You are a fellow with a good reputation. You have earned honor in

your life. Hold then my sword, and turn away your face, while I run on my sword and kill myself. Will you do that for me, Strato?"

"Give me your hand first," Strato said.

They shook hands, and Strato said, "Farewell, my lord."

"Farewell, good Strato."

Strato held the sword firmly and turned his face to the side.

Brutus ran on his sword, fell, and said, "Caesar, now be still. I did not kill you with half so good a will as that with which I kill myself."

Brutus died.

Octavius and Mark Antony and some of their soldiers arrived with two bound prisoners: Messala and Lucilius.

"What man is that?" Octavius said, referring to Strato.

"My master's servant," Messala said. "Strato, where is Brutus, your master?"

"He is free from the bondage you are in, Messala," Strato said. "The conquerors can but make a funeral fire for him because Brutus conquered himself, and no other man but himself has gained honor from his death."

"It is fitting that Brutus should be found like this," Lucilius said. "I thank you, Brutus, because you have proved what I said to be true. I said that when Antony found Brutus, whether he is alive or dead, he would be found to be noble Brutus — he would behave in accordance with his own true and noble nature."

"Everyone who served Brutus, I will take into my service," Octavius said.

He said to Strato, "Will you join with me?"

"Yes, if Messala will recommend me to you," Strato replied.

"Recommend him, good Messala," Octavius said.

First, Messala asked, "How did my master, Brutus, die, Strato?"

"I held the sword, and he ran on it," Strato said.

"Octavius, take Strato into your service. He did the final service to my master."

Mark Antony said over Brutus' corpse, "This was the noblest Roman of them all. All the conspirators except only he did what they did out of envy of great Caesar. Brutus joined the conspirators only because he honestly believed that he was acting for the general good of all. His life was noble, and his character was such that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

"Let us treat him according to his virtue and excellence," Octavius said. "We will give him all respect and rites of burial. Within my tent his bones shall lie tonight with the honors due to a soldier. Order the fighting to stop, and let us return to our camp to enjoy the glories of this happy day."

Chapter XXVII: KING LEAR

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*King Lear*)

Lear, King of Britain; King Lear is over 80 years old.

King of France.

Duke of Burgundy.

Duke of Cornwall.

Duke of Albany.

Earl of Kent.

Earl of Gloucester (pronounced Gloster).

Edgar, legitimate son to Gloucester.

Edmund, bastard son to Gloucester.

Curan, a courtier.

Oswald, steward to Goneril.

Old Man, tenant to Gloucester.

Doctor.

Fool.

An Officer, employed by Edmund.

A Gentleman, attendant on Cordelia.

A Herald.

Servants to Cornwall.

Goneril, Lear's oldest daughter; married to the Duke of Albany.

Regan, Lear's middle daughter; married to the Duke of

Cornwall.

Cordelia, Lear's youngest daughter; at the beginning of the play, she is unmarried.

Knights of Lear's train, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants.

Scene: Britain.

Note: Duke is a title higher than Earl.

CHAPTER 1 (King Lear)

— 1.1 —

In King Lear's palace, the Earl of Kent, the Earl of Gloucester, and Edmund, who was Gloucester's bastard son, were talking together.

The Earl of Kent said to the Earl of Gloucester, "I thought the King had more preferred the Duke of Albany than the Duke of Cornwall."

The Duke of Albany had recently married King Lear's oldest daughter, Goneril, while the Duke of Cornwall had recently married King Lear's middle daughter, Regan.

The Earl of Gloucester replied, "It always seemed so to us, but now, in the division of the Kingdom, it is not apparent which of the two Dukes he values most. The shares of the Kingdom for the two Dukes are so equally divided that the closest examination of the two shares cannot make either Duke covet the other Duke's share."

"Isn't this your son, my lord?" the Earl of Kent asked the Earl of Gloucester, motioning toward Edmund.

"I have paid for his upbringing," the Earl of Gloucester replied. "I have so often blushed to acknowledge him as my son that now I am inured to it and can brazenly say that he is mine."

"I cannot conceive what you mean," the Earl of Kent replied.

"Sir, this young fellow's mother could very definitely conceive," the Earl of Gloucester punned. "In fact, upon conceiving she grew round-wombed with a pregnant belly, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle before she had a

husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault from what I say? Edmund, my son, is illegitimate.”

“I cannot wish the fault undone since the issue of it is so handsome,” the Earl of Kent diplomatically replied.

“But I also have, sir, a son by order of law — he is legitimate — about a year older than this son. My legitimate son is no dearer to me than my illegitimate son. Though this knave came somewhat saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet his mother was beautiful, there was good entertainment at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged.”

The Earl of Gloucester called his illegitimate son, Edmund, names such as “knave” and “whoreson,” but he used those names affectionately.

He asked his illegitimate son, “Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?”

“No, my lord.”

“He is my lord of Kent,” the Earl of Gloucester said. “Remember him hereafter as my honorable friend.”

“I am at your service, my lord,” Edmund said respectfully.

“I want to be your friend, and I will do what I can to know you better,” the Earl of Kent replied.

“Sir, I shall make every effort to deserve your respect and earn your high opinion.”

“Edmund has been out of the country for nine years, and he shall go away again,” the Earl of Gloucester said.

Hearing trumpets blow, he added, “The King is coming.”

King Lear, the Duke of Cornwall, and the Duke of Albany entered the room. With them were the King’s daughters —

Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia — and some attendants. One attendant carried a coronet, which someone below the rank of King was meant to wear. Events would show that the person intended to wear the coronet was Cordelia.

King Lear said, “Usher into the royal presence the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.”

“I shall, my liege,” Gloucester replied and then exited. Edmund went with him.

“In the meantime we shall express our darker purpose,” King Lear said, using the royal plural. “This purpose is dark because we have kept it secret from all of you; however, some of you already know part — but only part — of what I am going to do. Give me the map. Know that we have divided into three our Kingdom, and it is our firm intent to shake all cares and responsibilities from our age. As you know, I am over 80 years old. We will confer our cares and responsibilities on younger strengths, while we, unburdened, crawl toward death.”

King Lear had talked of his “darker purpose.” “Darker” meant “secret” or “hidden,” but many of the people listening to him, such as the Earl of Kent, believed that it was a bad idea to divide the Kingdom and that it would have dark and evil consequences.

King Lear continued, “Our son-in-law of Cornwall, and you, our no less loving son-in-law of Albany, pay attention. We have this hour a firm purpose to make known publicly our daughters’ individual dowries, so that future strife may be prevented now. Because you will receive your share of the Kingdom before I die, no one needs to fight over his share after I die.

“The King of France and the Duke of Burgundy are great rivals for the love of Cordelia, our youngest daughter, who is still unmarried. Long in our court they have made their

amorous sojourn, courting Cordelia. Today, the decision about whom Cordelia will wed will be made.

“Tell me, my daughters — since now we will divest ourself of rule, possession of territory, and the cares of government — which of you shall we say loves us most? I will give the largest dowry to that daughter whose natural affection for her father merits the largest territory.

“Goneril, you are our eldest-born; you will speak first.”

“Sir, I love you more than words and language can make clear,” Goneril said. “To me you are dearer than eyesight, possession of land, and freedom of action. You are beyond what can be valued as rich or rare. I love you no less than I love life with grace, health, beauty, and honor. I love you as much as a child has ever loved, or a father has ever found himself to be loved. My love for you is a love that makes language poor, and speech inadequate to express how much I love you.”

Cordelia was disgusted by the fulsomeness of Goneril’s praise, and she expected to hear the same kind of praise from her other sister, Regan. By pouring on the praise, these two sisters hoped to benefit by receiving bigger dowries.

Cordelia also worried. She thought, *What should Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.*

Cordelia loved her father, but she loathed fulsome praise that was used to manipulate a father in order to gain wealth. It is better to show one’s love through one’s actions rather than fake it through one’s words.

King Lear pointed to the map and said to Goneril, “Of all these boundaries, even from this line to this, with shady forests and with enriched open plains with plenteous rivers and extensive meadows, we make you lady. This territory

will perpetually belong to your and Albany's descendants."

He then said, "What does our second daughter, our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall, have to say? Speak."

Regan replied, "Sir, I am made of the self-same mettle that my sister is. Prize me at her worth. Value me as you value her."

"Mettle" meant "nature" or "character." However, it is a homonym for "metal." Subsequent events would show that both Goneril and Regan were hard-hearted.

Regan continued, "In my true heart I find that Goneril names what my love really is — only she comes too short. I profess that I am an enemy to all other joys that the most perfect part of me can enjoy, and I find that I am made happy only in your dear Highness' love."

Regan's quest for a bigger dowry had caused her to be even more fulsome in her description of her love for her father than her older sister, Goneril. If Regan, as she had said, really is made happy only in the love of her father, then loving her husband and being loved by him brings her no happiness.

Cordelia thought, *Poor Cordelia! And yet I am not so, since I am sure that my love for my father is richer than my tongue. I love my father more than I can say.*

Pointing to the map, King Lear said to Regan, "To you and your descendants forever after will belong this ample third of our fair Kingdom. It is no less in space, value, and pleasure than that conferred on Goneril."

He then turned to Cordelia and said, "Now, our joy, although you are the last of my daughters to be born and therefore the youngest, the King of France with its vineyards and the Duke of Burgundy with its dairy pastures

strive for your love and wish to marry you. What can you say to draw a third of the Kingdom that is more opulent than your sisters' shares?"

King Lear had planned from the beginning to give Cordelia a better part of the Kingdom than he would give to her sisters. Her sisters were already married, and an excellent dowry would help Cordelia to get an excellent husband. Besides, Cordelia was his favorite daughter. One of several reasons to divide up the Kingdom now — before he died — was to give Cordelia the best share. If the Kingdom were divided after his death, Cordelia, being the youngest, would get the worst share, or no share.

Cordelia remained silent, so King Lear told her, "Speak. What can you say to draw a third of the Kingdom that is more opulent than your sisters' shares?"

She gave an honest, not a fulsome, answer: "Nothing, my lord."

Shocked, King Lear exclaimed, "Nothing!"

"Nothing," Cordelia repeated.

"Nothing will come from nothing," King Lear said. "Speak again."

"Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave my heart into my mouth," Cordelia said.

Ecclesiasticus 21:26 states, "*The heart of fools is in their mouth: but the mouth of the wise is in their heart.*"

Cordelia continued, "I love your majesty according to my filial duty — no more and no less. I love you as a daughter ought to love her father."

"Cordelia! Mend your speech a little, or it may mar your fortunes."

“My good lord,” Cordelia said, “you have begotten me, bred me, and loved me. I return those duties back to you as are rightly fit. I obey you, love you, and greatly honor you.

“Why do my sisters have husbands, if they say that all their love is for you? When I shall wed, that lord who takes my hand shall carry half my love with him, as well as half my care and duty. Half of my love will be for you, and half will be for my husband. To be sure, I shall never marry like my sisters have; they give you all their love and none to their husband.”

“Do you say this from your heart?” King Lear asked.

“Yes, my good lord.”

“Can you be so young, and so untender? Are you really this hard-hearted?”

“I am so young, my lord, and I say the truth. I am honest.”

“Let it be so,” King Lear said. “Your truth, then, shall be your dowry. I swear by the sacred radiance of the Sun, the mysteries of the underworld goddess Hecate, and the night; by all the operations of the astrological orbs from whom we exist, and cease to be, that here I disclaim all my paternal care, kinship, and common blood with you. From here on, I regard you as a stranger to my heart and me, forever. The barbarous Scythian, or that person who cannibalizes his parents and children to feed his appetite, shall to my bosom be as well neighbored, pitied, and relieved as you, my former daughter. I renounce you; you are no longer my daughter. You are no kin of mine.”

The Earl of Kent began to object: “My good liege —”

King Lear shouted, “Peace, Kent! Silence! Come not between the dragon and his wrath. I loved Cordelia the most, and I thought to give all the rest I had to her in return

for her tender loving care. Leave, and avoid my sight!”

The Earl of Kent did not leave.

King Lear said, “Now it seems that I will find my peace in my grave, as here I take her father’s heart away from her and give it away to someone else!”

He ordered, “Call the King of France!”

Everyone was stunned; no one moved.

King Lear said, “Who will carry out my orders? Call the Duke of Burgundy, too.”

Some attendants left.

Pointing to the map, King Lear said, “Cornwall and Albany with my two daughters’ dowries digest this third dowry — the one that should have been Cordelia’s. Let pride, which Cordelia calls plain-speaking, be her dowry and get her a husband. I do invest you, Cornwall and Albany, jointly with my power, first position, and all the magnificent trappings that accompany majesty.

“We reserve for ourself a hundred Knights, by you to be paid. We shall also reside with you, by turn, one month at a time. We retain for ourself the title of King, and all the honors and prerogatives that are due to a King. You two shall have the power and authority, revenue, and execution of the royal duties and responsibilities. Beloved sons-in-law, they are yours. To confirm what I say, share this coronet between yourselves.”

The Earl of Kent said, “Royal Lear, whom I have ever honored as my King, loved as my father, followed as my master, and mentioned in my prayers as my great patron —”

King Lear warned the Earl of Kent, “The bow is bent and

drawn; stay out of the way of the arrow.”

The Earl of Kent replied, “Let the arrow fly even though the forked arrowhead invades the region of my heart. Kent shall be without manners when Lear is mad. What will you do, old man? Do you think that I will ignore my duty and be afraid to speak up when a powerful man bows down before flattery? An honorable man is bound by duty to speak out when majesty stoops to folly. Reverse your judgment; change your decision, and after you have thought things over carefully, stop this hideous rashness. I will stake my life that what I say is true: Your youngest daughter does not love you least, nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound reverbs no hollowness. Cordelia may not be able to fulsomely express how much she loves you, but she loves you nonetheless. My duty is to speak truth to power.”

“Kent, on your life, speak no more,” King Lear threatened.

“My life I have never valued except as a pawn to wage war against your enemies, nor am I afraid to lose it in an attempt to keep you safe.”

“Get out of my sight!” King Lear shouted.

“See better, Lear,” the Earl of Kent said, “and aim your sight at me. I will not lead you astray.”

King Lear started to speak: “Now, by Apollo —”

“Now, by Apollo, King,” the Earl of Kent interrupted, “you swear by your gods in vain.”

“Oh, vassal! Unbeliever!” King Lear shouted, laying his hand on his sword.

Both the Duke of Albany and the Duke of Cornwall said to King Lear, “Dear sir, don’t.”

The Earl of Kent said to King Lear, “Do. Kill your physician, and give the physician’s fee to your foul disease. Revoke your decision. Or, if you do not, as long as I can shout from my throat, I’ll tell you that you are making a mistake and are doing evil.”

“Hear me, traitor!” King Lear shouted. “On your allegiance, hear me! Since you have sought to make us break our vow, something that we have never dared to do, and since with unnatural pride you have intervened between our order and its carrying out, something that neither our nature nor our high position as King can bear, I now demonstrate my power and give you your reward for your interference. We allow you five days to get provisions to shield yourself from the disasters and evils of the world. On the sixth day, you must turn your hated back upon our Kingdom. If, on the tenth day following, your banished body is found in our dominions, that moment will be the moment you die. Get out! By Jupiter, we shall never revoke your exile!”

“Fare you well, King,” the Earl of Kent said. “Since thus you will appear, freedom lives out of your country, and banishment is here.”

He said to Cordelia, “The gods to their dear shelter take you, maiden, who justly think, and have most rightly said!”

He said to Regan and Goneril, “And I hope that your deeds may show that your large and generous speeches were true, so that good effects may spring from words of love.”

He said to the Duke of Albany and the Duke of Cornwall, “Thus Kent bids all you Princes *adieu*; he’ll shape his old course in a country new. I will stay true to myself — and speak the truth — in another country.”

The Earl of Kent exited.

The Earl of Gloucester returned to the presence of King Lear. With him were the King of France, the Duke of Burgundy, and some attendants.

The Earl of Gloucester said, "Here are the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, my noble lord."

"My lord of Burgundy," King Lear said, "we first address ourself to you, who with this King of France have been competing to marry Cordelia, our daughter. What is the least dowry that you would require to be paid immediately to marry my daughter, without which you would cease your quest of love?"

"Most royal majesty, I crave no more than what your Highness has already offered, and I am sure that you will not offer less."

"Right noble Burgundy, when Cordelia was dearly beloved by us, we did regard her as being dear and valuable, but now her price has fallen. Sir, there she stands. If you like anything within her, who seems to be worth little, or if you like all of her, she is there, and she is yours. But be aware that I am displeased with her, and I will not give her a dowry. If you want to marry her without a dowry, then marry her. If you must receive a dowry in order to marry her, then do not marry her."

"I don't know what to say," the Duke of Burgundy replied.

"Will you marry Cordelia although she possesses infirmities and imperfections, although she lacks friends, although she has recently earned our hatred, although her only dowry is our curse upon her head, and although I have sworn that she is no longer my daughter? Will you take her, or leave her?"

"Pardon me, royal sir," the Duke of Burgundy said. "No choice can be made when such conditions exist. A true

choice involves two viable options to choose between. Here only one viable option exists to be chosen.”

“Then leave her, sir,” King Lear said. “You have good reason — by the power who made me, I have told you all her wealth.”

King Lear then said, “As for you, great King of France, I have such friendship for you that I would not do anything to harm it such as have you marry a female I hate; therefore, I advise you to cease loving Cordelia. Instead, avert your liking to a worthier maiden. Do not love a wretch whom Nature is almost ashamed to acknowledge hers. Cordelia is unnatural.”

“This is very strange,” the King of France said. “Cordelia very recently was the main object of your love, the subject of your praise, the balm of your age. How can the best and dearest Cordelia in a moment of time commit an action so monstrous that it dismantles so many layers of your favor? Surely, her offense must be so unnatural that it is monstrous, or else the affection you previously felt for her was undeserved — but it would take a miracle for me to believe either of these things.”

Cordelia said to King Lear, “I beg your Majesty — even though I lack the ability to do what the glib and oily do, which is to speak and promise to do something without meaning to do what they say and promise; in contrast, when I intend to do something, I do it before I speak — that you make known that it is no vicious blot such as murder or other foul immorality, no unchaste action or dishonorable action, that has deprived me of your grace and favor. What has done that is the lack of things that I am richer for not having: an always-begging eye and such a fulsome tongue as I am glad I do not have, although not to have it has deprived me of your like for me.”

Cordelia deliberately chose to use the word “like” instead of “love.”

King Lear replied, “It would have been better for you never to have been born than to have failed to please me better.”

The King of France asked, “Is Cordelia’s fault only this — a natural tendency not to announce publicly what she intends to do?”

He asked, “My lord of Burgundy, what do you say to the lady? Love’s not love when it is mingled with regards that stand aloof from the entire point. Love ought not to be affected by a dowry or the lack of a dowry. Will you have her? She is herself a dowry. Will you marry Cordelia?”

“Royal Lear,” the Duke of Burgundy said, “if you give as her dowry that portion which you yourself proposed, then I will take Cordelia by the hand and make her Duchess of Burgundy.”

“I will give nothing as her dowry,” King Lear replied. “I have sworn that. I am firm in my decision and will do what I have sworn to do.”

The Duke of Burgundy said to Cordelia, “I am sorry, then. You have lost a father, and now you must lose a husband.”

Cordelia said, “May peace be with Burgundy! Since he loves status and money, I shall not be his wife.”

The King of France said, “Fairest Cordelia, you are most rich, being poor; most choice, being forsaken; and most loved, being despised! Here and now I seize upon you and your virtues. It is lawful for me to take what has been cast away.

“Gods, gods! It is strange that from their cold neglect my love should kindle to inflamed respect. Although the gods neglect you, I even more strongly love you. Your dowerless

daughter, King Lear, thrown to my lot, is to be Queen of us, of what is ours, and of our fair France. Not all the Dukes of waterish Burgundy can buy this unprized precious maiden away from me.”

By “waterish Burgundy,” the King of France meant that the Duke of Burgundy was weak. Blood did not flow in his veins — only weak water did.

The King of France added, “Bid them farewell, Cordelia, although they have been unkind to you. What you lose here, you will find better elsewhere.”

“You have her, King of France,” King Lear said. “Let her be yours, for we have no such daughter, nor shall we ever see that face of hers again. Therefore, Cordelia, be gone without our grace, our love, or our benison and blessing. Come, noble Duke of Burgundy.”

Everyone left except for the King of France, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia.

The King of France said to Cordelia, “Bid farewell to your sisters.”

Cordelia said, “With eyes washed by tears, Cordelia leaves you, the jewels of our father. I know you for what you really are, and like a sister I am very loath to call your faults by their actual names. Treat our father well. To your professed bosoms I commit him, but if I still were within his grace, I would recommend him to a better place. So, farewell to you both.”

Cordelia had committed her father to her sisters’ “professed bosoms” — the love that they had professed for him, aka the love that they had said that they had for him. She wanted them to treat him with all the love that they had publicly proclaimed that they had for him. She did not want them to treat him the way that they actually felt about him.

“Don’t tell us what our duty to our father is,” Regan said.

“Concern yourself with making your husband happy,” Goneril said. “He is the one who is marrying you as an act of charity. You have failed in your obedience as a daughter, and you well deserve to be treated by your husband with the same lack of love that you have shown to your father.”

“Time shall unfold what covered cunning hides,” Cordelia said. “Time at first covers faults, but eventually it reveals and derides them. Well may you prosper!”

“Come, my fair Cordelia,” the King of France said.

He and Cordelia exited.

Goneril said to Regan, “Sister, I have to talk to you about something that closely concerns us both. I think our father will depart from here tonight.”

“That’s very certain,” Regan said. “He will leave and stay with you; next month he will stay with us.”

“You see how full of changes he is in his old age,” Goneril said. “We have seen much evidence of those changes. He always loved our sister most; it is grossly obvious that he used poor judgment when he cast her off.”

“It is the infirmity of his old age,” Regan said, “yet he has always known himself only but little.”

“He was rash even when he was at his best and soundest,” Goneril said. “What can we look forward to now that he is old? He will have the imperfections that he has always had, but added to them will be the unruly waywardness that unhealthy and angry old age bring with them.”

“He is likely to continue to engage in such impulsive outbursts as that which led to Kent’s banishment,” Regan said. “That is the behavior that we are likely to see our

father engaging in.”

“There will be additional formalities before the King of France leaves here,” Goneril said. “Please, let’s sit and put our heads together. If our father continues to exert authority with his customary impulsiveness, then his recent abdication of his power to us will be in name only — he will be a problem to us.”

“We shall think further about it,” Regan said.

“We must *do* something,” Goneril said. “A blacksmith must strike and shape iron while it is hot or he will lose his labor and opportunity. Like a blacksmith, we also must strike while the iron is hot.”

— 1.2 —

Holding a letter while alone in a room in the Earl of Gloucester’s castle, Edmund said to himself, “You, Nature, are my goddess; to your law my services are bound. The laws of Nature are better than the laws of Civilization. Why should I stand in the midst of pestilential customs and permit the finely and curiously detailed laws of nations to deprive me of what I want just because I am some twelve or fourteen months younger than Edgar, my brother.

“Why am I a bastard? Why am I therefore regarded as base? My proportions are as well put together, my mind as noble and refined, and my appearance as like my father’s as is Edgar’s, who is the son of my father’s wife. Why do they brand people like me with the words ‘base,’ ‘baseness,’ and ‘bastardy’? They call me base, but am I base?

“I am a person who, having been created as the result of lusty stolen natural pleasure, aka adultery, has acquired more beneficial qualities, which are both physical and mental as well as energetic, than a whole tribe of fools who were created in a dull, stale, tired bed — the result of a long

marriage — in between bedtime and morning.

“Well, then, legitimate Edgar, I must have your land and other inheritance. Our father’s love is the same for the bastard Edmund and for the legitimate Edgar — that’s a fine word: ‘legitimate’!

“Well, my legitimate Edgar, if this letter I have forged succeeds, and if my plot thrives, Edmund the base shall overtop and surpass Edgar the legitimate.

“I grow; I prosper. Now, gods, stand up for bastards!”

The Earl of Gloucester entered the room. Upset by recent events, he talked to himself.

“Kent has thus been banished! And the angry King of France has departed! And King Lear left last night! He has limited his power! He is now confined to an allowance! All this was done suddenly, as if he had been pricked by a gad — a spear!”

Seeing his illegitimate son, he said, “Edmund, how are you? What is the news?”

“If it please your lordship, there is no news.”

He hastily put away the letter he had forged — and looked as if he had a secret reason for putting it out of sight.

“Why are you so eager to put away that letter?” the Earl of Gloucester asked.

“I know no news, my lord,” Edmund replied.

“What letter were you reading?”

“I was reading nothing, my lord.”

“No?” the Earl of Gloucester said. “Why then did you need to put it in your pocket with such a terrible display of

haste? By definition, nothing has no need to hide itself. Let me see it. Come, if it really is nothing, I shall not need spectacles to read it because it is nothing rather than something.”

“Please, sir, pardon me,” Edmund said. “It is a letter from my brother, and I have not read it all, but judging from the part that I have read, I find it not fit for you to read.”

His curiosity aroused, the Earl of Gloucester said, “Give me the letter, sir.”

“I shall offend, I see, whether I keep it or give it to you to read. The content of the letter, judging from the part I read, is offensive.”

“Let me see it! Let me see it!”

“I hope, for my brother’s sake, that he wrote this letter only as a trial or test of my virtue,” Edmund said.

The Earl of Gloucester read the letter out loud:

“This policy of reverence for old age makes bitter the best years of our lives, keeps our fortunes from us until our own old age cannot relish and enjoy our fortunes. I begin to find useless and foolish bondage in the oppression made by aged tyranny, which holds command over us, not because it has power, but because we allow it to. Come to me so that I may speak more about this. If our father would sleep until I waked him, you would enjoy half of his income forever, and live the beloved of your brother, EDGAR.”

The Earl of Gloucester said, “Ha! This is conspiracy! He wrote about my death: ‘*If our father would sleep until I waked him, you would enjoy half of his income.*’ My son Edgar! Did he write this? Does he have the heart and brain that this thought bred in?”

The Earl of Gloucester said to Edmund, “When did you get

this letter? Who brought it to you?"

"It was not brought to me, my lord," Edmund said. "There's the cunning of it. I found this letter in my bedroom — it had been thrown through the window."

"Do you know whether the handwriting is your brother's?"

"If the content of the letter were good, my lord, I would swear that it was his handwriting, but because of the content, I would prefer that the handwriting were not his."

"It is his handwriting," the Earl of Gloucester said.

"True, my lord," Edmund said. "It is his handwriting, but I hope his heart is not in the content."

"Has he ever before tried to find out what you think about this business of taking my income and making me a ward?"

"Never, my lord, but I have heard him often maintain that it is fitting that, when sons are at a mature age, and fathers are declining, the father should be a ward to the son, and the son should manage the father's income."

"Oh, he is a villain — a villain! This is the same opinion that he expressed in the letter! He is an abhorrent villain! He is an unnatural, detestable, brutish villain! He is worse than brutish! Go and find him. I'll arrest him — that abominable villain! Where is he?"

"I do not know for certain, my lord," Edmund said. "If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother until you can get from him better testimony and evidence of his intent, you shall run a safe course; whereas, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honor, and shake into pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare bet my life that he wrote this letter to test my affection for you, and that he had no more dangerous intention than that."

“Do you really think so?” the Earl of Gloucester asked.

“If your honor judges it fitting, I will place you where you shall hear us talk about this, and with your own ears you shall learn for yourself what his intention was in writing the letter. This can be done without any further delay — we can do it this evening.”

“He cannot be such a monster —”

“I am sure that he is not,” Edmund said.

“— to his father, who so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and Earth! Edmund, seek him out. Find him, and worm yourself into his confidence for me, please. Find a way — whatever way you think is best — to do this. I would give anything — including my own wealth and rank — to know the truth.”

“I will look for him, sir, immediately,” Edmund said. “I will carry out the business as I shall find means and let you know what I find out.”

“These recent eclipses of the Sun and Moon portend no good to us,” the Earl of Gloucester said. “Although human reason can explain these recent eclipses in various ways, yet all of Humankind finds itself scourged by the devastating consequences that follow the eclipses: Love cools, friendship falls off and declines, brothers divide, mutinies and riots occur in cities, discord occurs in countries; treason occurs in palaces, and the bond between son and father is cracked. This villain of mine — Edgar — comes under this prediction: the son goes against the father, the King falls away from his natural temperament, and the father goes against the child.

“We have already seen the best years. Now machinations, emptiness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly and disturbingly to our graves.

“Edmund, find this villain — Edgar! You shall lose nothing by it; do it carefully.

“And the noble and true-hearted Kent has been banished! What is his offense? It is honesty! Strange!”

The Earl of Gloucester exited.

Alone, Edmund said to himself, “This is the excellent foolishness of the world, that, when bad things happen to us — which are often due to the excesses of our own behavior — we avoid taking responsibility. Instead, we regard the Sun, the Moon, and the stars as guilty of causing our disasters. We think that we were villains by necessity; fools by the compulsion of astrological stars; knaves, thieves, and traitors because of the predominance of astrological planets; drunkards, liars, and adulterers because of an enforced obedience to astrological planetary influence; and all that we are evil in we say was caused by supernatural astrological compulsion.

“What an admirable evasion of responsibility is made by a lecherous man when he says that a star caused his lusty disposition! My father had sexual intercourse with my mother under the Dragon’s Tail — the constellation called Drago. And my nativity took place under Ursa Major — the constellation called the Big Bear, in which Mars is predominant but in which Venus has influence. According to astrology, it follows that I am warlike and lecherous.”

He thrust his tongue between his lips and blew a raspberry, and then he added, “I would have been what I am even if the maidenliest star in the Heavens had twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar —”

At this moment, Edgar entered the room.

“— and right on cue here he comes like the conclusion of an old comedy. Now I need to act with villainous

melancholy, and heave a sigh like Tom o'Bedlam — an insane beggar — would.”

He said more loudly, so that Edgar would hear him, “Oh, these eclipses predict divisions and conflicts!”

Then he hummed to himself and pretended that he did not know that Edgar had entered the room.

“How are you, brother Edmund?” Edgar asked. “What serious contemplation are you engaged in?”

“I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read the other day about what will follow these eclipses.”

“Do you concern yourself about that? Is that really something you want to waste your time on?”

“I promise you that the astrologer writes of very bad consequences, such as unkindness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of friendships that have lasted a long time; divisions in state, as well as menaces and maledictions against King and nobles; needless suspicions and distrusts, banishment of friends, loss of supporters, breaking up of marriages, and I know not what else.”

“How long have you been a devotee of astrology?”

“Come, come; when did you last see my father?”

“Why, just last night.”

“Did you speak with him?” Edmund asked.

“Yes, for two hours.”

“Did you part on good terms? Did you notice any displeasure in him by his words or in his countenance?”

“None at all,” Edgar replied.

“Think about how you may have offended him, and at my entreaty please stay away from him until some time has passed and lessened the heat of his displeasure, which right now so rages in him that his doing physical harm to you would not stop his anger.”

“Some villain has done me wrong and has been spreading malicious lies about me,” Edgar said.

“I think that you are right,” Edmund said. “Please, stay away from him and keep your emotions under control until the intensity of his rage lessens. Also, I ask you to go with me to my quarters, from whence I will bring you at the appropriate time to hear my lord speak. Please, go now. Here’s my key. If you need to be outside my quarters, go armed.”

“Armed, brother!” Edgar said, astonished.

“Brother, I advise you the best I know how. Arm yourself. Carry weapons. I am not an honest man if I know of any good intention toward you right now. I have told you what I have seen and heard, but only faintly. I have told you nothing like the horrible reality of our father’s anger toward you. Please, go now.”

“Shall I hear from you soon?”

“I will do what I can to help you.”

Edgar exited, and Edmund said to himself, “I have a credulous father! And I have a noble brother, whose nature is so far from doing anyone harm that he thinks that no one would do him harm. On his foolish and honest nature my deceptions work well! I see the treachery ahead of me that I need to do. Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit. All with me is meet that I can fashion fit. If I cannot get lands through inheritance, I will get them through treachery. I am willing to do whatever it takes.”

King Lear was now staying with Goneril in the palace of her husband, the Duke of Albany. In a room of the palace, Goneril was talking to her steward, Oswald.

“Did my father strike my gentleman because he scolded his Fool — his court jester?” Goneril asked.

“Yes, madam.”

“By day and night he wrongs me; every hour he bursts out into one gross offense or other that sets us all at odds and throws us into tumult. I’ll not endure it. His Knights grow riotous, and he himself upbraids us about every trifle. When he returns from hunting, I will not speak with him; tell him that I am sick. If you slack off your former services to him, you shall do what I want you to do. I will take responsibility for your slothful service to him.”

“He’s coming, madam,” Oswald said. “I hear him.”

Horns sounded.

“Be as casually disobedient to him as you please — you and your fellow servants,” Goneril said. “I want this to come up for discussion. If he dislikes the servants’ behavior, let him go to my sister, whose mind and mine, I know, are in agreement that we will not be ruled by him. He is a foolish and idle old man, who still wants to exert the authority that he has given away! Now, by my life, old fools are babes again; and they must be treated with rebukes in place of flatteries — when they abuse those flatteries. Remember what I tell you.”

“I will, madam.”

“And let his Knights have colder looks from you and the other servants. The consequences that develop from it do not matter. Tell the other servants that. I want to cause a

confrontation so that I can tell my father what I think. I'll write immediately to my sister to tell her to do the same things that I am doing.

“Go, and prepare for dinner.”

— 1.4 —

In a hall in the castle of the Duke of Albany and his wife, Goneril, Kent stood. He was in disguise.

He said to himself, “If I can disguise my voice with an accent, I may succeed in that purpose for which I razed my likeness by, for example, taking a razor to my beard. Now, banished Kent, if you can serve where you stand condemned, it may happen that your master, whom you respect, shall find you working hard to help him.”

Some horns sounded, announcing that King Lear had returned from his hunt. King Lear, his Knights, and some attendants entered the hall.

“Let me not wait even a moment for dinner; go and get it ready,” King Lear ordered.

An attendant exited.

Seeing the disguised Kent, King Lear asked, “How are you? And what are you?”

“A man, sir.”

“What do you profess? What do you want from us?” King Lear asked.

By “profess,” King Lear meant “profession” or “special calling,” but the disguised Kent interpreted it as meaning “claim.”

He said, “I profess to be no less than I seem. I will serve the man truly who will put me in trust, I will respect a man

who is honest, I will converse and keep company with a man who is wise and says little, I will fear the judgment of my god, I will fight when I cannot avoid fighting, and I will eat no fish.”

By “eat no fish,” the disguised Kent meant that he was a Protestant and so did not have to eat fish on Friday, that he was a meat-eater and so a hearty man, and that he did not consort with prostitutes, aka “fish.”

“Who are you?” King Lear asked.

“A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the King,” the disguised Kent replied.

He took a chance in making that particular joke. King Lear had given his wealth to his two oldest daughters, and he was poor, especially for a King, but he took the joke well, replying, “If you are as poor for a subject as he is for a King, you are poor enough. What do you want?”

“Service,” the disguised Kent said. “I want a job.”

“Who would you serve?”

“You.”

“Do you know me, fellow?”

“No, sir, but you have something in your countenance that makes me want to call you my master.”

“What’s that?”

“Authority.”

“What services can you do?” King Lear asked.

“I can keep an ethical secret, ride, run, mar an excellent tale when I tell it, and deliver a plain message bluntly. I can speak plainly, but do not expect me to speak like a courtier.

That which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in, and my best quality is diligence.”

“How old are you?”

“I am not so young, sir, as to love a woman for singing, nor so old as to dote on her for anything. The years on my back number forty-eight,” the disguised Kent said.

“Follow me; you shall serve me,” King Lear said. “If I like you no worse after dinner, I will not part from you yet. You will stay in my employ for a while at least.”

He then called, “Dinner, ho, dinner! I ordered my dinner a while ago! Where’s my knave? My Fool? Go, one of you, and call my Fool hither.”

An attendant exited.

Oswald, who was loyal to Goneril, entered the hall.

King Lear said, “You, you, fellow, where’s my daughter?”

Oswald said, “Excuse me, sir,” and exited without answering King Lear’s question. This was no way to treat a King.

Perturbed, King Lear said, “What did the fellow there say to me? Call the blockhead back.”

A Knight left to get Oswald.

“Where’s my Fool?” King Lear shouted. “I think the world’s asleep.”

The Knight returned.

“Where’s that mongrel?” King Lear asked, referring to Oswald.

“He says, my lord, that your daughter is not well,” the Knight said.

“Why didn’t the slave come back to me when I called him?”

“Sir, he answered me in the rudest manner that he would not.”

“He would not!”

“My lord, I don’t know what the matter is, but in my opinion, your Highness is not being treated with that ceremonious affection that used to be shown to you,” the Knight said. “I have noticed that a great lessening of kindness appears in the servants in general as well as in the Duke himself and your daughter.”

“Do you really think so?” King Lear asked.

The Knight replied, “Please, pardon me, my lord, if I am mistaken. My duty is to speak up when I think your Highness has been wronged.”

“You have simply reminded me of what I myself have thought. I have perceived a very faint neglect recently, which I have rather blamed on my own possible over-scrupulousness about how I am treated rather than a deliberate intent on their part to be unkind to me. I will look further into it. But where’s my Fool? I have not seen him these two days.”

“Since the young lady Cordelia has gone to France, sir, the Fool has much grieved.”

“Tell me no more about that,” King Lear said. “I have noted it well.”

He ordered an attendant, “Go and tell my daughter I want to speak to her.”

The attendant exited.

King Lear ordered another attendant, “Tell my Fool to

come here.”

The attendant exited.

Oswald reentered the hall.

King Lear said to him angrily, “Come here, sir. Who am I, sir?”

“My lady’s father,” Oswald replied.

Wrong answer.

“‘My lady’s father’! That’s like calling me ‘my lord’s knave’! You misbegotten dog! You slave! You cur!”

“Begging your pardon, I am none of these things, my lord,” Oswald said, staring King Lear in the face.

He was treating King Lear as an equal.

“Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?” King Lear said, hitting him.

“I’ll not be hit, my lord,” Oswald said.

“Nor tripped neither, you base football player,” Kent said, tripping him.

In this society, members of the upper class played tennis and bandied the ball back and forth, while members of the lower class played football, aka soccer.

“I thank you, fellow,” King Lear said to the disguised Kent. “You serve me well, and I’ll treat you well.”

The disguised Kent yelled at Oswald, “Come, sir, get up and go away! I’ll teach you to recognize differences in rank! Get out! Get out! If you want to be thrown on the floor again so you can measure your clumsy length again, stay for a moment, but it will go better for you if you leave! Wise up, and get out of here!”

The disguised Kent threw Oswald out of the hall.

King Lear said, “Now, my friendly fellow, I thank you. Here is a down payment on the money you will earn by being in my service.”

The Fool entered the hall as King Lear gave the disguised Kent some money.

A Fool is not a fool. Many Fools are quite wise.

The Fool said, “Let me hire him, too. Here’s my coxcomb.”

The Fool offered the disguised Kent his Fool’s hat, which was designed to look like the coxcomb of a rooster.

“How are you, my fine fellow?” King Lear asked his Fool.

The Fool said to the disguised Kent, “Sirrah, you had best take my coxcomb.”

“Sirrah” was a title used when addressing a person of inferior social status.

“Why, Fool?” the disguised Kent asked.

“Why, for taking the part of a person who is out of favor,” the Fool said. “If you can’t smile as the wind sits, you will catch cold shortly. If you can’t curry favor with the people in power, you will find yourself out in the cold. So there, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banished two of his daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if you follow him, you had better wear my coxcomb because you will be a fool.”

King Lear had banished, in a way, his two older daughters. When he had possessions and power, they had shown respect to him. Now that they had his possessions and power, they no longer needed to show respect to him. King Lear had “banished” his two older daughters out of his intimate circle of family. He had also given Cordelia a

blessing — although unintentionally — by disinheriting her and not giving the dowry to her husband that he had promised to give. Because of this, Cordelia had not married the materialistic Duke of Burgundy; instead, she was now Queen of France.

The Fool said to King Lear, “My uncle, I wish that I had two coxcombs and two daughters!”

“Why, my boy?” King Lear asked.

“If I gave my two daughters all my other possessions, I would keep my two coxcombs for myself. There’s my coxcomb; beg another one from your daughters.”

The Fool was calling King Lear twice the fool the Fool was.

“Take heed, sirrah,” King Lear said. “Remember the whip.”

Fools made jokes and entertained Kings; they had much leeway in what they could say, but if they went too far, they could be whipped. Right now, the Fool was calling the King a fool. The Fool was speaking truth to power — or former power — and King Lear did not like what he was hearing.

The Fool said to him, “Truth is a dog that must go to kennel outside; he must be whipped out of doors. In contrast, Lady the flattering bitch is allowed to stand by the fire and stink.”

“This pains me!” King Lear said. He was beginning to wonder whether what the Fool said was true.

“Sirrah, I’ll teach you a speech,” the Fool said.

“Go ahead.”

The Fool said, “Listen to it carefully, my uncle.”

He sang this song:

“Have more than you show,

“Speak less than you know,

“Lend less than you owe,

“Ride more than you walk,

“Learn more than you hear,

“Don’t stake all on a single throw.

“Leave your drink and your whore,

“And keep indoors,

“And you shall have more

“Than two tens to a score.”

The Fool gave wise advice in the beginning of the song, but the conclusion was nonsensical. The hearers expected the song to end up something like “And you shall have more / As your net worth becomes more.” However, sometimes we can do the right things and yet suffer a bad result. We can also do things for good reasons and yet suffer a bad result.

As an octogenarian, King Lear wanted to pass his power and possessions on to his daughters because he sincerely believed that they sincerely loved him. Much could be said in support of his decision, but the consequences of it were turning out not to be what he expected and he was beginning to suspect that he had acted wrongly, both in giving all his wealth and power away and in how he had treated Cordelia. In many cases, as when an elderly parent is beginning to show signs of senile dementia, the elderly parent ought to become the ward of his or her children, but King Lear, although he was an octogenarian, was vigorous

enough to go hunting with his Knights.

“This song is nothing, Fool,” King Lear said.

“Then it is like the breath of a lawyer who has not received a fee,” the Fool said. “Lawyers will not do good work until they are paid, and you have paid me nothing for my song. Can you make any use of nothing, my uncle?”

“Why, no, boy,” King Lear said. “Nothing can be made out of nothing.”

The Fool said to the disguised Kent, “Please, tell him that nothing is the amount the rent of his land comes to. He will not believe a Fool.”

King Lear had given away all his land — and all the income that his land had formerly brought him. Now he had no income; he had only the allowance his two older daughters were supposed to give him — an allowance that was supposed to include the pay of a hundred Knights to attend him.

“This is a bitter and sarcastic Fool!” King Lear said.

“Do you know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?” the Fool asked.

“No, lad,” King Lear replied. “Teach me.”

“That lord who counseled you to give away all your land, place him here by me,” the Fool said. “You can stand for him. The sweet fool and the bitter fool will immediately appear.”

He pointed to himself and said, “The sweet one is the one in motley here.”

He pointed to King Lear and said, “The bitter one is the one found there.”

No lord had counseled King Lear to give away all his land; it had been the King's own idea.

“Do you call me fool, boy?” King Lear asked.

Speaking truth to former power, the Fool said, “All your other titles you have given away; the title of ‘fool’ is the one you were born with. You cannot give it away.”

The disguised Kent, who was another man who had spoken truth to power, said to King Lear, “This is not altogether fool, my lord.” He meant that what the Fool was saying was not altogether foolish, but instead included much sense.

The Fool deliberately misunderstood the sentence as saying that the Fool did not have all the foolishness of the world. He said, “No, truly, for the lords and great men will not let me have all the foolishness. Even if I had a monopoly on foolishness, they would have part of it. And this is true of ladies, too — they will not let me have all the foolishness to myself; they’ll be snatching foolishness away from me.”

The Fool paused, and then he added, “Give me an egg, my uncle, and I’ll give you two crowns.”

Crowns are coins, and they are the headwear of a King, and they are the tops of heads.

“What two crowns shall they be?” King Lear asked.

“Why, after I have cut the egg in the middle, and eaten up the egg, what will remain will be the two halves of the eggshell — the two crowns of the egg.”

King Lear had given away his valuables: his land and his income. He had kept the title of King, but that was getting him little respect now.

The Fool continued, “When you split your crown in the

middle, and gave away both parts, you behaved as foolishly as if you carried your donkey on your back as you trod over the dirt — you had as little wit in your bald crown when you gave your golden crown away. If I speak like myself — a Fool — in saying this, then let the person who first finds it true be whipped. Such a person is a Fool, and Fools are whipped, and such a person tells the truth, and people who tell the truth in this society are whipped.”

The Fool sang this song:

“Fools had never less wit in a year;

“For wise men are grown foolish,

“They know not how their wits to wear,

“Their manners are so apish.”

The Fool’s song stated that fools were not much needed now because wise men were acting like fools — the wise men were imitating, aka aping, fools.

King Lear asked, “Since when have you been so full of songs, sirrah?”

“I have made a habit of singing, my uncle, ever since you made your daughters your mothers, for when you gave them the whip, and pulled down your own pants —”

The Fool sang this song:

“Then they for sudden joy did weep,

“And I for sorrow sung,

“That such a King should act like a child,

“And go among the fools.”

The Fool added, “Please, my uncle, keep a schoolmaster who can teach your Fool to lie: I would like to learn to lie.”

“If you lie, sirrah, we’ll have you whipped,” King Lear said, using the royal plural.

“I wonder how you and your daughters are related,” the Fool said. “They’ll have me whipped for speaking the truth, you will have me whipped for lying, and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace and saying nothing. I had rather be any kind of thing than a Fool, and yet I would not be you, my uncle — you have pared your wit on both sides, and left nothing in the middle.”

A Fool is supposed to be a half-wit, but King Lear had given away all of his wits along with everything else.

The Fool looked at the door and said, “Here comes one of the parings.”

Frowning, Goneril entered the hall.

“How are you, daughter!” King Lear said. “Your frown looks like a frontlet — a band going across your forehead. I think that you have been frowning too much lately.”

The Fool said to King Lear, “You were a fine fellow when you had no need to care about her frowning; now you are a zero without a number in front of it to give it value. I am better than you are now; I am a Fool, but you are nothing.”

Angry, Goneril frowned at the Fool.

The Fool said to Goneril, “Yes, indeed, I will hold my tongue; so your face orders me to, although you say nothing. Mum, mum.”

He sang this song:

“He who keeps neither crust nor crumb,

“Tired of everything, shall want some.”

Crust and crumb referred specifically to a loaf of bread, but

metaphorically to everything. The Fool was saying that King Lear had given away all he had, and that he would find himself wanting to have some of his wealth and power back.

The Fool pointed to King Lear and said, “That’s a shelled peapod.”

A shelled peapod is empty of peas, the valued part of the peapod; the shelled peapod itself is worth nothing.

Goneril said to King Lear, her father, “Not only, sir, this your all-licensed Fool, who is permitted to make fun of everyone and everything, but others of your insolent retinue hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth in rank and gross and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir, I had thought, by making this well known to you, to have found a sure remedy; but now I grow fearful, because of what you yourself have spoken and done only recently, that you protect this kind of behavior and encourage it by being permissive. If this is true, you are committing a fault that will not escape censure. Remedies for this misbehavior must be found, although in order to get a wholesome and healthy society, these remedies might be thought to be an offence to you and cause me shame, except that the necessity for such remedies will silence such criticism and instead be praised as a sensible course of action.”

The Fool said to King Lear, “For, you know, my uncle, the hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long that it had its head bit off by its young. So, out went the candle, and we were left in the dark.”

The cuckoo bird lays its eggs in the nests of other birds such as the hedge-sparrow, which rears the cuckoo’s young, which grow larger than the hedge-sparrow and become a danger to it. The Fool’s point in telling this story was that King Lear was in danger from his ungrateful

daughter — who might not even be his biological daughter. At the very least, Goneril was not treating King Lear with the devotion that a biological daughter ought to feel for her father.

Shocked at this treatment from his daughter, King Lear asked, “Are you our daughter?”

He was pointing out that Goneril ought to treat him with the respect due a father.

“Come, sir,” Goneril said, “I wish that you would make use of that good wisdom, of which I know that you have plenty, and put away these moods that recently have transformed you from what you rightly are.”

The Fool said, “May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?”

The Fool was pointing out that things were backwards here. The father can criticize a daughter, but the daughter ought not to criticize the father.

He sang, “*Whoop, Jug! I love you.*”

“Jug” was a nickname for “Joan,” and “Joan” was a generic term for “whore.”

King Lear asked sarcastically, “Does anyone here know me? This is not Lear. Does Lear walk like this? Does he speak like this? Where are his eyes? Either his mind weakens, or his faculties are paralyzed — am I awake? It is not so. Who is it who can tell me who I am?”

The Fool answered, “Lear’s shadow — you are the shadow of King Lear.”

“I would like to know who I am because by the signs of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be falsely persuaded I had daughters.”

The Fool added, “— who will make you an obedient father.”

King Lear asked Goneril sarcastically, “What is your name, fair gentlewoman?”

“This pretense of amazement, sir, is much of the savor of your other new pranks,” Goneril said. “I ask you to understand my purposes correctly. As you are old and reverend, you should be wise. Here you are keeping a hundred Knights and squires; these men are so disordered, so debauched and bold, that our court, infected with their manners, looks like a riotous inn. Their pursuit of pleasure and lust makes our court more like a tavern or a brothel than a palace graced with the royal presence. This shame requires an immediate remedy; therefore, I ask that you — and if need be, I will forcefully take the thing I ask for — a little to reduce in number your train of followers. And let the remaining Knights, who shall still serve you, be such men as are suitable for your age, and know their own place and yours.”

“Darkness and devils!” King Lear shouted. “Saddle my horses; call my train of followers together!”

He shouted at Goneril, “Degenerate bastard! I’ll not trouble you any longer. I still have a daughter left.”

Goneril said, “You physically strike my servants, and the members of your disordered rabble make servants of their betters.”

The Duke of Albany, Goneril’s husband, entered the hall.

King Lear said, “Woe to the person who repents too late.”

He then said to the Duke of Albany, “Oh, sir, have you come? Is it your will? Speak, sir.”

He ordered his followers, who were shocked and were still

standing still, "Prepare my horses."

He then said to Goneril, "Ingratitude, you marble-hearted fiend, you are more hideous than a sea-monster when you show yourself in a child!"

"Please, sir, be patient," the Duke of Albany said to King Lear. "Control yourself."

King Lear said to Goneril, "Detested kite — you bird of prey! You lie! My train of followers are men of choice and rarest abilities who know all the particulars of their duty and exactly what they are to do, and they are very careful to live up to their excellent reputations."

He then said to himself, "Oh, very small fault, how ugly did you seem to be in Cordelia! That very small fault, like an engine, wrenched the frame of my nature from its fixed foundations like a building being pried up — it drew from my heart all love for Cordelia and added to my bitterness."

He hit himself in the head and shouted, "Oh Lear, Lear, Lear! Beat at this gate that let your folly and foolishness in and let your dear and considered judgment out!"

He said to his train of followers, "Let's go; go, my people."

The disguised Kent and the Knights left. The Fool remained.

The Duke of Albany said, "My lord, I am as guiltless as I am ignorant of what has upset you."

"That may be true, my lord," King Lear said.

He then cursed his daughter: "Hear, Nature, hear; dear goddess, hear! Suspend your purpose, if you intended to make this creature fruitful! Into her womb convey sterility! Dry up in her the organs of increase and birth and from her dishonored body never allow a babe to spring and honor

her! If she must teem with an infant, create her child of spleen, so that it may live and be a perverse and unnatural torment to her! Let it stamp wrinkles in her youthful brow. Let it fret channels of falling tears in her cheeks. Let it turn all her mother's pains and beneficial care of her child to mocking laughter and contempt so that she may feel how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless and ungrateful child!"

He shouted, "Away! Away! Let's leave!"

He exited.

The Duke of Albany asked his wife, Goneril, "Now, by the gods whom we adore, what is the cause of this?"

She replied, "Never afflict yourself by knowing the cause; instead, let his disposition have the scope that dotage gives it."

King Lear returned; he was crying with anger.

He shouted, "What! Fifty of my followers released in a single moment! Within a fortnight of my giving you wealth and power!"

"What's the matter, sir?" the Duke of Albany asked.

King Lear replied, "I'll tell you."

He said to Goneril, "Life and death! I am ashamed that you have the power to shake my manhood like this. I am ashamed that you can cause these hot tears, which break from me involuntarily. I am ashamed that you are worth the tears of a King. May pestilential gusts and fogs of unhealthy air fall upon you! May the very deep wounds — too deep to be probed and cleansed — of a father's curse pierce every sense you have and cause you pain!"

He shouted, "Old foolish eyes, if you weep because of this

cause again, I'll pluck you out, and cast you, with the tears that you shed, on the ground to mix with clay.

“Has it come to this? Let it be so. I still have a daughter left who, I am sure, is kind and will offer comfort to her father. When she shall hear this about you, she'll flay your wolfish visage with her fingernails. You shall find that I'll resume the Kingly appearance that you think I have cast off forever. You shall — that I promise you!”

King Lear exited again. The Fool remained again.

Goneril said to her husband, “Did you see that, my lord?”

Preparatory to criticizing her, he said, “I cannot be so partial, Goneril, to the great love I bear you —”

“Be quiet, please,” Goneril said.

She called, “Oswald, come here!”

She said to the Fool, “You, sir, are more knave than Fool. Follow your master.”

The Fool called, “My uncle Lear, my uncle Lear, tarry and take the Fool with you.”

He sang this song:

“A fox, when one has caught her,

“And such a daughter,

“Should surely be sent to the slaughter,

“If my Fool's cap would buy a halter, aka a noose,

“And so the Fool follows after his master.”

The Fool exited.

Goneril said sarcastically, “This man has had ‘good’ counsel.”

She meant that this man — her father — had NOT received good counsel from the Fool.

She added, “A hundred Knights!”

She said sarcastically, “It is ‘politic’ and ‘safe’ to let him keep armed and ready a hundred Knights. Yes, that way on every dream, each rumor, each fancy, each complaint, and each dislike, he may protect his dotage with their powers, and hold our lives at his mercy.”

She shouted, “Oswald, I say!”

The Duke of Albany said, “Well, you may be fearing something that will not happen.”

“That is safer than being too trustful,” she replied. “Let me always take away the harms I fear; that is better than always fearing to be taken by harms. I know my father’s heart. What he has uttered, I have ordered to be written to my sister. If she should sustain him and his hundred Knights after I have showed their unfitness —”

Oswald entered the hall.

“How is it going now, Oswald?” Goneril asked. “Have you written that letter to my sister?”

“Yes, madam.”

“Take with you some company, and ride away on horseback and deliver the letter to my sister. Inform her in full of my particular fears, and add to them such reasons of your own as may strengthen it more. Go now, and quickly return.”

Oswald exited.

Her husband was looking at her. He was not pleased.

Goneril said to him, “No, no, my lord, your mild and gentle

way of acting — although I myself do not condemn it — yet, begging your pardon, other people much more criticize you for lacking wisdom than praise you for your harmful mildness. Your leniency can result in danger.”

He replied, “How far your eyes may pierce the future I cannot tell; however, when we strive to make something better, often we mar what’s already well.”

Goneril started to speak: “No, because —”

He cut her off: “Well, we will see what the result of your actions will be.”

— 1.5 —

In the courtyard of the Duke of Albany’s palace stood King Lear, the disguised Kent, and the Fool.

King Lear said to the disguised Kent, “Go ahead of us to Gloucester with this letter. Acquaint my daughter no further with anything you know than comes from her questions about the letter. Do not volunteer information. Be diligent in your journey; otherwise, I shall be there before you.”

“I will not sleep, my lord, until I have delivered your letter,” the disguised Kent said.

He exited.

The Fool said, “If a man’s brains were in his heels, wouldn’t it be in danger of suffering from chilblains?”

A chilblain is a painful and itchy swelling on skin that has been exposed to cold and then rapidly warmed up.

King Lear replied, “Yes, boy.”

“Then you ought to be merry because your wit and intelligence shall never go slipshod.”

King Lear laughed at the joke. He would not have to wear slippers — be slipper-shod — because he would not have chilblains on his brains. And it was good news that his brains would not be slipshod — characterized by disorganization and a lack of thought.

But why wouldn't his brains be in his heels? One possible answer that was consistent with other things that the Fool had said was that King Lear had no brains. He had lost his brains — his wits — when he gave away his wealth and power.

The Fool said, “You shall see that your other daughter will treat you kindly because although she's as like this daughter — Goneril — as a crab is like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell. I know what I know.”

The Fool did not think that Regan would treat King Lear better than Goneril had treated him — he was punning. Regan would treat her father “kindly” — after her “kind.” Unfortunately, her kind was not good.

The Fool also thought about King Lear's daughters Goneril and Regan that one daughter was as like the other daughter as a crab is to an apple. That may sound like the two daughters are very different, but the “crab” that the Fool was referring to was a crabapple.

“Why, what do you know, my boy?” King Lear asked.

“She will taste as like this daughter as a crab tastes like a crab.”

In other words, the two daughters are exactly alike. Unfortunately, crabapples are small and sour.

The Fool then asked, “Do you know why one's nose stands in the middle of one's face?”

“No.”

“Why, to keep one’s eyes on either side of his nose so that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.”

In other words, the Fool was advising King Lear to stay alert and learn something. He did not yet know the true nature of his daughter Regan.

Thinking about Cordelia, King Lear said, “I did her wrong —”

The Fool asked him, “Do you know how an oyster makes its shell?”

“No.”

“Neither do I, but I know why a snail has a house.”

“Why?”

“Why, to put his head in it; that way, he will not give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.”

This was in part an indecent joke. Readers should already know what a man’s “horn” is, and the word “case” in this society could refer to a vagina. The Fool could also have been referring to a cuckold’s horns — a man with an unfaithful wife was depicted in pictures as having horns. Again, the Fool was hinting that Goneril and Regan were not legitimate — the assumption being that a legitimate daughter would love and respect and honor her father.

“I will forget my paternal nature,” King Lear said. “Fathers are supposed to have a kindly nature when it comes to a daughter. I have been so kind a father! Are my horses ready?”

“Your asses have gone to get them ready,” the Fool said.

He added, “The reason why the seven stars — the Pleiades — are no more than seven is a pretty fine reason.”

“Because they are not eight?” King Lear said.

“Yes, indeed,” the Fool said. “You would make a good Fool.”

A good Fool should know what is obvious, even when it is not obvious to other people.

King Lear said to himself, thinking about Goneril, “Maybe I should take my Kingdom back by force! She has shown monstrous ingratitude to me!”

“If you were my Fool, my uncle, I would have you beaten because you are old before your time,” the Fool said.

“How’s that?”

“You should not have become old until you had become wise.”

A gentleman walked over to them and King Lear asked him, “Are the horses ready?”

“They are ready, my lord.”

“Come, boy,” King Lear said to the Fool.

The Fool said, “She who’s a virgin now, and laughs at my departure, shall not be a maiden long, unless things be cut shorter.”

A young virgin who laughed at the Fool’s departure was very foolish, in the Fool’s opinion, because the Fool knew — based on his knowledge of Regan — that bad things were going to happen very soon. Such a virgin was too foolish to remain a virgin for very long unless men’s things — the dangly longish sexual part under the front of their waist — should be cut very short.

CHAPTER 2 (King Lear)

— 2.1 —

Edmund and the courtier Curan met in a room of the Earl of Gloucester's castle. They were close to where Edmund had hidden Edgar.

Edmund said, "May God save you, Curan."

"And you, sir. I have been with your father and have informed him that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan, his Duchess, will be here with him tonight."

"Why are they coming here?"

"I don't know. Have you heard of the news going around — I mean the whispered news, for it is so far only ear-kissing gossip?"

"No, I haven't heard it yet. What are people whispering?"

"Have you heard anything about a probable war between the Duke of Cornwall and the Duke of Albany?"

"Not a word," Edmund replied.

"You may hear something, then, soon. Fare you well, sir."

Curan exited.

Edmund said to himself, "The Duke of Cornwall is coming here tonight? This is better than I could imagine! This is the best thing that could possibly happen! His coming here weaves itself necessarily into my plot — I can take advantage of this! My father is ready to accuse and arrest my brother, and I have one thing, of a queasy question, aka sensitive nature, that I must do. May speed and good fortune be on my side and help me!"

He called, "Brother, may I have a word with you? Descend, brother, I say!"

Edgar entered the room.

"My father is still awake and watchful. Oh, sir, flee from this place; my father has been given information about where you are hiding. You have now the good advantage of the night so you can escape unseen. Haven't you spoken against the Duke of Cornwall? He's coming here, now, in the night, hastily, and Regan is with him. Have you said nothing about supporting his side against the Duke of Albany? Think."

"I am sure that I have not said a word," Edgar replied.

"I hear my father coming," Edmund said. "Pardon me. As part of a deception, I must draw my sword upon you. Draw your sword; seem to defend yourself; now act as if you were fighting me fiercely."

Edmund said loudly so that his father would hear, "Surrender! Appear before my father. Light! Bring light here!"

He said softly, "Flee from here, brother."

Then he shouted, "Torches! Bring torches!"

He said softly to Edgar, "And so, farewell."

Edgar exited.

Edmund said softly to himself, "Some blood drawn from me would help create the opinion that Edgar and I have really been fiercely fighting."

He used his sword to lightly wound and bloody his arm.

He said softly, "I have seen drunkards do more than this in sport."

Young men of the time would sometimes wound themselves so that they could drink a toast of blood and wine to their beloved.

He shouted, “Father! Father! Stop! Stop! Won’t anyone help me?”

The Earl of Gloucester entered the room, along with some servants who were carrying torches.

“Now, Edmund, where’s the villain?” the Earl of Gloucester asked.

Edmund, who wanted Edgar to get away lest their father’s questions reveal the truth about what had happened, delayed answering the question. He said, “Here he stood in the dark, his sharp sword out, mumbling wicked charms, conjuring the Moon to be his auspicious mistress and help him —”

“But where is he?” the Earl of Gloucester asked.

Still playing for time, Edmund said, “Look, sir, I am bleeding.”

“Where is the villain, Edmund?”

Pointing in the wrong direction, Edmund replied, “He fled this way, sir. When by no means he could —”

The Earl of Gloucester ordered, “Pursue him! Go after him!”

Some servants exited in pursuit of Edgar.

He asked Edmund, “By no means what?”

“Persuade me to murder your lordship,” Edmund replied. “I told him that the avenging gods aim all their lightning and thunder against parricides — people who murder their own father. I spoke about the manifold and strong bonds that

bind the child to the father. Sir, at last Edgar, seeing how I loathed and opposed his unnatural purpose, in one deadly motion thrust his drawn and ready sword at me and attacked my unprotected body and cut my arm. But when he saw my courage aroused as if in response to a battle cry — I was brave because I knew that I was in the right — and saw that I was ready to fight back, or perhaps because he was frightened by the noise I made, quite suddenly he fled.”

“Let him fly far,” the Earl of Gloucester said. “If he stays in this land, he shall be caught, and when he is found, he will be killed. The noble Duke of Cornwall, who is my master, my worthy and honorable overlord and patron, comes here tonight. By his authority I will proclaim that whoever finds Edgar shall deserve our thanks for bringing the murderous coward to the place of execution; the penalty for whoever conceals Edgar shall be death.”

Edmund said, “When I tried to convince him not to try to have you killed and found him completely determined to do it, with angry speech I threatened to reveal his plot. He replied, ‘You beggarly bastard who is legally prevented from inheriting his property, do you think, if I would oppose you, that any trust, virtue, or worth in you would make your words believed? No! I would deny everything even if you were to produce evidence in the form of a letter written in my own handwriting — I would say that everything was your suggestion, plot, and damned practice. You must think that everyone in the world is a dullard if they would not realize that you, Edmund, would greatly profit if I, Edgar, were to die: You would inherit our father’s property. That is an understandable and powerful motive for you to seek my death!’”

“He is an unnatural and hardened villain!” the Earl of Gloucester said. “Would he deny having written his letter?”

I never fathered him — he is no son of mine!”

Some trumpets sounded the distinctive notes that announced the arrival of the Duke of Cornwall.

The Earl of Gloucester said, “Listen, the Duke’s trumpets! I don’t know why he is coming here.”

He then said, “I’ll close all the seaports; the villain Edgar shall not escape; the Duke of Cornwall must grant me that privilege. In addition, I will send Edgar’s picture far and near, so that everyone in the Kingdom may have the information they need about him.

“And, Edmund, you loyal and loving boy, I’ll work the legal means that will make you capable of inheriting my land.”

The Duke of Cornwall, Regan, and some attendants entered the room.

The Duke of Cornwall said, “How are you now, my noble friend! Ever since I came here, which was just now, I have heard strange news.”

“If it is true,” Regan said, “all punishments are inadequate for the offender. How are you, my lord?”

“Oh, madam, my old heart is cracked! It’s cracked!” the Earl of Gloucester cried.

“What! Did my father’s godson really seek your life? He whom my father named? Your Edgar?”

“Oh, lady, lady, my shame would like this to be hidden and not known!”

“Wasn’t he the companion of the riotous Knights who serve my father?” Regan asked.

“I don’t know, madam,” the Earl of Gloucester said. “This

situation is very bad — very bad!”

Taking advantage of an opportunity to further slime Edgar, Edmund said, “Yes, madam, he was one of that group.”

Regan replied, “It is no wonder this happened, then, even if Edgar were disloyal. It is those riotous Knights who have invited him to kill the old man — his father — so that they can spend and waste his income. I have this evening received a letter from my sister, Goneril, who has well informed me about these riotous Knights. She gave such warnings that I decided that if they come to stay at my house, I will not be there.”

“Nor I, I assure you, Regan,” the Duke of Cornwall said.

He added, “Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father the loyalty that a child owes a father.”

“It was my duty, sir,” Edmund replied.

“Edmund revealed Edgar’s plot, and he received this injury you see on his arm while striving to apprehend him,” the Earl of Gloucester said.

“Is Edgar being pursued?” the Duke of Cornwall asked.

“Yes, my good lord,” the Earl of Gloucester replied.

“If he is captured, you shall never again fear that he will do harm — he will be killed,” the Duke of Cornwall said. “Use my resources to do what you think needs to be done.”

Using the royal plural, he added, “As for you, Edmund, whose virtue and obedience that you have shown just now do so much to commend you, you shall serve us. Natures of such deep trust and loyalty we shall much need. We choose you to enter our service.”

“I shall serve you, sir, truly and loyally, above all else,” Edmund replied.

“For him I thank your Grace,” the Earl of Gloucester said.

The Duke of Cornwall began to say, “You don’t know why we came to visit you —”

Regan interrupted, “— thus out of season, threading dark-eyed night as we avoided obstacles as we traveled through the darkness. Matters, noble Gloucester, of some importance have arisen about which we must have your advice. Our father has written to us, and so has our sister, about quarrels between them. I thought it fitting and best to answer our father’s letter while we are away from our home. Several messengers are waiting to be sent back with our reply. Our good old friend, console yourself about Edgar’s disloyalty to you, and give us the advice we need about this matter, which needs to be taken care of immediately.”

The Earl of Gloucester replied, “I will help you, madam. Your graces are very welcome.”

— 2.2 —

The disguised Kent and Oswald, Goneril’s steward, met in front of the Earl of Gloucester’s castle. The time was a little before dawn.

Oswald said, “Good dawning to you, friend. Are you a servant in this castle?”

The disguised Kent replied, “Yes.”

This was a lie. He recognized Oswald, whom he had tripped in the Duke of Albany’s castle because Oswald had treated King Lear badly, and he wanted to start a fight with him. Oswald did not recognize Kent.

“Where may we stable our horses?” Oswald asked.

“In the mud and mire,” the disguised Kent replied.

“Please, if you respect me, tell me.”

“If you respect me” meant “if you would be so kind,” but the disguised Kent deliberately mistook it as being literal.

“I don’t respect you.”

“Why, then, I don’t care for you,” an angry Oswald replied.

“If I had you in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make you care for me.”

A pinfold is a pen for stray cattle, and “Lipsbury” has the meaning of “Lipstown.” The disguised Kent was saying that if he had Oswald in his power — between his teeth — he would make him care for — be wary of — him.

“Why are you talking to and treating me this way?” Oswald complained. “I don’t know you.”

“Fellow, I know you,” the disguised Kent said.

“Who do you think I am?”

“You are a knave. You are a rascal. You are a servant who dines on broken foods — leftovers. You are a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, lightweight, filthy, worsted-stocking knave. You have only the three suits of clothing given annually to servants, and you wear the low-value worsted stockings that a servant wears rather than the silk stockings of an upper-class person. You are a lily-livered, legal-action-taking knave who is too cowardly to fight and so prefers to file a lawsuit. You are a whoreson, mirror-gazing and vain, super-serviceable and over-officious as well as finical and fussy rogue. You are a one-trunk-inheriting slave — all you inherited will fit into one trunk. You are a person who will be a bawd by way of providing good service to your master. You are nothing but the compound of a knave, beggar, coward, and panderer. You are the son and heir of a mongrel bitch; not only are

you a son of a mongrel bitch, but you also inherited all the qualities of the mongrel bitch. You are a person whom I will beat into clamorous whining if you deny even the smallest syllable of the names that I have called you.”

Oswald complained, “Why, what a monstrous fellow you are, thus to rail against a person whom you do not know and who does not know you!”

“What a brazen-faced varlet you are to deny that you know me!” the disguised Kent said. “Is it two days since I tripped up your heels, and beat you in front of the King? Draw your sword, you rogue, for although it is night, yet the Moon shines. I’ll make a sop of the moonlight out of you: I will fill you full of holes that soak up the moonlight. Draw your sword, you whoreson, despicable barber-monger, draw.”

Kent was a master of invective. A whoremonger is a person who drums up business for whores. Kent was calling Oswald a barber-monger, a person who drummed up business for barbers. In other words, he was saying that Oswald made himself useful to men who were very concerned about their appearance.

Kent drew his sword.

Oswald said, “Stay away from me! I have nothing to do with you.”

“Draw, you rascal. You have come with letters against the King, and you take the part of Vanity the Puppet — Goneril — against the royalty of her father. Draw, you rogue, or I’ll slice your shanks. Draw your sword, you rascal, and fight me!”

Oswald shouted, “Help! Murder! Help!”

“Fight, you slave! Stand up and fight, rogue! Stand! You

fancy slave, fight!”

The disguised Kent used the flat of his sword to hit Oswald.

Oswald shouted again, “Help! Murder! Help!”

Edmund, who had drawn his rapier, arrived on the scene, as did Regan, the Earl of Gloucester, and some servants.

Edmund asked, “What’s the matter?”

The disguised Kent replied, “Let us fight, impudent boy, if you please. Come, I’ll wound your flesh and initiate you into the world of adults. Come on, young master.”

The Earl of Gloucester said, “Weapons! Arms! What’s the matter here?”

The Duke of Cornwall ordered, “Stop fighting. Keep the peace. Your lives depend upon it. Whoever strikes again with his weapon will die. What is the matter?”

Regan said, “These are the messengers from our sister and from the King.”

“What is your argument about?” the Duke of Cornwall asked. “Speak!”

“I am out of breath, my lord,” Oswald replied.

“That is not a surprise since you have ‘fought’ so ‘courageously,’” the disguised Kent said sarcastically to him. “You cowardly rascal, Nature refuses to admit that you are natural. In fact, a tailor made you.”

“You are a strange fellow,” the Duke of Cornwall said. “Can a tailor make a man?”

“Yes, a tailor did, sir,” the disguised Kent said. “A stone-cutter or painter could not have made him so badly, even if he had been only two hours at the job. The man the tailor

made is not a man; he is a tailor's dummy."

"Speak," the Duke of Cornwall ordered Oswald. "How did your quarrel begin?"

"This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared because of his gray beard —"

Insulted, the disguised Kent said. "You whoreson zed! You unnecessary letter!"

The letter Z did not appear in dictionaries of the time. People felt that the letter Z was unnecessary because it could be replaced by the letter S and because Latin did not have a letter Z.

The disguised Kent said to the Duke of Cornwall, "My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the wall of a privy with him. Spare my gray beard, you wagtail?"

The disguised Kent's insults continued. "Unbolted" had the meaning of "unsifted"; Kent would have to step continually on Oswald in order to get the lumps out of the mortar. Of course, if Oswald were unbolted, he was not locked up in a jail. Also, if Oswald were "unbolted," he lacked a man's "bolt." In addition, a wagtail is a bird that bobs its tail up and down. Kent was suggesting that Oswald was an obsequious courtier who was constantly bowing. He may also have meant that Oswald was excitedly hopping and unable to keep still.

The Duke of Cornwall ordered, "Shut up, sirrah! You beastly knave, know you no reverence and respect?"

"Yes, sir, I do, but anger has a privilege," the disguised Kent said.

"Why are you angry?" the Duke of Cornwall asked.

“I am angry that such a slave as this should wear a sword, which is a privilege given to gentlemen, not to a man such as this who has no honesty and no virtue. Such smiling rogues as this Oswald, like rats, often bite the holy cords of marriage in two that are too intricately and closely knotted to be untied.”

The disguised Kent was making a major insinuation that Oswald was helping his boss, Goneril, sin against her husband, the Duke of Cornwall. Previously, he had called Oswald a panderer — a go-between between two illicit lovers.

He added, “Such smiling rogues smooth the path of their lords’ passions that rebel against reason — they help their lords satisfy their unreasonable desires. They bring oil to fire, and they bring snow to their masters’ colder moods.

“They deny, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks with every varying gale of their masters. They say no when their masters want to hear no, and they say yes when their masters want to hear yes. They are like a dead kingfisher that has been hung up by its neck; whichever way the wind blows the dead kingfisher will turn so that its beak acts like a weathervane.

“They know nothing, like dogs, except how to follow their masters.”

Seeing Oswald looking with contempt at him, the disguised Kent shouted at him, “A plague upon your epileptic visage! Are you smiling at what I have to say, as if I were a fool? Goose, if I had you upon Salisbury plain, I would drive you cackling home to Camelot.”

“What? Are you insane, old fellow?” the Duke of Cornwall asked.

“How did you two fall out?” the Earl of Gloucester asked.

“Why did you two grow angry at each other? Tell us that.”

“No two opposites hate each other more than I and this knave,” the disguised Kent said.

“Why do you call him a knave? What’s his offense?” the Duke of Cornwall asked.

“His face does not please me.”

“And, perhaps, neither does mine, nor the Earl of Gloucester’s, nor my Duchess’.”

“Sir, it is my particular pastime to be plain,” the disguised Kent said. “I have seen better faces in my time than stand on any shoulders that I see before me at this instant.”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “This is some fellow who, having been praised for bluntness, puts on a saucy roughness, and forces plain-speaking away from its true nature. He uses it not for honest candor but for crafty trickery. This man cannot flatter — not he! He has an honest and plain mind — he must speak the truth! If they will endure his talk, he has won a victory over them; if they will not, he says that he is plain-spoken. These kinds of knaves I know; in this plain-spokenness they hide more craft and trickery and corrupter ends than twenty silly ducking attendants who constantly make silly and obsequious bows.”

The disguised Kent mocked the Duke of Cornwall by using elevated, not plain, language: “Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity, under the allowance of your great aspect, whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire on flickering Phoebus Apollo’s forehead —”

The Duke of Cornwall asked, “What do you mean by this?”

“I mean to go out of my usual style of speaking, which you criticize so much. I know, sir, that I am no flatterer:

Whoever he was who deceived you with plain talk was a plain knave, which for my part I will not be, even though I may be so plain-spoken that you think that I am a plain knave.”

The Duke of Cornwall said to Oswald, “What was the offense you committed against him?”

“I never did him any offense,” Oswald replied. “It pleased the King his master very recently to strike at me because he misunderstood something. At that time, this man, in league with and wanting to encourage the King in his displeasure, tripped me from behind. Once I was down on the floor, he insulted me and railed against me. He acted in such a macho manner that the King thought that he was a hero and praised him although all he had done was to attack someone who was willing to walk away from a fight. Because of his success in attacking a man who would not fight back, he drew his sword against me here and attacked me again.”

The disguised Kent said, “None of these rogues and cowards but Ajax is their Fool.”

This meant: *Rogues and cowards surround me, and Ajax is their Fool.* Not surprisingly, this was another major insult. Great Ajax was a warrior hero in Homer’s *Iliad*, but later his reputation declined and he gained a reputation for great stupidity. Kent was saying that among these rogues and cowards, Ajax would be the Fool. As shown by King Lear’s Fool, Fools are not foolish although fools are foolish. In fact, Fools are often wise. Kent was saying that Ajax, as foolish as he was, would be the wise man in this group of people around him.

Instantly angry, the Duke of Cornwall ordered, “Bring the stocks here!”

He wanted to punish the disguised Kent by putting him in

the stocks, which would restrain his legs so that he could not move. The stocks were used to punish lower-class people who had committed misdemeanors.

The Duke of Cornwall said to the disguised Kent, “You stubborn old knave, you reverend braggart, we’ll teach you ___”

The disguised Kent, as plain-spoken as ever, interrupted, “Sir, I am too old to learn. Call not your stocks for me. I serve the King, on whose employment I was sent to you. You shall do small respect and show too bold malice against the grace and person of my master if you stock his messenger.”

The disguised Kent was correct. Because he served King Lear, he ought to be respected because of the King. If the Duke of Cornwall were to put him in the stocks, he would be gravely insulting Lear both as a King and as a man.

The Duke of Cornwall ordered, “Bring the stocks here! As I have life and honor, there shall he sit until noon.”

Regan said, “Until noon? Until night, my lord — and all night, too!”

“Why, madam, even if I were your father’s dog, you should not treat me so.”

“Sir, you are my father’s knave, and so I will treat you so.”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “This is a fellow who matches the description of the people our sister-in-law Goneril warned us against. Come, bring the stocks!”

The stocks were brought out.

The Earl of Gloucester said, “Let me beg your grace not to do this. His fault is great, and the good King his master will rebuke him for it. Your purposed low correction — the

stocks — is such as is used to punish the basest and most contemptible wretches for such things as small thefts and other common crimes. The King must take it ill that he's so slightly valued that his messenger is thus restrained."

"I'll answer that," the Duke of Cornwall said. "I'll take responsibility for this."

Regan said, "My sister may take it much more worse to have her gentleman — Oswald — abused and assaulted for following her orders. Put his legs in the stocks."

The disguised Kent was put in the stocks.

Regan said, "Come, my good lord, let's leave."

Everyone left except the Earl of Gloucester and the disguised Earl of Kent, who was undergoing a humiliating punishment that ought never to be inflicted on an Earl.

"I am sorry for you, friend," the Earl of Gloucester said. "This is the Duke's pleasure, whose disposition, all the world well knows, will not be hindered or stopped. I'll entreat him to release you."

"Please do not, sir," the disguised Kent said. "I have been awake a long time and travelled hard; some of the time I spend in the stocks I shall sleep, and the rest of the time I'll whistle. A good man's fortune may poke out at heels."

A good man's fortune may wear away until it becomes bad fortune, just like a good stocking becomes a bad stocking when it wears out and one's heel pokes out of it.

The disguised Kent then said, "May God give you a good morrow!"

"The Duke's to blame in this; it will be ill taken," the Earl of Gloucester said, and then he exited.

Kent said to himself, "Good King Lear, you must prove this

common proverb to be true: You out of Heaven's benediction come to the warm Sun, aka a place of no shelter! Yes, you must go from better to worse, from a place like Heaven to a place that is this Earth. You have been King, but here you will not be treated like a King. When you arrive here, bad things will happen."

He took out a letter and said softly, "Approach, you beacon — the Sun — to this under globe — the Earth — so that by your comfortable beams I may read this letter! Nothing almost sees miracles but misery; in other words, no one but the truly miserable almost sees miracles. When one is truly miserable, one hopes for a miracle!

"I know this letter is from Cordelia, who has most fortunately been informed of my obscured course of action — of what I am doing while I am in disguise.

"Cordelia is in France, away from this enormous and broken state of affairs, and she is finding time to seek a way to give losses their remedies. She wishes to right all these wrongs.

"My eyes are completely weary from being awake too long, so take advantage, heavy eyes, of this opportunity to sleep and not look at these stocks — this shameful lodging.

"Fortune, good night. Smile once more on me, and turn your wheel! Right now, I am at the bottom of the Wheel of Fortune, and a turn of the wheel will bring me higher."

He slept.

— 2.3 —

Edgar thought out loud in a wooded area: "I heard myself proclaimed to be an outlaw, and I was lucky and happy to find and hide in a hollow of a tree and so escape the hunt.

"No seaport is free and open to me; everyplace has guards

who watch with very unusual vigilance and hope to capture me. As long as I can escape capture, I will preserve myself. I have formed the plan to take the basest and poorest shape that ever poverty, in contempt of man, has brought a man closest to being a beast.

“I’ll grime my face with filth, cover only my loins and leave the rest naked, neglect my hair until it is matted and knotted, and exposed and naked I will confront the winds and persecutions of the sky.

“The countryside gives me examples and precedents of Bedlam beggars — former inmates of the Bethlehem Hospital for the insane who, released and with a license to beg, with roaring voices, stick in their numbed and pain-insensitive bare arms pins, wooden skewers, nails, and sprigs of rosemary, and with this horrible spectacle, they force people from humble farms, poor and paltry villages, sheep-cotes, and mills, sometimes with the use of lunatic curses, sometimes with prayers, to give them charity.”

Edgar practiced the cries of a Bedlam beggar: “Poor Turlygod! Poor Tom!”

He then said, “There is some good in this for me. I will look nothing like Edgar.”

— 2.4 —

King Lear, the Fool, and a gentleman who served King Lear arrived at the courtyard of the Earl of Gloucester’s castle. They were close to the disguised Kent, King Lear’s messenger, who was still in the stocks.

King Lear said, “It is strange that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan should depart in this way from their home, and not send back to me my messenger.”

The gentleman said, “I learned that the night before they

moved they had no plan to move.”

They had not seen the disguised Kent, but now he said, “Hail to you, noble master!”

Seeing that the disguised Kent was in stocks, King Lear asked him, “Are you doing this for your own amusement? Is this a joke?”

“No, my lord.”

The Fool said, “He is wearing cruel garters.”

The Fool was punning on “crewel,” which was a thin worsted yarn that was used to make stockings.

The Fool continued, “Horses are tied by the heads, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the waist, and men by the legs. When a man’s over-lusty at legs — a vagabond — then he wears wooden stockings.”

King Lear asked the disguised Kent, “Who is the man who has so misunderstood your position as my messenger that he has placed you here in the stocks?”

“It is both he and she: your son-in-law and daughter.”

Horrified, King Lear said, “No!” To deliberately stock his messenger — knowing that he was his messenger — was a major insult to him as a King and as a man and as a father and father-in-law.

“Yes.”

“No, I say.”

“I say, yes.”

“No, no, they would not.”

“Yes, they have.”

“By Jupiter, I swear, no.”

“By Juno, I swear, yes.”

King Lear said, “They would not dare to do it. They could not, would not do it; it is worse than murder to do such violent outrage to a person whom they ought to respect because of whom he serves. Tell me, as quickly as you can tell me clearly, in which way you might deserve, or they might legitimately impose, this treatment on you, knowing that you are my messenger.”

“My lord, when at their home I delivered your Highness’ letter to them, before I rose from the place I was kneeling to show them respect, there came a steaming messenger, soaked in sweat because of his haste, half breathless, panting forth the salutations that came from Goneril. He delivered a letter, although he was interrupting me, which they read immediately. Because of the contents of that letter, the Duke of Cornwall and Regan summoned up their retinue of servants, immediately took to horse, and then commanded me to follow them and wait until they had leisure to answer your letter. They gave me cold looks.

“Meeting here in this place the other messenger, whose welcome, I perceived, had poisoned mine — he was Oswald, the very fellow who had recently been so saucy to your Highness — and having more courage than intelligence about me, I drew my sword.

“He aroused the people in the house with his loud and cowardly cries. Your son and daughter found this trespass worth the shame that here it suffers in the stocks.”

The Fool said, “Winter’s not gone yet, if the wild geese fly that way.”

He meant that bad times were going to continue. If the wild geese were still flying south, winter was coming. Regan

was acting the way that Goneril had acted.

The Fool then sang this song:

“Fathers who wear rags

“Do make their children blind;

“But fathers who bear moneybags

“Shall see their children kind.

“Fortune, that arrant whore,

“Never turns the key to the poor.”

When a father is poor, his children will be blind to his needs because providing for his needs will cost them money. But when a father is rich, his children will be kind to him in hopes of receiving a good inheritance. Fortune, aka luck, is a whore who will not open her door to a poor man who cannot afford to pay her for her services.

The Fool added, “But, for all this, you shall have as many dolors — by which I mean griefs, not dollars — on account of your daughters as you can speak of or count in a year.”

Feeling ill, King Lear said, “Oh, how this mother swells up toward my heart! *Hysterica passio*, go back down, you climbing sorrow. Your element’s below!”

The illness *hysterica passio* was also called “the mother.” The affliction involved a sense of choking and suffocation that began low and then went higher in the throat. It was thought to begin in the womb for women and in the abdomen for men.

King Lear asked, “Where is my daughter?”

The disguised Kent replied, “With the Earl of Gloucester, sir. She is within.”

King Lear said to the gentleman and the Fool, “Don’t follow me. Stay here.”

He exited.

The gentleman asked the disguised Kent, “Did you commit any offense other than the one you spoke of?”

“None,” Kent replied. “How is it that the King comes with so small a train of followers?”

The Fool said, “If you had been set in the stocks for asking that question, you would have well deserved it.”

“Why, Fool?”

The Fool gave a cynical answer: “We’ll send you to be educated by an ant, to teach you there’s no laboring in the winter.”

The Fool was saying that men do not work when they receive no profit. Ants work hard in the summer because food can be collected then, but they do not work in the winter. Similarly, many people were willing to serve King Lear when he had wealth and power, but many people were not willing to serve him now.

The Fool continued, “All who follow their noses are led by their eyes except blind men; and there’s not a nose among twenty but can smell a man who is stinking.”

The Fool was saying that it was obvious that King Lear lacked wealth and power. A sighted man could readily see his poverty, and a blind man could readily smell his poverty, which stank.

The Fool continued, “Let go your hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break your neck as you follow it, but when a great wheel goes up the hill, let it draw you upward.”

In other words, hitch your wagon to a rising star, but when a star falls abandon it. Watch how your master's Wheel of Fortune is turning: Is it bringing him higher or lower?

The advice was cynical, but the Fool did not think that good people would, or should, follow it.

The Fool continued, "When a wise man gives you better advice than I have just given you, give my advice back to me. I want no one but knaves to follow this advice, since a fool gives it."

The Fool sang this song:

"That sir who serves and seeks for gain,

"And follows but for form,

"Will pack when it begins to rain,

"And leave you in the storm."

The word "form" meant "appearance." The Fool was saying that many men abandon the person they serve when the going gets rough.

He continued to sing this song:

"But I will tarry; the Fool will stay,

"And let the wise man fly:

"The knave turns fool who runs away;

"The Fool is no knave, by God."

The Fool was saying that he would continue to serve King Lear. Abandoning him would be a knavish thing to do, the kind of thing a fool would do, and the Fool was no knave and no fool.

The disguised Kent asked the Fool, "Where did you learn

this, Fool?”

The Fool replied, “Not in the stocks, Fool.”

This was a compliment. The Fool was saying that the disguised Kent was a faithful follower of King Lear and that the disguised Kent would not abandon him — the disguised Kent was no knave. If the disguised Kent had abandoned King Lear, he would not now be in the stocks.

King Lear returned with the Earl of Gloucester.

King Lear said, “They refuse to speak with me? They are sick? They are weary? They have travelled all night? These are mere excuses, tricks, and pretenses. These are signs of revolt and desertions. Go back to them and bring me a better answer.”

The Earl of Gloucester replied, “My dear lord, you know the fiery quality of Duke Cornwall and how stubborn and fixed he is in his own course. He wants to have things his own way.”

Angry, King Lear shouted, “Vengeance! Plague! Death! Destruction!”

He then shouted, “Fiery? What quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester, I wish to speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.”

“Well, my good lord, I have informed them so.”

“Informed them!” King Lear said. “Do you understand me, man?”

“Yes, my good lord.”

“The King wishes to speak with the Duke of Cornwall; the dear father wishes to speak with his daughter, and he commands her service and is waiting for her. Have they been informed of this? My breath and blood! Fiery? The

fiery Duke? Tell the hot Duke that — no, do not tell him yet. Maybe he is not well. Illness always makes us neglect our duties that we would do if we were well and healthy. We are not ourselves when we are afflicted by illness that commands the mind to suffer with the body. I'll restrain myself, and I am angry that my headstrong impulse makes me mistake an indisposed and sickly man for a sound and healthy man.”

His eyes happened to fall on the disguised Kent, who was still in the stocks, and he immediately grew angry again: “Death on my state! Why should he sit here? This act persuades me that this move of the Duke of Cornwall and Regan from their palace to here and their refusal to speak to me is a deliberate scheme and insult. Set my servant free. Go tell the Duke and his wife that I will speak with them now — immediately. Tell them to come here and listen to me, or at their chamber-door I'll beat a drum and kill their sleep.”

“I would have all well between you,” the Earl of Gloucester said as he left to carry out the errand.

Suffering another attack of *hysterica passio*, King Lear said, “Oh, me! My heart, my rising heart! Down!”

The Fool said, “Cry, my uncle, as the cockney cook did to the eels when she put them alive in the cooking dish; she rapped them on the heads with a stick, and cried, ‘Down, playful creatures, down!’”

If the cockney cook had killed the eels before putting them in the cooking dish, she would not have had this problem.

If King Lear's heart had stopped and he had died before his wealth and power were distributed, he would not now be having this problem. And if Goneril and Regan had died earlier, King Lear would not now be having this problem.

The Fool added, “It was her brother who, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered its hay.”

Her brother had wanted to be kind, but horses do not eat grease. The brother’s kindness had a bad result: It rendered the hay inedible.

King Lear had wanted to be kind when he gave away his wealth and power as dowries for his daughters, but his kindness was having bad results.

The Duke of Cornwall, Regan, the Earl of Gloucester, and some servants arrived.

“Good morrow to you both,” King Lear said to the Duke of Cornwall and Regan.

“Hail to your grace!” the Duke of Cornwall replied.

The servants set the disguised Kent free.

Regan said to her father, “I am glad to see your Highness.”

“Regan, I think you are,” King Lear said. “I know what reason I have to think so. If you should not be glad to see me, I would divorce your mother, who is in a tomb, because the tomb would be sepulchering an adulteress.”

A biological daughter ought to be glad to see her father.

King Lear looked at the disguised Kent and said to him, “Oh, are you free? Some other time we will address that.”

He then said, “Beloved Regan, your sister’s evil. Oh, Regan, her sharp-toothed unkindness has stabbed me, like a vulture tied to me, here.”

Overcome with emotion, he pointed to his heart, and then he said, “I can scarcely speak; you will not believe with how depraved a manner — oh, Regan!”

“Please, control yourself,” Regan said. “I hope that you are mistaken. I hope that you are undervaluing Goneril’s good qualities rather than that she is failing in her duties as a daughter to you.”

“What do you mean?”

Regan replied, “I cannot think my sister in the least would fail in her obligations to you. If, sir, perhaps she has restrained the riotous behavior of your followers, it is on such grounds, and for such a wholesome end, as would clear her of all blame.”

King Lear shouted, “My curses on her!”

Regan replied, “Oh, sir, you are old. Nature in you stands on the very verge of her limit — you have nearly reached the end of your life. You should be ruled and led by some discreet person who discerns your state of mind — and your social position — better than you yourself do. Therefore, I ask you to please return to our sister and say that you have wronged her, sir.”

“Ask her for her forgiveness?” King Lear said. “Do you think that this would suit my position as King and father?”

He knelt and said, “Dear daughter, I confess that I am old. Old people are useless. On my knees I beg that you’ll give me clothing, bed and shelter, and food.”

Regan said, “Good sir, no more of this. This is an unsightly trick. Return to my sister.”

King Lear stood up and said, “Never, Regan. She has deprived me of half of my train of followers. She has looked black upon me, and she struck me with her tongue, very like a serpent, upon the very heart. May all the stored vengeance of Heaven fall on her ungrateful head! Strike her young bones, you infecting airs, with lameness!”

“Sir!” the Duke of Cornwall said.

King Lear shouted, “You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty, you swampland fogs, drawn by the powerful Sun; fall upon her and blast her pride!”

Regan said, “Oh, the blest gods! You will wish the same things on me when you are in another rash mood.”

“No, Regan, you shall never have my curse,” King Lear said. “Your tender-hearted nature that is set in a woman’s body shall not give you over to harshness. Goneril’s eyes are fierce; but your eyes comfort and do not burn. It is not in you to begrudge me my pleasures, to reduce in size my train of followers, to exchange hasty words with me, to scant my allowance, and in conclusion to draw the bolt and lock the door to prevent me from coming in. You know better than Goneril the duties of natural affection, the bond of childhood, the good manners of courtesy, and the dues of gratitude — you have not forgotten the half of the Kingdom that I gave you.”

“Good sir, get to the point,” Regan said.

“Who put my servant in the stocks?” King Lear asked.

A trumpet sounded some distinctive notes.

“What trumpet is that?” the Duke of Cornwall asked.

“I know it,” Regan said. “It is my sister’s. In her letter to me, she wrote that she would come here.”

Oswald, Goneril’s courtier, entered the courtyard.

“Has your lady come?” Regan asked.

King Lear said about Oswald, “This is a slave, whose easy-borrowed pride dwells in the fickle grace of the woman he serves. He has done nothing to deserve pride; he has no

rightful pride.”

He said to Oswald, “Out, varlet; get out of my sight!”

Oswald stayed in the courtyard.

“What does your grace mean?” the Duke of Cornwall asked.

“Who put my servant in the stocks?” King Lear asked.
“Regan, I hope that you did not know about it.”

Goneril entered the courtyard.

King Lear said, “Who comes here? Oh, Heavens, if you love old men, if your sweet rule approves of obedience — the obedience daughters owe to their fathers — if you yourselves are old, make my cause your cause; send down the stored vengeances of Heaven, and take my part!”

He said to Goneril, “Aren’t you ashamed to look upon this beard?”

His white beard was a sign of old age and the respect that ought to be accorded to old age.

Regan and Goneril held hands.

King Lear said, “Oh, Regan, will you take her by the hand?”

Goneril replied, “Why shouldn’t she take me by the hand, sir? How have I offended you? Not everything is offensive that poor judgment and senility believe to be offensive.”

“Oh, sides, you are too tough,” King Lear said. “Will you continue to hold my breaking heart inside my chest? How came my servant to be put in the stocks?”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “I set him there, sir, but his disorderly conduct deserved much less good treatment. He

should have been punished much more harshly.”

“You!” King Lear said. “Did you?”

Regan said, “Please, father, you are weak, and I wish that you would act that way. Return with and stay with my sister until the expiration of your month, and then, after dismissing half your train of followers, come and stay with me. I am now away from home, and I do not have what is needed to take care of and entertain you.”

“Return with her to her home, with fifty of my men already dismissed?” King Lear said. “No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose to wage war against the enmity of the air; to be a comrade with the wolf and owl — to endure the sharp pinch of necessity! Return with her to her home?”

“Why, think about the hot-blooded King of France, who took as a wife Cordelia, our youngest born, even without a dowry. I could as well be brought to kneel before his throne, and, like a humble servant, beg for a pension to keep base life afoot. Return with her? Persuade me instead to be a slave and packhorse to this detested servant.”

King Lear pointed at Oswald.

“As you choose, sir,” Goneril said.

“Please, daughter, do not make me mad,” King Lear said. “I will not trouble you, my child. Farewell. We’ll meet no more, see one another no more. But yet you are my flesh, my blood, my daughter — or rather you are a disease that’s in my flesh, which I must call mine: You are a boil, a plague-sore, a swollen carbuncle, in my disease-corrupted blood. But I’ll not criticize you; let shame come to you when it will, I do not call it upon you. I do not bid Jupiter, the thunder-bearer, to shoot bolts of lightning at you, nor do I tell tales of you to Jupiter the highest judge. Mend when you can; be better at your leisure. I can be patient; I can

stay with Regan, I and my hundred Knights.”

King Lear’s Knights had already been reduced to fifty, but he hoped that Regan would honor the agreement made when he gave her dowry to her and allow him to have once more a hundred Knights.

Regan said, “Not so fast. I had not expected you to visit me yet, nor am I prepared with what is necessary to give you a fit welcome. Listen, sir, to my sister. Rational people who listen to your passionate complaints must come to the conclusion that you are old, and so —”

She hesitated and then said, “But she knows what she is doing.”

“Is this well spoken?” King Lear asked. “Do you really mean to say this?”

“I dare to say that it is true, sir,” Regan replied. “What, fifty followers? Isn’t that a good number? Why should you need more? Yes, or so many, since both expense and danger speak against so great a number? To maintain fifty Knights costs much money. And how, in one house, should so many people, under two commands, stay friendly? It is hard, almost impossible, to maintain the peace under such conditions.”

Goneril asked, “Why can’t you, my lord, be served by those whom she calls her servants or by my own servants?”

“Why not, my lord?” Regan asked. “If then they chanced to slack off while serving you, we could control them. If you will come to me — but now I see danger in you having so many Knights serving you — I entreat you to bring only twenty-five Knights. To no more than that will I give place or recognition.”

King Lear said, “I gave you everything —”

“And about time, too,” Regan said.

“I made you my guardians and my trustees,” King Lear said, “but I reserved some rights. We made an agreement that I would be allowed to have a hundred Knights serving me. What! Must I come to you with only twenty-five Knights, Regan? Don’t you remember?”

King Lear had reserved the right to have a hundred Knights serve him as a symbol of his social status. He was a King, not a servant or a beggar.

“If you say that again, my lord, you will have nothing more to do with me,” Regan said.

King Lear said, “Wicked creatures look good when they are compared to other creatures that are even more wicked. Not being the worst deserves some praise.”

He said to Goneril, “I will go with you. You allow me fifty Knights, and that is double the twenty-five Knights that Regan will allow me to have; therefore, you must love me twice as much as she does.”

Goneril said, “Listen to me, my lord. Why do you need twenty-five, ten, or five Knights to serve you in a house where twice so many are commanded to take care of you?”

Regan asked, “Why do you need one Knight?”

King Lear replied, “Oh, reason not the need. Don’t ask why they are needed. Even our basest beggars have something more than is absolutely needed. If you were to allow a man no more than what a man absolutely needs, that man’s life would be as cheap as a beast’s.

“You are a lady, and you wear gorgeous clothing. The purpose of clothing is to keep you warm, and if you have only the clothing that is needed to keep you warm, you would not need the gorgeous clothing you are wearing,

which barely keep you warm. You can keep warmer with a plain cloak.

“But, for true need —”

Some things cannot be quantified. King Lear had tried to quantify love by the number of Knights his daughters would allow him, and he had tried to quantify love earlier when before he gave his daughters their dowries he asked them to tell him how much they loved him.

Also, some needs are social. They may not be necessary to keep one alive, but they are nonetheless needs. Such needs include gorgeous clothing and the services of a hundred Knights. They also include love and respect.

King Lear said, “You Heavens, give me patience — the ability to endure pain — that’s what I need! You see me here, you gods, a poor old man, as full of grief as of age, and wretched in both!”

He then changed his mind about what he needed: “If you gods are the ones who are stirring these daughters’ hearts against their father, don’t make me so much a fool that I endure it meekly. Touch me with noble anger, and don’t let women’s weapons — drops of water, aka tears — stain my man’s cheeks!”

He said to Goneril and Regan, “No, you unnatural hags, I will have such revenges on you both, that all the world shall — I will do such things — I don’t know what they are yet, but they shall be the terrors of the Earth! You think I’ll weep. No, I’ll not weep. I have full cause to weep, but this heart shall break into a hundred thousand pieces before I’ll weep.”

Thunder sounded.

He then said to one of his few supporters, “Oh, Fool, I shall

go mad!”

King Lear, the Earl of Gloucester, the disguised Kent, and the Fool left.

The storm started in earnest.

“Let us go inside,” the Duke of Cornwall said. “There will be a storm.”

Regan said, “This house is little. The old man and his people cannot be well accommodated here.”

“It is his own fault,” Goneril said. “He has put himself out in the storm and away from shelter, and he has made his mind unrestful and disturbed. He needs to suffer from his folly.”

“I’ll receive him and take care of him gladly,” Regan said, “but not even one of his followers.”

“I am resolved to do the same thing,” Goneril said. “Where is my lord of Gloucester?”

“He followed the old man,” the Duke of Cornwall said. “Here he comes.”

The Earl of Gloucester entered the courtyard and said, “The King is in a high rage.”

“Where is he going?” the Duke of Cornwall asked.

“He is calling for his horses, but I don’t know where he is going.”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “It is best to give him his way and let him go. He insists on having his own way.”

“My lord, do not ask him to stay,” Goneril said.

“The night is coming, and the bleak winds are getting very strong,” the Earl of Gloucester said. “There is scarcely even

a bush for many miles around here.”

Regan said, “Oh, sir, willful men such as my father must learn from the injuries that they inflict on themselves. Shut and lock your doors. My father is served by a desperate train of followers, and since he allows himself to be manipulated by them, wisdom tells us to be afraid of what they may incite him to do.”

The Duke of Cornwall, who outranked the Earl of Gloucester, said, “Shut and lock your doors, my lord; it is a wild night. My Regan has given you good advice; come out of the storm.”

The Earl of Gloucester did as he was ordered.

CHAPTER 3 (King Lear)

— 3.1 —

The storm raged on the heath. The disguised Kent and the gentleman, who was another of King Lear's followers, met. The disguised Kent had been separated from King Lear by the storm.

"Who's there, besides foul weather?" the disguised Kent asked.

"One whose mind is like the weather — very unquiet."

"I know who you are," the disguised Kent said. "Where's the King?"

"Struggling against and competing with the raging elements of the storm. He orders the winds to blow the land into the sea or to swell the curled waves above the mainland so that the entire world might change or cease to exist. He tears his white hair, which the impetuous blasts, with blind rage, catch in their fury and show no respect for. He strives in this little world of man to out-scorn the to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain. In this night, in which the she-bear, whose milk has been emptied by her cubs, would lie in a cave, and in which the lion and the belly-pinched and starving wolf keep their fur dry, he stays outside without a hat and cries out with desperate defiance like a gambler who is betting all he has left."

"But who is with him?" the disguised Kent asked.

"None but the Fool, who labors to outdo the King's heart-struck injuries with extravagant wit."

"Sir, I know your good character, and I dare, because I know that you are a good man, to entrust an important task

to you. There is disagreement, although the two are cunning enough to conceal it, between the Duke of Albany and the Duke of Cornwall. They have — and which enthroned great men do not? — servants, who seem to be no other than servants, but who are spies who send to the King of France information about our state. This information includes the quarrels and plots of the two Dukes, or the harsh treatment both Dukes have borne against old and kind King Lear, or something deeper than these things, of which perhaps these other things conceal the truth of what is really going on.

“But it is true that from France an army comes into this divided Kingdom. This army, taking advantage of our negligence, has already gained a secret stronghold in some of our best ports, and the French soldiers are ready to openly show their military banners.

“Now let me tell you what I want you to do. If you trust me enough to dare to speed to Dover, you shall find men there who will thank you for giving an honest report of the unnatural and maddening sorrow that afflicts the King.

“I am a gentleman by birth and education, and because of some reliable information and confidence, I offer you the opportunity to do this service.”

The gentleman knew the disguised Kent only as a servant, and so he was skeptical and wanted further information before undertaking this task.

He said, “I will talk further with you.”

The disguised Kent knew that the gentleman was skeptical, but he needed the gentleman to quickly go to Dover, and so he needed to quickly give the gentleman enough assurance so the gentleman would quickly leave and do the task.

He said, “No, do not. But for confirmation that I am much

more than my outward appearance of a servant suggests, open this wallet, and take the money and ring it contains. If you shall see Cordelia — as you will, don't worry— show her this ring, and she will tell you who your servant — me — is, whom you yet do not know.

“Damn this storm! I will go seek the King.”

The gentleman was convinced that the disguised Kent was of a good and high-ranking family. He was willing to undertake the mission.

The gentleman said, “Let's shake hands. Do you have anything else to say to me?”

“Only a few words, but they are more important than all the other words. We need to find the King. You go that way, and I'll go this way. Whoever first finds the King will shout to the other that the King has been found.”

— 3.2 —

In another part of the heath, with the storm still raging, stood King Lear and the Fool.

King Lear shouted into the storm, “Blow, winds! Puff up your cheeks and blow! Rage! Blow! You cataracts — you flood gates of Heaven — and hurricanes, spout water until you have drenched our steeples and drowned the weathercocks! You sulfurous lightning that flashes as quickly as thought, forerunners of thunderbolts that split mighty oaks, singe my white head! And you, all-shaking thunder, smite flat the thick rotundity of the world! Crack Nature's molds and spill all seeds that make ungrateful Humankind!”

The Fool said, “Oh, my uncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than this rainwater out of doors.”

Court holy-water was flattery, something that many courts

are known for.

The Fool continued, “My good uncle, go inside, and ask for your daughters’ blessing. Here is a night that pities neither wise man nor fool.”

The Fool was concerned about the King and wanted him to be somewhere dry and safe, even if it meant apologizing to his daughters.

Ignoring the Fool, King Lear shouted into the storm, “Rumble your bellyful! Spit, fire! Spout, rain! Not rain, nor wind, nor thunder, nor fiery lightning are my daughters. I do not charge you, you elements, with unkindness toward me. I never gave you a Kingdom, and I never called you my children. You owe me no allegiance, and so let fall on me your horrible pleasure. Here I stand, your slave: a poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man. But yet I call you servile agents that have with two pernicious daughters joined your Heavenly armies against a head as old and white as this. Oh! Oh! It is foul!”

The Fool said, “He who has a house to put his head in has a good head-piece.”

The compound word “head-piece” meant both a helmet and a brain.

The Fool sang this song:

“The cod-piece that will house

“Before the head has any,

“The head and he shall louse;

“So beggars marry many.”

The compound word “cod-piece” meant “penis” in this context.

The Fool was saying that a penis that sought a home — vagina — before the head had a home would suffer. Both the head hair and the pubic hair would be infested with lice. Someone who was impudent and sought sex rather than love would end up a beggar and would “marry” — be joined with — many lice.

The Fool then sang this song:

“The man who makes his toe

“What he his heart should make

“Shall of a corn, aka bunion on a toe, cry woe,

“And turn his sleep to wake.”

This meant that the man who treasures something trivial such as a toe rather than something precious such as his heart would end up hurting and unable to sleep at night.

King Lear had done this. He had valued Goneril and Regan more than he had valued Cordelia.

The Fool was not trying to cheer up King Lear. Instead of being funny, the Fool’s words were wise. King Lear was in the process of learning from his mistakes, but he had not learned all that he needed to learn. He had learned that Goneril and Regan were bad daughters, but he still needed to learn to value Cordelia, although he had started the process of doing that.

The Fool then said, “For there was never yet a beautiful woman who did not make mouths when she looked in a mirror.”

The phrase “make mouths” meant to “make faces.” A beautiful woman could smile when she looked in a mirror to make herself more beautiful, but to “make a mouth” could also mean to make a contemptuous smile, such as the

one that Oswald gave the disguised Kent before the disguised Kent was put in the stocks.

Cordelia might smile pleasantly when she looked in a mirror, but Goneril and Regan were very capable of making contemptuous smiles when looking into a mirror — looking at the face of a close relative can be like looking into a mirror. In fact, they smiled when they recently took their father's Knights away from him. It is possible to infuriate an old father by saying hurtful words in a soothing voice.

King Lear calmed down and said, "No, I will be the pattern of all patience and self-control. I will say nothing."

The disguised Kent came out of the darkness and asked, "Who's there?"

The Fool replied, "Here's grace and a cod-piece; that's a wise man and a fool."

The Fool did not say who was the wise man and who was the fool.

The disguised Kent said to King Lear, "Alas, sir, are you here? Things that love night do not love such nights as these; the wrathful skies frighten the very wanderers of the dark and make them stay in their caves. Ever since I became a man, I cannot remember ever experiencing such a storm as this: such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrible thunder, such groans of roaring wind and rain. Man's nature cannot endure the affliction of the storm or the fear it inspires."

King Lear said, "Let the great gods, who keep this dreadful tumult over our heads, find out who are their enemies now. Tremble, you wretches, who have within you secret crimes, unpunished by justice. Hide yourselves, you bloody murderers, you perjurers, and you incestuous men who pretend to be virtuous. Tremble, wretches who under secret

and convenient appearances have plotted against the lives of men. Well-concealed criminals, burst out of your concealing hiding places, and cry for mercy from these dreadful summoners who wish to see you punished.”

A summoner was a man who took an accused person to an ecclesiastical court to be tried.

King Lear paused and then added, “I am a man who is more sinned against than sinning.”

The disguised Kent said, “I am sorry to see you bare-headed in this storm! My gracious lord, nearby here is a hovel; it will lend you some friendship and protection against the tempest. Rest there while I go to this hard house, the inhabitants of which — your daughters — are harder than the stones of which the house is made. Just now, your daughters, when I was asking about you and your whereabouts, refused to let me in. Let me return there and force them to show some courtesy to you, their father.”

King Lear said, “My wits begin to turn.”

His mind was changing; he was growing and beginning to be empathetic. Just a while ago, he had been calling for the extinction of Humankind, but now he began to be concerned about the man — or perhaps boy — who was his Fool. He wanted shelter for the Fool.

He said to the Fool, “Come on, my boy. How are you doing, my boy? Are you cold? I am cold myself.”

He said to the disguised Kent, “Where is this straw, my servant? Necessity has strange powers and can make vile things — such as warm straw in a hovel — precious. Come, take us to the hovel you have found.”

He said to his Fool, “Poor Fool and knave, I still have one part in my heart that is alive and feels empathy for you.”

The Fool sang this song:

“He who has a little tiny wit —

“With hey, ho, the wind and the rain —

“Must make happiness with his fortunes fit,

“For the rain it rains every day.”

This song meant that a person who is not very intelligent — a description that applies to all of us — must find a way to be happy with life despite the rain, aka evil, that falls upon each of us continually.

King Lear said to the Fool, “True, my good boy.”

He then said to the disguised Kent, “Come, take us to this hovel.”

King Lear and the disguised Kent departed, and the Fool said this to you, the reader:

“This is a splendid night to cool the lust of a courtesan — on such a night she won’t be horny.”

He paused and then added, “I’ll tell you a prophecy before I go:

“When priests are more in word than matter,

“In other words, when priests talk more about sin than actually commit sin,

“Or perhaps, in other words, when priests talk more about leading an ethical life than actually try to lead an ethical life,

“When brewers mar their malt with water,

“In other words, when brewers water their beer and make it healthier and decrease alcoholism,

“Or perhaps, in other words, when brewers ruin their beer
by watering it down,

“When nobles are their tailors’ tutors,

“In other words, when nobles know how to do the work of
the common people,

“Or perhaps, in other words, when nobles think they know
more than the real experts know,

“When no heretics are burned, except wench’s suitors,

“In other words, when no heretics are burned, except for
women’s suitors, who are properly punished as they burn
from venereal disease because they did not obey the word
of God,

“When every case in law is right,

“In other words, when no innocent people are convicted
and no guilty people remain unpunished,

“When no squire is in debt, nor no poor Knight,

“In other words, when people stay out of debt,

“When slanders do not live in tongues,

“In other words, when people do not spread malicious
gossip,

“Nor cutpurses come not to throngs,

“In other words, when pickpockets do not go among
crowds of people and steal,

“When usurers tell their gold in the field,

“In other words, when moneylenders count their money in
the open,

“And bawds and whores do churches build,

“In other words, when panderers and whores turn to God and build churches,

“Then shall the realm of Albion

“In other words, then shall the realm of England

“Come to great confusion,

“In other words, England shall be troubled,

“And then comes the time, who lives to see it,

“In other words, and then comes the time, whoever lives to see it,

“That going shall be used with feet.

“In other words, then walking shall be done with feet.”

This prophecy stated that England would always be troubled — even if it were a utopia.

Of course, a utopia will never happen in the real world, and because it will never happen (and even if it did happen), England will continue to be troubled.

What is a sure way to tell that England is troubled? If men walk with their feet, then you know that England is troubled.

It does not matter whether you are an optimist or a pessimist, England is troubled.

The Fool then said, “This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time.”

The Fool and King Lear lived centuries before the time of Merlin and King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, but the prophecy was true at the time that King Lear lived, and it was true at the time that Merlin lived.

It is still true today.

It will always be true until Humankind becomes extinct.

What the prophecy says about England is true of the world as a whole.

— 3.3 —

The Earl of Gloucester and his illegitimate son, Edmund, spoke together in a room in his castle.

“It’s sad, Edmund. I do not like this unnatural treatment of fathers. When I asked for permission from the Duke of Cornwall, Regan, and Goneril to show pity to and help King Lear, they took from me the use of my own house and they ordered me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure with me, not to speak of him, entreat for him, or in any way sustain and help him.”

“This is very savage and unnatural!” Edmund said.

“Quiet!” the Earl of Gloucester said. “You must say nothing about that; it’s dangerous. In addition, there’s a division between the Dukes, and a worse matter than that. I have received a letter tonight; it is dangerous to speak about that, too. I have locked the letter in my private room. These injuries the King now bears will be fully revenged. Part of an army has already landed; we must be on the side of the King. I will leave and seek him, and secretly help him. You go and talk with the Duke of Cornwall to keep him occupied so that he does not learn about my charity. If he asks for me, tell him that I am ill and have gone to bed.

“Even if I die because of it — and they have threatened to do no less to me — the King my old master must be helped.

“Strange things are happening, Edmund; please be careful.”

He exited.

Alone, Edmund said to himself, “This act of charity, which you have been forbidden to do, I shall immediately tell the Duke of Cornwall about, and I will tell him about that letter, too.

“These acts will deserve a reward from the Duke of Cornwall, and I will win what my father loses — that will be everything. The younger rises when the old does fall.”

— 3.4 —

On the heath in front of the hovel stood King Lear, the disguised Kent, and the Fool. The storm continued to rage.

The disguised Kent said, “Here is the place, my lord. My good lord, enter the hovel. The tyranny of the night in the open air is too rough for human nature to endure.”

King Lear replied, “Let me alone.”

The disguised Kent repeated, “My good lord, enter the hovel.”

“Do you want to break my heart?”

“I had rather break my own,” Kent replied. “My good lord, enter the hovel.”

“You think it is much that this contentious storm invades us to the skin with wind and water,” King Lear said. “So it is much to you, but wherever the greater malady is fixed, the lesser is scarcely felt. You would prefer to run away from a bear, but if your flight lay toward the raging sea, you would face the bear head-on. When the mind is free and unburdened, the body’s delicate. The tempest in my mind takes all feeling from my senses — except for the tempest beating there. Because of the mental pain I feel for my daughters’ ingratitude, I cannot feel any physical pain brought by this storm. Filial ingratitude! Is it not as if this mouth should bite this hand because it lifts food to it? But I

will punish them thoroughly.”

He hesitated and said, “No, I will weep no more. On such a night they shut me out of doors! Pour on the pain and the rain; I will endure them. On such a night as this! Oh, Regan, Goneril! Your old kind father, whose generous heart gave you everything — oh, that way madness lies, so let me not think of that. No more of that.”

Worried about King Lear, the disguised Kent again said, “My good lord, enter the hovel.”

“Please, go in yourself,” King Lear replied. “Seek your own comfort. My being outside in this tempest will not allow me to think about things that would hurt me more. But I’ll go in.”

He said to the Fool, “In, boy; you go in first.”

He thought about other poor people outside on this night and said, “You homeless poor —”

Then he said to the Fool, who was waiting for him, “No, you go in first. I’ll pray, and then I’ll sleep.”

The Fool went inside the hovel. The disguised Kent stayed outside with King Lear.

King Lear said, “Poor naked wretches, wherever you are, who endure the pelting of this pitiless storm, how shall your homeless heads and unfed bellies, and your ragged clothing filled with holes defend you from weather such as this?”

He then blamed himself for not caring more about the poor when he had wealth and power: “Oh, I have been too little concerned about this! Take this medicine, pompous people: Expose yourself so that you feel what poor wretches feel, and you will learn to give the excess of your wealth to them, and show the Heavens how wealth can be more fairly

distributed.”

Edgar, now disguised as a Tom o’Bedlam, said in a disguised voice from inside the hovel, where he had taken shelter, “Fathom and a half! Fathom and a half! Poor Tom!”

A fathom is six feet of water. The disguised Edgar was speaking as if he were a sailor taking soundings — measuring the depth of water — in a sinking ship.

The Fool ran out of the hovel.

“Don’t go in there, my uncle,” he cried. “There’s a supernatural spirit inside. Help me! Help me!”

The disguised Kent said, “Give me your hand. Who’s there?”

The Fool replied, “A spirit — a supernatural spirit. He says his name’s poor Tom.”

The disguised Kent yelled, “Who are you who mumbles there in the straw? Come outside.”

Edgar, disguised as a mad man, came outside. He was naked except for a blanket around his waist. He was dirty and his hair was matted, and he had pushed thorns into his arms.

The disguised Edgar, pretending to believe that the Devil tormented him, said, “Stay away! The foul fiend follows me! Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind. You are cold — go to your beds, and warm yourselves.”

King Lear asked him, “Have you given everything to your two daughters? Is that why you have come to this?”

The disguised Edgar replied, “Who gives anything to poor Tom? He is the man whom the foul fiend has led through fire and through flame, and through ford and whirlpool and

over bog and quagmire. The foul fiend has tempted poor Tom to commit suicide. He has laid knives under his pillow, and put hangman's ropes in his church pew, and set rat poison by his soup. The foul fiend has made him proud of heart, and the foul fiend has made him ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inch-wide bridges in order to chase his own shadow as if it were a traitor. May God bless your five wits! Tom's a-cold."

The disguised Edgar shivered and said, "May God bless and protect you from whirlwinds, the influences of evil stars, and infection! Do poor Tom some charity — poor Tom whom the foul fiend vexes."

The disguised Edgar pretended to fight an invisible demon, saying, "There could I have him now — and there — and there again, and there."

The storm continued to rage.

King Lear asked, "What, have his daughters brought him to this distress?"

He asked the disguised Edgar, "Couldn't you save anything and keep it for yourself? Did you give them everything?"

The Fool said, "No, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all embarrassed at seeing his bare butt."

King Lear had reserved for himself the services of a hundred Knights.

In this society, people believed that diseases hung in the air, waiting until they were poured out to inflict pain on human beings.

King Lear said, "Now, may all the plagues that in the pendulous air hang fated over men's faults fall and alight on your daughters!"

The disguised Kent said, “He has no daughters, sir.”

“Death to you, traitor!” King Lear shouted. “Nothing could have brought this human to such lowness but his unkind daughters. Is it the fashion that discarded and cast-off fathers should have thus little mercy on their flesh?”

He was looking at the thorns in the disguised Edgar’s arms, but he could also have been thinking of the thorns in his own mind.

He said, “Judicious punishment! It was this flesh that begot those pelican daughters.”

In this society, people believed that the young of pelicans would bite the breast of their parents and feed on the blood that flowed from the wound.

Hearing the word “pelican,” the disguised Edgar said, “Pillcock sat on Pillcock-hill.”

A ‘Pillcock’ was a cutesy name for a penis, and a ‘Pillcock-hill’ was a cutesy name for a vulva.

The disguised Edgar then sang, “Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!”

The Fool said seriously, “This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.”

The disguised Edgar said, “Take heed of the foul fiend. Obey your parents. Keep true to your word. Do not swear. Do not commit adultery with a man’s sworn spouse. Do not set your sweet heart on fancy clothing. Tom’s a-cold.”

King Lear asked him, “What have you been?”

The disguised Edgar replied, “A serving-man, proud in heart and mind. I was a courier. I curled my hair. I wore gloves — favors from my mistress — in my cap. I served the lust of my mistress’ heart, and I did the act of darkness with her. I swore as many oaths as I spoke words, and I

broke them openly in the sweet face of Heaven. I was a man who dreamed of lustful acts as he slept and then woke up and did them. Wine I loved deeply, dice and gambling I loved dearly, and when it came to women I had more mistresses than the Turkish Sultan. I was false of heart, light of ear and ready to believe malicious gossip, and bloody of hand. I was like a hog when it came to sloth, a fox when it came to stealth, a wolf when it came to greediness, a dog when it came to madness, and a lion when it came to hunting of prey.

“You may be tempted by the creaking of fashionable shoes and the rustling of the silk clothing of a woman as she meets a lover in a secret assignation, but do not betray your poor heart to that woman. Keep your feet out of brothels, keep your hands out of the openings of petticoats, keep your signature away from contracts in which you borrow money, and defy the foul fiend.”

The disguised Edgar then sang these words:

“Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind:

“Says suum, mun, ha, no, nonny.

“Dauphin, my boy, my boy, sessa! Be quiet! Let him trot by.”

The Dauphin was the son of a King of France, and Edgar was singing a combination of an old ballad and nonsense syllables. In the old ballad, the King of France wanted the Dauphin to be safe and not gain a reputation for valor by combating a notable opponent during wartime. Every time a notable opponent rode by, the King of France would tell his son, the Dauphin, “Be quiet! Let him trot by.” In Edgar’s version of the ballad, the Dauphin was not even allowed to combat the cold wind because it was too dangerous.

The storm continued to rage.

King Lear said to the disguised Edgar, “Why, you would be better off in your grave than to confront with your naked and uncovered body this extreme severity of the skies.”

He then said to the disguised Kent and to the Fool, “Is man no more than this? Look carefully at him.”

He said to the disguised Edgar, “You owe the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume.”

The disguised Edgar was naked. He did not wear silk or leather or woolen clothing. He also did not wear perfume made from the musk of the civet cat.

King Lear continued, “Ha! The three of us — my servant, the Fool, and me — are wearing clothing. We have disguised our nakedness. You are the natural man himself: a man without the trappings of civilization is no more than such a poor bare, forked-legged animal as you are.”

He started to tear off his clothing, saying, “Off, off, you trappings of civilization! Come! I will unbutton my clothing here.”

The Fool said, “Please, my uncle, control yourself; it is an evil night to go swimming in. Now a little fire in a wild field would be like an old lecher’s heart: a small spark — all the rest of his body would be cold. Look, here comes a walking fire.”

The Earl of Gloucester, carrying a torch, walked up to them.

The disguised Edgar said, “This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; from dusk to dawn he walks. He gives the web and the pin, aka eye cataracts. He makes the eye squint, and he

makes the harelip. He mildews the white wheat that is almost ready for harvest, and he hurts the poor creatures of Earth.”

He then sang this song as protection against the “evil spirit”:

“Saint Withold footed thrice the wold,

“In other words, Saint Withold went three times around the upland plains,

“He met the nightmare, and her nine-fold,

“In other words, he met the demon called the nightmare, which sits on the chests of sleeping people and makes it hard for them to breathe, and he met her nine followers,

“Bid her alight,

“In other words, he ordered her to get off the chest of the sleeper,

“And her troth plight,

“In other words, and swear to do no more harm,

“And, ‘Aroint you, witch, aroint you!’

“In other words, and said, ‘Leave, witch, leave!’”

The disguised Kent said to King Lear, “How is your grace?”

King Lear asked about the man with the torch, “Who is he?”

“Who’s there?” the disguised Kent said. “What is it you want?”

The Earl of Gloucester asked, “Who are you there? What are your names?”

The disguised Edgar replied, “Poor Tom, who eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-lizard, and the water-newt. Poor Tom, who in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for salads, swallows the old rat and the dead dog in the ditch, drinks the green scum of the stagnant pond. Poor Tom, who is whipped from parish to parish, who is put in stocks, and who is imprisoned. Poor Tom, who used to have three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, a horse to ride, and a weapon to wear. But mice and rats, and such small animals, have been Tom’s food for seven long years. Beware the demon who follows me. Peace, Smulkin; peace, you fiend!”

“What, has your grace no better company?” the Earl of Gloucester asked King Lear.

The disguised Edgar said, “The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman. Modo he’s called, and Mahu.”

The Earl of Gloucester said, “Our flesh and blood, aka children, are grown so vile, my lord, that it hates what begets it.”

The disguised Edgar said, “Poor Tom’s a-cold.”

The Earl of Gloucester said to King Lear, “Go inside one of my buildings with me. I must do my duty; I cannot endure to obey all of your daughters’ hard commands. Although they have ordered me to bar my doors and let this tyrannous night take hold upon you, yet I have ventured to find you and bring you where both fire and food are ready.”

King Lear said to the Earl of Gloucester about the disguised Edgar, whom the Earl of Gloucester did not recognize as being his own son, “First let me talk with this natural philosopher.”

He asked the disguised Edgar, “What is the cause of

thunder?”

In his madness, King Lear thought that the disguised Edgar was an educated man and a natural philosopher, aka a person who investigated Nature.

The disguised Kent said, “My good lord, take his offer; go into the house.”

King Lear replied, “I’ll talk a word with this same learned Theban.”

The ancient Greeks, including those from Thebes and Athens, were thought to be wise.

King Lear asked the disguised Edgar, “What is your main area of study?”

The disguised Edgar replied, “How to thwart the fiend, and to kill vermin.”

King Lear said, “Let me ask you one word in private.”

The disguised Kent said to the Earl of Gloucester, “Importune him once more to go, my lord. His mind has begun to become unsettled.”

“Can you blame him?” the Earl of Gloucester replied.

The storm continued to rage.

The Earl of Gloucester continued, “King Lear’s daughters seek his death. Ah, I remember the Earl of Kent! He was a good man. He, poor banished man, predicted it would be like this! You say the King grows mad; I’ll tell you, friend, I am almost mad myself. I had a son, who is now an outlaw whom I have disinherited. He sought my life just recently — very recently. I loved him, friend; no father ever loved his son dearer. I tell you the truth: The grief has crazed my wits. What a night’s this!”

He said to King Lear, “I do beg your grace —”

King Lear interrupted and said, “I beg your pardon,” and then he went back to talking to the disguised Edgar, “Noble philosopher, I desire your company.”

The disguised Edgar replied, “Tom’s a-cold.”

The Earl of Gloucester, who did not intend to help the Tom o’Bedlam, said to him, “Go in, fellow, there, into the hovel. Keep yourself warm there.”

King Lear said, “Come, let’s all go in.”

The disguised Kent said, “This way, my lord.”

He wanted King Lear to go away from the hovel and to the building that the Earl of Gloucester had offered as shelter.

King Lear put an arm around the disguised Edgar’s shoulders and said, “I will go with him. I will stay always with my philosopher.”

The disguised Kent said, “My good lord, humor the King; let him take the fellow with him.”

“You accompany the fellow,” the Earl of Gloucester said.

The disguised Kent said to the disguised Edgar, “Sirrah, come on; you can go along with us.”

King Lear said to the disguised Edgar, “Come, good Athenian.”

The Earl of Gloucester said to King Lear, “No words, no words. Hush.”

Edgar sang these words:

“Child Roland to the dark tower came,

“His motto was always this — Fie, foh, and fum,

“I smell the blood of a British man.”

A “child” was a candidate for Knighthood, and child Roland was the nephew of Charlemagne and the hero of the epic poem *The Song of Roland*. The disguised Edgar was pretending to confuse Roland with the giant in the fairy tale “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Much real confusion was happening in Britain.

— 3.5 —

In the Earl of Gloucester’s castle, the Duke of Cornwall and Edmund, the Earl of Gloucester’s deceitful and illegitimate son, were talking. As Edmund had promised himself he would do, he had informed the Duke of Cornwall that the Earl of Gloucester, Edmund’s father, had — against orders — gone to help King Lear. Edmund had also searched for and found the letter that his father had received about the invasion of the French army.

The Duke of Cornwall said, “I will have my revenge before I leave his house.”

Edmund replied, “My lord, I am afraid to think of how I may be criticized because my natural affection for my father is thus giving way to my loyalty to you, my lord.”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “I now realize that it was not altogether your brother Edgar’s evil disposition that made him seek your father’s death. Also a factor was the Earl of Gloucester’s own evil disposition that deserved to be punished with death. That and your brother’s evil disposition made your brother want to kill your father.”

Edmund said, “How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent my being just! I did the right thing when I informed you about my father’s evil, but I feel bad because I informed against my own father. This is the letter he spoke about, which proves that he was a spy who sent information

to France. Oh, Heavens! I wish that this treason had never occurred, or that I was not the person who detected it!”

“Go with me to the Duchess Regan,” the Duke of Cornwall said.

Edmund replied, “If the content of this paper is true, you have mighty business at hand.”

“True or false, it has made you the new Earl of Gloucester. You now take your father’s title. Find out where your father is, so that he can be arrested.”

Edmund thought, *If I find him comforting the King, it will make the Duke of Cornwall even more suspicious.*

He said out loud to the Duke of Cornwall, “I will persevere in my course of loyalty, although the conflict between my loyalty to you and my loyalty to my father is sharp.”

“I will trust in you, and you will find me to be a dearer father than your biological father in my love for you.”

— 3.6 —

In a room in a farmhouse near the castle were the old Earl of Gloucester, King Lear, the disguised Kent, the Fool, and Edgar, who was still disguised as a Tom o’Bedlam. The old Earl of Gloucester did not yet know that his illegitimate son, Edmund, had become the new Earl of Gloucester.

“This place here is better than the open air,” the old Earl of Gloucester said. “Take it thankfully. I will supplement the comfort with what additions I can. I will do what I can to make this place more comfortable for you. I will not be long away from you.”

The disguised Kent replied quietly, “All the power of King Lear’s wits have given way to his suffering and his anger. He is insane.”

He then said loudly to the old Earl of Gloucester, “May the gods reward your kindness!”

The old Earl of Gloucester departed.

The disguised Edgar said, “Frateretto calls to me, and he tells me that the Roman Emperor Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness.”

He then said to the Fool, “Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.”

The Fool said to King Lear, “Please, my uncle, tell me whether a madman is a gentleman or a yeoman.”

A gentleman has a higher social status than a yeoman. A gentleman has a coat of arms; a yeoman owns land but has no coat of arms.

King Lear replied, “A King! A King!”

The Fool replied, “No, a madman is a yeoman who has a gentleman as his son because he’s a mad yeoman who sees his son become a gentleman before he does.”

This was a cynical view. Loving fathers are happy to see their sons do better than they themselves did and advance in society and in life, but in the Fool’s joke this father was not happy to see his son do better than he did.

Of course, in loving families, family members are happy to see other family members do well, but Goneril and Regan were happy to see their aged father combat the storm although they could easily shelter him.

King Lear thought about the punishment his two daughters deserved, and he said out loud, “To have a thousand with red burning spits come hissing in upon them —”

The thousand could be devils if the two daughters were punished in Hell.

The disguised Edgar said, “The foul fiend bites my back.”

The Fool said, “He’s a madman who trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse’s health, a boy’s love, or a whore’s oath.”

This was more cynicism from the Fool. Yes, a “tame” wolf may bite, a horse’s health may decline or be lied about, and a whore may lie. But is a father a madman if he believes that his son loves him? Are all sons like Edmund?

King Lear, still lost in a fantasy world, came up with the idea of putting Goneril and Regan on trial.

He said, “It shall be done; I will immediately bring them to trial.”

He said to the disguised Edgar, “Come, you sit here, most learned justice.”

He said to the Fool, “You, wise sir, sit here.”

He then said to the air, “Now, you she-foxes!”

The disguised Edgar said about King Lear, “Look, where he stands and glares!”

He then said to the air, “Do you want eyes looking at you at your trial, madam?”

He sang, “*Come over the bourn, Bessie, to me —*”

The word “bourn” meant “stream.”

The Fool sang these words:

“*Her boat has a leak,*

“*And she must not speak*

“*Why she dares not come over to you.*”

The Fool’s words had a double meaning. The woman’s period had started, and she did not want to tell her lover

why she would not cross the stream to be with him.

The Fool's jokes, if you can call them jokes, were now usually about breakdowns or difficulties in personal relationships. This time, the difficulty was not nearly as serious as two daughters wishing their father to be killed. However, the Fool's song did involve sex between unmarried partners. A husband tends to know when his wife is on her period.

When things go wrong at the top — when a King is badly treated — things go wrong at other levels of society.

The disguised Edgar said, “The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale.”

The disguised Edgar was pretending that the foul fiend was the Fool, who had a good singing voice.

He continued, “Hopdance cries in Tom's belly for two white unsmoked herring. Croak and rumble not, black angel. I have no food for you.”

His belly was growling from hunger.

The disguised Kent was more concerned about King Lear than about the disguised Edgar's hunger and said to King Lear, “How are you, sir? Don't stand there looking so dumbfounded. Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?”

King Lear said, “I'll see their trial first. Bring in the evidence.”

He said to the disguised Edgar, “You robed man of justice, take your place.”

To King Lear, the disguised Edgar's blanket was now a judicial robe.

King Lear then said to the Fool, “And you, his partner in

justice, sit on the bench by his side.”

He said to the disguised Kent, “You are on the judicial commission, so you sit down, too.”

The disguised Edgar said, “Let us be just.”

He sang this song:

“Are you asleep or awake, jolly shepherd?

“Your sheep are in the corn;

“And if you give just one blast of your delicate mouth,

“Your sheep shall take no harm.”

Enterotoxemia is a severe and sometimes fatal disease of sheep that is caused by a sudden increase of grain in the sheep’s diet. Grain is good for sheep when eaten in the right amount, but too much grain can kill sheep.

In Edgar’s song, the shepherd needs to take care of his sheep and not allow them to eat too much grain. If the shepherd blows on his horn, help will arrive to get the sheep out of the field of grain. This is good for the sheep and good for the owner of the grain. Moderation is important.

King Lear had given his older daughters too much power and wealth too quickly. It had changed and harmed them. He had been a bad shepherd.

The disguised Edgar then said, “Purr! The cat is gray.”

He may have been referring to a demon in the form of a grey cat that he pretended to see.

King Lear said, “Arraign her first; bring Goneril here before the court to answer a criminal charge.”

He then said, “I here take my oath before this honorable

assembly and say that she kicked the poor King her father.”

The Fool said, “Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?”

King Lear said, “She cannot deny it.”

The Fool said, “I beg your pardon. I mistook you for a stool.”

Of course, Goneril was not present — just the stool that she would have been sitting on.

King Lear then said about Regan, “And here’s another, whose warped and distorted looks proclaim what kind of material her heart is made of. Stop her there! She is trying to escape! Arms! Arms! Sword! Fire! Corruption is in the place! She bribed someone to allow her to escape!”

He said to the disguised Edgar, “False justice, why have you let her escape?”

Shocked, the disguised Edgar replied, “Bless your five wits!”

The disguised Kent said, “I feel pity.”

He said to King Lear, “Sir, where are your patience and self-control now, which you so often have boasted to possess?”

The disguised Edgar thought, *My tears begin to trickle because I pity King Lear so much — they will ruin my disguise.*

King Lear said about imaginary dogs, “The little dogs and all — their names are Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart — see, they bark at me.”

He imagined that even small pet dogs had turned against him.

The disguised Edgar said, “Tom will throw his head back like a howling dog and yell at them:

“Avaunt, you curs! Get out!

“Whether your mouth be black or white,

“Tooth that poisons if it bite;

“Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,

“Hound or spaniel, brach-bitch or him,

“Whether bobtail short or very long tail,

“Tom will make them weep and wail:

“For, with throwing back thus my head and howling,

“Dogs leap over the bottom piece of a two-piece door, and all are fled.”

He yelled and then said, “*Sessa!* Quiet! Come, march to wakes and fairs and market towns. These are good places for begging. Poor Tom, your begging horn is empty.”

The disguised Edgar was hungry, but everyone was concerned about King Lear, not Tom o’Bedlam. King Lear was insane and unable to recognize that the disguised Edgar was hungry.

King Lear said, “Then let them dissect Regan to see what grows about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?”

He said to the disguised Edgar, “You, sir, I employ as one of my hundred Knights; however, I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say that they are luxurious Persian attire, but let them be changed for something more to my liking.”

The disguised Kent said to King Lear, “Now, my good

lord, lie here and rest awhile.”

King Lear, thinking that he was in a four-post bed with curtains, said, “Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains. So, so, so. We’ll eat our evening meal in the morning. So, so, so.”

He needed rest more than he needed food.

The Fool said, “And I’ll go to bed at noon.”

The old Earl of Gloucester entered the room and said to the disguised Kent, “Come here, friend. Where is my master the King?”

“Here, sir, but do not bother him; his wits are gone and he is insane.”

“Good friend, I beg you, take the King in your arms. I have overheard a plot of death against him. A vehicle and a stretcher are ready; lay him in the vehicle, and drive him to Dover, friend, where you will find both welcome and protection. Pick up your master, put him in the stretcher, and carry him to the vehicle. If you should delay even half an hour, his life, and your life, and the lives of all who offer to defend him, will certainly be lost. Pick him up! Pick him up and follow me. I will quickly take you to the vehicle, which has provisions for your journey.”

The disguised Kent said, “The King’s oppressed brain sleeps.”

He then spoke as if he were speaking to the sleeping King, “This much-needed rest might yet have healed your broken senses, which, if circumstances will not allow you to continue to rest, it will be difficult to cure.”

The disguised Kent said to the Fool, “Come, help to carry your master. You must not stay behind.”

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “Hurry! Hurry!”

Everyone left the disguised Edgar, who would not go with King Lear to Dover.

Alone, the disguised Edgar said, “When we see our betters bearing the same kind of woes we have, we scarcely think our miseries are our foes. A person who suffers by himself suffers most in the mind, leaving carefree things and happy scenes behind. But when grief has fellow sufferers, it skips over much suffering. How light and bearable my pain seems now, when that which makes me bend makes the King bow — he suffers much more than I do. He suffers unjustly because of his children; I suffer unjustly because of my father. Tom o’Bedlam — that is, me — let’s go away! Listen to the rumors of differences between those in power. Tom o’Bedlam can reveal himself to be Edgar when misconceptions, which now greatly defile you, are proven to be wrong. At that time, your status as an outlaw will be repealed and you will be reconciled to your father. Whatever else will happen tonight, may King Lear escape safely! In the meanwhile, I must stay hidden.”

— 3.7 —

The Duke of Cornwall, Regan, Goneril, and Edmund, along with some servants, were in a room in the Earl of Gloucester’s castle.

The Duke of Cornwall said to Goneril, “Ride quickly to the Duke of Albany, your husband. Show him this letter that was sent to the old Earl of Gloucester; it states that the army of France has landed here in Britain.”

He then ordered, “Find the old Earl of Gloucester, who is a villain.”

Some of the servants exited.

Regan said about the old Earl of Gloucester, “Hang him immediately.”

Goneril said, “Pluck out his eyes.”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund, you keep our sister-in-law company during your journey; go with Goneril because the revenges we are determined to take against your traitorous father are not fit for you to see.”

He then said to Goneril, “Advise the Duke of Albany, when you see him, to quickly prepare for war. We will do the same. Our posts back and forth between us shall be swift and full of information. Farewell, dear sister-in-law; farewell, my new Earl of Gloucester.”

Oswald entered the room.

The Duke of Cornwall asked, “Where is King Lear?”

Oswald replied, “My old Earl of Gloucester has conveyed him away from here. Some thirty-five or -six of the King’s Knights, who were urgently seeking for him, met him at the gate. These Knights, along with some other lords who serve King Lear, have gone with him toward Dover, where they claim to have well-armed friends.”

The Duke of Cornwall ordered, “Get horses for your mistress.”

Goneril said to the Duke of Cornwall and Regan, “Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “Edmund, farewell.”

Goneril, Edmund, and Oswald exited.

The Duke of Cornwall ordered, “Go seek the traitor: the old Earl of Gloucester. Tie him up like a thief, and bring him before us.”

Some servants exited.

The Duke of Cornwall said, “Although we may not execute him without a trial, yet our power shall do a favor for our wrath. Men may criticize what we do, but they cannot stop me from doing it.”

He heard a noise and asked, “Who’s there? The traitor?”

The old Earl of Gloucester entered the room, under guard.

Regan said, “Ungrateful fox! It is he.”

The servants had not obeyed all of the Duke of Cornwall’s orders; they had not tied up the old Earl of Gloucester.

The Duke of Cornwall ordered, “Bind fast his old and withered arms.”

The servants did not act immediately.

“What do your graces intend to do to me?” the old Earl of Gloucester asked. “My good friends, remember that you are my guests; do no foul play to me, friends.”

The castle belonged to the Earl of Gloucester. He was the host, and the Duke of Cornwall and Regan were his guests. Ever since ancient times, to harm a host has been acknowledged to be an evil deed. An important theme of Homer’s *Odyssey* is the relationship between hosts and guests, and the Trojan War was fought over a violation of that relationship: Paris, a Prince of Troy who was the guest of King Menelaus of Sparta, ran away with Helen, Menelaus’ wife. Helen became known as Helen of Troy. In Dante’s *Inferno*, guests who harmed hosts, and hosts who harmed guests, are punished in the lowest circle of hell; this shows how serious a sin these violations of trust are.

The Duke of Cornwall said, “Bind him, I say.”

Some servants bound the old Earl of Gloucester.

Regan said, “Bind him tightly — tightly. Oh, filthy traitor!”

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “Unmerciful lady as you are, I am not a traitor.”

The Duke of Cornwall ordered, “Bind him to this chair. Villain, you shall find —”

Regan plucked some hairs from the old Earl of Gloucester’s beard. This was a serious insult.

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “By the kind gods, to pluck some hairs out of my beard is a very ignoble act.”

Regan said, “Your beard is so white! You ought to be wise! How can you be such a traitor!”

“Evil lady, these hairs that you pull from my chin will come to life and accuse you of sin: I am your host, and you ought not to do violence to your host’s face with your robbers’ hands. What will you do with me?”

The Duke of Cornwall asked, “Sir, what letters have you recently received from France?”

“Give a straight answer,” Regan said, “because we know the truth.”

The Duke of Cornwall asked, “And what conspiracy have you formed with the traitors who have recently landed in the Kingdom?”

Regan asked, “To whom have you sent the lunatic King? Speak.”

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “I have a letter that contains guesses, not certain information. The letter came from a person who is neutral; that person is not opposed to you.”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “Cunning.”

Regan added, “And false.”

The Duke of Cornwall asked, “Where have you sent the King?”

“To Dover.”

Regan asked, “Why to Dover? Were you not charged at peril of your life —”

The Duke of Cornwall interrupted, “Let him first tell us why he sent him to Dover.”

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course. I am like a bear that has been tied to a stake and is being attacked by dogs.”

Regan asked, “Why did you send King Lear to Dover?”

“Because I did not want to see your cruel fingernails pluck out his poor old eyes, nor your fierce sister stick boarish fangs in his anointed flesh.

“The sea, if it had endured such a storm as his bare head in Hell-black night, would have buoyed upward and quenched the bright lights of the stars and made the night even blacker. Yet, poor old heart, he helped the Heavens to rage and to rain by dripping his tears to the ground.

“If wolves had howled at your gate during that stern time, you would have said, ‘Good porter, turn the key.’ You would have ordered the gates to be opened to let the wolves in so that they could find shelter.

“During that stern time, you would not allow your poor old father to enter the gate and find shelter. Go ahead and commit all other cruel deeds, but I shall see winged vengeance overtake such children as you and your sister. Of all the evil deeds you and your sister have committed, the one that I want to see punished is your treatment of

your father. The Furies punish parricides and other such sinners.”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “See it you never shall.”

He ordered, “Servants, hold the chair steady.”

He said to the old Earl of Gloucester, “Upon these eyes of yours I’ll set my foot.”

The old Earl of Gloucester begged for help: “He who wants to live until he is old, give me some help! Oh, cruel man! Oh, you gods!”

The Duke of Cornwall pulled out one of the old Earl of Gloucester’s eyes, dropped it on the floor, and stepped on it.

“One side of his face will mock the other side,” Regan said. “Pull out the other eye, too.”

The Duke of Cornwall said to the old Earl of Gloucester, “If you see vengeance —”

One of the Duke of Cornwall’s servants said, “Don’t move your hand, my lord. I have served you ever since I was a child, but I have never done you better service than now, when I tell you to stop.”

This act took much courage on the part of the servant, and it took a strong sense of right and wrong.

Angry, Regan said, “What are you doing, you dog!”

The servant said to Regan, “If you wore a beard upon your chin, I would insult you by shaking it.”

The Duke put his hand on the hilt of his sword, and the servant asked him, “What? Do you mean to fight?”

The Duke of Cornwall said, “You are my servant, and you

are a villain.”

The Duke of Cornwall and the servant drew swords and began to fight. The servant was a gentleman who served the Duke, and he wore a sword.

The servant wounded the Duke of Cornwall and then said, “Come on, and take the chance of fighting me while you are angry.”

Regan said to another servant, “Give me your sword. I can’t believe that this peasant is standing up against his master like this!”

She took the sword and ran to the servant and stabbed him in the back, inflicting a mortal wound.

The servant fell and said, “Oh, I am slain! My lord, you have one eye left to see that I have inflicted a wound on the Duke of Cornwall, who pulled out your eye.”

The servant died.

The wounded Duke of Cornwall said to the old Earl of Gloucester, “Lest your remaining eye see more, I will prevent it. Out, vile jelly!”

He pulled out the remaining eye, dropped it, stepped on it, and asked, “Where is your luster now?”

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “All is dark and comfortless. Where’s my son Edmund? Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of a son’s love, and get revenge for this horrible act.”

“Ha, treacherous villain!” Regan said. “You are calling on a person who hates you. It was Edmund who informed us about your treasons to us. Edmund is too good a person to pity you.”

“I have been a fool!” the old Earl of Gloucester said. “I

have wronged my son Edgar. Kind gods, forgive me for that, and help him prosper!”

Regan ordered some servants, “Go and thrust him out of the gates, and let him smell his way to Dover since he can no longer see the way.”

A servant exited with the old Earl of Gloucester.

Regan asked the Duke of Cornwall, “How are you, my lord? How are you feeling, my husband?”

“I have been wounded. Come with me, lady. Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave — the dead servant — upon the dunghill. Regan, I am bleeding a lot. This is a bad time for me to be wounded. Give me your arm.”

The Duke of Cornwall, assisted by Regan, exited.

A couple of servants remained behind.

The first servant said, “I’ll never care what wickedness I do, if this man the Duke of Cornwall comes to good after he dies. I will know that no one is punished after death for the evils that they committed while they were alive.”

The second servant said, “If Regan lives long, and in the end dies naturally of old age, all women will become monsters because they will know that they will not be punished for their sins.”

The first servant said, “Let’s go and follow the old Earl, and get the Tom o’Bedlam to lead him wherever the Earl wants to go. The Tom o’Bedlam’s roguish madness allows him to do whatever he wants.”

The second servant replied, “Go to the old Earl of Gloucester. I’ll fetch some flax bandages and egg whites to apply to his bleeding face. Now, I pray that Heaven will help him!”

CHAPTER 4 (King Lear)

— 4.1 —

The disguised Edgar was alone on the heath.

He said to himself, “It is better to be like this and know that I am despised than to be still despised and yet have people flatter me. To be the worst, the lowest, and the most rejected by Fortune means to always live in hope and not in fear. Since the worst has already happened, any change will be for the better. It is the people who are at the top of the Wheel of Fortune who will suffer a lamentable change. Welcome, then, you insubstantial air that I embrace! Let you winds blow against me! The wretch that you have blown unto the worst owes nothing to your blasts. Everything has been taken from me, and so I owe you winds of ill fortune nothing.”

He saw someone coming toward him and asked himself, “But who comes here?”

An old man was leading Edgar’s father, the blinded old Earl of Gloucester.

Edgar said to himself, “My father, with bloody eyes and led by a poor man? World! World! Oh, world! Except that your strange changes make us hate you, life would not accept old age. Because of the hateful changes we suffer in life, we accept old age and death.”

The old man said to the old Earl of Gloucester, “Oh, my good lord, I have been your tenant, and your father’s tenant, these fourscore — eighty — years.”

The old Earl of Gloucester replied, “Away, get away from me, good friend. Be gone. Your comforts can do me no good at all; you may be severely punished for trying to help

me.”

“Alas, sir,” the old man said, “you cannot see to make your way anywhere.”

“I have nowhere to go, and therefore I need no eyes,” the old Earl of Gloucester replied. “I stumbled when I saw. When I could see, I did not see that my legitimate son Edgar was loyal to me, and I did not see that my illegitimate son, Edmund, was disloyal to me. Very often it is seen that our possessions make us overconfident, and all of our disadvantages prove to be advantages.

“Oh, my dear son Edgar, you were the object of your deceived father’s wrath! If I could only touch you again and know that you are my son, I would say I had eyes again!”

The old man saw the disguised Edgar and asked, “Hey! Who’s there?”

The disguised Edgar thought, *Oh, gods! Who is it can truly say, “I am at the worst”? I just said it, but seeing my father like this makes me worse than ever I was.*

The old man looked closely and then said, “It is poor mad Tom.”

The disguised Edgar thought, *And worse I may yet be: The worst has not happened as long as we can say, “This is the worst.” As long as we are alive, something worse can happen to us.*

The old man asked the disguised Edgar, “Fellow, where are you going?”

The old Earl of Gloucester asked, “Is he a beggar?”

“He is a madman and a beggar, too.”

“He has some reason left; otherwise, he could not beg. In

last night's storm, I saw such a fellow who made me think that a man is a worm, the lowest of creatures. I remembered my son although I thought badly of him at that time. I have heard more about my son since then. As flies are to cruel boys, so are we to the gods. They torment and kill us for their entertainment."

The disguised Edgar thought, *How can this be? How did my father come to be blinded and in such circumstances that he thinks that the gods are out to torture us? But I must play Tom o'Bedlam in front of my father. Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow, angering itself and others. The person playing a fool resents it, as well as the sorrowful man and the bystanders.*

He said out loud, "Bless you, master!"

The old Earl of Gloucester asked the old man, "Is that the naked fellow?"

The disguised Edgar was still wearing only a blanket.

"Yes, my lord."

"Then please leave. If, for my sake, you will catch up with us, a mile or two from here, on the road toward Dover, do it out of the love and respect that you have had for me, and bring some covering for this naked soul, whom I'll entreat to lead me."

"Alas, sir, he is insane."

"It is the plague of the times, when madmen lead the blind," the old Earl of Gloucester replied. "Our leaders are insane, and they lead their blind and ignorant subjects. Do as I order you, or rather, do what you please since I cannot order anyone anymore to do anything. Most important of all, leave. You ought not to be seen with me."

The old man said, "I'll bring him the best apparel that I

have, no matter what happens as a result.”

The old man exited.

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “Sirrah, naked fellow —”

The disguised Edgar replied, “Poor Tom’s a-cold.”

He thought, *I can’t do this any longer* —

“Come here, fellow.”

— *and yet I must.*

The disguised Edgar said, “Bless your sweet eyes, they bleed.”

“Do you know the way to Dover?”

“Both stile and gate, bridle-path and foot-path. Poor Tom has been scared out of his good wits. May the gods bless you, good man’s son, and protect you from the foul fiend! Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once: Obidicut, fiend of lust; Hobbididence, fiend of dumbness; Mahu, fiend of stealing; Modo, fiend of murder; and Flibbertigibbet, fiend of grimacing and making faces, who has since possessed chambermaids and waiting-women. So, bless you, master!”

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “Here, take this wallet, you whom the Heavens’ plagues have humbled so that you endure all strokes. My wretchedness makes the Heavens happy. Heavens, continue to afflict the well-off! Let the man with excess wealth who eats excess food, who treats what gods’ decrees have given him as his just due, who will not see the needs of the poor because he does not feel the needs of the poor, use your power quickly — make him suffer the needs of the poor. If you do that, those who have too much shall give to those who lack enough, and each man shall have enough.

“Do you know Dover?”

The disguised Edgar replied, "Yes, master."

"At Dover is a cliff, whose high and bending head looks fearfully at the sea it overhangs and holds back. Bring me to the very brim of it, and I'll repair the misery you endure by giving you something costly that I have with me. You shall not need to lead me away from that place."

"Give me your arm. Poor Tom shall lead you."

— 4.2 —

Having finished their journey, Goneril and Edmund stood in front of the Duke of Albany's castle.

Using the royal plural, Goneril said to Edmund, "Welcome, my lord. I marvel that our mild husband did not meet us on the way."

Oswald walked up to them.

Goneril asked him, "Now, where's your master?"

Oswald replied, "Madam, he is within the castle, but I have never seen a man so changed. I told him about the French army that has landed, and he smiled. I told him that you were coming, and his answer was 'So much the worse.' I told him about the old Earl of Gloucester's treachery and about the loyal service of his son Edmund. After I informed him, he called me a fool, and he told me that I had turned the wrong side out. What he should most dislike seems pleasant to him; what he should most like seems offensive to him."

The Duke of Albany was able to see the true character of people. He knew that the old Earl of Gloucester was a good man and that the Earl's illegitimate son, Edmund, was a bad man. He also had learned and was angry about the treatment and insanity of King Lear.

Goneril said to Edmund, “Then you shall go no further. You shall not enter the castle. My husband’s spirit is like a cow’s; he is cowardly. He will not undertake any great endeavor. He will ignore insults that require him to retaliate. The things we talked about and hoped for on our journey may come true.”

Goneril had fallen in love with Edmund.

She continued, “Go back, Edmund, to my brother-in-law; make him call up his troops quickly and then escort his armies to the place of battle. I must change arms at home, and give the woman’s distaff into my husband’s hands. I will be the man and wear the sword, and he shall be the woman and do the spinning and weaving. This trustworthy servant shall pass messages between us. Before long you are likely to hear, if you dare to risk action in your own behalf, a mistress’ command.”

She was hinting that she would ask him to kill her husband so she could be his wife.

She took off a necklace and gave it to him, saying, “Wear this; don’t speak. Bow your head.”

She kissed him and said, “This kiss, if it dared to speak, would raise your spirits up into the air. Conceive — understand what I mean — and fare you well.”

Her words had a sexual undertone. She meant that something other than spirits would also rise into the air.

Edmund, the new Earl of Gloucester, replied, “Yours in the ranks of death. I am yours until I die.”

His words also had a sexual undertone. In this society, the phrase “to die” was a euphemism for “to have an orgasm.”

Goneril pretended to be shocked: “My very dear Gloucester!”

Edmund exited.

Goneril said to herself, “Oh, the difference between one man and another man! Edmund, a woman’s services are your due. My fool of a husband usurps my body.”

Although Goneril had said that her husband would not react to insults, she had not wanted her husband to see Edmund wearing her necklace; therefore, she had sent Edmund away as soon as they arrived at her husband’s castle.

Oswald said, “Madam, here comes my lord.”

He exited.

The Duke of Albany, Goneril’s husband, walked over to her.

Goneril said, “I have been worth the whistle.”

She was alluding to the proverb “It is a poor dog that is not worth whistling for.” She was saying that at one time her husband would have ridden his horse to meet her as she journeyed back to their castle.

The Duke of Albany had once loved Goneril, but he did not like the way that she had treated her father. He had not been present during King Lear’s treatment at the Earl of Gloucester’s castle, but he had since been informed about it.

“Oh, Goneril! You are not worth the dust that the rough and rude wind blows in your face. I fear your character. That nature, which condemns its own origins and father, cannot be trusted to stay within the bounds of morality and of good behavior. By cutting yourself away from your father, you are like a branch that has cut itself away from its tree. You, like the branch, have cut yourself off from the nourishing source and must necessarily wither and come to a bad end.”

“Say no more; the text of your sermon is foolish.”

“Wisdom and goodness seem vile to vile people. To filthy people, everything seems filthy. What have you done? You and your sister are tigers, not daughters. What have you done? You have made insane a father, a gracious man whose age and reverence even a captive bear enraged by being worried by dogs would lick. You are very barbarous and degenerate! Could my good brother-in-law permit you to do it? The Duke of Cornwall was a man, a Prince, whom King Lear has much benefited! If the Heavens do not quickly send down their spirits in visible form to tame these vile offenses, it will necessarily happen that Humanity prey on itself and become cannibals like monsters of the deep sea.”

“You are a milk-livered man!” Goneril replied. “You are a coward! You turn your cheek so it can be hit with blows, and your head is filled with wrong ideas.”

In Matthew 5:39 Jesus said, “*But I say unto you, Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other a also*” (1599 Geneva Bible). This was one “wrong idea” that Goneril had accused her husband of having.

Goneril continued, “You do not have in your brows an eye that can tell the difference between the wrong to your honor against which you must retaliate and the lesser wrong that you can endure. You do not know that only fools pity criminals who are punished before they have done their crimes. Where’s your military drum? Why aren’t you out raising troops? The King of France spreads his military banners in our quiet and peaceful land where no British military drums can be heard. With a plumed helmet your slayer begins to threaten you, and all you, a moralizing fool, do is to sit still, and cry, ‘Oh, no, why is he acting like this?’”

“Look at yourself, Devil! Your evil shows in your appearance. Such deformity is proper for the fiend, but it is horrible in a woman.”

“Oh, you vain fool!” Goneril replied.

“You have changed and that change shows in your appearance. You should be ashamed,” the Duke of Albany said.

“Be-monster not your appearance. Do not look like a monster. If it were appropriate to me to allow these hands to obey my anger, they would be ready to dislocate and tear your flesh and bones.

“Although you are a fiend, your woman’s shape shields you from my anger. Continue to appear in the shape of a woman, or I will hurt you, you fiend.”

“By God, you mention your manliness!” Goneril replied. “You compared to a real man are like a kitten compared to a tiger!”

A messenger arrived.

The Duke of Albany asked, “What is the news?”

“Oh, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall’s dead,” the messenger replied. “He was slain by his servant as he was about to put out the other eye of the Earl of Gloucester.”

“Gloucester’s eye!”

“A servant that the Duke of Cornwall bred, stirred to action by pity, opposed the act, turning his sword against his great master, who, enraged by this, flew at him, and among the other people present struck him dead, but first he received that harmful stroke that a little later killed him — he followed the servant in death.”

The Duke of Albany said, “This shows you are above, you

Heavenly judges, who so speedily can avenge the crimes people commit on Earth! But, poor Gloucester! Did he lose his other eye?"

The messenger replied, "He lost both eyes — both, my lord."

The messenger then handed Goneril a letter and said, "This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer; it is from your sister."

Goneril thought, *In one way I like this news well. However, now that my sister Regan is a widow, and my Edmund, the new Earl of Gloucester, is with her, all the things that I have been daydreaming about — all the castles that I have built on the clouds — may crash to the ground and leave me only the hateful life I now lead. But in another way, the news is not so sour — Edmund may yet be mine and we will not have to worry about the Duke of Cornwall as a rival to our controlling all of my father's kingdom.*

She said out loud, "I'll read the letter, and answer it."

She exited.

The Duke of Albany asked the messenger, "When they blinded his eyes, where was his son Edmund?"

"He was coming here with my lady, your wife."

"He is not here."

"No, my good lord; I met him on his way back to Regan's castle again."

"Does Edmund know about this wicked act?"

"Yes, my good lord; it was he who informed against his father," the messenger said. "He left his father's castle on purpose, so that they could freely inflict their punishment on his father."

Referring to the old Earl of Gloucester, the Duke of Albany said, “Gloucester, I live so that I can thank you for the love you showed to the King, and to revenge the loss of your eyes. Come with me, friend. Tell me what else you know.”

— 4.3 —

At the French camp near Dover, the disguised Kent talked to a gentleman, the same one whom he had asked to go to Dover and give a just and truthful report of how King Lear was being treated.

Kent asked, “Why has the King of France so suddenly gone back to France? Do you know the reason?”

“He left some state business unfinished, business that has become urgent since he came here; since neglecting it could put French citizens in danger and make them fearful, his personal return was required and necessary.”

“Who has he left behind him as General of his army?”

“The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.”

“Did the letter you wrote and gave to Cordelia, the Queen of France, move her to any demonstration of grief?”

“Yes, sir,” the gentleman replied. “She took the letter and read it in my presence, and now and then a large tear trickled down her delicate cheek. It seemed like she was a Queen over her emotions — emotions that, most rebel-like, sought to be King over her.”

“Oh, then the letter moved her,” the disguised Kent said.

“She was moved, but she maintained control of her emotions. She did not allow herself to be enraged; self-control and sorrow strove to see which could make her lovelier. You have seen sunshine and rain at the same time. Her smiles and tears were like that, but better. Those happy

little smiles that played on her ripe lips seemed not to know what guests — tears — were in her eyes. Her tears parted from her eyes, as if pearls were dropping from diamonds. In brief, sorrow would be a rarity most beloved, if it made everyone as lovely as Cordelia.”

“Did she ask any questions or say anything?”

“Once or twice she cried with difficulty the name of ‘father,’ panting as if the word weighed heavily on her heart. She cried, ‘Sisters! Sisters! Shame of ladies! Sisters! Kent! Father! Sisters! What, in the storm? In the night? Let pity not be believed!’ There she shook the holy water from her Heavenly eyes, and she mourned without making a sound and then went away to deal with her grief alone.”

The disguised Kent said, “It is the stars, the stars above us, that govern our characters; otherwise, one man and one woman could not beget daughters as different as Cordelia and her sisters. Have you spoken with her since then?”

“No.”

“Was this before the King returned?”

“No, it was since the King returned.”

“Well, sir, the poor distressed King Lear is in the town. Sometimes, in his better and more lucid moments, when he is less jangled and more in tune, he remembers why we are here, and he by no means will agree to see his daughter.”

“Why, good sir?”

“An overbearing shame makes him remember what he would like to have never happened: his own unkindness to Cordelia that stripped from her his blessing, turned her out to find a life in a foreign land, and gave what was valuable and rightfully hers to his dog-hearted daughters. These things sting his mind so venomously that his burning shame

keeps him from seeing Cordelia.”

“That poor man!” the gentleman said.

“Have you heard anything about the armies of the Duke of Albany and the Duke of Cornwall?”

“Yes, they are marching toward us.”

“Well, sir, I’ll bring you to our master Lear, and leave you to attend him. Some important reason causes me to stay in disguise for a while. When I reveal my identity, you shall not have reason to regret being my friend. Please, come with me.”

— 4.4 —

In a tent, Cordelia and a doctor were talking in the presence of some soldiers.

“Alas, my father has been seen, and he is in a bad way,” Cordelia said. “Why, he was met just now. He is as mad as the vexed sea. He was singing aloud, crowned with the weed known as fumitory or earth-smoke and with the rank weeds that grow among the crops in plowed land. He wore as a crown burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers, darnel, and all the useless weeds that grow in the plowed fields along with the crops that nourish us. Send a hundred soldiers out to find him. They can search every acre in the high-grown field, and bring him before our eyes.”

An officer departed to carry out the order.

She asked the doctor, “What can man’s wisdom do to restore his bereaved sense? He who cures him can have all my material possessions.”

“There is a way, madam,” the doctor said. “The foster-nurse of Nature is sleep, which King Lear is lacking. Many herbal medicines will close his eyes of anguish and make

him sleep.”

“All blessed secrets, all you little-known virtuous powerful herbs of the Earth, spring up — be watered with my tears!” Cordelia cried as she prayed aloud. “Be a helpful remedy for the good man’s distress.”

She added, “Seek, seek for him, lest his ungoverned rage dissolve the life that lacks the means — reason — to lead it. He is likely to commit suicide because he lacks the reason needed to control himself.”

A messenger entered the tent.

“I have news, madam. The British armies are marching here.”

“That is something that we already knew,” she replied. “Our armed troops are prepared to fight them. Oh, dear father, it is your business that I go about.”

In Luke 2:49 Jesus said, “*Then said he unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must go about my Father’s business?*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

Cordelia continued, “My husband, the great King of France, has pitied my mourning and importunate tears and allowed me to help my father. We are not taking up arms because of any puffed-up ambition to gain territory for ourselves, but love, dear love, makes us fight for our aged father’s rights. I hope that soon I may hear and see him!”

— 4.5 —

Regan and Oswald, Goneril’s steward, were talking together in the castle of the Earl of Gloucester.

Regan asked, “Have the armies of my brother-in-law, the Duke of Albany, set forth?”

“Yes, madam.”

“Is the Duke of Albany, himself, leading them in person?”

“Yes, madam, but it took much persuading. Your sister is the better soldier.”

The Duke of Albany had thought hard about where his loyalties should lie: Should he fight for Cordelia and King Lear, or should he resist the armies of France?

“Did Lord Edmund speak with your lord, the Duke of Albany, at home?”

“No, madam.”

“My sister has written a letter to Edmund. What does she write in that letter?”

Regan was jealous. She wanted Edmund.

“I don’t know, lady.”

“Truly, Edmund rode away in a hurry on important business,” Regan said. “It was political folly to allow the old Earl of Gloucester to remain alive after we put out his eyes. Wherever he goes, he moves all hearts against us. They pity him, and hate us. Edmund, I think, has gone, out of pity for his father’s misery, to kill him and end his benighted life. Also, he left in order to determine the strength of the enemy.”

“I must go after him, madam, with my lady’s letter,” Oswald said.

“Our troops set forth tomorrow. Stay and travel with us. The roads are dangerous.”

“I may not do so, madam. My lady was very insistent that I do my duty and deliver this letter.”

“Why should she write to Edmund? Why couldn’t you have simply communicated verbally her message to him?”

Perhaps, she wanted to say ... I know not what. I'll greatly appreciate it if you will let me unseal the letter and read it."

"Madam, I had rather —"

Regan said, "I know your lady, Goneril, does not love her husband. I am sure of that. When she was here recently, she looked at noble Edmund strangely and admiringly and very meaningfully. I know that she confides in you — you are close to her bosom."

"I, madam?"

"I know what I know," Regan said. "You are; I know it. Therefore, I advise you, take careful note of what I now say to you. My lord and husband is dead; Edmund and I have talked and reached an understanding. It is more convenient and suitable for him to marry me than to marry your lady. From what I have said, you may guess the rest. If you find Edmund, please give him this ring. And when you tell your mistress all that has happened here, tell her to come to her senses — I and not she will have Edmund. So, fare you well. If you happen to hear of that blind traitor Gloucester, know that whoever kills him will be rewarded."

Oswald said, "I wish that I could meet him, madam! I would show whose side I am on!"

"Fare you well."

— 4.6 —

In a field near Dover, Edgar, who was now dressed like a peasant, was leading his blinded father, the old Earl of Gloucester, who wanted to be taken to a cliff near Dover so that he could commit suicide. Edgar, however, did not want his father to die, and he had not led him to the cliff.

The old Earl of Gloucester asked, "When shall we come to the top of the hill at Dover?"

“You are climbing up it now,” Edgar lied. “See how hard it is to climb this hill.”

“I think that the ground is even.”

“It is horribly steep. Listen, do you hear the sea?”

“No, truly I don’t.”

“Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect now that your eyes are blind.”

“That may be true, indeed,” the old Earl of Gloucester said. “I think that your voice has changed and that you speak more articulately and with better content than you did.”

“You’re much deceived,” the disguised Edgar lied. “I am changed in nothing except that I am wearing different clothing.”

“I think that you are better spoken now.”

“Come on, sir; here’s the place,” the disguised Edgar said. “Stand still. How dreadful and dizzy it is to cast one’s eyes so low! The crows and jackdaws that wing the midway air seem scarcely as large as beetles. Halfway down the cliff hangs a man gathering samphire, an herb used in pickling — his is a dreadful line of work! I think that from here he seems to be no bigger than his head. The fishermen, whom I see walking upon the beach, appear to be the size of mice; and yonder I see a tall ship at anchor that seems to be the size of its small rowboat; the small rowboat itself seems to be the size of a buoy — it is almost too small to be seen from here. The murmuring waves that chafe innumerable useless pebbles cannot be heard so high. I’ll look no more lest my brain grow giddy, and my deficient sight cause me to topple headlong from the cliff!”

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “Set me where you are standing.”

“Give me your hand,” the disguised Edgar said, moving his father into position. “You are now within a foot of the edge. I would not jump up and down for all that lies beneath the Moon because of fear of falling.”

“Let go of my hand. Here, friend, is another wallet; in it is a jewel well worth a poor man’s taking. May fairies and gods help you to prosper with it! Go farther away, tell me farewell, and let me hear you going.”

“Now fare you well, good sir.”

“With all my heart.”

The disguised Edgar thought, *I seem to be trifling with my father’s despair, but I am doing this to cure it. My father now thinks that the gods are like cruel boys who tear the wings off flies; he thinks that the gods torment and kill us for their entertainment.*

The old Earl of Gloucester knelt and prayed, “Oh, you mighty gods! This world I renounce, and, in your sights, I shake off my great affliction patiently. If I could bear my great affliction longer, and not fall and quarrel with your great wills that cannot be opposed, my last remaining and loathed part of life should burn itself out naturally. If Edgar is still alive, gods, bless him!”

He then said to the disguised Edgar, who was far enough away not to stop him from jumping, “Now, fellow, fare you well.”

He fell forward. He was not at the cliffs of Dover, so he did not die.

The disguised Edgar said out loud, “Gone, sir. Farewell.”

He thought, *And yet, although I do not know how, imagination may rob the treasure of life, when life itself consents to the theft. He may be dead simply because he*

wants to be dead, although he did not fall from a great height. Had he been where he thought he was, on the cliffs of Dover, he would have been past thought by this time — he would be dead. Is he alive or is he dead?

Edgar changed his voice and said, “Ho, you sir! Friend! Can you hear me, sir! Speak!”

He thought, *My father might very well be dead indeed, yet he revives.*

He asked out loud, “Who are you, sir?”

His father said, “Go away, and let me die.”

The disguised Edgar said, “Had you been anything but gossamer, feathers, air, falling precipitously so many fathoms down, you would have smashed into pieces like an egg, but you are breathing, have a heavy body, are not bleeding, speak, and are sound and healthy. Ten masts stacked vertically end to end would not reach the altitude from which you have perpendicularly fallen. Your being alive is a miracle. Speak once more.”

“But have I fallen, or not?”

“You fell from the dread summit of this chalky cliff that forms a boundary of the sea. Look up at the height; the shrill-voiced lark cannot be seen or heard so far from here. Look up.”

“I grieve because I have no eyes. Is wretchedness deprived of that benefit: to end itself by suicide? It was yet some comfort when a miserable man could cheat the tyrant’s rage and frustrate his proud will by committing suicide rather than bending to his will.”

“Give me your arm. Let me help you up. Good. How are you? Can you feel your legs? You are standing.”

“Too well, too well,” the old Earl of Gloucester said.

“This is the strangest thing that I have ever seen. Upon the crown of the cliff, what thing was that which parted from you?”

“A poor unfortunate beggar.”

“As I stood here below, I thought his eyes were two full Moons; he had a thousand noses, his horns were curved and waved like the furrowed sea. It was some fiend; therefore, you fortunate old man, think that the gods who are most clearly known by men to be gods, who get honor for themselves by performing miracles that are impossible for men to perform, have preserved you and saved your life with a miracle.”

In this society, people who committed suicide were thought to end up in Hell. Demons were thought to tempt discouraged men to commit suicide so that they would be eternally damned.

“I remember the correct way to think about the gods now; henceforth, I’ll bear affliction until it itself cries, ‘Enough, enough,’ and then I will die. That thing you speak of, I took it for a man; often it would say, ‘The fiend, the fiend.’ He led me to that place.”

“Think correctly. Do not engage in self-despair. Be patient and engage in self-control,” the disguised Edgar said. “But I see someone coming here. Who is it?”

King Lear, still insane, was dressed in odd, fantastic clothing, and he was wearing a crown of weeds.

The disguised Edgar thought, *No one in his right mind would dress like that and wear a crown like that.*

King Lear said, “No, they cannot arrest me for counterfeiting coins; I am the King himself and I have the

right to coin money.”

“What a pitiful and heart-rending sight!” the disguised Edgar said.

“Nature’s above art in that respect,” King Lear said. “You can see more pitiful and heart-rending sights in real life than you do in art.”

Thinking about money made King Lear think about soldiers and paying them.

To an imaginary soldier, he said, “There’s your money for being impressed into the army.”

About another imaginary soldier, he said, “That fellow handles his bow like a scarecrow. Draw the arrow back as far as it will go.”

Military combat on a grand scale made him think of another combat on a small scale: “Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will tempt the mouse so that I can kill it.”

Combat with a mouse made him think of a grander combat: “There’s my gauntlet; I have thrown it on the ground as a challenge. I’ll defend my case and prove myself in the right even if I have to defeat a giant.”

He thought about other kinds of soldiers: those who carried pikes and those who were archers: “Bring up the brown bills — those who carry pikes painted brown to prevent rust. Oh, well flown, bird and arrow! In the bull’s-eye! In the bull’s-eye! Thud!”

Seeing Edgar, he said, “Give me the password.”

The disguised Edgar replied, “Sweet marjoram.”

This was an herb used to treat insanity.

“Correct!” King Lear said.

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “I recognize that voice.”

Seeing Gloucester’s white beard, King Lear thought that he was seeing one of his daughters in disguise: “Ha! Goneril, wearing a white beard! They flattered me as if they were fawning dogs, and they told me I had white hairs in my beard before the black ones were there — they said I was wise even before I grew a beard. They said ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to everything that I said ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to — this was bad theology.”

These verses are 2 Corinthians 18-19 (King James Version):

“18 But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

“19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.”

King Lear remembered the storm that he had endured: “When the rain came to wet me on one occasion, and the wind came to make my teeth chatter; when the thunder would not stop at my order; there I discovered that these people were flatterers — I smelled them out. Believe me, they are not men of their words: they told me I was everything and all-powerful; it is a lie, for I am not fever-proof.”

“I well remember that distinctive voice,” the old Earl of Gloucester said. “Is it not the King?”

King Lear replied, “Yes, I am every inch a King. When I stare at a subject, see how the subject quakes.”

Looking at the old Earl of Gloucester, he said, “I pardon that man’s life. What was your crime? Adultery? You shall

not die. Die for adultery! No. The wren goes to it and fornicates, and the small gilded fly fornicates in my sight. Let copulation thrive. Why? Because Gloucester's bastard son, Edmund, was kinder to his father than my daughters have been to me even though I fathered my daughters between lawful sheets with my properly married wife. Go to it, lechery, go to it hot and heavy! I lack soldiers, and fornication will bring me many soldiers."

King Lear then stated his current opinion of women: "Behold yonder simpering dame, whose face between her hair-combs seems to be a sign of snowy chastity and who seems to be fastidiously virtuous. She shakes her head if she merely hears the name of pleasure, but neither the polecat-like whores, nor the frisky and lecherous horses go at it with a more riotous appetite. Down from the waist women are lustful Centaurs, although they are women all above the waist. What is above the waist belongs to the gods, but what is beneath belongs to the foul fiends. There's Hell, there's darkness, there's the sulfurous pit, burning, scalding, stench, consumption. Wham! Bam!"

Hell was a word sometimes used in this culture to refer to the vagina.

King Lear then spoke to the old Earl of Gloucester as if the Earl were a pharmacist: "Give me an ounce of perfume, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination. Here's some money for you."

The old Earl of Gloucester said, "Oh, let me kiss that hand!"

King Lear replied, "Let me wipe it first; it smells of death and human mortals."

The old Earl of Gloucester said, referring to King Lear, "Oh, ruined piece of human nature! This great world shall likewise wear out to nothing. Do you know me?"

King Lear replied, "I remember your eyes well enough. Are you squinting at me? No, do your worst, blind Cupid! I'll not love."

In this society, brothels used a depiction of a blind Cupid as their sign.

King Lear said, holding an imaginary document, "Read this challenge; see the way that it is written."

"Even if all the letters were Suns, I could not see even one."

The disguised Edgar thought, *I would not believe this if someone told me this, but it is real, and my heart breaks because of it.*

King Lear said, "Read this document."

The old Earl of Gloucester replied, "How? With my eye sockets?"

King Lear said, "Oh, ho, are you there with me? Are we similar? Are we both blind? No eyes in your head, and no money in your wallet? Your eyes are in a heavy and serious situation because your eye sockets are empty. Your wallet is in a light and serious situation because it is empty. Yet you can still see how this world goes."

"I see the world feelingly. I see the world keenly through my sense of touch."

King Lear replied, "What, are you insane? A man with no eyes may see how this world goes. Look with your ears. See yonder how a judge scolds a common thief. Pay attention with your ears. Let the judge and the common thief change places, and — make a guess — which is the justice and which is the thief? Have you seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?"

The old Earl of Gloucester replied, “Yes, sir.”

“And have you seen the creature run away from the cur?” King Lear asked. “There you can behold the great image of authority: a dog is obeyed when it is in office.”

Imagining that he saw a parish constable punishing a prostitute by whipping her, King Lear said, “You rascal constable, hold your bloody hand! Why do you lash that whore? Strip your own back and stripe it with lashes. You hotly lust to use her in that kind of sin for which you are whipping her.”

He then said, “The usurer hangs the cozener. The big thief hangs the small thief. Through tattered clothes small vices can be seen; the robes and furred gowns of the great hide all their sins. Cover the sinner with gold-plated armor, and the strong lance of justice breaks against it without causing hurt to the sinner. But if the sinner’s armor consists of rags, a pigmy’s straw is able to pierce it.

“No one offends and commits sins — no one, I say, no one. I’ll vouch for them and give them immunity from prosecution. Take it from me, my friend — I have the power to close the accuser’s lips. Get yourself glass eyes, and then, like a scurvy schemer, pretend that you see the things you do not.”

He then said to the old Earl of Gloucester as if he were his valet: “Now, now, now, now. Pull off my boots. Pull harder, harder. Good.”

The disguised Edgar said, “Oh, the King’s speech is a mixture of sense and nonsense! Reason in the midst of madness!”

King Lear said to the old Earl of Gloucester, “If you will weep over my fortunes, take my eyes. I know you well enough; your name is Gloucester. You must be patient and

have self-control; we came crying hither. You know that the first time that we smell and breathe the air — when we are born — we wail and cry. I will preach to you. Listen.”

“This is too sad,” the old Earl of Gloucester said.

King Lear stood on a stump and said, “When we are born, we cry because we have come to this great stage of fools. This stump is a good mounting-block to stand on to mount a horse. It is a neat stratagem to shoe military horses with felt to deaden the noise their hooves make. I’ll give it a try, and when I have stolen upon these sons-in-law of mine, then kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill! No quarter!”

A gentleman arrived, accompanied by some attendants.

He said, “Oh, here he is. Lay your hands upon him.”

He said to King Lear, “Sir, your most dear daughter —”

King Lear, who had just thought about attacking his sons-in-law, now thought that he had been captured. He said, “No rescue? What, am I a prisoner? I was born to be the plaything of Fortune. Treat me well; I am a King, and you shall receive much ransom for me. Let me have surgeons to treat my injury; I am cut to the brains.”

King Lear’s brains were vexed; the physical head wound he thought that he had received was imaginary.

The gentleman said, “You shall have anything you need.”

“No supporters? I am all by myself?” King Lear said. “Why, this would make a man a man of salt tears — he could use his eyes for watering pots to tend the garden and to wet the streets so that the dust of autumn would not rise in the air.”

The gentleman said to King Lear, “Good sir —”

“I will die bravely, like a bridegroom,” King Lear said.

“What! I will be jovial.”

He was punning. One meaning of “die” was “to have an orgasm.” “Bravely” could mean “courageously” or “finely dressed.”

He added, “I am a King, my masters; you need to know that.”

“You are a royal one, and we obey you,” the gentleman said.

“Then there is still hope,” King Lear said. “If you get your prize — take me captive — you shall get it with running.”

He ran away. As he did so, he cried, “Sa! Sa! Sa! Sa!”

These were words used by hunters to encourage their dogs to track their prey.

The attendants of the gentleman ran after him, but the gentleman stayed with the disguised Edgar and the old Earl of Gloucester.

The gentleman said, “This sight would be extremely pitiful if the meanest wretch were acting this way, but to see a King acting this way is past speaking of! You, King Lear, have one daughter who redeems human nature from the universal curse that two — Goneril and Regan, and maybe even Adam and Eve — have brought her to.”

“Hello, gentle sir,” the disguised Edgar said.

“Sir, may God make you prosper,” the gentleman replied. “What do you want?”

“Have you heard anything, sir, of an upcoming battle?”

“The battle, as is commonly known, will surely take place. Everyone who can understand sound and words has heard that.”

“Please tell me how near the other army is.”

“It is near and marching quickly. We think that the main part of the army will arrive any hour now.”

“I thank you, sir. That’s all I have to ask you.”

“Although Cordelia, the Queen of France, is here for a special reason, her army has moved on.”

“I thank you, sir.”

The gentleman departed.

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “You ever-gentle gods, take my breath away from me. Let not my worse spirit, aka bad angel, tempt me again to die — by suicide! — before you gods please!”

The old Earl of Gloucester still wanted to die, but he did not want to commit suicide.

“That is a good prayer, father,” the disguised Edgar said.

In this society, “father” could mean “biological father,” or it could simply mean “old man.” Edgar had not yet revealed his identity to his father, so he was using the word “father” to mean “old man.”

“Now, good sir, who are you?” the old Earl of Gloucester asked.

“I am a very poor man, made submissive by Fortune’s blows. Because I have both known and felt sorrows, I am capable of feeling pity. Give me your hand, and I’ll lead you to some resting place.”

“I give hearty thanks to you. May you receive the bounty and the blessing of Heaven in addition to my thanks.”

Oswald arrived. Seeing the old Earl of Gloucester, he said,

“There is a bounty on his head that has been proclaimed throughout the land! This is very fortunate for me!”

He said to the old Earl of Gloucester, “That eyeless head of yours was first made flesh in order to raise my fortunes and make money for me. You old unhappy traitor, briefly remember your sins and pray for forgiveness. The sword that must destroy you is out of its scabbard.”

The old Earl of Gloucester replied, “Now let your friendly hand put strength enough in the thrust of your sword to accomplish your goal.”

Because he wanted to die, he called Oswald’s hand friendly.

The disguised Edgar stood in between his father and Oswald.

“Why, bold peasant,” Oswald asked, “do you dare to support a man who has been proclaimed to be a traitor? Get out of here lest the infection of his fortune take a similar hold on you. Let go of his arm.”

Edgar was disguised as a peasant, and so Oswald was not afraid of him because peasants were unlikely to know how to fight against a man who was trained in swordsmanship. In addition, peasants did not carry swords. The disguised Edgar was armed with a cudgel.

Oswald had called him a peasant, and so the disguised Edgar adopted a peasant’s rustic language.

“Ch’ill not let go, zir, without vurther ’casion.”

[“I will not go, sir, without further reason.”]

“Let go of his arm, slave, or you die!” Oswald shouted.

“Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk pass. An chud ha’ bin zwaggered out of my life, ’twould not ha’ bin

zo long as it is by a vortnight. Nay, come not near th' old man. Keep out, che vor ye, or ise try whether your costard or my ballow be the harder. Ch'ill be plain with you."

["Good gentleman, go on your way, and let poor folk pass. If I could have been bullied out of my life, I would not have lived as long as I have by a fortnight. No, do not come near the old man. Keep away, or, I promise you, I will find out whether your head or my cudgel is harder. I am telling you the plain truth."]

Oswald shouted, "Go away, you dunghill!"

"Ch'ill pick your teeth, zir. Come; no matter vor your foins."

["I'll use your sword to pick your teeth, sir. Come on and fight; I am not afraid of your fencing thrusts."]

They fought, and the disguised Edgar gave Oswald a mortal wound.

Oswald fell. Dying, he said, "Slave, you have slain me. Villain, take my wallet and money. If you want to thrive, bury my body and give the letter that you will find on me to Edmund, the Earl of Gloucester. Seek him. He is on the British side. Oh, untimely and early death!"

He died.

The disguised Edgar said, "I know you well. You are a villain who helps your mistress do evil deeds; you are as duteous to the vices of your mistress as badness would desire."

"What, is he dead?" the old Earl of Gloucester said.

"Sit down, old man, and rest. Let's see what's in this fellow's pockets. The letter that he spoke about may have useful information. He's dead; I am only sorry that he had

no other executioner than myself. Let us see. I beg your pardon, gentle wax that seals this letter. Manners and etiquette, do not blame us. To know our enemies' minds, we would rip their hearts; to rip their letters open is more lawful."

He read the letter out loud: "*Remember the vows we made to each other. In the battle, you will have many opportunities to cut down his life; if your will is not lacking, the time and place for committing murder will be plentifully offered. If he returns as the conqueror of the battle, then I am his prisoner, and his bed is my jail; from the loathed warmth of his bed deliver me, and in return for your labor take his place in my bed. Your — I would like to say wife, but I have to say for now — affectionate servant, GONERIL.*"

The disguised Edgar said to himself, "Oh, how vast and without limits is the lust of a woman! This is a plot upon her virtuous husband's life; she wanted to exchange her virtuous husband for Edmund, my illegitimate half-brother!"

He said to Oswald's corpse, "Here, in the sands, I'll bury you, the unholy messenger of murderous lechers, and at the right time I will show this ungracious letter to the Duke of Albany, whose death his wife plotted. For him it is a good thing that I can tell him about your death and the errand you were running."

The old Earl of Gloucester said, "The King is insane. How obstinate is my vile sense that remains sane and will not allow me to escape from my sorrows by lapsing into madness. Instead, I stand up, and I have conscious feeling of my huge sorrows! It would be better if I were insane. That way, my thoughts would be severed and divorced from my griefs, and my woes would lose the knowledge of themselves because I would see delusions."

“Give me your hand,” the disguised Edgar said.

Military drums sounded.

He said, “From far away, I think, I hear the beaten drum. Come, father, I’ll leave you with a friend.”

— 4.7 —

In a tent in the French camp were Cordelia, the disguised Kent, the gentleman, and a doctor. Some servants were also present. Music was playing softly.

Cordelia said, “Oh, Kent, you good man, how shall I live and work to match your goodness? My life will be too short, and everything I do to try to match your goodness will fail. How can I ever repay you?”

“For you to thank me, madam, is more than enough reward. Everything that I have reported is the modest truth — no more or less, but just the truth.”

“Put on a better suit of clothing,” Cordelia requested. “These clothes you are wearing are reminders of those very bad hours you have told me about. Please, take them off and put on better clothing.”

“Pardon me, dear madam,” the disguised Kent said, “to be recognized by others now would harm the plan that I have formed. I ask for a boon from you: Pretend in public that you do not know me until I think that the time is right.”

Kent’s plan may have been to reveal his identity to King Lear at a time when the King would recognize him.

“Then so be it, my good lord,” Cordelia replied.

She said to the doctor, “How is the King doing?”

“Madam, he is still sleeping.”

Cordelia prayed, “Oh, you kind gods, cure this great illness in his abused human nature! His senses are untuned and jarring; tune them and make them harmonious. Make this man sane, this man who has been harmed by his children and who has turned back into a child in his dotage.”

The doctor said, “If it pleases your majesty, we will wake the King. He has slept for a long time.”

“Be governed by your knowledge, and proceed as you think best,” Cordelia said. “Is he dressed?”

The gentleman said, “Yes, he is, Madam. While he was deeply asleep, we put fresh, clean garments on him.”

The doctor said to Cordelia, “Be close by, good madam, when we awake him. I am sure that he will be sane.”

“Very well,” she replied.

Some attendants carried in King Lear.

The doctor said to the attendant, “Please, bring him close.”

The doctor then ordered, “Play the music louder!” He wanted the music to wake up King Lear.

Cordelia said, “Oh, my dear father! May the god of restoration hang your medicine on my lips; and let this kiss repair those violent harms that my two sisters have made against your reverence!”

She kissed him.

The disguised Kent said, “Kind and dear Princess!”

Cordelia said to the sleeping King Lear, “Even if you had not been their father, these white strands of hair should have made Goneril and Regan pity you. Was this a face to be out in the storm and opposed against the warring winds? Was this a face to stand against the loud and dreadful

thunderbolt? Was this a face to be amidst the most terrible and nimble strokes of quick, zigzag lightning? Was this a face to be in bad weather like a guard at a dangerous post — when the face had only a few strands of hair as a helmet? My enemy’s dog, even if it had bitten me, would have stood that night near my fireplace — were you forced, poor father, to shelter yourself with swine, and forlorn rogues, on broken and musty straw? Alas! Alas! It is a wonder that your life and wits did not end immediately.”

She said to the doctor, “He is awakening. Speak to him.”

The musicians now played softly.

“Madam, you should be the one to first speak to him; it is fittest.”

Cordelia said to her father, “How is my royal lord? How fares your majesty?”

King Lear said, “You do me wrong to take me out of my grave. You are a soul in bliss in Heaven, but I am bound upon a Wheel of Fire and my own tears scald me as if they were molten lead.”

“Sir, do you know me?” Cordelia asked.

“You are a spirit, I know. When did you die?”

Mourning, Cordelia said to the doctor, “His wits are still far wide of the mark.”

“He is barely awake,” the doctor said. “Let him alone for awhile.”

King Lear asked, “Where have I been? Where am I? Is this beautiful daylight and not Hell? I am mightily confused. I would die of pity if I were to see someone as confused as I am. I don’t know what to say. I will not swear these are my hands. Let’s see if they are.”

He took the pin of a brooch and stuck one of his fingers with it.

He said, "I feel this pinprick. I wish I could be assured that I am all right and not in Hell!"

Cordelia knelt and said, "Oh, look upon me, sir, and hold your hands in benediction over me. No, sir, you must not kneel."

"Please, do not mock me," King Lear said. "I am a very foolish and senile old man. My age is fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less, and, to speak plainly, I fear that I am not in my right mind. I think that I should know who you are, and I should know who this man is."

He motioned toward the disguised Kent.

He continued, "Yet I am doubtful because I am entirely ignorant what place this is; and using all the skill and knowledge I have, I cannot remember these garments I am wearing, nor do I know where I lodged last night. Do not laugh at me. As I am a man, I think this lady is my child Cordelia."

"And so I am, I am," Cordelia said, crying because she was happy that her father recognized her.

King Lear said, "Are your tears wet? Yes, truly they are. Please, do not cry. If you have poison for me, I will drink it. I know that you do not love me because your sisters have, I remember, done me wrong. You have some reason to hate me; they have not."

"I have no reason to hate you — no reason," Cordelia said.

"Am I in France?" King Lear said.

He remembered that Cordelia was the Queen of France.

The disguised Kent said, "You are in your own Kingdom,

sir.”

“Do not make fun of me,” King Lear said.

He remembered that he had given his Kingdom away.

The doctor said to Cordelia, “Be comforted, good madam. The great rage of madness, you see, is killed in him, and yet it is dangerous to make him try to remember the time that he has lost due to madness. Ask him to go into his own tent; trouble him no more until after he has had more time for his mind to settle and be calm.”

“Will it please your Highness to walk to your tent?” Cordelia asked her father.

“You must be patient with me,” King Lear replied. “Please, forget and forgive. I am old and foolish.”

Everyone left the tent except for the disguised Kent and the gentleman.

The gentleman asked, “Do people still believe, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was slain in the way that we have heard?”

“Most certainly, sir.”

“Who is the general of his army?”

“We have heard that it is Edmund, the bastard son of the Earl of Gloucester.”

“They say that Edgar, his banished son, is with the Earl of Kent in Germany.”

The gentleman had been in the tent when the disguised Kent had revealed his identity to Cordelia. He knew who Kent was; he was simply making a point about rumors. The gentleman found it difficult to believe that the Duke of Cornwall had died as reported and that Edmund was

leading the Duke's forces.

"Rumors change," the disguised Kent said, acknowledging the gentleman's point.

Then he said, "It is time to take action; the armies of the British Kingdom approach quickly."

"The final outcome is likely to be bloody. Fare you well, sir," the gentleman said as he exited.

The disguised Kent said, "My point and period will be thoroughly wrought, either well or ill, as this day's battle is fought."

He meant that the end of his life would be either good or bad, depending on how the battle ended.

CHAPTER 5 (King Lear)

— 5.1 —

In the British camp, near Dover, Edmund and Regan were talking. Also present were some gentlemen and some soldiers.

Edmund said to a gentleman, “Find out from the Duke of Albany if he is still planning to follow his most recent plan — to fight against King Lear’s forces — or whether he has been induced by anything to change his course of action. He is full of indecision and self-reproach. Bring me his final decision.”

The gentleman left to carry out the action.

Regan said, “Oswald, the courtier of Goneril, my sister, has certainly met with misfortune.”

Edmund replied, “I fear that is correct, madam.”

“Now, sweet lord, you know the good things that I am planning for you. Tell me — and speak the truth. Don’t you love my sister?”

“With an honorable love.”

“But have you ever found my brother-in-law’s way to the forbidden place? Have you ever slept with her?”

“That thought is not worthy of you.”

“I am afraid that you have been joined bosom to bosom with her, in the most intimate way.”

“No, by my honor, madam,” Edmund said.

“I can’t stand her,” Regan said. “My dear lord, do not be friendly with her.”

“Trust me.” He heard a sound, looked up, and said, “Here she comes with the Duke of Albany, her husband.”

The Duke of Albany, Goneril, and some soldiers walked over to them.

Goneril thought, *I had rather lose the battle than endure my sister coming in between Edmund and me.*

The Duke of Albany said, “Regan, our very loving sister-in-law, we are well met. Edmund, sir, I hear that King Lear has come to Cordelia, his daughter, with others whom the tyranny of our government has forced to cry out and rebel. I have never fought for a cause in which I did not believe. As for this business, it concerns me because it is an invasion of my country. I will fight for that reason, but not because the invasion emboldens the King and others who, I fear, oppose us for very just and serious reasons.”

“Sir, you speak nobly,” Edmund replied.

Regan asked, “Why are you telling us these reasons?”

Goneril said, “Let us join together against the enemy; these personal and private squabbles are not the issue here.”

The Duke of Albany said, “Let’s decide with the Chief of Staff how to proceed.”

“I shall attend you immediately at your tent,” Edmund said.

The Duke of Albany, Edmund, and the Chief of Staff would meet in a council of war.

Regan started to leave, but she noticed Goneril staying behind and suspected that she was planning to attend the council of war and be with Edmund.

Regan asked Goneril, “Sister, will you come with us?”

“No.”

“It is very convenient; please, come with us.”

Goneril thought, *I see what you want — you want to keep me away from Edmund.*

She said, “I will go with you.”

Edgar, still disguised as a peasant, arrived as everyone was leaving. He said to the Duke of Albany, “If your grace has ever had speech with a man as poor as I am, listen briefly to what I have to say.”

The Duke of Albany said to the others, “Go ahead of me. I will be with you soon.”

He said to the disguised Edgar, “Speak.”

Edgar gave him a letter — the letter that he had taken from the pocket of the dead Oswald. This was the letter in which Goneril, the Duke of Albany’s wife, urged Edmund to kill her husband so that they could be married.

The disguised Edgar said, “Before you fight the battle, open this letter and read it. If you win the battle, let the trumpet sound for the man — me — who brought it. Wretched though I seem to be, I can produce a champion who will prove in a trial by combat what is avouched there. If you lose the battle, your business in the world will come to an end, and plots won’t matter to you. May the goddess Fortune love you.”

“Stay here until I have read the letter,” the Duke of Albany requested.

“I was forbidden to stay. When time shall serve, let the herald cry and the trumpet blow, and I’ll appear again.”

“Why, fare you well. I will look over the letter you have brought to me.”

The disguised Edgar left, and Edmund appeared.

Edmund said to the Duke of Albany, “The enemy’s in view; draw up your armies.”

He gave the Duke of Albany a paper and said, “Here is the estimate of the enemy’s true strength and forces by our diligent scouts. Now, haste is needed.”

“We will greet the time,” the Duke of Albany said. “We are prepared.”

He exited.

Now alone, Edmund said to himself, “To both these sisters — Goneril and Regan — I have sworn my love. Each is suspicious of the other, as those who have been bitten are suspicious of the adder. Which of them shall I take? Both? One? Or neither? Neither can be enjoyed, if both remain alive. If I were to take the widow, Regan, her sister Goneril would be exasperated and mad, and I cannot achieve my ambition if Goneril’s husband, the Duke of Albany, remains alive.

“Right now we’ll use him to fight for our side in the battle. After the battle, let her who would be rid of him — Goneril, who wants to marry me, or Regan, who wants to be Queen of all Britain — devise his speedy death. As for the mercy that he intends to show to Lear and to Cordelia, once the battle is done, and they are within our power, they shall never see his pardon. My situation requires that I take action, not engage in debate about how to treat the royal prisoners.”

For Edmund to become King of Britain, several people would have to die: King Lear, Cordelia, the Duke of Albany, and either Goneril or Regan. He would marry the surviving sister.

Edgar led his father, the blinded old Earl of Gloucester, to a tree and said, “Here, father, take the shadow of this tree as your good host; pray that the right side may thrive. If I ever return to you again, I’ll bring you comfort.”

He still had not told his father his real identity; he planned to do that after the battle, if he survived.

“May grace go with you, sir!”

Edgar left.

The battle was fought, and trumpets called for retreat.

Edgar came back to his father and said, “We need to get away, old man; give me your hand. We need to get away! King Lear has lost the battle; he and his daughter have been captured. Give me your hand; come on.”

“No farther, sir; a man may rot even here.”

“What, are you in ill thoughts again? Men must endure their going hence, even as they endured their coming hither. We are born, and we must die. Ripeness is all; it is everything. An apple grows ripe and falls from the tree and dies. The gods decide when a death is ripe; we do not. We must endure, and we must not commit suicide. We must take death when the gods give it to us.”

The old Earl of Gloucester said, “That’s true.”

— 5.3 —

In the British camp, Edmund stood with King Lear and Cordelia as his prisoners. Also present were a captain and some soldiers, some of whom were guarding King Lear and Cordelia.

Edmund ordered, “Some officers take the prisoners away under good guard until we know what the higher-ups who are to judge the prisoners tell us what to do.”

Cordelia said to King Lear, “We are not the first who, with the best intentions, have suffered the worst. The goddess Fortune has cast me down because I wanted to help you, oppressed King, my father. I am sorry that I could not help you, father; otherwise, I would out-frown false Fortune’s frown.”

She then asked Edmund, “Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?”

King Lear said, “No! No! No! No! Come, let’s go away to prison. We two alone will sing like birds in the cage. When you ask me for my blessing, I’ll kneel down and ask you to forgive me. In this way we’ll live, and pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh at gilded butterflies and hear poor rogues — fancily dressed courtiers and such other people — talk about court news; and we’ll talk with them, too, about who loses and who wins, and who’s in and who’s out of the King’s favor. We will act as if we are God’s spies and can understand the mystery of things, and we’ll wear out, in a walled prison, packs and sects of great ones, who ebb and flow by the moon. They will come and go, but we will be together.”

Edmund ordered, “Take them away.”

King Lear said, “Upon such sacrifices as our renunciation of the world, my Cordelia, the gods themselves throw incense — they approve. Have I caught you? Are you really here with me? He who parts us shall bring a brand from Heaven, and use fire and smoke to drive us out of jail like they drive foxes out of kennels. Since no one is able to bring a brand from Heaven, we will stay together. Heaven will not assist them in separating us again. Wipe your eyes. The devils shall devour our enemies, flesh and skin together, before they shall make us weep. We’ll see them starve first. Come with me.”

King Lear and Cordelia left, heavily guarded.

Edmund said, “Come here, captain, and listen to me.”

He gave the captain a note and said, “Take this note, and go and follow them to prison. One step I have already promoted you; if you do as this note instructs you to do, then you will have made your way to noble fortunes. You should know that men are as the times are: When times are hard, men are hard. To be tender-minded does not become a soldier. This task I want you to do will not bear discussion — you are not to question it. Either say you will do it, or find another way to thrive.”

“I’ll do it, my lord.”

“Go about it and know that you will be a happy man when you have finished. Remember, I say, to follow your instructions immediately, and follow your instructions exactly as I have written them.”

The captain said, “I am not a horse. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats. If it is man’s work, I’ll do it.”

He left.

The Duke of Albany, Goneril, Regan, a different captain, and some soldiers arrived.

Using the royal plural, the Duke of Albany said to Edmund, “Sir, you have shown today your valiant lineage and disposition, and the goddess Fortune led you well. You have the captives who were our enemies during this day’s strife. We command you to hand them over to us so that we can treat them as we shall find that their merits and our safety may equally determine.”

Playing for time in which the captain could accomplish his task, Edmund replied, “Sir, I thought it fit to send the old and miserable King Lear to some confinement under

appointed guard. The King's age has charms in it, and his title has more charms, that will make the common people take his side and make the lance-equipped soldiers we drafted to turn against us who command them. With him I sent Cordelia, the Queen of France, for the same reason. They are ready tomorrow, or at a further time, to appear wherever you shall hold your session and judge them. At this time we sweat and bleed. In the battle, the friend has lost his friend. And the best causes, in the heat of battle, are cursed by those who feel their sharpness. The question of Cordelia and her father requires a fitter place."

Edmund was implying that King Lear and Cordelia would not get a fair trial although he already knew that the Duke of Albany was planning to pardon them.

The Duke of Albany said to him, "Sir, if you don't mind, I regard you only as a subordinate in this war, not as my equal."

Using the royal plural, Regan said, "We please to regard him as your equal. I think that you could have asked what we thought before you spoke so rudely to Edmund. He led our armies; he bore the authority of my Kingdom and represented me personally. His direct connection to me may well stand up so that he — my deputy — can call himself your equal."

"Not so fast," Goneril said. "Edmund exalts himself because of his own abilities and accomplishments — those mean more than any titles or status you can give him."

"Because he has been invested with my rights," Regan said, "he equals the best."

Goneril said, "The investment of your rights in him would be most complete if he should become your husband."

"Jesters often prove to be prophets," Regan said. "Words

said in jest sometimes turn out to be true.”

“Stop!” Goneril said. “That eye that told you he would be your husband can’t see straight.”

“Lady, I am not well,” Regan said, “or else I would answer with very many and very angry words. General Edmund, take my soldiers, prisoners, inheritance. They are yours, as am I. The walls around my heart have fallen, and my heart is yours. The world will now witness that I make you here my lord and master.”

“Do you mean to marry and enjoy him?” Goneril asked.

The Duke of Albany said to his wife, Goneril, “You don’t want to let them alone so they can get married, but the lack of your good will is not enough to prevent them from being married.”

He added, “You don’t have the power to stop their marriage.”

“Neither do you, lord,” Edmund said.

“Half-blooded fellow — bastard — yes, I do have the power to stop your marriage to Regan,” the Duke of Albany said.

Regan said to Edmund, “Let the drum strike up, and prove that my title is your title. Fight and defeat the Duke of Albany, and then marry me.”

She wanted to be Queen of all Britain. For that to happen, the Duke of Albany needed to be dead.

“Wait,” the Duke of Albany said. “Listen to my reason for stopping the marriage.”

He had read the letter that the disguised Edgar had given to him, and he knew that Goneril wanted Edmund to kill him and marry her.

He said to Edmund, “I arrest you on the charge of capital treason, and I arrest in addition to you this gilded serpent who has been your accomplice and has — unwittingly — given me evidence with which to justify your arrest.”

He then said to Regan, “As for your claim on Edmund as your fiancé, fair sister-in-law, I bar it in the interest of my wife, Goneril. She is sub-contracted to this lord. She is under contract to me, her husband, but she has made a sub-contract with Edmund for him to be her new husband. I, her husband, dissolve your engagement to Edmund. If you want to marry someone, marry me. My lady is bespoken for; she is engaged to marry Edmund.”

“What a farce!” Goneril said. “What a performance!”

The Duke of Albany said, “You are armed, Edmund, Earl of Gloucester. You have a sword. Let the trumpet sound. If no one appears to prove upon your head in a trial by combat your heinous, manifest, and many treasons, there is my pledge.”

He threw down his glove as a formal challenge to fight Edmund.

He added, “I’ll prove it on your heart, before I taste bread, that you are nothing less than the traitor that I have here proclaimed you to be.”

Regan said, “I am sick! Oh, I am sick!”

Goneril, who had poisoned her sister, thought, *If you don’t feel sick, then I will never trust poison again.*

Edmund said, “There’s my glove.”

He threw down his glove to show that he accepted the Duke of Albany’s challenge.

He said, “Anyone in the world who calls me a traitor lies

like the villain he is. That is a direct lie, and I am bound by honor to fight him. Call that man with your trumpet. Against anyone who dares approach — him, you, anyone else — I will fight to firmly defend my truth and honor.”

The Duke of Albany called, “We need a herald!”

Edmund called, “A herald! A herald!”

The Duke of Albany said to Edmund, “Trust only in your own strength and courage. Your soldiers, all of whom were levied in my name, have in my name taken their discharge.”

Regan said, “My sickness grows worse.”

The Duke of Albany ordered an attendant, “She is not well; take her to my tent.

Regan left, aided by an attendant.

A herald arrived.

The Duke of Albany said, “Come here, herald.”

He gave the herald a piece of paper and said, “Let the trumpet sound, and read this out loud.”

The captain said, “Sound, trumpet!”

The trumpet sounded.

The herald read out loud, “*If any man of quality or degree within the lists of the army maintains that Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester, is a manifest traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the trumpet. Edmund will fight boldly in his own defense.*”

Edmund shouted, “Sound!”

The trumpet sounded for the first time after the reading of the proclamation.

The herald shouted, “Again!”

The trumpet sounded for the second time.

The herald shouted, “Again!”

The trumpet sounded for the third time.

Another trumpet sounded in answer.

Preceded by a trumpeter, Edgar arrived. He was wearing armor, and his helmet obscured his face so that he could not be recognized.

The Duke of Albany ordered the herald, “Ask him his reason why he appears upon this call of the trumpet.”

The herald asked, “Who are you? What are your name and your social rank? And why do you answer this present summons?”

Edgar replied, “Know that my name is lost; it has been gnawed bare by the tooth of treason as if worms had devoured it. Yet I am as noble as the adversary whom I have come to fight.”

The Duke of Albany asked, “Who is that adversary?”

Edgar asked, “Who speaks for Edmund, Earl of Gloucester?”

Edmund answered, “I speak for myself. What do you have to say to me?”

“Draw your sword,” Edgar replied, “so that, if my speech offends a noble heart, your arm and sword may do you justice. Here is my sword. Behold, the right to trial by combat is the privilege of my honors and Knighthood, my oath and loyalty, and my profession and religion. I am a Knight, and I have the right to challenge you and to have my challenge accepted. Despite your strength, youth,

position, and eminence, despite your victorious sword and newly forged fortune, your valor and your heart, you are a traitor. You are false to your gods, your brother, and your father. You have conspired against this highly illustrious Prince, the Duke of Albany. And, from the extreme top of your head to the dust below your foot, you are a traitor — you are spotted like a venomous toad. If you deny these charges, then this sword, this arm, and my best spirits are determined to prove upon your heart that you lie.”

“I have the right to refuse to fight anyone who is beneath me in social rank, so it would be prudent for me to ask you your name and confirm that you are a Knight,” Edmund said, “but since your appearance looks so fair and warlike, and since your tongue shows some sign of education, I spurn and disdain to do what would safely and properly by the code of Knightly conduct delay this combat. I toss the charge of treason back to your head. The charge of treason you made against me is a lie, and I hate it like I hate Hell. That charge does not stick to me; it glances off and scarcely bruises me. But I will use my sword to open a passageway to your heart so the charge of treason can enter immediately and rest in your heart forever.”

He then ordered, “Trumpets, speak!”

The trumpets sounded to announce the combat.

Edgar and Edmund fought, and Edgar mortally wounded Edmund, who fell to the ground.

The Duke of Albany sounded, “Spare him! Spare his life!”

He wanted Edmund to confess his sins and crimes.

Goneril said to Edmund, “This is treachery, Earl of Gloucester. By the law of arms, you were not bound to answer an unknown opponent. You have not been vanquished; you have been cheated and deceived.”

The Duke of Albany said to her, "Shut your mouth, dame, or with this paper I shall stop it."

The paper was the letter that Goneril had written to Edmund asking that he murder the Duke of Albany so that they could be married. The letter mentioned vows that she and Edmund had made to each other.

The Duke of Albany said to Edmund, "Just a moment, sir."

He then showed the letter to Goneril and said, "You who are worse than any name I could call you, read your own evil letter."

She attempted to snatch the letter from his hand and tear it up but failed.

He said to her, "No tearing, lady. I perceive you recognize this letter."

He then gave the letter to Edmund. It had not been delivered because Edgar had killed the messenger, Oswald, so this was the first time Edmund was seeing the letter.

Goneril said to her husband, the Duke of Albany, "Suppose that I do recognize the letter, the laws are mine, not yours. Who can arraign me for it?"

She was reminding him that she was Queen and he was merely her consort. She could not be put on trial in a court because as Queen she had no peers.

"You are most monstrous!" the Duke of Albany said.

She had not admitted that she recognized the letter, so he asked her, "Do you recognize this letter?"

She replied, "Ask me not what I know."

She exited.

The Duke of Albany ordered an attendant, "Go after her. She's desperate. Restrain her."

Edmund, having read the letter, said, "What you have charged me with, that I admit I have done, and more, much more. Time will reveal all that I have done. My evil deeds are in the past, and I am passing into the afterlife."

He then asked Edgar, who had not yet revealed his identity, "But who are you who have placed this fortune on me? If you are noble, I forgive you."

Edgar replied, "Let's exchange charity. If you forgive me for killing you, then I will forgive you for the evils you have done to me. I am no less in blood than you are, Edmund. If I am more, then the more you have wronged me."

He took off his helmet and said, "My name is Edgar, and I am your father's legitimate son. The gods are just, and of our vices that bring us pleasure the gods make instruments to plague us. My father begat you in a dark and vicious adulterous bed, and his adultery cost him his eyes."

Edmund said, "You have spoken rightly. What you have said is true. The Wheel of Fortune has come full circle. I started low on the Wheel of Fortune, then I was on top, and now I am here, lying in the dust."

The Duke of Albany said to Edgar, "I thought that your manner of walking did prophesy a worthy nobleness. I must embrace you. Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I hated you or your father! I have never hated either of you."

"Worthy Prince, I know it," Edgar replied.

"Where have you been hiding?" the Duke of Albany asked. "How have you learned about the miseries of your father?"

"By taking care of my father, my lord," Edgar replied.

“Listen to a brief tale, and when it is told — oh, I wish that my heart would burst! I wanted to escape the proclamation of my death that closely followed me — we value our lives so sweetly that we are willing to suffer deathly pains every hour rather than die at once! — and so I changed into a madman’s rags. I assumed a semblance that even the dogs hated, and in this disguise I met my father with his bleeding rings whose precious stones had been recently lost — he had been recently blinded. I became his guide, led him, begged for him, and saved him from despair. I never — this was a grievous fault! — revealed myself to him and told him that I was his son until approximately a half-hour ago, when I was armed to meet Edmund in combat. I was not sure of, though I was hoping for, this good and successful outcome. I asked his blessing, and from first to last told him about my pilgrimage, but his flawed and overstrained heart was sadly too weak to support his life as he felt great emotions! His heart stopped beating as he felt two extremes of passion: joy because he had found me, and grief because I had suffered. He welcomed death: He died smiling.”

Edmund said, “This speech of yours has moved me, and shall perhaps do good, but speak on. You look as if you had something more to say.”

People in this society believed that it was necessary to confess their sins before dying in order to go to Heaven. Edmund had admitted that he was a traitor, but now was a good time to tell the others about the note that he had given the captain after the battle. Edmund did not do that; perhaps he was trying to scam God with a fake repentance.

The Duke of Albany said to Edgar, “If what you have left to tell is more woeful than what you have already told, hold it inside yourself because I am almost ready to dissolve in tears after hearing what you have said so far.”

Edgar said, “What I have said so far would have seemed

the pinnacle of sadness to those who are not used to sorrow, but an additional sorrow I will mention will amplify by much more and exceed that pinnacle of sadness I have already mentioned.

“While I was loudly lamenting the death of my father, a man came over to us. He had seen me when I was in my disguise as a wretched man, and he had then shunned my abhorrent society, but finding out who it was who was enduring such grief, he threw his strong arms around my neck, and bellowed out his grief as if he would burst the Heavens. He threw himself on the body of my father. He told me the most piteous tale about King Lear and himself that any ear has ever heard. While he told this tale, his grief grew powerful and the strings of life began to crack. Then the trumpets sounded twice, and I left him there unconscious.”

“Who was he?” the Duke of Albany asked.

“He was the Earl of Kent, sir, the banished Kent, who in disguise followed his King who was hostile to him, and he did his King service that was not fit to be done by a slave.”

Carrying a bloody knife, a gentleman arrived and shouted, “Help! Help! Oh, help!”

Edgar asked, “What kind of help?”

“Speak, man,” the Duke of Albany ordered.

Edgar asked, “Why are you carrying that bloody knife?”

The gentleman said, “It is hot! It is steaming! It came just now from the heart of — oh, she’s dead!”

“Who is dead?” the Duke of Albany asked. “Speak, man!”

“Your lady, sir, your lady,” the gentleman said. “Your wife, Goneril, is dead, and she has confessed that she poisoned

her sister Regan.”

Edmund said, “I was engaged to marry them both. All three of us now marry — join in death — in an instant.”

Edgar looked up and said, “Here comes Kent.”

The Duke of Albany ordered, “Produce the bodies of Goneril and Regan, whether they are alive or dead. This judgment of the Heavens, that makes us tremble, touches us not with pity. We tremble because of the justice of the gods, but because of the evilness of Goneril and Regan, we cannot pity either of their deaths.”

A gentleman left to carry out the order.

Kent slowly and painfully walked up to them.

The Duke of Albany said, “Is this he? The time will not allow the complimentary formalities that good manners urge.”

Kent said, “I am dying, and I have come to bid my King and master good night forever. Isn’t King Lear here?”

“We have forgotten the great matter of the King’s whereabouts!” the Duke of Albany said. “Speak, Edmund, where’s the King? And where’s Cordelia?”

Some attendants carried in the bodies of Goneril and Regan.

The Duke of Albany asked, “Do you see this sad spectacle, Kent?”

Kent asked, “Why has this sad thing happened?”

Edmund said, “I was beloved. One sister poisoned the other sister for my sake, and afterward she slew herself.”

“That is true,” the Duke of Albany said. “Cover their

faces.” An attendant covered the faces of the corpses.

Edmund said, “I pant for breath and life. I mean to do some good in my remaining moments, despite my own evil nature. Quickly send — don’t waste time — someone to the castle because I wrote an order for the execution of King Lear and Cordelia. Hurry. Send someone in time to stop the execution.”

The Duke of Albany ordered, “Run! Run! Oh, run!”

“Run to whom, my lord?” Edgar asked. “Who has the order to execute them? We must send a token of reprieve.”

Edmund said, “Well thought out. Take my sword as that token and give it to the captain.”

The Duke of Albany said, “Make haste, for your life.”

Edgar took Edmund’s sword and ran.

Edmund said, “The captain has a commission from your wife and me to hang Cordelia in the prison, and to lay the blame upon her own despair, and say that she destroyed herself and committed suicide.”

The Duke of Albany said, “May the gods defend her!”

He then ordered, “Carry Edmund hence for awhile.”

Two attendants carried Edmund away.

Now King Lear, carrying Cordelia, walked over to the Duke of Albany. Edgar and an officer followed King Lear.

King Lear cried, “Howl! Howl! Howl! Howl! Oh, you are men made of stones! Had I your tongues and eyes, I would use them so that Heaven’s vault — the sky — would crack from the intensity of the sounds of mourning! She’s gone forever! I know when one is dead, and when one lives. She’s dead as earth. Lend me a looking glass. If her breath

will mist or stain the mirror, why then she lives.”

Kent asked, “Is this the promised end of the world? Is this Judgment Day?”

Edgar asked, “Or an image of that horror?”

The Duke of Albany said, “May the Heavens fall, and the Earth cease to exist!”

No mirror was immediately forthcoming, so King Lear held an imaginary feather under Cordelia’s nose. He said, “This feather stirs; she lives! If that is true, it redeems all the sorrows that I have ever felt. Her being alive will make up for all the misfortunes that I have suffered.”

The Earl of Kent knelt before King Lear and said, “Oh, my good master!”

King Lear, concerned only about Cordelia, replied, “Please, go away and leave me alone.”

Edgar said, “He is noble Kent, your friend.”

King Lear said, “A plague upon you — murderers, traitors all! I might have saved her; now she’s gone forever! Cordelia! Cordelia! Stay a little while in the land of the living!”

He bent over and positioned an ear over her mouth and said, “What is it you are saying? Her voice was always soft, gentle, and low, an excellent thing in a woman. I killed the slave who was hanging you.”

An officer who had been present said, “It is true, my lords. He did.”

King Lear said, “Didn’t I, fellow? I have seen the day when, with my good biting curved sword, I would have made them who oppressed her skip. I am old now, and the troubles of old age have ruined me as a swordsman.”

He looked at the Earl of Kent and asked, “Who are you? My eyes are not the best. I’ll recognize you soon.”

Kent said to King Lear, “If Lady Fortune were to brag about two men whom she first loved and then hated, one of them each of us would behold.”

King Lear said, “This is a miserable spectacle around us. Aren’t you Kent?”

“I am him — your servant Kent,” he replied.

Wanting to test King Lear’s understanding, he asked, “Where is your servant Caius?”

Kent had used the name Caius when he was in disguise.

“Caius is a good fellow, I can tell you that,” King Lear said. “In a fight, he’ll strike, and quickly, too, but he’s dead and rotten.”

“No, my good lord. Caius is not dead,” Kent said. “I am the very man —”

King Lear, in a state of shock, said, “I’ll attend to you in a moment.”

“— who, from the very beginning of your change of status and decline into decay, have followed your sad steps.”

“You are welcome here,” King Lear said.

“I am that man,” Kent said. “No one else did that. Everything now is cheerless, dark, and deadly. Your eldest daughters have destroyed themselves, and in despair they are dead.”

“Yes, I think so,” King Lear replied in a distracted manner.

He still did not know that Kent was Caius.

The Duke of Albany said, “He does not know what he is

saying, and it is in vain that we present ourselves to him.”

“It is very vain,” Edgar said.

A captain arrived and said, “Edmund is dead, my lord.”

“His death is only a trifle here,” the Duke of Albany replied.

He then said, “You lords and noble friends, know our intent. What comfort can come to this great decay of a man — King Lear — shall be given to him. As for us, for the duration of the life of this old majesty we will resign and give to him our absolute power.”

He said to Edgar and Kent, “You shall again have your rights with extra rewards and titles as your honors have more than merited and deserved. All friends shall receive the wages of their virtue, and all foes shall receive the cup of what they deserve.”

King Lear made a cry of mourning, and the Duke of Albany said, “Look at him!”

King Lear said, “And my poor fool — Cordelia — is hanged! No, no, no life! Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and you have no breath at all? You will come no more — never, never, never, never, never!”

King Lear felt a sense of suffocation — *hysterica passio* — and said to an attendant, “Please, undo this button for me. Thank you, sir.”

He looked at Cordelia and said, “Do you see this? Look at her — look, her lips! Look there! Look there!”

He died, thinking that he saw Cordelia breathing.

She did not breathe.

Edgar cried, ‘He faints! My lord! My lord!’”

Kent said, "Break, my heart. Please, break!"

Over King Lear's body, Edgar said, "Look up, my lord."

Kent said to him, "Vex not his ghost: Allow him to pass into the next world! He would much hate the man who would keep him alive a while longer to suffer and endure the rack of this tough world."

"He is gone, indeed," Edgar said. "He is dead."

"The wonder is that he endured so long," Kent said. "He lived long after he should have died."

The Duke of Albany said, "Carry the bodies away from here. Our immediate concern is public mourning for all."

He said to Kent and Edgar, "Friends of my soul, you two shall rule in this realm, and the wounded Kingdom sustain."

Kent replied, "I have a journey, sir, that I must soon take. My master calls me, and I must not say no to him."

Edgar said, "The weight of this sad time we must obey. We must speak what we feel, not what we ought to say. The oldest has borne the most; we who are young shall never see so much, nor live so long."

Chapter XXVIII: MACBETH

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Macbeth*)

Duncan, King of Scotland.

Malcolm, Donalbain, his sons.

Macbeth, Banquo, generals of the King's army.

Macduff, Lennox, Ross, Menteth, Angus, Cathness,
noblemen of Scotland.

Fleance, son to Banquo.

Siward, Earl of Northumberland, general of the English
forces.

Young Siward, his son.

Seyton, an officer attending on Macbeth.

Boy, son to Macduff.

An English Doctor.

A Scotch Doctor.

A Captain.

A Porter.

An Old Man.

Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macduff.

Gentlewomen attending on Lady Macbeth.

Hecate.

Three Witches.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers,
Attendants, and Messengers; the Ghost of Banquo, and
other Apparitions.

CHAPTER 1 (Macbeth)

— 1.1 —

In a deserted place above which thunder sounded and lightning flashed, Three Witches were ending their meeting. Nearby, a battle raged, and soldiers and horses screamed and died.

“When shall we three meet again? Shall we meet in thunder and lightning, or in rain?” asked the First Witch.

“We shall meet again after the battle is over. The battle shall have its conquerors, and it shall have its conquered,” answered the Second Witch.

“The battle will end before the Sun sets,” said the Third Witch.

“In which place shall we meet?” asked the First Witch.

“We shall meet upon the heath,” answered the Second Witch.

“There we shall meet Macbeth,” said the Third Witch.

With the Witches were their familiars. Graymalkin was a malevolent spirit in the form of a gray cat, and Paddock was a malevolent spirit in the form of a toad. The familiars were growing restless.

“I come, Graymalkin!” exclaimed the First Witch.

“Paddock calls,” said the Second Witch.

“It is time to go,” said the Third Witch.

All together, the Three Witches chanted, “Fair is foul, and foul is fair. Hover through the fog and filthy air.”

The Three Witches and their familiars vanished.

— 1.2 —

Duncan, King of Scotland, was too old to lead his soldiers in the battle, so he stood in a camp near the battle. Macbeth and Banquo were leading his soldiers. With King Duncan were his older son, Malcolm, and his younger son, Donalbain; Lennox, a nobleman; and many servants and soldiers. A soldier who was bloody from his wounds rode into the camp.

“Who is this bloody soldier?” King Duncan asked. “By the way he looks, he can provide news of how the battle is going.”

“This good and brave soldier fought hard to keep me from being captured,” Malcolm said. “Welcome, brave sergeant and friend! Tell the King news about the battle as it stood when you left it.”

“In the middle of the battle, no one could tell who would win. The two sides seemed to be equal,” the bloody soldier replied. “They were like two exhausted swimmers who cling to each other and prevent each other from swimming. The traitor Macdonwald — the rebel who is guilty of many evil deeds — commanded both lightly armed and heavily armed foot soldiers who had come from the Western Isles known as the Hebrides. Fortune seemed to smile at him like a whore, but brave Macbeth — and well does he deserve to be called brave — ignored Fortune, and with his sword, which steamed with hot blood, he cut his way through enemy soldiers until he faced the traitor. Macdonwald had no time to shake hands with him, or to say goodbye to him, because Macbeth immediately cut him open from his naval to his jawbone. Then he cut off the traitor’s head and exhibited it to all from the top of the walls of our fortifications.”

“Macbeth is both brave and worthy. He is a true gentleman,” King Duncan said.

“A calm morning at sea can later turn into a stormy day that can wreck ships,” the bloody soldier said. “Something that seems good can lead to something bad. Immediately after your troops had defeated the rebel and forced his troops to flee, the King of Norway sensed an opportunity to conquer Scotland and sent armed soldiers to attack your troops.”

“Did not this dismay the captains of our army: Macbeth and Banquo?” King Duncan asked.

“Yes, it did,” the bloody soldier replied, “exactly as much as sparrows dismay eagles, or rabbits dismay lions. Macbeth and Banquo were truly like cannons loaded with extra explosives as they fiercely fought the enemy soldiers. It was as if they wanted to bathe in the blood of the enemy soldiers, or to make the battlefield as memorable as Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified. But I am growing faint. A physician needs to treat my wounds.”

“Your words and your wounds give you honor,” King Duncan said to the sergeant.

Then he said to an attendant, “Get him medical help.”

The attendant helped the bloody soldier walk away to a physician.

A man came into the camp, and King Duncan asked, “Who comes here?”

Malcolm recognized the man and identified him: “The worthy Thane of Ross.”

A Thane is a Scottish feudal lord.

Lennox, who was also a Thane, said, “Look at his eyes! He must have important news to tell!”

“God save the King!” Ross said.

“From where have you come, worthy Thane?” King Duncan asked him.

“From Fife, great King,” Ross replied. “That is the site of the battle that the King of Norway, assisted by a traitor, the Thane of Cawdor, has been fighting your troops led by Macbeth and Banquo. The Norwegian banners flew there as the King of Norway’s many troops began the battle. Despite the enemy’s many troops, Macbeth — wearing armor well tested in battle — fought as if he were the husband of Bellona, the goddess of war, and countered the enemy’s attacks with attacks of his own and broke both the enemy’s army and his spirit. Your troops have conquered the enemy and won the battle.”

“This is good news indeed!” King Duncan said.

“Sweno, the King of Norway, now wants a peace treaty,” Ross said. “We would not allow him to bury his dead soldiers until he gave us \$10,000 and retreated to Saint Colme’s island.”

“The Thane of Cawdor acted as a traitor to me,” King Duncan said. “That will not happen again: Proclaim that he has been sentenced to death. When you meet Macbeth, greet him and tell him that he is the new Thane of Cawdor.”

“I will do so,” Ross said.

“What the Thane of Cawdor has lost, noble Macbeth has won,” King Duncan said.

— 1.3 —

Thunder sounded as the Three Witches met in an uncultivated field.

“Where have you been, sister?” the First Witch said.

“Killing swine — to waste food for mortals,” the Second Witch replied.

The Third Witch then asked the First Witch, “Where have you been, sister?”

The First Witch replied, “A sailor’s wife had chestnuts in her lap, and she munched, and munched, and munched. ‘Give me your chestnuts,’ I demanded. ‘Get lost, witch!’ the fat-bottomed, scabby sailor’s wife told me. Her husband is the master of the ship *Tiger*, and he is sailing to the Syrian city Aleppo. I will sail to his ship in a kitchen strainer, and like a rat without a tail, I will wreak havoc, and wreak havoc, and wreak havoc.”

“I’ll give thee a wind to cause a storm,” the Second Witch said.

“You are kind,” the First Witch said.

“And I will give you another wind,” the Third Witch said.

The First Witch said to the other Witches, “I myself have all the other winds, and I know all the ports and all the ships’ shelters from all the points of the compass. I will drain away the sailor’s energy. He shall not sleep, and he shall be a man accursed. For nine times nine weeks shall he decline, waste away, and long for land. Though his ship cannot be lost at sea because I lack that power, yet it shall be tempest-tossed. But, here, look what I have.”

“Show me, show me,” the Second Witch said.

“Here I have a pilot’s thumb, whose ship was wrecked as homeward he did come,” the First Witch said.

The Three Witches heard the sound of a drum.

“A drum, a drum! Macbeth does come,” the Third Witch

said.

The Three Witches danced in a circle and chanted, “The Weird Sisters, hand in hand, travelers of the sea and land, thus do go about, about, thrice to thine and thrice to mine, and thrice again, to make up nine. Stop! Our charm is coiled like a trap.”

Macbeth and Banquo rode toward the Three Witches without at first seeing them.

“So foul and fair a day I have not seen,” Macbeth said. “It is fair because we have won important battles, but foul because of the weather.”

Banquo, wondering about the distance that they had left to ride to Forres, the site of King Duncan’s castle, asked, “How far is it to Forres?”

Banquo then caught sight of the Three Witches and said, “Who are these creatures? They are so withered with age and wear clothing so odd that they do not seem to be creatures of the Earth, and yet here they are.

“Are you alive?” Banquo called to the Three Witches. “Are you creatures that men may talk to and ask questions of? You seem to understand me, since each of you has put a chapped finger to your skinny lips. But are you women? You seem to be women, but your beards make me question whether you are.”

“Speak, if you can,” Macbeth ordered. “What are you?”

The First Witch said, “All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!”

The Second Witch said, “All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!”

The Third Witch said, “All hail, Macbeth, you who shall be

King hereafter!”

Many men would consider it good news to become King, but Macbeth did not react as if the words of the Third Witch had made him happy.

“Sir, why do you react in such a way to news that does seem to be extraordinarily good?” Banquo said to Macbeth. “At first, you were startled, and then you seemed to be afraid.”

Banquo said to the Three Witches, “Are you illusions, or are you really what you seem to be? You have greeted Macbeth with honors that you say are real now and with the great honor that you say is coming to him. These honors of royalty and of hope to be King have made Macbeth silent as he contemplates your words. To me you have not spoken. If you are able to see into the future and can say who will prosper and who will not, tell me my future — the future of one who neither wants your love nor fears your hatred.”

The First Witch said, “Hail!”

The Second Witch said, “Hail!”

The Third Witch said, “Hail!”

The First Witch said, “You are lesser than Macbeth, and greater.”

The Second Witch said, “You are not so happy as Macbeth, yet much happier.”

The Third Witch said, “Your descendants will be Kings, although you yourself shall never be King. So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!”

The First Witch said, “Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!”

Macbeth said to the Three Witches, “Stay, and tell me the

rest of the story. I am Thane of Glamis because my father, Sinel, died. But how can I be Thane of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor, a prosperous gentleman, is still alive. And to become King seems to be impossible, just like becoming Thane of Cawdor seems to be impossible. Tell me how you know these things. Tell me from where you learned these things. Tell me why you stopped Banquo and me on this heath and greeted us with prophecies. I demand that you answer my questions.”

The Three Witches vanished.

“The Earth must have bubbles, just as the water has,” Banquo said. “These three beings must be the bubbles of the Earth. Bubbles burst, and they vanish. Did you see where the three beings went?”

“They vanished into the air,” Macbeth said. “What seemed to be solid melted away as breath melts into the wind. I wish that they had stayed!”

“Did we really see and hear what we think we saw and heard?” Banquo asked. “Or have we eaten a poisonous plant that produces insanity?”

“Your children shall be Kings,” Macbeth said.

Banquo said, “You shall be King.”

Wanting to hear seemingly good news again, Macbeth said, “And Thane of Cawdor, too. Isn’t that what they said?”

“That is exactly what they said,” Banquo replied.

Hearing a noise, Banquo said loudly, “Who is that?”

On horseback, Ross and Angus rode up to Macbeth and Banquo.

Ross said, “Macbeth, King Duncan is pleased with the news of your successes. He has heard of your personal

exploits in the battle against the rebels. He is speechless with admiration at your deeds in that battle, and yet he wishes to praise you. And you did more besides. On the same day, you were fearless as you fought the soldiers from Norway. You did not fear death as you created much death for enemy soldiers. King Duncan received message after message bearing news of your bravery in battle as you defended Scotland.”

Angus added, “King Duncan has sent us to you to bring you to him. He will reward you for your service.”

Ross said, “King Duncan told me to inform you of one of the honors you will receive from him. You are now Thane of Cawdor. Hail, most worthy Thane!”

Amazed at hearing some of the words of the Three Witches come true, Banquo said to Macbeth, “What, can Satan speak the truth?”

Macbeth said to Ross, “The old Thane of Cawdor lives. How then can I be the new Thane of Cawdor?”

Angus answered Macbeth’s question: “He who was the Thane of Cawdor still lives, but he has deservedly been sentenced to death. I don’t know whether he allied himself with the King of Norway, or whether he allied himself with the rebels, or whether he allied himself with both, but I do know that he plotted against King Duncan and Scotland. I also know that the evidence of his treasons is overwhelming and that he has confessed his treasons. Thus he is sentenced to die.”

Macbeth thought, *Some of the words of the Three Witches have come true. I was already Thane of Glamis, and as the Three Witches predicted, I am now Thane of Cawdor. They also predicted that I would be King of Scotland. Perhaps that also will come true.*

Macbeth said to Ross and Angus, “Thank you for this news.”

Macbeth then said quietly so that only Banquo could hear him, “Do you not hope your children shall be Kings? The Three Witches who predicted that I would be the Thane of Cawdor also promised that your children shall be Kings.”

Banquo quietly replied, “The Three Witches predicted that you would be King of Scotland as well as Thane of Cawdor. But I am suspicious. The forces of evil often tell us partial truths. They win us over with trifles, only to betray us in serious matters.”

Banquo then said to Ross and Angus, “I need to speak to you.”

As Banquo, Ross, and Angus talked among themselves, Macbeth brooded, thinking, *I now have two of the titles that the Three Witches said I would have. I have the lesser titles, and the greatest title is yet to come.*

Macbeth, realizing that he needed to add something to the conversation, said, “Gentlemen, I thank you.”

Then he resumed brooding: *What the Three Witches told me cannot be ill, and it cannot be good. If what they said is ill, why has it started with a truth and with a valuable reward: the title of Thane of Cawdor? If what they said is good, why am I thinking things that make my hair stand on end and that make my heart beat unnaturally against my ribs? I felt less fear in the two battles I fought today than I do at the thoughts I am now having. I am thinking of a murder. The murder is still only imaginary, but it shakes me and I cannot perform any ordinary actions because my thoughts consume me. All I can think about is a murder.*

Banquo said to Ross and Angus, “Look at Macbeth. He is lost in his thoughts.”

Macbeth continued brooding: *If I am meant to be King of Scotland, then perhaps I will become King of Scotland without having to do anything to make that happen.*

Banquo said to Ross and Angus, “He is thinking about his new honor: He is now Thane of Cawdor. After a while, he will become accustomed to that honor and wear it well, just as we become accustomed to new clothes by wearing them until they adapt to our body.”

Macbeth continued brooding: *Whatever must come to pass will come to pass. I may be eager for what is to come, but if I am patient, it will eventually come.*

Banquo said, “Macbeth, we are ready to leave. Are you ready?”

“Pardon me,” Macbeth said. “I was distracted by things I have already forgotten. Gentlemen, I thank you for what you have done today. I will remember you whenever I think of this day. Let us go to King Duncan.”

Macbeth then said quietly to Banquo, “Think about the Three Witches, and later let us talk about them.”

Banquo quietly replied, “Very gladly.”

“Until later, then,” Macbeth said quietly to Banquo.

Then Macbeth said loudly to all, “Let us go.”

They rode on horseback to the King.

— 1.4 —

In the courtyard of King Duncan’s castle in Forres, the King talked to his sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and to Lennox. Attendants were also present.

King Duncan asked, “Has the old Thane of Cawdor been executed yet? Have his executioners returned yet?”

“My liege, they have not yet returned,” Malcolm replied. “However, I have spoken with a person who saw the execution, and he reported that the old Thane of Cawdor confessed his treasons, implored that your Highness would forgive him, and repented his sins. In life, he did nothing so well as leaving it. He died as if he had studied how to die and how to throw away the dearest thing anyone can own as if it were nothing but an unwanted trifle.”

King Duncan said, “It is impossible to look at a man’s face and know what is in his mind. I absolutely trusted the old Thane of Cawdor.”

Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus rode into the courtyard of the King’s castle.

King Duncan said to Macbeth, “Worthiest kinsman, I was just now thinking that I have not shown you enough gratitude for your service to me. You have done such great service in so little time that the evidence of my gratitude is lagging behind. Only if you had done less service would I be able to give you adequate thanks and payment. You deserve more than all I have.”

“Serving you and being loyal to you are rewards in and of themselves,” Macbeth replied. “As our King, you should receive our service to you. We — your subjects — are your children and your servants. By doing everything we can to safeguard your love and your honor, we are doing only what we ought to do.”

King Duncan said to Macbeth, “I will do much for you. I have begun to plant you, and I will work to make you full of growing.”

He added, “Noble Banquo, like Macbeth you deserve reward for your deeds. I will hold you in my heart. I also will do good things for you.”

Banquo replied, "If you make me grow, I shall give you the harvest."

"I have so many joys that my eyes are watery," King Duncan said. "Sons, kinsmen, Thanes, and all of you who are closest to me, know that I am establishing the succession of the kingdom upon my oldest son, Malcolm, whom I name Prince of Cumberland. This is an honor for him, and more honors will be given to all who deserve them. Now let us go to Macbeth's castle in Inverness."

King Duncan said to Macbeth, "I will become bound to you even further because I will enjoy your hospitality."

Macbeth replied, "When I am not working to serve you, leisure is labor. I will tell my wife the news of your coming to our castle and so make her happy. Therefore, I humbly take my leave."

King Duncan replied, "Farewell, my worthy Thane of Cawdor."

As he left, Macbeth thought, Malcolm is now Prince of Cumberland! He is now the heir to the throne! I must give up my ambition or else leap over Malcolm because he stands between me and my desire to become King. Stars, hide your fires; I do not want light to see my black and deep desires. May my eye not see what my hand will do; still, let the deed occur that the eye will fear to see when the deed is done.

After Macbeth left, King Duncan and Banquo talked to each other and praised Macbeth. Now King Duncan said, "You are correct, Banquo. Macbeth is very valiant, and I enjoy hearing him praised. Your praises of him are like a banquet to me. Let us leave and ride to his castle, where he has gone to prepare our welcome. He is a peerless kinsman."

In a room in Macbeth's castle in Inverness, Lady Macbeth was reading a letter that Macbeth had sent to her.

She read out loud, *“The Three Witches met me after my successes in battle, and I have learned that they have more than merely mortal knowledge. I wanted to question them further, but they turned themselves into air and vanished. As I stood astonished, the King’s messengers arrived and said that I am the new Thane of Cawdor — which is one of the titles the Weird Sisters had hailed me by. They also referred to a title to come when they said to me, ‘All hail, Macbeth, you who shall be King hereafter!’ I wrote this letter to you, dear, so that you may be gladdened by the prediction, and not lose happiness through ignorance of your own future title: Queen. Keep this prediction secret. Farewell.”*

Having finished reading the letter, Lady Macbeth thought, *You are the Thane of Glamis, and you are the Thane of Cawdor, and you will be the King of Scotland. Yet I am afraid that you do not have in you to do what it will take to make you King. Your nature is too full of the milk of human kindness to do what will most quickly make you King. You, Macbeth, would like to be a great and powerful man. You have ambition, but you lack the evil nature that so often accompanies and assists ambition. What you most want, you would like to have through honest means. You do not want to do evil, and yet you want something that belongs to someone else. Macbeth, what you need to have is a nature that tells you, “This is what you need to do to achieve your ambition.” You also need a nature that allows you to do an evil act that you fear to do rather than a nature that wishes an evil act to remain undone. Come quickly to me, so that I can talk to you and persuade you to ignore the part of your nature that can keep you from wearing the crown of the*

King of Scotland. Both fate and supernatural beings seem to know that you will be King.

A messenger entered the room Lady Macbeth was in.

Lady Macbeth asked, "What news do you bring me?"

The messenger replied, "The King comes here tonight."

Lady Macbeth said, "You must be insane! Isn't Macbeth with the King? If what you said is true, Macbeth would have sent me word to prepare the castle for the King's arrival."

The messenger replied, "So please you, it is true. Macbeth is coming here. Another messenger traveled faster than Macbeth to bring you news. That messenger was so out of breath that he scarcely had enough to speak his news."

"Take care of him," Lady Macbeth said. "He has brought us important news."

The messenger left.

Lady Macbeth thought, *The messenger is like a hoarse raven as he announces the fatal entrance of King Duncan into my castle.*

She then prayed silently to unHeavenly spirits: *Come, you spirits that tend on deadly thoughts. Unsex me, and make me not a woman. Fill me from top to bottom with the worst kind of cruelty. Make my blood thick, and stop my monthly periods. Make me incapable of feeling remorse. Make me a man so that nothing feminine can stop me from accomplishing the evil I plan to do. Come to my woman's breasts, and replace my milk with gall, you murdering spirits. Come to me from wherever you, invisible, assist in the doing of evil. Come, thick night, and enshroud yourself in the darkest smoke of Hell, so that no one can see the wound my keen knife makes and so that Heaven cannot see*

through the darkness and shout, “Stop! Stop!”

Macbeth entered the room.

Lady Macbeth said to him, “Great Glamis! Worthy Cawdor! You will have a title greater than both of these. I have read your letter, and it has taken me beyond this present time, which normally does not know the future. Now I know the future.”

Macbeth said, “My dearest love, King Duncan comes here tonight.”

“And when does he leave?” Lady Macbeth asked.

“He intends to leave tomorrow,” Macbeth replied.

“Never shall Sun rise on the day that King Duncan leaves here alive,” Lady Macbeth said. “Your face, Macbeth, is at present like a book on which people can read your thoughts, including your evil thoughts. To fool the people around you, look like the people around you. Your eye should welcome the King. Your hands and your tongue should welcome the King. You should look like an innocent flower, but in reality you must be the serpent under it. We must take care of the King, and I want you to let me plan how to take care of the King. What we do this night will give us during all the nights and days to come absolute power.”

Macbeth said, “We will speak further about this.”

Lady Macbeth said, “In public, look innocent. If you look anything but innocent, we have much to fear. Leave all the rest to me.”

— 1.6 —

King Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Lennox, Macduff, Ross, Angus, and some attendants entered the

courtyard of Macbeth's castle.

Looking around, King Duncan said, "This castle has a pleasant site; the air immediately and sweetly soothes my senses."

Banquo said, "The guests of summer — the birds known as the martlets that are often seen around temples — provide evidence for what you say because their hanging nests are everywhere here. Every jetty, every frieze, and every corner has its nest. Where the martlets build nests and live, there I have observed that the air is delicate."

Lady Macbeth came outside to the courtyard to greet the group.

"See, see, our honorable hostess," King Duncan said. "Sometimes, people who love me inconvenience me with their attention, but I accept it because of the love they have for me. I hope that you will give me the same courtesy. By coming to your castle, I am inconveniencing you, but I have come here because of the love I have for you and your husband. I often ask God to give rewards to the people who inconvenience me, and I thank them for their attentions to me. Perhaps by my visit I can teach you to do the same for me."

Lady Macbeth replied, "All the service we provide for you is poor and trivial even if it were done twice and then done twice more. All the service we provide for you does not come even close to matching the honor you do us by coming to our castle. Because of the honors you have given to us in the past, and because of the new honors you have recently given to us, we are your hermits and pray to God to bless you, our benefactor."

"Where is the Thane of Cawdor?" King Duncan asked. "We rode close behind him — almost at his heels — and we even thought of arriving here before him to make

preparations for his arrival, but he rode his horse well, and his great love for his King and for his country — a love as sharp as the spurs he wears — helped him to reach his castle before we did. Fair and noble hostess, I am your guest tonight.”

“We are your servants,” Lady Macbeth replied, “and all we have, including our lives, we have in trust from you. We are always ready to give an accounting of all we have, and we are always ready to give back to you what is yours.”

“Give me your hand,” King Duncan said, “Take me to my host. I love him highly, and I shall continue to show favor to him. Are you ready, hostess?”

Lady Macbeth led King Duncan and the other guests inside the castle.

— 1.7 —

Inside Macbeth’s castle, servants prepared a feast for King Duncan.

Macbeth, alone, thought to himself, *If it were over and done once it were done, then it would be good to do it quickly. If only I could assassinate King Duncan, and then like a net catch all the consequences that follow except for my becoming King of Scotland ... if this one blow — the assassination — by itself could make me King of Scotland with no bad consequences following in this life ... if that were the case, then in order to be King of Scotland now I would risk damnation in the life hereafter. But would no consequences follow? In this life and in this world, we have laws and courts and executions. Also, by committing bloody acts, we teach other people to commit bloody acts, and we can end up being the victim and not the victimizer in the next bloody act. Or we can end up being harmed in other ways. If we poison wine to offer to other people, sometimes that poisoned wine is justly offered to ourselves.*

What reasons do I have to murder King Duncan? What reasons do I have to not murder him? King Duncan is my kinsman, and I am his subject. These are reasons not to kill King Duncan. In addition, I am his host. As his host, I ought to protect him against murderers, not carry a knife with which to murder him. Also, as King of Scotland, Duncan has been a good King. He has great power, but he has used his power fairly and justly. He has been free of vice. His virtues plead against his murder. Should he be murdered, pity would spread quickly to his subjects as if the news of the murder were carried by a newborn babe riding the wind, or like winged angels riding on the winds of the Earth — the tears of King Duncan's sorrowing subjects will fall like rain and drown the wind. I have no good reason to murder King Duncan. I have only my ambition to be King of Scotland. This ambition can vault over good reasons not to do something. This vaulting ambition is like a rider who tries to leap into a saddle but overleaps and falls to the ground on the other side of the horse.

Seeing his wife enter the room, Macbeth asked, "What is the news?"

Lady Macbeth replied, "King Duncan has almost finished eating. Why did you leave the dining chamber?"

Macbeth asked, "Has King Duncan asked for me?"

"Of course he has," Lady Macbeth replied.

"We will proceed no further in this business we have been planning," Macbeth said. "King Duncan has greatly honored me recently. I have earned golden opinions from all sorts of people. Because they are new, I should enjoy these golden opinions for a while, not throw them away as if they were old clothes."

Lady Macbeth replied, "You were hopeful of quickly

becoming King. Was your hope drunk? Did your hope sleep off its drunkenness? Has your hope woken up with a hangover? Does it now look sickly and pale at what it wanted to acquire? From this time on, I know how to value your love. You know what you want. Are you afraid to act to get it? Will you act to get the crown you desire, or will you live like a coward and know that you are a coward? Will you allow 'I will get what I want' to always be followed by 'I dare not act to get what I want'? Will you be like the cat in this old proverb: 'The cat wants to eat fish, but it will not wet its feet'?"

"Please shut up," Macbeth said. "I dare do all that a man may do. Who dares do more than I do is not a man."

"When you brought up the idea of murdering King Duncan to me, were you then a beast?" Lady Macbeth asked. "No. When you dared to murder King Duncan, then you were a man. And if you actually commit the murder, then you will be even more of a man. Before, the proper time and place of the murder was not known, and you dared to think of murder. Now, the time and place — this night, here in our castle — are known. Before, you thought to make a proper time and place for murder, but now that you have them, you are afraid to commit murder. I have breastfed an infant, and I know how it is to love the babe who feeds at my breast, but I would, while the babe was smiling in my sight, have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums, and dashed his brains out, had I sworn as you have sworn to commit murder."

Macbeth asked, "What happens if we are caught?"

Lady Macbeth replied, "Why should we be caught? Call up your courage, and we will not be caught. When King Duncan is asleep — and after this day's hard journey he will soon be asleep — I will get his two bodyguards drunk with wine. They will remember nothing, and their brains

will be confused with alcohol and the drugs I will put in their wine. When they are asleep like drunken pigs, what cannot you and I do to the unguarded King Duncan? What can we do that we cannot put the blame upon his drunken bodyguards? They shall bear the blame of our great murder.”

Macbeth said, “Give birth to sons only, not to daughters, for your undaunted spirit should bring forth only sons. After we kill King Duncan, we can smear his blood on his bodyguards and on their daggers. Will that be enough to make other people think that King Duncan’s bodyguards have murdered him?”

Lady Macbeth replied, “What else will anyone be able to think? After all, you and I shall loudly grieve for the murdered King.”

Macbeth said, “I have made up my mind. I shall force every part of my body to do the terrible deed I have decided to do. Let us rejoin the feast and fool the others with our acting skills. False faces must hide what the false heart does know.”

CHAPTER 2 (*Macbeth*)

— 2.1 —

In the darkness of night, Banquo and Fleance, his son, entered the courtyard of Macbeth's castle. To provide light, Fleance carried a burning torch.

Banquo asked, "Fleance, what time of night is it?"

Fleance replied, "The Moon has set. I have not heard the clock."

"I believe that the Moon sets at twelve."

"I am sure that it is later than that."

Banquo said, "Hold my sword for me."

He thought, *We are in Macbeth's castle, and we ought to fear nothing while we are here. I should have no need to carry a sword.*

He said out loud, "The Heavens tonight are practicing frugality. The candles that are the stars are not burning. I do not wish to carry anything tonight. I am so tired that I ought to go to bed, and yet, I do not want to sleep. I pray that God and the saints will keep from me the nightmares that come while men sleep."

Macbeth and a servant made a slight noise as they entered the courtyard.

Startled by the noise, Banquo ordered Fleance, "Give me my sword!" Then he called out, "Who's there?"

Macbeth replied, "A friend."

Banquo said, "I am surprised that you are not yet in bed. The King is at his rest. He is very pleased with your

hospitality and with your recent heroism, and he has given to you and your lady many gifts. Here is a diamond that he gave to me to give to you as a present for Lady Macbeth in gratitude for the hospitality he has received here. He called her 'a most kind hostess,' and when he went to bed he was most content with your reception of him here."

Macbeth replied, "We were unprepared for King Duncan's visit to our castle, and so although we greatly desired to entertain him well, we were unable to do all that we had wished."

"All is well," Banquo said, and then he changed the subject. "I dreamed last night of the three Weird Sisters. Some of what they said about you has proved to be true. You are now the Thane of Cawdor."

"I have not been thinking about them," Macbeth lied, then he added, "And yet, if sometime you and I can spare an hour, we could meet and talk about the Weird Sisters, if you are willing."

"I will be happy to do so whenever you like," Banquo said.

"Sometime in the future, I will desire your support," Macbeth said. "If you give me that support, you will benefit by so doing."

"I will be happy to support your cause, as long as I do not lose honor by so doing," Banquo said. Thinking of the Weird Sisters' prophecy that Macbeth would in the future be King of Scotland, Banquo added, "I would hate to lose the honor I already have by attempting to gain more honor. I will be happy to support your cause as long as I can keep my conscience clean and my loyalty to King Duncan unspotted."

"Sleep well," Macbeth said.

“Thank you, sir,” Banquo said. “You do the same.”

Banquo and Fleance left the courtyard, leaving Macbeth and the servant behind.

Macbeth ordered the servant, “Go to Lady Macbeth. Tell her that when she has finished mixing my drink to ring a bell. Then go to bed.”

The servant left, leaving Macbeth alone.

Macbeth then saw something that nobody else, if anyone had been present, would have seen.

Macbeth thought, *Is this a dagger that I see before me, the handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch it.*

He made a motion to grab the dagger, but his hand closed on nothing.

I do not have it in my hand, and yet I see it clearly. Is this fatal vision unable to be touched as well as to be seen? Is this dagger simply a creation of my mind? Is it a hallucination produced by my fevered brain? I see the dagger, and it appears to be as solid as the dagger that now I draw.

Macbeth drew a dagger from his belt.

The dagger I cannot touch leads me in the direction that I must go to kill the King. The dagger I cannot touch is like the dagger that I will use to kill the King. My eyes are not working correctly although my other senses do work, or perhaps my eyes work even better than my other senses. I see the dagger clearly. On it I now see splashes of blood that were not on it previously.

No bloody knife is here. My thinking of murdering King Duncan has caused me to hallucinate this knife. Half of the world is now asleep and lying as if they were dead, and

nightmares prey upon them in their beds that are curtained in an attempt to keep out the cold. Now is the time that witches give offerings to their goddess: Hecate with her dark and unsavory ways. Now is the time that the old man who is Murder, called to action by his guard the wolf, walks like the ancient Roman King Tarquin walked to rape Lucretia and cause her to commit suicide. Old man Murder walks like a ghost. Earth upon which I walk, I pray to you that you do not hear my steps. The stones I walk on ought not to reveal my presence with noise. The deed that I will do requires silence. I am thinking now, and as long as I keep thinking, King Duncan remains alive. The more I think, the more afraid I am.

A bell rang.

I go now to do the deed. The bell is my signal. Hear not the bell, King Duncan, for it is a knell that summons you to Heaven or to Hell.

Macbeth walked toward the King's bedchamber.

— 2.2 —

Lady Macbeth nervously paced and thought, I gave the King's bodyguards wine to make them drunk; the same wine has made me bold. The wine that has put them to sleep has excited me and made me wide awake.

A cry sounded in the night.

What was that! It was an owl, hooting while flying over a house in which a man will die. This owl is like a bellman whose job is to ring a bell to announce that a person is dying.

Macbeth is now committing the murder. I have unlocked the doors to the King's bedchamber, and the King's bodyguards are snoring, not protecting the King. Their

performance of their job is laughable. I drugged their drinks so much that the bodyguards are poisoned — even if Macbeth does nothing to them, they have as much chance of dying as they do of living.

She heard Macbeth's voice calling from inside the castle, "Who's there? What's wrong?"

Lady Macbeth thought, *I am afraid that the bodyguards have woken up and stopped the murder. My husband and I will be ruined by what we have attempted and not by what we have done. Let me listen carefully. We may yet succeed. I put the daggers where my husband could not miss them. Had King Duncan not resembled my father as he slept, I would have killed him myself.*

Macbeth walked toward Lady Macbeth, who exclaimed, "My husband!"

Macbeth said, "I have done the deed. Did you hear a noise?"

Lady Macbeth replied, "I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry. Did not you speak?"

"When?"

"Just now."

"As I descended from the King's bedchamber?"

"Yes."

Macbeth, hearing an imaginary noise, said, "Listen!" Then he asked, "Who is sleeping in the bedchamber next to the King's?"

"Donalbain, King Duncan's younger son."

Macbeth looked down at his bloody hands and said, "This is a sorry sight."

Lady Macbeth replied, “A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.”

“As I descended from the King’s bedchamber, I heard two people. One laughed in his sleep, and the other cried, ‘Murder!’ The two woke each other. I stood quietly and listened. They said their prayers and then went back to sleep.”

“Two people are sleeping in that bedchamber: Donalbain and his attendant.”

“One cried, ‘God bless us!’ and the other cried, ‘Amen.’ It was as if they had seen me with these hands that look as if they belong to a hangman, bloody from chopping up the bodies of criminals after a public hanging. I listened to the two men’s fears, and I could not say ‘Amen’ when they cried, ‘God bless us!’”

“Don’t think about it.”

Macbeth asked, “But why couldn’t I say ‘Amen’? I had most need of blessing, and the word ‘Amen’ stuck in my throat.”

Lady Macbeth replied, “We must not think about our evil deeds in such a fashion. Thinking about them in that way will make us mad.”

“I heard a voice cry, ‘Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep’ — the innocent sleep, sleep that relieves the cares of life, sleep that ends the hard work of the day, sleep that bathes away the soreness of hard work, sleep that heals hurt minds, sleep that most substantially nourishes the body and the mind —”

“What do you mean? I can’t understand what you are saying!”

Macbeth said, “The voice cried, ‘Sleep no more!’ to

everyone in the castle. It cried, ‘Glamis has murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more.’”

Lady Macbeth asked, “Who was it that thus cried? Husband, you weaken yourself when you think in such a cowardly way. Go. Get some water so that you can wash away the blood from your hands.”

She looked at his hands and was startled by what she saw: “Why did you bring these daggers from the murder scene? They must lie there. They are evidence that will convict the King’s bodyguards of murder and treason. Carry them back and smear the sleepy bodyguards with blood.”

Macbeth replied, “I will not go back. I am afraid to think what I have done. Look on it again I dare not.”

Lady Macbeth exclaimed, “Coward! Give me the daggers! Sleeping people and dead people are as harmless as pictures. Only a child is afraid of a picture of a devil. If King Duncan still bleeds, I will paint the faces of the bodyguards with blood. The gilding I do to their faces will result in everyone assuming that they are guilty.”

She left.

A knocking sounded at the castle gate.

Macbeth thought, *Who is knocking? What is wrong with me? Every noise I hear scares me.*

He looked at his hands and said to himself, “What kind of hands are these? They seem to pluck out my eyes. Will all the water in Neptune’s ocean wash away this blood from my hands? No! Instead, the blood from my hands will turn the ocean red.”

Lady Macbeth overheard Macbeth’s final words as she returned. She said, “My hands are now the same color —

red — as your hands, but I would be ashamed if my heart were as white — as cowardly — as your heart.”

A knocking sounded again at the castle gate.

She said, “I hear a knocking at the south entry. Let us go to our bedchamber. We can wash the blood from our hands and so remove the evidence that would convict us: A little water clears us of this deed, making it easy to escape punishment. You would know this, if you could keep your firmness of purpose.”

More knocking sounded at the castle gate.

Lady Macbeth said, “Listen! More knocking! Let’s go to our bedchamber so you can put on your dressing gown and robe. We can’t be seen in these, our day clothes. People will know that we have been up and about, not sleeping. Pay attention! You are lost in your thoughts!”

Macbeth replied, “To know my deed, it were best not know myself — I had rather not know myself than to realize the full enormity of what I have done.”

More knocking sounded at the castle gate.

He added, “Wake Duncan with your knocking! I wish you could!”

The Macbeths went to their bedchamber.

— 2.3 —

More knocking sounded as a half-asleep, half-drunken gatekeeper came to open the gate.

The gatekeeper complained aloud to himself, “Here’s a knocking indeed! If a man were the keeper of Hell-gate, he would be kept busy turning the key.”

More knocking.

“I am kept so busy that I might as well be Hell’s gatekeeper, and this castle might as well be Hell. So be it. Who’s there, in the name of Beelzebub, Prince of demons? Ah, here is the first knocker: A farmer who hoarded crops in the expectation of making a killing with high prices when a famine arrived. The famine never came; instead, crops were plentiful, and the farmer hanged himself because of low prices for his crops. I hope that he brought plenty of handkerchiefs with him because here in Hell he will sweat.”

More knocking sounded.

“Who’s there, in another devil’s name that I cannot remember? It is probably a liar who told one lie that resulted in treason and when caught he told another lie: He said that the first lie did not count because he had lied for the sake of God. This liar was talented, but he was not talented enough to lie his way into Heaven, and so he knocks at Hell’s gate, where he is welcomed in — and tortured.”

More knocking sounded.

“Knock, knock, knock! Who’s there? By my faith, here’s an English tailor. For years, he stole cloth from his customers by making the garments close fitting. But he tried that trick with French stockings, which are already close fitting, and so his thievery was discovered. I hope that the tailor brought a goose with him because surely his goose will be cooked here.”

More knocking sounded.

“Knock, knock, knock! Never any silence. But I will cease to be the gatekeeper of Hell — this place is too cold for Hell! But if I had been the gatekeeper of Hell just now, I would have let in a few more workers of different jobs who travel a broad and seemingly pleasant path to everlasting

fire and torment.”

More knocking sounded.

“I’m coming! I’m coming!”

The gatekeeper opened the gate and said, “Don’t forget to tip.”

Macduff and Lennox, two Scottish noblemen, entered the courtyard.

Macduff said to the gatekeeper, “Was it so late, friend, before you went to bed, that you lay asleep so long?”

The gatekeeper replied, “Truly, sir, we were drinking and partying until about 3 a.m., and drinking, sir, is a great provoker of three things.”

“What three things does drink especially provoke?”

“Nose-painting, sleep, and urine. Much use of alcohol paints one’s nose red, it makes one sleep, and it makes one pee. Alcohol both provokes and unprovokes lechery. It makes a man feel horny, and it makes a man unable to produce a horn. When it comes to horniness, alcohol is a liar. Alcohol makes a man horny, but it makes him unable to do anything about it. Alcohol persuades a man to find a partner, but it makes him unable to do anything with that partner. Alcohol makes a man attempt to get an erection, but it makes the man unable to keep that erection if he gets one. In short, alcohol lies to a man, making him horny but unable to do anything but sleep. Furthermore, once the man is asleep, the alcohol leaves him — the man pees himself.”

Macduff said, “I believe that alcohol did these things to you last night.”

“Alcohol did indeed, sir. It got me right in the throat. But I fought him. It made my legs weak and staggery, but I was

too strong and cast it out of my body with my vomit.”

Macduff asked, “Is your master awake?”

Macbeth entered the courtyard.

Seeing him, Macduff said, “Our knocking has awakened him; here he comes.”

Lennox greeted Macbeth, “Good morning, noble sir.”

“Good morning to both of you,” Macbeth replied.

“Is the King stirring, worthy Thane?” asked Macduff.

“Not yet.”

“He did command me to call early on him. I am almost too late.”

“I’ll bring you to him,” Macbeth said.

“I know that entertaining the King is a trouble to you, but one that you are happy to undertake.”

“Work that we delight in is not work,” Macbeth replied. He added, “This is the door.”

“I’ll be so bold to wake him, as that is my appointed duty.”

Macduff walked through the door that led to the King’s bedchamber.

Lennox asked, “Is the King leaving here today?”

“Yes,” Macbeth said. “He did decide so.”

“The night has been wild,” Lennox said. “Last night, the chimneys were blown down in the place we slept. People are saying that they heard cries of mourning in the air, strange screams of death, and terrible voices making prophecies of dire tumult and chaotic events to come and make the world woeful. The bird of darkness, the owl,

screamed all night. Some say that the Earth was fevered and did shake.”

Macbeth replied, “It was a rough night.”

For Macbeth, especially, it was.

“I am too young to remember a night as bad as this.”

Macduff ran into the courtyard and shouted, “Raise the alarm! Something has happened that is beyond words and beyond belief!”

Macbeth and Lennox asked together, “What’s the matter?”

Macduff shouted, “Evil has created a masterpiece! The King’s body was a temple, but the temple has been broken into and the life inside stolen!”

“What are you saying?” Macbeth asked. “The life?”

“Are you saying that King Duncan is dead?” Lennox asked.

“Go into the King’s bedchamber, and you will see a sight that is like a Gorgon that will make you blind and turn you into stone,” Macduff answered. “This sight will destroy anyone who sees it. I can’t speak of it. Go and see it, and speak for me.”

Macbeth and Lennox went through the door that led to the King’s bedchamber.

Macduff shouted, “Awake, awake, everyone! Ring the alarm bell. Murder and treason! Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! Wake up! Shake off your sleep, which resembles death, and see real death itself! Get up! See an image of the Last Judgment! Malcolm! Banquo! Rise from your beds as if you were rising from your graves, and walk like ghosts to come and see this horror! Ring the bell!”

The alarm bell rang.

Lady Macbeth entered the courtyard and said, “What’s the matter? Why has the alarm sounded to wake up everyone in the castle? It sounds like a trumpet in time of war! Tell me!”

“Gentle lady,” Macduff said, “it is not for you to hear what I can speak. Such words entering a woman’s ear would kill the hearer.”

Banquo arrived, and Macduff said to him, “Banquo, Banquo, our royal master is murdered!”

Lady Macbeth exclaimed, “What, in our castle!”

Banquo pointed out, “Too cruel anywhere,” and then he said, “Dear Macduff, I pray that you contradict yourself, and say that what you said is not so.”

Macbeth, Lennox, and Ross entered the courtyard.

Macbeth said, “Had I but died an hour before this murder, I would have lived a blessed life.”

Macbeth’s words were true.

He added, “From this moment, there is nothing worthwhile in mortal life. Everything is a sick joke; renown and grace are dead. The wine of life has been drunk, and all that is left are the dregs.”

For Macbeth, his words were true.

Malcolm and Donalbain, King Duncan’s two sons, entered the courtyard.

“What’s wrong?” Donalbain asked.

“You have suffered a tragedy and do not yet know it,” Macbeth answered. “The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood has been stopped.”

“Your royal father has been murdered,” Macduff said in plain language.

“By whom?” asked Malcolm, the oldest son.

“It seems that his bodyguards committed the murder,” Lennox replied. “Their hands and faces were bloodied; so were their unwiped daggers, which we found lying on their pillows. The bodyguards were disoriented and not in possession of their senses. No man’s life should be trusted with them.”

“I am sorry that I killed them in my fury,” Macbeth said.

“Why did you kill them?” Macduff asked.

“Who can be wise and amazed, temperate and furious, loyal and neutral, all in the same moment? No one. My love for King Duncan was stronger than my reason. I saw King Duncan dead. His silver skin was laced with his golden blood. The gashes that the knives made in his body were intrusions of evil. Near the King were his murderers, red with the color of their trade, their daggers bloody with gore. In that moment, what man who loves the King could refrain from killing the King’s murderers?”

Realizing that Macduff suspected her husband, Lady Macbeth created a distraction. She shouted, “Help me hence!”

Macduff ordered, “Look after the lady.”

Lady Macbeth pretended to faint.

Malcolm and Donalbain, who were at a distance from the others, conferred together. No one overheard them.

Malcolm asked Donalbain, “Why are we quiet? It is our father who has been murdered.”

Donalbain replied, “Why should we speak — or even be

present? Our father the King is dead; those who wanted him dead will want us dead as well. I don't believe that our father's murderer or murderers have been killed. Let us flee — our lives are in danger. We can mourn our father's death later — from a safe distance. If we stay here, we can be killed at any time.”

Malcolm said, “It is not yet the time to mourn — or to take action.”

Banquo said, “Look after the lady.”

Attendants came and carried Lady Macbeth away from the courtyard.

Banquo said, “Let us get out of our night clothing and put on warm clothing for the day, then let us meet and discuss this murder. Right now, we are shaken by our fears and suspicions. I will put my trust in God, and I will seek to find the reasons for this murder. I will fight whatever lies led to the secret plot that resulted in this murder.”

“So will I,” Macduff said.

“So will we all,” the others said.

“Let us quickly get dressed and arm ourselves and meet in the hall,” Macbeth said.

All left the courtyard except Malcolm and Donalbain.

Malcolm asked Donalbain, “What will you do? Let us not meet with them. I think the murderer is still alive and in the castle. I also think that anyone who is capable of committing a murder is also capable of pretending to be shocked and surprised at that murder. I will flee to England.”

Donalbain replied, “I will flee to Ireland. If we flee in different directions, both of us will be safer than if we flee

together. If we stay here, a man who smiles at us may also hide a dagger that he hopes to use to kill us. Anyone who wants to be King knows that he must kill us. Men who are the closest to us in being blood relatives are also the likeliest to make us bloody.”

Malcolm said, “This treasonous plot has not yet run its course. It is as if an arrow is aimed at us. The best way for us not to be hit by the arrow is to get beyond the distance that it can travel. Therefore, let us get horses, and let us not be squeamish about leaving immediately. Let us steal ourselves away. There is no criminality in such a theft when we will meet with no mercy if we stay here.”

They left the courtyard.

— 2.4 —

Outside Macbeth’s castle, Ross and an old man talked.

The old man said, “I can remember well seventy years. During those years I have seen dreadful hours and strange things, but what I have seen this dark night makes those hours and things seem like trifles.”

“Old man,” Ross said, “the Heavens seem to be troubled by the actions of Humankind and so threaten the world in which men live. Look at a clock, and you will know that it should be daylight now, yet night strangles the Sun. Is the night too strong, or is the day too ashamed, that the result is that darkness makes the Earth dark like a tomb at a time when sunshine should enlighten it?”

“This darkness is unnatural,” the old man said, “like the regicide that just occurred. Last Tuesday, an owl that normally kills mice instead attacked and killed a falcon — a bird of prey.”

Ross replied, “King Duncan’s horses did something that is

strange. Beauteous and swift, the best of their race, these horses turned wild in nature, broke out of their stalls, and ran away. They refused to be obedient to their human masters, but instead seemed to war against them.”

The old man said, “It is said that the horses cannibalized each other.”

“They did,” Ross said. “I myself witnessed them eating each other’s flesh. Here comes a good man: Macduff.”

Ross said to Macduff, “How goes the world, sir, now?”

“Don’t you know?” Macduff replied.

“Is it known who did this bloody, terrible regicide?”

“The bodyguards whom Macbeth has slain.”

“Such evil is difficult to believe,” Ross said. “In what way would the bodyguards benefit by King Duncan’s murder?”

“They were paid to commit the murder. Malcolm and Donalbain, the King’s two sons, have fled, and so they are being blamed for bribing the bodyguards to kill their father the King.”

“Patricide and regicide! Patricide is even more against nature than regicide! Ambition can be so strong that it causes the destruction of everything in its path, including one’s own father. Most likely, I suppose, Macbeth will become King. He is a close kinsman of the late King.”

“He has already been chosen King, and he has gone to Scone, where he will be crowned.”

“Where is the body of King Duncan?”

“It has been carried to Colmekill, where is the tomb that protects the bones of his ancestors.”

“Will you go to Scone?” Ross asked.

“No, I will return to Fife, my home,” Macduff replied.

Ross thought, *Macbeth could take your absence as an insult to him*. He said aloud, “I will go to Scone to see Macbeth crowned.”

“I hope that all goes well there. Let me say farewell to you now. The old King was generous and merciful, and things may not go nearly as well under the new King.”

Ross said, “Farewell, old man.”

The old man replied, “Farewell, and may God’s blessing go with you, and with all who try to turn bad things into good things and evil people into good people.”

CHAPTER 3 (*Macbeth*)

— 3.1 —

Banquo stood alone at King Duncan's castle, now occupied by the Macbeths, in Forres.

Banquo thought, *Macbeth, you have it all now. You are King of Scotland and now use the royal plural. You are also Thane of Cawdor and Thane of Glamis. You have everything that the Weird Sisters promised to you, and I fear that you have acted most foully to get everything that they promised to you. However, the Weird Sisters did not say that your descendants would be Kings. Instead, they said that I would be the root and ancestor of many Kings. Since the Weird Sisters have spoken the truth to you, Macbeth, why may not they have spoken the truth to me? But I had better be quiet and not talk about this.*

A trumpet call sounded to announce the King, and King Macbeth, Queen Macbeth, Lennox, Ross, and various lords and attendants entered the room in which Banquo stood.

Macbeth said, "Here is our chief guest for tonight's banquet."

"If Banquo were not at our feast," Lady Macbeth said, "then it would be incomplete and unfitting."

"Tonight we will hold a ceremonious feast, and I request that you attend," Macbeth said to Banquo.

"It is my duty to do whatever you command," Banquo replied.

"Will you ride on horseback this afternoon?" Macbeth asked Banquo.

"Yes, my good lord."

“We would otherwise have sought your advice, which has always been serious and profitable, in today’s council; however, we will hear your advice tomorrow. Will you be riding far?”

“I will ride long enough to fill the time between now and the feast. Unless my horse is faster than I expect, it will be dark for an hour or two before I return.”

Macbeth ordered, “Fail not to attend our feast.”

“My lord, I will not,” Banquo promised.

“We hear that our blood-covered cousins — Malcolm and Donalbain — are in England and in Ireland. They deny that they cruelly murdered their father, King Duncan. Instead, they are telling their hosts strange lies. But we will talk of this tomorrow, as well as of other matters that concern us both. Go and mount your horse. Farewell, until you return. Is Fleance, your son, riding with you?”

“Yes, my good lord,” Banquo replied. “And we ought to be going now.”

“I hope that your horses are swift and sure of foot, and now I entrust you to their backs. Farewell.”

Banquo departed, and Macbeth said to the others present, “Let everyone entertain himself until seven this evening, the time of the feast. To make company more enjoyable, we will stay by ourselves until the time of the banquet. Until then, God be with you.”

All departed except for Macbeth and an attendant.

Macbeth said to the attendant, “Are the men I am expecting waiting for me?”

The attendant replied, “Yes, they are, my lord. They are outside the castle gate.”

“Bring them to me.”

The attendant departed, and Macbeth thought, *To be King is nothing unless I can be King without worrying about being deposed. I am deeply afraid of Banquo. His royal nature must be feared because of his many good qualities. He is courageous, and he is wise enough to tip the odds in his favor and then take action. I am afraid of no one but him. Even my guardian spirit is afraid of him, just as Mark Antony’s guardian spirit was afraid of Octavian Caesar, who eventually defeated him in Rome’s civil wars. Banquo rebuked the Weird Sisters when they said that I would be King, and he asked them to tell his future. They said that he would beget many Kings. To me they gave a fruitless crown and a barren scepter — according to the Weird Sisters, no son of mine will become King after me. I have defiled my mind. Why? For Banquo’s descendants! I have murdered the gracious King Duncan. Why? For Banquo’s descendants! I have put poisonous drugs into the cup — my conscience — from which I formerly drank only peace. Why? For Banquo’s descendants! I have given my immortal soul to Satan. Why? For Banquo’s descendants! I have done all these things so that Banquo’s descendants may become Kings. I don’t want that to happen, so I will challenge fate itself and fight it to the death.*

Hearing a noise, Macbeth asked, “Who’s there?”

The attendant came again into the room, bringing with him two murderers.

“Leave us alone until I call for you,” Macbeth said to the attendant.

He said to the two murderers, “Was it not yesterday we spoke together?”

The First Murderer replied, “It was, so please your Highness.”

“Have you thought about what I said to you then?” Macbeth asked. “I explained to you two that Banquo was your enemy and had plotted against you. Previously, you two had thought that it was I who was your enemy. I showed to both of you clear proof of these things the last time we met. I proved who deceived you, who thwarted you, who plotted against you, and other things that would convince even a half-wit and an insane person to believe ‘Banquo is my enemy.’”

The First Murderer replied, “You made these things known to us.”

“I did all that, and more,” Macbeth said. “And now let us get to the point of this, our second meeting. Is your nature such that you can let this man’s bad treatment of you two pass without your getting revenge? Are you made so meek by the Christian gospel that you will pray for this good man and for his children — this man whose heavy hand has brought you close to your grave and made beggars of your families?”

“We are men, my liege,” the First Murderer said, “and as we are men, we will seek revenge.”

“Yes, you are part of the many who are called men. Similarly, hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs, shaggy dogs, longhaired water dogs, and dog-wolf mixes are all called dogs. However, dogs are classified by their traits. Some dogs are swift, some are slow, some guard the household, some are used in hunting, and so on. Each kind of dog has its gift that nature has given it, and so it can be distinguished from the other kinds of dog. This kind of list is more informative than a list that simply contains the names of various kinds of dogs. Similarly, men are classified by their traits. Where in the list of men appear you two? Are you in the worst rank of Mankind, or above the worst rank? Should I entrust you two with a plan that

will get rid of Banquo? Should I entrust you two with a plan that will make you my friends? As long as Banquo lives, I am ill at ease, but after Banquo dies, I shall be perfectly happy.”

The Second Murderer said, “I am a man who has been so badly treated by the world that in my anger I don’t much care what I do as long as I get some revenge for how I have been treated.”

The First Murderer said, “I am another such man. I am tired of the disasters I have suffered and I am tired of being the plaything of fate, and so I am willing to risk my life on the chance of improving my fortune. If I fail, I can but die.”

“Both of you know that Banquo is your enemy?” Macbeth asked.

“Yes, we do,” said the two murderers.

“Banquo is also my enemy,” Macbeth said. “Every moment that he is alive creates a pain in my heart. As King, I could easily and openly have him killed and be able to justify the killing, yet I must not, because he and I have certain friends in common whom I must keep as friends but who would mourn his death even if the King himself had ordered it. That is why I need you two. I must keep my part in Banquo’s death secret for various important reasons.”

“We shall, my lord, perform what you command us,” the Second Murderer said.

The First Murderer said, “Though our lives —”

Macbeth interrupted, “I can see that you are capable of doing what you promise to do. Within the next hour, I will tell you where you will hide in waiting for Banquo. I will give you the best information possible, including the best time to do what you have promised to do. This information

comes from a man who well knows how to get information. This deed must be done tonight, and it must be done at some distance from the castle. Always remember that I must not be suspected of planning Banquo's death. In addition, so that this deed is accomplished perfectly, you must kill Fleance, Banquo's son. Fleance's death is as desired by me as is Banquo's death. Leave now, and make sure that you are resolved to carry out this plan. I will come to you soon."

Both murderers replied, "We are resolved to do what we have promised."

The two murderers left, and Macbeth said, "The plan is complete. Banquo, if your soul is going to go to Heaven, it must find its way there tonight."

— 3.2 —

Lady Macbeth asked a servant in the castle, "Has Banquo gone from court?"

The servant replied, "Yes, madam, but he returns again tonight."

"Tell the King that I would like to talk to him."

"Madam, I will."

The servant left the room.

Alone in the room, Lady Macbeth thought, *Nothing is gained; all is spent. We have gained nothing; we have spent all we had. We have gotten what we thought we desired, but it has brought us no happiness. We would have been better off if we had been murdered instead of us murdering King Duncan. We committed murder, seeking joy, but the result for us has not been joy.*

Seeing her husband enter the room, Lady Macbeth said,

“Why do you reject company and stay alone by yourself? Your only companions are sad thoughts. These sad thoughts about the men you have murdered should die just like the murdered men. We can’t fix what we have done; therefore, we ought not to think about it. What has been done will stay done.”

“We have wounded the snake, but not killed it,” Macbeth said. “The snake will heal and be healthy again, and its fangs will threaten us, its feeble enemy. I wish that reality would disintegrate; I wish that Heaven and Earth would both perish. Destruction would be better than the reality of my shaking with fear as I eat and the reality of my shaking with fear from nightmares as I sleep. I would be better off dead. It is better for me to lie with the dead, whom I sent to their peace so that I could gain power, than to be tortured with this restless madness. King Duncan is in his grave. He experienced life’s fitful fever, but now he rests well. Treason has done its worst and killed him. Now, he is untouched by steel swords, deadly poison, Scottish traitors, and foreign armies — nothing can hurt him.”

“My noble lord,” Lady Macbeth said, “put on a happier face than the one you display now. Be lively and jovial among your guests tonight.”

“I will,” Macbeth replied, “and I hope that you will do the same. But let us talk a moment about Banquo. Honor him both with your eyes and your words. Show respect to him. We are still unsafe in our positions as King and Queen, and we must flatter him. We must wear a face that disguises what is in our hearts.”

“You must stop talking and thinking like this.”

“Dear wife,” Macbeth said, “my mind is full of scorpions — it is dangerous and it hurts. As you know, Banquo and his son, Fleance, are still alive.”

“Neither of them has been granted eternal life in this world.”

“I take comfort in that fact,” Macbeth said. “They can be killed. Be cheerful tonight. Before the bat takes its flight in the dark regions of our castle, before the winged beetle sounds the arrival of night for Hecate, goddess of witches, a deed of dreadful note shall be done.”

“What’s to be done?”

“I won’t tell you, dearest darling, until the deed is done. Then you may applaud it. Come, darkness, blindfold the eyes of daylight, and with your bloody and invisible hand, tear to pieces that life that makes me pale with fear. The light is fading, and the crow is flying to its home. The good beings who are active in the daytime are beginning to droop and drowse, while the black agents that are active in the nighttime are awakening. You, wife, don’t understand my words now, but wait a while longer. Evil beings can start out weak, but make themselves strong by doing more evil. Come with me now.”

They left the room.

— 3.3 —

Three murderers, including the two murderers Macbeth had talked to earlier, stood together.

The First Murderer asked, “Who told you to join with us?”

“Macbeth,” answered the Third Murderer.

“We need not mistrust him,” the Second Murderer said. “He knows exactly what Macbeth told us to do and how Macbeth told us to do it.”

“Then join with us,” said the Second Murderer to the Third Murderer. “The setting Sun still sends forth some rays of

light. Now travelers urge their horses to go faster so that they may soon reach an inn to stay at, and soon the man we have been waiting for will appear.”

“I hear horses,” the Third Murderer said.

The Third Murderer heard the voice of Banquo saying to a servant, “Give us a torch to light our way.”

“This is the man we have been waiting for,” the Second Murderer said. “Macbeth’s other guests are already in the castle.”

“They have dismounted from their horses,” the First Murderer said.

“They are still about a mile from the castle,” the Third Murderer said. “It is the custom for the servants to walk the horses by a longer route to the castle to cool them off, while the masters walk from here to the castle.”

“I see a light!” the Second Murderer said.

Banquo and Fleance stood revealed by the light cast by the torch that Fleance carried.

“It is Banquo,” the Third Murderer said.

“Get ready,” the First Murderer said.

Banquo said, “It will rain tonight.”

“Then let the rain come down,” the First Murderer said.

The three murderers attacked, concentrating on Banquo, who was an older, experienced warrior and much more dangerous than his son. In the confusion, the First Murderer extinguished the torch and the darkness made seeing difficult.

“We are under attack!” Banquo shouted. A good father, he

shouted, “Run, Fleance! Save yourself, and avenge me later!”

The three murderers succeeded in cutting down Banquo, but Fleance succeeded in escaping.

“Who put out the torch?” the Third Murderer asked.

“Wasn’t that the right thing to do?” the First Murderer asked.

“We have killed Banquo only,” the Third Murderer said. “His son has escaped.”

“We have failed in half of our mission,” the Second Murderer said.

“Let’s leave,” the First Murderer said, “and tell Macbeth what has happened.”

— 3.4 —

In the great hall of the castle, a feast was set out on the long table. In the great hall were Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox, various other members of nobility, and many servants.

“Please sit down according to your degree of nobility, and welcome, all,” Macbeth said.

“Thank you, your majesty,” all of the lords replied.

“I myself shall be the humble host and mingle with all,” Macbeth said. “For now my wife shall sit on her chair of state, and later we shall ask for her to mingle.”

“Welcome all our friends for me, sir,” Lady Macbeth said. “In my heart they are our friends and they are all welcome here.”

The First Murderer appeared at the door.

Macbeth said to his wife, “Our guests return your friendship in their hearts.”

Then he said to the guests, “Both sides — the Queen and the nobility — are equal in giving friendship. I will sit here in the midst of our guests. Be happy, all. Soon we will all drink a toast around the table.”

Seeing the First Murderer, Macbeth walked to the door and said quietly to him, “There’s blood on your face.”

The First Murderer replied, “It is Banquo’s blood.”

“I prefer it to be on your outside than in his inside,” Macbeth said. “Is he dead?”

“My lord, his throat is cut — I cut it for him.”

“You are the best of the cutthroats,” Macbeth said. “The person who cut Fleance’s throat is also good. If you did that, too, you have no equal.”

“Most royal sir, Fleance escaped.”

“Then I still have a problem that causes me fits,” Macbeth said. “If Fleance had also been murdered, my problems would be over. I would be as solid as marble, as firmly based as a boulder, as freely and widely ranging as the air. Instead, I continue to be shut up in a claustrophobic place and assailed by doubts and fears. But is Banquo truly dead?”

“Yes, my good lord. His corpse lies in a ditch, and his head bears twenty gashes, each one of them fatal.”

“Thank you for that,” Macbeth said. “The grown serpent is dead. The young serpent that escaped will grow up and become poisonous. At present it is not dangerous. Leave now. Tomorrow we will speak together again.”

The First Murderer left, and Macbeth went back to his

guests and his wife.

Lady Macbeth quietly said to him, “My royal lord, you have not been making our guests feel welcome. Unless the host makes the guests feel welcome, it is as if they are paying customers rather than honored guests. If our guests merely wanted to satisfy their hunger, they could do that at their own homes. Etiquette and welcome provide the sauce to a feast. Without proper etiquette and without a proper welcoming of guests, a feast is lacking.”

Macbeth said to Lady Macbeth, “Sweet remembrancer!”

Unseen by anyone, the bloody ghost of Banquo entered the great hall and sat down in the chair reserved for Macbeth at the long table.

Macbeth turned to his guests and said, “May everyone have good appetite, good digestion, and good health.”

He added, “Here under this roof we would have nearly all of Scotland’s nobility if only Banquo, who is endowed with grace, were present. I would prefer to criticize him for forgetting to show up on time rather than to pity him for any mishap that may have occurred to him.”

Ross said, “Banquo’s absence means that he has failed to keep his promise to be present. If it would please your highness, please sit down and favor us with your company.”

“All the seats are taken,” Macbeth said.

“Here is a seat that is reserved for you, sir,” Lennox said.

“Where?”

“Here, my good lord.”

Banquo’s ghost turned in the chair indicated and looked at Macbeth, who looked at the chair and saw seated on it the

bloody ghost of Banquo. Startled, Macbeth drew back, his hand on his sword hilt.

“What is it that has startled your highness?” Lennox asked.

“Which of you have done this?” Macbeth shouted.

The nobles and Lady Macbeth could not see the ghost, and they did not know that Macbeth was referring to the wounds that had bloodied Banquo’s head — Macbeth was making a feeble attempt to have someone else blamed for the wounds.

“What, my good lord?” Lennox asked.

Macbeth said to the ghost that none but he could see, “You cannot say that I did it — don’t shake your gory locks of hair at me!”

Seeing Macbeth agitated, Ross said, “Gentlemen, stand up. His highness is not well.”

Lady Macbeth tried to bring order out of chaos by saying, “Sit, worthy friends. The King is often like this, and he has been this way since his youth. Please, stay seated. His illness will end quickly. He will be himself again in a moment. If you stare at him, you will make him worse and extend the length of time his fit lasts. Eat now, and ignore the King.”

To her husband, she said under her breath, “Are you a man?”

“Yes,” Macbeth said to her. “I am a bold man, but I am looking at something that might make even Satan afraid.”

“Stuff and nonsense,” Lady Macbeth replied. “This is something conjured by your fear. This is like the dagger you hallucinated that you told me led you to King Duncan’s bedchamber. These startled outbursts of yours would be

suitable for a child sitting in front of a fireplace and listening to a woman tell a story that had been told to her by her grandmother. These startled outbursts of yours are not true fear. You should be ashamed of yourself. Why are you making such wild faces! You are looking at nothing but a chair!”

Macbeth looked again, and again he saw the bloody ghost of Banquo seated on the chair. He said to his wife, “Look! How can you say that nothing is there except a chair?”

Then he said to Banquo’s ghost, “Why should I care anything about you? I can see you moving your head. If you can do that, then speak to me. If tombs and graves are going to eject their corpses instead of hiding them, then the corpses ought to be eaten by birds and hidden in their stomachs.”

The ghost of Banquo vanished.

“Has your fear turned you into a weak woman?” Lady Macbeth asked her husband.

“Just as surely as I am standing here, I saw a ghost.”

“You should be ashamed,” Lady Macbeth said.

“Blood has been spilled before now — back in the ancient times before we had laws to restrain people and make them gentler,” Macbeth said. “Even now, terrible murders are committed that are horrifying to hear about. But it used to be true that when a man’s brains were dashed out of his skull, the man would die and stay dead. That is no longer true. Now the dead man will rise and walk again despite twenty mortal wounds to his head. What I just saw is more abnormal than even murder.”

Macbeth had much recovered from seeing the ghost, and Lady Macbeth said to him, “My worthy lord, your noble

friends lack your company.”

“I do forget,” Macbeth said. “Do not mind me, my most worthy friends. I have a strange infirmity, but people who know me well don’t fuss about it. I wish love and health to all of you. I will sit down. Give me some wine — fill the goblet full. I drink to the general joy of the whole table and to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss. All of us wish that he were here. To all, and to Banquo, let us drink.”

“Hear, hear,” said the nobles.

As Macbeth and the others drank a toast, the ghost of Banquo entered the great hall again.

Catching sight of the ghost, Macbeth shouted, “Go away! Get out of my sight! Let the dirt cover you in your grave! Your bones have no marrow! Your blood is cold! Your eyes are blind although you glare at me!”

Lady Macbeth said to the nobles, “Think of this, good peers, only as a common effect of my husband’s illness. It is not dangerous, although it spoils the pleasure of the feast.”

Macbeth shouted at the ghost, “I am brave. What any man dares, I dare. Approach me in the shape of a rugged Russian bear, a thick-hided rhinoceros armed with a horn, or an Asian tiger. Take any shape but the shape you have now, and I will not tremble in fear. Or be alive again and challenge me to fight you in a deserted place. If I stay home and tremble in fear, then say that I have the courage of the doll of a girl. Get away from me, horrible shadow! Leave now, unreal mockery! Go!”

The ghost of Banquo vanished.

Macbeth said, “Now that the ghost has left, I am a man again. Please, everyone, sit down.”

“Your actions have ruined the feast and made everyone uncomfortable,” Lady Macbeth said to her husband.

“How is it possible that such visions can appear and come over us like a cloud without everyone being amazed?” Macbeth said to his wife. “I see such visions and am no longer myself — my face turns white with fear. But you see such visions and your cheeks stay red with their natural color. When I see such visions, I feel like a stranger to my true — that is, my brave — nature.”

Ross, who had overheard the conversation between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, said, “What visions, my lord?”

Lady Macbeth said to the nobles, “I beg you, don’t speak to the King. He grows worse and worse, and question enrages him. At once, please leave and good night. Do not take the time to leave in the order of your rank, but please leave at once.”

Lennox said, “Good night, and better health attend his majesty!”

“A kind good night to all!” Lady Macbeth said.

The nobles departed with much to talk about.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth stood alone in the great hall.

“Blood will have blood,” Macbeth said. “The murdered will have their revenge. Gravestones have been said to move and trees to speak, all to bring murderers to justice. Predictions and psychic evidence reveal murderers. Even the actions of magpies and jackdaws and crows have brought forth evidence to reveal a murderer. What time is it?”

“It is so close to morning that it is difficult to tell whether it is night or morning,” Lady Macbeth replied.

“Macduff declines to come to me when I send for him. What is your opinion of that?”

“Did you send to him, sir?”

“I am reporting to you what I have heard, but I will send for him. Actually, I have already sent for him once — he refused to come and attend our banquet. In every noble’s household I have at least one servant whom I pay to be a spy. Early tomorrow, I will seek the Weird Sisters. I want more information. I am resolved to know the worst even if I have to consult evil witches to know it. I will satisfy my curiosity — to me, nothing is more important than that I get the information I seek. I have waded into a river of blood. I have waded so far and so deep into the river that I might as well keep going rather than return to the bank from which I started. I have in mind strange plots, and I intend to act on them before I think about them too much.”

“You need to get some sleep,” Lady Macbeth said.

“Let’s go to bed,” Macbeth agreed. “My vision of the ghost was simply the fear of a novice to the doing of evil. I need to be more evil and do more evil. I am still much too inexperienced in the doing of dirty deeds.”

— 3.5 —

On a heath below a lightning storm, the three Weird Sisters met Hecate, the goddess of witches. Hecate was not happy. Thunder sounded during their meeting.

“Greetings, Hecate,” the First Witch said. “You look angry.”

“Haven’t I just reason to be angry?” Hecate replied. “You hags don’t know your place. You are overly bold. How dare you tempt Macbeth with riddles to commit murder without my participation? I am your master, I am the secret

plotter of all harms, and I *will* have a part in corrupting Macbeth's soul. Macbeth is nothing but a wayward son. He is spiteful and angry, and he loves himself, not you. But now you can make amends to me for your wayward actions. In the morning, meet me at the pit that leads down to Acheron, one of the rivers of Hell. Macbeth will go there in the morning to seek you to learn about his future. Bring with you your cauldron and the ingredients for your spells and your charms. I will fly in the sky tonight, working on dismal and deadly business. An airy drop of heavy significance hangs from the Moon; I will catch it before it falls to Earth. Through the use of magic, I will use that drop to raise unnatural visions to mislead Macbeth further along the path of his ruin. After he sees my visions, Macbeth will spurn fate, scorn death, and value false hopes more than he values wisdom, gifts from Almighty God, and reasonable fears. As all of you know, overconfidence is the chief enemy of mortals. Death is coming soon for Macbeth, but he will not know it."

Nearby, music played and the words "Come away ... come away" filled the air.

Hecate said, "My familiar spirit — a demon — is calling for me. It sits on a foggy cloud and waits for me to come."

Hecate flew away, and the First Witch said, "Come, let's make haste — Hecate will soon be back again."

The three Weird Sisters left.

— 3.6 —

At Forres, the site of the late King Duncan's castle, Lennox and another lord spoke together.

"Your opinions and mine are in agreement," Lennox said. "Strange things have been occurring. The good King Duncan died, and Macbeth pitied him, so he says. The

valiant Banquo walked at night, and Banquo died, and Macbeth pitied him, so he says. You can say, if you like, that Fleance killed his father, Banquo. How do we know that he did that? Because Fleance fled following the murder he had committed, so Macbeth says. It is monstrous for a son to kill a father, so Macbeth says. Fleance did kill his father, so Macbeth says. And Malcolm and Donalbain did kill their father, so Macbeth says. Damned deeds! Macbeth grieved, so he says. He grieved so much, he says, that he killed the King's bodyguards, who were drunk and asleep. Wasn't that a noble deed for Macbeth to do? He says so, and he also says that it was a good deed, too. To hear the bodyguards deny that they had murdered the King would have angered any man, so Macbeth says. Macbeth has handled all these matters well — so he says. You may believe Macbeth's words if you like — but I know that you do not, and neither do I! I think that if Macbeth had power over Malcolm and Donalbain and power over Fleance, they would soon be murdered and so learn the consequences of murdering their fathers, as Macbeth would say. May Heaven never allow Macbeth to have power over King Duncan's sons and over Banquo's son!

“By the way, I hear that Macduff is in Macbeth's disfavor because Macduff speaks too frankly and too openly. Can you tell me where Macduff is these days?”

The lord replied, “Macduff has gone to visit Malcolm, who — being the late King Duncan's oldest son — ought to be King. The tyrant Macbeth withholds from Malcolm what is his by birthright. Malcolm now lives in the court of the King of England: Edward the Confessor. This King graciously welcomed Malcolm and treats him with great respect despite Malcolm's misfortunes and the deprivation of the crown that is rightfully his. Macduff wants Edward the Confessor to call to arms the people in Northumberland, which borders Scotland, so that its governor the Earl

Siward can lead them into battle against Macbeth. If an army is raised to fight against Macbeth, and if the great and good God is willing, as He must be, we will again have food on our tables, we will again be able to sleep easily at night, we will again be able to attend a King's feast without fear of being murdered, we will again be able to support a King with our own free will instead of supporting the King out of fear of what would happen if we did not support that King, and we will again be able to receive the honors due to patriotic men. Under the tyranny of Macbeth, we can no longer do or enjoy any of these things.

“Also, Macbeth has heard about Macduff. Macbeth knows that a rebellion is forming, and he is preparing for war.”

“Did Macbeth order Macduff to come to his banquet?” Lennox asked.

“Yes,” the lord answered, “and Macduff told Macbeth's messenger, ‘Sir, I will not go to Macbeth's banquet.’ The unhappy messenger turned his back on Macduff as if to say, ‘You will regret the time that you gave me this answer to take to Macbeth.’”

“The messenger's action may well convince Macduff to be cautious in opposing Macbeth and to keep away from Scotland — the wrath of Macbeth is terrible and something to be feared. It is possible that Macduff could stay in exile and not advocate that an army oppose Macbeth. I wish that an angel would fly to Macduff and tell him that the quicker an army opposes Macbeth the better it will be for Scotland. The removal of the tyrant will be a blessing for our country.”

The lord replied, “I would like to send my own prayers with that angel.”

CHAPTER 4 (Macbeth)

— 4.1 —

The three Weird Sisters stood around a boiling cauldron in a cave. Outside a lightning storm raged.

“Three times the striped cat has mewed,” the First Witch said.

“Three times, and the hedgehog has whined once,” said the Second Witch.

“Harpier, my familiar, cries, ‘It is time ... it is time,’” the Third Witch said.

The First Witch said, “Round about the cauldron go; in the pot poisoned entrails throw. First to be boiled is a toad that sweated venom for thirty-one days as it sat under a cold rock.”

All the witches chanted together, “Double, double, toil and trouble; fire burn, and cauldron bubble.”

The Second Witch said, “Slice of a swampland snake, in the cauldron boil and bake; eye of newt and toe of frog, wool of bat and tongue of dog, adder’s forked tongue and blind-snake’s poisonous sting, lizard’s leg, and owlet’s wing, for a charm of powerful trouble, like a Hell-broth boil and bubble.”

All the witches chanted together, “Double, double, toil and trouble; fire burn, and cauldron bubble.”

The Third Witch said, “Scale of a dragon, tooth of a wolf, mummy of a witch, gullet and throat of a ravenous sea-shark, root of hemlock dug up in the dark, liver of a blaspheming Jew, gall of a goat, and twigs of the poisonous yew tree sliced off during the eclipse of the Moon, nose of

a Turk and lips of a Tartar, and finger of a newborn babe who is damned because its mother, a whore, gave birth to it in a ditch and strangled it before it was baptized. Throw these into the cauldron and make the gruel thick and viscous. Add the entrails of a tiger to the ingredients of our cauldron.”

All the witches chanted together, “Double, double, toil and trouble; fire burn, and cauldron bubble.”

The Second Witch said, “Cool it with a baboon’s blood, and then the charm is firm and the opposite of good.”

Hecate entered the cave and examined the gruel in the cauldron. She said to the Weird Sisters, “Well done. I commend you for the pains that you have taken to brew this evil charm, and all of you will share in its gains. And now about the cauldron sing, like elves and fairies in a ring, enchanting all that you put in.”

All danced and sang around the cauldron, and the charm was ready for use when Macbeth arrived.

The Second Witch felt sudden pain — a harbinger of approaching evil — and said, “By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes.”

Her words were true now, but if she had spoken them before the Three Witches had tempted Macbeth, they would not have been true. Earlier, Macbeth had been a patriot and a hero, but now he was a regicide and a tyrant.

Hecate left, leaving the Three Witches in the cave awaiting Macbeth.

The Second Witch ordered, “Open, locks, to whoever knocks!”

Leaving Lennox outside, Macbeth entered the cave and said, “What are you doing, you secret, black, and midnight

hags?”

The Three Witches replied, “A deed without a name. No name exists for what we are doing.”

Macbeth said to the witches, “I order you in the name of Satan or whatever other powers you serve to answer my questions no matter by which means you acquire the necessary knowledge to reply. Even if you untie the winds and let them blow against the churches, even if you make the foamy waves batter and sink ships and drown sailors, even if you beat down crops of food and blow down trees, even if you topple palaces and steeples, even if you turn nature into chaos so that no seeds ever again bring forth life, even if you cause so much destruction that chaos itself is sickened, I demand that you tell me the answers to the questions I will ask you.”

The First Witch said, “Speak.”

The Second Witch said, “Demand.”

The Third Witch said, “We will answer.”

The First Witch asked, “Tell us whether you would rather hear the answers from our own mouths, or from the mouths of our masters?”

“Call your masters,” Macbeth ordered. “Let me see them.”

The First Witch chanted, “Pour into the flame the blood of a sow that has eaten her nine piglets. Pour into the flame the grease that has dripped from the skin-sores of the decomposed corpse of a murderer who has been hanging from a gibbet for days.”

All the witches chanted, “Come, high spirit or low spirit; yourself and your knowledge deftly show!”

Thunder sounded, and the first apparition — a male head

wearing a helmet — rose from the cauldron.

Macbeth began to speak to the apparition, “Tell me, unknown power —”

The First Witch told Macbeth, “He knows your thought. Hear his speech, but say nothing to him.”

The first apparition said, “Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff! Beware the Thane of Fife! Dismiss me. Enough.”

Macbeth replied, “Whatever you are, thank you for your warning. I have long been suspicious of Macduff. But one word more.”

The First Witch said, “He will not obey your orders.”

The first apparition disappeared into the cauldron, and the First Witch said, “Here’s another that is more powerful than the first.”

Thunder sounded, and the second apparition — a child covered with blood — rose from the cauldron.

The second apparition called, “Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!”

Macbeth replied, “Had I three ears, I would listen to your words with all three.”

The second apparition said, “Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born shall harm Macbeth.”

The second apparition disappeared into the cauldron.

Macbeth said, “Then I can let Macduff live because why should I fear him? But nevertheless I will take steps to ensure that Macduff shall do me no harm. Macduff shall not live. Then I can tell my white-hearted fear that it has

nothing to be afraid of, and I can sleep even when the sky thunders.”

Thunder sounded, and the third apparition — a child wearing a crown and holding a tree branch in his hand — rose from the cauldron.

Macbeth asked, “Who is this who rises like the son of a King and wears upon his baby-brow the round and top — the crown — of sovereignty?”

The Three Witches said to Macbeth, “Listen to the apparition but do not speak to it.”

The third apparition said to Macbeth, “Have the courage of a lion, and be proud. Don’t concern yourself about those who resent you and your rule and suffer under it. Don’t concern yourself about conspirers. Macbeth shall never be conquered until the great Birnam Forest marches twelve miles to your castle on the high Dunsinane hill.”

The third apparition disappeared into the cauldron.

Macbeth said, “That will never happen. Who can make a forest uproot itself and march for twelve miles? These are good omens for me! Banquo, you rebelled against death by appearing to me as a ghost. Never rise again until Birnam Forest rises up and marches against me. I, the King, will live until I die of old age and natural causes. Yet I still want to know one thing more: Shall Banquo’s descendants ever reign in this kingdom?”

The Weird Sisters replied, “Seek to know no more.”

“I will know the answer to my question!” Macbeth said. “If you do not answer, may an eternal curse fall upon you! Tell me! Why is the cauldron sinking? What music am I hearing?”

The music of oboes sounded.

The First Witch ordered, “Show him!”

The Second Witch ordered, “Show him!”

The Third Witch ordered, “Show him!”

All three Weird Sisters ordered, “Show his eyes, and grieve his heart; come like shadows, then depart!”

Spirits showed themselves in the forms of eight Kings. The eighth King had a mirror in his hand. The ghost of Banquo also appeared.

Macbeth shouted, “You look like the ghost of Banquo! Go away!”

Macbeth then shouted at the first King, “Your crown sears my eyeballs.”

Then he shouted at the second King, “Your hair, your brow that is crowned with gold, resembles those of the first King! And the third King resembles you!”

Macbeth then shouted at the three Weird Sisters, “Why do you show me this! I see a fourth King! Eyes, jump out of your sockets! What, will the line of Kings stretch out to the crack of doom? I see another and another King! A seventh! I don’t want to see any more Kings, and yet an eighth King appears, holding a mirror in which I see many more Kings, some of whom are carrying coronation emblems that show that they are Kings of multiple countries! This is a horrible sight for me! Banquo — his head bloody — smiles at me and points to his descendants, all of them Kings!”

The apparitions vanished.

Macbeth asked, “Is all of this true?”

The First Witch answered, “Yes, all that you have seen is true. You are acting like a person in shock, but we Weird Sisters will cheer you up and entertain you. I will charm

music out of the air and my sisters will dance. We want you, great King, to kindly say that we welcomed you.”

The witches danced until Hecate showed herself, and then they and Hecate vanished.

Macbeth listened a moment, heard only the galloping of horses, and said, “Where are the Weird Sisters? Gone? Let this evil day be forever a day of ill omen in the calendar! Lennox, come here!”

Lennox entered the cave and asked, “What are your orders for me?”

“Saw you the Weird Sisters?” Macbeth asked.

“No, my lord,” Lennox replied.

“Didn’t they pass by you?”

“No, indeed not, my lord.”

Macbeth said, “The air that the three Weird Sisters ride upon is infected with corruption, and everyone who trusts them is damned. I heard horses galloping. Who was it who came here?”

“A few men came here to tell you that Macduff has fled to England.”

“England!”

“Yes, my good lord.”

“Macduff timely anticipated what I was going to do to him,” Macbeth said. “Anyone who forms a plan ought to act immediately on it. From this moment on, I will do so: Whenever I form a plan in my heart, I will act on it and bring it to fruition. I will start to do that right now: I will attack Macduff’s castle at Fife, and I will kill his wife, his children, and anyone unfortunate enough to be related to

him. I won't boast of deeds not done; instead, I will ensure that this deed is done before I change my mind. I will also no longer seek to see the apparitions of the Weird Sisters! Where are the messengers? Take me to them."

— 4.2 —

At Macduff's castle in Fife, Lady Macduff, her young son by her side, talked with Ross.

"What did my husband do to make him flee from Scotland?" asked Lady Macduff.

"You must have patience, madam," Ross replied.

"My husband had no patience. His flight was madness. His actions did not make him a traitor, but his fearful flight makes him appear to be a traitor."

"You don't know whether it was his wisdom or his fear that made him flee," Ross said.

"How could it be wisdom," Lady Macduff said, "to leave his wife, his children, and his possessions in a place from which he himself flees in fear? He does not love us. He lacks the natural instincts that even animals have. The poor mother wren, the smallest of birds, will fight an owl to protect her young ones in her nest. Fear, not love, rules my husband's actions. His flight is against all reason, and so it is not wise, either."

"My dearest cousin, I advise you to control yourself. Your husband is noble, wise, and judicious, and he best knows the disorders present now in Scotland. I dare not speak much further, but cruel are the times when men are called traitors and do not know why they are called traitors. We are so fearful that we believe rumors, and yet we do not know what it is we fear. We seem to be floating upon a wild and violent sea that tosses us one way and then the

other. I take my leave of you. Soon I shall return. When the times are at their worst, they cease becoming worse and may even improve to where they were before. My pretty cousin, God's blessing be upon you!"

"My son has a father, and yet he is fatherless because his father has forsaken him."

Ross replied, "I am so much a fool that should I stay longer, I would cry, and that would be my disgrace and your discomfort; therefore, I take my leave at once."

Ross departed.

Lady Macduff said to her young son, "Your father is dead. What will you do now? How will you live?" She expected bad news and hoped to prepare her son for it by talking to him now.

"As birds do, mother."

"What, with worms and flies?"

"With what I get, mother. That is how birds live."

"My son, you would make a poor bird," Lady Macduff said. "You would not know enough to be afraid of the nets and snares used to catch birds."

"Why should I, mother? If I am a poor bird, hunters will not want to catch me. And you are wrong about my father — he is not dead."

"Yes, he is dead," Lady Macbeth lied, hoping to prepare her son for whatever bad news would arrive. "What will you do to get a new father?"

"What will you do to get a new husband?"

"Why, I can buy twenty husbands at any market."

“Then you will buy them to sell again at a profit.”

“You are speaking with all your wit. Truly, you have wit enough to suit you.”

“Was my father a traitor, mother?”

“Yes, he was.”

“What is a traitor?”

“Why, one who swears and lies — one who swears an oath of allegiance but does not keep his oath.”

“And be all traitors that do so?”

“Every one who does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.”

“And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?”

“Every one.”

“Who must hang them?”

“The honest men must hang them.”

“Then the liars and swearers are fools,” her son said, “for there are liars and swearers enough to beat the honest men and hang them.”

“That is all too true,” Lady Macduff said, “and all too cynical for a boy as young as you to believe. God help you, you poor monkey! How will you get a new father?”

“If my father were dead, you would weep for him unless you were going to marry someone new. Since you are not weeping, that is a good sign that either he is not dead or I will soon have a new father.”

“Poor prattler, how you talk!”

A messenger entered the room and said to Lady Macduff, “God bless you, fair lady! You do not know me, but I know

your rank. I fear that some danger does quickly approach you. If you will take a simple, plain man's advice, you will flee immediately. Do not stay here with your children. Flee! I am sorry to have to frighten you like this, but I do not want something much more cruel to happen to you and your children. If you stay here, you will suffer much cruelty — it quickly approaches you! Heaven help you! I dare not stay here any longer!"

The messenger left in a hurry.

"Where should I flee to?" Lady Macduff said. "I have done no harm. But I am in this Earthly world where to do harm is often considered worthy of praise and where to do good is often considered the action of a fool. In such a world, what good does it do for a woman to say, 'I have done no harm'?"

Murderers entered the room.

"Who are you?" Lady Macduff asked.

"Where is your husband?" a murderer asked.

"I hope that he is in no place so unsanctified that people like you can find him."

"He's a traitor," a murderer said.

Lady Macduff's young son shouted, "You're lying, you shaggy-haired villain!"

"Runt!" the murderer shouted and stabbed the boy, who shouted, "He has killed me, mother. Run!"

Lady Macduff ran away from the murderers and screamed, "Murder!" She did not run fast enough.

Malcolm and Macduff were meeting outside the palace of

the King of England. Malcolm's bodyguards were near.

Malcolm said, "Let us find some shade and mourn for Scotland there."

Macduff replied, "Let us instead wield deadly swords and like good men defend Scotland and wrest it from the tyrant, who with each new day makes new widows howl with grief and new orphans cry. Each day, the tyrant creates new sorrows that slap Heaven in the face — the slaps make Heaven cry out in pain and in sympathy for Scotland."

"I will mourn whatever evils I believe to have occurred," Malcolm said. "I will believe what I learn to be the truth, and whatever evils I can avenge, I will avenge — at the right time. The things you have been telling me may very well be true. This tyrant, whose name blisters our tongues when we speak it, was once thought to be good. You used to think highly of him. He has done nothing to harm you that I am aware of. I am young, but I am old enough to realize that you may be seeking to earn favor with Macbeth by doing harm to me. Some think that it is wise to offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb to appease an angry god. You may think it wise to offer up me to appease an angry tyrant."

"I am not treacherous," Macduff replied.

"But Macbeth is. Even a good and virtuous man may think it wise to obey the orders of a cruel tyrant. But I may be wrong in my suspicions of you. I may suspect you, but yet you may be a good man. Angels are still bright, although the brightest angel — Lucifer — became evil and fell from Paradise. Evil men seek to have the appearance of good men. Good men have that appearance naturally. Therefore, an evil man and a good man may have the same appearance but not the same nature."

"I wanted you to gather an army to fight Macbeth, but I

have lost all hope of that ever happening,” Macduff said.

“You have your doubts about me,” Malcolm said, “and I have my doubts about you. Why did you leave your wife and children behind without defenses in the dangerous land of Scotland — you love them, don’t you? If you are an agent of Macbeth, you could leave them behind without worry. I ask this because I want to protect myself, and by being cautious and fearing plots I can best defend myself. Despite my cautiousness, you may be a good and just man.”

“Bleed, poor Scotland, bleed!” Macduff mourned. “Tyrant, do your worst and do it openly because good people dare not oppose you. Enjoy the fruits of your evil, and boast about them. Farewell, lord Malcolm. I would not be the villain whom you think I am even if I were offered everything that the tyrant controls and all of the rich East as well.”

“Don’t be offended,” Malcolm said. “I am not entirely convinced that you are an agent of Macbeth. I believe that Scotland sinks exhausted beneath the yoke the tyrant has put on it. Scotland weeps, it bleeds, and each day a new gash is added to her wounds. I think that many hands would be uplifted to fight for me and give me my rightful throne of Scotland. The gracious Edward the Confessor has offered thousands of soldiers to me to lead against Macbeth. However, once I have the tyrant’s head under my boot or displayed at the end of my sword, Scotland will suffer worse and in more varied ways than it ever did under the tyrant.”

“Who would bring such woes to Scotland?” Macduff asked.

“I would,” Malcolm replied. “I know that in myself are all the many vices. Once I am in a position of power and able

to enjoy my vices openly, black Macbeth will seem as pure as snow, and the citizens of Scotland will regard him as a lamb in comparison with me.”

“No one can ever be as evil as Macbeth — not even a devil damned in Hell.”

“I know that Macbeth is bloody, licentious, avaricious, false, deceitful, violent, malicious, and an enthusiastic participant of every sin that has a name. However, I have no limit to my lust. Scotland’s wives, daughters, matrons, and maidens could not fill up the cistern of my lust. Anyone who tried to restrain the satisfaction of my lust I would strike down. It is better that Macbeth rule Scotland than that I do.”

“Boundless lust in a man’s nature is a kind of tyranny,” Macduff replied. “It has caused many Kings to be removed from their thrones. Nevertheless, return to Scotland, oust Macbeth, and become King. You can satisfy your great lust in secret and appear to be virtuous in public. You can fool the Scots. Scotland has many women who would be willing enough to satisfy your lust. You cannot be so lustful as to run out of women who will willingly sleep with a King if they find out you want them.”

“I also have in my character a greed without end for land and possessions. I would seize the land of the nobles. I would seize jewels and castles. The more land and possessions I seize, the more I would want. I would create false justifications to seize the land and possessions of good and loyal Scots — I would destroy them just so I can have their wealth.”

“The evil of avarice is worse than the evil of lust. Lust will be less prevalent as you grow old, but greed can stay with you all your life. Like lust, greed has caused subjects to rebel against and kill many Kings. However, this does not

mean you should not return to Scotland and become King. The royal lands and wealth are so great that they ought to satisfy your greed. Scotland can endure your vices if you have virtues to go with them.”

“I have no virtues,” Malcolm said. “I care nothing about justice, truth, temperance, stableness, bounty, perseverance, mercy, humility, devotion, patience, courage, fortitude. The people of Scotland will find no trace of these virtues in me, but they will find an abundance of each kind of vice in me. If I had the power to act on all my wishes, I would pour virtues into Hell so that they would be extinguished, I would turn universal peace into universal war, and I would take all unity on Earth and tear it to pieces.”

“I mourn for Scotland!” Macduff said.

“If such a one be fit to govern, speak up. I am as I have spoken.”

“Fit to govern!” Macduff said. “You are not fit to live! Our nation is miserable. A tyrant who lacks the true title to the throne and yet rules with a bloody scepter now governs Scotland. You are the rightful King of Scotland, and yet if your words are true you are unfit to rule and ought to be kept from the throne. Your evil character would scandalize your ancestors. Your royal father was a most sainted King. The Queen who gave birth to you was oftener upon her knees praying than she was on her feet. Each day she lived, she prepared herself for residence in Paradise. Farewell to you! The evils that you say you are guilty of now make me an exile from my own country. I have no hope for Scotland. My hope ends here.”

“Macduff, this love you have for Scotland shows that you are noble and have integrity,” Malcolm said. “I have banished my suspicions about you. I know now that you are truthful and honorable. Many times has devil-like Macbeth

tried to trick me and get me within his grasp. Because of this, I am not hasty to believe people. But now, let God witness that we shall work together. I will do as you wish and free Scotland. Know also I take back my ‘confession’ of my ‘vices.’ I did not tell you the truth about the kind of person I am. The vices that I said are part of my character are in reality strangers to me. I am a virgin and have not sexually known a woman. I have never committed perjury. I scarcely value my own possessions, much less those of other people. I would not betray one devil to another devil. I love the truth as much as I love my life. My only lies are the ones I told you just now to test you and ensure that you were not an evil man who obeys the orders of Macbeth. I am yours to guide and Scotland’s to command. In fact, before you arrived here, Old Siward with ten thousand soldiers gathered into an army was already coming here to be led in war against Macbeth. Now you and I will march together. I pray that our chance of success will equal the justice of our cause.”

Macduff said nothing.

Malcolm asked him, “Why are you silent?”

“To hear such welcome things immediately after hearing such unwelcome things makes it difficult to know what to say.”

A doctor walked up to Malcolm and Macduff.

“We will speak together at more length soon,” Malcolm said to Macduff. Then he said to the doctor, “Is Edward the Confessor coming out?”

“Yes, sir,” the doctor said. “Many wretchedly ill people await his cure by touch. Their illness cannot be cured by medical science, but when the King touches them, his touch heals their illness — such is his gift from Heaven.”

“I thank you, doctor,” Malcolm said.

The doctor departed.

“What is the disease he means?” Macduff asked.

“It is called the King’s evil by most people because the King can cure it by the laying on of hands,” Malcolm said. Others call it scrofula. I have often seen the good King Edward the Confessor cure it with a most miraculous work. What prayers he makes to Heaven, he alone knows, but strangely afflicted people, swollen and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye, with no hope of being cured by doctors, he cures. He prays as he hangs a golden coin around their necks, and it is said that when a King of England dies he passes on this gift to the next King. Along with this Heavenly gift, he has others, including the gift of prophecy. These gifts and other blessings show that he is full of grace and loved by God.”

Ross walked up to Malcolm and Macduff.

Macduff asked Malcolm, “Who is this man coming toward us?”

“Judging by his clothing, a Scotsman, but I don’t know him.”

Now recognizing Ross, Macduff said to him, “My noble cousin, welcome.”

Malcolm said, “I recognize him now. I pray to God that soon the circumstances that make us strangers will no longer exist. If I had not been exiled from Scotland for so long, I would have recognized Ross immediately.”

Overhearing Malcolm’s prayer, Ross said, “Sir, amen.”

“Is the situation in Scotland still the same?” Malcolm asked.

“Pity our poor country!” Ross said, “It is almost afraid to

look at itself. It should not be called our mother at this time, but rather our grave. No one smiles except those who are too ignorant or too stupid to know what is happening. Sighs and groans and shrieks rend the air, but they are now so common that they are no longer noticed. Violent sorrow is now a common experience. Death is so common that no one asks any more for whom the death bell tolls — someone is always dying and it is impossible to keep up to date on who is dead. The life of a good man is so short that the man dies before the flower in his cap dies. Good men die before they grow ill; they do not die of sickness of body.”

“Your story is eloquently told, and it is true,” Macduff said.

Malcolm asked, “What’s the newest grief?”

“News of grief that is even an hour old is old news. Every minute a new cause for grieving pushes aside the old cause,” Ross said.

“How is my wife?” Macduff asked.

Ross knew that Lady Macduff had been murdered, but he was reluctant to convey such bad news to her husband, so he replied, “Why, well.”

“And all my children?”

“Well, too.”

“The tyrant Macbeth has not battered at their peace and attacked them?”

Ross replied, “No; they were at peace when I did leave them.” He thought, *That is partially true. It is false that Macbeth has not attacked them, but it is true that they were at peace when I left them — they were peacefully lying in their graves.*

Suspicious at Ross' obvious reluctance at answering his questions, Macduff said, "Be not a niggard of your speech. How are they?"

Still not willing to tell Macduff the truth and wanting to be sure that Malcolm would attack Macbeth, Ross replied, "When I came here to give you the bad news about Scotland, news that saddens me, I heard a rumor that many men were arming themselves in order to fight against Macbeth. I personally saw Macbeth's army on the march, and so I believe the rumor I heard. Now is the time for you, Malcolm, to help. Your presence in Scotland would create soldiers and would inspire even our women to fight to get rid of Macbeth and the distresses he inflicts upon them."

"They shall be comforted," Malcolm said. "We are going to Scotland. Edward the Confessor has given us the use of an army led by Old Siward. The Christian nations do not have a more experienced or more successful soldier."

"I wish that I could answer this comforting good news with news like it," Ross said, "but I have words that should be howled out in the desert air, where no one can hear them."

"Which person do such words concern?" Macduff asked. "Do they affect all Scots or just one Scot?"

"The news grieves all good Scots," Ross said, "but it will especially grieve you."

"If the grief be mine, keep it not from me. Quickly let me have it," Macduff said.

"Let not your ears despise my tongue forever," Ross said. "My tongue will speak words that will scar your ears."

"I can guess what you are going to say," Macduff said.

Ross told him what Macbeth had done: "Macbeth attacked your castle and savagely slaughtered your wife and

children. If I were to give you specific details, your grief would cause your corpse to be added to the pile of dead bodies.”

Macduff was silent.

Shocked, Malcolm said, “Merciful Heaven! Don’t be silent. Give way to your grief and rail against its cause. Unless you express your grief, it will eat at you from inside and break your overburdened heart.”

Despite having already been told the answer, Macduff asked, “My children, too?”

“Wife, children, servants, all who could be found in the castle and on your land,” Ross said.

“And I was not there because I was seeking Malcolm,” Macduff said. “Macbeth killed my wife, too?”

“Yes,” Ross said. “I have told you that.”

“Be comforted,” Malcolm said. “Let revenge against Macbeth be your medicine to cure this deadly grief.”

Such words were not comforting to Macduff, who said to Ross about Malcolm, “He has no children.”

Macduff added, “All my pretty ones are dead? Did you say all? Hell! All? What, all my pretty chickens and their dam killed at one fell swoop?”

Malcolm said, “Fight it like a man.”

“I shall do so,” Macduff said, “but I must also feel it like a man. I cannot help remembering that of all people these were the most precious to me. Did Heaven witness their murders and would not help them? Sinful Macduff, Macbeth killed them because of you! They had done nothing wrong. Macbeth killed them because I came to England. Heaven rest them now!”

“Let this be the whetstone of your sword,” Malcolm said, “Let grief convert to anger. Do not blunt your heart; instead, enrage it.”

“I could act like a woman and cry,” Macduff said. “I could also brag about how I will avenge their deaths. But I pray that Heaven will not make me wait but instead quickly bring me face to face with this fiend of Scotland. If I get within sword’s length of him and he does not die — but he will die! — then let Heaven forgive him.”

“Now you are speaking like a man,” Malcolm said. “Let us go to Edward the Confessor. Our army is ready, and everything is ready for us to march against Macbeth, who is soon to fall from power. God will show us our way. Macbeth has made a long night for Scotland, but we will make it day.”

CHAPTER 5 (Macbeth)

— 5.1 —

In an anteroom in Macbeth's castle at Dunsinane, a doctor and a gentlewoman — a woman of high social standing — talked together.

The doctor said, "I have for two nights stayed up and watched with you, but I have seen nothing of what you have reported to me. When was it Lady Macbeth last sleepwalked?"

The gentlewoman replied, "Ever since Macbeth took his soldiers out to try to stop the rebellion of the nobles, I have often seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her body, unlock her chest, take out paper, fold it, write upon it, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed. She has done all these things despite being in a deep sleep."

"This is a great perturbation in nature, to receive the benefit of sleep and yet at the same time to do many things that are normally done while awake. Have you ever heard her say anything while she is sleepwalking?"

"Yes, sir, I have heard her say things that I will not repeat to you."

"You may tell me," the doctor said. "It is the right thing for you to do."

"I will not tell you or anyone else — not until I have a witness to confirm what I would say," the gentlewoman said.

Holding a candle, Lady Macbeth, sleepwalking, entered the room.

The gentlewoman said, "Look! Here she comes! This is

what she often does. She is asleep — watch her, but stay hidden.”

“Where did she get the candle?”

“It was by her bed. She always has candles lit by her at night. She has ordered that this be done.”

“Her eyes are open,” the doctor said.

“Yes, but she does not see anything. She is still asleep.”

“What is she doing now?” the doctor asked. “Look how she rubs her hands.”

“Seeming to wash her hands is a habit of hers. I have seen her do this for a quarter of an hour.”

Lady Macbeth, thinking she saw King Duncan’s blood on her hands, said, “Yet here’s a spot.”

The doctor said, “I will write down what she says. It will help me to remember her words.”

Reliving the night that her husband and she murdered King Duncan, the sleepwalking Lady Macbeth said, “Out, damned spot! Out, I say!”

Reliving hearing the bell strike two the night of King Duncan’s murder, Lady Macbeth said, “One. Two. Why, then, it is time to do it. Hell is murky! My husband, are you a soldier and afraid? What need we fear who knows what we will have done, when none will have the power to bring us to justice?”

Reliving when she smeared King Duncan’s blood on the faces of his bodyguards, Lady Macbeth said, “Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.”

“Did you hear that?” the doctor said.

Reliving the murder of Lady Macduff, Lady Macbeth said, “The Thane of Fife had a wife — where is she now?”

Reliving trying to wash her hands after she had smeared King Duncan’s blood on the faces of his bodyguards, Lady Macbeth said, “What, will these hands never be clean?”

Reliving the banquet at which her husband had been startled when he thought he saw Banquo’s ghost, Lady Macbeth said, “No more of that, my lord, no more of that — you will mar all unless you can appear to be innocent.”

“For shame,” the doctor said. “You have known what you should not.”

“She has spoken something that she should not, I am sure of that,” the gentlewoman said. “Heaven knows what she has known.”

Lady Macbeth said, “Here’s the smell of the blood still! All the perfumes of Arabia will not take away the smell of this blood!”

She sighed heavily.

“What a sigh she made!” the doctor said, “Her heart is gravely burdened.”

The gentlewoman said, “I would not have such a heart in my bosom even if I were Queen.”

The doctor said, “Well, well, well.”

“Pray God all be well, sir,” the gentlewoman said.

“This disease is beyond my medical knowledge, yet I have known some people who have walked in their sleep who have died holily and without guilt in their beds.”

Lady Macbeth said, “Wash your hands, put on your nightgown, don’t look so pale. ... I tell you yet again,

Banquo is buried — he cannot come out of his grave.”

“This is something new,” the doctor said.

Lady Macbeth said, “To bed, to bed! There is knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What’s done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed!”

Still asleep, Lady Macbeth walked out of the room.

“Will she go now to bed?” the doctor asked.

“Yes. Immediately,” the gentlewoman said.

“Foul whisperings and evil rumors are abroad,” the doctor said. “Unnatural deeds do breed unnatural troubles such as sleepwalking and sleeptalking — guilty minds will tell their secrets to their deaf pillows. Lady Macbeth needs a priest more than she needs a physician. May God forgive us all!”

He ordered the gentlewoman, “Look after her. Take away from her anything she can use to hurt herself. Watch her carefully.”

He added, “Now, good night. She has baffled my mind and amazed my sight. I dare not tell anyone what I think.”

“Good night, good doctor,” the gentlewoman said.

— 5.2 —

The Scottish nobles Menteith, Caithness, Angus, and Lennox, as well as many Scottish soldiers, were in a field. These nobles — rebels against Macbeth — were planning to meet and join the soldiers led by Malcolm.

Menteith said, “The English army is near, led on by Malcolm, his uncle Old Siward and the good Macduff. They burn to get revenge against Macbeth. The causes they have for revenge would rouse even a dead man to the bloody and fierce call to arms against Macbeth.”

Angus said, “We will meet the English army near Birnam Forest. That is the way their soldiers are marching.”

Caithness asked, “Is Donalbain with his brother, Malcolm?”

“No, sir, he is not,” Lennox replied. “I have a list of the gentry who are with Malcolm. Old Siward’s son is with Malcolm, as are many beardless youths who are now declaring themselves to be men by marching against Macbeth.”

“What is the tyrant Macbeth doing?” Menteith asked.

“He is fortifying his castle at Dunsinane,” Caithness replied. “Some people say that he is insane. Other people, who hate him less, call it valiant fury. Either way, he lacks self-control, and he cannot control the soldiers who should be fighting for him. Because he lacks soldiers who are willing to fight for him in open battle, he is preparing for a siege.”

“Now he can no longer blame his murders on other people, the way he blamed King Duncan’s murder on the King’s bodyguards and the King’s sons,” Angus said. “The blood of the people he has murdered now sticks to his hands. His subjects now continually rebel against him because of his many treacheries. He forces his soldiers to obey his orders — none of his soldiers obeys him out of respect. His crown is too large for him — he is not man enough to be King. His wearing the crown is like a dwarfish thief trying to wear a giant’s robe.”

“Everything that is inside Macbeth condemns his murders and other evils,” Menteith said. “No one can blame Macbeth’s tormented senses and awareness of guilt for causing him to act in fits of irrational anger.”

“Let us march forward,” Caithness said. “We will obey the

orders of Malcolm, the true King to whom we truly owe allegiance. He will be the doctor of our sickly country, and with our blood we will help him purge the evil that is Macbeth.”

“We will use our blood to water the flower that is our rightful King and make it grow, and we will use our blood to drown the weed that is Macbeth,” Lennox said. “Now let us march to Birnam Forest.”

— 5.3 —

In a room in the castle at Dunsinane, Macbeth raged — the doctor and some servants witnessed his rage.

“Bring me no more reports,” Macbeth ordered. “I know that the Thanes are deserting me and going to support Malcolm, and I don’t care. Until Birnam Forest marches to Dunsinane, I shall fear nothing. What is the boy Malcolm to me? A danger? No! He was born of woman. Supernatural spirits that know the future of mortals have told me, ‘Fear not, Macbeth; no man who is born of woman shall ever have power over you.’ So desert me, disloyal Thanes, and support the effeminate and decadent English. My mind and my heart shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.”

A servant, pale with fear, entered the room.

Macbeth yelled at the servant, “May Satan turn you black, you cream-faced fool! Where did you get that foolish look of fear? You look like a frightened goose.”

His voice shaking with fear, the servant said, “There is ten thousand —”

Macbeth finished the sentence for him, “Geese, fool?”

“Soldiers, sir,” the servant said.

“Go prick your face and use the red blood to cover the whiteness of your frightened face, you lily-livered boy! What soldiers, fool? May your soul die! Your linen cheeks are witnesses of your fear. What soldiers, milk-face?”

“The English force, so please you.”

“Take your face away from here,” Macbeth ordered.

The servant left the room.

Macbeth began to call for an officer, whose name was Seyton.

“Seyton!” Macbeth called. “I am sick at heart, when I see such cowards. Seyton, come here!”

Macbeth thought, *This battle will either establish me permanently on the throne or take the throne away from me.*

He paused, then he thought, *I have lived long enough. My life is now like a withered, dry, yellow leaf of autumn, ready to fall and die as winter arrives. All those things that an old man who has lived well should have — honor, love, loyalty, and troops of friends — I will not have. Instead, I will have curses that are not loud but are deep, the signs of honor that I force my subjects to show to me, and flattery — flattery that my subjects will not like to engage in but will be too afraid not to.*

He yelled, “Seyton!”

Seyton entered the room and said, “What is your gracious pleasure?”

“Is there any more news?”

“All that was reported to you has been confirmed to be true.”

“I’ll fight until my flesh is hacked from my bones,” Macbeth said, “Give me my armor.”

“It is not needed yet,” Seyton said.

“I’ll put it on anyway,” Macbeth said. “Send out more people on horseback; let them scout the country around the castle and hang anyone who talks of fear. Give me my armor.”

Then Macbeth said, “How is your patient, doctor?”

“She is not so sick, lord,” the doctor said, “as she is troubled with numerous illusions and hallucinations that keep her from sleeping.”

“Cure her of that,” Macbeth ordered, “if you can. Can you treat a diseased mind? Can you remove her sorrows from her memory? Can you give her a drug that will clean away everything that weighs upon her heart?”

“Only the patient can heal that kind of illness,” the doctor said.

“In that case, let medical science go to the dogs,” Macbeth thundered. “I don’t want it.”

He said to Seyton, “Come, put my armor on. Give me my lance.”

He said to the doctor, “The Thanes fly from me.”

He said to Seyton, “Faster.”

He said to the doctor, “If you are able to, analyze the urine of my country, discover what disease it suffers from, and cure it so that Scotland has a sound and pristine health. If you can do that, I will applaud you until the echo of my applause returns to you.”

Having finished putting on his armor, Macbeth said to

Seyton, "Pull my armor off, I say."

Macbeth said to the doctor, "What rhubarb, senna, or purgative drug would purge Scotland of these English soldiers? Have you heard about the soldiers?"

"Yes, my good lord," the doctor said. "I know that you are preparing for war."

Macbeth said to Seyton, who was holding the armor he had taken off Macbeth, "Carry the armor behind me. I will not be afraid of death and destruction and bane until Birnam Forest comes to Dunsinane."

Macbeth and Seyton left, and the doctor thought, *Were I from Dunsinane away and clear, a large sum of money would not again draw me here.*

— 5.4 —

Malcolm, Old Siward and Young Siward, Macduff, Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox, and Ross rode horses near Birnam Forest. Many soldiers marched near them.

"Kinsmen," Malcolm said, "I hope the time is near at hand when Scots can again be safe in their own homes."

Menteith said, "All of us believe that will happen soon."

Old Siward asked, "What forest is this ahead of us?"

"Birnam Forest," Menteith said.

Malcolm ordered the soldiers, "Let every soldier cut down a branch and carry it in front of him. That way, we can hide the number of soldiers in our army and Macbeth's scouts will make false reports of our army's strength."

The soldiers replied, "We shall do it."

Old Siward said, "According to our own scouts, the

impudent Macbeth is fortifying Dunsinane and will not attack us in open battle. He is willing to endure our setting siege to the castle.”

“Dunsinane is his main fortress,” Malcolm said. “He is forced to stay there. Whoever is able to desert him does so, whether they are nobility or common people. The soldiers who stay with him are forced to stay. They do not respect Macbeth and do not want to die for him. If Macbeth were to take the field, his soldiers would desert him.”

Macduff said, “Let us do our judging of soldiers after the battle is over. For now, let us fight.”

Old Siward said, “Soon we will find out whether we win or lose the war. We can talk and we can hope, but it will be fighting that wins the war.”

— 5.5 —

In a room in the castle at Dunsinane stood Macbeth, Seyton, and some soldiers.

Macbeth ordered, “Hang our banners on the walls of the castle that face the enemy. The news is still, ‘They come!’ But the strength of our castle will laugh a siege to scorn. Let the enemy soldiers lay siege until famine and fever eat them up. If they were not reinforced with deserters from my army, we might have boldly met them in open battle, beard to beard, and beat them back to England.”

Some women in the castle screamed.

“What is that noise?” Macbeth asked.

“It is the cry of women, my good lord,” Seyton said. He left to investigate the cause of the screams.

I have almost forgot what fear tastes like, Macbeth thought. At one time, my senses would have cooled if I had heard a

scream at night and my hair would have risen and stood on end when I heard a scary story. But I have experienced so many murderous horrors that they are so familiar to me that a new horror cannot startle me.

Seyton entered the room.

“What is the cause of that screaming?” Macbeth asked.

“The Queen, my lord, is dead,” Seyton replied.

“She should have died at a later time,” Macbeth said. “Then I would have had time to mourn her. But she would inevitably die sometime, so now is as good a time as any.”

He thought, Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow creep along from day to day until the end of time. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle of life! Life is only a walking shadow that passes quickly away. Life is only a poor actor who struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. Life is meaningless: It is a tale told by an idiot, it is full of sound and fury, and it means nothing.

A messenger entered the room.

“You came here to tell me something,” Macbeth said. “Tell me quickly what you have to say.”

“My gracious lord,” the messenger said, “I need to report to you what I saw, but I do not know how to do it.”

“Just tell me,” Macbeth ordered.

“As I was doing guard duty on the hill, I looked toward Birnam Forest, and it seemed to me that the forest began to move.”

“Liar and slave!” Macbeth raged.

“If I am lying, punish me,” the messenger said. “Look for

yourself and you will see the forest is now only three miles away and moving toward us.”

Macbeth said, “If you are lying, I will hang you alive from the nearest tree and let you die of hunger. If you are telling the truth, I will not mind if you do that to me.”

Macbeth thought, *My confidence is disappearing, and I suspect that the apparition the three Weird Sisters showed me was equivocating and deliberately misleading me, making me think that one thing is true when actually something different is true. The apparition told me, “Fear not, until Birnam Forest comes to Dunsinane.”*

Macbeth said, “Let us not wait to be besieged! Instead, let us arm for battle and go forth from the castle! If this messenger is telling the truth, it is no use for me either to try to run away or to stay here and endure a siege.”

Macbeth thought, *I begin to grow weary of the Sun and of life itself. I wish that the universe were plunged into chaos.*

Macbeth said, “Ring the alarm bell! Blow, storm! Come, vengeance!”

Macbeth thought, *At least I’ll die with armor on my back.*

He had decided that if he should die, so be it. Still, he had some confidence in the third apparition’s prophecy: “No man born of woman shall harm Macbeth.”

— 5.6 —

Malcolm, Old Siward, and Macduff, along with many soldiers holding tree branches in front of them, stood outside Macbeth’s castle at Dunsinane.

Malcolm ordered, “We are close enough to the castle. Throw down the leafy tree branches and show yourselves to the enemy. Old Siward, you and your noble son, Young

Siward, shall lead our first battalion. Macduff and I will do whatever else is needed to be done.”

Old Siward replied, “Fare you well. We go to find the tyrant’s army. If we cannot conquer the tyrant, we deserve to be beaten.”

“Make all our trumpets speak,” Malcolm said. “Blow all of them. Give them all breath, those noisy announcers of blood and death.”

— 5.7 —

Macbeth had led his few forces out of the castle and onto the battlefield, where they were badly losing.

Macbeth thought, *I am like a bear that is tied to a stake for the night’s bloody entertainment of a bear fighting dogs. I cannot run away, but I must fight the dogs that attack me. Who is the man, if anyone, who was not born of woman? I must fear that man, or no man.*

Young Siward saw Macbeth and asked him, “What is your name?”

“If I tell you my name, I will frighten you,” Macbeth said.

“No, you won’t,” Young Siward said. “Not even if you have a name that is hotter than any name in Hell.”

“My name is Macbeth.”

“Satan himself could not pronounce a name that is more hateful to my ear.”

“Or one that makes you more afraid.”

“You lie, hated tyrant! With my sword I will show you that your name causes no fear in me!”

Macbeth and Young Siward fought, and Macbeth killed

Young Siward.

Macbeth said over the corpse, “You were born of woman, but I smile at the swords and laugh at the other weapons of all men who were born of woman.”

Macduff, who was seeking Macbeth elsewhere on the battlefield, shouted, “I seek the place where the most fighting is because that is where Macbeth will be. Tyrant, show your face! If you are already slain by no stroke of mine, my wife’s and my children’s ghosts will continue to haunt me. I will not strike at wretched foot soldiers, mercenaries who bear arms for money. Either I kill you, Macbeth, or I sheathe my sword with an unbloodied and unbattered edge. The great clamor I hear must be announcing your presence. Let me find Macbeth, god of Fortune! I ask for nothing more.”

Elsewhere, Old Siward and Malcolm met and talked about the battle.

“This way, my lord,” Old Siward said to Malcolm. “The castle surrendered to us without a fight. Most of the tyrant’s soldiers have turned against him and are now on our side. The battle is almost won. Little is left to do.”

Malcolm said, “We have met with ‘enemy’ soldiers who join our cause and fight by our sides against a common enemy: Macbeth.”

“Sir, enter the castle,” Old Siward said.

— 5.8 —

Macbeth, knowing that he had lost the battle, thought, *Why should I play the Roman fool, and commit suicide by throwing myself on my own sword? Let Brutus or Cassius commit suicide when they see that their cause is lost. While I see enemy soldiers, gashes made by my sword look better*

on their bodies.

Macduff saw Macbeth and ordered, “Turn around, Hell-hound, turn around!”

Recognizing Macduff, Macbeth said, “Of all men, I have been avoiding you. Don’t fight me. My soul is already too much burdened with the blood of your wife and children. I do not want to add your blood to my burden of guilt.”

“I will not talk,” Macduff said. “My sword will do the talking. You are a bloodier villain than words can express.”

Macduff attacked Macbeth, who fiercely fought back.

At a pause in the fight, Macbeth said to Macduff, “You are wasting your time trying to kill me. You can kill air with your sword as easily as you can kill me. Go and fight soldiers who can be killed. I lead a charmed life. No man born of woman can kill me.”

“Your charm is worthless,” Macduff replied. “The evil spirit whom you have served and still serve can tell you that I was from my mother’s womb prematurely ripped. I was not born through the birth canal but had to be cut out of her womb to save my life.”

“May you be damned to Hell for telling me this!” Macbeth shouted. “You have taken away my confidence. Let no one believe the Weird Sisters — those deceiving fiends who trick mortals with equivocating words that appear as if they are good but that are in reality evil. I will not fight you.”

“Then surrender, coward,” Macduff said. “We will exhibit you before the gaze of your former subjects. We will treat you the way we treat deformed animals and make you a freakshow. We will paint your portrait on a sign on a pole along with the words ‘Here may you see the tyrant!’”

“I will not surrender and kiss the ground before young

Malcolm's feet, and I will not be subjected to cruel treatment and abuse by my subjects," Macbeth said. "Although Birnam Forest has marched to Dunsinane and although you are not of woman born, yet I will try to kill you. In front of my body, I hold my shield. Fight, Macduff, and damned be the first man who cries, 'Stop! I have had enough!'"

They fought.

Elsewhere, Malcolm, Siward, Ross, and the other Thanes were meeting.

"Not all of our friends are accounted for," Malcolm said. "I hope that they survived the battle."

"Some soldiers die in every battle," Old Siward said. "Judging by the number of corpses we see, we have won a great battle while losing very few lives."

"Macduff is missing, and so is your noble son," Malcolm said.

Ross said to Old Siward, "Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt on the battlefield. He lived only until he reached adulthood. As soon as he became an adult, he proved his manhood by valiantly fighting. He died courageously, as befits a man."

"My son is dead?" Old Siward asked.

"Yes," Ross replied. "His corpse has been carried off the battlefield. If you were to mourn him as much as he is worth, you would never stop mourning him."

"Were his wounds in the front?" Old Siward asked, knowing that cowards who run away are wounded in the back.

"Yes, they were in the front," Ross replied.

“Then he deserves to be — and is — a soldier of God,” Old Siward said. “Had I as many sons as I have hairs, none could have a more honorable death than that of Young Siward. And so the death bell tolls for my son.”

“He deserves to be mourned more greatly than this,” Malcolm said, “and I shall mourn him.”

“No greater mourning is needed,” said the stoical Old Siward. “He died well and honorably. He settled all of his accounts. Look! Here comes better news!”

Macduff, carrying the decapitated head of Macbeth, said to Malcolm, “You are now King. Hail, King! Look at the cursed head of the tyrant. Scotland is now free from tyranny. I see around you the nobles of Scotland, and I ask them to join me in this cry: Hail, King of Scotland!”

Macduff and the nobles shouted, “Hail, King of Scotland!”

Malcolm said, “Not much time will pass before I reward you for your loyalty. I owe you now, and I will repay you. My Thanes and kinsmen, henceforth be Earls — the first Earls ever in Scotland. Much remains to be done with the dawn of this new era. We must call from abroad our friends in exile who fled from Macbeth’s tyranny. We must find the cruel supporters of this dead butcher and his fiend-like Queen, who is thought to have committed suicide. These and other things, God willing, we will do justly and at the right time and place. Thank you, all, and I invite you to see me crowned at Scone as the rightful King of Scotland.”

Chapter XXIX: OTHELLO

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Othello*)

Male Characters

DUKE OF VENICE.

BRABANTIO, a Venetian senator, father to Desdemona.

GRATIANO, a noble Venetian and brother to Brabantio.

LODOVICO, a noble Venetian and kinsman to Brabantio.

OTHELLO, the Moor, in the military service of Venice.

CASSIO, an honorable lieutenant to Othello.

IAGO, an ensign, aka standard-bearer, aka ancient, to Othello; a villain.

RODERIGO, a Venetian gentleman.

MONTANO, governor of Cyprus, replaced by Othello.

Clown, servant to Othello.

Female Characters

DESDEMONA, wife to Othello.

EMILIA, wife to Iago.

BIANCA, a courtesan who is mistress to Cassio.

Other Characters

SENATORS, SAILORS, GENTLEMEN OF CYPRUS,
OFFICERS, MESSENGERS, MUSICIANS.

CHAPTER 1 (*Othello*)

— 1.1 —

Late at night on a street in Venice, Italy, Iago and Roderigo were in the middle of a conversation.

Roderigo said, “Bah! Don’t even try to make me believe that! I have trusted you, and I have let you spend my money as if it were your own. I can’t believe what I am hearing!”

“You are not listening to me,” Iago said. “I never dreamed that such a thing could happen. If I have, then hate me forever.”

“You told me that you hate him.”

“Indeed, I do,” Iago replied. “Hate me if I do not hate him. Three VIPs of Venice went to him to ask him to make me his lieutenant. They removed their hats as they stood in front of him to show their respect for him. By the faith of humanity, I know my worth, and I know that I deserve to be his lieutenant. But he, being proud and wanting to make his own decision, ignored them. Instead, he came up with a bombastic reason stuffed with military jargon to ignore their request and said, “Assuredly, I have already chosen my lieutenant.” And who was his new lieutenant? Indeed, he was a great theorist, a Florentine — a foreigner — named Michael Cassio, who is a dandy and ladies man who has avoided ruining his bachelor fun by avoiding marriage. He has no personal experience of warfare. He has never positioned a squadron in the field. He does not know how to methodically arrange troops on a battlefield any more than a spinster knows. All he knows is textbook theory; our inexperienced Venetian senators can talk as ‘masterly’ as he can. Cassio’s soldiership is all talk and no experience,

and all his talk is mere prattle. But he, sir, was chosen to be lieutenant, while I, whose worth has been witnessed in battles at Rhodes, Cyprus, and other places — both Christian places and heathen places in the crusading wars — have been stopped in my advancement. I am like a ship that is in the lee and becalmed — another ship stands between the wind and me and so keeps me from moving forward. This bookkeeper, this petty accountant, will be lieutenant, while I — God help me! — must continue to be his Moorship's ancient — his standard-bearer, his ensign.”

Anyone in Venice hearing this conversation would realize that Iago and Roderigo were talking about Othello, a Moor — a black North African — who served Venice as a military commander. The word “Moorship” is a portmanteau term combining “Moor” and the respectful term “Worship,” but Iago was not using the word “Moorship” respectfully. As standard-bearer, Iago carried the distinctive flag identifying his unit, but he wanted a promotion to lieutenant — a promotion that Othello had denied to him and given to Michael Cassio instead. This was one of the reasons why Iago hated Othello.

“By Heaven, I would prefer to be his executioner than his standard-bearer,” Roderigo said.

“I know of no way to remedy this situation,” Iago said. “This is the curse of military service. Advancement and promotions come about because of influence and favoritism, and not by seniority, where the person second in line would eventually take over from the first person. Now, sir, judge for yourself whether I in any just way am required to respect and serve and be loyal to the Moor.”

“I would not follow him then,” Roderigo said.

“Oh, sir, know that I follow him only in order to use him for my own advantage. We cannot all be masters, and not

all masters will be loyally followed. We see many a duteous and bowing servant knave, who, enjoying his own obsequious bondage, wears out his life, much like his master's ass, for nothing but provender, and when he's old, he's cashiered — he's fired and left to forage for himself. Let such honest and respectable knaves be whipped. Others there are who, showing outwardly all forms and visages of duty, keep yet their hearts intent on helping themselves. They give their lords shows of service and thrive at their lords' expense. When they have stuffed their coats with money, they do themselves homage and praise themselves. These fellows have some spirit, and I consider myself to be such a fellow. For, sir, it is as sure as you are Roderigo that, were I the Moor, I would not be Iago — if I were the Moor, I would not be fooled by an Iago because I would see through him and realize that he was putting on a show of loyalty to me. In seeming to follow him, I follow only myself; I am loyal to only myself and I work only to profit myself. As Heaven is my judge, I do not serve him out of love and duty, but only seem to. Why? So that I may profit by so doing. Right now, I do not act openly as I would like to act. Eventually, I will do so. Right now, I will wear my false heart upon my sleeve the way that a servant wears a badge that shows which family he serves. My false heart will falsely say that I truly serve Othello. Later, my actions will match what I truly think and feel. Then, I will allow jackdaws — foolish people — to wise up and peck at my false heart and tear it away, revealing my true character to all. Everyone will then know that I am not what I seem to be. I will reverse the moral of the fable of the bird in borrowed feathers — in the fable, a jackdaw dresses in the feathers of a peacock, but once the peacocks know what the jackdaw is doing, they rip the borrowed feathers (and the jackdaw's own feathers) away from the jackdaw's body. The moral of that fable is to not dress in borrowed feathers, but my dressing in borrowed feathers will help me achieve

my goals.”

“The thick-lips will have a full fortune if he can get away with this elopement!” Roderigo said.

“Call to and wake up her father. Rouse him out of bed, pester him, poison his delight, proclaim his business in the streets, and incense her kinsmen. Even though her father in a fertile climate dwells, plague him with flies. Even though his joy be real joy, yet throw such changes of vexation on his joy that it may lose some color and joyfulness.”

“Here is her father’s house,” Roderigo said. “I’ll call to him.”

“Do that,” Iago said. “Call to him with such a frightening and dire yell as is used when a fire in a populous city is started by negligence at night.”

“Brabantio, wake up! Signior Brabantio, get up!” Roderigo shouted.

“Wake up!” Iago shouted. “Brabantio! Thieves! Thieves! Thieves! Look after your house, your daughter, and your moneybags! Thieves! Thieves!”

Brabantio, a senator of Venice and the father of Desdemona, appeared at a second-story window and asked, “What is the reason for this terrible racket? What is the matter?”

Roderigo replied, “Signior, is all your family inside your house?”

Iago asked, “Are your doors locked?”

“Why are you asking me these questions?”

“Sir, you have been robbed,” Iago said. “Get dressed. Your heart has burst, and you have lost half your soul. Even now, right now, an old black ram is tugging your white ewe.

Arise! Arise! Awake the snoring citizens with the bell, or else the black devil will make a grandfather of you. Arise, I say.”

“What, have you lost your wits?” Brabantio asked.

“Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?” Roderigo asked.

“No. Who are you?”

“My name is Roderigo.”

“You are even less welcome now than you were before,” Brabantio said. “I have ordered you not to loiter around my doors. In honest plainness you have heard me say that my daughter is not for you, no matter how much you think you love her, but now you — full of supper and maddening alcoholic draughts that fill you with malicious bravery — have come to disrupt my quiet life.”

“Sir, sir, sir —” Roderigo started to speak.

Brabantio interrupted, “You will learn that my character and place as a senator of Venice give me the power to punish these actions of yours and make you regret them.”

“Patience, good sir!” Roderigo said.

“Why are you two talking to me about my house being robbed? This is Venice. My home is not an isolated house in the countryside.”

“Most grave and respected Brabantio, with sincere and disinterested motivation I come to you,” Roderigo lied.

Iago said to Brabantio, “Damn, sir, you are one of those people who will not serve God even when the devil — who is black — orders you to. You will not take good advice when it comes from a person whom you dislike. Although we come to do you good, you ignore us because you think

we are ruffians. Because of that, you'll have your daughter covered sexually by a Barbary stallion. By Barbary, I mean Arabian, and by Arabian, I mean Moorish. Your grandchildren will neigh to you; you will have racehorses for kin and small Spanish horses for your blood relations."

Brabantio, who did not recognize Iago's voice, asked, "What profane wretch are you?"

"I am one, sir, who comes to tell you that your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs — they are having sex."

"You are a villain."

"You are —" Iago thought about using a cruelly insulting term, but instead finished his sentence with "— a senator."

"You will have to pay for tonight's outrage! I know your identity, Roderigo!"

"Sir, I will pay whatever you think I owe you," Roderigo said. "If it be your pleasure and you have given most wise consent that your beautiful daughter, just after midnight this night, be transported, with no worse nor better guard than a knave of common hire, a gondolier, and given to the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor — if this is known to you and you have given your permission to your daughter to marry the Moor, as I partly suspect to be the case, judging by your words to us — then we have done you bold and insolent wrongs. But if you do not know what your daughter has done, my code of conduct tells me that you have wrongly rebuked us. Do not believe that I, contrary to all sense of civility, would play and trifle with the respect that is due to you. Your daughter, if you have not given her permission to marry the Moor, has made a disgusting revolt against your wishes. She has tied her duty, beauty, intelligence, and fortunes to an extravagant and wheeling stranger who wanders widely here and everywhere.

Immediately look and see whether your daughter is in her bedchamber or elsewhere in your house. If she is, then let us suffer the state's punishment for lying to and upsetting you."

Finally convinced that perhaps Roderigo was telling the truth when he said that his daughter was no longer in his house, Brabantio called out to his servants, "Strike a spark on the tinder! Give me a candle! Wake up all my relatives! This report by Roderigo is not unlike my dream. Belief in it oppresses me already. Light, I say! Bring me light!"

He disappeared from the second-story window.

Iago said to Roderigo, "Farewell; I must leave you. It is not wise — if I want to keep my job — for me to be made to give evidence against the Moor, as I will have to if I stay and am found here. The police will make me talk. What we have done may gall the Moor and cause him a little trouble, but it will do him no serious harm. He will not be fired from his position of military leader because he is needed to defend the island of Cyprus and keep Venice safe. Venice's war against the Turks is ongoing, and the Moor's competence makes him the right choice to be a military leader. To save their lives, the Venetian senators can find no one with the Moor's competence and experience to lead their military forces. Although I hate the Moor as much as I do the torments of Hell, yet because it is necessary to keep my job, I must pretend to respect him and put on a good show. You will find the Moor with me at the Sagittary Inn. Lead Brabantio and the men he wakes up there. Farewell."

Iago left, and Brabantio and some servants carrying torches came out of his house.

"It is too true an evil," Brabantio said. "My daughter is gone. The rest of my despised life will be spent in bitterness. Now, Roderigo, where did you see her? Oh,

unhappy girl! She is with the Moor, did you say? Having experienced this, I have to ask why anyone would want to be a father! How did you know it was she? She has deceived me past all comprehension! What did she say to you?”

He ordered his servants, “Get more candles and light some torches. Wake up all my relatives.”

He then asked Roderigo, “Do you think that they are married?”

“Truly, I think they are.”

“Oh, Heaven! How did she get out of my house? Her blood is treasonous! Fathers, from now on do not trust that your daughters will continue to be obedient because they have always acted that way — they can change.”

He paused, then added, “Aren’t there magical charms and love spells that can change the nature of youth and maidenhood? Have you read, Roderigo, of things like that?”

“Yes, sir, I have indeed.”

Brabantio said to his servants, “Wake up my brother.”

He said to Roderigo, “Now I wish that you had married my daughter.”

He said to his servants, “Some of you go one way, some another.”

He said to Roderigo, “Where can we apprehend my daughter and the Moor?”

“I think that I can lead you to him, if you want. Get some armed men and come along with me.”

“Lead on. At every house I will call and wake up the

sleepers. As a person of power and influence, I can demand and get help from almost every house.”

He ordered his servants, “Get weapons, and get some special officers of night — not the usual night watchmen — to go with us.”

He added, “Good Roderigo, I will reward your actions to me.”

— 1.2 —

On another street of Venice were standing Othello, Iago, and some servants holding torches. Iago was telling Othello a partial truth. He told him the truth about Brabantio’s anger toward him, but he lied about his conversation with Roderigo.

Iago said about his conversation with Roderigo, “Although in the trade of war I have slain men, yet I believe it to be immoral to commit cold-blooded murder. I lack sometimes the evil-mindedness to do what would help me. Nine or ten times I was tempted to stab him here under the ribs.”

“It is better that you did not,” Othello replied.

“But he chattered foolishly and called you such scurvy and provoking terms that, with the little godliness I have, I spared his life with great difficulty.”

Iago then began to speak about Brabantio: “But let me ask you, sir, are you securely married? Be assured that this magnifico is much beloved and that he has much power; indeed, his power approaches that of the Duke of Venice. If he can, he will make you get a divorce, or put upon you whatever restraint and hardship the law, with all his might to enforce it, will give him scope.”

“Let him act on his spite,” Othello said calmly. “The services that I have done for the Venetian government will

outweigh his complaints — my services will speak louder than his complaints. People do not know, because I won't boast until boasting is honorable, that I am descended from men of royal rank, and my family, in all due modesty, is equal in social status to the family that I have married into. Know, Iago, that I love the gentle Desdemona. If I did not, I would not have married her and given up my freedom in the tents of military camps for the restrictions and confinements of marriage — even if marrying her would have given me all the treasures of sunken ships lying on the bottom of the sea. But look! What lights are coming toward us?"

"Those are the lights of Desdemona's awoken father and his friends," Iago replied. "It is best — and safer — for you to go inside."

"No," Othello said. "I must confront them. My good qualities, legal right, and blameless soul shall serve me well. Are you sure that these people are Desdemona's father and his friends?"

Looking again, Iago said, "By Janus, I think they are not."

Iago thought, *Janus is a literally two-faced Roman god. Since I am figuratively two-faced, Janus is an appropriate god for me to swear by.*

Michael Cassio and some other military officers carrying torches arrived.

Othello greeted them, "The servants of the Duke, and my lieutenant, welcome. May the goodness of the night be upon you, friends! What is the news?"

"The Duke greets you, general," Cassio said. "And he urgently requires your immediate appearance."

"What is the matter?"

“I think that it is a matter of some urgency that concerns the island of Cyprus. Our ships have sent a dozen messengers, one after the other, this night. Many of the consuls have already been awoken and are meeting at the Duke’s. You have been urgently sent for. When you were not found at your lodging, the Venetian Senate sent three different groups of people to find you.”

“It is well that you have found me. I will leave a brief message at this inn and then go with you.”

Othello went inside the inn.

Cassio asked Iago, “Ancient, what is he doing here?”

“Tonight, he has boarded a treasure-ship on land,” Iago replied. “If he can keep the ship, he is a made man forever.”

Iago thought, *Yes, Desdemona comes from a wealthy family, and Othello has boarded her — or will board her — in a sexual sense.*

“I do not understand.”

“He’s married.”

“To whom?”

Iago started to answer, “To —” But Othello came out of the building and Iago asked him, “Come, captain, are you ready to go?”

“I’m ready.”

Cassio saw some people coming toward them and said, “Here comes another troop of people seeking you.”

“It is Brabantio,” Iago said. “General, be advised; he comes with bad intent toward you.”

Brabantio, Roderigo, and several officers carrying torches came toward Othello.

“Stop!” Othello shouted. “Stand there!”

They stopped, and Roderigo said to Brabantio, “Signior, it is the Moor.”

“Arrest him!” Brabantio shouted. “He’s a thief!”

Several people, including Iago, drew their swords.

Iago immediately singled out the one person he knew would not hurt him and said, “You, Roderigo! Come, sir, I will fight you.”

Iago thought, *Roderigo and I can pretend to fight. That way, I will look as if I am defending the Moor.*

Othello said, “Put away your bright swords, or the dew will rust them.”

He thought, *If my sword were to rust, it would be because of blood. The swords that Brabantio and his followers are carrying are in the hands of amateurs.*

He added, “Good signior, you shall command more respect because of your many years than because of your weapons.”

“Oh, you foul thief, where have you hidden my daughter?” Brabantio said. “Damned as you are, you have enchanted and bewitched her. My common sense tells me that chains of magic must bind my daughter. Otherwise, a maiden so tender, beautiful, and happy, who is so opposed to marriage that she has shunned the wealthy and darling men of our nation with their curled hair, would never have — thereby incurring public ridicule — run away from her father and her home to the sooty bosom of such a thing as you, who inspires fear, not delight. Let the world judge whether it is

obvious that you have used foul charms on her and abused her delicate youth with drugs or poisonous potions that weaken willpower. The court of law will agree that this is probable and easy to believe. I therefore seize and arrest you because you are a corrupter of the world, a magician who practices prohibited and illegal dark arts.”

He ordered his followers, “Lay hold of him. If he resists, overpower him at his peril.”

“Don’t move and don’t fight, whether you are on my side or against me,” Othello said. “If it were my cue to fight, I would have known it without a prompter.”

He then asked Brabantio, “Where do you want me to go so I can answer this charge of yours?”

“I want you to go to prison,” Brabantio said, “until a court of law will hear my case.”

“Suppose I do that,” Othello said, “Will the Duke be happy with that? His messengers are here by my side. They have orders to bring me to him because of some important and urgent business of the state.”

One of the Duke’s officers said to Brabantio, “That is true, most worthy signior. The Duke is holding a council and you, yourself, I am sure, have been sent for.”

“What! The Duke is holding a council! At this time of the night! Bring him away and take him to the Duke. Mine is not an idle cause. The Duke himself and all of my fellow senators cannot but feel this wrong as if it were their own, for if such actions as the Moor’s may be done freely, bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.”

They left to see the Duke.

The Duke of Venice and the Venetian senators were sitting at a table in the council chamber. Some military officers were also in attendance.

The Duke said, “These reports lack the consistency that would give them credibility.”

“Indeed, they are inconsistent with each other,” the first senator said. “My letters say that the Turks have a hundred and seven galleys.”

The Duke said, “My letters say a hundred and forty.”

The second senator said, “And mine, two hundred. However, although they do not agree on the number of ships — in such cases as this, where estimates are given, disagreement in numbers is common — yet all these letters confirm that a Turkish fleet is sailing to Cyprus.”

“That is certainly probable,” the Duke said. “The discrepancy in the number of ships does not make me so overconfident that the reports are wrong that I disbelieve the reports’ main point: A Turkish fleet is headed toward Cyprus to attack it and take it away from us. That is something that we must be concerned about.”

A sailor outside the council chamber called, “I have news!”

The first officer said, “Here is a messenger from the galleys.”

The sailor entered the council chamber and said, “The Turkish fleet is now sailing to the island of Rhodes. Signior Angelo ordered me to carry this news to this council.”

The Duke asked his advisors, “What do you think about this change in the Turkish fleet’s course?”

The first senator said, “That cannot be the truth: Reason shows that the Turks cannot be intending to attack Rhodes.

This is a trick; its purpose is to make us concerned about the island of Rhodes and not the island of Cyprus, which must be the Turks' real intended destination. When we consider how much more important Cyprus is to the Turks than Rhodes is, and when we consider that Cyprus is not as well militarily prepared to resist invasion as Rhodes is, then we must realize that the Turks intend to attack Cyprus and not Rhodes. The Turks are not incompetent; they will not leave what is most important until last, and they will not attack a strongly defended island of lesser value to them when they can instead attack a weaker defended island of much greater value to them."

"This is good reasoning based on the best evidence we have," the Duke said. "We can be certain that the Turks do not intend to attack Rhodes."

The first officer, seeing a messenger arriving, said, "Here comes more news."

The messenger arrived and said, "The Turks from the Ottoman Empire, reverend and gracious senators, who have been sailing toward Rhodes, there joined another fleet that is following them."

"I thought so," the first senator said. "How many ships do you guess are in the new fleet?"

"Thirty," the messenger said. "Now they have steered back to their original course and are openly sailing toward Cyprus. Signior Montano, the governor of Cyprus, your trusty and most valiant servant, with honorable respect for you, informs you thus and hopes that you believe him."

"It is certain, now, that the Turks are heading toward Cyprus," the Duke said. "Is Marcus Luccicos in town? He knows much about the Turks and the defense of islands. We should take advantage of the special knowledge that others have."

“He’s now in Florence.”

“Write from us to him; do this as quickly as possible.”

The first senator, seeing more people coming, said, “Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.”

Brabantio, Othello, Iago, Roderigo, and some officers arrived.

The Duke of Venice focused his attention on Othello, who was needed now, and said, “Valiant Othello, we must immediately employ you in military matters concerning our general enemy the Ottoman Turks.”

Seeing Brabantio, the Duke said, “I did not see you at first; welcome, gentle signior. We lacked your counsel and your help this night.”

“And I lacked yours,” Brabantio said. “Your good grace, pardon me. Neither my position as senator nor anything I heard of urgent business has raised me from my bed, nor have the ordinary affairs of government aroused me this night. My personal grief overwhelms me like an open flood-gate; its overbearing nature engulfs and swallows all other sorrows — it is not affected by other sorrows.”

“Why, what’s the matter?” the Duke asked.

“My daughter! Oh, my daughter!”

Some senators asked, “Dead?”

“Yes, to me,” Brabantio answered. “She is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted by spells and medicines bought from quack doctors. Human nature, if it is not deficient, blind, or lame of sense, cannot so preposterously err unless witchcraft is involved.”

The Duke said, “Whoever he is who in this foul proceeding has thus beguiled your daughter and taken away her senses,

and has taken her away from you, the bloody book of law you shall yourself read and interpret in your own way. You will do this even if my own son is the person whom you accuse.”

“Humbly I thank your grace,” Brabantio said. “Here is the man I accuse: this Moor, whom now, it seems, your special order has brought here on important state business.”

A senator said, “We are very sorry to hear it.”

The other senators nodded or murmured their agreement with what the senator had said.

The Duke said to Othello, “What, on your own behalf, do you say to this?”

“He can say nothing except to admit that I have spoken the truth,” Brabantio said.

“Most mighty, respected, and esteemed signiors,” Othello said, “my very noble and approved good masters, that I have taken away this old man’s daughter is most true. It is also true that I have married her. The height and breadth of my offense has this extent and no more. Plain am I in my speech, and little blessed with the soft phrase of peace. Ever since these arms of mine had the strength of a seven-year-old until some months ago, they have done their most important work in the tented fields where soldiers fight and sleep, and I can speak of little of this great world unless it pertains to feats of fighting and battle, and therefore little shall I help my cause by speaking for myself. Yet, with your gracious patience, I will tell a plain and unpolished tale describing my whole course of love. I will tell what drugs, what charms, what incantations, and what mighty magic I supposedly used — for such I am accused of using — to win his daughter.”

Brabantio said, “My daughter was a maiden who was never

bold. She had a spirit so still and quiet that her own natural desires embarrassed her. Could she, in spite of her nature, of their difference in age, of their difference in country of origin, of the danger to her reputation, and of everything, fall in love with something she feared to look at! Only a defective and most imperfect person could think that perfection so could err against all rules of nature; to explain why my daughter eloped with this man, we must look at the practices of cunning Hell. I therefore assert again that he used some drugs that had power over her blood and emotions, or that he gave her a magic love potion that had such an effect on her.”

“Suspicion is not proof,” the Duke said. “Accusation is not proof without fuller and manifest evidence than the implausible and flimsy evidence and weak probabilities that you are putting forward against him. You need more and better evidence than this if you are to be believed.”

The first senator said, “Othello, speak. Did you by cunning and force subdue and poison this young maiden’s affection? Or did her affection for you come from her consent and from honest face-to-face conversation with you?”

Othello replied, “Please, send for the lady to come here. She is at the Sagittary Inn. Let her speak about me in the presence of her father. If you find me wicked and guilty after hearing what she says about me, then not only take away the trust I have from you and the office I hold under you, but also sentence me to die.”

The Duke ordered, “Bring Desdemona here.”

Othello said to Iago, “Ancient, go with them. You best know the location of the inn, and you can lead the Duke’s men there.”

Iago and two of the Duke’s men left.

“Until she comes, I will tell you how she and I fell in love and decided to be married. I will tell you the truth just as if I were confessing my sins to Heaven,” Othello said.

The Duke replied, “Speak, Othello.”

“Desdemona’s father respected me. He often invited me to his home, and he often questioned me about the story of my life: the battles, sieges, and fortunes that I have experienced. I told my story, even from my days of boyhood to the very moment that he bade me tell my story. I spoke about disastrous events, of exciting adventures at sea and on land, of narrow escapes when a gap appeared in the fortifications, of being captured by the insolent foe and sold into slavery, of my ransom out of slavery and my behavior in my travels. I took the opportunity to speak about vast caves and empty, sterile deserts, rough quarries, and rocks and hills whose heads touch Heaven. I also spoke about the cannibals — the Anthropophagi — who eat each other and about hunchbacked men whose heads grow beneath their shoulders. Desdemona intently listened to my story. Sometimes, she would have to leave to attend to household tasks, but she would try to finish these quickly and come to listen to me with a greedy ear. I noticed her interest and took an opportune hour to allow her to ask me to recount my story in full — she had heard bits and pieces of my personal history but not the entire story. I answered her questions, and often as I told her about some distressful event from my youth her eyes filled with tears. When my story was finished, she gave me for my pains a world of sighs. She swore, in faith, that my story was strange, very strange, and it was pitiful, wondrously pitiful. She said that she wished that she had not heard it, but yet she wished that Heaven had made her born not a female but instead such a man as I am. She thanked me, and she requested that if I had a friend who loved her I would teach him how to tell my story, and that story would woo her. Hearing this hint, I

spoke my feelings to her. She loved me for the dangers I had experienced, and I loved her because she did pity them. This is the only witchcraft I have used to woo and wed Desdemona. Here comes the lady; let her be my witness that what I have said is true.”

Desdemona, Iago, and some attendants arrived.

The Duke said, “I think this tale would win my daughter, too. Good Brabantio, make the best you can out of this mangled matter. Remember this proverb: Men would rather use their broken weapons than their bare hands.”

“Please, let my daughter speak,” Brabantio said. “If she confesses that she was half the wooer, then may destruction fall upon my head if I wrongly accuse this man.”

He said to his daughter, “Come hither, gentle mistress. Do you see in all this noble company the man to whom you most owe obedience?”

“My noble father,” Desdemona said, “I do perceive here a divided duty. To you I am bound for my life and education: You raised me. My life and education both have taught me to respect you; you are the lord of duty. I am your daughter, but here is my husband. As much duty as my mother showed to you, giving you preference before her father, so much I claim that I may profess due to the Moor, who is now my lord. To my husband, I most owe obedience, just as my mother did before me.”

“May God be with you!” Brabantio said to Desdemona.

He said to the Duke, “I withdraw my accusation against the Moor. Please, your grace, let us move on to the affairs of state.”

To himself, he said, “I would prefer to adopt a child than to beget it.”

He said to Othello, "Come hither, Moor. I here give you that with all my heart which, if you did not already have it, I would keep from you with all my heart."

He said to his daughter, "Because of you, jewel, I am glad in my soul that I have no other children because your escape would make me a tyrant to them, and I would fasten fetters to their legs to keep them at home."

He said to the Duke, "I have finished speaking, my lord."

The Duke replied, "Let me give you some advice. Perhaps I can say some words that will help these lovers climb into your favor. Our griefs should be over after we see that we have no way to remedy them. We see the worst although we had hoped to avoid it. To continue to mourn a misfortune that is past and gone is the best way to draw new misfortune on. Patient endurance mocks misfortunes that cannot be prevented. The robbed man who smiles steals something from the thief; a man robs himself when he engages in useless grief."

Brabantio replied, "If what you say is correct, then let the Turks cheat us and steal Cyprus from us — the Turks cannot hurt us as long as we smile. A man can hear your words and endure them well when he sits comfortably at home and hears of another's misfortune, but a man who has suffered a misfortune so great that his patience is cruelly taxed must suffer both from the misfortune and from the cruelty of 'comforting' words. These sentences are sugar to a man who does not suffer, but they are gall to a man who does suffer — they are equivocal. But words are merely words; I never yet have heard of any bruised heart that was cured by words heard by the ear. Please, let us now discuss the affairs of the state."

The Duke said, "The Turks with a mighty armed fleet are sailing toward Cyprus. Othello, you best know the

fortifications of the place. We have on Cyprus a governor named Montano — he is very competent, yet our general opinion, which determines what we should do, states that you are the better person to hold power on Cyprus in this situation. Therefore, despite your recent marriage, we want you to sail to Cyprus and defend it.”

“Because of all my experience in warfare, most grave senators, I regard sleeping on the ground in full armor as equivalent to sleeping on a bed made of the softest down,” Othello replied. “I confess that I find a natural and ready eagerness to engage in hardship, and I therefore will undertake to be your general in these present wars against the Turks of the Ottoman Empire.

“Most humbly, therefore, I ask you to make suitable arrangements for my wife. Give her an appropriate residence and financial support with such accommodations and companions as are suitable for someone with her social position.”

“If you please,” the Duke said, “she shall stay at her father’s.”

Brabantio said, “I will not have her stay with me.”

“Nor will I allow her to stay with her father,” Othello said.

“I decline to stay with my father,” Desdemona said. “I do not want to upset him, which would happen each time he looked at me. Most gracious Duke, listen with a favorable ear to my proposal and give me permission to do what my lack of sophistication asks from you.”

“What do you want, Desdemona?” the Duke asked.

“I love the Moor and want to live with him,” she replied. “My violation of normal standards of conduct and the disruption of my life provide unmistakable proof of that to

the world. My heart is now completely in accord with my husband's profession as soldier. I saw Othello's true being in his mind, and I have dedicated my whole being and future to his honor and military virtues. This means, dear lords, that if I am left behind in Venice as a moth — an idler or parasite — of peace whose expenses are paid for by the state, and Othello goes to the war, the rites — both the rites of war and the rights of marriage that follow from the rite of marriage — for which I love him are bereft me. His absence will cause me to be sorrowful until I see him again. Therefore, let me go with him to Cyprus.”

Othello said, “Let her have your permission. Vouch with me, Heaven, that I am not begging that she be allowed to go with me only to please the palate of my sexual appetite and to satisfy my lust — I am a mature man, and I do not allow youthful emotions to rule me, although I will of course have the distinct and proper satisfaction of sex within the marriage. I want to be generous and bountiful to — and enjoy — her mind. Heaven forbid that your good souls think that I will ignore your serious and great business while she is with me. No, if winged Cupid's feathered arrows should ever blind me to my duty and make my powers of perception and intelligence dull from excessive sexual activity so that I no longer do the work you expect me to do, then let housewives take my helmet and use it as a cooking vessel and let all unworthy and base adversities form an army and make war against my reputation!”

“You may make the decision whether Desdemona stays here in Venice or goes with you to Cyprus,” the Duke said. “But this situation is urgent, and it requires haste. You must leave tonight.”

“Tonight, my lord?” Desdemona asked.

“This very night,” the Duke replied.

“I will leave tonight with all my heart,” Othello said.

The Duke said to the senators, “At nine in the morning we will meet again here. Othello, leave some officer behind so that he can bring our commission to you, along with such other important and relevant things that concern you.”

“So please your grace, my ancient, Iago, is a man of honesty and trust. I give him the duty to convey my wife to Cyprus. He can also bring whatever else your good grace shall think is necessary to be sent to me.”

“Let it be so. Good night to everyone.”

The Duke then said to Brabantio, “Noble signior, if virtue no delightful beauty lacks, your son-in-law is far more fair than black.”

The first senator said, “*Adieu*, brave Moor. Treat Desdemona well.”

“Watch her carefully, Moor,” Brabantio said, “if you have eyes to use. She has deceived her father, and she may deceive you.”

As the Duke of Venice and the senators left, Othello called after Brabantio, “I swear upon my life that she will be faithful to me!”

Othello then said, “Honest Iago, I must leave my Desdemona with you. Please, let your wife, Emilia, be her attendant. Bring both of them to Cyprus at the best and most convenient time.”

He added, “Come, Desdemona. I have only an hour to spend with you and must devote it to love, worldly matters, and instructions. We must use the time well and do what is necessary.”

Othello and Desdemona departed, leaving Roderigo and

Iago behind, alone.

Roderigo had been thinking and now he said, “Iago —”

“What have you got to say, noble heart?” Iago asked.

“What do you think I should do?”

“Why, go to bed, and sleep.”

“I will immediately drown myself.”

Iago joked, “If you do, I will stop being friends with you.”

He added, “Why would you drown yourself, you silly gentleman!”

“To live is silliness when to live is torment. When our physician is death, then we have a prescription to die.”

“This is villainous!” Iago said. “I have looked upon the world for four times seven years — I am twenty-eight years old — and ever since I acquired the ability to distinguish between a benefit and an injury, I have never found a man who knew how to love himself. Before I would say that I would drown myself because I loved some b*tch, I would exchange my body for the body of a lecherous baboon.”

“What should I do?” Roderigo asked. “I confess that it is shameful to be so much in love with Desdemona, but I don’t have the power to stop loving her.”

“Bullsh*t!” Iago said. “We do have power — we ourselves decide what we are and whether we are this way or that way. Remember that Galatians 6:7 says that “*whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap.*” Our bodies are our gardens, and our free will is our gardener. Whether we plant nettles or sow lettuce, whether we plant minty hyssop or throw away thyme as if it were a weed, whether we fill our garden with one kind of herb or with many kinds, whether we have a garden that is unproductive because we

are too lazy to tend it or have a productive garden because we manure it and make it fertile through our hard work is up to us. We have the free will to do these things. We have the power to change. Our lives have a pair of scales. In one scale is reason and in the other scale is sensuality. Unless we had reason to counterbalance sensuality, the natural passions and baseness of our natures would lead us to do outrageous actions. Fortunately, we have reason to cool our raging emotions, our carnal stings, our unrestrained lusts — I consider what you call love to be one of our unrestrained lusts.”

“Love is nothing but an unrestrained lust? That cannot be the truth!” Roderigo said.

“It is merely a lust of your body that your will has permitted. Come on, be a man! You want to drown yourself! Instead, drown cats and blind puppies. I have told you that I am your friend and I now tell you that I am determined to help you get what you deserve. We are bound together with cables of everlasting toughness. I could never better help you than now. Remember this proverb: Prepare yourself for success. Therefore, sell your land and put money in your wallet. You can use the money to buy gifts and give them to me to pass on to Desdemona.”

Yes, do that, Iago thought. I will keep the valuable gifts, not give them to Desdemona.

Iago continued, “Go to Cyprus, the battleground of the current war. Cover your handsome face with a fake beard.”

Yes, do that, Iago thought. You aren't man enough to grow a real beard.

Iago continued, “I say again, put money in your wallet. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue to love the Moor — put money in your wallet — and it cannot be that the Moor should long continue to love Desdemona. Their

love had a violent and sudden commencement, and you will see a sudden separation — put money in your wallet. These Moors are changeable in their nature — fill your wallet with money — the food that to him now is as luscious as sweet chocolate shall soon be to him like a bitter apple. Desdemona must soon change her love for a young man — the Moor is older than she is. When she has had enough of his body, she will see that she chose wrongly when she chose an older man. She will find that she must change her lover — therefore, put money in your wallet. If you must damn yourself, find a better way of doing it than drowning. Raise all the money you can. If piety and a frail vow of marriage between a wandering barbarian and an oversophisticated Venetian woman are not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of Hell, you will enjoy her body; therefore, raise money. F**k drowning yourself! It is absolutely the wrong thing to do. If you must die, it is better for you to sleep with her and be hanged than for you not to sleep with her and be drowned.”

“Can I count on you to completely support me as I pursue my goal of sleeping with Desdemona?”

“You can count on me — go and raise money. I have told you often, again and again, that I hate the Moor. My reason for hating him is deeply rooted in my heart — you hate him for no less reason than I do. Let us join together and get revenge against him. If you can make a cuckold out of him, you will feel pleasure and I will be entertained. Time is pregnant with many events to which it will give birth.”

Iago then gave Roderigo a military command: “About face!”

Roderigo was not a military man and did not understand or execute the order.

Iago added, “Go and provide yourself with money. We will

talk more about this tomorrow. *Adieu.*”

“Where shall we meet in the morning?”

“At my lodging.”

“I will be there early.”

“Go now; farewell. But listen to me, Roderigo.”

“What?”

“Talk no more about drowning yourself.”

“I have changed my mind. Instead, I am going to go and sell all my land.”

Roderigo departed, leaving Iago alone.

Iago thought these things:

Just like I am doing now, I have always made my fool a major source of my income. I would be wasting my intelligence and experience if I were to spend time with a fool such as Roderigo and not gain entertainment and profit.

I hate the Moor. It is commonly thought that he has done what is my duty as a husband to do between my sheets — people think that he has slept with Emilia, my wife. I don't know if that is true, but I will assume that it is true. The Moor has a good opinion of me: That will help me to get revenge on him.

Cassio is a handsome man. Let me see now: How can I prepare to commit a double knavery against Othello and Cassio that will result in my taking Cassio's place as Othello's lieutenant? How, how?

Let's see. After a little time has passed, I can lie to Othello and tell him that Cassio is too familiar with Desdemona.

Cassio has an agreeable appearance and a charming manner that can arouse suspicion. He seems designed to persuade women to be unfaithful to their husbands. The Moor is of a free and open nature; he thinks that men are honest who only seem to be honest. I can lead him as tenderly by the nose as jackasses are led.

I have it. I have formed a plan. Hell and night must bring my plan's monstrous birth to the world's light.

CHAPTER 2 (*Othello*)

— 2.1 —

Montano, the governor of Cypress, was standing with two other gentlemen near a quay that was used for loading and unloading ships at a port in Cypress. One gentleman stood on a high structure and so was able to see farther out at sea than Montano, who asked, “What can you see out at sea?”

“Nothing at all,” the first gentleman said. “The sea is tempestuous and rough. I cannot see a sail.”

“The wind has been tempestuous on land, too,” Montano said. “A fuller blast of wind has never shaken our battlements. If the wind has been as tempestuous at sea, what ships’ ribs of oak, when mountainous waves of water melt on them, can hold the mortise and keep their joints together and not be wrecked? What do you think will be the outcome of this?”

The second gentleman said, “The outcome must be a scattering of the Turkish fleet. Stand on the foaming shore and you will see that the waves, rebuked by the shore, seem to pelt the clouds. The wind-shaken waves, which have a mane like some monster, seem to throw water on the stars that make up the burning bear — Ursa Minor — and put out the Guardians — Ursa Minor’s two brightest stars that serve as guards to the Pole Star, aka North Star. I have never seen a similar upheaval of the enraged sea.”

Montano said, “Unless the Turkish fleet reached shelter in a bay, their ships have sunk and their sailors have drowned. It is impossible that the Turkish fleet has ridden out this storm.”

A third gentleman arrived and said, “Good news, lads! The

war is over before it started. This desperate tempest has so banged up the Turkish fleet that their plan to wage war cannot be completed. Cassio, the Moor's lieutenant who was on a noble ship of Venice, has seen that most of the Turkish ships have been wrecked or damaged."

"Really! Is this true?" Montano asked.

"Cassio's ship has put in at this port," the third gentleman said. "It is a ship that was fitted out in Verona. Michael Cassio, the warlike Moor Othello's lieutenant, has come on shore. The Moor himself is still at sea and has been commissioned to come to Cyprus and govern it."

"I am glad of it," Montano said. "He will be a worthy governor."

"Cassio, although he is comforted by the wreck of the Turkish fleet, looks sad and prays that the Moor is safe; their ships were separated by the foul and violent tempest," the third gentleman said.

"I pray to Heaven that the Moor is safe," Montano said. "I have served under him, and the man commands like a perfect soldier. Let's go and see the noble ship of Venice that's come in and look for brave Othello until our eyes blur together the ocean and the blue sky."

"Let's go," the third gentleman said. "Every minute other Venetian ships are expected to appear."

Cassio appeared and said, "Thanks, you valiant people of this warlike isle, who so respect the Moor! May the Heavens give him defense against the tempestuous elements because I have been separated from him and left him on a dangerous sea."

"Is his ship seaworthy?" Montano asked.

"His ship is stoutly timbered, and his pilot is competent and

has been tested by experience,” Cassio said. “Therefore, my hope that he is safe is realistic and not excessively optimistic.”

They heard people crying, “A sail! A sail! A sail!”

A fourth gentleman arrived, and Cassio asked him, “What is that noise?”

“The town is empty because everyone is on the edge of the cliff looking for ships at sea. They are crying ‘A sail!’ because they see a ship.”

“I hope that it is the ship of the Moor, who will be governor of Cyprus,” Cassio said.

Some soldiers of Cyprus fired guns.

The second gentleman said, “They are firing the guns as a courtesy to welcome friends.”

“Please, sir,” Cassio said, “go and see who has arrived and then come back and tell us who it is.”

“I will,” the second gentleman said.

He exited.

Montano asked Cassio, “Good lieutenant, is your general married?”

“Yes, and most fortunately. He has married a maiden who surpasses description and wild rumor. She surpasses the extravagances of written descriptions and in the perfect beauty of her being even transcends the imagination. No matter how well you think of her, she is better than you think.”

The second gentleman returned, and Cassio asked him, “Which ship has arrived?”

“The ship carrying Iago, who serves as ancient to the general.”

“His ship has had very favorable and happy speed,” Cassio said. “The tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds, the jagged rocks and sandbanks — underwater traitors that hope to damage the guiltless keel — have a sense of beauty and thereby restrain their dangerous nature so that the divine Desdemona may safely sail to her destination.”

“Who is this Desdemona?” Montano asked.

“She is the woman I spoke of, our great captain’s captain, the wife of Othello, left in the care of the bold Iago, whose arrival here is a week earlier than expected,” Cassio said, adding, “Great Jove, guard Othello and swell his sail with your own powerful breath so that he may bless this bay with his tall ship, make love’s quick pants in Desdemona’s arms, give renewed fire to our depressed spirits, and bring comfort to all Cyprus!”

Desdemona, Emilia, Iago, a newly bearded Roderigo, and some attendants arrived.

Cassio said, “Behold, the ship’s wealth — this woman — has come on shore! You men of Cyprus, bend your knees to this woman, whose name is Desdemona. Hail to you, lady! May the grace of Heaven, before you, behind you, and on every side, surround you!”

“Thank you, valiant Cassio,” Desdemona said. “What news can you tell me of my lord and husband, Othello?”

“He has not yet arrived,” Cassio said. “As far as I know, he is well and will be soon here.”

“I am afraid for him,” Desdemona said. “How were you separated from him?”

“The great storm of the sea and sky drove our ships apart from each other — but look, a sail!”

They heard people crying “A sail!” and guns firing.

The second gentleman said, “The ship has fired a salute to the citadel. This likewise is a friend.”

“Go and find out what you can about the ship,” Cassio said.

The second gentleman departed.

Cassio said to Iago, “Good ancient, you are welcome.”

He said to Emilia, “Welcome, lady.”

He then said to Iago, “Do not take this amiss, good Iago. I am merely observing the rules of etiquette. I was raised to be courteous to ladies. I am from Florence, where courtesy and etiquette are forms of art.”

He then gave Emilia, Iago’s wife, a brief, chaste kiss.

Cassio’s family had raised him to be extraordinarily gallant — kissing and handholding between friends of the opposite sex were socially acceptable.

Iago, who was lower in rank than Cassio and resented it, said, “Sir, if she would give you so much of her lips as she often bestows on me of her tongue, you would soon have enough. My wife often criticizes me.”

Desdemona said about Emilia, “You have embarrassed her. She says nothing.”

“She says nothing now,” Iago replied, “but she is very capable of speech — too capable, in fact. She criticizes me even when she allows me to sleep. But it is true that when she is around your ladyship, she somewhat keeps her tongue still, although she still scolds me in her mind.”

Emilia said, “You have little cause to say that.”

“Come on,” Iago said, “you women are models of virtue when you are out of doors, but you are as noisy as bells in your parlors, you are wildcats in your kitchens, you pretend to be saints when you injure other people, you are devils when you are injured, and you are lazy when it comes to doing housework and enthusiastic while having sex in your beds.”

“You are slandering women!” Desdemona said.

“No, this is all true, or else I am a Turk — a non-Christian who is not to be believed. When you get out of bed, you play leisurely, and when you go to bed, you work enthusiastically.”

“Poets write praise about their loved ones. I do not want *you* to write ‘praise’ of me,” Emilia said.

“I will not praise you,” Iago replied.

Desdemona said, “What would you write about me, if you were to praise me?”

“Gentle lady,” Iago said, “do not ask me to praise you because I am nothing if not critical.”

“Come on,” Desdemona said. “Fulfill my request.”

She added, “Has someone gone to the harbor to seek news of incoming ships?”

“Yes, madam,” Iago replied.

Desdemona thought, *I am not merry, but I will disguise what I am — a wife who is worried about the safety of her husband — by pretending to be in a merry mood.*

She said, “Come on, how would you praise me?”

“I am thinking about my answer,” Iago said, “but indeed my ideas come out of my brain the way that sticky birdlime comes out of woolen fabric — with great difficulty. Still, my Muse is laboring — and now she delivers this idea: If a woman is fair and wise and has beauty and intelligence, she intelligently uses her beauty to get what she wants.”

“Well praised! What praise can you give a woman if she is black and intelligent?” Desdemona said.

“If she is black, and also has a wit, she will find a white lover who shall her blackness fit.”

“This praise is worse,” Desdemona said.

“What praise can you give a woman if she is fair and foolish?” Emilia asked.

“She never yet was foolish who was fair; for even her folly helped her to give birth to an heir,” Iago said. “A pretty blonde may be foolish, but men find such foolishness in pretty blondes attractive and so pretty blondes marry and have babies.”

“These are old and silly jokes to make fools laugh in the alehouse,” Desdemona said. “What miserable praise do you have for a woman who is foul and foolish? What have you to say if the woman is ugly and foolish?”

“There is no woman so foul and foolish that she cannot use the same tricks that pretty and intelligent women use,” Iago said.

“This is heavy ignorance,” Desdemona said. “You give the best praise to the worst women. What praise would you give a deserving woman, one who, because she is so good, compels even malicious people to approve of her?”

“She who was always pretty and never proud, spoke well and yet was never loud, never lacked gold and yet never

spent excessively on expensive clothing, did not indulge herself even when she could, when angry and able to get revenge nevertheless accepted her injury and rejected her hurt feelings, she who was wise enough never to ignore morality and take advantage of someone by giving them a nearly worthless item such as a cod's head in exchange for a valuable item such as a salmon's tail, she who was wise enough and strong enough never to exchange a penis for a pudendum and become a lesbian, she who could think and yet keep her thoughts secret, she who knew that suitors were following her and yet did not look behind her, she was a person, if ever such person were, to —”

Iago paused, and Desdemona asked, “To do what?”

“— suckle fools and chronicle small beer.”

“That is a very lame and impotent conclusion!” Desdemona said. “Is that all that such an excellent woman could and should do! To raise babies and keep household accounts! Babies get either intelligence or foolishness from their mothers' milk. Would such an excellent woman make her babies foolish?”

She said to Emilia, “Do not let Iago be your teacher, although he is your husband.”

She added, “What do you think, Cassio? Isn't Iago a most coarse and licentious teacher?”

“He speaks plainly, madam,” Cassio said. “You may relish him more as a soldier than as a scholar.”

As Cassio spoke, he held Desdemona's hand, something that was acceptable in the society in which he was raised, just like giving a friendly kiss to a married woman he knew.

Iago watched Cassio and thought, *He is taking Desdemona*

by the hand. Good, Cassio. Now he is whispering to her. With as little a web as this, I will ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Go on. Smile at her. I will use your own courtly behavior to fetter you.

He said out loud to Cassio, “You are saying the truth. It is exactly as you say.”

He thought, *If such courtly behavior as you are engaging in will strip your lieutenancy away from you, you will regret doing such things as holding and kissing Desdemona’s hand, just as you are now doing. You are way too eager to act like a courtly gentleman. Very good, Cassio. You kiss so well! You show Desdemona an excellent courtesy, indeed! Yet again you kiss Desdemona’s fingers — I wish that her fingers were the nozzles of enema bags!*

A trumpet sounded, and Iago said out loud, “It is the Moor! I know the distinctive call his trumpeter makes.”

Cassio said, “You are right. It is Othello.”

“Let’s go and greet him,” Desdemona said.

“Look, here he comes,” Cassio said.

Othello and some attendants arrived.

Othello said to Desdemona, “My beautiful warrior!”

“My dear Othello!” she replied.

“I am extremely happy to see you here — as happy as I am surprised that you arrived on Cyprus before I did. You are the joy of my soul! If after every tempest would come such calms, I wish that the winds would blow until they have awakened death! Let the laboring ship climb hills of seas that are as high as Mount Olympus and then duck again as low as Hell is from Heaven! If it were my time now to die,

I would die a very happy man because, I fear, my soul is so filled with such absolute happiness that I shall never again be this happy.”

Desdemona replied, “May the Heavens grant that our loves and happiness should increase with each day we live!”

“Amen to that, sweet Heavenly powers!” Othello said. “I cannot speak well enough to describe my happiness — my heart is too filled with joy.”

He kissed Desdemona twice and said, “I hope that these kisses are as close to fighting as we will ever come.”

Iago thought, *Desdemona and you are like a well-tuned musical instrument now, but I will loosen the pegs of the strings and turn your harmony into discord. You think that I am an honest man, and I honestly intend to ruin your marriage.*

Othello said, “Come, let us go to the castle. We have received good news, friends. The war is over; the Turks have been drowned.”

He said to Montano and the other gentlemen of Cyprus, “How are my old friends here on this isle?”

He said to Desdemona, “Honey, you shall be well liked here in Cyprus; I have found great friendship among the people here. Oh, my sweetheart, I am talking too much because I am so happy.”

He added, “Please, good Iago, go to the bay and take care of my belongings. Bring the captain of the ship to the citadel. He is a good man, and his worthiness commands much respect.”

He added, “Come, Desdemona, once more, we are well met here at Cyprus.”

Othello, Desdemona, and most of the others departed.

Iago said to one of the attendants who were leaving, "Meet me soon at the harbor."

Now Iago and Roderigo were alone, and Iago said, "Come here, Roderigo. If you are bold and brave — people say that ordinary men who fall in love acquire a nobility of character that they were not born with — listen to me. Lieutenant Cassio has guard duty tonight — but first let me tell you something important — Desdemona is clearly in love with him."

"Desdemona is in love with Cassio!" Roderigo exclaimed. "That is not possible!"

Iago put his finger to his lips in a "Shush" gesture and said to Roderigo, "Place your finger like this and be quiet so that I can wise you up."

He lowered his finger and said, "You remember how violently Desdemona first loved the Moor, although what she loved him for was his bragging to her and telling her fantastic lies. Will Desdemona continue to love him because he talks foolishly? Don't even think that. Her eye must be fed; she must have someone handsome to look at and to love. The devil is black, and what delight shall Desdemona have when she looks at the Moor and sees the devil? After one has a lot of sex and becomes satiated, there must be, to reignite one's sexual appetite, loveliness in appearance and similarity in age, manners, and virtues. The Moor is deficient in all of these. He is black, he is older than Desdemona, and because he is from another country and culture, he and she are different in other ways as well. Now, because she and the Moor are so dissimilar, Desdemona's delicate tenderness will find itself abused, and she will begin to heave the gorge — that is, vomit. She will disrelish and abhor the Moor; her very nature will

reject the Moor and compel her to love some second choice instead of the Moor. Now, sir, this granted — and it must be granted because it is very obvious and natural — who is more likely to be next in line for Desdemona’s love than Cassio? He is a knave who is very smooth-tongued. He is conscientious in seeming to be polite and courteous, but only so that he can achieve the fulfillment of his lecherous passions. No one is more likely than he to be the next object of Desdemona’s affections. He is a slippery and subtle knave, a finder of opportunities, and a man who has an eye to create opportunities for himself, although true opportunities never present themselves naturally to him — he is a devilish knave. In addition, the knave is handsome, he is young, and he has all those attributes that foolish and immature minds look for. He is a pestilent and complete knave, and the woman has already found him.”

“I cannot believe that Desdemona is like that,” Roderigo said. “She is blessed and moral.”

“Bullsh*t!” Iago said. “The wine she drinks is made of grapes. All wines have sediment; all women have faults. If Desdemona were blessed and moral, she would never have loved the Moor. Blessed! You may as well call entrails — where food is no longer food — blessed! Didn’t you see her holding hands with him? Didn’t you see that?”

“Yes, I did see that, but that was but nothing but courtesy and good etiquette,” Roderigo said. “He is from Florence, and Florentines do such things.”

“It was lechery — I swear it!” Iago said. “It was a preface and obscure prologue to an upcoming history of lust and foul thoughts. Their lips were so close that their breaths embraced. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! When these intimacies so lead the way, soon comes the main exercise — the two bodies joined, making the beast with two backs. It’s obvious. But, sir, do what I tell you to do. I have

brought you from Venice. Stay awake tonight and do what I tell you to do. Cassio, who has guard duty, does not know you. I will be close to you. Find an opportunity to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or disparaging his job performance, or by doing something else that will anger him at the right time.”

“Huh,” Roderigo said.

“Sir, Cassio is rash and very easy to anger, and he is likely to try to hit you. Provoke him, so that he will attempt violence against you. When that happens, I will cause these citizens of Cyprus to riot; they will not be appeased until Cassio is fired and someone — me — replaces him. That way, you will have a shorter journey to your desires — you will bed Desdemona more quickly — by the means I shall then have to promote your desires. Both you and I will benefit from the firing of Cassio; unless we get rid of him, we cannot be successful in achieving our goals.”

“I will do this, if I have the opportunity,” Roderigo said.

“You will have the opportunity — I promise,” Iago said. “Meet me soon at the citadel. I now must bring the Moor’s baggage ashore. Farewell.”

Roderigo replied, “*Adieu*,” and then he departed.

Alone, Iago thought these things:

That Cassio loves Desdemona, I well believe. That she loves him is plausible and very believable. Women are untrustworthy. I believe that the Moor, although I cannot stand him, is of a faithful, loving, noble nature, but I think that he will cost Desdemona dearly. Truly, I love her, too. I do not love her solely because of lust, although it is certainly possible that I am guilty of the sin of lusting for her. However, I want to sleep with her in part out of revenge. I suspect that the Moor has leapt into my seat —

into that part of my wife's body that only I ought to fill. This suspicion gnaws at my insides like a poisonous mineral. Nothing can or shall content my soul until I get even with him. I remember Exodus 21:1 and 21:23-4: "... these are the laws ... life for life, / eye for eye, tooth for tooth.' To that I would add, 'wife for wife.'" But if I cannot cuckold the Moor, I can make him so jealous of Desdemona and so certain that she has been unfaithful to him that his intelligence and his reason will not be able to convince him that she is faithful.

Roderigo is poor trash — a worthless person — from Venice. I manage — and restrain as needed, since I am not actually promoting his cause, although he thinks I am — his hunting of Desdemona, and if he does as I tell him to do, soon I will have Michael Cassio at my mercy, which is nonexistent. I will slander Cassio to the Moor and say that Cassio has a lascivious manner. Actually, Cassio does seem to have a lascivious manner — I can easily imagine him wearing my nightcap while he is in bed with my wife. I will make the Moor thank me, respect me, and reward me. For what? For making him egregiously an ass and plotting against his peace and quiet even so far as to make him insane.

My opportunity now is present, but the details are still confused. Knavery's plain face is never seen until it is used.

— 2.2 —

On a street of Cypress, a herald read a proclamation out loud:

"It is the pleasure of Othello, our noble and valiant general, since certain and reliable news has now arrived that the Turkish fleet has been entirely destroyed, that every person enjoy public festivity and revelry. Dance.

Make bonfires. Enjoy whatever entertainment your inclination leads you to. In addition to celebrating the destruction of the Turkish fleet, celebrate also the marriage of Othello and Desdemona.”

The herald added, “This is the proclamation that Othello wanted to be read out loud. All kitchens and pantries are open, and everyone is invited to feast from now until the bells have tolled eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general, Othello!”

— 2.3 —

In a hall in the castle, Othello said to Michael Cassio, “Good Michael, be in charge of and keep an eye on the guards tonight. Let us exercise self-control and not revel so much that we are indiscrete.”

“Iago has his instructions for what to do, but nevertheless, I will keep my eye on things.”

“Iago is a very honest and very good man,” Othello said. “Michael, good night. Tomorrow at your earliest convenience meet with me.”

To Desdemona, Othello said, “Come, my dear love. We have made our purchase — we have gotten married. However, the fruits are to ensue. Our profit is yet to come between me and you — we have not yet consummated our marriage.”

He said to Cassio, “Good night.”

Othello, Desdemona, and their attendants departed, and Iago arrived.

Cassio said, “Welcome, Iago; we must go and stand watch.”

“Not yet, lieutenant,” Iago said. “It is not yet ten o’clock.

Our general left us so early because of his love for Desdemona. We cannot blame him for that. He has not yet slept with her, and she would be good sport for Jove, the Roman god who enjoyed many affairs with immortal goddesses and with mortal women.”

“She’s a most exquisite lady,” Cassio replied.

“And I bet that she is vigorous in bed.”

“To be sure, she is a most fresh and delicate creature.”

“Her eyes are beautiful! I think that they give provocative invitations.”

“Her eyes are beautiful, but I think that they are modest, not lascivious.”

“When she speaks, doesn’t she cause men to feel passion?” Iago asked.

“She is indeed perfection,” Cassio said.

“Well, happiness to their sheets!” Iago said.

He thought, *I have tried to tempt Cassio to try to seduce Desdemona, but he is having none of it, although he clearly admires her. Pity.*

Iago said, “Come, lieutenant, I have a jug of wine. Just outside are a couple of Cyprus gallants who would like to drink a toast to the health of black Othello.”

“Not tonight, good Iago. I do not have a good head for alcohol — I am easily intoxicated. I wish that society had a different and better — and yet polite — way of celebrating than drinking.”

“The men outside are our friends,” Iago said. “Have one cup of wine with them. I will do most of the drinking for you.”

“I have drunk only one cup of wine tonight, and that was secretly and carefully diluted with water, too, but I — and probably you — can tell that it has affected me. I am unfortunate in that I cannot tolerate alcohol, and I dare not drink any more wine.”

“What, man! This is a night of revels and parties — we are celebrating! The gallants I mentioned want you to celebrate with them.”

“Where are they?”

“Just outside the door; please, call them in.”

“I will do it, but I dislike it,” Cassio said.

He left to invite the people outside to come in.

Iago thought, If I can persuade Cassio to drink one more cup of wine in addition to the cup that he has already drunk tonight, he will be as ready to fight and to take offense as a young lady's feisty pet dog. Already, that lovesick fool Roderigo, whom love has almost turned inside out, has drunk many toasts in honor of Desdemona. He is awake and watching for his opportunity to get Cassio in trouble. Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits, who are touchy about the respect that they think is due them and who are characteristic of the men on this warlike isle, are already drunk with the full and flowing cups of wine I have given them. They will be guards tonight, too, along with Montano, the former governor of Cyprus. I will put Cassio in the midst of this flock of drunkards and make him commit an action that will outrage the citizens of this isle. Here Cassio and the three young drunks come. Soon Roderigo will arrive. If my plot has the consequences it should, my boat will sail freely with a favorable wind and current — I will enjoy success.

Cassio returned. With him were the three young men whom

Iago had already gotten drunk and Montano, the former governor of Cyprus. The three young men and Montano would serve as guards this night. Servants carrying wine also entered the room.

Cassio said, “By God, they have already given me some wine, which I have drunk.”

Montano said, “Just a little wine, I swear — not more than a pint, as I am a soldier.”

Iago called to a waiter, “Bring some wine!”

He then began to sing a song to which he and others clinked their tankards together:

“And let me the tankard clink, clink;

“And let me the tankard clink.

“A soldier’s a man;

“A life’s but a span;

“Why, then, let a soldier drink.”

He then said, “Some wine, boys!”

Cassio, made drunk by only two servings of wine, one of them diluted with water, said, “That is an excellent song.”

“I learned it in England,” Iago said, “where, indeed, they are most expert in drinking. Your Dane, your German, and your sagging-bellied Hollander — waiter, bring more wine! — are nothing compared to your English.”

“Is an Englishman so expert in his drinking?” Cassio asked.

“Why, he drinks, easily, until and after your Dane is dead drunk; he does not have to sweat to outdrink your German; your Hollander will vomit while the Englishman’s tankard is being refilled.”

Cassio cried, "To the health of our general!"

"Good toast," Montano said. "I will drink to that."

Iago sang again:

"Oh, sweet England!

"King Stephen was a worthy peer,

"His breeches cost him a crown;

"He held them sixpence all too dear,

"With that he called the tailor low-down.

"He was a man of high renown,

"And you are of low degree.

"It is extravagant clothing that pulls the country down,

"So wrap your old cloak around you."

Cassio said, "Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other one."

"Will you hear it again?" Iago asked.

"No — because I hold a man to be unworthy of his position who does such things as drinking, singing, and carousing. Well, God's above all; and some souls must be saved, and some souls must not be saved."

"That's true, good lieutenant," Iago said.

"For my own part — no offence to the general, or to any man of rank — I hope to be saved," Cassio said.

"And so do I, lieutenant."

"Yes, but, by your leave, I hope that you are not saved before me," Cassio said. "According to military protocol, the lieutenant must be saved before the ancient because he

outranks him. But let's have no more of this; let's attend to our affairs. We have a job to do: guard duty. May God forgive us our sins! Gentlemen, let's attend to our business. We have guard duty. Do not think, gentlemen, that I am drunk. I know what I ought to know. This is my ancient; this is my right hand, and this is my left hand. I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and I can speak well enough."

An impartial observer might think, *Cassio, you are unsteady on your feet and you are slurring your words*, but the men with Cassio said, "You are excellent and well."

"Why, so I am," a drunken Cassio said. "I am also not drunk."

He departed.

"Let us go to the ramparts, men, and start our guard duty," Montano said.

The three young men of Cyprus followed after Cassius.

Montano would have gone, too, but Iago spoke to him, saying, "That drunken fellow who left before the three young men is a soldier fit to be Caesar's right-hand man and give military commands, but he has a vice that is the equal of his virtue. They form a perfect equinox; his vice is as black as his virtue is fair. It is a pity. I fear the trust that Othello has in him. Sometime in the future, this fellow is likely to do something that will hurt this island."

"Is he often drunk?" Montano asked.

"He gets drunk every night before he sleeps. If his drunkenness did not put him to sleep, he would stay awake a couple of days in a row."

"This is something that the Moor, our general, should be made aware of," Montano said. "Perhaps he does not know

about it, or perhaps he so prizes the virtues that are in Cassio that he ignores his vice. That seems likely.”

Roderigo entered the room, and Iago whispered to him so that Montano could not hear, “You have come at a good time. Cassio just left; go after him. You know what to do.”

Montano continued, “It is a great pity — and a great danger — that the noble Moor should have as second in command someone with such a vice as drunkenness. It would be a good deed to tell the Moor that.”

“I won’t — not even for all of this island!” Iago said. “I respect Cassio, and I would do much to cure him of his vice —”

Noises sounded, and someone shouted, “Help! Help!”

Iago asked, “— but what is going on?”

Roderigo, chased by Cassio, ran into the room.

Cassio, drunk and angry, shouted at him, “You rogue! You rascal!”

Montano asked, “What’s the matter, lieutenant?”

“This knave is trying to teach me my duty! He is trying to tell me how to do my job! I’ll whip the knave until the marks on his skin resemble a bottle covered with wickerwork.”

“Will you whip me?” Roderigo shouted.

“Stop babbling, rogue,” Cassio ordered, hitting Roderigo.

Montano said, “Stop, good lieutenant.” He grabbed Cassio’s hand and added, “Please, sir, stop hitting this man.”

“Let me go, sir,” Cassio said, “or I’ll hit you on the head.”

“Come, come, you’re drunk,” Montano said.

“Drunk!” Cassio said.

He attacked Montano, who fought back.

Iago said quietly to Roderigo so that no one could hear, “Go out, and cry that there is a mutiny, an insurrection.”

Roderigo left to carry out Iago’s command.

Iago then pretended to be a peacemaker: “Good lieutenant ... for pity, gentlemen ... help! ... lieutenant, sir ... Montano, sir ... help! ... this is an excellent watch — not!”

An alarm bell rang.

Iago shouted, “Who is ringing the bell? ... Diablo — the devil! ... The townspeople will start a riot. ... For God’s sake, lieutenant, stop fighting! You will be disgraced forever.”

Othello and some attendants entered the room.

“What is the matter here?” Othello said.

“Damn! I am bleeding! I am likely to die!” Montano said.

“Everyone, stop fighting, if you value your lives,” Othello ordered.

Iago said, “Everyone, stop fighting! ... Lieutenant Cassio, sir ... Montano ... gentlemen! Have all of you forgotten all sense of dignity and duty? Stop! The general is speaking to you! Stop! Stop, for the love of God!”

“What is going on here?” Othello said. “What is the cause of this disturbance? Have we all become Turks, and are we going to fight ourselves although Heaven sent a tempest to prevent the real Turks from fighting us? For Christian shame, stop this barbarous brawl! He who angrily moves

next to attack someone values his own soul only lightly — he will die as soon as he makes a move! Silence that dreadful bell! It frightens the citizens of this isle and destroys its normal peace and quiet. What is the matter, people? Honest Iago, you who look as if you will die with grief, speak. Tell me who began this fight. Loyal soldier, I order you to tell me.”

“I do not know who started the fight,” Iago replied. “Everyone seemed to be friends until just now in their conduct. They were like a bride and a groom undressing in preparation for bed, and then, just now, as if some malignant planet of astrology had driven these men out of their minds, they took out their swords and made each other’s chests their targets in a bloody fight. I cannot identify any cause of this senseless quarrel, and I would prefer that I had lost my legs in a glorious battle than that they brought me to this quarrel.”

“How is it, Michael, that you have this night forgotten the right and honorable way to act?” Othello asked Cassio.

“Please, pardon me,” Cassio replied. “I cannot speak in my defense.”

“Worthy Montano, you are accustomed to be law-abiding,” Othello said. “Everyone has noticed the gravity and sober behavior of your youth, and people of the wisest judgment praise you greatly. What is the reason you are willing to act in such a way as to exchange your good reputation for the bad reputation of a night-brawler? You are spending the wealth of your reputation on trifles. Answer me.”

“Worthy Othello, I am seriously injured,” Montano said. “Iago, your officer, can inform you about this fight — I should not talk because talking causes me pain — and about my actions I know of nothing that I have said or done wrong this night unless valuing one’s life is sometimes a

vice, and defending ourselves is a sin when someone violently attacks us.”

“By Heaven, my anger begins to overwhelm my reason. My strong feelings, having shut down my best judgment, now begin to control me,” Othello said. “If I move in any way, or lift this arm, even the best and highest ranking of you shall feel my anger. Tell me how this foul rout began and who started it. Whoever is guilty of this offence, even if he were my twin brother, will lose my friendship. What a way to act! Here we are in a town that was a target of the Turkish enemy, the people are still riled up and afraid, and yet you are fighting in a private and domestic quarrel, at night, and while you are on guard duty! This behavior is monstrous! Iago, who began this fight?”

Montano put his hand on Iago’s arm and said, “If you deliver more or less than the truth, you are no soldier. Do not let your friendship with Cassio bias you.”

“Don’t touch me, but you do know me well,” Iago said. “I would rather have my tongue cut from my mouth than use it to do offence to Michael Cassio. However, I persuade myself that to speak the truth will not harm him. This is what I know, general. While Montano and I were talking, a fellow came in this room crying out for help. Cassio was chasing him with his sword drawn, determined to use it. Sir, this gentleman, Montano, stepped in and spoke to Cassio, and entreated him to be calm. I myself pursued the fellow who was crying out for help because I was afraid that his cries — as in fact did happen — would frighten the citizens of this town. The fellow was swift of foot and outran me. I returned to this room rather than try to follow him because I heard the clink and fall of swords and Cassio swearing mightily — something I had never heard him do before this night. When I came back — I was away only a short time — I found them fighting together, trading blow

and thrust. They were fighting exactly as you saw when you yourself separated them. More of this matter I do not know, but men are men; the best sometimes forget themselves. Though Cassio did some little wrong to Montano, as men in rage strike those who wish them best, yet surely Cassio, I believe, received from the man who fled some strange indignity or insult that a man could not honorably ignore.”

“I know, Iago, that your honesty and respect for Cassio affect the way you are telling your story,” Othello said. “You are deliberately minimizing Cassio’s fault.”

He said to Cassio, “I respect your virtues, but you will no longer be an officer of mine.”

Desdemona now arrived, accompanied by a few attendants.

Othello said, “Look! My gentle love has been awakened by this commotion.”

He said to Cassio, “I will make an example of you.”

“What’s the matter?” Desdemona said.

“All’s well now, sweetheart,” Othello said. “Go back to bed.”

He said to Montano, “Sir, I myself will pay a doctor to look after your injuries.”

Some people helped Montano leave the room and seek the services of a doctor.

Othello said, “Iago, go throughout the town and calm anyone whom this brawl has upset.”

He added, “Come, Desdemona. It is normal in the soldiers’ life to have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.”

Everyone departed except for Iago and Cassio.

Iago asked, "Are you hurt, lieutenant?"

"Yes, and a doctor cannot help me."

"Heaven forbid!"

"Reputation, reputation, reputation!" Cassio cried. "Oh, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, I have lost my reputation!"

"As I am an honest man, I thought that you had received some bodily wound; that would hurt you more than a wounded reputation. Reputation is an idle and very false concept. It is often gotten without merit, and it is often lost without just cause. You have lost no reputation at all, unless you regard yourself as such a loser. Remember this proverb: A man is weal — happy — or woe — sorrowful — as he thinks himself so. What, man! There are ways to regain the general's good opinion of you. You are cast aside now only because he is angry, and this punishment is in accordance more with policy than with malice. It is like someone beating his innocent dog in order to frighten an imperious lion. Othello is making an example of you so that his troops and the citizens of Venice will respect his authority. If you plead to him to give you your job back, he will do so."

"I would prefer to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer as I have been tonight," Cassio said. "Drunk? And speak nonsense like a parrot? And squabble? Swagger? Swear? And talk rubbish to my own shadow? Oh, you invisible spirit of wine, if you have no name that you are known by, let us call you devil!"

"Who was he whom you chased with your sword drawn?" Iago asked. "What had he done to you?"

“I don’t know.”

“How can that be possible?”

“I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly. I remember a quarrel, but not what the quarrel was about. Oh, God, how is it possible that men should put an enemy — wine — in their mouths that will steal away their brains! How is it possible that we should, with joy, pleasure, revel, and the desire for applause, transform ourselves into beasts!”

“Why, you are sober enough now,” Iago said. “How is it that you are now thus recovered?”

“It has pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath,” Cassio said. “My anger drove out my drunkenness. One imperfection gave way to another, and both make me frankly despise myself.”

“Come, you are too hard on yourself,” Iago said. “Considering the time, the place, and the condition of this country, I wish that this had not happened to you, but since it has, solve this problem and make things right again for yourself.”

“If I ask him to give me my job back, he shall tell me that I am a drunkard!” Cassio said. “Had I as many mouths as Hydra, the nine-headed serpent that Hercules killed, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible and intelligent man, and then a fool, and then a beast! Oh, strange! Every cup of wine too much is cursed and the contents include a devil.”

“Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used — exclaim no more against it,” Iago said.

He thought, *That is true, and it is also true that good wine is a bad familiar creature — a witch’s personal devil-*

servant, usually in the form of an animal — if it is badly used.

Iago added, “Good lieutenant, I think that you know that I am your friend.”

“I know it well and have good evidence of it, sir,” Cassio said. “I can’t believe that I got drunk!”

“You or any other living man may at times be drunk,” Iago said. “I’ll advise you what you shall do. Our general’s wife, Desdemona, is now the general in this respect: The Moor has devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, observation, and noting of her qualities and graces. Confess freely to her what has happened and beg her to help you get your job again. Desdemona is of so generous, so kind, so helpful, and so blessed a disposition that she thinks that it is a sin not to do more than is requested of her. Ask her to mend this break between Othello and you. I will make a bet that she will help you. This break will be mended and your friendship with the Moor will be made stronger than before, just like a bone that has healed after being broken is stronger than it was before it was broken.”

“You advise me well,” Cassio said.

“I do so because of the sincere friendship I have for you and the honest kindness I feel for you.”

“I well believe it,” Cassio said. “Early in the morning, I will beg the virtuous Desdemona to plead my case to her husband. My future is desperate if I don’t get my job back.”

“You are doing the right thing,” Iago said. “Good night, lieutenant. I must resume my guard duty.”

“Good night, honest Iago,” Cassio said.

He departed.

Iago thought, *How can anyone say that I am a villain when this advice I give is open and generous and honest, reasonable, and in fact exactly what is needed for Cassio to get in the good graces of the Moor again? It is very easy to persuade the generous and sympathetic Desdemona to take one's side in a good cause. She is naturally as generous as the Earth that freely gives us oxygen and water. She can easily persuade the Moor to do what she wants him to do. Even if she wanted him to renounce his Christian religion and his baptism and all other seals and symbols of redeemed sin, his soul is so chained to her love that she may create, ruin, and do what she wishes. The Moor's weak willpower will make his sexual appetite for her his god. Can I be considered a villain when I advise Cassio to do what I want him to do — when what I advise is something that will lead to something good for him? This is the divinity of Hell! When devils want to do the blackest sins, the devils mislead people by appearing Heavenly. That is what I am doing now. While this honest fool, Cassio, pleads for help from Desdemona to regain his job, and she pleads for him strongly to the Moor, I will pour poison into the Moor's ear. I will tell him that Desdemona pleads for Cassio because she lusts for him. The more she strives to do Cassio good, the more she shall undo the Moor's love for her. So will I turn her fair virtue into black pitch, and out of her own goodness will I make the net that shall enmesh them all.*

Roderigo now entered the room.

“How are you, Roderigo?” Iago asked.

“I am like a dog that follows in a hunting chase,” Roderigo said. “I am not one of the dogs that sniffs out the prey, but merely one of the dogs who barks in the pack — I am an also-ran. I desire Desdemona, but I am not in the running for her affection. My money is almost spent, I have been

tonight exceedingly well beaten by Cassio, and I think the conclusion will be that I shall have much experience and nothing else for my pains, and so, with no money at all and a little more sense, I shall return again to Venice.”

“How poor are they who lack patience!” Iago said. “What wound did ever heal but by degrees? You know that we work by intelligence and cunning wit, and not by witchcraft — cunning wit depends on dawdling time. To achieve your goal of sleeping with Desdemona will take time. Aren’t things going well? Cassio did beat you, but by that small hurt, you have gotten Cassio fired. Many plants grow well in the sunshine, but whatever blossoms first will ripen first. The firing of Cassio is the blossom, and the fruit you desire will follow. You will sleep with Desdemona, but for now be content and peaceful. Look, the sky is lightening; it is morning. Pleasure and action make the hours seem short and time pass quickly. Go to bed; go to your lodging. Go away, I say. We will talk later, but for now go to bed.”

Roderigo departed.

Iago thought, *Two things are to be done. One: My wife, Emilia, must plead for Cassio to her mistress, Desdemona. I will tell her to do that. Two: Meanwhile, I must draw the Moor aside and then bring him back when he will see Cassio asking Desdemona for her help. Aye, that’s the way. Dull not an evil scheme by coldness and delay. I am willing and eager to put my plot in action.*

CHAPTER 3 (Othello)

— 3.1 —

Cassio and some musicians walked to a place in front of the castle.

Cassio said, “Musicians, play here; I will pay you. Play something that’s brief, and bid the Moor, ‘Good morning,

general.”

Although Cassio was no longer Othello’s lieutenant, he was doing something considerate for Othello and Desdemona: He was following the custom of awakening the newly married couple with music after their first night together.

A clown, aka Fool, aka comedian, arrived, and listened to the musicians.

The clown said, “Your musical instruments have a nasal sound; they sound as if they are making music in a nose. Have your instruments been in Naples?”

The clown thought, *That is a good joke, although I doubt if these musicians will get it. Naples is known for the venereal disease syphilis, which deforms the nose by collapsing the bridge.*

The first musician said, “What do you mean?”

The clown then asked, “Are these wind instruments?”

“Yes, sir, they are,” the first musician replied.

“Thereby hangs a tail,” the clown said.

“Whereby hangs a tale, sir?” the first musician asked.

“A tail hangs by many a wind instrument that I know,” the clown replied.

The clown thought, *That is true. One meaning of wind is a fart, and therefore an anus is a wind instrument. A tail — or penis — hangs by half of the human wind instruments on this Earth.*

The clown added, “Musicians, here’s money for you. The general likes your music so well that he desires you, for love’s sake, to make no more noise with your instruments.”

“Well, sir, we will not,” the first musician said.

“If you have any music that cannot be heard, then play it, but the general does not care to actually hear music.”

“We have no music that cannot be heard, sir,” the first musician said.

“Then put your pipes in your bag and carry them away,” the clown said. “You need not carry me away; I will leave on my own. Vanish into air! Go away!”

The musicians departed, and Cassio asked the clown, “Do you hear, my honest friend?”

Because he was from Florence, Cassio’s language differed slightly from that of both Venice and Cyprus. He meant, *Will you listen to me, my honest friend?*

The clown ignored the comma in Cassio’s question and said, “No, I don’t hear your honest friend; I hear you.”

“Please, don’t engage in word play,” Cassio said. “Here is a small gold coin for you. If the gentlewoman — Emilia — who attends the general’s wife is stirring, tell her that a man named Cassio entreats her to listen to a few words. Will you do this for me?”

“She is stirring, sir,” the clown said.

He thought, *Yes, she is stirring — in more ways than one. She stirs up sexual desire in men, and she is awake and out of bed.*

He also thought, *This is a man who is a little too fancy with words: “entreats her to listen to a few words.” Yech!*

Making fun of Cassio’s speech, the clown added, “If she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her.”

“Do that, my good friend.”

The clown departed.

Iago now arrived.

“You have come at a good time, Iago,” Cassio said.

“Haven’t you been to bed?” Iago asked.

“Why, no,” Cassio replied. “The dawn had broken before we parted. I have made bold, Iago, to send a request in to your wife. I want to ask her if she will arrange for me to talk to Desdemona.”

“I will send my wife to talk to you very soon,” Iago said. “I will also find a way to draw the Moor out of the way so that you and my wife can talk more freely.”

“I humbly thank you,” Cassio replied.

Iago departed, and Cassio said, “Iago could not be kinder and more honest; he is as kind and honest as a Florentine — a person from my own city, which is known for its etiquette and courtesy.”

An impartial observer might remember that Machiavelli, author of *The Prince*, had lived in Florence.

Emilia, Iago’s wife, walked up to Cassio.

“Good morning, good lieutenant,” she said. “I am sorry that you have incurred the Moor’s displeasure, but all will surely be well. The general and his wife were talking about you, and she spoke up for you strongly. However, the Moor replied that the man you hurt is well known in Cyprus and is a member of an important family. Therefore, the wisest thing for the Moor to do was to punish you, but the Moor said that he respects you and he needs nothing more than that respect to reinstate you as his lieutenant when he has a good opportunity to do so.”

“Still, I beg you,” Cassio replied, “if you think it fitting,

and if it may be done, to allow me to speak briefly to Desdemona.”

“Please, come in,” Emilia replied. “I will put you in a place where you can speak freely to Desdemona.”

“I am much obliged to you,” Cassio said.

— 3.2 —

In a room of the castle, Othello, Iago, and some gentlemen were speaking about official business.

Othello said, “Iago, give these letters to the pilot of the ship sailing to Venice, and have him give my respects to the senate. Once that is done, come back to me. I will be walking on the fortifications.”

Iago replied, “My good lord, I will do what you say.”

“Shall we see this fortification, gentlemen?”

“We will go with you, your lordship,” a gentleman said.

— 3.3 —

In the garden of the castle, Desdemona, Cassio, and Emilia were talking. Emilia was serving as Desdemona’s chaperone.

Desdemona said, “Be assured, good Cassio, that I will do everything I can to help you regain your position as lieutenant.”

“Good madam, do so,” Emilia said. “I know that Cassio’s misfortune grieves my husband, Iago, as badly as if it had happened to him.”

“Iago is an honest man,” Desdemona said. “Do not doubt, Cassio, that I will soon have my husband and you together again as friendly to each other as you were before.”

“Generous madam,” Cassio said, “whatever shall become of Michael Cassio, he will never be anything but your true servant.”

“I know it,” Desdemona said. “I thank you. You do respect my husband. You have known him a long time. Be well assured that he shall be estranged from you no longer than is politically expedient. He needed to make an example of you.”

“Yes,” Cassio said, “but, lady, that political expediency may either continue so long, or continue because of weak and trivial reasons, or continue because of accidental, unrelated political events, that with myself absent and with someone else filling in as lieutenant, the general will forget his and my friendship and my service to him.”

“Don’t think that,” Desdemona said. “With Emilia as a witness, I promise you that you will regain your position as lieutenant. I assure you that if I promise to do something for a friend that I will do everything that I have promised.” She joked, “My husband will never rest: I’ll keep him awake just like I were taming a hawk. I will talk to him and nag him until he grows impatient. His bed shall seem like a school because of the lectures that I will give him, and when he eats his meals he will think that it is as if he were a priest hearing a long confession. Whatever he does, I will bring up Cassio’s petition to be reinstated as lieutenant. Therefore, be happy, Cassio. I will be the lawyer who pleads your case to Othello, and I would rather die than give up your cause.”

Emilia saw Othello and her husband, Iago, entering the garden, and said, “Madam, here comes my lord.”

Cassio said to Desdemona, “Madam, I’ll leave now.”

“Why, stay, and hear me speak to my husband about you,” she replied.

“Madam, not now,” Cassio said. “I am very ill at ease, and I am not prepared to plead to be reinstated.”

“Well, do what you think best,” Desdemona said.

Cassio departed.

Iago saw Cassio and said, quietly but deliberately loud enough for Othello to hear, “I don’t like that.”

“What did you say?” Othello asked.

“Nothing, my lord, but — I don’t know what I was saying.”

“Wasn’t that Cassio who just left my wife?” Othello asked.

“Cassio, my lord!” Iago said. “No, surely. I cannot think that it was he. Why would he steal away so guilty-like when he saw that you were coming?”

“I do believe that it was Cassio,” Othello said.

“How are you, my lord?” Desdemona greeted Othello. “I have been talking with a man here, a man who languishes because you are displeased with him.”

“Who is it you mean?”

“Why, your lieutenant, Cassio,” Desdemona replied. “My good lord, if I have any grace or power to move you, please be reconciled with him immediately. For if he is not someone who truly respects you, someone who has erred in ignorance and not on purpose, then I cannot judge who is honest. Please, call him back and be reconciled with him.”

“Was that Cassio who left just now?” Othello asked.

“Yes,” Desdemona replied. “He was so mournful that he left part of his grief with me, and I suffer with him. Good love, be reconciled with him.”

“Not now, sweet Desdemona. Some other time.”

“But shall it be shortly?”

“The sooner, sweetheart, for you.”

“Shall it be tonight at supper?”

“No, not tonight.”

“Tomorrow during the noon meal, then?”

“I shall not dine at home; I am meeting the captains at the citadel.”

“Why, then, tomorrow night, or Tuesday morning, or Tuesday noon, or Tuesday night, or Wednesday morning. Please, name the time that you will be reconciled with Cassio, but let it not exceed three days. Truly, he’s penitent, and yet his trespass, ordinarily, is almost not severe enough to incur a private rebuke, much less a public disgrace. Of course, it is understandable that in times of military struggle, you must make an example, when necessary, of even high-ranking officers.

“But when shall Cassio come and be reconciled to you? Tell me, Othello. I wonder in my soul what you could possibly ask me to do that I would refuse to do, or would put off with stammering.

“Remember what a friend Michael Cassio has been to you. He used to come with you when you wooed me, and whenever I disparaged you, he stood up for you and praised you.”

Desdemona thought, *I used to disparage you on purpose just to hear Cassio defend you and praise you.*

She added, “Is it really such a difficult decision to forgive his fault and bring him into your favor again?”

“Please, say no more,” Othello said. “I will be reconciled to Cassio, and soon. He can come and see me whenever he

wishes. I will deny you nothing.”

“Why, I am not asking for something that will benefit myself,” Desdemona said. “What I am asking for now is similar to asking you to put on your gloves when needed, or eat nourishing food, or wear warm clothing on cold days, or to do something else that benefits yourself. Being reconciled with Cassio means that you will have a good and competent lieutenant again. When I have a request that will put your love for me to the test, that request will be serious and heavy and fearful to be granted.”

“I will deny you nothing,” Othello said. “But now, please, grant me this request: Leave me and let me be by myself for a while.”

“Shall I deny you your request?” Desdemona said. “No, of course not. Farewell, my lord.”

“Farewell, my Desdemona. I’ll come to you soon.”

Desdemona said, “Emilia, let’s go.”

She said to Othello, her husband, “Do whatever you want to do. Whatever you do, I am and will be your obedient wife.”

Desdemona and Emilia departed.

Othello said to himself, with affection for his wife, “Excellent wench! Damn, but I do love you. If I should ever stop loving you, chaos, from which the world arose and to which it will return at the end of time, will come again.”

“My noble lord,” Iago said.

“What is it, Iago?”

“Did Michael Cassio, when you were wooing Desdemona, know about your love for her?”

“He did, from the beginning to the ending of my wooing her. Why do you ask?”

“To satisfy my curiosity,” Iago said. “No other reason.”

“Why are you curious about that, Iago?”

“I did not think he had been acquainted with her.”

“He was, and he very often served as a messenger between us.”

“Indeed!” Iago said.

“Indeed!” Othello repeated. “Yes, indeed. Do you see anything odd about that? Isn’t Cassio an honest man?”

“Honest, my lord!”

“Honest!” Othello repeated. “Yes, honest.”

“My lord, for all I know, he is honest.”

“What are you thinking?” Othello asked.

“Thinking, my lord?”

“Thinking, my lord?” Othello repeated. “By Heaven, you keep echoing me as if there were some monstrous thought in your brain that is too hideous to be revealed. You are thinking something. I heard you say just now that you didn’t like it when you saw Cassio leaving my wife. What didn’t you like? And when I told you that Cassio knew all my thoughts when I was wooing Desdemona, you said, ‘Indeed!’ And you furrowed your brow as if you had some horrible idea shut up in your brain. If you are my friend, tell me what you are thinking.”

“My lord, you know that I am your friend.”

“I think indeed that you are my friend,” Othello said. “And since I know that you are full of friendship and honesty,

and that you carefully consider your words before you speak them, these sudden pauses of yours frighten me all the more. Such things in a false disloyal knave are tricks of a dishonest trade, but in a man who is just and fair they are expressions of hidden thoughts that come from the heart and that emotions cannot control.”

“I dare to swear that I think that Cassio is honest and trustworthy.”

“I dare to swear the same thing,” Othello said.

“Men should be what they seem to be,” Iago said. “I wish that men who are not honest would be seen and known to be not honest.”

“Certainly, men should be what they seem,” Othello said.

“Why, then, I think Cassio is an honest man,” Iago said.

“You are not telling me everything you are thinking,” Othello said. “Please, tell me what you think. Obviously, you suspect something. Give the worst of your thoughts the worst of words.”

“My good lord, pardon me,” Iago replied. “Though I am bound to every act of duty, I am not bound to do that which all slaves are free not to do. Utter my thoughts? Why, let’s say that my thoughts are vile and false; after all, where is that palace into which foul things never intrude? Who has a breast so pure that no unclean thoughts and ideas ever appear and sit beside pure thoughts and ideas?”

“You conspire against your friend, Iago, if you think that he has been wronged and you never tell him what you think.”

“Please do not make me tell you what I am thinking. Chances are, what I am thinking is wrong. It is a fault of my character to inquire into evils, and often my suspicions are about evils that turn out not to exist. I ask you not to

take any notice of my suspicions, which often turn out to be wrong; do not bring yourself trouble because of my casual and unsure observations. It will disrupt your calm and quiet life and will not be good for you. Not for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom would I let you know my thoughts.”

“What do you mean?”

“The good name and reputation of man and woman, my dear lord, is the most precious jewel of their souls,” Iago said. “Who steals my money steals trash; it is something trivial. It was mine, now it is his, and it has been the servant of thousands of people. But he who steals from me my good name robs me of something that does not enrich him but makes me poor indeed.”

“By Heaven, I will know what you are thinking.”

“You cannot — not even if my heart were in your hand,” Iago said, “and you shall not, while my heart is in my custody.”

“We will see about that,” Othello said.

“Beware, my lord, of jealousy, which is traditionally associated with the color green,” Iago replied. “Jealousy is a green-eyed monster that mocks and torments its victim. A man who is sure that his wife has made him a cuckold by sleeping with another man lives in bliss when he does not love the wife who cuckolded him. But damned are the minutes of a man who loves his wife but doubts her and suspects her and still strongly loves her!”

“Such a life would be miserable,” Othello said.

“A man who is poor but is happy despite being poor is a rich man indeed,” Iago said, “but a man with unlimited wealth is as poor as winter if he always is afraid that he may become poor. Good Heaven, may the spirits of all my

ancestors protect me from jealousy!”

“Why are you saying these things?” Othello asked. “Do you think that I would live a life of jealousy and have new suspicions with each change of the Moon? No. To be once in doubt is to resolve on a course of action — one can form a plan of action to find out whether the doubt is justified. If I should ever turn the business of my soul to such exaggerated and inflated surmises that match what you are implying, then I will be a goat. It is not enough to make me jealous to say that my wife is beautiful, is good company during meals, loves the company of other people, speaks interestingly, and sings, plays musical instruments, and dances well. When a woman has virtue, such abilities increase her virtue. Nor from my own weak merits will I draw the smallest fear or doubt about her fidelity. When she was single, she saw clearly with her eyes, and she chose to marry me. No, Iago. I will have to see evidence before I doubt her fidelity; when I doubt her fidelity, I will seek proof either that she is faithful or that she is not faithful. On the basis of that proof, I will either cease loving her or stop being jealous of her!”

“I am glad of it,” Iago replied, “because now I have reason to show you openly the love and duty that I owe you; therefore, as I am bound to speak the truth, hear it from me. I am not speaking yet of proof. Watch your wife; observe her carefully when she is with Cassio. Watch with an open mind. Do not let your eyes be biased either by jealousy or by overconfidence that your wife is faithful. I do not want you to be hurt by falsely assuming that because you are honest and trustworthy, other people are also honest and trustworthy. Be careful. I know the people of Venice. In Venice, wives are willing to let Heaven see the sins that they dare not show their husbands. Their consciences do not tell them not to sin, but instead to keep the sin hidden.”

“Do you truly believe that?” Othello asked.

“Desdemona deceived her father when she eloped with you without first getting his permission, and when she seemed to tremble and fear your looks to deceive her father, that is when she loved you most. Remember what her father told you: ‘Watch her carefully, Moor,’ Brabantio said, ‘if you have eyes to use. She has deceived her father, and she may deceive you.’”

“She did deceive her father,” Othello said.

“Why, there you are,” Iago said. “She is one who, despite being so young, could act and deceive her father so well that it was as if he were blind — her father even thought that you had manipulated her with witchcraft. But I am much to blame for telling you this. I humbly do beg your pardon that I have spoken so freely because I respect you so much.”

“I am forever in your debt,” Othello said.

“I see that this has dampened your spirits a little.”

Othello lied, “Not at all. Not at all.”

“I am afraid that it has,” Iago replied. “I hope that you know that I have spoken these things because of my concern for you. But I can see that you’re affected by what I have said. Please do not overanalyze what I have said and jump to conclusions — just be suspicious.”

“I won’t jump to conclusions.”

“Should you do so, my lord, my speech could have a vile effect. I did not intend that. Cassio is my worthy friend — my lord, I see you’re upset.”

“No, not very upset,” Othello said. “I do not think anything except that Desdemona is faithful to me.”

“May she live long and be faithful to you!” Iago said. “And may you live long and think that she is faithful to you!”

“Yet,” Othello said, “a person may turn away from one’s true nature.”

“Yes, that’s the point!” Iago said. “If I may be blunt with you, a woman sometimes does not want a marriage — even if she has had many marriage proposals of this kind — with a man from her own climate, of her own color, and from her own social standing. Yet that is the kind of marriage that our nature inclines us toward. In rejecting such a marriage, such a woman’s use of her free will shows itself to be most rank. She engages in foul impropriety and indulges her unnatural thoughts.

“But pardon me; I do not positively and specifically speak about Desdemona, although I fear that she, returning to her better judgment, may begin to compare you with her fellow countrymen and perhaps may repent having married you.”

“Farewell, farewell,” Othello said. “If you see anything more, let me know. Also, tell your wife to watch Desdemona. Leave me now, Iago.”

“My lord, I take my leave.”

Iago walked away.

Othello thought, *Why did I get married? This honest man — Iago — doubtless sees and knows more, much more, than he has told me.*

Iago returned and said, “My lord, I wish to ask your honor to consider this matter no further. Wait and see what happens. Although it is fitting that Cassio be reinstated as your lieutenant, because indeed he does his job with great ability, yet if you are willing not to reinstate him for a while, you will be able to watch him and see how he

responds. See whether your wife strongly or vehemently urges that he be reinstated. That will tell you much. In the meantime, think that I am overreacting to my fears — although I think I have worthy reasons for my fears — and please consider her to be innocent.”

“You need not fear my self-control,” Othello replied.

“I once more take my leave.”

Iago departed.

“Iago is a man of great honesty,” Othello said to himself. “He understands different kinds of people and how and why they act as they do. If I discover proof that Desdemona is wild and untamed and not like a civilized and obedient wife, I will — even though the ties that bind her to me are my own heartstrings — cast her aside and let her be wild and untamed and take care of herself. Perhaps, because I am black and do not converse as well as courtiers and ladies’ men, or because I am older than she is — yet I am not that old — she has not been faithful to me. I am and have been deceived, and my relief must be to hate her. It is the curse of marriage that we can call these delicate creatures ours, and yet their desires are not ours! I would prefer to be a loathsome toad and live in the foul air of a dungeon than allow the pudendum of my wife to be used by other men. Yet, this is the plague of great men; they are less likely than less important men to have faithful wives because their duties keep them so often and so long away from home. This is a destiny that cannot be avoided, like death. The fate of a cuckold is ours even from the time we begin to move in our mother’s womb.”

He looked up and said to himself, “I see Desdemona coming now. If she is unfaithful to me, then Heaven is mocking itself by creating a woman who is so beautiful and yet is unfaithful — I will not believe that Heaven has done

such a thing.”

Desdemona and Emilia walked over to Othello.

Desdemona asked, “How are you, my dear Othello! Your dinner and the generous islanders whom you have invited to eat with us are waiting for your arrival.”

“My lateness is my fault,” Othello replied.

“Why do you speak so faintly?” Desdemona asked. “Are you not well?”

“I have a pain on my forehead here,” Othello said, pointing to where the horns of a cuckold were supposed to grow.

“Your headache is caused by a lack of sleep,” Desdemona said. “It will go away. Let me tie your head with my handkerchief, and within an hour your headache will vanish.”

“Your handkerchief is too small,” Othello said, pushing it away.

The handkerchief fell to the ground.

Othello said, “You need not bind my head. Come, I will go in to dinner with you.”

“I am very sorry that you are not well,” Desdemona said. Because she was so concerned about her husband’s not feeling well, she did not think about her handkerchief.

She and Othello left to go to dinner, leaving the handkerchief on the ground.

Emilia picked up the handkerchief and said, “I am glad I have found this handkerchief. This was the first keepsake the Moor gave her. My headstrong husband has a hundred times urged me to steal it, but she loves the love-token. Her husband made her swear to keep it forever, and she keeps it

always with her so that she can kiss it and talk to it. I'll have the embroidery — a pattern of strawberries that is a work of art — copied onto another handkerchief and give it to my husband, Iago. What he will do with it, Heaven knows and not I. I want nothing except to gratify his whim.”

Iago appeared and said to Emilia, “How are you? What are you doing here alone?”

“Don't rebuke me. I have a thing for you.”

“A thing for me? It is a common thing —”

Iago and Emilia did not always get along. Iago now seemed to be insulting his wife. Nowadays, “thing” refers to a penis, but in Iago's country and day, “thing” referred to both male and female genitalia. To say that Emilia's thing was common meant that her thing was open to all.

Shocked, Emilia said, “What!”

And Iago concluded, “— to have a foolish wife.”

Emilia said, “Is that all? I was expecting a much worse insult.”

Wanting to keep on her husband's good side — he could be especially mean when she was not on his good side — Emilia said, “What will you say to me now if I give you a handkerchief?”

“What handkerchief?”

“What handkerchief? Why, the handkerchief that the Moor first gave to Desdemona — the handkerchief that so often you have asked me to steal.”

“Did you steal it from her?”

“No. She negligently let it drop to the ground. I was lucky

enough to be present and picked it up.”

“Good girl,” Iago said. “Give it to me.”

“What will you do with it? Why have you been so eager for me to steal it?”

Iago snatched the handkerchief away from his wife and said, “What business is that of yours?”

“If you don’t need it for something important,” Emilia said, “give it back to me. Poor Desdemona will be very upset when she discovers that she has lost it.”

“Pretend that you know nothing about this handkerchief. I need it. Go, now, leave me.”

Emilia departed.

Iago thought, I will plant this handkerchief in Cassio’s lodging and let him find it. Trifles light as air are to the jealous confirmations as strong as the proofs found in holy scripture. This handkerchief will advance my plot. The Moor is already changing with my poisonous words: Dangerous thoughts are, in their nature, poison. At first, the poisonous words seem to have little effect, then the poison spreads and infects one’s whole being. The poisonous thoughts burn like sulfur mines. I say this because I know this.

Iago looked up and saw Othello walking toward him.

Iago thought, Already my poison is working. Opium and other soporifics will never again give the Moor the sweet sleep that he enjoyed as recently as yesterday.

Othello was mumbling to himself, “Has she been unfaithful to me? Has she cheated on me?”

“How are you, general?” Iago said. “Please, torment yourself no longer with jealousy.”

“Go away!” Othello said. “Leave! Your words have put me on the rack and are torturing me. I swear that it is better to be cheated on continuously and not know it than to be cheated on a little and know it.”

“What do you mean, my lord?” Iago asked.

“What did I know about her stolen hours of lust? I did not see them, I did not think about them, they did not harm me. Each time she was unfaithful, I slept well the following night and I was free of jealousy and I was happy. I was not aware of Cassio’s kisses on her lips. A man who was robbed, but does not know he was robbed, has not been robbed at all.”

“I am sorry to hear this,” Iago said.

“I would be happy, if all the soldiers of the camp, including the very lowest in rank, had tasted her sweet body, as long as I was not aware of it,” Othello said. “But now, my tranquil mind is gone forever. Farewell, tranquility! Farewell, happiness! And farewell to my career! Farewell to the troops! Farewell to the big wars that turn ambition into a virtue! Farewell to the neighing steeds, and the shrill trumpets, the spirit-stirring drums, the ear-piercing fifes, the royal banners, and all attributes, proud display, pomp, and ceremonies of glorious war! All you deadly cannon whose rude throats counterfeit the deadly thunder and lightning of immortal Jove, farewell! My career is over!”

“Can that be possible, my lord?” Iago asked.

“Villain, make sure that you prove my wife is a whore,” Othello said. “Make sure of it. Give me proof that I can see with my eyes, or I swear by my immortal soul that it would have been better for you to be born a dog than to face my awakened wrath!”

“Has it come to this?”

“Show me proof, or, at the least, so prove that my wife is a whore that the proof will have nowhere on which a doubt can hang — or you will lose your life!”

“My noble lord —”

“If you are slandering her and torturing me, do not bother to pray and abandon all repentance for your sins. Horrors accumulate on the head of a man who is horrible. Do deeds so evil that they will make Heaven weep and amaze everybody on Earth because you can do nothing that can add more to your damnation than what you have already done!”

“May the grace of God and Heaven forgive me for being so honest,” Iago said. “Are you a man? Do you have a soul or sense? May God be with you. I resign my office — make someone else your ancient. I am a wretched fool because I have lived to see that my honesty is considered a vice! Oh, monstrous world! Take note, people, take note: To be direct and honest is not safe. I thank you for this wisdom I have learned, and from here on I will have no friends because making friends leads to abuse from those so-called friends.”

Iago started to walk away.

Othello said, “Stay. You ought to be honest.”

“I ought to be wise,” Iago replied. “An honest man is a fool who loses the friends he tries to help.”

“I would bet the world that my wife is faithful to me, and yet I think that she is not. I think that you are just and yet I think that you are not. I need some proof. My wife’s name, that was as fresh and clean as the face of the virgin goddess Diana, is now as begrimed and black as my own face. If ropes, or knives, or poison, or fire, or suffocating streams, exist, I will not endure it.”

Iago thought, *Are you thinking about killing Desdemona and Cassio — or yourself? I am OK with either decision.*

“I wish I knew the truth for certain!” Othello said.

“I see, sir, that you are eaten up with suffering,” Iago said. “I am sorry that I told you what I suspect. But do you really want to know the truth?”

“I do want to know the truth — and I *will* know the truth!”

“And you shall know the truth,” Iago said. “But how? How can we get you the proof you need? Would you have to catch her in the act of betraying you? Would you have to see her in bed with a man on top of her?”

“Death and damnation!” Othello exclaimed.

“It would be difficult, I think, to catch your wife and her lover in the act of betraying you,” Iago said. “Damn them if ever mortal eyes other than their own see them go to bed together! So what can we do? How can we get proof? How can your need for proof be satisfied? It is impossible for you to see them in bed together. They will take precautions even if they are as lecherous as goats, as horny as monkeys, as lustful as wolves in heat, and as foolish as stupid, drunken people. But still, I say, if rational inferences and strong circumstantial evidence that together lead directly to the door of truth will give you satisfactory evidence, you may have your proof.”

“Give me valid evidence that she is disloyal to me.”

“I do not like this job you are giving to me,” Iago said. “But, since I am already involved in this situation because of my foolish honesty and respect for you, I will go on. As you know, in our culture, it is acceptable for two people of the same sex to share a bed. I lay beside Cassio recently. Because I was troubled with a raging toothache, I could not

sleep. Some men are so indiscrete that when they are asleep they will mutter about their affairs. Cassio is such a man. As he lay asleep, I heard him say, ‘Sweet Desdemona, let us be wary. Let us hide our love for each other.’ And then, sir, he gripped and wrung my hand, cried, ‘Sweetheart!’ and kissed me hard, as if he were plucking up kisses by the roots that grew upon my lips. He then laid his leg over my thigh, and sighed, and kissed, and then he cried, ‘Cursed be the fate that gave you to the Moor!’”

The Moor is likely to believe this lie, Iago thought.

“Oh, monstrous! Monstrous!” Othello said.

“This was only his dream.”

“But this is evidence of a previous coupling,” Othello said.

“Cassio’s dream is circumstantial evidence that he is having an affair with my wife.”

“This dream may serve to bolster other evidence that only weakly points to an affair.”

“I will tear her to pieces!” Othello cried.

“Don’t,” Iago said. “But be wise. So far, we have no visual evidence. We may yet find out that your wife is faithful to you. But tell me, doesn’t your wife own an expensive handkerchief that is embroidered with a pattern of strawberries?”

“I gave her that handkerchief,” Othello said. “It was my first gift to her.”

“I did not know that,” Iago said. “But I saw today Cassio wiping his beard with that handkerchief — I am sure that it is your wife’s.”

“If that was the handkerchief I gave her —”

“If it was, or if it was any handkerchief that belonged to

her, it is yet more evidence that she is unfaithful to you.”

“I wish that this slave — Cassio — had forty thousand lives! One is not enough for me to give adequate expression to my rage. I know now that he is having an affair with my wife! Iago, listen. All the foolish love I had for my wife I now blow up to Heaven — that love is gone. Arise, black vengeance, from your home in hollow Hell! My love for Desdemona, leave my mind and heart and give up your place to tyrannous hatred! Swell, mind and heart, with your burden, which is the venom of poisonous snakes!”

“Calm down,” Iago advised.

“I want blood!” Othello said. “Blood! Blood! Blood!”

“Be patient and wait a while,” Iago said. “You may change your mind.”

“Never, Iago,” Othello replied. “My bloody thoughts are like the current of the Black Sea, which always flows strongly to the Mediterranean Sea. Because water always flows from a higher to a lower elevation, the current never flows from the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea. Similarly, my bloody thoughts shall never look backward toward a humble love but shall always violently rush forward toward a suitable and all-encompassing revenge.”

Othello knelt and said, “I swear a sacred vow by Heaven, which is shining and changeless, that I will get revenge.”

Iago said, “Do not rise yet.”

He knelt beside Othello and made his own vow: “Witness, you ever-burning lights above, you elements that encircle us, that here Iago gives up the control of his mind, hands, and heart to Othello — Iago will follow the orders of Othello, who has been wronged by his wife. Let him command me to do anything at all, and I will do whatever

bloody business he orders me to do as if I were doing a good deed. I will feel no remorse but instead shall value serving Othello.”

They rose.

Othello said, “I will acknowledge your service to me not with empty thanks, but with profit to you. Immediately, I ask you to keep your vow: Within three days bring it about that I will hear that Cassio no longer lives.”

“Cassio, who is my friend, will die,” Iago said. “I will kill him as you request, but let Desdemona continue to live.”

“Damn her, that lewd and wanton whore! Damn her! Come with me. I will go inside and equip myself with some means to swiftly kill that beautiful devil. You are now my lieutenant.”

“I am yours to command forever.”

— 3.4 —

Desdemona and Emilia were standing on a street in front of the castle. Also on the street was a man whom Desdemona recognized; he was a clown, aka Fool, aka comedian. Desdemona knew that he played with language, and although she was worried about her handkerchief, which had turned up missing, she decided to speak to the clown while using the clown’s own somewhat peculiar style of language: “Do you know, please, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?”

“I dare not say he lies anywhere,” the clown replied.

“Why not, man?”

“Cassio is a soldier, and when a person says that a soldier lies, that person is in for a stabbing.”

Desdemona laughed and then said, “Where does he lodge?”

Where does he dwell?"

"To tell you where he lodges is to tell you where I lie."

"Can any sense be made of what you just said?"

"I do not know where he lodges, and for me to make up a lodging and say that he lies here or that he lies there would be to lie in my own throat."

"Can you inquire about him, and be edified by report?"

"To be edified is to be educated; therefore, I will catechize the world for him; that is, I will ask questions, listen to the answers, and so learn where he is, and then I will bring the information to you."

"Seek him, find him, and tell him to come here," Desdemona said. "Tell him that I have talked to my lord and husband on his behalf, and I hope that all will be well."

"To do this is within the scope of a man's intelligence, and therefore I will attempt the doing of it."

The clown departed.

Desdemona asked, "Where could I have lost that handkerchief, Emilia?"

Emilia lied, "I don't know, Madam."

"Believe me, I prefer to have lost a purse full of gold coins marked with the Christian cross. Fortunately, my noble Moor is true of mind and trusts me and is not like a base and jealous man. If he were not, my losing that handkerchief could make him think badly of me."

"Is he not jealous?" Emilia, whose husband was jealous, asked.

"Who? Othello?" Desdemona replied. "I think that he was

born without a jealous atom in his body.”

“Look, here he comes,” Emilia said.

“I will not leave him until he promises to make Cassio his lieutenant again,” Desdemona said. “This is a good opportunity for me to act in behalf of Cassio. I expect to give Cassio good news when he arrives.”

Othello walked up to them.

“How are you, my lord?” Desdemona asked.

“I am well, my good lady,” Othello said.

It is hard to pretend that I am well, he thought. I am far from being well.

“How are you, Desdemona?” he asked.

“Well, my good lord,” she replied.

“Give me your hand,” Othello said. He held it and said, “This hand is moist, my lady.”

Othello thought, *A moist hand is evidence of a lustful nature.*

“My hand has of yet felt no age nor sorrow.”

She thought, *A moist hand is evidence of a youthful and carefree nature.*

“A moist hand is evidence of fruitfulness and a liberal heart,” Othello said.

He thought, *The word “liberal” means either “generous” or “licentious.”*

“Your hand is hot — hot and moist,” he added. “Based on these symptoms, this hand of yours requires less liberty, much fasting and prayer, much corrective discipline, and

many religious observances. Here is a young and sweating devil, and that kind of devil commonly rebels. But it is a good hand because it is a frank hand.”

To be frank is to be generous or to be open and free from restraint, Othello thought. People should appear to be what they really are. Desdemona’s hand is good because it frankly — openly and freely — reveals what she really is: lustful.

“You may, indeed, say that my hand is generous,” Desdemona replied, “because that hand gave away my heart.”

Desdemona meant that her hand gave away her heart to Othello.

“Your hand is a liberal hand,” Othello said, meaning that her hand had given away her heart to men other than him.

He added, “The hearts of old gave hands, but our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.”

He thought, *People used to give away their heart and hands to one person, but nowadays the fashion is to give away one’s hand in marriage to one person and one’s loving heart to another person. Hearts, united in love, used to give away hands in marriage, but nowadays, hands, despite belonging to a married person, give away hearts to people to whom they are not married.*

“I don’t know about that,” Desdemona said. “But come now, remember your promise.”

“What promise, darling?”

“I have sent a messenger to ask Cassio to come and speak with you.”

“I have an irritating and constant cold that is bothering

me,” Othello replied. “Lend me your handkerchief.”

“Here, my lord,” Desdemona replied, handing him a handkerchief.

“Not that one. Give me the one I gave you.”

“I don’t have it with me.”

“You don’t?”

“No, indeed, my lord.”

“That’s too bad,” Othello said. “An Egyptian gave that handkerchief to my mother. The Egyptian was a magician who used charms and spells; she could almost read people’s minds. She told my mother that as long as she had that handkerchief, it would make her beloved and keep my father in love with her, but if she lost it or gave it away, my father would hate the sight of her and he would chase other women. On her deathbed, my mother gave it to me and told me that when I married to give it to my wife. I did so. Take care of it and regard it as precious as your own eyes. To lose it or give it away would cause such damage that nothing could match it.”

“Is that really true?” Desdemona asked.

“It is true,” Othello said. “When the Egyptian wove it, she wove magic into the cloth. A Sibyl in her prophetic fury sewed the handkerchief. Some say that the Sybil was two hundred years old; others say that she had calculated that the world would end in two hundred years. But the worms were consecrated that produced the silk, and it was dyed in the liquid called mummy — medicinal fluid that skillful magicians had made from the liquid of the hearts of embalmed virgins.”

“Really! And is that true?”

“It is very true,” Othello replied. “Therefore, take good care of that handkerchief.”

“If what you said is true, then I wish to God that I had never seen that handkerchief!”

“Why?” Othello shouted.

“Why do you speak so abruptly and urgently?” Desdemona asked.

“Is it lost? Is it gone? Speak! Is it missing?”

“Heaven bless us!” Desdemona said, startled by Othello’s urgency.

“What do you say?”

“It is not lost,” Desdemona said.

I think that my handkerchief is not forever lost, Desdemona thought. I must have mislaid it somewhere, and it will turn up again.

“But what if the handkerchief were lost?” she asked.

“What!”

“I say again that the handkerchief is not lost.”

“Go and fetch it. Let me see it.”

“Why, I could do that, sir, but I will not now. This is a trick that you are playing to distract me from asking you to reinstate Cassio as your lieutenant. Please, reinstate him.”

“Fetch the handkerchief for me. I don’t think that you are telling me the truth.”

“Come, come. You’ll never meet a man more competent than Cassio.”

“The handkerchief!”

“Please, let us talk about Cassio.”

“The handkerchief!”

“Cassio is a man who has counted on your support for his good fortune. He has shared dangers with you —”

“The handkerchief!”

“Truly, you are to blame.”

“That’s enough!” Othello shouted and then stalked away.

“You said that he is not jealous?” Emilia asked.

“I have never seen him like this before,” Desdemona said. “Surely, there really is some wonderful magic in that handkerchief. I am very unhappy because of the loss of it.”

“It takes more than a year or two to learn a man’s true nature,” said Emilia, whose marriage to Iago was not happy. “Men are nothing but stomachs, and we women are nothing but food. They eat us hungrily and then vomit us up.”

She looked up and said, “Look, Cassio and my husband are coming!”

Cassio and Iago had been conversing, and Iago said now, “There is no other way; it is she who must do it.”

He looked up and added, “Look, happily she is here! Go, and ask her.”

“How are you, good Cassio! What is the news with you?” Desdemona asked.

“Madam, I have come to talk with you about my former lieutenancy,” Cassio said. “I beg you to do all you can to help me get my life back and be on good terms again with your husband. I greatly respect him, and I don’t want to

wait any longer. If my offence is of such a serious kind that my past services, nor the repentance I have now for what I did wrong, nor the service that I can render to him in the future, can make him forgive me, I want to know it now. My benefit will be to know the truth so that I can force myself to move on and hope that I have the good fortune to find another occupation.”

“I am sorry, thrice-gentle Cassio,” Desdemona said, “but I am unable to help you at this time. My lord and husband is not acting like my lord and husband. I would not be able to recognize him if his face were as altered as his personality. I swear to every sanctified spirit that I have pleaded your case to the best of my ability — because I have spoken so freely, I am suffering from my husband’s displeasure. You must be patient for a while longer. I will do what I can for you, and I will do more for you than I dare to do for myself. Let that satisfy you for now.”

“Is the general angry?” Iago asked.

“He left just now,” Emilia said, “and he was greatly upset.”

“I did not know it was possible for him to be angry,” Iago said. “I have seen cannon blow Othello’s soldiers into the air and like the devil kill Othello’s brother while his brother was standing by his side, yet he showed no emotion — and *now* he is angry? Something of great importance has occurred. I will go and talk to him. If he is angry, it is about something of great importance.”

“Please, go and talk to him,” Desdemona replied.

Iago departed.

She added, “Iago must be right. Some great affair of state — something that concerns Venice or a plot in Cyprus that he has just learned about — must have disturbed and muddled his mind. In such cases, men will argue about

unimportant things although great, important matters are on their minds. It is often like that. If only one finger aches, it negatively affects our whole body and mind even though they are healthy. We must remember that men are only mortal — they are not gods. At such times, we must not expect men to act as they did during the marriage ceremony. I am at fault, Emilia. I was, unskillful ‘warrior’ as I am, accusing him in my soul of being unkind, but now I find that I have caused the witness — myself — to lie by misinterpreting Othello’s behavior. I have unfairly accused Othello.”

“Pray to Heaven that it is matters of state, as you think, that cause Othello to act this way,” Emilia said, “and not a misconception that is causing him to be jealous concerning you.”

“I have never given him any reason to be jealous,” Desdemona said.

“But jealous souls will not care about that,” Emilia said. “They are not jealous because they have a just reason to be jealous. No, instead they are jealous because they are jealous. Jealousy is a monster that gives birth to itself; it does not need a reason to come into existence.”

“May Heaven keep that monster from Othello’s mind!” Desdemona said.

“Lady, amen to that!” Emilia said.

“I will go and seek him,” Desdemona said. “Cassio, stay here. If I find Othello in a better mood, I will plead that you regain your lieutenancy.”

“I humbly thank your ladyship,” Cassio said.

Desdemona and Emilia left to seek Othello.

Bianca, who had been looking for Cassio, now walked up

to him. She was a prostitute, and she loved Cassio, but he did not return her love although he slept with her.

“May God save you, friend Cassio!” Bianca said.

“What are you doing away from home? How are you, my most beautiful Bianca? Truly, sweet love, I was coming to your house.”

“And I was going to your lodging, Cassio,” Bianca replied. “You have not visited me for a week! Seven days and nights! Eight score and eight hours! When lovers are away from each other, each hour lasts eight score times longer than it usually does! Such arithmetic is disheartening.”

“Pardon me, Bianca, for my absence,” Cassio said. “I have this past week been burdened with heavy problems, but I shall, in a time less burdened and interrupted with problems, make my long absence up to you. Sweet Bianca, I want you to do something for me.”

He handed Desdemona’s handkerchief to her and said, “Please copy this embroidery.”

“Cassio, where did this come from?” Bianca asked. “This is some keepsake from a new lover. Now I know why I have not seen you for so long. Has it come to this?”

“No, woman!” Cassio said. “Throw your vile suppositions back in the devil’s teeth from whence you got them. You are jealous now because you think that this is a keepsake from some woman. No. I swear that it is not, Bianca.”

“Why, then whose handkerchief is it?”

“I don’t know, sweetheart. I found it in my bedchamber. I like the embroidery well — it is a pattern of strawberries. I expect that its owner will show up and want it back — that is likely to happen. But before it happens, I would like to have it copied. Take the handkerchief, and copy the

embroidery onto another handkerchief, and leave me for a while.”

“Leave you for a while! Why?”

“I am waiting here to speak to the general,” Cassio said. “I do not think it will help my cause if I have a woman with me during this serious business.”

“Why don’t you want me here?”

“It is not that I don’t love you.”

“You don’t love me,” Bianca said petulantly. Then she relented and said, “Please walk with me for a little while as I return home and please tell me whether I will see you soon one night.”

“I can walk with you for only a little way because I have important business here,” Cassio said, “but I will see you soon.”

“Very well,” Bianca said. “I must be happy with what I can get.”

CHAPTER 4 (Othello)

— 4.1 —

Othello and Iago were speaking in front of the castle.

“Do you think that?” Iago asked.

“Think what?” Othello asked.

“That they kissed in private?”

“An unauthorized, illicit kiss!”

“Do you think that it is possible she was naked with her friend in bed for an hour or more, not meaning any harm?”

“Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!” Othello thundered. “That would be hypocrisy against the devil. Those who seem to be acting sinfully and yet are virtuous in their heart are people whom the devil would call hypocrites. If they did act like that, they would be setting themselves up for the devil to tempt them, and they would be tempting Heaven to damn them.”

“As long as they are naked in bed together and do not commit adultery, it is a venial slip — less serious than a venial sin, which is still a sin that can be forgiven,” Iago said, “but if I give my wife a handkerchief —”

He paused.

“What then?” Othello asked.

“Why, then, the handkerchief belongs to her, my lord, and since it belongs to her, she can give it to any man she pleases.”

“Her honor belongs to her, too,” Othello said. “Does it follow that she can give that away, too?”

“Her honor is an essence that cannot be seen. Women very often have a reputation for honor although they lack honor. But, as for the handkerchief —”

“By Heaven, I would very gladly forget about the handkerchief. Now that I know — because you told me — that Cassio has it, each time I remember it, it affects me like a raven on the roof of a house that has been infected with the plague. It is an evil omen of death and doom to all who see it or know that it is there.”

“It is true that I told you that.”

“That was bad news for me.”

“Suppose that I have more bad news for you,” Iago said. “Suppose I say that I have seen Cassio do you wrong? Or suppose that I have heard Cassio say — you know, of course, that adulterers exist in the world who have seduced and overcome a woman or been seduced by a willing woman and in either case have been sexually satisfied and have been eager to blab —”

Othello interrupted, “Has Cassio said anything?”

“He has, my lord, but be assured that he will deny that he ever said anything.”

“What has he said?”

“Truly, he said that —”

Iago hesitated, and then he said, “I don’t know what he said.”

“He said something so horrible that you don’t want to tell me what he said, but tell me anyway.”

“He talked about lying —”

Again, Iago hesitated.

“Lying with her?” Othello said.

“With her. On her. Whatever,” Iago replied.

“Lying with her? Lying on her? I would prefer that people lie about her than lie on top of her — adultery is disgusting! I have the evidence of the handkerchief and this verbal confession. My handkerchief! He has confessed, and he should be hanged for what he did! I am willing to hang him first and allow him to confess his sins after he is dead. I am so angry that I am trembling. It would not be natural for me to feel this way and to tremble in this way unless there was a good reason to do so. It is not merely words that make me tremble like this. No! I will cut off their noses, ears, and lips! Can all this really be true? He confessed, and he has my handkerchief — damn!”

Othello fell down in an epileptic fit.

Work on, my “medicine,” work on! Iago thought. In this way credulous fools are caught, and in this way many worthy and chaste women meet reproach although they are guiltless.

Seeing Cassio coming, Iago put on an act for his benefit. Iago pretended to be concerned about Othello and said loudly enough for Cassio to hear, “My lord, wake up! Othello!”

He looked up and said, “Cassio!”

“What’s the matter?”

“My lord is having another epileptic fit. This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.”

“Rub his temples.”

“No, we better not,” Iago said. “His unconsciousness must run its course. If it does not, he foams at the mouth and

then breaks out in a savage madness. Look, he is regaining consciousness. Go away for a little while. He will recover quickly. After he leaves, I want to talk to you about something important.”

Cassio departed, and Othello regained consciousness.

“How are you, general? Does your head hurt?”

“Are you making fun of me?” Othello said angrily, thinking that Iago was saying that his head hurt because he was growing the horns of a cuckold.

“Making fun of you? No, but by God, I wish that you would bear your ill fortune like a man!”

“A horned man is a monster and a beast.”

“In that case, there is many a beast in a populous city, and many a civilized monster.”

“Did Cassio confess?”

“Good sir, be a man,” Iago said. “You should think that every mature man who has been married — yoked like a horned beast to pull a burden — has the same burden as you. Millions of men are now alive who each night lie in beds that they think belong only to them but which they share with their wife’s lovers. Your situation is better than theirs: You know that your wife is unfaithful. The malice of Hell — the worst mockery — is to kiss a wanton whore on a bed that the husband thinks is his alone. No, I prefer to know that I have been cuckolded. Knowing that, I know what revenge to take on my wife.”

“Certainly, you are a wise man.”

“Stand for a while at a little distance,” Iago said, “and control yourself. While you were overwhelmed with your suffering and had fallen into a fit — grief most unsuitable

for such a man as you — Cassio came here. I came up with an excuse to get him to go away and made a good excuse for your falling into a fit. I also asked him to return here and speak to me, which he promised to do. Therefore, conceal yourself and witness the sneers, the mockery, and the obvious contempt that can be seen in every region of his face. You can witness these things because I will make him tell the story again of where, how, how often, how long ago, and when he has slept — and will again sleep — with your wife. Watch his gestures carefully. But be patient and do not reveal yourself, or I shall say you are consumed with passion and ruled by anger and are not a real man.”

Iago thought, *If Othello were to actually talk to Cassio, he would learn how I have been tricking him.*

“Listen to me, Iago,” Othello replied. “I will control myself, but I will have blood — lots of blood.”

“There is nothing wrong with that,” Iago said, “but make those who have wronged you bleed at the right time. Will you conceal yourself nearby and watch as I talk with Cassio?”

Othello walked a short distance away and hid himself.

Iago thought, *Now I will ask Cassio questions about Bianca, the whore who loves him — by selling her body she is able to buy herself food and clothing. She loves Cassio — prostitutes seduce many men but are often themselves seduced by one man. Cassio does not love her. When he hears about her and her love for him, he cannot stop himself from laughing. Here comes Cassio now. Cassio shall smile and laugh, and Othello shall go insane. The Moor’s ignorant jealousy will interpret Cassio’s smiles, gestures, and cheerful behavior completely the wrong way. He will not be able to hear our words; he will only be able to see our gestures and hear Cassio’s laughter.*

Cassio walked up to Iago, who asked, “How are you, lieutenant?”

“I feel worse because you have called me by a title I don’t have anymore — the lack of that title is killing me.”

“Keep pushing Desdemona to help you, and you are sure to regain your lieutenantcy.”

Iago lowered his voice and said, “Suppose that Bianca were able to plead your case. How quickly would you become lieutenant then!”

Cassio laughed and said, “That poor woman.”

Othello thought, *Already he is laughing!*

Iago said, “I have never known a woman to so love a man.”

“That poor rogue!” Cassio said. “I think, indeed, that she loves me.”

Othello thought, *Now he is faintly denying the affair, and he is laughing about it.*

“Listen to me, Cassio,” Iago said.

Othello thought, *Now Iago is asking Cassio to tell him about his affair with my wife. Well done, Iago.*

“Bianca is telling everyone that you will marry her,” Iago said. “Will you really marry her?”

Cassio laughed loudly.

Othello thought, *Are you laughing about triumphing over me like a Roman conqueror?*

“I marry her!” Cassio said. “Please, give me credit for some intelligence — don’t think that I am stupid enough to marry a whore.”

You are laughing now, Othello thought, but it is better to be the last one who laughs.

“Indeed, the gossip is everywhere that you will marry her.”

“Tell me the truth.”

“This is truly what people are saying — or else I am a villain.”

Have you wounded me? Othello thought. Just wait.

“That is the monkey’s own story. She is persuaded that I will marry her because of her own love for me and because of her belief that I love her. I have never told her that I will marry her.”

Iago gestured to Othello to come closer, and Othello thought, *Now Cassio is going to tell the tale of his affair with my wife.*

Cassio said, “She was here just now; she haunts me in every place. Just the other day I was talking on the seashore with some people from Venice, and here she — this plaything — comes and throws her arms around my neck.”

Othello thought, *Desdemona must have hugged him and called him “dear Cassio”! That is what his gesture means.*

Laughing, Cassio said, “She had her arms around my neck, and hung from me, and cried. She tugged at me and pulled me.”

Othello thought, *Now he is telling how Desdemona pulled him into my bedchamber. I can see your nose, Cassio, but I cannot see the dog that I will throw it to after I have cut it off.*

“Well, after hearing what you have told me,” Cassio said, “I must stop seeing her.”

“Look!” Iago said. “Bianca is walking toward us!”

“She is a polecat,” Cassio said to Iago. “They stink when they are in heat. Bianca drenches herself in perfume.”

He said to Bianca, “What do you mean by this haunting of me? Why are you following me everywhere?”

“Let the devil and his dam haunt you!” Bianca replied. “What did you mean by that embroidered handkerchief you gave me just now? I was a fine fool to take it. You want me to copy the embroidery? You told me quite a tale — you found it in your bedchamber and you don’t know how it got there! A likely story! This is a keepsake from some slut. Take it — give it to your slut. Wherever you got this handkerchief, I will not copy the embroidery.”

“Sweet Bianca, don’t be upset,” Cassio said.

Othello thought, *That’s my handkerchief!*

Bianca said to Cassio, “If you want to eat supper at my place tonight, you may. If you don’t come tonight, then come the next time I prepare a meal for you — that will be never.”

She left.

“Go after her,” Iago urged Cassio.

“I had better,” Cassio said. “She will scream complaints about me in the streets if I don’t.”

“Will you dine with her?” Iago asked.

“Yes.”

“Well, perhaps I will see you. I would like very much to talk more with you.”

“No problem. You come, too.”

“OK.”

Cassio went after Bianca.

Othello came out of hiding and asked, “How shall I murder him, Iago?”

“Did you see how he laughed at his vice?” Iago asked.

“I did!”

“And did you see the handkerchief?”

Othello knew that the handkerchief was his, but he sadly asked, “Was that mine?”

“I swear that it was your handkerchief,” Iago replied. “And you can see how much he values your wife, that foolish woman! Your wife gave him that handkerchief, and he gave it to his whore.”

“I would like to take nine years to torture and kill him!” Othello said, adding sarcastically, “My wife is a fine woman, a fair woman, a sweet woman!”

“No, you must not think about that,” Iago said.

“Let her rot!” Othello said. “Let her perish. Let her be damned tonight. She shall no longer live. My heart has turned to stone.”

He hit himself in the chest and said, “When I hit my heart, my hand hurts. The world does not have a sweeter woman than my wife. She could lie beside an emperor and give him orders.”

“This is not the best way for you to act.”

“Hang her! I do but say what she is. She is so delicate with her needlework; she is an admirable musician! When she sings, she makes a savage bear become gentle. She is very

witty and imaginative.”

“She’s all the worse for having so many fine qualities and yet being evil.”

“Oh, a thousand thousand times, and also she is nobly born and has a gentle and yielding disposition.”

“Yes, too yielding.”

“That is certain, but it is such a pity, Iago! Such a pity!”

“If you are so foolish as to accept her unfaithfulness to you, then let her run wild and cuckold you. If that does not bother you, it will not bother anyone else.”

“I will chop her into small pieces of meat!” Othello said.
“She has cuckolded me!”

“It was foul of her.”

“With my own officer!”

“That’s fouler.”

“Get me some poison, Iago, this very night. I will not talk to her, lest her body and beauty change my mind. Get it tonight, Iago.”

“Don’t kill her with poison. Strangle her in her bed — the bed she has contaminated.”

“Good, good,” Othello said. “The poetic justice of it pleases me very well.”

“And as for Cassio, let me undertake his murder. You shall hear more by midnight.”

“Excellent.”

A trumpet sounded, and Othello said, “What is the purpose of that trumpet sounding?”

“It is surely a message from Venice. I see Lodovico coming toward us. The Duke of Venice must have sent him here. Look, your wife is with him.”

Lodovico, Desdemona, and some attendants walked up to Othello and Iago.

“God bless you, worthy general!” Lodovico said.

“I thank you with all my heart, sir,” Othello replied.

“The Duke and senators of Venice greet you and have sent you this letter.”

He handed the letter to Othello.

“I kiss the instrument of their pleasures,” Othello said courteously. He kissed the letter and then opened it and began to read it.

“What news have you brought, kinsman Lodovico?” Desdemona asked.

She came from a noble and well-known family and was related to many important men in Venice.

Iago said to Lodovico, “I am very glad to see you, signior. Welcome to Cyprus.”

“I thank you. How is Lieutenant Cassio?”

“He lives, sir,” Iago replied quietly, implying that something was wrong.

“Kinsman, there has fallen between Cassio and my husband an unnatural breach, but you shall make all well between them,” Desdemona said.

“Are you sure of that?” Othello asked.

“My lord?” Desdemona replied. “What do you mean?”

Othello read part of the letter out loud, “*Do not fail to do this —*”

“Othello will not answer you right now,” Lodovico said. “He is busy reading the letter. What is this about a breach between Cassio and Othello?”

“It is very unfortunate,” Desdemona said. “I would do much to reconcile them because I respect Cassio’s good qualities so much.”

Overhearing her, Othello said, “Damn, damn, and damn!”

“My lord?” Desdemona asked. “What’s wrong?”

“Haven’t you any intelligence at all?” Othello said.

“What — are you angry?” Desdemona asked.

“Maybe the letter has angered him,” Lodovico said. “I understand that his orders are to return to Venice and to leave Cassio here as governor in charge of Cyprus.”

“I am glad that those are the orders,” Desdemona said.

“Indeed!” Othello said.

“My lord?” Desdemona asked. “What’s wrong?”

“I am happy to see that you have completely lost your mind,” Othello said, thinking that she was mocking him by praising Cassio and being glad of Cassio’s promotion.

“Why, darling Othello —” Desdemona began.

Othello struck her and said, “Devil!”

Shocked, and crying, Desdemona said, “I have not deserved this.”

Also shocked, Lodovico said to Othello, “My lord, this would not be believed in Venice even if I swore that I saw

it with my own eyes. Make this up to Desdemona. Apologize. She is crying.”

“She is a devil!” Othello said. “If this woman’s tears could impregnate the Earth, each tear she lets fall would produce a crocodile, which lures its prey near with its crocodile’s tears.”

He shouted at Desdemona, “Get out of my sight!”

“I will not stay here and offend you with my sight,” Desdemona said and obediently left.

“Truly, she is an obedient lady,” Lodovico said. “That is what a wife should be. I beg your lordship, please call her back and apologize to her.”

“Mistress!” Othello called.

“My lord?” Desdemona asked. “What do you want?”

“What do you want to do with and to her, sir?” Othello asked Lodovico.

“Who, I, my lord?” Lodovico asked.

“Yes, you said that you wanted me to ask her to turn back. Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on, and turn again.”

Yes, Othello thought. She can turn to one sexual position and then another sexual position and then yet another sexual position. And she can service one brothel customer and then another brothel customer and then yet another brothel customer.

Othello added, “And she can weep, sir, she can weep.”

Yes, Othello thought. She can weep crocodile tears.

Othello added, “And she’s obedient, as you say, obedient, very obedient.”

Yes, Othello thought. *She obeys Cassio's orders in bed.*

Othello ordered Desdemona, "Keep crying."

"About this letter, sir —" Othello began saying to Lodovico.

He said to Desdemona, "You fake sadness so well!"

He said to Lodovico, "I am commanded to return to Venice."

He said to Desdemona, "Get away from me. I will send for you soon."

He said to Lodovico, "Sir, I will obey my orders; I will return to Venice."

He shouted at Desdemona, "Leave me! Now!"

Desdemona left.

He said to Lodovico, "Cassio shall take over my place as governor. And, sir, I ask you to dine with me tonight. You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus."

Overcome by anger at the thought of Cassio and Desdemona in bed together, Othello shouted the names of two animals known for their horniness: "Goats and monkeys!"

He departed.

Shocked by what he had witnessed, Lodovico said to Iago, "Is this the noble Moor whom our entire senate regards with such esteem? Is this the man with such a reputation for self-control? Is this the man whose excellence and virtue cannot be harmed by either a cannon shot of fortune or an arrow of fate? Othello is supposed to be able to maintain his self-control and composure no matter what enemy forces he faces."

Iago replied, “He is much changed.”

“Is his mind sound? Has he become insane?” Lodovico asked.

“He is what he is. As an officer serving under him, I ought not to state my opinion about his state of mind, but if he is not insane, I wish to God that he were because that would excuse his actions!”

“He actually struck his wife!”

“That was an evil action, but I wish that I knew that that was the most evil thing he would do!”

“Is this the way that he usually acts?” Lodovico asked Iago. “Or is he so upset by the letter that he is acting abnormally?”

“I am sorry, but as his officer I ought not to speak about what I have seen and known him to do. You should watch him — his own actions will reveal his character to you and so I need not reveal his character by talking about it. Watch him, and see how he acts.”

“I am sorry that I was mistaken about his character,” Lodovico said.

— 4.2 —

In a room in the castle, Othello was questioning Emilia, Desdemona’s attendant and Iago’s wife.

“You have seen nothing suspicious?”

“I have never seen or heard anything suspicious,” Emilia replied, “and I have never suspected Desdemona of doing anything wrong.”

“You have seen Cassio and her together.”

“Yes, but I have never seen them do anything wrong, and I have heard every syllable that they have spoken to each other.”

“Did they ever whisper?”

“Never, my lord.”

“And they never sent you away?”

“Never.”

“Not even to fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, or something else?”

“Never, my lord.”

“That’s strange.”

“I would bet my immortal soul that she is faithful to you. If you think otherwise, you are wrong and you need to change your thinking. Remove any thought that Desdemona has done you wrong; such thoughts abuse your heart. If any wretch has put such a thought in your head, let Heaven repay that deed with the serpent’s curse! Remember Genesis 3:14-15: *‘And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.’* If Desdemona is not honest, chaste, and true to you, then no man is happy — the purest of their wives is as foul as slander.”

“Tell Desdemona to come here,” Othello said. “Go now.”

Emilia left the room.

Othello said to himself, “She says that Desdemona is faithful to me, but it would have to be a stupid and foolish

brothel-keeper who would not lie as well as Emilia. Emilia is a subtle whore who acts like a lock and key and keeps villainous secrets, and yet she kneels and prays — I have seen her do it.”

Desdemona and Emilia both entered the room.

“My lord, what is your will?” Desdemona asked.

“Please, chick, come here,” Othello said.

Desdemona walked to Othello and asked, “What do you want?”

“Let me see your eyes; look at my face,” Othello angrily said.

Wary, Desdemona asked, “What horrible notion is this?”

Othello said to Emilia, “Do your job, mistress. Leave us procreants — we who procreate — alone and shut the door. Cough, or cry ‘ahem,’ if anybody comes. That is your job, so do it.”

Emilia knew that she had been insulted. The words that Othello had used implied that she was the keeper of a brothel and that her job was to help people have illicit and immoral sex. But she was afraid, and she left.

Desdemona, who knew much less of the evils of the world than Emilia, understood the tone of voice that Othello had used. She knelt before Othello and said, “What do you mean? I understand from your tone of voice that you are angry, but I do not understand your words.”

“Why, what are you?” Othello asked her.

“Your wife, my lord; your true, faithful, and loyal wife.”

“Come, swear it, and damn yourself,” Othello said. “You are beautiful, and you look like you belong in Heaven. I do

not want the devils of Hell to be afraid to seize you after you die, so therefore swear to me that you are faithful to me, and be double-damned.”

He thought *Be damned once for adultery and once for perjury.*

“Heaven knows that I am faithful to you.”

“Heaven knows that you are as false as Hell.”

“To whom am I false, my lord? With whom am I false? How am I false?”

“Desdemona, stay away from me!” Othello said, crying.

“This is a horrible day,” Desdemona said. “Why are you crying? Am I the reason for these tears, my lord? If you suspect that my father is the cause of your being recalled to Venice, do not blame me. If you have lost his good will, I also have lost his good will.”

“Had it pleased Heaven to test me by afflicting me, by raining all kinds of sores and shames on my bare head, by steeping me in poverty up to my lips, by imprisoning me and chaining up all my hopes, I still would have found in some place of my soul a drop of patience. Unfortunately, Heaven has made me a fixed figure for everyone to scorn and to point at like the numbers on a clock. It is as if my disgrace were written on the face of a clock in the marketplace. Still, I could bear that, too, well — very well. But in the place where I have given my heart, where either I must live, or have no life, where is the fountain from which my current runs, or else dries up — I am referring to you, my wife — I have been thrown out from that place, I have been discarded from there! It is now a cistern where foul toads copulate and breed. Change your complexion, like the young and rose-lipped cherub known as Patience when she looks at the place where I have given my heart.

That's right — now you look as grim as Hell!”

“I hope my noble lord believes that I am honest and faithful to him and morally pure.”

“Yes, I do believe that you are chaste,” Othello said sarcastically. “As chaste as summer flies are in the slaughterhouses, flies that become pregnant again as soon as their eggs are laid. You weed, you are so lovely and so beautiful and you smell so sweet that my senses ache when they behold you — I wish that you had never been born!”

“What sin have I committed without being aware of it?” Desdemona asked.

Othello looked at Desdemona's face and said, “Was this beautiful paper, this excellent book, made to write the word ‘whore’ upon? What sin have you committed!”

He thought, *You know Exodus 20:14; it is one of the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”*

He said, “You are a common whore! I should make forges of my cheeks; they would burn with embarrassment if I were to mention your evil deeds out loud. What sin have you committed! Heaven stops its nose at it so it will not smell your sin and the Moon — a symbol of chastity — closes its eyes so it will not see your sin. Even the bawdy wind that kisses all it meets is hiding in a hollow cave under the ground so it will not hear about your sin. What sin have you committed! You are an impudent whore!”

“By Heaven, you do me wrong,” Desdemona said.

“Are you not a whore?”

“No, I am not. I swear it as I am a Christian,” Desdemona said. “If to preserve this vessel — my body — for my lord from any foul unlawful touch means that I am not a whore, then I am not a whore.”

“What? You say that you are not a whore?”

“I am not a whore. If I am, then I give up my eternal salvation eternally.”

“Is it possible that you can say such a thing?”

“Heaven forgive us!”

“I beg your pardon, then,” Othello said sarcastically. “I mistook you for that cunning whore of Venice who married Othello.”

Othello raised his voice and called Emilia: “You, mistress, who have the office opposite to that of Saint Peter, and keep the gate of Hell while he keeps the gate of Heaven, come here.”

Emilia entered the room.

Othello threw a few coins at her and said, “We have finished; here’s money for your pains. Please, keep the door and keep the secrets of Desdemona and me.”

He left the room.

Emilia knew that she and Desdemona had been insulted. Othello was treating Desdemona like a whore and Emilia like the keeper of a brothel. He was acting as if he had been one of a whore’s — Desdemona’s — customers and was tipping Emilia for her services as a procurer and to have her not gossip about his use of a prostitute’s services.

Emilia said, “What is going on in your husband’s brain? How are you, madam? How are you, my good lady?”

“I am in shock. It is as if I am half-asleep.”

“Good madam, what’s the matter with my lord?”

“With whom?”

“Why, with my lord, madam.”

“Who is your lord?”

“The same person who is your lord, your husband, sweet lady.”

“I have no lord, no husband,” Desdemona replied. “Do not talk to me, Emilia. I cannot cry, and tears would accompany the only answers that I can give you. Please, lay my wedding sheets on my bed tonight. Remember that. Also, call your husband here so I can talk to him.”

“Things have certainly changed around here!” Emilia said.

She left to get her husband, Iago.

Desdemona said sadly but sarcastically and bitterly, “It is fitting that I should be treated this way, very fitting. What have I done that he should make even the smallest criticism about my greatest fault?”

Emilia and Iago entered the room.

Iago looked at Desdemona, whom he was hoping to manipulate her husband into murdering, and asked, “What do you want, madam? How are you?”

“I do not know how I am,” Desdemona replied. “Those who teach young babes do so gently and give them easy tasks to do. My husband might have criticized me gently because, indeed, like a child I am unaccustomed to being scolded.”

“What’s the matter, lady?” Iago asked.

“It’s a shame, Iago, but my lord treated her as if she were a whore. He has called her spiteful and scornful names that good people cannot bear.”

“Am I deserving of the names he called me, Iago?”

Desdemona asked.

“What names, fair lady?”

“Such names as your wife says my lord did say I was.”

“He called her a whore,” Emilia said. “Not even a drunk beggar would have called his slut such names as Othello called Desdemona.”

“Why did he do that?” Iago asked.

“I do not know why,” Desdemona said. “I am sure that I did not deserve to be called such names.”

“Do not cry, Desdemona, do not cry,” Iago said. “This is a sorrowful day!”

“Has Desdemona given up so many noble marriages that she could have made, has she given up her father and her country and her friends, just to end up being called a whore?” Emilia said. “Doesn’t this make you want to cry?”

“It is my wretched fate,” Desdemona said.

“Curse him for this,” Iago said. “Why is he acting this way?”

“I don’t know,” Desdemona said. “Only Heaven knows.”

“I can guess the cause,” Emilia said. “I will be hanged if some eternal villain, if some busy and insinuating rogue, if some lying, cheating slave, to get some job, has not devised some slander. I will be hanged if this is not true.”

Iago said, “No man can be that evil. That is impossible,” but he thought, *That is a good part of the truth — I did it in part so that I could be lieutenant, and now I am lieutenant.*

“If any such man exists, may Heaven pardon him!” Desdemona said.

“May a halter around his neck pardon him!” Emilia said. “And may Hell gnaw his bones! Why should Othello call Desdemona a whore? How is it even possible for her to have an affair? Who keeps her company that she could have an affair with? In what place could an affair take place? At what time could an affair take place? How could an affair happen? What is the evidence for an affair? Some very villainous knave, some base and notorious knave, some scurvy fellow has abused the Moor. I wish that Heaven would reveal such villains for what they are and put in every honest hand a whip to lash the rascals naked through the world from the East to the West!”

Iago did not like hearing his wife say this. He said, “Speak more quietly. We are indoors.”

“To Hell with such men!” Emilia said. “Such a man spoke with you and turned your brain inside out and made you suspect that I had an affair with the Moor.”

Iago replied, “You are a fool. Shut up.”

Desdemona said, “Good Iago, what can I do to win my lord again? Good friend, go to him and talk to him. By this light of Heaven, the Sun, I swear that I do not know how I lost him. Here I kneel and swear that if ever my will trespassed against his love, either in thought or in actual deed, then may I never be happy. I swear that if my eyes, my ears, or any other sense ever delight in any man except my husband, then may I never be happy. I swear that if I never dearly loved my husband or do not dearly love my husband now or do not continue to dearly love my husband — even if he were to shake me off and divorce me and make me a beggar — then may I never be happy. Unkindness may do much, and his unkindness may take away my life, but it can never take away my love for him. I can hardly say the word ‘whore’ — to say the word now abhors me. I would not do the act that would make me a whore for all the world’s

mass of vain finery.”

“Please, control yourself,” Iago said. “This is a temporary mood of Othello’s. He is bothered by affairs of state and so he quarrels with you.”

“I hope that is the reason and there is nothing else —”
Desdemona began.

Iago interrupted, “That is the reason. I promise you that.”

Trumpets sounded.

Iago said, “The trumpets are sounding to announce that the evening meal is ready. Your guests — the messengers from Venice — are ready to dine. Go in to the meal, and do not cry. Don’t worry — all shall be well.”

Desdemona and Emilia went in to the meal, while Iago went outside, where he found an angry Roderigo waiting for him.

“How are you, Roderigo?”

“You have not been treating me fairly!”

“What have I done to make you think that?”

“Every day you put me off with some excuse, Iago. It seems to me now that you keep me from taking advantage of any and all opportunities that would further me even a little in my pursuit of Desdemona. I have not even met Desdemona. I will no longer endure it, and I am not about to let you get away with having treated me this badly.”

“Listen to me, Roderigo —”

“I have listened to you too much already because your words and your actions do not match.”

“You accuse me most unjustly.”

“My accusation is nothing but true,” Roderigo said. “I have wasted my capital. The jewels you have received from me to give to Desdemona would have half corrupted a Catholic nun. You have told me that Desdemona has received my gifts and in return has given to you to deliver to me words of hope and expectation that she and I will meet on intimate terms, but that never happens.”

“Well, go on. Continue,” Iago said.

“Go on! Continue!” Roderigo said. “I cannot go on and continue. My money is almost gone. I am in a scurvy situation, and I think that you have cheated me.”

“Go on.”

“I tell you that I cannot go on in this way. I intend to introduce myself to Desdemona and tell her that if she returns my jewels to me, I will stop pursuing her and repent my immoral solicitation of a married woman. If she will not return my jewels to me, assure yourself that I will seek satisfaction from you.”

Iago thought, If he talks to Desdemona, he will discover that I have delivered to her no jewels. Instead, I put them in my pocket.

“Have you said all you have to say?”

“Yes, and I have said nothing but what I intend to do.”

“Why, I see that you have spunk, and I now have a better opinion of you than I ever had before,” Iago said. “Shake my hand, Roderigo. You have greatly criticized me, but I say that I have always been honest in trying to help you achieve your goal of sleeping with Desdemona.”

“It does not look like it.”

“I grant that you have not yet enjoyed Desdemona’s body,

and so your suspicion of me is founded on intelligent and good judgment. But, Roderigo, if you have some qualities in you that I indeed have greater reason to believe now than ever before — I refer to purpose, courage, and valor — this night you need to prove that you have those qualities. Prove that this night, and if you are not enjoying Desdemona's body tomorrow night, then form treacherous plots against my life and kill me and take me from this world.”

“What do you want me to do?” Roderigo said. “Is it something reasonable that can likely be accomplished? Is it feasible?”

“Sir, a letter from Venice has arrived with orders to replace Othello with Cassio as governor of Cyprus.”

“Is that true? Why, then Othello and Desdemona will return to Venice.”

“No,” Iago lied. “Othello will go into Mauritania in Western Africa and take away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his stay here be lengthened by some event — definitely, if Cassio were to be removed, Othello and Desdemona would stay here in Cyprus.”

“What do you mean by the removing of Cassio?”

“I mean that Cassio needs to be made incapable of taking Othello's place, as will be true if his brains are knocked out.”

“And that is what you want me to do?”

“Yes, if you dare to do something that will profit you and give you something — Desdemona — that ought to be yours by right. Cassio is dining with a prostitute, and I will go and join them. Cassio does not yet know of his good and honorable fortune — his being made governor of Cyprus. If you will wait for him to leave, which I will make happen

between midnight and one, you may kill him at your pleasure. I will be near to give you support, and with both of us attacking him, he shall die.”

Roderigo looked shocked.

Iago said, “Come on. Don’t just stand there. Come with me. I will give you such reasons why his death is necessary that you will feel obliged to kill him. It is now supertime, and the time is passing quickly. Let’s go.”

“I need to hear further reasons why Cassio’s death is necessary.”

“And I will tell them to you,” Iago replied.

They departed.

— 4.3 —

In a room in the castle were Othello, Lodovico, Desdemona, Emilia, and some attendants. The evening meal was over, and Othello was offering to walk Lodovico home.

Lodovico said to Othello, “Please, sir, trouble yourself no further about me.”

“It is no trouble,” Othello said. “A walk will do me good.”

“Madam, good night,” Lodovico said. “I humbly thank your ladyship.”

“Your honor is most welcome,” Desdemona replied courteously.

“Shall we walk, sir?” Othello asked Lodovico.

He then said, “Desdemona —”

“My lord?”

“Go to bed immediately. I will return soon. Send Emilia, your attendant, away, also. Make sure that you follow my orders.”

“I will, my lord.”

Othello, Lodovico, and some attendants exited.

Emilia had been far enough away that she had not heard what Othello had said. She said to Desdemona, “How is everything going now? Othello looks gentler and calmer than he did.”

“He says that he will return quickly. He has ordered me to go to bed and to dismiss you. Apparently, he wants me to be alone when he returns.”

“Dismiss me!” Emilia said, surprised. Normally, a lady’s attendant would stay with her until the lady’s husband was ready for bed.

“That is what he ordered,” Desdemona said. “Therefore, good Emilia, give me my night clothes. We must not now displease him.”

Uneasy, Emilia said, “I wish that you had never seen him!”

“I do not have that wish,” Desdemona said. “I love him so much that even his stubbornness, his rebukes of me, his frowns — please, unpin my hair and dress — have grace and favor in them.”

“I have laid on the bed those sheets you asked me to get.”

“It doesn’t matter. All’s one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds! What thoughts they make us think! If I die before you, please use one of those sheets as my shroud.”

“Come, that’s no way to talk,” Emilia said.

“My mother had a maid named Barbary, a form of Barbara.

She was in love, and the man she loved proved to be unfaithful and forsook her, She used to sing a song named 'Willow.' The willow is a symbol of unrequited love; the weeping willow is a symbol of unhappiness. It was an old song, but it expressed her fortune, and she died singing it. That song tonight will not leave my mind. I find it difficult to keep from hanging my head to one side and singing that song like poor Barbary. Please, hurry up."

"Shall I go and fetch your nightgown?"

"No, finish unpinning me now," Desdemona said, adding, "This Lodovico is a proper man."

"A very handsome man."

"He speaks well."

"I know a lady in Venice who would have walked barefoot to Palestine for a kiss from him."

Had Desdemona not married Othello, she might have married a man much like Lodovico. Although he was a relative, if he were a distant enough relative, and unmarried, she might even have married Lodovico.

Desdemona began to sing:

"The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,

"Sing all a green willow:

"Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,

"Sing willow, willow, willow.

"The fresh streams ran by her, and repeated her moans;

"Sing willow, willow, willow.

"Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones."

She gave some clothing to Emilia and said, “Put these away.”

Desdemona then sang again:

“Sing willow, willow, willow.”

She said to Emilia, “Please, go now. Othello will soon return.”

Desdemona then sang again:

“Sing, all — a green willow must be my garland.

“Let nobody blame him; his scorn I accept —”

She stopped and said, “No, that line is not next.”

Hearing a noise, she said, “Listen! Who is knocking?”

Emilia replied, “It’s the wind.”

Desdemona then sang again:

“I called my lover untrue, but what did he say then?

“Sing willow, willow, willow.

“If I court more women, you’ll sleep with more men!””

She said to Emilia, “Well, go now. My eyes itch. Is that a sign of weeping to come?”

“It is neither here nor there,” Emilia said.

“I have heard it said that itchy eyes foretell weeping. Oh, these men, these men! Do you truly think — tell me, Emilia — that women really exist who abuse their husbands by making them cuckolds?”

“Some such women exist, no question about it.”

“Would you do such a deed for all the world?”

“Why, wouldn’t you?”

“No, by this Heavenly light, the Sun!”

“Neither would I in this Heavenly light from the Sun, but I might do it in the dark,” Emilia said.

“Would you do such a deed for all the world?”

“The world is huge; it is very valuable. It is a great payment for performing a small vice.”

“Truly, I don’t think that you would ever be guilty of such a sin.”

“Truly, I think that I would,” Emilia said. “I would do the sin, and after I had the world, I would undo the damage resulting from the sin. Of course, I would not do such a thing for a ring, or for yards of fine linen, or for clothing such as gowns, petticoats, and caps, or for any petty amount of money or petty gift — but for the whole world? Why, who would not make her husband a cuckold if it would make him a monarch? I would risk being condemned to much time in Purgatory for committing such a sin. This sin can be forgiven; it need not result in being condemned to Hell.”

“Curse me if I would do such a wrong even for the whole world.”

“Why, the wrong is only a wrong in the world. Once you have the world as the price for your labor, it is a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.”

“I do not think that any such woman exists who would commit such a sin.”

“Yes, a dozen, and as many in addition as would fill the world they played for. But I think it is their husbands’ faults if wives fall into this kind of sin. Husbands

sometimes slack in their duties — instead of sleeping with us, they pour their treasured semen into the laps of other women. Or else the husbands break out in peevish jealousies and restrict our freedom. Or they strike us. Or they reduce our monetary allowance out of spite. Why, we have spirits that can feel resentment, and though we have some grace and can forgive them, yet sometimes we want and get revenge. Let husbands know that their wives have senses and feelings just like theirs: They see and smell and have an appetite both for sweet and sour, just like husbands have. What is it that husbands get when they exchange us — their legitimate wives — for others? Is it sexual pleasure? I think it is. Does affection breed it? I think it does. Is it frailty that thus errs? Yes. Don't we wives have affections, desires for sexual pleasure, and frailty, as men have? Then let them treat us well, or else let them know that the sins we do, their own sins teach us to do.”

Desdemona said, “Good night, good night. May Heaven help me learn from such examples to avoid doing evil!”

Emilia exited, leaving Desdemona alone in the bedchamber.

CHAPTER 5 (*Othello*)

— 5.1 —

Iago and Roderigo spoke together on a dark street near where Cassio was visiting Bianca.

Iago said, “Here, stand behind this projecting wall. Cassio will arrive quickly. Take out your rapier, and thrust it deep in him. Quick, quick; don’t be afraid. I will be at your elbow. This action will make us, or it will mar us and ruin us; think about that, and be resolute.”

“Be close at hand,” Roderigo said. “I may need help.”

“Here I am, by your side,” Iago said. “Be bold, and take your stand.”

Iago withdrew a short distance away.

I have no great desire to do this deed of murder, Roderigo thought. And yet Iago has given me reasons for committing murder. Oh, well. It is only the death of a single man. I will draw my sword — Cassio will die tonight.

Iago thought, I have rubbed this pimple — this youngster, this Roderigo — until it is raw, and now he grows angry at me. Now, whether Roderigo kills Cassio, or Cassio kills him, or each kills the other, I come out ahead. If Roderigo stays alive, he will demand that I make a large restitution to him — he will demand that I restore to him all the gold and jewels that I defrauded him, saying that they were gifts for Desdemona when actually I put them in my own pocket. That must not happen. If Cassio should stay alive, he has a constant beauty of character in his life that makes me ugly by comparison and, in addition, the Moor may eventually talk to him and learn that I have been lying about Desdemona. Because of that, I stand in much danger, and

so Cassio must die. Listen! I hear him coming!

Cassio arrived.

Roderigo thought, *I know his gait — he is Cassio.*

He then said to Cassio, “Villain, now you must die!”

He thrust his sword at Cassio, who said, “That sword thrust would have been my death, but I am a soldier and I am wearing a privy coat — a coat of mail underneath my regular clothing — for protection. Now let us see whether your coat is as good as mine.”

Cassio thrust his sword into Roderigo’s body, and Roderigo cried, “I am going to die!”

In the dark, Iago came up behind Cassio. Knowing that Cassio was wearing a protective coat of mail, Iago wounded him in the leg with his sword and then fled.

Cassio shouted, “I am maimed forever! Murder! Murder!”

He fell.

Othello, who was walking to his home after having walked Lodovico home, heard the noise and thought, *It is the voice of Cassio; Iago has kept his word and murdered him.*

Roderigo shouted, “Damn me!”

Othello thought, *Cassio should be damned.*

Cassio shouted, “Help! Bring some light here! I need a doctor!”

Othello thought, *Yes, it is the voice of Cassio. Brave Iago, you are honest and just. You have a noble sense of the wrong done to me, your friend! You teach me how to act now.*

He thought about Desdemona, *Hussy, your dear lies dead,*

and your cursed end hurries to you. Whore, I am coming to see you. Your charming eyes no longer influence my heart. You have spotted our bed with lust, and now I shall spot it with your whorish blood.

Othello departed.

Lodovico had decided to take a walk with his friend Gratiano and seek Cassio.

Cassio shouted, "Help! Are there no watchmen? No passersby to help me? Murder! Murder!"

"Something bad has happened," Gratiano said. "Someone badly needs assistance."

Cassio shouted, "Help!"

Lodovico said, "Listen!"

Roderigo shouted, "Damn!"

"Two or three men are groaning," Lodovico said. "It is a dark night. Let's be careful. These men may be acting as if they are hurt so that they can rob us when we come to their assistance. Let's get more people and then go to them."

Lodovico was understandably cautious because he was in a country that was not his own.

"Is nobody coming to help me?" Roderigo shouted. "Then I shall bleed to death."

Lodovico said again, "Listen!"

Iago now returned.

Gratiano said, "Here comes someone wearing a nightshirt and carrying a lamp and a sword."

"Who's there?" Iago said. "Who is shouting, 'Murder!'?"

“We do not know,” Lodovico said.

“Did you hear anyone shout?” Iago asked.

“Here, here!” Cassio shouted, “For Heaven’s sake, help me!”

Iago asked, “What’s the matter?”

Gratiano said, “I recognize this man. This is Othello’s ancient.”

“You are right,” Lodovico said. “He is Iago, a very valiant fellow.”

“Who are you here who is shouting so grievously?” Iago asked.

Cassio replied, “Is that you, Iago? I am wounded, injured by villains. Give me some help.”

“Lieutenant, what villains have done this?” Iago asked.

“I think that one of them is still near here and cannot flee.”

“They are treacherous villains!” Iago said.

Seeing Lodovico and Gratiano, he said, “Who are you there? Come here, and give us some help.”

Roderigo shouted, “Help me! I am over here!”

“That is one of the men who attacked me,” Cassio said.

Iago went over to Roderigo and said, “You murderous slave! You villain!”

Then he stabbed Roderigo, who weakly said, “Damn you, Iago! You inhuman dog!”

“Killing men in the dark!” Iago shouted. “Where are these bloody thieves? How quiet the town is tonight! Murder! Murder!”

Seeing Lodovico and Gratiano, Iago asked, “Who are you! Are you good men or bad men?”

“Judge us by our actions, then praise us,” Lodovico said.

Iago asked, “Are you Signior Lodovico?”

“Yes.”

“I beg your pardon. Here is Cassio. He has been hurt by villains.”

“Cassio!” Gratiano said.

“How are you, brother?” Iago asked Cassio.

“My leg has been cut in two.”

“Heaven forbid!” Iago exclaimed. “Hold the lamp so I have light, gentlemen. I will bandage Cassio’s wound with my shirt.”

The attack had occurred outside Bianca’s home. She had heard the noise and now came running.

She asked, “What is the matter? Who is he who cried out?”

“Who is he who cried out?” Iago repeated, sarcastically, implying that Bianca knew who had cried out.

Bianca saw the wounded Cassio and exclaimed, “Oh, my dear Cassio! My sweet Cassio! Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!”

“You are a notable whore!” Iago said to her.

He then asked, “Cassio, do you know which men wounded you?”

“No.”

Gratiano said to Cassio, “I am sorry to see that you are wounded. I was on my way to find you.”

“Someone, lend me a garter so I can bind Cassio’s bandage,” Iago said. “Good. Now we need a sedan chair — an enclosed chair attached to two poles so that servants can carry it — so that we can easily carry Cassio to a doctor.”

“Cassio has fainted from loss of blood,” Bianca cried.

Iago said, “Gentlemen, I do suspect this trash — this woman — to be a party in this attack against Cassio.”

He said to Cassio, “Be patient. We will take care of you.”

He then walked over to where Roderigo was lying and said, “Bring a lamp here. Do we know this man? It is my friend and my dear countryman Roderigo! Is it? No — yes, it is, definitely. Oh, Heaven! It is Roderigo.”

“Roderigo of Venice?” Gratiano asked.

“Yes, it is he, sir,” Iago asked. “Did you know him?”

“Know him? Yes.”

“Is that you, Signior Gratiano?” Iago said. “Please pardon me. This bloody attack must excuse my bad manners — I did not mean to neglect you.”

“I am glad to see you,” Gratiano said.

“How are you doing, Cassio?” Iago asked. “We need a sedan chair! A chair!”

Gratiano looked at Roderigo’s body and said, “Roderigo!”

“Yes, it is he,” Iago said.

Some people arrived, carrying a sedan chair, and Iago said, “Well done. Some good men carry Cassio carefully from here; I’ll get the general’s surgeon.”

He said to Bianca, “As for you, mistress, keep out of the way.”

He said to Cassio, “The man who lies here dead was my dear friend. His name was Roderigo. What was the problem between you two?”

“There was none,” Cassio said. “I don’t even know the man.”

Iago said to Bianca, “You look pale. That is suspicious.”

He then said, “Carry Cassio away.”

Cassio was carried away in the sedan chair. Some men also carried away Roderigo.

Iago said to Lodovico and Gratiano, “Stay here a moment, gentlemen.”

He said to Bianca, “Do you look pale, mistress?”

He said to Lodovico and Gratiano, “Do you see the terror in her eyes?”

He said to Bianca, “Go ahead and stare. We shall learn more soon.”

He said to Lodovico and Gratiano, “Look at her closely. See how guilty she looks! Guilt will reveal itself even when tongues stay silent.”

Emilia walked up to Iago and the others and asked, “What is going on? What’s the matter, husband?”

Iago replied, “Cassio has here been attacked in the dark by Roderigo and some fellows who have escaped. Cassio is close to dying, and Roderigo is dead.”

“This is a pity, good gentlemen!” Emilia said. “It is a shame that this happened to good Cassio!”

“This is the fruit of whoring,” Iago said. “Please, Emilia, go to Cassio and ask him where he dined this night.”

He looked at Bianca and asked, “Are you shaking with fear because of what I asked my wife to do?”

“Cassio dined at my house tonight, but I am not shivering in this cool night air because of that.”

“Oh, so he did dine with you,” Iago said. “I command you to come with me.”

“Damn you, whore,” Emilia said.

“I am no whore,” Bianca said. “I live as respectable a life as you who are verbally abusing me.”

“As respectable a life as I!” Emilia said. “Not likely!”

Iago said, “Kind gentlemen, let’s go and make sure that poor Cassio’s wounds are bandaged.”

He said to Bianca, “Come, mistress, you must tell us another tale.”

He said to his wife, “Emilia, run to the citadel and tell the Moor and Desdemona what has happened.”

He said to Lodovico and Gratiano, “Please lead the way.”

He thought, *This is the night that will either make me or entirely ruin me.*

— 5.2 —

Desdemona was asleep in her bedchamber in the castle. A candle was burning near her.

Othello entered the room and thought this:

It is the cause; it is the cause, my soul. Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars! It is the cause.

I must keep in mind the cause. Desdemona has committed adultery, and that is the cause — the reason — why I must

punish her.

I will not shed her blood, and I will not scar that whiter skin of hers than snow — that skin as smooth as alabaster stone used in making tombs. Yet she must die, else she will betray more men.

I will put out the candle's light, and then I will put out the light that is her life. If I quench you, you flaming candle, I can easily again restore your light, if I repent my action. But if I put out the light that is Desdemona's life — that pattern so skillfully wrought by nature excelling itself — I do not know where to find the heat that Prometheus used when he created human beings and so I cannot make you live again.

When I have plucked a rose, I cannot give it vital growth again. It must wither and it will wither. So will it be if I pluck your life, Desdemona.

I'll smell the rose on the bush.

He leaned down and kissed Desdemona.

He thought, *Your breath is fragrant. It almost persuades Justice to break her sword of punishment! One more kiss, one more. Be like this when you are dead, and I will kill you and love you afterward.*

He kissed her.

One more, and this is the last kiss, he thought.

He kissed her a third time.

So sweet was never so fatal. I must weep, but I weep cruel tears. This sorrow is Heavenly — it strikes where it does love. I remember Proverbs 3:12: "For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth." She is waking up.

Desdemona asked, "Who's there? Othello?"

“Yes, Desdemona.”

“Will you come to bed, my lord?”

“Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“If you can think of any sin that you have not confessed and asked to be forgiven for, pray about it immediately. You must be reconciled with God and forgiven by Him.”

“That sounds ominous. My lord, what do you mean by that?”

“Do it now, and be brief; I will walk nearby to give you some privacy. I would not kill your unprepared spirit. You must be ready to enter Heaven. I would not kill your soul — Heaven forbid that!”

“Are you talking about killing me?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Then I pray that Heaven have mercy on me!”

“Amen, with all my heart!” Othello said.

“If you can say that, I hope that you will have mercy on me and not kill me.”

“What you hope — that will not happen.”

“I fear you. You are deadly when your eyes roll like they are doing now. But I do not know why I should be afraid that you will kill me. I have done nothing wrong and I am guilty of nothing, and yet I am afraid that you will kill me.”

“Think about your sin.”

“My sin is the love I have for you,” Desdemona said.

She added, “It is a sin to love a mortal man more than

God.”

“True, and that is the reason you will die,” Othello said, thinking that Desdemona loved Cassio.

“Death is most unnatural when one kills because of love,” Desdemona said. “Why are you gnawing your lower lip? Some bloody passion shakes your very frame: These are deadly portents; but yet I hope, I hope, that they do not pertain to me.”

“Be quiet, and be still!”

“I will obey you,” Desdemona said. “What’s the matter?”

“That handkerchief that I so valued and gave to you, you gave to Cassio.”

“No, by my life and soul that is not true! Send for the man, and ask him.”

“Sweet soul, take heed and be careful not to commit the sin of perjury. You are on your deathbed.”

“I may eventually die in this bed, but not yet, I hope.”

“You will die very soon on this bed. Therefore, confess freely your sins. Denying anything of which you are accused will not remove or strangle the strong suspicions that make me groan. You will die.”

“Then, Lord God, have mercy on me!”

“To that I say, ‘Amen.’”

“And, Lord my husband, you have mercy on me, too! I have never done anything to offend you in my life. I have never had anything to do with Cassio except what Heaven would approve of. I have never given him any love-token, including your handkerchief.”

“By Heaven, I saw my handkerchief in his hand,” Othello said. “Woman, you have committed the sin of perjury. You have turned my heart to stone. Your refusal to confess your sins forces me to call what I intend to do a murder, which I thought would instead be a sacrificial gesture. I saw the handkerchief.”

“Then he found it. I never gave it to him. Send for him — he will tell you the truth.”

“He has confessed the truth.”

“What, my lord?”

“He has confessed that he has used you.”

“How? Immorally?”

“Yes. He has confessed that you and he have committed adultery.”

“Call him here. He will not say that.”

“No, he won’t. His mouth is closed and will never again open. Honest Iago has seen to that.”

“I am afraid! Is Cassio dead?”

“Had all his hairs been lives, my great desire for revenge would have ended each life.”

“He has been betrayed, and I will die.”

She cried.

“Stop, whore! Will you cry for Cassio in front of me?”

“Banish me, my lord. Send me away, but do not kill me!”

“Don’t you move, whore!”

“Kill me tomorrow — let me live tonight!”

Othello grabbed her and said, “Don’t you struggle —”

“Let me live another half an hour!”

“Now that I have started, I must go on.”

“Wait until I say one prayer!”

“It is too late.”

Othello strangled Desdemona, his wife.

Emilia, outside the bedchamber door, called, “My lord! My lord!”

Othello listened to hear whether Desdemona was breathing; he said, “What noise is this? Not dead? Not yet quite dead? I who am cruel am also merciful. I would not have you linger in pain.”

He put his hands around her neck again and squeezed.

Emilia called, “My lord! My lord!”

“Who’s there?” Othello called.

“My good lord, I need to talk to you!”

“It is Emilia,” Othello said.

He called, “Wait a moment!”

He thought, *Desdemona is dead. Likely, Emilia has come to inform me about Cassio’s death. The attack and its aftermath created a lot of noise. Desdemona is no longer moving — she is as still as the grave. Shall I let Emilia come in? Is that what I should do? Is Desdemona moving? No. What is the best thing for me to do? If Emilia comes in, she’ll want to speak to my wife. My wife! My wife! What wife? I have no wife. This is unbearable! This is a heavy hour! I think a huge eclipse of Sun and Moon should occur now, and I think that the frightened globe should tear itself*

apart in an earthquake. Now the world should end.

Emilia called, "Please, I need to talk to you, my good Lord!"

"I had forgotten about you," Othello said. "Come in, Emilia. Wait a moment. Let me first draw the curtains around the bed. Now I will unlock the door."

He unlocked the door and let Emilia in and said, "What's the matter with you now?"

"My good Lord, murders have been committed!"

"When? Just now?"

"Just now, my Lord."

"The Moon has caused this. She errs in her orbit and comes closer to the Earth than usual, and she is making men lunatics."

"My Lord, Cassio has killed a young Venetian named Roderigo."

"Roderigo has been killed!" Othello said. "And Cassio has been killed!"

"No, Cassio has not been killed."

"Cassio has not been killed!" Othello said.

He thought, *Murder is out of tune, and the sounds of sweet revenge grow harsh. The wrong man has been killed.*

Desdemona revived and said, "I have been unfairly murdered!"

"What cry is that?" Emilia asked.

"That! What?" Othello said.

"That was my lady's voice," Emilia said.

Emilia cried, “Help! Help! Help!” and ran to the bed.

She held Desdemona in her arms and said, “Oh, lady, speak again! Sweet Desdemona! Oh, sweet mistress, speak!”

“I die a guiltless death,” Desdemona said. “I have done nothing wrong.”

“Who has done this deed?” Emilia asked.

Wanting to protect her husband, Desdemona said, “Nobody; I have done it myself. Farewell. Give my love to my kind lord. Oh, farewell!”

Desdemona died.

Othello said, “How can she have been murdered? Who could have murdered her?”

“Who knows?” Emilia replied.

“You heard her say herself that it was not I.”

“She said so. My duty is to report the truth.”

“Like the liar she is, she has gone to burning Hell. I am the person who killed her.”

“Then the more angel she, and you the blacker devil! With her final words, she forgave you and tried to make you appear innocent of her murder.”

“She turned to sin, and she was a whore,” Othello said.

“You are telling lies about her, and you are a devil.”

“She was false as water. She was as changeable as the tides. Water is unstable — it often changes; it can be liquid water, ice, snow, and water vapor. She was beautiful on the outside, but that appearance was deceptive.”

“You are as rash as fire when you say that she was false.

She was as true as Heaven! She was not deceitful or sinful.”

“Cassio lay on top of her,” Othello said. “Ask your husband whether that is true. I would be damned to Hell for eternity if I murdered Desdemona without just cause. Your husband knows that she was false to me.”

“My husband?”

“Your husband.”

“He knew that Desdemona committed adultery and broke the marriage vows she made in church?”

“Yes, she committed adultery with Cassio. Had she been true to me and had not committed adultery, I would not have traded her for a Heaven-made precious gem the size of the Earth.”

“My husband?”

“Yes, he told me first about her adultery. He is an honest man, and he hates the slime that sticks on filthy deeds.”

“My husband?”

“Why do you keep saying that, woman? Yes, it was your husband, Iago.”

“Oh, mistress, villainy has made a mockery of your love! Was it my husband who said that she was false to you!”

“Yes, woman,” Othello said. “I say that it was he, your husband, who told me that my wife was committing adultery with Cassio. Do you understand the word ‘husband’? I am talking about my friend, your husband: honest, honest Iago.”

“If he said that Desdemona committed adultery, may his pernicious, destructive, and evil soul rot in Hell forever! He

lies entirely — all the way to his heart. Desdemona was too fond of her most filthy bargain — her marriage — to commit adultery.”

“Ha!” Othello said, and he drew his sword.

“Do your worst to me,” Emilia said. “This deed of yours is no more worthy of Heaven than you were worthy of her.”

“Shut up, if you are wise!”

“You have not half the power to do me harm as I have the power to endure that hurt. You are a fool! You are an idiot! You are as ignorant as dirt! You have done an evil deed — I am not afraid of your sword! I will make your evil deed known to all, and I would do that even if I lost twenty lives!”

She shouted, “Help! Help! Help! The Moor has killed my mistress! Murder! Murder!”

Montano, Gratiano, and Iago entered the room.

“What is the matter?” Montano asked. “How are you now, general?”

Emilia saw her husband and said, “Oh, have you come, Iago?”

She added, sarcastically, “You have done well — men are blaming their murders on you.”

Gratiano asked, “What is the matter?”

Emilia said to Iago, “Prove that Othello is lying, if you are a man. He says that you told him that his wife was false to him and had committed adultery. I know that you did not — you are not such a villain. Speak, because my heart is heavy with grief.”

“I told him what I thought to be true,” Iago said, “and I told

him no more than what he himself found was reasonable, believable, and true.”

“But did you ever tell him that Desdemona was false to him and had committed adultery?”

“I did.”

“Then you told a lie — an odious, damned lie. I swear upon my soul that you told a lie, a wicked lie. Desdemona false with Cassio! Did you say that she committed adultery with Cassio?”

“With Cassio, mistress,” Iago said. “Put a spell on your tongue to silence it.”

“I will not be silent,” Emilia said. “I must speak. My mistress, Desdemona, here lies murdered in her bed —”

Shocked, Montano and Gratiano said, “Heaven forbid!”

Emilia finished, “— and, Iago, your lying reports have caused the murder.”

Montano and Gratiano stared at Othello, who said, “Do not stare, masters. What Emilia said is true, indeed. I have killed my wife.”

Gratiano said, “It is a strange truth.”

“It is a monstrous act!” Montano said.

“Villainy, villainy, villainy!” Emilia said. “I know it. I smell it. Oh, villainy! I suspected it previously. I’ll kill myself out of grief. Oh, villainy, villainy!”

“What, are you insane?” Iago said. “I order you to go home.”

“Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak,” Emilia said. “It is usually proper for me to obey my husband, but it is

not proper now. Perhaps, Iago, I will never again go home.”

Overcome with emotion, Othello groaned and fell on Desdemona’s bed.

“Lie down there and roar with grief,” Emilia said to him. “You have killed the sweetest innocent who ever lifted her eyes to Heaven as she prayed.”

Othello was still unwilling to accept the truth. He stood up and said, “Desdemona was foul.”

He looked at Gratiano, Desdemona’s uncle, who was therefore his uncle-in-law, and said, “I scarcely did recognize you, uncle. There lies your niece, whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopped. I know that this act appears to be horrible and grim.”

“Poor Desdemona!” Gratiano said. “I am glad that your father is dead. Your marriage to Othello was deadly to him; his grief at your marriage cut his life short — the Fates cut his thread of life. If he were still alive, this sight would make him do something desperate. He would curse his guardian angel and drive it away from his side, commit suicide, and fall into a state of damnation.”

“This sight is pitiful,” Othello said, “but Iago knows that she has committed adultery with Cassio a thousand times; Cassio himself confessed it, and she rewarded his amorous works with the first love-token that I gave to her. I saw it in his hand: It was a handkerchief: an antique love-token that my father gave my mother.”

“Oh, Heaven!” Emilia cried. “Oh, Heavenly powers!”

“Shut up!” Iago ordered her.

“The truth will come out! The truth will come out! Will I shut up? No, I will speak as liberally as the North Wind that violently blows with bitter cold. Let Heaven and men

and devils, let them all, all, all, cry shame against me because I am disobeying my husband, yet I'll speak."

"Be wise, shut up, and go home," Iago said.

"I will not."

Iago drew his sword and threatened his wife.

Gratiano was shocked: "You would draw your sword against a woman!"

"You dull Moor!" Emilia said. "By chance, I found that handkerchief you are talking about, and I gave it to my husband. Often, solemnly and earnestly, despite the handkerchief being just a trifle, he had asked me to steal it."

"You are a villainous whore!" Iago said to his wife.

"Did Desdemona give that handkerchief to Cassio? No! I found it, and I gave it to my husband."

"Filth, you lie!" Iago shouted.

"By Heaven, I do not. I do not, gentlemen," Emilia said.

She said to Othello, "Oh, murderous fool! What could such a fool as you do with so good a woman? You did not deserve her!"

Realizing that Emilia was telling the truth, Othello said, "Are there no lightning bolts in Heaven but those that are used with the thunder? Will no lightning bolts strike Iago dead?"

Othello said to Iago, "You are thoroughly a villain!"

Sword drawn, Othello ran at Iago, but Montano disarmed Othello. Iago stabbed Emilia and then fled.

Gratiano said, "Emilia has fallen. No doubt this villain has

killed his wife.”

“I am dying,” Emilia said. “Lay me by my mistress’ side.”

With help from Montano and Gratiano, she staggered to the bed and lay on it.

Gratiano said, “Iago has fled, and his wife has suffered a mortal wound.”

“Iago is a notorious villain,” Montano said.

He said to Gratiano, “Take this weapon, which I have just taken from the Moor, and guard the door from the outside. Do not let him pass through the doorway — kill him if you have to. I will run after Iago, that damned villain — he is a damned servant of evil.”

Montano and Gratiano exited the bedchamber. They thought that Emilia had died.

Othello said to himself, “I have lost my valor. Any puny whippersnapper can take my sword from me. But why should my reputation for valor outlast my valor? My reputation for honor should not outlast my honor.”

Emilia said softly on the bed, “What did your song foretell, lady? Can you hear me? Swans are silent during their lives and sing only when they are dying. I will be like the swan and die as I sing.”

She sang, “*Willow, willow, willow —*”

She added, “Moor, Desdemona was chaste and did not engage in immoral sex; she loved you, cruel Moor. I swear on my immortal soul that I am telling you the truth. I am telling you the truth as my soul goes to Paradise.”

Those were Emilia’s last words.

Othello said, “I have another weapon in this bedchamber; it

is a sword of Spain, tempered in an icy brook. Here it is.”

He held the sword in his hand as he called, “Uncle, I must come out of this room.”

Gratiano replied, “If you attempt to leave, it will cost you dearly. You have no weapon, I do have a weapon, and therefore you will suffer.”

“Come in here and talk to me,” Othello said, “or, defenseless as I am, I will attack you.”

Gratiano entered the room and said, “What do you want?”

Othello displayed his sword and said, “Look, I have a weapon. A better sword has never hung upon a soldier’s thigh. I have seen the day that with my little arm and this good sword, I have made my way through impediments with more than twenty times your power to stop me, but I am vainly boasting. Who can control his fate? I cannot do that now. Don’t be afraid, although you see me with a weapon. Here is the end of my journey — here is my stopping place and the marker that announces the farthest extent of my life.”

Gratiano backed away from Othello, who asked, “Do you retreat in dismay? You are wasting your fear. Point a mere straw at Othello’s chest, and I will give up. Where should Othello go?”

Othello looked at Desdemona’s corpse and said, “How do you look now? Oh, ill-starred woman! You are as pale as your smock! When we shall meet on Judgment Day, this look of yours will hurl my soul from Heaven, and fiends will snatch at it and carry it away to Hell. You are cold, cold, my girl! Your chastity — your avoidance of immoral sex — lacked the heat of immoral lust. I am a cursed sinner! Whip me, devils, from the possession of this Heavenly sight! Desdemona and I will be separated in the

afterlife — her abode is in Heaven, and mine is in Hell! Let hot winds blow on me! Roast me in sulfur! Wash me in precipitous chasms of liquid fire! Desdemona! Desdemona, you are dead! I have murdered you!”

Lodovico and Montano entered the room. With them was Cassio, who was being carried in a sedan chair. Officers also entered the room, leading Iago, their prisoner.

Lodovico asked, “Where is Othello, that rash and most unfortunate man?”

“The man who was Othello is here,” Othello said. “I am he.”

Lodovico said, “Where is that viper named Iago? Bring the villain forward.”

Othello said, “I look down at Iago’s feet, but he does not have cloven feet — that story about devils is a fable.”

Othello said to Iago, “If you are an immortal devil, then I cannot kill you.”

Othello slashed Iago with his sword.

“Wrench his sword away from him,” Lodovico ordered.

Othello was disarmed.

Iago said to Othello, “I bleed, sir; but I am not killed.”

“I am not sorry that you are alive,” Othello said. “I prefer that you stay alive. I know now that it is happiness to die. It is better to die than to be alive.”

“Othello, you were once a very good man,” Lodovico said, “but you fell into the trap of this damned evil man. What can I say to you?”

“Say anything you wish,” Othello said. “Call me an

honorable murderer, if you will. I did nothing out of hatred; I acted only out of honorable motives.”

“This wretched Iago has partly confessed his villainy,” Lodovico said. “Did you and he agree to cause Cassio’s death?”

“Yes,” Othello replied.

Cassio said, “Respected general, I never gave you cause to wish my death.”

“I believe you, and I beg you to forgive me,” Othello said. “Will you, please, ask that demi-devil why he has thus ensnared my soul and body?”

“Ask me nothing,” Iago said. “What you know, you know: From this time forward, I will never speak another word.”

“Not even to pray?” Lodovico asked.

Gratiano said, “Torture will open your lips.”

“Torture is an excellent idea,” Othello said.

Lodovico said to Othello, “Sir, you shall understand what has happened. You do not, I think, know all the story. Here is a letter found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo, and here is another letter. The first letter is from Iago to Roderigo and contains information intended to help Roderigo kill Cassio.”

“Iago is a villain,” Othello said.

Cassio said, “This attempted murder is very heathenish and very gross!”

“Here is another letter that we found in Roderigo’s pocket,” Lodovico said. “It seems that Roderigo meant to send this letter of complaint to Iago but Iago met with Roderigo just before he sent the letter; Iago answered his complaints.”

“Iago is a pernicious caitiff!” Othello said. “He is a malignant and contemptible person!”

He added, “Cassio, how did you come to possess that handkerchief that belonged to my wife?”

“I found it in my bedchamber,” Cassio replied. “Iago himself confessed just now that he dropped it there as part of his plan to ruin you.”

“I have been a fool!” Othello said. “A fool! A fool!”

Cassio said, “Roderigo’s letter in which he upbraids Iago contains more information. Roderigo wrote that Iago made him attack me while I was on guard duty, resulting in my dismissal as Othello’s lieutenant. Just now Roderigo gave us more information. We thought that he had been dead a long time, but he revived briefly before dying for real and told us that Iago had wounded him and that previously Iago had urged him to try to murder me.”

Lodovico said to Othello, “You must leave this room, and go with us. Your power and your command are removed from you; Cassio now rules in Cyprus. As for this villain, Iago, if there exists any cunning cruelty that can torment him greatly without killing him for a long time, he will feel that torture. You, Othello, will be our prisoner until we inform the Venetian government about the nature of your fault. The Venetian government will decide what shall be done with you.”

He said to the guards in the bedchamber, “Come, take the Moor away.”

Othello said, “Wait. Let me say a word or two before you go. I have done the Venetian government some service, and they know it, but no more of that. Please, in your letters, when you shall relate these unlucky deeds, speak of me as I am. Make no excuses for me, and do not write anything out

of malice. You must write about me as one who loved not wisely but too well — I should have loved moderately but instead I loved excessively. You must write about me as one who was not easily jealous, but as one who was manipulated into being extremely jealous. You must write about me as one whose hand, like the hand of a lowly ranking man of India, threw a pearl away that was more valuable than all his tribe. You must write about me as one whose eyes, although unaccustomed to crying, dropped tears when overcome with grief as quickly as Arabian trees drop the medicinal myrrh that oozes from them. Write all this down, and add that in Aleppo once, where a malignant and evil turbaned Turkish Muslim beat a Venetian man and slandered the Venetian state, I took the circumcised Muslim dog by the throat and killed him although it was a capital crime for a Christian — and I am a Christian — to strike a Turk.”

Othello was a military man, and military men often keep weapons hidden on their bodies. Othello took out a hidden dagger and said, “I killed the Turk like this” — then he stabbed himself mortally.

Lodovico said, “This is a bloody conclusion to Othello’s life!”

“All that we planned to do concerning Othello is ruined,” Gratiano said. “It is no longer applicable.”

Othello said to Desdemona’s corpse, “I kissed you before I killed you. There is nothing left to do but this — having killed myself, to die with a kiss.”

He fell on the bed, kissed Desdemona’s corpse, and died.

“I was afraid that Othello might try to kill himself,” Cassio said, “but I thought he had no weapon. Othello was great of heart.”

Lodovico said to Iago, “You vicious Spartan dog — deadlier than anguish, hunger, or the sea! — look at the tragic corpses on this bed. This is your doing. This spectacle poisons men’s sight.”

He ordered, “Draw the bed curtains and let the corpses be hidden from sight.”

He then said, “Gratiano, stay in the house, and take legal possession of the belongings and money of the Moor. You are the next of kin, and you inherit his fortune.”

He said to Cassio, “To you, lord governor, falls the punishment of Iago, this Hellish villain; you decide the time, the place, the torture — enforce justice!”

He concluded, “I myself will immediately return to Venice, and to the Venetian state, I will these sad events with heavy heart relate.”

Chapter XXX: ROMEO AND JULIET

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Romeo and Juliet*)

Juliet — Capulet's daughter.

Romeo — Montague's son.

Mercutio — Kinsman to the Prince of Verona and friend of Romeo.

Tybalt — Lady Capulet's nephew and Juliet's cousin.

The Nurse — Juliet's nursemaid.

Friar Lawrence — A brother of the Franciscan order and Romeo's confessor.

Capulet — Juliet's father.

Paris — A noble kinsman to the Prince.

Benvolio — Montague's nephew.

Lady Capulet — Juliet's mother.

Montague — Romeo's father.

Balthasar — Romeo's servant.

Apothecary — a chemist, aka pharmacist.

Escalus — the Prince of Verona.

Friar John — A brother of the Franciscan order.

Lady Montague — Romeo's mother.

Peter — A Capulet servant attending the Nurse.

Abram — A servant to Montague.

Sampson — Servant of the Capulet household.

Gregory — Servant of the Capulet household.

PROLOGUE (*Romeo and Juliet*)

The Capulets and the Montagues — two families, very much alike in most respects — in the beautiful city of Verona, Italy, battle each other because of a long-standing feud. Because of this feud, the hands of the citizens of Verona become dirty with the blood of other citizens of Verona. The two families have given birth to two children — a boy named Romeo and a girl named Juliet — who become ill-fated lovers and commit suicide. The burial of these lovers also buries the quarrel between their two families. These lovers' story is told in this book.

CHAPTER 1 (Romeo and Juliet)

— 1.1 —

On a street of Verona, Sampson and Gregory, two servants of the Capulet family, walked and talked. They wore swords and carried small, round shields. Sampson was in a mood to boast about his masculinity, and both were in a mood to make jokes.

Sampson said, “Gregory, you and I are not the type to take insults lightly.”

Gregory replied, “Neither of us is a lightweight.”

“If anyone should make us angry and choleric, we would draw our swords.”

“I definitely recommend that you not be collared by the city guards.”

Sampson said, “When I am moved by anger, I strike quickly with my sword.”

Gregory replied, “True, but it is best to not be quickly moved to strike.”

“Any member of the family of Montague can quickly move me to anger.”

“To quickly move is to run. A courageous man will stand and face the enemy. Are you telling me that when you meet a Montague you will run away?”

Sampson said, “A male Montague will move me to anger and a female Montague will make a certain part of my body move to make a stand. If we meet a Montague man on the street, I will make the Montague man walk in the gutter while I walk next to this wall.”

Gregory replied, “Doesn’t that mean that you are weak? The weaker sex walks on the side away from the street while the stronger sex walks next to the street. Members of the weaker sex will walk next to this wall.”

“You talk truthfully. Women are weak and need to be specially treated. If we meet a Montague man, I will push him into the gutter. But if we meet a Montague woman, I will nail her ass to this wall.”

“This feud is between the heads of the Capulets and the Montagues. And yet, the feud extends between other members of the two families and even to servants such as us.”

Sampson replied, “So be it. I will act like a tyrant. I will fight the Montague men, and then I will cruelly cut off the heads of the Montague maidens.”

“The heads of the maidens?” Gregory asked.

“Yes, the heads of the maidens, or better, I will break their maidenheads. Take it either way, but while I am alive, let no Montague hymen be unbroken.”

“If the Montague maidens take it, they will feel it inside them.”

Sampson said, “I will stand and deliver. Part of me will stand up, and I will deliver it to the Montague maidens. What I will deliver to the Montague maidens is a pretty piece of flesh.”

“It is good that you are flesh and not fish,” Gregory said. “If you were fish, you would be dried fish — dried and shriveled up.”

Gregory saw Abraham and Balthasar, two servants of the Montague family, and said to Samson, “Draw your sword. Here come two Montagues.”

“My naked sword is out of its scabbard, but if these two Montagues were Montague women and not Montague men, my sword is not the naked tool I would now be displaying. Pick a quarrel with these Montagues — I have your back.”

“In what way? Will you turn your back and run?”

“Don’t worry.”

“As long as I have *you* at my back, I worry.”

Samson said, “Let’s not break the law. Let them start a quarrel.”

“I will frown as I pass by them,” Gregory said. “They can take it as they wish.”

“That’s not enough,” Samson said. “I will rub my nose with my middle finger. If they don’t start a fight, they will be thought to be cowardly.”

As Abraham and Balthasar neared them, Samson pulled his fingers into a fist, extended his middle finger, and rubbed the tip of his nose while staring at the Montague servants.

Abraham asked angrily, “Are you giving us the finger?”

“I am indeed giving the finger,” Samson replied.

“Yes, I can see that you are,” Abraham said, “but are you giving *us* the finger?”

Samson asked Gregory, “Is the law on our side, if I say yes?”

“No,” Gregory replied.

Samson said to the Montague servants, “No, I am not giving you the finger, but I am giving the finger.”

Gregory said to the Montague servants, “Are you picking a fight with us?”

“A fight?” Abraham said. “No.”

“If you want to fight, I will fight you,” Sampson said. “My boss is as good as yours.”

“He is no better,” Abraham said.

Gregory said, “Say that our boss is better than his boss. I see a reinforcement coming: Benvolio, a relative of our boss.”

“You are wrong,” Samson said to Abraham. “Our boss is better than your boss.”

“You lie!” Abraham shouted.

“Draw your swords if you are men,” Sampson said. “Gregory, get ready to fight — you know how to cut and slash with your sword.”

Benvolio, a peacemaker, drew his sword and tried to stop the fight. He shouted, “Part, fools! Put up your swords; you know not what you do!” He used his sword to beat down their swords.

Tybalt, a Montague, came running with his sword drawn and said to Benvolio, “You have drawn your sword among these stupid servants. Turn, and face a worthy opponent. Turn, and face your death.”

“I do but try to keep the peace,” Benvolio said. “Put up your sword, or use it to help me separate these quarreling men.”

“What! You have drawn your sword, and you are talking about being a peacekeeper!” Tybalt mocked. “I hate the word ‘peace’ as I hate Hell, all Montagues, and you. Let’s fight, coward!”

Tybalt and Benvolio fought.

News of the fight spread quickly, and soon several Capulets and Montagues came running and started to fight. Some guards — officers of the law — also arrived.

A guard shouted, “Beat down the weapons of both the Capulets and the Montagues! Stop this fight!”

Old Capulet, the head of the Capulet family, heard the commotion. Still in his nightgown, he ran out of his house and shouted, “What noise is this? Give me my long sword!”

His much younger wife, Mrs. Capulet, said to him, “Why are you asking for a sword? You can get much more use out of a crutch!”

Old Capulet repeated, “Bring me my sword, I say! Old Montague has come, and he has drawn his blade in defiance of me.”

Old Montague and his wife arrived on the scene. Old Montague shouted, “Old Capulet, you are a villain!”

His wife grabbed onto him. He shouted at her, “Hold me not! Let me go!”

She told him, “You shall not stir a foot to seek a foe.”

The Prince of Verona and his armed bodyguards rode into the street. Prince Escalus wanted a peaceful city, and he was determined to have one, even if he had to threaten to torture and kill some people to get peace.

The Prince shouted, “Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace, you who coat your steel swords with your neighbors’ blood, listen to me! Either throw your weapons to the ground or be sentenced to death by torture.”

They threw down their weapons. The Prince was the ruler of the city, and if he ordered his bodyguards to kill

someone, his bodyguards would instantly obey him.

The Prince continued, “Three brawls in the street have disturbed the peace of our city. Three brawls that were caused by words that dissipated into the air — words spoken by you, Old Capulet, and by you, Old Montague. Your airy words have caused you two old men of Verona to put aside your dignified and appropriate behavior and caused you to wield old weapons in your old hands. You are putting weapons that are rusty with peace and disuse in your arthritic hands to serve your hatred of each other. Listen to what I decree: If ever you or your families fight in our streets again, you will pay for your crime with your lives: If you fight, you die!

“Old Capulet, come with me now. Old Montague, come to me this afternoon. Meet me in old Freetown, the court where I make judgments.

“All of you, I order you to leave here. Leave peacefully and immediately, or die.”

Everyone left. Old Montague, his wife, and Benvolio walked away slowly together.

Old Montague asked Benvolio, “What happened? Who caused this newest fight in our ancient feud? Were you here when it happened?”

“Before I arrived, servants of the Capulet family and servants of our family were already fighting,” Benvolio said. “I drew my sword in an attempt to part them and reestablish the peace. But Tybalt of the Capulet family came running with his sword drawn. He shouted his hatred of me and other Montagues while he swung his sword around his head. His sword did not hurt the air, which hissed at him in scorn. Tybalt talks a good fight, but his talking is better than his fighting. He and I fought, and more and more people arrived and began fighting either for

the Capulets or for our side. The Prince then arrived and stopped the fighting.”

Mrs. Montague said, “Where is my son, Romeo? Have you seen him? I am glad that he was not fighting here.”

“An hour before sunrise, I took a walk because my mind was troubled,” Benvolio said. “I saw your son walking in a grove of sycamore trees to the West of the city. I was walking toward him, but he saw me and walked away. I could tell that he wished to be alone, as did I. I did not go to him.”

Old Montague said, “Romeo has often been seen there before sunrise. His tears fall and are added to the morning dew. But as soon as the Sun begins to rise, my melancholy son returns home and shuts himself up alone in his room. He closes the windows and shuts out the sunlight, turning what should be a brightly lit room into an artificial night. His mood will stay black and ominous unless someone can find out what is bothering him.”

“My noble uncle, do you know the cause of Romeo’s depression?”

“I don’t know the cause, and he won’t tell me what is bothering him.”

“Have you tried to find out?”

“Yes, I have asked him,” Old Montague said. “So have many of my friends. But he keeps his thoughts private and won’t talk to us. His depression is like a worm that bites the bud of a flower and keeps it from spreading its petals and displaying its beauty to the Sun. I want to know what is bothering him so I can fix the problem.”

Benvolio said, “I see Romeo walking toward us now. Let me be alone with him. I will do everything I can to find out

what is bothering him.”

Old Montague replied, “Good luck. I hope that he tells you what is making him depressed.”

He then said to his wife, “Let’s go away and leave Benvolio and our son alone.”

They left, and Benvolio walked toward Romeo.

“Good morning, Romeo,” Benvolio said.

“Is it still morning?”

“The clock just now struck nine.”

“Sad hours seem long,” Romeo said. “Was that my father who left just now?”

“Yes, it was. What sadness makes your hours seem long?”

“My sadness is that I do not have the thing that if I had it would make my hours seem short.”

“You sound as if you are in love,” Benvolio said.

“Out —”

“Of love?”

“Out of the favor of the person I love.”

“Being in love seems like a good thing, but all too often love is harsh.”

“Love is supposed to be blind, but it has made me its bitch — so, where do you want to eat?”

Benvolio was wise enough not to smile, but he thought, *Romeo can’t be very deeply in love if he can still think of his stomach instead of the woman who does not love him although he thinks he loves her.*

Romeo noticed blood on the ground and said, “Who has been fighting here? Don’t tell me. I can guess. It’s the feud. Here has been a battle among men who hate each other but love to fight each other. Here has been brawling love and loving hate. With these men, love and hate are entwined with each other. We might as well talk of creating something out of nothing! We might as well talk of heavy lightness and serious vanity! We might as well talk of beautiful forms that look ugly! We might as well talk of lead feathers and bright smoke and cold fire and sick health! We might as well talk of still-waking sleep. These fighting men know nothing of love. The love I feel makes me feel no love for this brawl.

“Benvolio, are you laughing at me?”

“No, Romeo. Instead, I weep.”

“Why?”

“Because you are unhappy.”

Romeo said, “Unhappiness is often the consequence of love. I have griefs to bear in my heart, and yet your grief becomes added to my griefs, although I already have too much grief to bear. What is love? Love is a smoke that rises with the sighs of lovers. When love is returned, you can see a fire burning in both lovers’ eyes. When love is refused, a sea is created with the rejected lover’s tears. What else is love? It is a most intelligent madness. It is a thing that chokes, and it is a thing that tastes sweet. Farewell, Benvolio.”

“Wait!” Benvolio said. “I will go with you. If you leave me now, you do me wrong.”

“I have lost myself,” Romeo said. “I am not Romeo — he is some other where.”

“Be serious,” Benvolio said, “and tell me who it is you love.”

“Shall I groan and tell you?”

“You need not groan,” Benvolio said, “but be serious and do tell me who it is you love.”

“‘Serious’ is a word that ought not to be used in front of a dying man who needs to make a will,” Romeo said, “but seriously, Benvolio, I love a woman.”

“When you said you loved someone, I did indeed think you loved a woman. I know you that well. Tell me more.”

“When you thought I loved a woman, you hit a bull’s-eye,” Romeo said. “She is indeed beautiful.”

“I have hit another bull’s-eye,” Benvolio said. “I also thought that she would be beautiful. If she is the target of your love, what kind of a marksman have you been?”

“The worst possible,” Romeo replied. “She is a target who will not allow herself to be hit with the arrow of Cupid. She wants nothing to do with romantic love. She is a follower of Diana, a virgin goddess, and she wishes, like Diana, always to remain a virgin. She vigilantly defends her chastity and wears metaphorical armor that defends her body from the arrows of Cupid. She will not listen to loving compliments. She ignores loving looks. She will not open her lap to receive gifts of saint-seducing gold. She is rich with beauty, but when she dies her beauty will be buried with her.”

“Then she has sworn always to remain a virgin?”

“She has, indeed,” Romeo said, “and so she is wasting her beauty. By remaining forever a virgin, she will never give birth to a daughter who will inherit her beauty. She is too beautiful and too intelligent and too fashionable to be

allowed into Paradise after refusing to return my love. She should not receive eternal bliss as a result of making me despair. She has sworn never to love, and that is something she should never have sworn. By doing so, she has killed the best part of me, leaving only a husk to tell you my story.”

“Take my advice,” Benvolio said. “Forget about her.”

“Tell me how it is possible to do that.”

“Simply allow your eyes to look at other beautiful women.”

“If I do that, I will only remember the more her beauty,” Romeo said. “At masked balls, women put masks over their face but we remember that beauty lies underneath the mask. A man who goes blind will still remember the beauty that he has seen. Show me a beautiful woman, and I will simply remember the woman I love — a woman who is more beautiful than any woman you show me. You cannot teach me how to forget my love, so farewell, Benvolio.”

Romeo left, and Benvolio said, “You think I cannot teach how to forget your love, but I think I can.”

He walked after Romeo.

— 1.2 —

In his mansion, Old Capulet was planning a party, one that he held annually. He also was hosting Count Paris. A relative of the Prince, Paris would be an important political ally if he would marry Juliet, Old Capulet’s daughter. Paris had come to Old Capulet to see about arranging that marriage.

Old Capulet said to Paris, “I believe that the upcoming days will be peaceful. If I fight, I die. If Old Montague fights, he dies. With such a penalty over our heads, and with Montague and I being so old, it should not be hard for us to

keep the peace.”

“Both of you are honorable men of good reputation, and it is a pity that you have feuded,” Paris said. “But will you allow me to marry your daughter, Juliet?”

“I can say only what I have said before,” Old Capulet said. “My daughter is yet a stranger in the world — she is not yet fourteen years old. She will have to be sixteen before I can think of allowing her to get married.”

Paris replied, “Younger than she are happy mothers made.”

Thinking of his much younger wife, Old Capulet said, “And too soon marred are those so early made mothers. All of my other children are dead and buried; Juliet is my only child who is left alive. In her I place my hopes. But woo her, Paris, and win her heart. My consent to the marriage is only part of what is needed. If she agrees to the marriage, I will gladly give my consent.

“Today I am giving a party, one I hold each year. I have invited many guests whom I love, and I invite you to be a welcomed guest. Come to my house tonight. You will see young girls who will seem to be stars that walk on the Earth and light up the night sky from below. After the cold winter come warm April and many beautiful flowers. The young girls you see at my party tonight are as beautiful as April flowers — look at all of them and talk to all of them. Fall in love with the one whom you think most deserves your love. That one may be my daughter, or perhaps you will prefer another girl.”

To a servant, Old Capulet gave a paper, saying, “Go throughout Verona and invite to my party tonight the people whose names are written on this paper. Tell them that I look forward to seeing them.”

To Paris, Old Capulet said, “Come with me.”

Old Capulet and Paris left the room, and the servant said, "Find the people whose names are written here! How can I do that? I can't read! I have been told that the fisherman should use his pencil, and I have been told that the painter should use his net. I think that's what I've been told, but it doesn't sound quite right. But how can I use this piece of paper when I can't read! I must find an educated person."

Old Capulet had hired extra servants for the feast and dance, and so he did not know that this servant could not read.

The illiterate servant walked out into the street and saw Romeo and Benvolio. He did not recognize them, but they looked as if they could read and so he said, "Just the people I need!"

Benvolio said to Romeo, "To put out one fire, firefighters sometimes start another fire. Seeing the pain of another person sometimes lessens one's own pain. One evil is sometimes conquered by another evil. Your eyes have been poisoned by the woman you love; to cure that poison, infect your eyes with the poison of the sight of another beautiful woman."

"Why not simply use aloe vera?" Romeo asked.

"Use aloe vera for what?" Benvolio asked.

"For skinned knees."

"But I'm not talking about skinned knees!"

"You certainly aren't talking about anything I am interested in listening to. Your kinds of remedies have nothing to do with my lovesickness."

Romeo saw the servant eagerly looking at him and asked, "May I help you?"

The servant asked, "Can you read?"

"I can read my own future — I will continue to be miserable."

"That's not the kind of reading I mean, sir. Can you read something that is written on a piece of paper?"

"Yes, if what is written is a language that I can read."

"You are not giving me a strictly straight answer, so I will assume that you do not want to help me," the servant said, beginning to turn away.

"Wait. Don't go. I have been joking with you. I really can read."

The servant handed Romeo the piece of paper and Romeo read the list out loud:

"Signor Martino and his wife and daughters.

"Count Anselm and his beautiful sisters.

"The lady widow of Vitruvio.

"Signor Placentio and his lovely nieces.

"Mercutio and his brother Valentine.

"My uncle Capulet, and his wife and daughters.

"My fair niece Rosaline.

"Livia.

"Signor Valentio and his cousin Tybalt.

"Lucio and the lively Helena."

Romeo said to the servant, "This is a list of well-known people in the city. Mercutio is a friend of mine, and I have seen Rosaline. What is the list for, if you don't mind my

asking?”

“They are coming up.”

“Up where.”

“To my master’s house, for supper.”

“Whose house?”

“My master’s.”

“I had hoped for more information than that. Apparently, I was not clear enough when I asked my question.”

“I have been joking with you,” the servant said. “Now I will tell you what you want to know. My master is the great and rich Old Capulet, and if you and your friend are not Montagues, feel free to crash the party and drink some wine. Farewell, and God bless.”

The servant left to invite to the party all the people named in the list.

Romeo and Benvolio had been talking, and Romeo had confessed that the woman he loved was Rosaline, whose name appeared on the list of guests to be invited to the Capulet party.

Benvolio said, “The beautiful Rosaline, whom you say you love, will be at the Capulet party. So will many beautiful women of Verona. Go to the party with me, and if you look with unbiased eyes and compare Rosaline’s face with some faces that I shall show you, I will make you think that your swan whom you think is beautiful is actually as ugly as a crow.”

“My eyes worship Rosaline, and if ever my eyes would falsely regard any woman as being more beautiful than she, then let my tears turn into fires,” Romeo said. “My eyes have often drowned in tears and yet they live, but if ever

my eyes regard any woman as being more beautiful than Rosaline, then they are clearly heretics and liars and so should be burnt. Can anyone be fairer than Rosaline? No. Since the creation of the world, the Sun, which sees all, has seen none more beautiful than she.”

“Come on,” Benvolio said. “When you saw Rosaline and decided that she was beautiful, she was the only woman present. Your eyes had no one to compare her to. Come to the party and compare Rosaline with some women I shall show you, and you won’t think Rosaline is as beautiful as you think she is now.”

“I will go to the party with you,” Romeo said, “but not to look at any women you seek to show me. I will go to the party so that I can look at Rosaline.”

— 1.3 —

In a room in Old Capulet’s mansion, Mrs. Capulet and the Nurse were sitting and talking.

“Nurse, where’s my daughter? Call her to come to me.”

“By my virginity when I was only twelve years old,” the Nurse said, “I swear that I have already told her to come here.”

The Nurse called, “Lamb! Ladybird!”

Then she said to herself, “Good Heavens! Where is that girl?”

She called again, “Juliet!”

Juliet entered the room and said to the Nurse, “Here I am. What do you want?”

“Your mother wants to talk to you,” the Nurse said.

“Here I am, Mother. What do you want?”

“We need to talk about something important,” Mrs. Capulet said. “Nurse, step outside for a while. No, wait. Stay here. You should hear what I have to say. You know that Juliet is growing up.”

“I can tell her age unto an hour,” the Nurse said.

“She still is not yet fourteen years old,” Mrs. Capulet said.

“I would stake as a wager fourteen of my teeth — but to my sorrow, I have only four teeth left — that she is not yet fourteen,” the Nurse said. “How long is it now to Lammas-tide — the first of August?”

“A fortnight and odd days,” Mrs. Capulet replied.

“Even or odd, of all days in the year, on Lammas-eve at night Juliet will be fourteen years old,” the Nurse said. “My daughter — God bless Susan’s soul — and Juliet were born on the same day. Susan is with God. She was too good for me. But on Lammas-eve at night Juliet shall be fourteen years old. I remember her infancy and childhood well. It has been eleven years since the earthquake and so eleven years since she was weaned. I was her wet-nurse and fed her Susan’s milk, and on the day of the earthquake I put wormwood on my nipple to make it bitter. You and your husband were then away visiting the city of Mantua. I was sitting with Juliet in the Sun under the dove-house wall. My memory is excellent. Juliet started to suck at my breast, but when she discovered that the nipple was bitter, she grew irritable. That is when the earthquake struck and the dove-house shook. That is the day that my duties as Juliet’s wet-nurse ended. That was eleven years ago, and Juliet was able to stand by herself. Actually, she was able to run and walk by herself, too. The day before the earthquake, she was running and fell forward and cut her forehead. My husband — God bless his soul — said to her, ‘Juliet, you fell forward upon your face, didn’t you? But someday, after

you reach puberty, you will fall backward and lie on your back, won't you, Juliet?" And I swear that pretty Juliet stopped crying and said, "Yes, I will."

Mrs. Capulet blushed, knowing that the joke was that Juliet would lie on her back with her knees in the air and her legs parted — and Juliet would not be alone.

The Nurse continued, "It was the funniest thing. If I live to be a thousand years old, I will not forget it. 'Won't you fall backward, Juliet?' my husband asked her. And pretty Juliet stopped crying and said, 'Yes, I will.'"

"No more of this talk," Mrs. Capulet said. "Please be quiet."

"Yes, I will be quiet," the Nurse said. "But I cannot stop myself from laughing. Pretty Juliet stopped crying and said, 'Yes, I will fall backward,' although she had a bump on her forehead from the fall — a bump as big as one of the balls of a rooster. Juliet fell, and she cried, and my husband said to her, 'You fell forward upon your face, didn't you, Juliet? But one day you will fall backward and lie on your back, won't you, Juliet?' and Juliet stopped crying and said, 'Yes.'"

Juliet was embarrassed because her mother was present, but if her mother had not been present, she would have laughed.

Juliet said, "Please stop telling that story, Nurse."

Having told it four times, the Nurse said, "I am done telling the story. You were the prettiest baby I ever nursed, and I hope that I live long enough to see you married."

"That is exactly what I want to talk about," Mrs. Capulet said. "Juliet, what do you think about getting married?"

Juliet replied, "It is an honor that I have never dreamed

about.”

“An honor,” the Nurse said. She thought, *Yes, if Juliet gets married, her husband will be on her.*

The Nurse said out loud, “That is a wise remark. I would say that you sucked wisdom from my nipples, but that would be complimenting myself as well as you.”

Mrs. Capulet said to Juliet, “Think about marriage now. Here in Verona, many ladies of esteem younger than you are already mothers. I myself was a mother when I was your age. Let me tell you straight out that the valiant Paris wishes to marry you.”

The Nurse said, “Paris really is a man, Juliet, and such a man! His figure is as perfect as if he were a sculpture.”

“Speaking poetically,” Mrs. Capulet said, “summertime in Verona has not such a flower as Paris.”

“True,” the Nurse said, “Paris is a flower.”

“What do you say, Juliet?” Mrs. Capulet asked. “Do you think you can love Paris? He will attend our party tonight. Look him over carefully. I think you will be pleased by what you see. If he were a book, a pen of beauty would have written it. Examine his features and see how they work together to create a harmonious whole — he is a handsome man. Continue your examination by looking into his eyes. He will make a handsome groom — he lacks only a beautiful bride. A man needs a woman to be complete. He has handsomeness outside and virtues inside, and with you as his wife, he will be complete. As the wife of such a man, you shall share all his virtues and his reputation. Speaking poetically, by having him as your husband, you will make yourself no less.”

The Nurse joked, “Juliet, you will certainly be no less.

Women grow by men — they become pregnant!”

“Tell me, Juliet,” Mrs. Capulet said. “Can you learn to return Paris’ love?”

“I will look at him and see if I like him,” Juliet said. “I certainly will not do anything that you do not want me to do.”

A servant entered the room and said to Mrs. Capulet, “The guests have arrived and dinner is supposed to be ready. People are asking for you and for Juliet. Servants in the pantry are cursing the Nurse because she is not there to help. Everything is a mess right now, and I have to go back and serve the food. I beg you, come with me and restore order.”

“We will go with you,” Mrs. Capulet said.

She said to Juliet, “Paris is here now, and he wants you to approve of him as a groom.”

The Nurse said, “Juliet, seek happy nights to happy days. A honeymoon has many happy nights.”

— 1.4 —

On a street of Verona, Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, and five or six other people wearing masks and some people holding torches to provide light were heading to Old Capulet’s party. Mercutio was neither a Montague nor a Capulet, but he was a friend to Romeo and Benvolio and other Montagues. He was also related to Prince Escalus.

“When we arrive at the party, should we talk to Old Capulet and introduce ourselves, or should we simply crash the party?” Romeo asked.

“We need not say anything,” Benvolio said. “Wordy introductions are out of fashion. We need not draw

attention to ourselves. We certainly aren't going to blindfold one of ourselves like Cupid, arm him with a bow, and scare all the ladies like a scarecrow scares crows. We don't need such ostentatious costumes, and we don't need any memorized complimentary speeches. We will simply crash the party anonymously and let them judge us as they will. We will dance a dance, and then we will be gone."

"Let me hold a torch," Romeo said. "I am not in the mood for dancing."

"No, good friend Romeo," Mercutio said. "We must watch you dance."

"You would not enjoy the sight," Romeo replied. "You, Mercutio, have dancing shoes with nimble soles. I have a soul of lead that weighs me down so I cannot dance."

"You are a lover," Mercutio said. "You can easily borrow Cupid's wings. With them you can dance lighter than a non-lover."

"Not so," Romeo said. "I am so wounded by Cupid's arrow that I cannot soar with his light feathers. Because I am so wounded, I cannot leap in a dance. Under love's heavy burden, I sink."

"By sinking, you drag down love," Mercutio said. "Love is so tender that it ought not to be treated like that."

"Is love tender?" Romeo asked. "Love treats me roughly, rudely, and boisterously, and it pricks like a thorn."

"If love is rough with you, then you should be rough with love," Mercutio, who regarded sex as a joke, said. "If love pricks you, then use your prick to lay down your love and be satisfied."

They had arrived at Old Capulet's mansion. Mercutio shouted, "Someone, give me a mask to put my face in. Give

me a new face for my old face. And make the new face ugly. What do I care if people look at me and think that my face is deformed?"

Someone handed Mercutio an ugly mask. He looked at it and said, "Here are the overhanging beetle brows that shall make me look deformed!"

Benvolio said, "Let's knock and go in. As soon as we are in, let all of us begin dancing."

"Give me a torch to hold," Romeo said. "Let people who are light of heart do the dancing. If I hold a torch and am an onlooker only, I probably won't get in trouble. I am not in the mood for dancing, and so I won't dance. I am done with dancing."

"Done with dancing?" Mercutio said. "Dun is the color of a mouse, and now we should be quiet like a mouse. We should stop talking and go in to the party and start dancing. If you are dull-colored and dun, we will pick you up out of the mire caused by your lovesickness — that mire in which you are up to your ears. Come on, we need to go in to the party. We are wasting light."

"No, we aren't. It's night," Romeo said.

"Please," Mercutio said. "We are wasting the light cast by our torches by not going in to the brightly lit party. It is like lighting a lamp on a bright summer day when the lamp is not needed. Don't think so literally. Usually, you are a wit."

"We mean well by going to this party," Romeo said, "but we are not showing wit or intelligence by so going."

"Why not?" Mercutio asked.

"I dreamt a dream tonight."

"And so did I."

“What was your dream?”

“That dreamers often lie.”

“In bed asleep, while they do dream about true things,”
Romeo, who could be witty, said.

Mercutio, as was common with him, let his imagination run free: “Oh, then, I see Queen Mab has been with you. She is the fairies’ midwife, and she is no bigger than the agate-stone on a ring on the forefinger of an alderman. She rides in a wagon drawn by a team of tiny insects across men’s noses as they sleep. The spokes of the wheels of her wagon are made from spiders’ long legs. Covering her wagon are the wings of grasshoppers. The traces used by the insects to draw her wagon are made from the webs of spiders. The collars that go around the necks of the insects are made of moonbeams. Her whip handle is made from a cricket’s bone, and the lash of her whip is made from a fine filament. Her wagoner is a small grey-coated gnat that is not as big as a round little worm touched by the lazy finger of a maiden. Her chariot is the shell of a hazelnut, and it was manufactured by a carpenter squirrel or an old grub, which for ages have made the coaches of fairies.”

Mercutio’s vision gradually grew darker: “And in this carriage Queen Mab gallops night by night through the brains of lovers, and then they dream of love. She gallops over the knees of courtiers, and then they dream of curtsies. She gallops over the fingers of lawyers, and then they dream of lawyers’ fees. She gallops night by night over the lips of ladies, who dream of kisses. Queen Mab blisters those lips because they smell of candy. Sometimes she gallops over the nose of a courtier, and then he dreams of smelling out a lawsuit. Sometimes she takes the tail of a tithe-pig — a gift to support a priest — and she uses it to tickle the nose of a parson, and then he dreams of money and wealth.”

And then Mercutio's vision became very dark: "And in this carriage Queen Mab sometimes drives over the neck of a soldier, and then he dreams of cutting foreign throats, of breaking through defensive walls, of ambushes, of Spanish swords, and of drunkenness. She drums in his ear and he wakes up. Frightened, he prays and makes vows to God, and then he goes back to sleep. She is that very Queen Mab who makes matted the manes of horses in the night, and tangles their hairs in foul elflocks that, once untangled, are harbingers of misfortune. Queen Mab is the hag who sends dreams that teach maidens to lie on their backs and screw and get pregnant and carry children like women of good carriage. Queen Mab is she who —"

Alarmed by Mercutio's wildness, Romeo touched him gently on the arm and said, "Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace! Be quiet now. You are talking of nothing."

As if he were coming out of a trance, Mercutio blinked himself into everyday consciousness and said, "True, I talk of dreams, which are the children of an idle brain and are born of nothing but vain fantasy that is as thin of substance as the air and that is more unconstant than the wind, which now blows toward the frozen bosom of the north, but then becomes angry and blows toward the dew-dropping south."

"We are being blown off our course by the wind you talk of," Benvolio said. "We are supposed to be attending a party. By now, everyone has eaten. Soon, people will start leaving the party and going home."

Romeo thought, *Benvolio worries about getting to the party too late. I worry about getting there too early. I worry that an uncaring fate and the uncaring stars will set something in motion at this party that shall end with my all-too-early death. But let who or whatever has the steerage of my course direct my sail!*

Romeo said out loud, “Let’s go party-crashing, friends!”

Benvolio said to a drummer, “Begin drumming,” and all marched into the mansion of Old Capulet.

— 1.5 —

Inside Old Capulet’s mansion, musicians played. Some servants were busy cleaning up the great chamber after the dinner.

A servant asked, “Where’s Potpan? Why isn’t he helping us to carry dirty dishes away from the table? How can he call himself a server? He isn’t scraping any dishes and washing them!”

A second servant said, “When almost everyone forgets to do their work, and it lies in the hands of only a couple of workers to do all the work, then it is a foul thing — and the good workers’ hands are foul with the work of scraping dirty plates.”

The first servant said, “Let’s carry out of the dining room the folding chairs and movable cupboard and the silver dishes and the silverware. Please, save me a piece of marchpane — I love sugar and almonds. And please, tell the porter to let in Susan Grindstone and Nell. Our master is having a party, and we have a party of our own planned.”

The first servant then called, “Anthony and Potpan!”

Anthony and Potpan arrived.

Anthony asked, “What do you want?”

“Help is needed in the great chamber,” the first server said. “They have been asking for your help for a long time.”

Potpan said, “We cannot be here and there, too. Be cheerful, boys; work hard and quickly, and then we will have time for our party.”

In the great chamber, Old Capulet invited guests and maskers to dance. Juliet was nearby.

Wearing masks and not easily recognized, Romeo and his friends entered the great chamber.

Old Capulet said, “Welcome, gentlemen! Ladies who are not plagued with painful corns on their feet will be happy to dance with you. Ladies, none of you will dare not to dance, now! Any lady who does not dance will — I will tell everybody — have corns on her feet. Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day when I have worn a mask and would whisper sweet nothings in a fair lady’s ear, but for me those days are gone. You are welcome, gentlemen! Musicians, play! Clear the hall. Dance, everyone! Foot it, girls!”

Mercutio, Benvolio, and others in Romeo’s group began to dance. Romeo stood to the side like a wallflower.

Old Capulet ordered, “More light, you knaves. Move the tables to the side. Quench the fire because the room has grown too hot.”

Old Capulet, who had not recognized Romeo, said to a relative about Romeo and his group of friends, “I had not expected these people in masks to be guests, but the more the merrier — especially welcome are those who will dance. You and I are past our dancing days — how many years has it been since you and I wore a mask at a party?”

His relative answered, “By Saint Mary, it must be thirty years.”

“What?” Old Capulet said. “It can’t have been that long ago! We last wore a mask at the wedding of Lucentio at Pentecost. When Pentecost arrives, it will have been twenty-five years since Lucentio was married.”

“He has been married longer than that. His son is thirty

years old.”

“That’s not possible, is it?” Old Capulet said. “Just two years ago, his son was still a minor.”

Romeo had caught sight of Juliet, and her beauty dazzled him. He asked a servant, “Which lady is she who is dancing with that knight?”

The servant replied, “I know not, sir.” Old Capulet had hired extra servants for the feast and dance; these servants were not familiar with the Capulet household.

Still wearing a mask, Romeo thought, *She teaches the torches how to burn brightly. She seems to brightly hang upon the cheek of night like a rich jewel in an Ethiopian woman’s ear. Her beauty is too rich for use and too dear for Earth! She is like a white dove in the midst of a flock of black crows — that is how much in beauty she surpasses all the other women in this ballroom. Once this dance is finished, I will watch where she stands, and I will touch her hand and make blessed my own rough hand.*

Then Romeo said out loud without thinking, “Did my heart ever love before now? Answer no, sight! For I never saw true beauty until this night.”

Although Romeo thought that he was speaking softly, Tybalt overheard him enough to recognize the sound of his voice but not enough to understand the content of his words.

Tybalt said to a servant, “This person, judging by his voice, is a Montague. Fetch me my rapier, boy. How does this slave dare to come hither, his face covered with a grotesque mask, to mock and scorn our dance? By the stock and honor of my kin, to strike Romeo dead, I hold it not a sin.”

Old Capulet noticed that Tybalt was upset, and he asked

him, “What’s wrong? Why are you so angry?”

Tybalt replied, “Uncle, this man is a Montague, our enemy. He is a villain who has come here in spite, to mock our dance this night.”

Old Capulet looked closely at the young man whom Tybalt pointed out, and he asked, “Young Romeo, is it?”

Tybalt replied, “Yes, he is that villain Romeo.”

Mindful that the Prince of Verona had threatened him with death should violence break out, Old Capulet said, “Don’t be angry, Tybalt. Let him alone. He bears himself like a good gentleman, and to say the truth, he has a reputation throughout Verona of being a virtuous and well-behaved youth. I would not for the wealth of all Verona have any harm come to him in my house. Therefore, Tybalt, be patient and take no note of him. Instead, I want you to show a fair presence. Look pleasant, be courteous, and don’t frown. Remember that you are at a dance.”

“My frowns are justified, when a guest is such a villain,” Tybalt said. “I will not endure Romeo’s presence.”

A younger man should not disrespect an older man, especially when the older man is a wealthy and respected relative and the host of a dance that the young man is attending.

Old Capulet told Tybalt, scornfully, “I say that you shall endure Romeo’s presence here. You will do what I tell you to do, young man! Who is the master here? Me? Or you? Who are you to make a scene? No one, that’s who!”

“But, uncle, it’s a shame!”

“Says you!” Old Capulet replied. “Are you going to disrespect me? Do so, and your actions will come back and bite you in the ass. Don’t be a fool.”

He said to some nearby guests, “Enjoy yourselves and be merry!”

He then said to Tybalt, “You are acting like a spoiled youngster! If you can’t behave, leave before you make a fool of yourself.”

He said to some servants, “More light, more light!”

He then said to Tybalt, who looked ready to burst with words, “Be quiet, or I’ll make you quiet.”

He said to some guests, “Be merry, friends.”

Tybalt, still angry, thought, Patience and anger don’t mix. I am so angry that I cannot be patient, and so I shall leave. Romeo’s intrusion here must seem to him sweet, but I shall change the sweetness to bitter gall.

Tybalt left the great chamber.

Juliet had stopped dancing, and Romeo — whose name means “a pilgrim to Rome” — went over to her and held her hand, saying, “If I profane with my unworthing hand this holy shrine, your hand, the gentle fine is this: My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand to smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.”

Juliet, using the same metaphor of a pilgrim — sometimes also called palmers — visiting a holy shrine, replied, “Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much. By holding my hand, you show proper devotion. For saints have hands that pilgrims’ hands do touch, and palm-to-palm is holy palmers’ kiss. By holding my hand, you have showed proper devotion, but let’s not otherwise kiss.”

Romeo asked, “Have not saints lips, and holy palmers, too?”

“Yes, pilgrim,” Juliet said. “They have lips that they must

use in prayer.”

“Oh, then, dear saint, let our lips do what our hands are doing — let our lips touch. My lips pray to you for a kiss. Grant their prayer, lest my faith turn to despair.”

“Saints do not take the initiative, even when through the intercession of God they grant prayers.”

“Then move not, while you grant my prayer. Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin you take.”

Romeo kissed Juliet.

“Now my lips have the sin that they have taken from your lips,” Juliet said.

“Your lips have taken sin from my lips?” Romeo said. “That is a trespass I sweetly urged! Give me my sin again.”

He kissed her again.

Juliet said, “You kiss by the book — you get your kisses in accordance with the pilgrim metaphor we have been following.”

The Nurse arrived and said to Juliet, “Madam, your mother craves a word with you.”

Juliet left, and Romeo asked the Nurse, “Who is her mother?”

The Nurse replied, “Young man, her mother is the lady of the house, and a good lady, both wise and virtuous. I was wet nurse to her daughter, with whom you have been talking. Whoever marries her will inherit much wealth from her father.”

The Nurse went to Juliet.

Romeo thought, *She is the only daughter of Old Capulet!*

My life is forfeited to my enemy! If I can't be with Juliet, I cannot live!

Benvolio came over to Romeo and said, "It is time for us to leave — we have had a good time here."

"Yes," Romeo said. "I wonder if I ever again will have as good a time."

Old Capulet heard the two talking and said, "No, gentlemen, don't leave now. Stay and eat a snack before you go."

Benvolio shook his head no, and Old Capulet said, "What? You must leave? Then I thank you gentlemen for coming tonight. Good night, young sirs."

Old Capulet said, "Bring more torches here to provide light for these gentlemen."

Romeo and Benvolio waited for Mercutio to come, and Old Capulet said to Juliet and the Nurse, "It really is getting late, so I'm going to bed."

Old Capulet left, but Juliet and the Nurse stayed.

Juliet still did not know the name of the young man who had kissed her, and she did not want the Nurse to know that she was interested in him, so she asked what were the names of some other young men before she asked for the name of the young man who had kissed her.

Juliet pointed and asked the Nurse, "Who is that gentleman?"

The Nurse replied, "The son and heir of old Tiberio."

"Who is that person who is now going out of the door?"

"He, I think, is young Petruchio."

Juliet pointed and asked, “Who is the young man who would not dance?”

“I don’t know.”

“Please go and ask him his name.”

The Nurse left to inquire, and Juliet thought, *If he is married, I think that I will die. My grave will be my wedding bed.*

The Nurse returned and said, “His name is Romeo, and he is a Montague. He is the only son of your great enemy.”

Juliet said softly, “My only love sprung from my only hate! I saw and loved him before I knew who he was, and I found out who he is too late to stop loving him. Love is born in me, and I now love a loathed enemy.”

“What did you say?” the Nurse asked.

“Just a rhyme that I learned at this dance.”

Someone in another room called, “Juliet.”

The Nurse said loudly, “We’re coming! We’re coming!”

She said to Juliet, “Let’s go now. The guests have all left. All who remain are family and servants.”

They left.

CHAPTER 2 (Romeo and Juliet)

Prologue

Romeo's old "love" for Rosaline has now died, replaced by Romeo's new love for Juliet. Romeo had suffered during his "love" for Rosaline and he had thought that he would die, but Rosaline's beauty could not compare with the beauty of Juliet. Juliet now loves Romeo, and Romeo loves Juliet. But Romeo must tell a Capulet — his enemy — that he loves her. Juliet also loves her enemy. Because Romeo is a Montague male, he has little opportunity to meet Juliet again and tell her of his love. Because Juliet is a Capulet female, she has even less opportunity to meet Romeo and tell him of her love. But they are passionately in love, and love will find a way, a time, and a place, and the danger they place themselves in when they meet will be sweetened with extreme pleasure.

— 2.1 —

Running, Romeo appeared in a lane by the wall of Old Capulet's garden. He wanted to be alone and he wanted to see Juliet, and so he was running from Benvolio and Mercutio.

Romeo said to himself, "How can I leave this lane when Juliet is so near? Let my body stay here and seek my soul, whose name is Juliet."

Romeo climbed the wall and jumped down into Old Capulet's garden.

Benvolio and Mercutio arrived in the lane by the wall of Old Capulet's orchard. They were seeking Romeo.

Benvolio called, "Romeo! Where are you, Romeo?"

Mercutio said, "Romeo is wise, and I swear on my life that he has gone home to his bed."

Benvolio disagreed: "He ran this way, and he climbed this garden wall. Call him, good Mercutio."

"I will call him, and I will entreat him to reveal himself," Mercutio replied. "Romeo! Romantic man! Madman! Passionate man! Lover! I conjure you to speak to us with a sigh. Speak but one rhyme, and I will be satisfied that you are well and did not break your neck and die when you jumped down from the wall. Sigh 'Ah, me!' Say 'love' and 'dove.' Speak a word to Venus, goddess of love. Speak the name of her son Cupid, who shoots his arrows as if love were blind, as when he made King Cophetua fall in love with a beggar-maiden and make her his Queen."

Mercutio said to Benvolio, "Romeo does not hear me. He does not stir. He does not move. The poor fool is dead, and I must conjure him alive!"

Mercutio called, "I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes, by her high forehead and her scarlet lip, by her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh, and by the foxhole that there adjacent lies, that you appear to us!"

"If he hears what you are saying about Rosaline, he will be angry," Benvolio said.

"What I say cannot anger him," Mercutio said. "If I wanted to anger him, I would conjure up a male spirit to put some maleness in her honeyhole, leaving it there arisen until she laid it and conjured it down. That would make him angry. Benvolio, you are a good man, and you want me to speak of a conjurer's circle, but I know of better, wetter circles to speak about. What I am saying now, however, is fair and honest. The purpose of my conjuration is merely to say the name of the woman Romeo loves and thereby make him rise — at least a part of him."

“Romeo has hidden himself among these trees,” Benvolio said. “He wants the night to be his company. Love is blind, and so Romeo seeks the night.”

“If love is blind, how can a lover’s arrow hit the target’s circle?” Mercutio asked Benvolio. “Romeo will now sit under a tree and wish that his beloved lass were the medlar fruit that young ladies call ‘open-ass’ when they think that young men are not around to overhear them. I wish that Romeo were a pear — a pear that from the right angle looks like a standing-up penis and balls. In fact, I wish that Romeo were a poperin pear. With an open-ass lass and his pop-er-in pear, Romeo would be able to put his dick in her butt.”

Benvolio looked shocked.

Mercutio then called, “Romeo, good night! I’m going home to my warm bed. It’s too cold for me to sleep out in the open.”

He said to Benvolio, “Shall we go?”

“Let’s go,” Benvolio replied. “It’s useless to seek someone who does not want to be found.”

— 2.2 —

In Old Capulet’s garden, Romeo listened to Benvolio and Mercutio leave.

Romeo said about Mercutio, “He who jests at the scars of love has never felt a wound.”

Juliet appeared at a window on the second story above Romeo.

Romeo said softly, “What light through yonder window breaks? The window is the East, and Juliet is the Sun. Arise, fair Sun, and kill the envious Moon, who is already

sick and pale with grief because you are far more beautiful than she. Diana, the Moon, is a virgin goddess, and you, Juliet, serve her because you are still a virgin. Diana is envious of you. Don't serve the Moon — the vestal clothing of her and her followers is sick and green, and only fools wear it. Cast off Diana's vestal clothing — stop being a virgin!

“Here is Juliet! Here is my love! I wish that she knew I love her! She speaks yet she says nothing out loud, but so what? Her eyes speak. I will answer her eyes. But I assume too much — she is not speaking to me.

“Two of the brightest stars in all the Heavens, about to leave on business, beg her eyes to twinkle in their spheres until they return. What if her eyes were in the Heavens, and the two stars were in her head? The brightness of her cheeks would shame those stars, as daylight shames a lamp. Her eyes in Heaven would through the airy region stream so brightly that birds would sing and think it were not night. See, how Juliet leans her cheek upon her hand! Oh, that I were a glove upon her hand, that I might touch her cheek!”

Juliet said, “Sorrow defines my life.”

Romeo said to himself, “She speaks out loud. Speak again, bright angel! You are as glorious to me this night, standing in a window over my head, as is an angel — winged messenger of Heaven — to the upturned wondering eyes of mortals who fall back to gaze on him when he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds and sails upon the bosom of the air.”

Still not knowing that Romeo was in the garden beneath her window, Juliet said, “Romeo, Romeo! Why is your name Romeo? Deny your father and refuse your name — stop being a Montague. Or, if you will not do so, swear that you love me, and I will no longer be a Capulet.”

Romeo said to himself, "Shall I hear more, or shall I speak to Juliet?"

Juliet said, "Only your name is my enemy. If you give up your name, you will still be yourself. What is the name Montague? It is not hand, or foot, or arm, or face, or any other part belonging to a man."

Juliet paused to smile at "part belonging to a man," then she continued, "Be some other name! What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. If Romeo were not named Romeo, he would still be perfect. Romeo, put aside your name. In the place of your name, which is not part of you, take all of me."

Romeo said out loud to Juliet, "I take you at your word — I believe what you have said. Call me your love, and I'll be baptized a second time and take a new name. Henceforth, my name will not be Romeo."

Not immediately recognizing Romeo's voice, Juliet said, "Which man are you who, hidden by the night, have heard what I have said?"

Romeo replied, "I have a name that I know not how to tell you because, dear saint, my name is hateful to myself because it is an enemy to you. If my name were written down, I would tear up my name."

Juliet said, "My ears have not yet heard a hundred words of your tongue's utterance, yet I know by the sound of your voice who you are. Aren't you Romeo and a Montague?"

"I am neither, dear saint, if you dislike them."

"How did you come here, and why?" Juliet asked. "The garden walls are high and hard to climb, and for you this place is death because you are a Montague. If any of my relatives find you here, they will kill you."

“With love’s light wings did I fly over these walls,” Romeo said. “Stony walls cannot stop love and keep love out. Whatever love can do, that will love attempt. Your relatives cannot stop me or my love for you.”

“If my relatives see you, they will murder you.”

“An angry look from you would hurt me more than twenty of their swords,” Romeo said. “But if you look at me sweetly, their hatred cannot hurt me.”

“I would not for the world have them see you here.”

“The night will hide me,” Romeo said. “But if you do not love me, let them find me here. It is better for them to kill me than for me to go on living without your love.”

“How did you find this place?”

“Love caused me to make inquiries and find it,” Romeo said. “Love lent me wisdom, and I lent love eyes. I am no pilot; yet, if you were as far away as that vast shore washed with the farthest sea, I would risk taking the journey there for such a prize as you.”

“Because of the darkness of the night, you cannot see my face, but if you could see my face, you would see a blush because of the words you have overheard me speak,” Juliet said. “I could put on an act and deny what I said, but I won’t do that. Let me ask you straight out: Do you love me? I know that you will say ‘Yes,’ and I know that I will believe you. Still, even if you swear that you love me, you may be lying. They say that Jove, the Roman king of the gods, laughs at the perjuries of male lovers. Romeo, if you really do love me, tell me the truth. But if you think that I am won too easily, I will play hard to get, if that will make you woo me, but I prefer not to play games. To be honest, fair Montague, I love you too much, and you may think me too easy, but trust me, gentleman, and I will be true to you,

unlike those girls who only pretend to be virtuous. I should not have revealed my love for you so quickly, I admit, but you overheard my confession before I was aware that you were present. Therefore, pardon me. Do not think that because I have confessed so quickly during this dark night that I am not serious.”

Romeo started to reply romantically and poetically, “Lady, I swear by the blessed Moon that tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops —”

“Do not swear by the Moon, the inconstant Moon, that monthly changes in her circled orbit. If you swear by the ever-changing Moon, perhaps your love for me will change into a love for someone else.”

“What shall I swear by?”

“Do not swear at all, or if you must swear, swear by your gracious self, for you are the god of my idolatry. If you do so, I will believe you.”

“If my heart’s dear love —”

“Do not swear,” Juliet said, changing her mind. “You bring me joy, but I have no joy of our contact tonight. It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden. It is too much like the lightning, which ceases to be before one can say ‘It lightens.’ My sweet one, good night! This bud of love, ripening by the breath of summer, may prove a beauteous flower when next we meet. Good night, good night! May you enjoy the same sweet repose and rest that I feel within my breast!”

“Will you leave me so unsatisfied?”

“What satisfaction can you have tonight?”

“The exchange of your love’s faithful vow for mine.”

If Romeo had been a different kind of man — a man such as Mercutio — he would have asked for a different kind of satisfaction.

“I gave you my vow of love before you asked for it,” Juliet said. “I wish that I could take back that vow of love.”

“Why would you want to take it back?” Romeo asked.

“So that I could once more tell you for the first time that I love you,” Juliet replied. “But really, I am wishing for something that I already have: for you and me to be in love. My love for you is as boundless as the sea. My love for you is as deep as the sea. The more love I give to you, the more love I have left to give because my love for you is infinite.”

The Nurse called from within the mansion, “Juliet!”

Juliet said to Romeo, “I hear some noise within. Dear love, goodbye!”

She shouted to the Nurse inside the mansion, “Just a minute!”

Then she said to Romeo, “Sweet Montague, be true. Stay but a little while, and I will come to the window again.”

Juliet went inside to talk to the Nurse, and Romeo said to himself, “Blessed, blessed night! I am afraid lest that, this being night, all this is only a dream. It seems too flattering-sweet to be real.”

Juliet reappeared at the window, “Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed. If your love for me is honorable and you want to marry me, send me a message tomorrow by a person whom I will send to you. In your message tell me where and at what time you will marry me, and all my fortunes at your foot I will lay and I will follow you, my husband, throughout the world.”

The Nurse called from within, “Juliet!”

Juliet called to the Nurse, “I’m coming!”

Juliet then said to Romeo, “But if your love for me is not honorable, I beg you —”

The Nurse called, “Juliet!”

“Just a minute!” Juliet called, and then she said to Romeo, “But if your love for me is not honorable, I beg you to stop wooing me and to leave me to my grief. Tomorrow I will send someone to you.”

Romeo began, “So thrive my soul —”

But Juliet said, “A thousand times good night!” and went inside.

Romeo complained to himself, “Being away from you is a thousand times worse than being close to you. A lover goes toward his lover as eagerly as a schoolboy goes away from his books. A lover goes away from his lover as sorrowfully as a schoolboy walks to school.”

He began to leave, but Juliet reappeared at the window.

Not seeing Romeo, she hissed, “Romeo!” She was trying to be loud enough to be heard by Romeo but not so loud as to be heard by her family and the Nurse.

Juliet said, “I wish I could shout as loudly as a falconer who calls his falcon back to him. That way, Romeo would hear me. But I cannot shout. I must be hoarse and not draw my family’s attention, or I would make use of the voice of Echo, who was so talkative that Juno, Queen of the gods, punished her by making her repeat the words of other people. I would shout ‘Romeo’ into the cave where Echo lives, and she would repeat his name. Her voice would say his name so many times that it would grow more hoarse

than mine.”

Romeo heard Juliet, and he returned to her.

He said, “Juliet, who is my soul, calls my name: How silver-sweet sound the tongues of lovers by night! They are like the softest music to attentive ears!”

“Romeo!” Juliet called.

“Yes, Juliet?”

“At what time tomorrow shall I send a messenger to you?”

“Nine in the morning.”

“I will not fail. It will seem like twenty years until nine a.m. comes.”

She turned to go inside, then turned back, hesitated, and said, “I have forgotten what else I wanted to say to you.”

“Let me stand here until you remember it.”

“I shall forget on purpose in order to have you still stand there because I love to be with you.”

“And I will continue to stay here, and let you continue to forget. I will forget that I have any other home than right here.”

“It is almost morning. Because of the danger you would face if you were found here, I would have you go, and yet I want you to go no further than a spoiled child’s bird. The child lets the bird hop a small distance from her hand like a poor prisoner in his twisted chains, and with a silk thread pulls it back to her. The child does not want the bird to leave her.”

“I wish that I were your bird.”

“So do I,” Juliet said. “But if I act like that now, I will get

you killed by keeping you here too long. Good night! Good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say ‘good night’ until it be tomorrow.”

She departed.

Romeo said to himself, “May sleep dwell upon your eyes, and may peace be in your breast! I wish that I were sleep and peace, so I could be with you. Now I will go to my priest’s home to beg for his help and to tell him about my good fortune.”

— 2.3 —

Friar Lawrence was up early and was out in a meadow collecting herbs and placing them in his wicker basket. He talked to himself as he looked at the plants around him, “The morning smiles at the frowning night. As the morning brightens the Eastern sky, the night like a drunkard staggers away from the light and the Sun. Before the Sun is fully risen and has made the day cheerful and has dried up the dew of the night, I must fill my basket with poisonous weeds and with medicinal flowers. The Earth is the mother of nature, but it is also her tomb. The place for burial is also her womb. And from the Earth’s womb come so many and various children that we can make use of. Many plants have many excellent qualities, no plant lacks a use, and all of the plants are different. Herbs, plants, and seeds all have useful qualities. None is so evil but that its use can bring about good, and none is so good but that, being misused, it can bring about evil. Virtue itself can become a vice, if it is used wrongly, and vice can bring into being something good when used to good purpose.”

Romeo walked toward the good friar, who did not see him and continued to talk to himself, “In this small flower are both a poison and a medicine. Smell this flower, and you will feel good and your senses will tingle. Taste this flower,

and your senses will die along with your heart. In plants, as well as in human beings, two kings attempt to rule. One king is good and full of grace, and the other king is evil and filled with an evil will. When evil becomes predominant, a cankerworm will feed on the leaves of that plant and kill it.”

Romeo said, “Good morning, Friar Lawrence.”

Friar Lawrence looked up and said, “*Benedicte!* God bless you! Who is up so early? Ah, it is Romeo. Young man, you must have a troubled mind if you are up and out of bed so early. Old men have troubles and cares, and sleep does not come easily to or remain long with men who worry, but a young man who is unbruised by life and who has an untroubled mind should easily go to sleep and easily stay asleep. Since you are up so early, something must be worrying you. Or if nothing is worrying you, I can guess why you are now up — our Romeo has not been in bed and asleep tonight.”

“Your second guess is correct,” Romeo said. “I have not been in bed and asleep tonight, but for all that, the sweeter rest was mine.”

Shocked by what entered his mind, Friar Lawrence said, “God pardon sin! Have you been up all night with Rosaline?”

“With Rosaline, Friar Lawrence?” Romeo said, “No. I have forgotten that name, and the sorrow that name brought me.”

“Good for you, my son,” Friar Lawrence said. “But then where have you been?”

“I’ll tell you, before you ask me again. I have been feasting with my enemies. One of my enemies wounded me, and I wounded her. To cure our wounds, we need your help and a holy sacrament. I bear no hatred, blessed man, because

what I ask you will benefit my enemy.”

“Be plain, good son, and let me understand your speech; riddling confession finds but riddling absolution.”

“Then plainly know that my heart’s dear love is set on Juliet, the beautiful daughter of rich Old Capulet. My heart is set on her, and her heart is set on me. We have been wounded by love and separated by our families, and the only thing that will cure our wounds is marriage, for then we can come together. When and where and how Juliet and I wooed each other and exchanged vows of love, I will tell you, but this I pray, that you will consent to marry us today.”

“Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!” Friar Lawrence said. “Is Rosaline, whom you did love so dear, so soon forsaken by you? Young men’s love then lies not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes. Jesu Maria, what a deal of brine used to wash your love-sickened cheeks for Rosaline! Your tears seasoned your love for Rosaline with salt, but you did not taste that love! The Sun has not yet cleared away the mist from your lovesick sighs for Rosaline! Your lovesick groans for Rosaline ring yet in my old ears. Here upon your cheek I see a still-unwashed stain of a tear that you shed for Rosaline! If ever you were yourself and these woes were yours, you belonged to Rosaline and your woes were all for her! And now you have changed? Remember this: Don’t blame women for falling in and out of love, when men do the same.”

“Often you have criticized me for loving Rosaline,” Romeo said.

“I criticized you for your puppy love, not for any real love, Romeo.”

“And you wanted me to bury my love.”

“I did not want you to bury your love in a grave just so you could immediately love someone else.”

“Please, don’t criticize me,” Romeo said. “The woman whom I now love returns my love. Rosaline did not love me.”

“She knew well that you talked of love without understanding what love is. You were like a student who has memorized the answers to questions without understanding what the answers mean. But come with me, changeable lover, I will help you because a marriage between you and Juliet will most likely change the hatred between the Montagues and the Capulets into love.”

“Let’s hurry,” Romeo said. “I want to be married quickly.”

“Go wisely and slow,” Friar Lawrence said. “People who run fast stumble.”

— 2.4 —

Benvolio and Mercutio walked together on a street.

“Where the devil is Romeo?” Mercutio said. “Did he go home last night?”

“He did not return to his father’s mansion,” Benvolio replied. “I asked his servant there about him.”

“That same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline, is tormenting him, and so he will surely become insane.”

“Tybalt, that Capulet, sent a letter to Romeo’s father’s mansion.”

“It is a challenge to a duel, I suppose,” Mercutio said.

“Romeo will answer him,” Benvolio said.

“Any man who can write may answer a letter.”

“He will not answer it with another letter. Instead, he will fight Tybalt, just as Tybalt dares him to do.”

“Poor Romeo!” Mercutio said. “He does not need a duel to kill him. He is already dead. The dark eyes of the white wench Rosaline have already stabbed him. A love song has already shot him through the ear. The center of his heart has already been penetrated by Cupid’s arrow. Is Romeo, an already dead man, the man who should fight Tybalt?”

“Why shouldn’t he fight Tybalt?” Benvolio asked.

“Romeo is too love struck to fight anyone, including Tybalt, who is as intelligent as the cat — also named Tybalt — that Reynard the Fox tricks in folk tales. Tybalt is quite the man. In fact, Tybalt likes to think that he is a manly man with manly man powers. Tybalt speaks well in public — truly, Tybalt is a courageous captain of compliments. Tybalt fences the way that other people sing classical music — Tybalt and they keep time, distance, and proportion. They reach a high note, and Tybalt puts his sword in your bosom — with his sword Tybalt can stab and butcher each button on your chest. Tybalt understands the protocol and the moves of fencing: the first and second cause, the immortal *passado*, the *punto reverso*, and the home thrust!”

“I don’t understand those words,” Benvolio said.

“If you knew how to fence and duel the fashionable way, you would,” Mercutio replied. “But those words are too fancy! The people such as Tybalt who use them are inane, lipping, drama-queen fanatics! They pronounce these fancy words with fake accents! They say, ‘By Jesu, he is a very good blade! He is a very brave man! She is a very good whore!’ It is lamentable that we should be thus afflicted with people like Tybalt — these strange buzzing insects, these fashionmongers, these pretentious fellows with their elaborate courtesy, who pay so much attention to

fashionable clothing and language that they cannot sit at ease upon an old bench! I am tired of people such as Tybalt forever saying ‘*Bon! Bon!*’ when all they mean is ‘Good! Good!’ Romeo may be too lovesick to fight Tybalt, but I could easily defeat Tybalt in a fair fight.”

Romeo came walking up to his friends.

Benvolio said, “Here comes Romeo.”

“Romeo is thin,” Mercutio said. “His lack of a lady who loves him in return has made him grieve in love-sickness and waste away. He is like a herring that has separated from its roe and dried. Take ‘roe’ away from ‘Romeo’ and you have ‘meo’ — a lover’s sigh. Now the grieving lover is ready to listen to the love poetry of Petrarch. Compared to Rosaline, Laura — the beloved of Petrarch — was only a kitchen-wench. Compared to Rosaline, Dido — the tragic Queen of Carthage who loved the Trojan hero Aeneas, who abandoned her — was a dowdy woman. Compared to Rosaline, Cleopatra — the Queen of Egypt — was a gypsy. Compared to Rosaline, Helen of Troy and the woman named Hero — loved respectively by Paris and by Leander — were good-for-nothing harlots. Compared to Rosaline, the pretty eyes of Thisbe, the lover of Pyramus, were lacking. So Romeo thinks, anyway.”

Mercutio said to Romeo, “Signor Romeo, *bon jour!* There’s a French salutation to go with the French loose breeches you are wearing. You gave us the counterfeit last night.”

“Good morning to both of you,” Romeo said. “What counterfeit did I give you?”

“You counterfeited friendship with us — and then you gave us the slip and disappeared, although we sought you,” Mercutio said.

“Pardon me, my friend Mercutio,” Romeo said. “I had

something important to do, and in such circumstances, I ought to be excused for my lack of good manners.”

“I can guess that your important business involved going in and out and in and out,” Mercutio said.

“Going in and out of doors?” Romeo said.

“That’s not what I meant, but your interpretation of my words is very polite. I was referring to a kind of exercise.”

“I am in the pink of health,” Romeo said.

“In the pink is exactly what I was referring to,” Mercutio said.

“Knowing you, ‘pink’ has more than one meaning, and not just one sole meaning,” Romeo said.

“Knowing you, you are concerned about your soul,” Mercutio said.

“At times, my soul is my sole concern, and I’m not talking about the sole of my shoes, or the Sun, or King Solomon,” Romeo said.

“Benvolio, help me out,” Mercutio said. “I am running out of puns. I can’t think of any more to save my soul.”

“If you can’t make any more puns, then I declare myself the winner in this game of wits,” Romeo said. “I am a cobbler of puns. I will save your sole and I will heel you, but I will not dye — D, Y, E — for you.”

“Shoe puns are shoe hilarious,” Mercutio said. “Trying to find a new pun at this point is like going on a wild-goose chase. Some of these puns are hoary with age.”

“I have never seen you go out of your way to avoid a whore,” Romeo said.

“I will bite you on the ear for that joke,” Mercutio said.

“Whores use their mouths on a different body part,” Romeo said. “Which is why their customers say, ‘Please don’t bite.’”

“Your wit is a sharp sauce that betters the living of life. You are a *bon vivant*,” Mercutio said.

“You have always liked a saucy girl — someone who betters the living of life. You are also a *bon vivant*,” Romeo said.

“Your wit runs both broad and deep.”

“You like broads and you like being deep in the pink.”

“Isn’t this game of punning much better than being constantly lovesick and groaning?” Mercutio said. “You are again the Romeo I remember. You are friendly. You are good company. You are witty. You are what you used to be and what we have wished you to be. For a while, the love you felt made you run up and down like an idiot with his tongue or another body part hanging out while he looked for a hole to put his favorite plaything in.”

“That is a good place to stop this line of thought,” Benvolio said.

“But I like this line of thought,” Mercutio said.

“You like going too far and too fast,” Benvolio said.

“You are wrong,” Mercutio said. “I like going very deep and very fast.”

The Nurse and Peter, another Capulet servant, entered the street.

“Here comes some fun,” Romeo said.

It was a windy day, and the wind blew on and filled out the Nurse's long skirt and Peter's baggy shirt.

"A sail, a sail!" Romeo shouted.

"No, two sails," Mercutio said. "A shirt and a smock."

The Nurse said, "Peter."

"Yes, Nurse."

"Please give me my fan."

"Good Peter, give her fan so that she can hide her face," Mercutio said under his breath to Romeo and Benvolio. "Her fan is fairer than her face."

The Nurse said, "Good morning, gentlemen."

Mercutio replied, "Good afternoon, fair gentlewoman."

"Is it afternoon?" the Nurse asked.

"Indeed, it is," Mercutio said. "The bawdy — that is, dirty — hand of the dial is now on the prick — that is, mark on a clock — of noon. Prick, hand, ha! Handjob! A prick in two hands is not worth one in a bush."

"Your language is bawdy," the Nurse said. "What kind of man are you?"

Romeo said, "He is a man whom God created so that he could ruin himself."

"He is well on his way to doing that," the Nurse said.

She added, "Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?"

"I can tell you," Romeo said, "but young Romeo will be older when you have found him than he was when you sought him. However, in Verona I am the youngest of that

name, for fault of a worse.”

“You speak well,” the Nurse said.

“True,” Mercutio said to Benvolio, “‘For fault of a worse’ is a nice variation of ‘for want of a better.’”

“If you are Romeo,” the Nurse said to Romeo, “I wish to speak to you and have a confidence with you.”

“She means ‘conference,’ not ‘confidence,’” Benvolio whispered to Mercutio. “She will probably ‘endite,’ not ‘invite,’ him to supper.”

“I have found out her occupation,” Mercutio said.

“What have you found out?” Benvolio asked.

“She is a procurer. She can’t be a whore because she is so old and ugly. Of course, she may be a hoary hairy whore who wants to serve him a hair pie. Would you like to hear a song that I learned at school?”

He sang loudly as he stared at the Nurse,

“She has a friend with some hankers.

“He has crabs, herpes, syphilis, and cankers.

“He got all the four

“From a dirty old whore,

“So he wrote her a letter to thank her.””

The Nurse stared in shock as Mercutio then said, “Romeo, are you going to your father’s for lunch? We will go with you.”

“You two go now, and I will follow you later,” Romeo replied.

Mercutio tipped his hat to the Nurse with mock courtesy

and said to her, "Farewell, ancient lady, farewell."

Then he and Benvolio walked away as Mercutio sang again, "She has a friend with some hankers"

Recovering from her shock, the Nurse asked Romeo, "Who was that sassy punk whose mouth runs faster than his mind?"

"He is a gentleman who loves to hear himself talk," Romeo said. "He says more in words in one minute than he says in sense in a whole month."

The Nurse said, "If he says anything nasty about me, I will take him down, and if he is bigger than anything I can handle, I will find other people to take him down. Either I or other people whom I will find will demolish him. We will indeed make him go down in size and make him shorter than he is now."

Romeo thought, *It is a good thing that Mercutio is not here. He would make jokes about going down and about demolishing a six-inch structure.*

"He is a scurvy knave!" the Nurse continued. "I am not one of his loose women. I am not one of his gangster's molls. I am not one of his buddies."

She said to Peter, "And all you did was stand by and let him use me as the butt of his jokes. Now everyone will know that he used me."

"I saw no one use you," Peter said. "If I had, I would have quickly taken my weapon out."

Romeo thought, *I am glad that Mercutio is not here to talk about a weapon. The weapon that Mercutio would talk about is one that a man can take out of his pants. And, of course, he would make jokes about this woman being used.*

Peter continued, “I dare draw a sword as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and if the law is on my side.”

Romeo thought, *Once again, I am glad that Mercutio is not here to talk about a sword. He would talk about a “swordsman,” a word that can refer to a guy who has had a lot of sex. He would joke about putting a sword in a sheath. He would remind everyone that the Latin word “vagina” means sheath.*

“I swear to God that I am so angry that every part about me quivers,” the Nurse complained.

Romeo thought, *If Mercutio were here, he would make a joke about an arrow in a quiver.*

The Nurse continued, “That scurvy knave! But to business. Romeo, my young lady ordered me to find you. I am her Nurse. What she told me to say to you, I will keep to myself for now. First, I want to tell you that if you are trying to mislead her into a fool’s paradise — that is, if you want a one-night stand instead of a marriage — that is a poor way to treat a lady. My young lady is very young, and even if she were not, no lady should be treated that way.”

“Nurse,” Romeo said. “Tell Juliet that my intentions are honorable. I —”

“I will do so,” the Nurse said. “Lord, she will be a joyful woman.”

“What will you tell her, Nurse?” Romeo asked. “You have not listened to what I have to say.”

“I will tell her, sir, that you do protest to her,” the Nurse said. “That is what a gentleman would do.”

Protest to her? Romeo thought. *Oh, she means, Propose to her.*

Romeo said, "Tell her to find an excuse to go to Friar Lawrence's cell this afternoon. There she and I shall be married."

He held out some money to the Nurse and said, "This is for your pains."

The Nurse said, "No, truly, sir; not a penny."

"I insist that you take it," Romeo said.

The Nurse took the money, and then she said, "This afternoon, you say. Juliet will be there."

"Wait, good Nurse, behind the abbey wall," Romeo said. "Within an hour my servant shall be here with a rope ladder. I will use it to climb into Juliet's bedchamber tonight and be with her joyfully and secretly. Farewell. Do good work and I'll reward you. Farewell. Be sure to praise me when you speak to Juliet."

"May God bless you," the Nurse said, "but listen to me."

"What is it?"

"Can your servant keep a secret?" the Nurse asked. "Let us remember that two people can keep a secret provided that only one person knows the secret."

"My servant can keep a secret," Romeo said. "He is as true as tempered steel."

"My young lady is the sweetest lady," the Nurse said. "I remember when she was a babbling little girl and fell forward upon her face — but no more of that. A nobleman in town — Count Paris — would gladly marry Juliet and bed her, but Juliet prefers to look at a toad, a very toad, than look at him. I made her angry by saying that Paris is better looking than you. When I told her that, she changed color."

The Nurse paused, then said, “Don’t rosemary and Romeo both begin with the same letter?”

“Yes,” Romeo said. “They both begin with R.”

“Don’t be silly. Pirates say, ‘Arrrrr.’ So do sea dogs. I know of a dog that when it talks, it says, ‘Arrrrr.’ Perhaps that is its name. Are you mocking me because I’m not educated? I’m pretty sure that Romeo and rosemary begin with another letter. Anyway, Juliet says the most beautiful things about you and rosemary.”

Romeo said, “Please say the most beautiful things about me to Juliet.”

“Yes, I will,” the Nurse said. “I will say one thousand nice things about you.”

Romeo left, and the Nurse called, “Peter!”

Peter, who was standing a short distance away, said, “Yes, Nurse?”

The Nurse ordered, “Peter, take my fan, and walk in front of me. Walk quickly.”

— 2.5 —

In Old Capulet’s garden, Juliet impatiently waited for the Nurse.

Juliet said to herself, “The clock struck nine when I sent the Nurse to see Romeo. She promised to return in half an hour. Maybe she could not find and talk to him — I doubt that. She must be lame because she returns home so slowly. People who carry the messages of lovers should be as fast as thought, which is ten times faster than the beams of the Sun that drive back shadows from dark hills in the morning and make the hills brightly lit. Swift-winged doves carry messages from Venus, goddess of love, and the wings of

Cupid are as swift as the wind. Now the Sun is at high noon, and it is three long hours that the Nurse has been away and still she has not returned. If she were young and had the passions of youth, she would be as swift in motion as a ball. My words would send her as quickly as a sharply hit tennis ball to Romeo, and his words would return her to me just as quickly. But old folks behave as if they were already dead — they are as unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead.”

Catching sight of the Nurse, Juliet said, “Here she comes!”

The Nurse and Peter entered Old Capulet’s garden, and Juliet said, “Oh, honey nurse, what news do you bring me? Did you meet him? Send Peter away.”

The Nurse told Peter, “Wait at the gate.”

Juliet said, “Now, good sweet nurse — why do you look so sad? Even if the news you bring me is sad, yet tell it merrily. If the news is good, you are perjuring it with your sour face.”

“I am tired,” the Nurse said. “Let me rest awhile. My bones ache. I had to search everywhere to find Romeo.”

“If I could, I would give you my bones, provided that you gave me your news. Speak, good Nurse. Tell me your news.”

“Why are you in such a hurry?” the Nurse said. “Can’t you wait a minute? Can’t you see that I am out of breath?”

Juliet said, “How can you say that you are out of breath when you have breath to tell me that you are out of breath! The number of words you say to persuade me to wait are many more than the number of words it would take you to tell me what I want to know. Is your news for me good or bad? Tell me! Tell me either good or bad right now, and I

will wait a while for the details. Tell me! Is your news good or bad?"

"You made a foolish choice when you chose Romeo as a good-looking beau," the Nurse said. "But he is more handsome than other men, his legs are more handsome than other men's, as are his hands and feet and his body. Ladies ought not to talk like this about a man, but yes, Romeo is truly handsome in face and body. Romeo is not the flower of courtesy — he can be rude. But I swear that he is as gentle as a lamb. Do whatever you want, Juliet. But always obey God."

The Nurse paused, then added, "Have you eaten lunch yet?"

"No, I haven't eaten yet," Juliet said. "But you are not telling me what I want to know — I already know that Romeo is handsome. I want to know whether he and I will be married. What did he tell you about that?"

"I have a headache," the Nurse said. "My head is pounding as if it will break into twenty pieces. And my back — ow!"

Juliet began to rub one side of the Nurse's back; the Nurse said, "The other side. You should be ashamed for sending me out to run all over Verona — I could die from exhaustion!"

"Truly, Nurse," Juliet said. "I am sorry that you are not well, but sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what did Romeo tell you?"

"Romeo, your love, says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous gentleman, and a kind gentleman, and a handsome gentleman, and, I believe, a virtuous gentleman, he says —"

Then, forgetting what she was about to say, and starting to

think about something else, the Nurse asked, “Where is your mother?”

“Where is my mother!” Juliet said. “Why, she is inside. Where else should she be? How oddly you answer my questions! You tell me, ‘Romeo, your love says, like an honest gentleman, Where is your mother?’”

“Why are you so angry?” the Nurse said. “Is this how you treat my aching bones! From now on, deliver your own messages!”

“I have no time to argue with you,” Juliet said. “Tell me! What did Romeo tell you?”

“Do you have permission to go to confession today?”

“Yes, I have.”

“Then go to Friar Lawrence’s cell. You will find there a groom who wants to make you his wife.”

Juliet blushed.

“The Nurse said, ‘Now comes the red blood up in your cheeks. Now that you are in love with Romeo, you blush at any news concerning him. You go to church now. I will take a different path. I need to get a rope ladder that Romeo will use to climb up to your bedchamber as soon as it is dark. Right now, I am doing all the work. But tonight — when Romeo comes — you shall do the work of a woman. Go now. I will eat lunch. You go to Friar Lawrence’s cell.’”

“Wish me luck,” Juliet said. “Honest nurse, farewell.”

— 2.6 —

Romeo was waiting for Juliet in Friar Lawrence’s cell.

Friar Lawrence said, “May the Heavens smile upon this holy act of the marriage sacrament so that we shall not

regret it later.”

“Amen,” Romeo said, “but even if sorrow comes later, it shall not equal the joy I feel when I look at Juliet for just one short minute. Join our hands in holy matrimony, and then love-devouring Death can do whatever he wishes — it is enough for me that I can call Juliet mine.”

“Be careful, Romeo,” Friar Lawrence said. “These violent delights have violent ends, and in their triumph they die. They are like fire and gunpowder, which as they kiss, they explode. Honey in moderation is delicious and sweet, but too much honey can make you hate its taste. Therefore, love moderately if you wish love to last long. Too fast can harm love as much as too slow.”

Friar Lawrence looked outside and said, “Here comes your lady. Her foot is so light that the flint of the rocky road of life will not cut it. A lover is so light that he or she can walk on a string that was spun by a spider and is floating in the air and not fall off. Lovers are light, and so is the love of lovers.”

Juliet arrived at Friar Lawrence’s cell. She immediately ran to and hugged Romeo tightly. They did not let go of each other.

“Good afternoon, Friar Lawrence,” Juliet said.

Romeo kissed Juliet.

“Romeo greets you for both of us,” Friar Lawrence said.

Juliet said, “I return his greeting,” and she kissed Romeo.

“Juliet,” Romeo said, “if your joy is as much as mine, then use your skill with words, which is greater than mine, to fill the air with sweet words and rich verbal music and tell me how happy our marriage will be.”

Juliet replied, "True understanding of happiness focuses on being happy and not on talking about happiness. Experiencing happiness is better than talking about happiness. Beggars can use words to count what they have. The wealth of love I give and the wealth of love I receive is so great that I cannot count even half of my wealth of love."

"Come with me now," Friar Lawrence said. "We will have the wedding quickly. I can see by the way you kiss and hug and speak to each other that I had better not leave you alone until after I have married you. Not until after you are married shall you two become one."

He led the happy couple away to be married.

CHAPTER 3 (Romeo and Juliet)

— 3.1 —

Mercutio, Benvolio, and some others were in a public square on a very hot and sticky day — a muggy day that made everyone irritable.

Benvolio said, “Mercutio, let’s go home. The day is hot, the Capulets are out and about, and, if we meet, we will fight each other. Today is so hot that everyone is a bad mood and ready to fight.”

Mercutio, always ready to make a joke, decided to treat Benvolio, a peacemaker, as if he were a troublemaker.

Mercutio replied, “You are like one of those fellows who when he enters a tavern puts his sword upon the table and says, ‘I hope to God that I will not need you,’ but after his second drink draws his sword and wants to fight — without provocation — the person who drew his drink.”

Benvolio asked, “Am I like such a fellow?”

“Don’t try to deny it,” Mercutio said. “When you are in the mood to fight, you are as quick to get in a fight as any man in Italy. You are so quick-tempered that when you want to get in a fight, you quickly find something to make your temper rise.”

“Is that so?”

“If there were two such men as you, very quickly there would be but one left, because one man would kill the other,” Mercutio said. “You will start a fight with a man because he has a hair more or a hair less in his beard than you do. You will start a fight with a man who is cracking nuts. Why? Because your eyes are the color of hazelnuts.

Only your eyes would spy such a quarrel. Your head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of protein, and because of excessive fighting your head is as scrambled as an egg. You fought a man because he coughed in the street and woke up your dog that was lying in the sunshine. You fought a tailor because he wore a new jacket before Easter. You fought a different tailor because he tied his new shoes with old shoelaces. And yet you are acting like a man who wishes to keep me from fighting!”

“If I were as likely as you to quarrel,” Benvolio said, “my future life expectancy would be about 15 minutes.”

“Don’t be silly,” Mercutio said.

“Look,” Benvolio said. “Some Capulets are coming our way.”

“I don’t care,” Mercutio replied.

Tybalt and some other Capulets walked up to Mercutio and Benvolio.

Tybalt said to the other Capulets, “Stay close to me. I will speak to them.”

Tybalt was like a schoolyard bully who wanted protectors close to him.

He said to Mercutio and Benvolio, “Gentlemen, good afternoon. I would like to have a word with you.”

“Just one word?” Mercutio asked, widely parting his legs. “That’s not enough. Make it a word and a blow.”

Tybalt, who thought that Mercutio was speaking about fighting, said, “You shall find me apt enough to do that, sir, if you give me enough reason.”

“Aren’t you capable of finding enough reason without me giving you a reason?”

“Mercutio, you band together with Romeo,” Tybalt said.

“Band together?” Mercutio said. “Do you think that we are musicians? If you think that, you will listen to nothing but noise.”

Mercutio touched his sword and said, “Here is my fiddlestick. It can make you dance. Band! Indeed!”

Benvolio said, “We are out here in public. Either we should go somewhere private and talk together rationally, or we should all leave and go home. Out here in public everyone can witness what we say and do.”

“Men’s eyes were made to look, so let them look,” Mercutio said. “I will not leave this place.”

Romeo entered the public square and walked toward the group of people.

Tybalt said, “Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes the man I want to see.”

“He is a man, but not your man,” Mercutio said. “But if you want him to be your follower, walk to a dueling ground. He will follow you, and he will fight you.”

Tybalt said, “Romeo, the hatred I have for you makes me call you by no better word than this — you are a villain.”

These were fighting words, and Tybalt — and everyone else present, including Mercutio and Benvolio — expected Romeo to fight Tybalt.

He did not.

Romeo, newly married to Juliet and therefore an in-law to Tybalt, replied in a friendly way, “Tybalt, I have reason to treat you well — indeed, even love you. Because of that reason, which you don’t now know about, I decline to take offence at your insult to me. I am not a villain. Therefore,

farewell. You really do not know who I am.”

Romeo turned away from Tybalt, who drew his sword and said, “Boy, your words shall not excuse the insults that you have made to me; therefore, turn and draw your sword.”

Romeo replied, “I say that I have never harmed you, but I do love you better than you can know. Soon you shall know the reason of my love. And so, good Capulet — you bear a name I love as dearly as my own — do not be angry and do not attempt to fight me.”

Mercutio, shocked by Romeo’s words, shouted, “This is calm, dishonorable, vile submission! A mere threat makes Romeo submit!”

Mercutio said to Tybalt, “Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk from me?”

“What do you want?”

Mercutio drew his sword and said, “Tybalt, you king of cats, I want nothing but one of your nine lives. I will take one, and depending on how you act, I may very well beat the rest of your eight lives out of you. Will you pluck your sword with its hilts, which look like ears, out of your scabbard? Be quick about it, or you will find my sword moving about your ears before you draw your sword!”

“If you want to duel, I am the man for you,” Tybalt replied, drawing his sword.

“Mercutio, please put away your sword,” Benvolio said.

“You may begin your attack,” Mercutio said to Tybalt.

They started to fight.

Romeo put himself between the two duelists and said, “Draw your sword, Benvolio, and beat down their weapons. Gentlemen, stop this outrage! Tybalt, Mercutio,

you know that Prince Escalus has forbidden fighting in the streets of Verona! Stop, Tybalt! Stop, Mercutio!”

Tybalt thrust his sword under Romeo’s arm and mortally wounded Mercutio. Seeing Mercutio wounded, Tybalt and the other Capulets ran away.

Most fights among teenagers involve bluster, not blood. Sometimes, a fight goes wrong and someone gets hurt.

Mercutio said, “I am hurt! May a plague curse all the Capulets and all the Montagues! I’ve been wounded! Has Tybalt gone, and suffered nothing? Did no one fight for me?”

Disbelieving, Benvolio said, “What! Have you been wounded?”

“Yes, I have suffered a scratch,” Mercutio said. “It will do. Get me a doctor.”

“Your wound cannot be serious,” Romeo said.

“No, it is not serious. It is not as deep as a well or as wide as a church door, but it will do — it will serve as well as a serious wound.”

Mercutio knew that he was dying, and he knew exactly what to do — make a pun, the best pun of his short life. He told Romeo, “Ask for me tomorrow, and you shall find me a *grave* man.”

He added, “I have suffered my deathblow. I am done for this world. What is a dog, a rat, a mouse, a cat doing scratching a man to death? Tybalt is all of these, as well as a braggart, a rogue, and a villain who fights by a rulebook. He is not a man who should be able to kill me.”

Mercutio said to Romeo, “Why the devil did you come between us? Tybalt thrust his sword under your arm and

mortally wounded me.”

“I thought I was doing the right thing,” Romeo said.

Mercutio said, “Help me into some house, Benvolio, or I shall faint. May the plague infect all the Capulets and all the Montagues! The Capulets and the Montagues have made me food for worms! I am done for! A plague! On both families!”

Benvolio carried Mercutio away.

Romeo said to himself, “Mercutio, a gentleman and Prince Escalus’ near relative, my best friend, was mortally wounded fighting for me because Tybalt stained my reputation with his slander — Tybalt, who has been my in-law for an hour! Sweet Juliet, your beauty has made me effeminate and has taken away my bravery, softening the steel that used to be my valor!”

Benvolio returned and said, “Romeo, Mercutio is dead! His gallant soul has climbed past the clouds, scorning too quickly this world he leaves behind.”

“This day’s black fate will not end today,” Romeo said. “Black fate will rule other days. On this day begins great sorrow, and many days will pass before the sorrow ends.”

Benvolio looked up and said, “Tybalt is coming back to the scene of his crime.”

Tybalt and his followers did not know how badly Mercutio was wounded, but they wanted to know. If Mercutio were badly wounded or dead, Tybalt needed to go into hiding until he could flee from Verona and save his life.

“Tybalt is still alive while Mercutio is dead!” Romeo said. “Not for long. Mercy, leave me and return to Heaven — I have no need of you! All I need now is fire-eyed fury!”

Tybalt faced Romeo.

Romeo said, "Now, Tybalt, take back the insult you gave me earlier. I am no villain. The late Mercutio's soul has not gone far. It is only a little way above our heads, waiting for your soul to join it and keep it company. Either your soul, or my soul, or both, must leave this world and accompany Mercutio's soul."

"You were Mercutio's friend while he was alive," Tybalt said. "It is fitting that your soul accompany his soul in its journey."

"Our fight will determine whose soul accompanies his soul."

Romeo and Tybalt fought with swords, and Romeo killed Tybalt so quickly that Benvolio did not have time to intervene to stop them. As Mercutio had known, Tybalt ably talked the talk but he could not ably walk the walk. Mercutio had died because of Tybalt's lucky thrust with a sword made while Romeo was trying to part the two fighters.

Benvolio said, "Romeo, run away! I hear people and guards coming! You have killed Tybalt, and Prince Escalus has decreed that anyone who fights in the streets of Verona shall die! If the guards catch you, the Prince will order you to be killed! Run away! Now!"

"Oh, I am fortune's fool!" Romeo cried. "I am the plaything of fate."

Benvolio shouted at him, "Why are you still here!"

Romeo ran for his life.

Some guards and citizens arrived and asked Benvolio, "Where is the man who killed Mercutio, Prince Escalus' relative? Which way did he run? Where is Tybalt, the

murderer?”

If Romeo had restrained himself and had not killed Tybalt, Prince Escalus would have had Tybalt arrested and punished — perhaps with death.

Benvolio said, “Tybalt lies here, dead.”

A guard told Benvolio, “You are under arrest, in the name of Prince Escalus. Come with me.”

Prince Escalus arrived, as did Old Montague and Old Capulet, their wives, and other people. Prince Escalus asked, “Where are the vile people who have disturbed the peace of our city?”

“Prince Escalus,” Benvolio said, “I can tell you everything that happened. Here lies the body of Tybalt, who killed Mercutio, your relative. Romeo killed Tybalt.”

Grieving, Mrs. Capulet said, “Tybalt was my nephew! He was my brother’s child! And now he is dead. Prince, I demand justice. Tybalt’s blood has been spilled. For blood of ours, shed the blood of Romeo Montague.”

Prince Escalus wanted justice — his own relative, Mercutio, had been killed — and he wanted peace in his city, but he also wanted to find out exactly what had happened.

He asked, “Benvolio, who began this bloody fight?”

Benvolio replied, “Tybalt lies here dead, slain by Romeo, but Romeo spoke peacefully to Tybalt, asking him to think about how trivial was the cause of Tybalt’s anger at him. He also urged him to remember your order against fighting in the streets. Romeo said all this with gentle breath, calm look, and his knees humbly bowed, but Tybalt was not willing to be peaceful. Tybalt pointed his piercing steel at the breast of Mercutio, who was as angry as Tybalt and

whose sword met Tybalt's sword. Mercutio, scorning Tybalt, beat aside Tybalt's deadly thrusts with his sword and sent deadly thrusts back at Tybalt, who beat them aside. Romeo cried aloud, 'Stop, friends! Stop fighting!' He then used his arm to beat down their swords. Tybalt thrust his sword under Romeo's arm and mortally wounded Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled. Soon, he came back, and Romeo, angered at the death of Mercutio, sought revenge, and the two fought like lightning, and before I could part them, haughty Tybalt lay dead. Romeo then fled. This is the truth; if it is not, order me to be killed."

Mrs. Capulet said, "Benvolio is a Montague, and he is lying to protect another Montague. Some twenty Montagues fought in this black strife, and all those twenty could kill only one life: that of Tybalt. I beg for justice, which you, Prince Escalus, must give. Romeo slew Tybalt, and so Romeo must not live."

Prince Escalus replied, "Romeo slew Tybalt, but Tybalt slew Mercutio. How many more shall die?"

"Not Romeo, Prince Escalus," Old Montague said. "He was Mercutio's friend. Romeo's fighting ended what the law should have ended: the life of Tybalt."

Prince Escalus made up his mind: "And for that offence immediately we do exile Romeo from Verona. I have been affected by the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets: Mercutio, my kinsman, is dead. I will punish both families with so heavy a fine that you shall all repent the death of Mercutio. I will be deaf to pleading and excuses; neither tears nor prayers shall persuade me to let you off lightly. Don't even try it. Romeo must leave this city quickly. If he is found here after this day, the hour that he is found will be his last hour alive. Take this corpse away, and obey my orders. Pardoning murderers is not merciful because it leads to more murders."

In her bedchamber, Juliet impatiently waited for night to come so that Romeo could come to her.

Juliet said to herself, “Phaëthon went to his father, the god Apollo, and asked to be allowed to drive the Sun-chariot across the sky and bring light to the world. But Phaëthon, doomed youth, was unable to control the stallions, and they ran wildly away with the Sun-chariot, wreaking havoc and destruction upon Humankind and the world. The king of the gods, Jupiter, saved Humankind and the world by throwing a thunderbolt at Phaëthon and killing him. Right now, stallions that pull the Sun-chariot, I want you to race the Sun across the sky to the West and sunset so that Romeo may quickly come to me. Gallop as if Phaëthon were once again your charioteer and make it dark night immediately. Close the curtain upon day, so that the stallions may sleep and Romeo may leap into my arms with no one to see him and raise an alarm. Lovers by the light of their own beauty can see enough to have sex in the dark, or, if love be blind, it best agrees with night. Come, night, clothed in black, and teach me to lose my virginity to Romeo, my husband. Night, cover the blood — the blood of a virgin — that rises in my cheeks until I experience sex for the first time and know that sex with a true love is right and proper. Come, night. Come, Romeo. Cum, Romeo, who is day in night. In my vision of you, I see your white body lying upon the black wings of night — you are whiter than new snow on the back of a raven. Night, give me my Romeo, and when he cums and ‘dies’ with delight, take him and cut him out in little stars. If you do that, he will make the face of the nightly Heaven so fine that all the world will be in love with night and pay no worship to the garish Sun.”

Having expressed her strong desire to lose her virginity

quickly to Romeo, her husband, Juliet said, “Romeo and I belong to each other, but neither of us has so far done anything that shows it. It is as if I have bought a mansion but have not moved into it. Romeo has married me, but he has not yet enjoyed me. My waiting now for Romeo to come to me is like an impatient child’s waiting during the eve before some festival at which the child will wear new clothing.”

Juliet saw the Nurse coming to her and said, “My Nurse is bringing me news. Anyone who says ‘Romeo’ speaks with Heavenly eloquence.”

The Nurse, carrying a rope ladder, entered Juliet’s bedchamber.

Juliet asked, “Nurse, what news do you have?” Seeing that the Nurse was carrying something, Juliet asked, “What do you have in your hands? Is that the rope ladder that Romeo sent to you?”

The Nurse threw down the rope ladder and replied, “Yes, it is.”

Juliet asked, “What is troubling you? What is the news? Why are you wringing your hands?”

The Nurse said, “This is a miserable day. He’s dead! He’s dead. He’s been murdered! We’re ruined, Juliet. We’re ruined!”

Juliet, assuming that Romeo had died, said, “Can Heaven be so cruel?”

The Nurse said, “Romeo can be that cruel, but Heaven cannot. Oh, Romeo, Romeo! Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!”

“What kind of devil are you, who torments me so?” Juliet said. “This kind of torture belongs in Hell. Has Romeo

killed himself? If you say, ‘Yes, he has killed himself,’ I will die just as surely as if a basilisk had looked at me and struck me dead. If Romeo is dead, say ‘yes.’ If Romeo is not dead, say ‘no.’ Those short words will determine whether I live or die.”

“I saw the wound, I saw it with my eyes,” the Nurse said. “It was on his breast. It was a corpse to be pitied — a bloody corpse to be pitied, Pale, pale as ashes, all red with blood — I fainted at the sight.”

“Heart, cease to beat,” Juliet said. “Eyes, go to prison and never look on liberty. Dust that makes up my body, return to the dust of the Earth. Life, stop — Romeo and I shall share one grave.”

“Oh, Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!” the Nurse said. “Oh, courteous Tybalt! You were an honest gentleman! That ever I should live to see you dead!”

“What storm is this that blows so contrary?” Juliet said. “From which direction are the squall winds blowing? Is Romeo slaughtered, and is Tybalt dead? Is my dearly loved cousin dead, and also my dearer lord, my husband? Is the trumpet blowing that announces the end of time? Nurse, tell me! Who is living, and who is dead?”

“Tybalt is dead, and Romeo has been banished from Verona,” the Nurse replied. “Romeo killed Tybalt, and that is why he is banished.”

“Oh, God!” Juliet said. “Did Romeo’s hand really shed Tybalt’s blood?”

“It did! It did!” the Nurse said. “Curse the day, it did!”

“Romeo is not what he seemed to be!” Juliet said. “Oh, serpent heart, hid with a flowering face! Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave? Beautiful tyrant! Angelical fiend!

Dove-feathered raven! Wolvish-ravening lamb! Despised substance of divinest show! Romeo is in reality a complete opposite to what he seemed to be. He is a damned saint, an honorable villain! What laws of Nature had to be broken to put the spirit of a fiend from Hell into the sweet fleshly paradise of Romeo's body? Was there ever a book containing such vile matter so beautifully bound? I can't believe that deceit should dwell in such a gorgeous palace!"

"There's no trust, no faith, no honesty in men," the Nurse said. "All men lie and cheat, and all men are evil. Where is the servant? He needs to bring me a drink. These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old. Go to Hell, shameful Romeo!"

"Blistered be your tongue for such a wish!" Juliet said. "Romeo was not born to shame; upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit, for Romeo's brow is a throne where honor may be crowned King. I should not have criticized my husband the way I did."

"Will you speak well of the man who killed your cousin?" the Nurse asked.

"Should I speak ill of the man who is my husband?" Juliet asked. "Poor Romeo, who will speak well of you, when I, your wife of three hours, have said such bad things about you? But why, villain, did you kill my cousin? No doubt because that villain cousin would have killed you, my husband. Back, my foolish tears, return back to my eyes, your native spring. Tears belong to sorrow, and I am joyful that my husband lives, whom Tybalt would have killed. I must be joyful that Tybalt is dead because he would have killed my husband. All of this is comforting news, so why am I crying? One thing happened that is worse than Tybalt's death. That thing is expressed in one word that murders me. I wish I could forget that word, but it is burned into my brain like damned guilty deeds are burned into the

minds of sinners. Tybalt is dead, and Romeo — banished. That word ‘banished’ creates more sorrow in me than the deaths of ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt’s death was woe enough; no more sorrow should have been added to that sorrow. But if sour woe delights in company and must be accompanied by other griefs, why was not the death of Tybalt followed by the death of my father or my mother, or both? That would have been bad enough, and I would have grieved in the ordinary way. But following the news of Tybalt’s death, I have been ambushed with the news of Romeo’s banishment. To hear ‘Romeo is banished’ is to tear my world and my life apart. It is as if my father, my mother, Tybalt, my husband, and myself were all dead. ‘Romeo is banished!’ There is no end, no limit, no measure, no bound to the grief that short sentence brings. No words can express that grief.”

Juliet then asked, “Where are my father and my mother, nurse?”

“They are weeping and wailing over Tybalt’s corpse. Will you go to them? I will lead you there.”

“They can use their tears to wash his wounds,” Juliet said. “When they have finished crying, I will still be crying because of Romeo’s banishment. Take away that rope ladder. Romeo wanted to use it to climb into my bedchamber tonight, but he is exiled from Verona. I, still a virgin, will become a virgin widow. I will go to my wedding-bed alone. The grave — not Romeo — will take my virgin body.”

“Go to your bedchamber,” the Nurse said. “I will find Romeo so he can comfort you. I know where he is. Listen to me. Romeo will come to you tonight. He is now hiding in Friar Lawrence’s cell.”

“Find Romeo, and give him — my true knight — this

ring,” Juliet said. “Have him come to me to take his last farewell.”

— 3.3 —

Entering his cell, Friar Lawrence said loudly, “Come out, fearful Romeo. Figuratively speaking, affliction is in love with you, and you are married to calamity.”

Romeo came out from behind a curtain where he had been hiding in case the city guards had come for him, and he said, “Friar Lawrence, what is the news? What is the Prince’s ruling about me? What sorrow is in store for me that I am still unaware of?”

“Romeo, you are too much afflicted with suffering. I bring you news of the punishment that Prince Escalus has set for you.”

“Is the Prince’s sentence upon me anything less than my death?”

“He has given you a gentler punishment than that,” Friar Lawrence said. “Your punishment is not your body’s death but instead your body’s banishment.”

“Banishment!” Romeo said, throwing himself upon the floor and lying there in despair. “If you want to be merciful to me, say instead that my punishment is death. To me, exile from Juliet is more terrifying than death. Do not say that I am banished.”

“You are banished from Verona,” Friar Lawrence said, “Bear this punishment patiently, for the world is broad and wide.”

“For me, no world exists outside Verona,” Romeo said. “Outside the walls of Verona lie Purgatory and torture — in fact, Hell itself. To be banished from Verona is to be banished from the world — and to be banished from the

world is to be dead. Banishment is another, nicer, word for death. By telling me that I am banished, you are cutting off my head with a golden axe, and you are smiling while you make the swing of the ax that kills me.”

“You have the wrong attitude,” Friar Lawrence said. “You are guilty of the sin of ingratitude. Your lack of appreciation is shocking! The penalty for what you did is death, but merciful Prince Escalus has softened your punishment. He turned the black word ‘death’ into the merciful word ‘banishment.’ You have received much mercy, but you don’t see or appreciate that.”

“Banishment is torture, not mercy,” Romeo said. “Heaven is here, where Juliet lives. Every cat and dog and little mouse, every unworthy thing, may live here in Heaven and look at Juliet, but I may not. Even the flies of Verona have it better than I do. They may touch Juliet’s hand or her virgin lips, which grow red when they touch each other, thinking such self-kisses a sin. But I cannot touch Juliet’s hand or her lips. Flies may do this, but I must fly from Verona and Juliet. Flies are free, but I am banished. And yet you tell me that banishment is not death? Haven’t you got a better way to kill me than through banishment? Haven’t you got any poison or a sharp knife or some other disgraceful way of killing me? The damned in Hell use the word ‘banishment’ — they are banished from Heaven and they howl when they say the word ‘banishment.’ You are a priest to whom I confess my sins. You absolve my sins, and you profess to be my friend. How then can you torment me with the word ‘banishment’?”

“You foolish madman, listen to me.”

“Why? You will speak again of banishment.”

“I can give you armor against that word,” Friar Lawrence said. “Philosophy can lessen adversity. Philosophy can

comfort you even though you are banished.”

“Again you say the word ‘banished’! Philosophy is worthless unless it can make a Juliet, or bring Verona — and Juliet! — to my place of exile, or change Prince Escalus’ mind about my punishment! Philosophy does not help. Philosophy is unable to provide comfort when I am banished. Talk to me no more.”

“I see that madmen have no ears.”

“Why would they, when wise men have no eyes?”

“Let me talk to you about the situation you are in.”

“You cannot speak about what you cannot feel,” Romeo said. “If you were as young as I am, if you loved Juliet the way I do, if you had been married for only an hour when you killed Tybalt, and if you were banished from the one you love, then you could speak, then you could tear your hair, and then you could fall upon the ground as if you were falling into your grave. If all that has happened to me had happened to you, then you would act exactly the way I am acting.”

Someone knocked at the door of Friar Lawrence’s cell.

“Get up, Romeo,” Friar Lawrence said. “Hide yourself.”

“No,” Romeo said. “I will not be hidden unless the mist from my heartsick groans hides me.”

More knocking.

Friar Lawrence said to Romeo, “Listen to the knocking!”

Friar Lawrence shouted, “Who’s there? Just a moment!”

To Romeo, he said, “Get up! You will be captured!”

He shouted, “Just a moment!”

To Romeo, he said again, “Get up!”

More knocking.

“Romeo, you are acting like a fool!”

Friar Lawrence shouted, “I’m coming! I’m coming!”

More knocking.

He shouted, “Who is knocking so loudly? From where did you come? What do you want?”

The Nurse, who had been knocking, replied, “Let me come in, and you shall know my errand. Juliet sent me.”

Friar Lawrence recognized her voice; she was not a danger to Romeo. He opened the door and said, “Welcome.”

The Nurse asked, “Holy friar, tell me: Where is Juliet’s husband? Where is Romeo?”

Friar Lawrence replied, “Come in. There he is, lying on the floor, crying. His tears have made him drunk and unable to think well.”

“He is acting just like Juliet,” the Nurse said. “Their cases of mourning are exactly the same. Both share the same sorrow. Both are in a piteous predicament. Like Romeo, she lies down, blubbing and weeping, weeping and blubbing.”

To Romeo, the Nurse said, “Stand up! Stand up! Stand up, if you be a man. For Juliet’s sake, rise and stand. Why should you fall into so deep a moan?”

If the ghost of Mercutio had been around, he would have thought, *I wish that I were still alive — the puns I could make! The Nurse talked about a case. A case is a container for holding something. So is a sheath, or vagina. I would make jokes about Romeo being in Juliet’s case. The Nurse*

has talked about rising and standing up for Juliet's sake. I know what part of Romeo should do the rising and standing up. The Nurse talked about Romeo falling into so deep a moan. When people moan, they make an O with their mouths. If I were still alive, I would talk about a different O — Juliet's O between her legs.

Romeo said, "Nurse!" and stood up.

The Nurse said, "Things could be worse — you could be dead."

"You mentioned Juliet," Romeo said. "How is she? Does she think of me as a hardened murderer now that I have at the beginning of our marriage killed a close relative of hers? Where is she? How is she? What does my secret wife say about our ruined marriage?"

"She does not say anything," the Nurse replied. "All she does is cry and cry. She falls on her bed. She gets up and cries out first the name 'Tybalt' and then the name 'Romeo,' and then she falls on her bed again."

"It is as if my name had been shot from a deadly gun and had murdered her, just as it murdered Tybalt," Romeo said.

He drew his sword and said, "Tell me, Friar Lawrence, in what vile part of my body does my name live? Tell me so that I can cut my name out of myself."

Friar Lawrence said, "Put away your sword. Are you not a man? You look like a man, but your tears make you appear to be womanish. The wildness and lack of thought of your actions make you appear to be an angry beast. You are a shameful woman in the body of a man! Or you are an ugly beast that is half-man, half-woman. You amaze me.

"By my holy order, I thought that you had more sense. You have killed Tybalt. Will you now kill yourself? Don't you

know that by killing yourself you would also kill Juliet, your wife, who is now part of you? Why treat yourself with such damnable hatred? Why do you hate your family origin, your soul, and your body? All three of those make up you, and by killing yourself you would lose all three. You are shaming your body, your love, and your mind. Like a usurer who hoards money, you could have good things in abundance, but you do not use your body, your love, and your mind well. Your body should be noble and full of the valor of a man, but you make it seem as if it were made of wax — a sculpture, not a real man. You have sworn to love Juliet, but that must be a lie since by killing yourself you would also kill the person whom you have vowed to cherish. Your intelligence, which should control and manage your body and your love, leads both astray. Your intelligence acts as if it were a stupid soldier who puts gunpowder in a flask and ignorantly sets it on fire. Your intelligence should be used to protect yourself, but instead you are using it to blow yourself up and kill yourself.

“Wise up, Romeo! Your Juliet is alive. To love and marry her, you have risked death! Be happy that Juliet is alive! Tybalt wanted to kill you, but you were able to kill Tybalt. Be happy that you are alive! The law stated that anyone who fought in the streets of Verona would be executed, but instead you are merely exiled. Be happy that Prince Escalus is merciful! You are greatly blessed and happiness has befriended you, but you are acting like a misbehaved and sullen girl — you are pouting despite your good luck and your great love. Be careful because those who are ungrateful die miserable.

“But now, go to Juliet, as was arranged earlier. Climb up to her bedchamber and comfort her. But be careful. Leave before the new set of city guards take up their places in the morning because if you are captured in the morning or afterward you will be killed. Leave earlier so that you can

leave Verona and live in Mantua until the time when it is OK to announce publicly your marriage to Juliet, to reconcile the Capulets and the Montagues, and to beg Prince Escalus to pardon you and allow you to live again in Verona. When you return to Verona, you will have twenty hundred thousand times more joy than the lamentation you will endure when you depart from Verona.

“Nurse, go to Juliet first. Give my compliments to her, and tell her to encourage everyone in her father’s mansion to go to bed early because of their heavy sorrow. Let her know that Romeo is coming.”

The Nurse said to Friar Lawrence, “I could stay here all night and listen to you give advice. To be educated is wonderful!”

She said to Romeo, “I will tell Juliet that you are coming to see her.”

“Please do,” Romeo said, “and tell her to be ready to speak to me frankly and honestly. I think she will want to know how Tybalt died.”

“Romeo, this is a ring that Juliet gave me to give to you,” the Nurse said. “Come quickly to Juliet because it is beginning to be very late.”

The Nurse departed.

“I feel so much better now!” Romeo said.

“Before you go to Juliet, let me remind you that you need to be gone from Verona before the new set of city guards relieves the guards on duty now,” Friar Lawrence said. “The guards on duty now will allow you to leave Verona, but the new guards will arrest you. If you get a late start and the new guards are on duty, you will have to disguise yourself to pass through the gates. Go to Mantua and live

there. I will send your servant to you occasionally with news that relates to your situation here — I expect the news to be good. Shake hands with me. It's late. Go to Juliet, and good night."

"A joy that surpasses all joy awaits me," Romeo said, "or else I would be sad at parting from you. Farewell, Friar Lawrence."

— 3.4 —

Old Capulet, Mrs. Capulet, and Paris spoke together in a room in Old Capulet's mansion. Paris loved and greatly desired to marry Juliet.

Old Capulet said to Paris, "Events have occurred that have made it impossible for me to have time to convince Juliet to marry you. As you know, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly, as did I. Unfortunately, death is not optional, and anyone who is born will also die. It is very late now, and Juliet will not come down to see you. In fact, I myself should have been in bed an hour ago."

"These times of woe afford no time to woo," Paris said.

To Mrs. Capulet, he said, "Madam, good night. Give my compliments to Juliet."

"I will," Mrs. Capulet said. "And tomorrow morning, I will see how she feels about marrying you. Tonight, she is mourning heavily in her bedchamber."

Old Capulet said, "Sir Paris, I will make a bold offer of my child's love for you. I think that she will do as I advise her to do. In fact, I have no doubt that she will accept my advice."

He said to Mrs. Capulet, "Wife, before you go to bed, go to Juliet and tell her of Paris' love for her. Also tell her that this coming Wednesday — wait, what day is today?"

“Today is Monday, sir,” Paris said.

Old Capulet said, “Monday! Well, Wednesday is too soon. So, wife, tell Juliet that she shall marry Paris, my almost son-in-law, on Thursday.”

To both Paris and his wife, Old Capulet said, “Will everyone and everything be ready? This leaves little time for preparations, but we should not have too big an affair. Tybalt is very recently dead, and we don’t want people to think that we little mourn him. If we have a big affair, they may think that. Therefore, we will have around a half-dozen guests, and that will be enough. But, Paris, what do you think about being married on Thursday?”

Paris replied, “I wish that Thursday were tomorrow.”

“Well, go home now,” Old Capulet said. “Thursday will be your wedding day, then.”

To his wife, he said, “See Juliet before you go to bed, and tell her to prepare for her wedding day.”

He then said to Paris, “Good night. I am going to bed. Actually, it is so late that I could almost call it morning. Good night.”

Old Capulet knew that Paris loved Juliet and that most young women would be happy to have Paris for a husband. He also knew that Paris, who was related to Prince Escalus, would make a good political ally — especially now that Mercutio and Tybalt had perished because of the feud with the Montagues.

— 3.5 —

Romeo and Juliet had enjoyed their wedding night together, and now it was almost morning.

Juliet said, “Are you leaving now? It is not yet close to

morning. We just now heard the cry of the nightingale and not the morning lark. Each night, the nightingale sings on the pomegranate tree outside. Believe me, Romeo, you heard the cry of the nightingale.”

“No, Juliet,” Romeo said. “We heard the cry of the lark, the announcer of morning. It was no nightingale. Look, my love, streaks of light reveal the clouds in the East. They announce that for now we must end the happiness of our being together. The stars — the candles of night — have burnt out. The day that makes many people happy now reveals the tops of misty mountains. I must be gone from Verona and live, or stay in Verona and die.”

“The light you see is not daylight,” Juliet said. “I know that it is not. It is instead the light of one of the shooting stars that will give you light on your way to Mantua, and therefore you need not leave yet.”

“Let me be captured and put to death,” Romeo joked. “I am happy for that to happen if that is what you want. Just as you wish, I will say that the light I see is not the beginning of dawn. And I will say that the bird I heard so high above our heads is not the morning lark. I have more desire to stay with you than I have will to leave. Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so. Isn’t that right, my love? Let us continue to talk — it is not yet dawn.”

Realizing that Romeo was in real danger of being killed if he were captured after dawn, Juliet exclaimed, “It is dawn! It is! Leave! Go to Mantua! Do not stay any longer in Verona! It is the lark that sings so out of tune. Its sounds are harsh discords and unpleasing sharps. Some people say that the lark makes sweet divisions — sweet variations on a melody — but the lark does not make sweet divisions because it divides us. Some people believe that because the beautiful lark has ugly eyes and the ugly toad has beautiful eyes, therefore the two must have traded eyes. I wish that

the two had traded voices, too. Why should the lark have a beautiful voice when that voice takes us out of each other's arms! It announces that you must leave me now. Oh, leave now and be safe — it grows more and more light!"

"The morning grows more and more light; our woes grow more and more dark," Romeo said.

The Nurse entered Juliet's bedchamber and said, "Juliet, your mother is coming here to speak to you."

The Nurse said to Romeo, "The morning has broken. Beware and be careful. Your life is in danger."

The Nurse left.

Juliet said, "Romeo, climb out through the window, which will all too soon let daylight in."

Romeo said, "Goodbye! One last kiss, and then I will leave."

He kissed her and climbed through the window but did not leave Juliet quite yet.

"You have left me so soon," Juliet said. "Husband, I must hear from you every day in the hour, for in a minute there are many days."

She mourned, "By this way of counting, I shall be very old the next time I see my Romeo."

"Goodbye," Romeo said. "I will omit no opportunity to send my love to you, Juliet."

"Do you think that we shall ever again meet?" Juliet asked.

"I am positive that we will meet again," Romeo replied. "We will tell stories about all of our current troubles to our grandchildren someday."

Romeo climbed down into Old Capulet's garden.

"I have a foreboding of evil," Juliet said. "As I now look down at you, you seem to be like a dead person at the bottom of a tomb. Either my eyesight is playing tricks on me, or you seem pale like a corpse."

"My love," Romeo said, "in my eyes you also seem pale right now. Our sorrows make us appear to be bloodless and so we lose our ruddy hue. Goodbye, Juliet, my wife."

He departed.

"Fortune, people call you fickle," Juliet said. "They say that you are changeable. If you are changeable, what fortune is going to happen to Romeo, who does not change and who is honored for being faithful? I hope that you are fickle, fortune. We have had bad fortune, and good fortune will not keep Romeo long away from me but will bring him back to me quickly."

Mrs. Capulet called, "Juliet, are you awake and up?"

"Who is calling me?" Juliet said to herself. "Is it my mother? Has she not gone to bed tonight, or is she up very early? It is unusual for her to be up and talking to me so early. She must have something important to say to me."

Mrs. Capulet entered Juliet's bedchamber and asked, "How are you, Juliet?"

"I am not well."

"Are you continuing to cry for Tybalt's death?" Mrs. Capulet asked. "Are you trying to wash him from his grave with your tears? Even if you could do that, you would not be able to make him live again. Therefore, stop crying. Some grief shows that you love him, but excessive grief shows a lack of good sense."

“Please let me cry for such a loss I feel with all my heart,” Juliet said.

“If you cry, you will feel the loss bitterly, but you will not bring back the person for whom you are crying.”

“Mother, I feel the loss so bitterly that I must cry.”

“Juliet, I think that you are crying not so much over your cousin Tybalt as you are over the fact that the villain who killed Tybalt is still alive.”

“What villain?”

“Romeo.”

Juliet said, “The villain and he are many miles apart. God pardon him! I do, with all my heart. And yet no man like he does grieve my heart.”

Mrs. Capulet understood this to mean, “The villain Romeo and Tybalt are many miles apart. God pardon the late Tybalt! I do, with all my heart. And yet no man so much as Tybalt does grieve my heart because he has died.”

But Juliet knew that to herself, her ambiguous words meant, *The word “villain” and Romeo are many miles apart — Romeo is not a villain! God pardon Romeo! I do, with all my heart. And yet no man so much as Romeo does grieve my heart because he is banished from Verona and my presence.*

Mrs. Capulet said, “You should say, ‘And yet no man so much as Romeo does grieve my heart because he is still alive.’”

Juliet said, “I grieve because Romeo is far from the reach of these my hands. I wish that no one but I might avenge Tybalt’s death!”

Mrs. Capulet understood these words to mean that Juliet

would like to kill Romeo, but she grieves because he is no longer in Verona and so she cannot kill him.

But Juliet knew that to herself, her ambiguous words meant, *I grieve because I can no longer see Romeo, and I would like to be the only person who could avenge Tybalt's death against Romeo because then Romeo would be safe and in no danger.*

Mrs. Capulet said, "Don't worry. We will have vengeance for the death of Tybalt, so you need not cry because Tybalt's death has not been avenged. I am going to send a man to Mantua, where the exiled scoundrel Romeo is said to be fleeing. The man I send to Romeo will give him a drink so poisonous that very quickly Romeo will keep Tybalt company in death. Then, I hope, you will be happy."

Juliet said, "Indeed, I never shall be satisfied with Romeo, until I behold him ... dead ... is my poor heart for a kinsman vexed. Mother, if you could find a man to bear a poison, I would temper it, so that Romeo should, upon receipt thereof, soon sleep in quiet. Oh, how my heart hates to hear him named, and cannot come to him to wreak the love I bore my cousin upon the body of the man who slaughtered him!"

Juliet again used ambiguous words, some of which had two meanings.

This is what Mrs. Capulet heard: "Indeed, I never shall be satisfied with Romeo, until I behold him dead — dead is my poor heart for a kinsman [Tybalt] vexed. Mother, if you could find a man to bear a poison, I would temper [mix] it, so that Romeo should, upon receipt thereof, soon sleep in quiet [die]. Oh, how my heart hates to hear him named, and cannot come to him to wreak [avenge] the love I bore my cousin upon the body of the man who slaughtered him!"

But Juliet knew that to herself, her ambiguous words

meant, *Indeed, I never shall be satisfied with Romeo, until I behold him — dead is my poor heart for a kinsman [Romeo] vexed. Mother, if you could find a man to bear a poison, I would temper [weaken] it, so that Romeo should, upon receipt thereof, soon sleep in quiet [take a nap]. Oh, how my heart hates to hear him named, and cannot come to him to wreak [give expression to] the love I bore my cousin upon the body of the man who slaughtered him!*

“You get the poison, and I’ll get a man to give it to Romeo,” Mrs. Capulet said. “But right now I have good news for you, girl.”

“Good news is welcome in such joyless times as these,” Juliet said. “What is your good news?”

“You have a father who loves you,” Mrs. Capulet said. “He knows that you have been grieving, and to take away your sadness he gives you a day of joy — a day that neither you nor I expected.”

“What day is that?”

“Early Thursday morning, a gallant, young, and noble gentleman, Count Paris, at Saint Peter’s Church, will happily make you a happy bride.”

Shocked, Juliet replied, “By Saint Peter’s Church and by St. Peter, too, he will not make me there a joyful bride! I wonder at this haste — why must I wed before I am wooed? Mother, I beg you to tell my father that I will not marry yet; and, when I do marry, I swear that my groom shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate, rather than Paris. Your news is shocking, not joyful.”

Her mother told her, “Here comes your father; tell him so yourself, and see how he will take it.”

Old Capulet and the Nurse entered Juliet’s bedchamber.

Looking at Juliet, who was crying, Old Capulet said, “When the Sun sets, the air drizzles dew. But now, for the sunset of Tybalt, my brother’s son, it rains downright.”

He said to Juliet, “Your eyes are the source of conduits. Still in tears? Is your face forever showering? With your body you are imitating a ship, a sea, and a wind. Your eyes, like a sea, ebb and flow with tears. Your body is a ship sailing in this salt flood of tears. Your sighs are the winds. Your sighs and your tears — which never cease — will sink your storm-tossed body.”

To his wife, he asked, “What is going on here? Haven’t you told our daughter about her upcoming marriage to Paris?”

“I have indeed, but she won’t have it. She says thanks, but no, thanks. I wish the fool were married to her grave!”

“Let me make sure I understand what you are saying,” Old Capulet said. “She refuses to be married and she refuses to thank us for arranging such a splendid marriage? Isn’t Juliet elated to marry Paris? Doesn’t she realize how blessed she is to have so worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom? Doesn’t she realize that she is unworthy of such a splendid marriage?”

“I am not pleased that you have arranged a marriage for me,” Juliet said, “but I am thankful that you have arranged a marriage for me out of your love for me. I hate the marriage that you have arranged for me, but I am thankful for what I hate because I know that you arranged the marriage for me because you love me.”

“What are you saying?” Old Capulet said. “You are not making sense: ‘Thanks, but no thanks’? Girl, thank me no thankings, but know that on Thursday you and Paris will go to Saint Peter’s Church and know that there will be a wedding. Fettle your limbs for a wedding, girl. We fettle — that is, groom — a horse. Like a horse, your limbs will be

ridden. If you can't force yourself to go to church, I can force you to go. If I have to, I will drag you there on a hurdle just as if I were taking you to an execution — your execution, you pale-faced girl!”

Knowing that her husband had gone too far, Mrs. Capulet said to him, “Are you insane?”

Juliet said, “Father, I beg you on my knees to listen patiently to what I have to say.”

Old Capulet was not in a listening mood: “Headstrong, disobedient girl! I'll tell you what! Either go to church and get married on Thursday, or never after see me! Speak not! Reply not! Do not answer me! I want to slap you!”

To his wife, he said, “We hardly thought that we were blessed to have only one child left living, but now I see that this one is one too many. We are cursed in having her for our daughter! She is worthless!”

The Nurse said to Old Capulet, “God in Heaven bless her! You are to blame, my lord, for criticizing her so.”

“And why am I at fault, my lady wisdom?” Old Capulet said. “Hold your tongue, my lady prudence. If you want to say something, go and gossip with your friends!”

“I speak no treason,” the Nurse replied.

“Bull!” Old Capulet said.

“May not one speak?”

“Peace, you mumbling fool! Share your wisdom with your friends — but here and now, shut up!”

Mrs. Capulet told her husband, “You are too angry. You are overreacting.”

“Damn!” Old Capulet said. “I have a right to be angry!”

During day and night, during hour and season, during work and play, and alone or among company, I have been doing my best to get Juliet a good husband. Now I have found for her a gentleman of noble parentage, with wealthy estates, youthful, and well connected, handsome and with a manly figure. But what happens! My daughter acts like a wretched, whimpering fool! She acts like a whining, mentally feeble puppet! An excellent groom is handed to her, and she replies, ‘I will not marry him. I cannot love him. I am too young. Pardon me.’”

He said to Juliet, “If you will not marry Paris, the kind of pardon I will give you is one you will not enjoy. Yes, you will not have to marry Paris, but no, you will not be allowed to eat or live in this house. Eat and live wherever you can — you shall not eat or live here. Think about what I am saying — you know that this is not a joke. Thursday is coming soon. Consider well my words — take them to heart. You are my daughter, and I will marry you to whomever I wish. If you refuse the marriage, then go hang yourself, beg, starve — die in the streets, for all I care! If you refuse the marriage, you will no longer be my daughter. I will not acknowledge that I am your father, and nothing that I own will ever do you good. Believe what I am telling you! I swear that it is the truth!”

Old Capulet left Juliet’s bedchamber.

Juliet said, “Can no one pity me and see my grief? Mother, don’t cast me aside! Delay this marriage for a month, a week; or, if you do not, make my bridal bed in that dim tomb where Tybalt lies.”

“Don’t talk to me,” Mrs. Capulet said. “I will not speak a word on your behalf. Do whatever you want to do, for I am done with you.”

Mrs. Capulet left Juliet’s bedchamber.

Juliet said to the Nurse, “How can we stop this marriage! I already have a husband on Earth. Our vow of marriage is recorded in Heaven. How can that vow of marriage end, freeing me to marry again, unless Romeo dies and enters Heaven? Nurse, give me some comfort. Nurse, give me some good advice. Why is Heaven sending such misfortune to me, who am so weak? Talk to me, Nurse. Do you have even one word of comfort for me?”

“Yes, I do,” the Nurse said. “I have advice that I hope will comfort you. Romeo has been banished from Verona, and he will never return to claim you as his wife. Even if he were to return, it would be secretly. Since this is the case, I think it is best that you marry Count Paris — oh, he’s a lovely gentleman! Romeo is a dishrag compared to him. Not even an eagle has so attractive, so lively, so beautiful eyes as does Paris. I think this second groom surpasses your first groom, but even if he did not, your first groom is dead to you, or at least as good as dead to you. After all, you are here and he is in exile. You are not able to live together as husband and wife.”

Juliet asked, “Are you speaking from your heart?”

“Yes, and from my soul, too,” the Nurse said.

Juliet realized that no comfort could come to her from the Nurse, who had just advised her to commit bigamy. Better advice might come from Friar Lawrence.

Juliet said, “Amen.”

“What?” the Nurse asked.

“You have comforted me marvelously much,” Juliet said. “Go and tell my mother that I regret having displeased my father, and so I have left to go to Friar Lawrence so that I may confess my sins and receive absolution.”

“Yes, I will do as you say,” the Nurse replied. “You are acting very sensibly.”

The Nurse left Juliet’s bedchamber.

“That damned old woman!” Juliet said. “She is a very wicked fiend! What is her worst sin? To advise me to commit bigamy and be unfaithful to Romeo, my husband? Or to dispraise my husband after she has praised him beyond compare so many thousands of times previously? Go, Nurse. From here on, you and I shall be separate. You will no longer be my confidant. I will go to Friar Lawrence to seek his advice. If I have no other way to stop this marriage, I can commit suicide.”

CHAPTER 4 (*Romeo and Juliet*)

— 4.1 —

Count Paris had been talking to Friar Lawrence and asking him to officiate at his wedding to Juliet.

Friar Lawrence now said, “On Thursday, sir? The time before the wedding is held is very short.”

“This is what Old Capulet wants,” Paris said. “However, I admit that I want to be married quickly.”

“You say that you don’t know what Juliet thinks about being married to you,” Friar Lawrence said. “Weddings should not be arranged until *after* the girl has consented to be a bride. I do not like this.”

“She has been excessively grieving because of the death of Tybalt,” Paris said, “and therefore I have not been able to woo her as I would like to. Venus does not smile in a house of tears. Juliet’s father thinks that it is dangerous for her to grieve so immoderately, and he believes that it is best for her to quickly marry because that will stop her tears. She has been staying by herself and grieving, and her father — as do I — believes that if she is around other people and enjoying society that she will stop grieving. That is the reason for our haste in arranging this wedding.”

Friar Lawrence thought, *I know of a reason why this wedding ought not to take place quickly.*

He saw Juliet walking toward his cell, and he said aloud, “Here comes the lady herself walking toward us.”

Juliet arrived, and Paris said to her, “Happily met, my lady and my wife!”

Politely, but distantly, Juliet replied, “That may be, sir,

when I may be a wife.”

Paris said, “That ‘may be’ must be, love, on this coming Thursday.”

“What must be shall be,” Juliet said.

“That’s the truth,” Friar Lawrence said.

“Did you come to make your confession to Friar Lawrence?” Paris asked Juliet.

“To answer that, I should confess to you.”

“Do not deny to him that you love me.”

“I will confess to you that I love him.”

“You will also confess to him, I am sure, that you love me.”

“If I tell Friar Lawrence that I love you, that will be more trustworthy than if I said it directly to you.”

“Poor Juliet,” Paris said, “your face is disfigured by the tracks of many tears.”

“The tears have done little to disfigure my face because my face was bad enough before I cried.”

“By saying that, you wrong your face even more than the tears have wronged it.”

“What is true is not slander,” Juliet said. “And I have spoken the truth.”

“Your face is mine,” Paris said, “and you have slandered it.”

Thinking of Romeo, Juliet said, “It is true that my face is not my own.”

She asked Friar Lawrence, “Do you have time for me to

confess, or should I come to you at evening mass and confess afterward?"

Friar Lawrence said to Juliet, "I have time now."

He said to Paris, "I need to be alone with Juliet so I may hear her confession."

"Heaven forbid that I should keep anyone from confessing their sins!" Paris said to Friar Lawrence.

To Juliet he said, "The morning of the day we will be married, I will wake you up with music. Until then, goodbye."

Paris kissed Juliet's cheek, and then he departed.

"Shut the door," Juliet said. "After the door is shut, come and cry with me. I am past hope, past cure, past help!"

"Juliet, I know, of course, why you grieve," Friar Lawrence said. "I can't think of a way to stop or delay the marriage. Your father is determined that you marry Count Paris this Thursday."

Juliet replied, "Don't tell me that you have heard of this marriage unless you can also tell me how to prevent it. You are wise, but if you cannot think of a way to prevent my marriage to Count Paris, then tell me that what I have resolved is wise, and with this dagger I will commit suicide. God joined my heart and Romeo's heart. You joined our hands in marriage. This hand belongs to Romeo, and before my hand shall be joined in marriage to another man or my heart revolt and turn to another man, this dagger shall slay both my hand and my heart. Therefore, Friar Lawrence, out of your years of experience of living, give me helpful advice or a plan — or else this dagger will solve my problem. Give me a plan quickly. If you can come up with no way to stop this marriage, I long to die quickly."

“Wait, Juliet,” Friar Lawrence, who was completely opposed to suicide, said. “I do see a way to stop the wedding. You are in a desperate situation, and the way out will require a desperate action. If you are willing to commit suicide rather than marry Count Paris, then it is likely that you will be willing to undergo something similar to death to avoid marrying him. You will have to encounter something like death itself to escape the shame and sin of committing bigamy and being unfaithful to Romeo. If you are willing to do this, I can help you avoid this marriage.”

“I am willing to do much to avoid marrying Paris,” Juliet said. “I am willing to jump from the top of a tower. I am willing to walk in a road swarming with thieves. I am willing to stand in a nest of serpents. I am willing to be chained to roaring bears. I am willing to be locked alone in a building where human bones are stored and to be covered with reeking leg bones and yellow, jawless skulls. I am willing to go into a newly made grave and hide with a shrouded corpse. All of these things that I have heard about have made me tremble, but I will do any of them without fear or hesitation in order to stay faithful to Romeo, my sweet love.”

“In that case, go home, be merry, and tell your parents — falsely — that you agree to marry Paris,” Friar Lawrence said. “Today is Tuesday. On Wednesday night, make sure that you are alone in your bedchamber. Do not let the Nurse stay with you. I have a vial for you to take with you when you leave here. When you are in bed tomorrow night, drink the potion inside the vial. Immediately, the potion will get into your veins and stop your pulse without harming you. Your body will be cold, not warm. You will have no breath. You will have no color in your lips and cheeks. Your eyelids will close. All of the parts of your body shall be stiff and stark and cold. You will appear to be dead for forty-two hours. After that time, you will wake up as if

from a pleasant sleep. When Paris comes Thursday morning to wake you up, everyone will think that you are dead. Then, as our tradition is, you will be dressed in your best clothing and carried on a bier to the ancient burial vault where all the deceased Capulets and their kin lie. In the meantime, I shall send a letter to Romeo to tell him about our plan, and he shall secretly return to Verona, and he and I will wait in the Capulet burial vault for you to wake up. After you have woken up, Romeo will take you to Mantua. If you do this, you will not have to marry Count Paris. This plan will work as long as you do not let a womanish fear stop you from drinking the potion in the vial.”

“Give me the vial!” Juliet said. “Do not talk to me about fear!”

Friar Lawrence gave her the vial and said, “Leave now. Be brave. Be strong. I will send a fellow friar, a friend of mine, to Mantua with a letter for Romeo.”

“Love will give me strength! And strength will help me do what I must do!” Juliet said. “Farewell, dear Friar Lawrence.”

— 4.2 —

In Old Capulet’s mansion were Old Capulet, his wife, the Nurse, and some servants.

Old Capulet told a servant, “Take this list and invite to the wedding all the people whose names are on it.”

The servant left.

Old Capulet, who had changed his mind about having only a few guests to the wedding, told the second servant, “Go and hire for me twenty good cooks.”

The second servant said, “All of the cooks shall be good

cooks, sir, because I will test them. I will see if they will lick their fingers.”

“Why?” Old Capulet asked.

“A cook’s cooking gets on his fingers. A cook who cannot lick his own fingers is a bad cook. Therefore, I will not hire for you any cook who cannot lick his own fingers.”

“Leave now,” Old Capulet said.

The second servant left.

“We are unprepared for this wedding feast,” Old Capulet said. “Has Juliet gone to see Friar Lawrence?”

“Yes,” the Nurse replied.

“Maybe he can talk some sense into her,” Old Capulet said. “She is a peevish and selfish good-for-nothing.”

“Here she comes from confession now,” the Nurse said. “She looks happy.”

“So, my headstrong young daughter,” Old Capulet said, “where have you been gadding about?”

“I have been where I have learned to repent my sin of disobeying you,” Juliet said, kneeling before her father. “Friar Lawrence told me to obey you and to ask for your forgiveness, which I do. Henceforward I am ever ruled by you and shall be obedient to your wishes.”

Old Capulet immediately made up his mind to hold the wedding a day early.

He said, “Send for Count Paris. Tell him that Juliet has agreed to marry him. The wedding will be held tomorrow morning — Wednesday — not on Thursday.”

“I met Count Paris at Friar Lawrence’s cell,” Juliet said. “I

gave him what decorous love I could, but I was careful not to step over the boundary of what is modest.”

“I am glad,” Old Capulet said. “All of this is good. All things are as they ought to be. Stand up now. Let me see Count Paris. Servant, go and bring Count Paris to me. By God, the city of Verona owes this reverend holy friar a great debt.”

Juliet said, “Nurse, will you go with me to my bedchamber and help me to choose the clothing and jewelry that I will wear tomorrow for my wedding?”

Mrs. Capulet said, “No, let’s have the wedding on Thursday. We can wait that long.”

Old Capulet overruled his wife: “Nurse, go with Juliet. We will have the wedding tomorrow, on Wednesday.”

Mrs. Capulet said, “We will be unprepared to host a wedding. Already it is almost nighttime.”

“Don’t worry,” Old Capulet said. “I will handle everything, and everything will be done as it ought to be done. Go to Juliet and help her get ready for her wedding. I will stay awake all night. Leave everything to me, and for this once I will do the work of a housewife.”

His wife went to Juliet.

Old Capulet said, “Everyone is gone. Well, I will see Count Paris to let him know about tomorrow’s wedding. I feel happy now that my wayward girl is obeying me.”

— 4.3 —

In Juliet’s bedchamber, Juliet and the Nurse had been picking out the clothing and jewelry that Juliet was supposed to wear at the wedding.

Juliet said, “Yes, this is what I will wear, but Nurse, please

let me be alone tonight because I need to make many prayers to ask God to smile upon me and my wedding. As you know, lately I have been rebellious and sinful.”

Mrs. Capulet entered the bedchamber and asked, “How is everything going? Do you need my help?”

“No,” Juliet said. “We have already picked out the clothing and jewelry that I will wear tomorrow, so please let me be left alone tonight, and let the Nurse stay up with you tonight because I am sure that you will be up all night making preparations for the wedding.”

“Good night,” her mother said. “Go to bed and rest. You need your sleep.”

“Farewell!” Juliet said.

Mrs. Capulet and the Nurse left Juliet’s bedchamber.

“God knows when we shall meet again,” Juliet said to herself. “I feel a cold fear going through my veins, nearly causing me to faint. It almost freezes the heat of life. I will call for my mother and Nurse to comfort me.”

She called, “Nurse!”

Then she said to herself, “Why am I calling for the Nurse? What should she do here? I need to be alone for what I have to do.”

Out of a pocket, she took the vial that Friar Lawrence had given to her.

She said to herself, “What if this potion does not work? Will I then be married to Paris tomorrow morning?”

Juliet took out a dagger.

She said, “If the potion does not work, this dagger will stop my marriage. I will commit suicide.”

She put the dagger down in a handy place where it was easy to reach.

Juliet then said, “What if this potion is a poison? If my marriage to Romeo is discovered, Friar Lawrence will be in grave trouble. Perhaps he has given me a poison so that I will die and no one will ever hear of my marriage to Romeo. I am afraid that this potion is a poison, and yet I doubt that it is because Friar Lawrence has always been a righteous man.”

Juliet then said, “What if, after I am laid in the tomb, I wake up before Romeo comes? That would be terrifying! Won’t I suffocate in the tomb where no healthy air comes in? Won’t I die before Romeo comes to get me?”

“Or, if I continue to live, what will happen when I am surrounded by death and night in a place of terror — a vault, this ancient receptacle of dead bodies, where for many hundreds of years the bones of all my buried ancestors have been placed, this vault where Tybalt, bloody with his wound, newly interred, lies festering in his shroud? What will happen when I wake up in a place inhabited by ghosts at night? Isn’t it likely that I, if I should wake before the arrival of Romeo, will smell rotting flesh and perhaps even hear hideous shrieks of ghosts that drive men mad? Isn’t it likely that I will become hysterical because of these fearsome things and insanely play with my forefathers’ bones? Isn’t it likely that I will pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud? Isn’t it likely that in an insane fit I will grab a relative’s bone and use it as a club to dash out my desperate brains? Look! Already I see Tybalt’s ghost seeking Romeo, who spitted his body with a rapier! Stop, Tybalt, stop!”

Juliet held up the vial and said, “Romeo, I am doing this for you. This I drink to you.”

Juliet drank the potion, which quickly took effect, and she fell back upon her bed.

— 4.4 —

In Old Capulet's mansion, Mrs. Capulet said to the Nurse, "Take these keys, and bring more spices."

The Nurse replied, "They are calling for dates and quinces in the pastry room."

Old Capulet entered the room and said, "Stir! Stir! Stir! The second cock has crowed, the curfew-bell has rung, and it is very late at night. Look after the baked meats, good Nurse. Don't worry about the cost."

"You are a man trying to do the work of a woman," the Nurse replied. "Go to bed. If you stay up all night, you will be ill tomorrow."

"Nonsense," Old Capulet said. "I have previously stayed awake all night for less important reasons than this wedding, and I have never felt ill because of it."

"Yes, in your day you chased skirts," his wife said. "But I will make sure that you don't chase any more skirts."

Mrs. Capulet and the Nurse left.

"My wife is jealous," Old Capulet happily said.

Some servants entered the room, carrying spits, logs, and baskets.

Old Capulet asked a servant who was carrying baskets, "Now, fellow, what have you got there?"

"Things for the cook, sir," the servant replied, "but I don't know what they are."

That servant left, and Old Capulet said to another servant,

“Fetch drier logs. Call Peter, he will show you where they are.”

The servant replied, “I have a brain in my head, sir, and I can find the drier logs without troubling Peter.”

The servant left.

Old Capulet said, “Well said, servant, but you are, I think, a loggerhead. Good Heavens, it is already morning. Count Paris will soon be here with his musicians to wake up Juliet. Wait! I hear them playing!”

He listened to the music played by Count Paris’ musicians as they walked to his mansion, and then he shouted, “Nurse! Wife! Come here! Nurse, I say!”

The Nurse entered the room, and Old Capulet told her, “Go and wake up Juliet and help her dress. I will go and talk to Paris. Hurry! Hurry! The bridegroom has arrived! Hurry!”

— 4.5 —

The Nurse entered Juliet’s bedchamber to awaken her.

She said, “Juliet, wake up! I bet that you are still fast asleep, slugabed. Why aren’t you saying something? Well, you should get your rest. Count Paris will make sure that you get little rest tonight. God forgive me for making such a joke! Well, I need to wake you, but if Count Paris were to find you in bed, he would quickly wake you. Am I not right, Juliet?”

The Nurse drew back the curtains that enclosed Juliet’s bed and looked at Juliet.

“What!” the Nurse said. “You woke up, got dressed, and went back to bed to sleep some more. Well, wake up again. Juliet, wake up!”

The Nurse touched Juliet, whose body was cold like a

corpse, and the Nurse screamed and shouted, “Help! Help! Juliet is dead! Curse the day that I was born! Bring me something to drink! My lord! My lady!”

Mrs. Capulet entered the room, saying, “What is the reason for this noise?”

The Nurse simply cried.

“What is the matter?”

The Nurse pointed to Juliet and said, “Look!”

Mrs. Capulet looked at Juliet, whose face was pale. She touched Juliet’s body and felt how cold it was.

Mrs. Capulet said, “My child, my life, wake up, look up, or I will die with you!”

Old Capulet entered Juliet’s bedchamber and said, “What is the reason for this delay? Bring Juliet down to meet Paris; he has come for her.”

The Nurse said, “She’s dead, deceased — she’s dead! Curse this day!”

Mrs. Capulet said, “She’s dead! She’s dead! She’s dead!”

Old Capulet said, “Let me see her!” Like the Nurse and his wife, he touched Juliet.

He said, “She is cold. Her blood has stopped moving. Her joints are stiff. Breath and her lips have long been separated. Death lies on her like an untimely frost lies upon and kills the sweetest flower of all those in the field.”

The Nurse and Mrs. Capulet cried, and Old Capulet said, “Death took her away to make me cry, but I am so shocked that I cannot cry.”

Friar Lawrence and Paris entered the room.

Friar Lawrence asked, "Is the bride ready to go to church?"

Old Capulet said to him, "She is ready to go to church, but she shall never again return home."

He said to Paris, "The night before your wedding day, Death lay with your wife-to-be. There she lies. She was a flower, and Death has deflowered her. Death is my son-in-law. Death is my heir. Death has married my daughter. I will die, and I will leave Death all I have. Death will get my life and my property — Death will get everything."

Paris said, "For a long time I have longed to see this morning, but now that it has arrived, I see something that I have never longed to see."

Mrs. Capulet said, "This day is accursed, unhappy, wretched, and hateful. This hour is the most miserable hour that ever time saw in its ceaseless passage throughout eternity. I had only one child left alive, one child left to love, one child to rejoice in and take solace in, and cruel Death has taken her away from me!"

The Nurse said, "This is a day of sorrow, of lamentation — the worst day that I have ever experienced. Never was seen so black a day as this."

Paris said, "On this day Death has cheated me, made me divorced, wronged me, spited me, slain me! Cruel Death has overthrown and conquered me. The woman I love is dead!"

Old Capulet said, "Death has treated me badly, distressed me, hated me, martyred me, killed me! Death, why did you come now to murder our wedding ceremony? Child, you were my soul and not just my child — and now you are dead! My child is dead! With my child all my joys are buried."

“Restrain your grief,” Friar Lawrence said. “Your exclamations of grief do not help. For fourteen years, Heaven and all of you shared this beautiful maiden, but now Heaven has all of her. Juliet is better off in Heaven than she was in this world. You were not able to keep Juliet’s body from dying, but Heaven will keep Juliet’s soul forever alive. Here on Earth, you wanted Juliet to gain social prestige. You wanted her to advance in society. Well, now she has advanced to Heaven itself — she is above the clouds and now resides in Heaven! So why do you grieve for her? Do you love your child so badly that you grieve when she achieves the highest happiness that anyone can ever achieve? The best marriage is not a marriage that lasts a long time, but a marriage in which one quickly dies because one rises all the sooner to Heaven. Dry your tears, and cover Juliet’s body with rosemary and carry her dressed in her best clothing to church. Our foolish human nature makes us cry for our dear Juliet, but our reason tells us that we should rejoice because Juliet is in Heaven.”

Old Capulet ordered, “Everything that we prepared for Juliet’s wedding, we now must use for Juliet’s funeral. Our musical instruments must play melancholy tunes, our happy wedding feast must become a sad burial feast, our happy wedding hymns must become sullen dirges, our bridal flowers must serve as funeral flowers — everything that was to be used for a wedding must now be used for a funeral.”

Friar Lawrence said, “Old Capulet, Mrs. Capulet, Paris, and everyone else, prepare for the funeral. You must follow Juliet’s corpse to the church. Heaven is frowning on you because of some sin. Do not anger Heaven any further by attempting to go against the will of Heaven.”

In another part of Old Capulet’s mansion, the musicians were talking among themselves as the Nurse walked

through the room.

A musician said, “Well, we might as well put away our musical instruments and go home.”

The Nurse said, “That is a good idea. As you know, Juliet is dead and this is a pitiable case.”

She left.

“She is right, you know,” the musician said. “The case of my musical instrument is in pitiable shape, but it can be mended. The case of the dead Juliet is something that can never be mended.”

Peter, the Capulet servant, entered the room and said, “Musicians, please play for me the song ‘Heart’s Ease.’ If you want me to live, play ‘Heart’s Ease.’”

“Why do you want us to play ‘Heart’s Ease’?”

Peter replied, “Because my heart is playing ‘My Heart is Full of Woe.’ Play something that will comfort me and make me feel better.”

“This is not a time for playing music,” the musician said.

“You will not play for me?” Peter asked.

“No.”

“Then I will give you something sound,” Peter punned.

“What will you give us?”

“I certainly will not give you sound money, but I will give you something. I will give you sound sarcasm — I will call you a thieving minstrel.”

“Then I will call you a lowly servant.”

Peter pulled out a dagger and said, “I really do not need this

— I have my fists. I will *do re mi* you — I will rain blows on you from low to high. I will treat you like a percussion instrument. I will give you a sound beating. I will make you a sounding board for my fists. Take note of the notes that I will play on you.”

None of the musicians felt threatened by the dagger. One look at Peter, and people knew that he was a clown and not a fighter.

The musician said, “If you *do re mi* us, you will be singing for us. Note those notes.”

A second musician said, “Please, put away your dagger, and either put away your wit or put your wit on display.”

“My wit is my greatest weapon,” Peter said, putting away his dagger. “I can use it to defeat you without even using my dagger. Here is a riddle for you: People often talk about ‘music with her silver sound.’ Why is sound called silver? What answer do you bring, Simon String?”

The first musician replied, “Because silver has a sweet sound.”

“It is a pretty answer, but it is wrong,” Peter said. “How do you answer my riddle, Hugh Fiddle?”

“People say ‘silver sound’ because musicians make sounds for silver coins,” the second musician said.

“It is an ingenious answer, and very close to being exactly the right answer,” Peter said. “And to what answer would take an oath, James Soundpost?”

“I can’t think of an answer,” James Soundpost said.

“Then you must be the singer,” Peter said. “Tenors have enormous cavities in their heads that enable them to sing well. I bet that you can put an egg in your mouth and close

it without breaking the egg. It's such a pity that the enormous cavities in their heads leave tenors little room for brains. But here is the answer to my riddle, hey-diddle-diddle: People refer to 'music with her silver sound' because musicians get no gold coins — they get only silver coins — for making sounds.”

With that, Peter departed.

The first musician said, “He was more annoying than he was witty.”

“Let him go hang himself,” the second musician said. “But let's not go home. We can stay here and wait for the mourners to return from the funeral and eat. At least, we'll get a meal.”

CHAPTER 5 (Romeo and Juliet)

— 5.1 —

Romeo, alone on a street in Mantua, said to himself, “If I may trust the truth — if it is not deceiving — of dreams, my dreams foretell good news and happiness for me. My heart is light, and all day I have been floating above the ground with cheerful thoughts — something unusual of late for me. I dreamt that Juliet came and found me dead — it is a strange dream that allows a dead man to be conscious and think! Juliet kissed me and brought me back to life, and when I lived again, I became an emperor. This dream was very joyful and sweet, but it is but a shadow of the joy I will enjoy and sweetness I will taste when I am again with Juliet, my beloved!”

Romeo’s servant, Balthasar, who had remained in Verona so that he could bring news to Romeo as needed, rode a horse up to Romeo.

Romeo said, “News from Verona! How are you, Balthasar? Have you brought me a letter from Friar Lawrence? How is Juliet? How is my father? Again, how is Juliet? I ask about her twice because nothing can be ill, if she be well.”

Balthasar replied, “Then she is well, and nothing can be ill. Her body rests in the tomb of the Capulets, and her soul lives with angels. I myself attended her funeral and saw her corpse placed in the tomb. Immediately, I rode here to tell you. Pardon me for bringing you such bad news, but I am following your orders to bring you news from Verona, sir.”

“Is what you have said true?” Romeo asked. “Then I defy you, stars! I will choose my own fate and make it fact. Balthasar, you know where I live. Get me ink and paper so that I can write a letter, and get fresh horses for us to ride. I

will return to Verona tonight.”

“I beg you, sir,” Balthasar said, “not to act hastily and without patience. Your looks are pale and wild, and they worry me.”

“You have nothing to worry about,” Romeo said. “Leave me, and do the things I have ordered you to do. Didn’t Friar Lawrence write a letter to me and send it to me by you?”

“No, sir.”

“It doesn’t matter,” Romeo said. “Go and get fresh horses. I will be with you soon.”

Balthasar left.

Romeo said to himself, “Well, Juliet, I will lie with you — both of us dead — tonight. What is the best way for me to commit suicide? Funny how quickly the means is found for desperate men! I remember seeing an apothecary, a druggist, who lives near here in his shop. He wears tattered clothing, he has beetle brows, and I saw him gathering medicinal herbs. He was very thin — the sharp misery of poverty had worn him to the bones. In his poverty-stricken shop hung a tortoise, a stuffed alligator, and skins of various ill-shaped fishes. On the mostly empty shelves were a few empty boxes, unfired earthen pots, bladders and musty seeds, bits and pieces of packthread and cakes of rose petals that are too old to freshen the air and ought to be thrown away. All these poor things were on the shelves to make a pretense of merchandise. Noting this penury when I first arrived in Mantua, I said to myself, ‘If a man should ever need poison — the sale of which in Mantua is punished by immediate death — here lives a miserable wretch who would sell it to him.’ My thought then I will put into action now. I have need of poison, and this needy man will sell it to me. If I remember correctly, this is his shop. Today is a holiday, and his shop is shut.”

Romeo called, "Apothecary!"

The apothecary came to the door of his shop and said, "Who is calling so loudly?"

"I want to make a purchase," Romeo said. "I see that you are impoverished. Here are forty gold coins — a fortune for you. In return, let me have some poison — fast-acting poison that will disperse itself through all the veins and kill the life-weary taker as violently and quickly as gunpowder is swiftly fired into the air from the womb of a cannon."

"I have such a poison," the apothecary said, "but the law of Mantua punishes with death anyone who sells it."

"You are thin from hunger and full of wretchedness," Romeo replied. "You are close to death, so why are you afraid to die? I look at your cheeks, and I see famine. I look at your eyes, and I see need and oppression. I look at your back, and I see the contempt that people have for you and for your beggary. The world is not your friend, and neither is the law of Mantua. Mantua has no law that will make you rich; it has only a law that will keep you from becoming rich. Therefore, stop being impoverished — break the law and take these forty gold coins."

"My poverty, but not my will, consents."

"I pay your poverty and not your will."

The apothecary handed Romeo a small vial partially filled with poison powder and said, "Add any liquid you want to this vial of poison, and drink it. After you drink it, it will kill you even if you have the strength of twenty men."

Romeo gave the apothecary the forty gold coins and said, "Here is your gold. Gold is a worse poison and kills more people than this so-called poison that the law of Mantua forbids you to sell. I have given you poison. You have not

given me poison. Farewell. Buy food, and gain weight.”

He turned away and said to himself, “Come, cordial and not poison, go with me to the grave of Juliet, for there I will drink you and you will make me whole by reuniting me with Juliet.”

— 5.2 —

Friar John walked up to Friar Lawrence’s cell and called, “Holy Franciscan Friar Lawrence! Are you home?”

Friar Lawrence said, “I recognize your voice, Friar John. Welcome back from Mantua.”

He let Friar John into his cell and said, “What news do you bring me from Romeo? Or, if he has written to me, please give me his letter.”

“I have news that will disappoint you,” Friar John said. “I went to find another Franciscan friar to accompany me during my journey to Mantua and back. He was visiting the sick when I found him. The health officials of Verona arrived, and thinking that my friend and I were in a house that was infected with the plague, quarantined us in the house. Therefore, I was not able to go to Mantua to give Romeo your letter.”

“Then who took my letter to Romeo?” Friar Lawrence asked.

“The health officials were so strict that I was unable to find someone to deliver your letter. In fact, I could not even get a messenger to carry the letter to you and give it to you. And so I return to you your letter.”

“This is bad luck, indeed!” Friar Lawrence said. “This letter was not trivial but instead was full of important and urgent news. That it was not delivered may do much damage. Friar John, please go and get me an iron crowbar

and quickly bring it to me.”

“Brother, I will,” Friar John said.

He left to find the crowbar.

“I will go to the Capulet tomb alone,” Friar Lawrence said. “Romeo will not be present to accompany me. Within three hours, fair Juliet will awake. She will blame me because Romeo has not received news of our plan, but I will write him another letter and send it to him in Mantua. I will keep Juliet in my cell until Romeo reads my letter and comes to Verona to take her with him to Mantua. I pity Juliet: She is a living corpse in a tomb filled with the dead.”

— 5.3 —

In the churchyard where the tomb of the Capulets was located, Paris and his servant arrived that night. They were carrying flowers and a torch.

“Give me the torch,” Paris said to his servant. “Go over there and stand. Wait there. Put out the torch because I don’t want to be seen. Under the yew trees, lie on the ground so that you are hidden. Keep your ear to the ground so that you can hear anyone who comes here. The ground is loose because of the digging of dirt. The loose dirt will cause people to stumble, and you will hear them. If someone comes, let me know — whistle. Give me those flowers. Go, and do what I have ordered you to do.”

Paris’ servant thought, *I am afraid to be here in the graveyard, yet I will stay.*

Paris said, “Juliet, sweet flower, with flowers I decorate your bridal bed, which is also your tomb — the canopy of your bridal bed is dust and stones. Each night, I will bedew your tomb with perfume or with my tears purified by my moans of sorrow. Each night, I will decorate your tomb

with flowers and I will grieve.”

Paris’ servant heard someone coming. The servant whistled.

Paris said, “The boy gives warning that something is approaching. Whose cursed foot wanders this way tonight to interrupt my mourning and true love’s rite? It is someone with a torch! Night, hide me for a while!”

Romeo and Balthasar entered the courtyard. They did not see Paris or his servant. Balthasar carried a torch, mattock (a tool shaped like a pickax; the two differently shaped ends of its head are often used for digging), and iron crowbar.

Romeo said to Balthasar, “Give me that mattock and the iron crowbar.”

Then he handed him a letter and said, “Take this letter that I have written, and early in the morning deliver it to my father. Now give me the torch. I order you that no matter what you hear or see, you do not interfere with what I do. I will enter this tomb partly because I want to see Juliet’s face.”

Thinking that Balthasar might still be suspicious, Romeo then lied, “But the main reason I need to enter this tomb is to take from Juliet’s dead finger a precious ring, a ring that I must use in some important business.”

He added, “Now, go. But if you are suspicious and return here to spy on me and see what I do, by Heaven, I will tear you into pieces and strew this hungry churchyard with your limbs. I mean it: I can be both savage and wild. I can be more fierce and more determined than hungry tigers or the roaring and dangerous sea.”

Balthasar said, “I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.”

“That is the way to show me friendship,” Romeo said.

He handed Balthasar some money and said, “Take this. Live, and be prosperous. Farewell, fine fellow.”

Balthasar walked away a short distance but thought, *Despite what I said, I will stay here and hide and see what Romeo does. His looks frighten me, and I am afraid of what he may attempt to do.*

Romeo, thinking himself alone and unwatched, said to himself, “Tomb, you detestable mouth, you belly of death, you have swallowed Juliet. I will force your rotten jaws to open, and to spite you, I will fill you with more food.”

Romeo used his tools to open the tomb.

Watching, Paris recognized Romeo: “This is that banished haughty Montague, who murdered my Juliet’s cousin Tybalt. It is said that Juliet died from the shock and grief of Tybalt’s death. Now Romeo has come here to do some villainous shame to the bodies of Juliet and Tybalt. I will stop him.”

Paris stepped out of the shadows that had hid him and said to Romeo, “Stop, vile Montague! Tybalt and Juliet are dead. Can you wreak vengeance even past their deaths? Condemned and exiled villain, I arrest you. Go with me, for you must die.”

“I know that I must die,” Romeo said. “That is why I came here. Good gentle young man, leave me, a desperate man, alone. Go. Leave me. Think of the dead bodies in this tomb, and let them frighten you so that you dare not stay here. I beg you, don’t make me kill you so that I am guilty of another sin. Don’t make me angry! Go. By Heaven, I swear that I love you better than I love myself. I have come here bearing a weapon that I will use against myself. Do not stay here. Go, and live, so that you may say, ‘A

merciful madman begged me to run away.”

“I defy you and your threats, and I arrest you. You are a felon here in Verona.”

“Do you defy me? Then let us fight, boy!”

Romeo and Paris fought.

Paris’ servant saw them and thought, *I will go and call the guards.*

He ran out of the courtyard.

Romeo stabbed Paris, who said, “I am dying!”

Paris fell and said to Romeo, “If you are merciful, carry me into the tomb and lay me near Juliet.”

Paris died, and Romeo said, “I will do as you ask and place you in the tomb of the Capulets. But I wonder who you are.”

Romeo looked at him carefully and said, “So you are Mercutio’s cousin, Count Paris. I think Balthasar mentioned you as we rode back to Verona, although I paid little attention to him. I think he said that you were going to marry Juliet. I think Balthasar said that, or perhaps I dreamed it. Or have I become insane and invented the tale because you mentioned Juliet? You are unfortunate like me. I will bury you in this magnificent tomb. A tomb? No, I will bury you in a lantern. Juliet’s body lies here, and her beauty makes this tomb a chamber that is full of light.”

Romeo carried Paris’ body into the tomb and put it down, saying, “Lie there. You are a dead man who has been interred in a tomb by a soon-to-be dead man.”

Romeo paused, and then he looked at Juliet and said, “How often are men merry when they are soon to die! Their doctors call such merriment the lightening before death.

But how can I call what I am feeling now a lightening? Juliet! My love! My wife! Death had the power to suck away the honey of your breath, but Death does not yet have the power to take away your beauty. Death has not conquered your beauty. Your lips and your cheeks are still red, and Death has not yet planted his pale flag there — the banner of your beauty still flies.”

Romeo looked at another body in the tomb and said, “Tybalt, are you lying there in your bloody shroud? What better thing can I do for you than to use the hand that killed you in your youth to kill myself, who was your enemy? Forgive me for killing you, Tybalt!”

Looking again at Juliet, Romeo said, “Why are you yet so beautiful? Should I believe that Death, which has no body, falls in love? Should I believe that Death, that lean, abhorred monster, keeps you here in the dark tomb to be his lover? Because I am jealous of Death, I will always stay with you, and I will never depart from this palace of dim night. Here I will remain with the worms that are your chambermaids. Here I will set up my everlasting rest and end the ill fate that unfavorable stars have brought to my world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last at Juliet! Arms, take your last embrace of Juliet! Lips — the gates of breath — seal with a rightful kiss an everlasting contract with brutish Death!”

Romeo kissed Juliet, and then he took out of a pocket the poison that he had mixed with water.

Romeo said, “Poison, you shall be my bitter and unpleasant guide to death! Now I — a desperate pilot — will wreck on rocks that sea-weary ship that is my body! Here’s to my love!”

Romeo drank the poison and said, “Apothecary, you spoke the truth: Your poison is quick.”

He died.

A little later, Friar Lawrence entered the courtyard, carrying a lantern, a crowbar, and a spade. He walked toward the tomb and said, “Saint Francis, help me! All too often tonight, I have stumbled over graves — a bad omen!”

He heard someone and asked, “Who’s there?”

Balthasar answered, “A friend — I know you very well.”

“May God make you happy!” Friar Lawrence said. “Tell me, friend, whose torch is it that burns dimly among grubs and eyeless skulls. It seems to be burning in the tomb of the Capulets.”

“That is correct,” Balthasar said. “The torch belongs to a person you know and love.”

“Who is it?”

“Romeo.”

“How long has he been there?”

“At least half an hour.”

“Go with me to the tomb,” Friar Lawrence said.

“I dare not, sir. Romeo does not know that I am here. He thinks that I have departed, and he threatened to kill me if I stayed here and spied on him.”

“Stay here, then,” Friar Lawrence said. “I will go into the tomb alone. Fear comes upon me; I am afraid that some ill, unlucky thing has happened. I am much afraid.”

“I think I fell asleep under this yew tree,” Balthasar said. “I think I dreamed that Romeo and another man fought and that Romeo killed him.”

As he walked to the tomb, Friar Lawrence called,

“Romeo!”

Holding his torch, he looked around and said, “Whose blood is this that stains the stony entrance of this tomb? To whom belong these gory swords that lie discolored with red by this place of peace?”

He walked into the tomb and called, “Romeo!”

He looked around, saw Romeo’s corpse, and said, “Romeo, you are pale and dead as you lie by Juliet! Who else is here? Paris! You are dead and steeped in blood, Paris! An unkind hour has witnessed this cruel turn of the wheel of fortune.”

Juliet moved and Friar Lawrence said, “She awakes.”

Juliet sat up, recognized Friar Lawrence, and said, “Comforting friar, where is Romeo? I remember well our plan, and I am in the tomb and awake, as we planned. Where is my Romeo?”

A noise sounded from outside the tomb. Paris’ servant had gotten the city guards and was leading them to the tomb of the Capulets.

“I hear some noise,” Friar Lawrence said. “Juliet, come from this nest of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep. A greater power than we can resist has thwarted our plan. Come, come away from here. Your husband lies — dead — beside you. Near you, Paris also lies dead. Come with me. I will arrange for you to join a sisterhood of holy nuns. Don’t ask me questions now, but leave at once because the city guards are coming. Come with me, Juliet. Let us flee!”

More noise was heard.

Panicked, Friar Lawrence said, “I dare no longer stay!”

Juliet said, “Leave, if you must, but I will not flee from

here.”

Friar Lawrence ran out of the tomb.

Juliet turned toward Romeo and said, “What is this? A vial enclosed in my true love’s hand? It is poison that has caused his death. Romeo, have you drunk it all and left me no friendly drop to drink so I can follow you in death? I will kiss your lips and hope that some poison — a restorative that will restore me to you — is on them to make me die.”

She kissed Romeo and said, “Your lips are warm.”

A guard outside shouted at Paris’ servant, “Lead on, boy! Which way do we go?”

“The noise grows closer,” Juliet said. “Therefore, I will die quickly.”

She took a dagger from Romeo’s belt, “Oh, opportune dagger, my body is your sheath!”

She stabbed herself and said, “Rust there, and let me die.”

She fell across Romeo’s body and died.

Some city guards and Paris’ servant stood outside the tomb.

“This is the place,” Paris’ servant said. “Look there, where the torch is burning.”

The head guard said, “The ground here is bloody. Some of you guards search the courtyard and arrest anyone you find.”

He entered the tomb and said, “Here lies Count Paris dead. Here also lies Juliet, bloody, warm, and newly dead, although she has been lying in this tomb for two days.”

The head guard looked at the corpse of Romeo and then

ordered, "Guards, some of you run and inform Prince Escalus, the Capulets, and the Montagues. Others, search the tomb. We see the ground where all these woes lie, but we cannot know the true ground or cause of all these woes until we know more details."

The head guard went outside the tomb, and some guards arrived with Balthasar in their custody. A guard said, "Here is Romeo's servant. We found him in the churchyard."

"Keep him in your custody until Prince Escalus arrives and investigates what has happened."

Other guards arrived with Friar Lawrence in their custody.

A guard said, "Here is a friar who trembles, sighs, and weeps. We took this mattock and this spade from him as he was leaving this churchyard."

"That is suspicious," the head guard said. "Keep him in your custody."

Prince Escalus and his bodyguards arrived.

"What outrage has occurred that calls me out of bed?" Prince Escalus said.

Old Capulet, Mrs. Capulet, and other people arrived.

Old Capulet asked, "What has happened that causes such noise in the streets?"

Mrs. Capulet said, "Some people in the street cry 'Romeo,' other people cry 'Juliet,' and some other people cry 'Paris.' But all run, shouting, to the tomb of us Capulets."

"Why is everyone shouting?" Prince Escalus asked.

The head guard said, "Sir, here lies Count Paris dead. Here lies Romeo dead. And here lies Juliet, who we had thought was dead two days ago, warm and newly dead."

“Let us find out how all this happened,” Prince Escalus said.

The head guard said, “Here are a friar and Romeo’s servant. With them are tools that can be used to open a closed tomb.”

Old Capulet had entered the tomb and looked at his daughter’s body. He returned and told his wife, “Juliet has bled much recently. The dagger in her body is in the wrong place — it should have been found in the back of Romeo.”

Mrs. Capulet said, “As a parent, I should have died before my daughter. Older people should die before younger people. Before Juliet died, a funeral bell should have tolled for me.”

Old Montague and others arrived.

Prince Escalus said to Old Montague, “Come here. You are up early, and now you will see your son and heir down early this night and early in his all-too-short life.”

Old Montague replied, “My liege, my wife died earlier tonight from grief caused by the exile of our son, Romeo. What further grief has now come to harass me in my old age?”

“Look and you shall see.”

Old Montague looked into the tomb and saw Romeo, his son, dead.

He cried, “Romeo, what foul manners are these! To die and go into a tomb before your aged father dies!”

“Restrain your cries of grief,” Prince Escalus said, “until we find out truly what has happened and why it happened. Then you and I shall both grieve. Two of my relatives — Mercutio and Paris — are dead, and perhaps you and I will

both die of grief. I may even die of grief first. In the meantime, restrain your cries of grief and let your head control your heart.”

Prince Escalus then ordered, “Bring forth the people you have arrested.”

The guards brought forth Friar Lawrence and Balthasar.

Friar Lawrence said, “I am the man who is under the greatest suspicion, and I am the one who is least able to exonerate myself because of the time when and the place where I was arrested. Those place me here at the time of this tragedy. I will both accuse myself and exonerate myself. I will tell you what I have done, and I will tell you my motives in doing what I have done.”

“Tell us at once everything you know,” Prince Escalus ordered.

“I will be brief,” Friar Lawrence said. “The brief time that I may have left to live will not permit a long story. Romeo, who lies here dead, was married to Juliet, who also is lying here dead. I married them. The day of their marriage was also the day of death for Tybalt, whose premature death resulted in banishment for the newly married Romeo from Verona. Juliet mourned, but she mourned for Romeo, not for Tybalt. You, Old Capulet, wanted to stop Juliet’s mourning, and so you decided — against her will — to marry Juliet to Count Paris. Wild and distraught, Juliet then came to me and begged me to form a plan that would stop her marriage to Count Paris — or else she would kill herself immediately in my cell. Therefore, I gave her a sleeping potion, which had the effect I intended, for it made her appear to be dead. In the meantime, I wrote a letter to Romeo to tell him to come to Verona this awful night to help me to take Juliet from this tomb at the time she woke up. But the man who was supposed to carry my letter to

Romeo in Mantua was forced by circumstances to stay here in Verona and so yesterday he returned to me my letter. All alone this night, I came to take Juliet from the tomb, intending to keep her hidden in my cell until I could find a good time to send news to Romeo. But when I came here tonight, a few minutes before Juliet woke up, here I saw lying dead the noble Paris and faithful Romeo. Juliet awoke, and I begged her to leave the tomb and bear this work of Heaven with patience, but I heard a noise and was frightened and so I left, but Juliet — a desperate woman — would not go with me, and, it appears, she committed suicide. This is what I know. The Nurse can vouch that Romeo and Juliet were married. If any of these cruel events were caused by me, then let my old life end before my time of natural death in accordance with the letter of your law.”

“You have a good reputation,” Prince Escalus said. “I have always known you to be a righteous man.”

He asked the head guard, “Where is Romeo’s servant? Let’s hear what he has to say.”

Balthasar said, “I brought Romeo news of Juliet’s death, and he rode a horse here from Mantua to this tomb. I am holding in my hand a letter that he earlier told me to give to his father. He threatened me with death if I did not depart and if I interfered with him, and then he went into the tomb. I decided to stay here, but I did not go into the tomb.”

“Give me the letter,” Prince Escalus said. “I will read it.”

He then asked, “Where is Count Paris’ servant — the one who alerted the guards?”

Count Paris’ servant was brought before the Prince, who asked him, “What was Count Paris doing here?”

“He came with flowers with which to strew Juliet’s resting place,” the servant said. “He ordered me to stay at a

distance, and I obeyed. Soon someone came with a torch and began to open the tomb. Count Paris drew his sword and they fought, and I ran away to get the guards.”

Count Escalus, who had been reading Romeo’s letter to his father by the light of torches, said, “This letter provides evidence that shows that Friar Lawrence spoke the truth. Romeo tells of his and Juliet’s love for each other. Romeo states that he thought that Juliet was truly dead. And Romeo writes that he bought poison from an impoverished apothecary and came to the tomb of the Capulets to die, and to lie beside Juliet.”

Prince Escalus then asked, “Where are these enemies? Capulet! Montague! See what a scourge is laid upon your hate — Heaven has found a way to kill your joys, your children, with love. I have treated your quarrels and battles too softly, and because of my lenience, I have lost two kinsmen: Mercutio and Paris.”

He shouted, “All of us are punished!”

Old Capulet said to Old Montague, “Brother, give me your hand. Now that our children, who were married to each other, are dead, we ought to make peace. That is the least that we can do.”

“I can do something more for you,” Old Montague said. “I will have made a statue of Juliet in solid gold. As long as Verona is called by the name Verona, no one shall be valued more than true and faithful Juliet.”

“As rich a statue shall I have made of Romeo, and he will be by Juliet’s side. Those two gave their lives because of our former hatred of each other.”

Prince Escalus said, “Peace has come to us on this cloudy and grey morning. The Sun, for sorrow, will not show his head. Let us leave here and talk more about these sad

events. Some people shall be pardoned, and some people shall be punished, for never was a story of more woe than this of Juliet and her Romeo.”

Chapter XXXI: TIMON OF ATHENS

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Timon of Athens*)

Male Characters

Timon of Athens.

Lucius, Lucullus, Sempronius, flattering Lords.

Ventidius, one of Timon's false friends.

Apemantus, a churlish Cynic philosopher.

Alcibiades, an Athenian Captain.

Poet, Painter, Jeweler, Merchant.

Certain Senators.

Certain Masquers (Ladies dressed as Amazons).

Certain Thieves.

Flavius, steward to Timon.

Flaminius, Lucilius, Servilius, servants to Timon.

Caphis, Philotus, Titus, Lucius, Hortensius, several servants to Usurers and to the Lords.

Female Characters

Phrygia, Timandra, mistresses to Alcibiades.

Minor Characters

Cupid.

Diverse other Servants and Attendants.

Servants of Ventidius and of Varro and Isidore (two of Timon's Creditors).

Three Strangers.

An Old Athenian.

A Page.

A Fool.

Scene

Athens, and the neighboring Woods.

CHAPTER 1 (Timon of Athens)

— 1.1 —

In a hall in Timon's house, several people stood. A poet and a painter stood together, and a jeweler and a merchant stood together.

The poet said to the painter, "Good day, sir."

"I am glad you're well," the painter replied.

"I have not seen you for a long time. How goes the world?"

"How goes the world?" was a way of saying, "How are you?" However, the painter took the question literally.

"It wears, sir, as it grows," the painter replied. "The world wears out as it grows older. With entropy, someday the world will wear out completely."

"Yes, that's well known," the poet said, "but what particular rarity do we see in the world? What strange event never experienced before and without equal — according to many and varied witnesses and records of history — do we see?"

The poet answered his own question: "See the magic of bounty and generosity! The power of bounty and generosity has conjured all these spirits to be in attendance here and now."

He was referring to the people present, all of whom were present because of Timon's bounty. Timon was a very generous man.

The poet pointed and said, "I know that merchant."

"I know both of the men," the painter said. "The other

man's a jeweler."

A short distance away, the merchant said, "Oh, he is a worthy lord."

The jeweler replied, "That's very certain."

"He is a very incomparable man, and he keeps his generosity well exercised. His goodness is, as it were, tireless and enduring. He is surpassingly generous."

The jeweler said, "I have a jewel here —"

"Please, let me see it," the merchant requested. "Is it for the Lord Timon, sir?"

"If he will pay me its estimated value, but as for that —"

As for that, Timon always paid its estimated value.

The poet recited two verses to himself, "*When we for recompense have praised the vile, / it stains the glory in that happy verse that aptly sings the good.*"

A person can praise things that are bad in order to receive money, but doing that devalues praise for things that are good.

Now, lots of praise began to be stated for things for which people were hoping to receive money.

"The jewel is of good quality," the merchant said.

"The quality is rich," the jeweler said. "Look at its luster."

A short distance away, the painter said to the poet, "You are rapt, sir, in some work, some dedication to the great lord."

The great lord was the generous Timon. Poets would often dedicate a work to a generous lord in return for financial patronage.

“These two verses slipped idly and casually from me,” the poet said. “Our poetry is similar to gum that oozes from the tree from whence it is nourished.”

The poet believed that poetry was easy to write as long as it was nourished — paid for.

The poet added, “The fire in the flint does not show itself until the flint is struck.”

There is a way to strike the flint that is this poet so that it produces the spark of poetry. That way is to give this poet money.

The poet continued, “Our refined flame produces itself and like the current flies each barrier it chafes.”

According to the poet, writing poetry could be compared to flowing water that went around or leapt over barriers in the stream and then continued downstream.

One can wonder whether truly good poetry can be *easily* written in return for money.

Seeing the painter holding something, the poet asked, “What do you have there?”

“A picture, sir,” the painter said. “When does your book come forth?”

“Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.”

The poet was present to present his book to Timon; he was fully confident that Timon would approve of the book and would give him money for its publication — and for its composition.

The poet requested, “Let’s see your piece.”

Showing the poet his picture, the painter said, “It is a good piece.”

“So it is,” the poet said. “This picture turned out well, and it is excellent.”

“It is indifferent,” the painter said.

One can wonder whether the painter was being falsely modest in order to get a compliment, or was telling the truth.

“It is admirable,” the poet said about the painting, which depicted a man. “Look at how the gracefulness of this figure proclaims his status! What a mental power this eye shoots forth! How forcefully imagination moves in this lip! The figure is dumb — silent — but the viewer can provide words for the gesture the figure is making.”

“It is a pretty mocking of the life,” the painter said. “It is a good imitation of reality. Look here at this part. Is it good?”

“I will say about your picture that it tutors nature,” the poet said. “Artificial strife lives in these touches that are livelier than life.”

The artificial strife was the effort needed to make art. The poet had said that writing poetry was easy when the poetry would be paid for, but to him painting was hard.

Senators now entered the hall and walked in front of the poet and the painter.

“How this lord is followed!” the painter said. “Lots of important people seek his patronage.”

“The Senators of Athens seek Timon’s patronage!” the poet said. “Timon is a happy man!”

“Look, more are coming!” the painter said.

“You see this confluence, this great flood of visitors,” the poet said. “I have, in this rough work, shaped out a man, whom this Earthly world that is below him embraces and

hugs with the amplest reception. My free drift halts not particularly, but moves itself in a wide sea of wax: No targeted malice infects one comma in the course I hold; the course I hold flies an eagle flight, bold and straight on, leaving no trace behind.”

The poet was describing the work of art that he would present to Timon. It was a work about a man whom many people praised. He did not name any particular man. In addition, he claimed that no maliciousness against any particular person could be discerned in his writing. The scope of the poet’s writing was broad. At this time, people often wrote on wax tablets with a stylus, but the poet wrote on a sea of wax — a very broad scope. The poet also claimed that the targeted malice of his writing flew like an eagle; it flew high and straight and left no trace of its passage behind.

In other words, the message of the writing was universal, but it definitely applied to a particular individual. However, the poet expected that his writing would fly over the head of its audience and leave no trace behind.

The poet’s words were vague, and the painter said, “How shall I understand you? What are you saying?”

“I will unfold my meaning to you,” the poet said. “You see how all social ranks, how all minds, as well of glib and slippery creatures as of grave and austere quality, tender their services to Lord Timon. His large fortune, in conjunction with his good and gracious nature, subdues and appropriates to his love and attention all sorts of hearts. Yes, hearts ranging from those of the mirror-faced flatterers who reflect back the flatterer’s own moods and opinions to the Cynic philosopher Apemantus, who loves few things better than to hate himself.”

If what the poet said is true, then Apemantus hates himself

simply because he is a human being.

The poet continued, “Even Apemantus drops down to his knee when he is before Timon, and returns home happy when Timon acknowledges him by nodding to him.”

“I saw them speak together,” the painter said.

“Sir, I have represented in my work Lady Fortune, who is enthroned upon a high and pleasant hill. The base of the mountain is surrounded by rows of men with differing degrees of merit and differing kinds of character. These men labor on the bosom of this sphere to increase their wealth. Among them all, whose eyes are fixed on this sovereign lady — Lady Fortune — is one man I describe as being like Lord Timon in disposition and build, whom Lady Fortune with her ivory hand beckons to her. Lord Timon’s present grace translates his rivals to present slaves and servants — his ever-present generosity immediately changes his rivals into his slaves and servants.”

“You have hit your target,” the painter said. “This throne, Lady Fortune, and this hill, in my opinion, with one man beckoned to climb from the rest below, bowing his head against the steep mountain to climb to his happiness, would be well expressed in our condition.”

The painter meant that Lady Fortune also beckons creative people such as himself and the poet to climb the mountain. Such a climb is steep, but it is rewarding.

“Sir, continue to listen to me,” the poet said. “All those who were his equals just recently, some of whom are worth more than he himself is, at the moment follow his strides, fill his lobbies as if they were his servants and attendants, rain sacrificial whisperings — like the adoring prayers of a priest at a sacrifice — in his ear, treat as a sacred object even his stirrup that they hold as he mounts his horse, and act as if only through him are they able to drink in the air

that is free to all.”

“What about all these people?” the painter asked.

“When Lady Fortune in her shift and change of mood kicks down her late beloved, all his parasites who labored on their hands and knees and crawled after him to reach the mountain’s top now let him slip down the mountain. Not even one will accompany him in his decline.”

“That is a commonplace idea,” the painter said. “I can show you a thousand moralistic paintings that demonstrate these quick blows of Lady Fortune more pregnantly than words can. Yet you do well to show Lord Timon that lowly eyes have seen the foot above the head.”

The eyes of the lowly have seen Lady Fortune’s foot above their head just before it kicked them down the steep hill; previously, the eyes of the now lowly were the eyes of the then great.

Trumpets sounded; someone important was coming.

Timon entered the hall and talked courteously with those present — people who had a request to make of him.

A messenger from Ventidius began talking with Timon; Lucilius and other servants followed Timon.

Timon said, “Imprisoned is he, do you say?”

The messenger from Ventidius replied, “Yes, my good lord. Five talents is his debt; his means of repayment are very short, and his creditors are very strict. He wants you to write an honorable letter to those who have shut him up. If you fail to do that, his comfort will come to an end.”

The honorable letter would state that Timon would honor — pay — the debt of his friend.

“Noble Ventidius!” Timon said. “Well, I am not of that

feather — that kind of person — to shake off my friend when he needs me. I know him to be a gentleman who well deserves help, which he shall have. I'll pay the debt, and free him.”

“Your lordship binds Ventidius to you forever with your generosity,” the messenger said.

“Convey my greetings to him,” Timon said. “I will send his ransom. Once he has been freed, ask him to come to me. It is not enough just to help the feeble up, for we ought to support him afterward. Fare you well.”

“All happiness to your honor!” the messenger said as he exited.

An old Athenian man entered the hall and said, “Lord Timon, hear me speak.”

“Speak freely, good father,” Timon said.

In this society, old men one was not related to were called “father” as a term of respect.

“You have a servant named Lucilius,” the old Athenian man said.

“I have,” Timon said. “What about him?”

“Most noble Timon, call the man before you.”

“Is he here, or not?” Timon asked. “Lucilius!”

“Here I am, at your lordship’s service.”

“This fellow here, Lord Timon, this creature of yours, by night frequents my house,” the old Athenian man said.

The terms “fellow” and “creature” were contemptuous. The old Athenian man looked down on Lucilius because he was a servant and lacked wealth.

The old Athenian man continued, “I am a man who from my first years has been inclined to be thrifty, and my estate deserves an heir more raised than one who holds a trencher.”

A trencher is a wooden plate that holds food. Lucilius was a servant who waited on Timon during meals. The old Athenian man’s problem with Lucilius courting his daughter was Lucilius’ lack of social status and wealth. He wanted his daughter to marry someone with a higher social status and more wealth.

“Well, what further do you have to say?” Timon asked.

“I have only one daughter, no kin else, on whom I may confer what I have gotten throughout my life. The maiden is beautiful and has just become old enough to be a bride, and I have raised her at a very dear cost to have the best accomplishments. This man of yours wants her to be his. I ask you, noble lord, to join with me to forbid him from being in her presence. I myself have spoken to him, but in vain.”

“Lucilius is honest,” Timon said. “He is honorable and worthy.”

“If he is honest, then therefore he will be honest,” the old Athenian man replied. “He can show that he is honest by leaving my daughter alone. His honesty will be his reward; his reward must not be my daughter — he must not bear her away.”

“Does she love him?” Timon asked.

“She is young and apt — she is impressionable. Our own former passionate feelings teach us what levity’s in youth.”

Some of the old Athenian man’s words had a double meaning. “Apt” could mean “impressionable” or “sexually

inclined.” “Levity” could mean “frivolity” or “licentiousness.” A woman with light heels is a promiscuous woman.

Timon asked Lucilius, “Do you love the maiden?”

“Yes, my good lord, and she accepts my love.”

The old Athenian man said, “I call the gods to witness that if in her marriage my consent is missing, I will choose my heir from among the beggars of the world, and dispossess her of all she would have inherited if she had married with my consent.”

“How shall she be endowed, if she marries a man who is her equal?”

“Immediately, three talents of money; in the future, all that I possess.”

“This gentleman of mine has long served me,” Timon said. “Although he serves me, he is well born. As I said, he is a gentleman. To build his fortune I will strain a little because generosity is a duty among men. Give him your daughter. What you bestow to your daughter, I’ll match and give to him. If the wealth of Lucilius and the wealth of your daughter were weighed in a pair of scales, they would weigh the same.”

“Most noble lord, if you stake your honor to me that you will do this, she is his.”

“Let’s shake hands,” Timon said. “I promise on my honor that I will do what I said I will do.”

“Humbly I thank your lordship,” Lucilius said. “May no property or fortune ever fall into my possession that I do not acknowledge as being due to you!”

Lucilius and the old Athenian man exited together.

The poet went to Timon, offered him a document, and said, "Please accept my labor, and long live your lordship!"

"I thank you," Timon said, accepting the document. "You shall hear from me soon. Don't go far away."

Timon then said to the painter as the poet went a short distance away, "What do you have there, my friend?"

"A piece of painting, which I ask your lordship to accept."

"Painting is welcome," Timon said, taking the painting. "The painted figure is almost the natural man who is free of artificiality. But since dishonor has dealings with man's nature, he is merely outward appearance: A man may appear to be other than he actually is. In contrast, these painted figures are exactly what they appear to be. I like your work, and you shall find I like it. Wait here in this hall until you hear further from me."

"May the gods preserve you!" the painter said.

"May you fare well, gentleman," Timon said to the painter. "Give me your hand. We must dine together."

Timon then turned to the jeweler and said, "Sir, your jewel has suffered under praise."

"What, my lord!" the jeweler said. "From underpraise? From dispraise?"

Timon explained what he had meant: "It has suffered from an excess of praise. If I should pay you for the jewel as it is praised, it would quite ruin me. The jewel is praised so highly that it must be very expensive."

"My lord, it is rated as those who sell would give," the jeweler said. "It is priced in accordance with what jewelers would normally pay for it; that is, it is priced at cost. But as you well know, things of like value that have different

owners are prized differently by their owners — and other people will value the things differently according to who owns them. Two jewels may have the same objective value, but their owners may value them differently — and other people may value them differently according to who owns the jewels. Believe it, dear lord, when I say that you increase the jewel’s value by wearing it.”

“Well mocked,” Timon said. “Well jested.”

“No, my good lord,” the merchant said. “He speaks the common tongue, which all men speak with him. Other men say the same thing that the jeweler did.”

Seeing Apemantus coming toward him, Timon said, “Look and see who is coming here.”

He said to the jeweler and the merchant, “Will you stay and be rebuked? You know that he will criticize all of us.”

The jeweler replied, “We’ll stay and endure his company, along with your lordship.”

“He’ll spare no one,” the merchant said.

“Good day to you, gentle Apemantus!” Timon said.

“Until I become gentle, you will have to wait for me to wish you a good day; I will be gentle when you become your dog, and when these knaves become honest men. That will be never.”

“Why do you call them knaves?” Timon asked. “You don’t know them.”

Hmm. Perhaps if Apemantus knew these men, he would be justified in calling them knaves.

“Aren’t they Athenians?” Apemantus asked.

“Yes.”

“Then I don’t repent my calling them knaves,” Apemantus said. “All Athenians are knaves.”

The jeweler asked, “Do you know me, Apemantus?”

“You know I do. I called you by your name — knave.”

“You are proud, Apemantus,” Timon said.

Timon meant that Apemantus was arrogant and presumptuous, but Apemantus twisted the meaning of “proud.”

“I am proud of nothing so much as that I am not like Timon.”

Apemantus turned as if he were moving away, and Timon asked, “Where are you going?”

“To knock out an honest Athenian’s brains.”

“Murder is a crime. That’s a deed you shall die for,” Timon said.

“You are right,” Apemantus said, “if doing nothing results in being put to death by the law.”

In other words, no honest Athenian existed, and so Apemantus would knock out no honest Athenian’s brains.

“How do you like this picture, Apemantus?” Timon asked, holding up the painting.

“I like it best for the innocence,” Apemantus said.

The figure in the painting, not being a living being, could do no evil.

“Didn’t the artist who painted it do a good job?”

“The man who made the painter — the painter’s father — did a better job, and yet the painter’s but a filthy piece of

work.”

“You’re a dog,” the painter said.

Apemantus was a Cynic philosopher who rejected materialism. The word “Cynic” was related to the Greek word for “doglike.”

“Your mother’s of my generation and breed,” Apemantus said. “What is she, if I am a dog?”

He was calling the painter’s mother a bitch.

“Will you dine with me, Apemantus?” Timon asked.

“No,” Apemantus replied. “I don’t eat lords.”

He did not consume lords by eating their food and so consuming their wealth.

“If you did eat lords, you would anger the ladies,” Timon said.

“Oh, they eat lords,” Apemantus said. “That’s how they come to have great big bellies.”

By consuming the lords’ food, the ladies grew great big bellies. By sexually consuming the lords, the ladies got pregnant.

“That’s a lascivious apprehension,” Timon said.

“Since that is how you apprehend — interpret — my words, take the apprehension for your labor.”

“How do you like this jewel, Apemantus?” Timon asked, displaying it.

“Not so well as plain-dealing, which will not cost a man even a coin that is worth less than a penny.”

Apemantus was referring to this proverb: “Plain-dealing is

a jewel, but he who engages in plain-dealing dies a beggar.” “Plain-dealing” is “honest dealing” — not cheating in business transactions.

“What do you think it is worth?” Timon asked.

“It’s not worth my thinking about it,” Apemantus said.

He then said, “How are you now, poet?”

“How are you now, philosopher?” the poet asked.

“You lie,” Apemantus said.

“Aren’t you a philosopher?” the poet asked.

“Yes.”

“Then I’m not lying.”

“Aren’t you a poet?”

“Yes.”

“Then you lie,” Apemantus said.

A proverb stated, “Travelers and poets have leave to lie.”

Travelers brought back home fantastic tales of their adventures.

As early as Plato, poets have been criticized for lying. In *The Republic*, Plato’s character Socrates criticized Homer for lying about the gods by making them figures of fun instead of majestic beings. For example, in Homer’s *Iliad*, Hera outwits her husband, Zeus, by having sex with him so that he will fall asleep and the Greeks, whom Hera supports, can rally against the Trojans in a battle of the Trojan War.

Apemantus continued, “Look in your last work of poetry, where you have depicted Timon as a worthy fellow.”

“That’s not feigned,” the poet said. “It’s not a lie. Timon really is worthy.”

“Yes, he is worthy of you,” Apemantus said, “and to pay you for your labor: He who loves to be flattered is worthy of the flatterer. Heavens, if I were a lord!”

“What would you do then, Apemantus?” Timon asked.

“I would do what I — Apemantus — do now; I would hate a lord with all my heart.”

“What! Would you hate yourself?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because I had no angry wit to be a lord,” Apemantus said. “Because to be a lord I had no angry wit.”

In order for Apemantus to be a lord, he would have to give up being a Cynic philosopher because Cynic philosophers rejected materialism and high social rank. Apemantus would have to give up the angry wit of a Cynic philosopher if he became a lord.

Apemantus also meant that if he became a lord, he would be a poor lord because he lacked the angry wit necessary to be a lord. Yes, he possessed the angry wit he needed to be a Cynic philosopher, but he lacked the angry wit he would need to be a lord. As a Cynic philosopher, he could direct his anger toward people whose behavior he disliked, but as a lord, he would have to behave in a way that he disliked and that would make him angry at himself for being a phony. Apemantus enjoyed mocking others; he had no desire to seriously mock himself or to do anything that would result in him mocking himself.

Apemantus would be intelligent either as a Cynic

philosopher or as a lord. As a Cynic philosopher, he was intelligent enough to realize the foolishness of other people. As a lord, he would still be intelligent, and he would realize how foolish he — a lord — was. Most of the lords he knew were flatterers and hypocrites. Timon was a lord, but Apemantus regarded him as a fool for being deceived in the belief that he had true friends.

Apemantus then asked, “Aren’t you a merchant?”

“Yes, I am, Apemantus,” the merchant replied.

“May business ruin you, if the gods will not!”

“If business ruins me, then the gods ruin me,” the merchant replied.

“Business is your god, and may your god ruin you!” Apemantus said.

A trumpet sounded, and a messenger entered the hall.

“Whose trumpet is that?” Timon asked.

The messenger replied, “It is the trumpet of Alcibiades, and some twenty horsemen, all in the same company.”

Timon said to some attendants, “Please, welcome them; guide them here to us.”

The attendants left to carry out their orders. The messenger went with them.

Timon said to Apemantus, “You must dine with me.”

He said to the painter, “Don’t go until I have thanked you. When dinner’s done, show me this piece.”

He then said to all who were present, “I am happy and joyful to see all of you here.”

Alcibiades and others entered the hall.

Timon said, "Most welcome, sir!"

Much bowing took place.

Apemantus said, "Well, look at that! May your aches shrivel and wither your supple joints! That there should be little love among these sweet knaves, and yet there is all this courtesy! The strain of man's bred out into baboon and monkey. Men have degenerated and become baboons and monkeys."

Alcibiades said to Timon, "Sir, you have satisfied my longing to see you, and I feed most hungrily on your sight."

"You are very welcome, sir!" Timon said. "Before we part, we'll spend abundant time sharing various pleasures. If you please, let us go inside."

Everyone exited except for Apemantus.

Two lords arrived.

The first lord asked, "What time of day is it, Apemantus?"

"It is time to be honest."

"It is always that time," the first lord said.

"Then the more accursed are you, who always neglect it," Apemantus said.

"Are you going to Lord Timon's feast?" the second lord asked.

"Yes, to see food fill knaves and wine heat fools."

"Fare you well, fare you well," the second lord said.

"You are a fool to bid me farewell twice," Apemantus said.

"Why, Apemantus?" the second lord asked.

"You should have kept one farewell to yourself, for I mean

to give you none.”

“Go hang yourself!” the first lord said.

“No, I will do nothing at your bidding,” Apemantus said.
“Make your requests to your friend.”

“Go away, quarrelsome dog, or I’ll kick you away from here!” the second lord said.

“I will flee, like a dog, the heels of the ass,” Apemantus said.

A dog will flee to avoid being kicked by the hooves of an angry donkey or ass.

Apemantus exited.

The first lord said, “Apemantus is opposed to humanity. Come, shall we go in, and taste Lord Timon’s bounty? He outstrips and surpasses the very heart and soul of kindness.”

“Timon pours his bounty out,” the second lord said.
“Plutus, the god of gold, is his steward. Timon receives no gifts that he does not repay sevenfold above the value of the gift. Every gift to Timon breeds the giver a return exceeding all the usual practice of repayment. Timon repays the gifts with much more than the usual rate of interest given for a loan.”

“Timon carries the noblest mind that ever governed man.”

“Long may he live with his fortunes!” the second lord said.
“Shall we go in?”

“I’ll keep you company,” the first lord said.

They went in.

In a banqueting room in Timon's house, musicians were playing music and servants were carrying in great amounts of food. Present were Timon, Alcibiades, lords, Senators, and Ventidius, whose debt of five talents Timon had paid so that he could be released from prison. Apemantus walked into the room, looking unhappy as usual. Everyone except Apemantus was wearing fine clothing.

Ventidius said, "Most honored Timon, it has pleased the gods to remember my father's age, and call him to the long peace that is death. He is gone, he died well, and he has left me rich. So then, as in grateful virtue I am bound to your generous heart, I return to you those talents, doubled with thanks and respect, from whose help I derived liberty."

"Oh, by no means, honest Ventidius, will I accept your money," Timon said. "You misunderstand my friendship for you. I gave the money to you freely and forever, and no one can truly say that he gives, if he receives. Even if our betters play at that game — receiving back what they have given — we must not dare to imitate them; the faults of the rich are fair."

The "betters" were rich money-lending usurers, who received interest on their loans. The Senators of Athens did this.

A proverb stated, "The rich have no faults." In other words, behavior that would be considered a fault if done by a poor person is not considered a fault when done by a rich person.

"What a noble spirit you have!" Ventidius said.

The lords present stood to show respect to Timon.

Timon said, "No, my lords, ceremoniousness was devised at first to set a glossy but deceptive appearance on faint deeds, hollow welcomes, and goodness, generosity, and kindness that are quickly taken back — false goodness that

is regretted even before it is shown. But where there is true friendship, ceremoniousness is not needed.

“Please, sit. More welcome are you to my fortunes than my fortunes are to me. I value you more than I value my vast wealth.”

They sat.

The first lord said, “My lord, we always have confessed it.”

He may have meant that the lords always have confessed to being friends with Timon, but a cynical person — such as Apemantus — could think that he meant that the lords always have confessed to being very welcome to Timon’s vast wealth.

Apemantus said loudly, “Ho, ho, confessed it! Hanged it, have you not?”

He was alluding to this proverb: Confess (your crimes) and be hanged. However, meat was hung and dry aged to make it more flavorful, and the lords confessed their friendship to Timon and were rewarded with flavorful meat that had been hung.

“Oh, Apemantus, you are welcome,” Timon said.

“No, you shall not make me welcome,” Apemantus said. “I have come to have you throw me out of doors.”

“Bah, you are a churl,” Timon said. “You’ve got a disposition there that does not become a man. Your moodiness is much to blame for causing you to engage in inappropriate behavior.”

Timon then said, “They say, my lords, ‘*Ira furor brevis est*’ — Latin for ‘Anger is a brief madness’ — but yonder man is always angry. Go, let him have a table by himself, for he neither desires company, nor is he fit for it, indeed.”

Servants brought out a table for Apemantus to sit at by himself.

“Let me stay at your peril, Timon,” Apemantus said. “I come to observe; I give you warning on it.”

By “observe,” he meant both to see and to comment on what he saw.

“I take no heed of you,” Timon said. “I won’t pay attention to you. You are an Athenian, and therefore you are welcome. I myself have no power to make you be quiet, and so I hope that my food will make you silent.”

“I scorn your food,” Apemantus said. “It would choke me because it is for flatterers and I will never flatter you.

“Oh, you gods, what a number of men eat Timon, and he does not see them! It grieves me to see so many dip their food in one man’s blood; and all the madness is that he encourages them to eat him up, too.

“I wonder that men dare trust themselves with men. I think that they should invite them without knives; that would be good for their food, and safer for their lives.”

In this society, forks were mostly unknown and people brought their own knives to feasts. If his guests did not have knives, it would be good for Timon’s food because the guests could not eat as much, and it would be safer for Timon because his guests could not murder him by slitting his throat with their knives.

Apemantus continued, “There’s much example for it; the fellow who sits next to him now, divides and shares bread with him, and pledges his life to him while drinking a toast in a cup passed from person to person is the readiest man to kill him: It has been proven.”

Judas Iscariot is one example whom Apemantus may have

had in mind. Judas shared a meal with Jesus at the Last Supper before betraying him. At the Last Supper, Jesus invited his disciples to eat his body: “*And as they did eat, Jesus took the bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body*” (Matthew 26:26).

Apemantus continued, “If I were a huge — big in social status — man, I would be afraid to drink during meals at which guests were present lest they should spy where my windpipe makes its dangerous notes. Great men should drink while wearing armor to protect their throats.”

Timon proposed a toast: “My lord, with heart and good spirits; and let the health — the toast — go round.”

“Let it flow this way, my good lord,” the second lord, who was eager to drink a toast, said.

“Flow this way!” Apemantus said. “He is a splendid fellow! He keeps his tides — his occasions and opportunities — well. Those healths will make you and your estate look ill, Timon.”

He was referring to this proverb: “To drink healths is to drink sickness.” Drinking too many toasts of alcohol will give one a hangover or do worse damage to one’s health — and financial situation.

Apemantus lifted a cup of water and said, “Here’s that which is too weak to be a sinner, honest water, which never left man in the mire. This cup of water and my food — edible roots — are equals; there’s no difference between them. Both are healthy and inexpensive, and I thank the gods for both of them. People who attend feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods.”

Apemantus prayed:

“Immortal gods, I crave no pelf, aka possessions;

“I pray for no man but myself:

“Grant I may never prove so fond, aka foolish,

“To trust man on his oath or bond,

“Or a harlot, for her weeping,

“Or a dog, that seems to be sleeping,

“Or a jailer with my freedom,

“Or my friends, if I should need them.

“Amen.”

He pulled an edible root from a pocket and said to himself,

“So I fall to it. Rich men sin, and I eat roots. Much good dich your good heart, Apemantus!”

“Dich” was a dialectical word meaning “do” and “scour or clean.” Apemantus was saying this: May my food keep me healthy and keep me consistent with my principles.

Timon said, “Captain Alcibiades, your heart’s in the battlefield now.”

“My heart is ever at your service, my lord,” Alcibiades replied.

“You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than a dinner of friends.”

“As long as the enemies were newly bleeding, my lord, there’s no food like them. I could wish my best friend at such a feast.”

Apemantus said, “I wish that all those flatterers were your enemies, so that then you might kill them and bid me to eat them!”

The first lord said to Timon, "Might we but have that happiness, my lord, that you would once make use of our hearts, whereby we might express some part of our zealous friendship for you, we would think ourselves forever perfectly happy."

"Oh, no doubt, my good friends," Timon said, "but the gods themselves have provided that I shall have much help from you: How would you have become my friends otherwise? Why would you have that charitable and warmhearted title of friend from among so many thousands of other people if you did not chiefly belong to my heart? I have told more about you to myself than you can with modesty speak in your own behalf; and thus far I can vouch for your worthiness. I have narrated to myself your many merits.

"Oh, you gods, I think to myself, what need do we have for any friends, if we should never have need of them? Friends would be the most unnecessary creatures living, if we should never have any need to use them, and they would most resemble sweet-sounding musical instruments hung up in cases that keep their sounds to themselves.

"Why, I have often wished myself poorer, so that I might come nearer to you. We are born to do good deeds, and what better or more properly can we call our own than the riches of our friends?"

"Oh, what a precious comfort it is, to have so many friends, like brothers, commanding one another's fortunes! Oh, joy, that seems to be finished because of the appearance of tears, which actually are happy, even before joy can be completely born!

"My eyes cannot keep from watering, I think. To forget the faults of my eyes, I drink to you."

Apemantus said, "You weep to make them drink, Timon."

Timon's weeping provided an occasion for all to drink, but all his guests' drinking and eating at his expense would soon cause Timon to weep.

The second lord said, "Joy had the like conception in our eyes, and at that instant like a babe it sprung up."

Apemantus chuckled and said, "I laugh to think that babe a bastard."

A bastard is falsely conceived, and the tears in the eyes of the lords were falsely conceived. They were the tears of hypocrisy and flattery, not the tears of shared friendship.

"I promise you, my lord, you moved me much," the third lord said.

"Much!" Apemantus said. "Much I believe that!"

A trumpet sounded.

"What is the meaning of that trumpet?" Timon asked.

A servant entered, and Timon asked him, "What is it?"

"If it pleases you, my lord, certain ladies greatly want to be admitted here," the servant replied.

"Ladies!" Timon said. "What do they want?"

"There comes with them a forerunner, my lord, who has the job of telling you what they want," the servant said.

"All right, let them be admitted here."

A boy dressed as Cupid, the young son of Venus, goddess of sexual passion, entered the dining hall.

The Cupid said, "Hail to you, worthy Timon, and to all who taste his bounty and enjoy his acts of kindness! The five best senses acknowledge you as their patron, and they come freely to greet your generous warm-heartedness. There,

taste, touch, and smell, all pleased from your table rise; the ladies who come now come only to feast your eyes.”

“They’re all welcome,” Timon said. “Let them kindly be admitted. Musicians, make them welcome!”

The Cupid exited to get the ladies.

“You see, my lord, how amply you’re beloved,” the first lord said.

Music began to play. Cupid returned with several ladies costumed as Amazons, a tribe of warrior women. They had lutes in their hands, and they danced as they played the lutes.

“Hey, what a sweep of vanity and foolishness comes this way!” Apemantus said. “They dance! They are madwomen. A similar madness — vanity — is the glory of this life. Just look at all this fancy food when all that anyone needs is a little oil and some edible roots. We make ourselves fools to entertain ourselves, and we expend our flatteries to drink down those men upon whose old age we vomit the drink up again with poisonous spite and envy. Society flatters men when they are in the prime earning years of their lives, and then society rejects them when they are old.

“Who lives who is not slandered or slanders? Who dies and goes to their grave who has not suffered from at least one kick that their friends gave them?”

“I would fear that those who dance before me now will one day stomp on me. Before this it has been done; men shut their doors against a setting sun.”

Sun worshippers say prayers to the *rising* morning Sun, which they worship and adore.

Timon sat down as the lords stood up to show their loves for and to dance with the Amazons, who had finished their

ceremonious dancing.

Once the dance of the lords and the Amazons was over, Timon said, “You have brought to our entertainment much gracefulness, fair ladies. You have set a fair fashion on our entertainment, which before you arrived was not half as beautiful and gracious as you have made it. You have added worth and luster to our entertainment, and you have entertained me at my own feast. I thank you for it.”

“My lord, you take us even at the best. You rate our performance as highly as it can be rated.”

“It is good to sexually take them at their best,” Apemantus said, “for to sexually take them at their worst is filthy, and would not be worth the taking, I fear. When ladies are at their worst, their vaginas are diseased.”

“Ladies, a little banquet of fruits, desserts, and wine is waiting for you. Please go and enjoy yourselves.”

“We will, most thankfully, my lord,” the ladies said.

The Cupid and the ladies exited.

Timon called for his steward: “Flavius.”

A steward is in charge of the household; his job includes paying bills and managing household finances.

Flavius said, “My lord?”

“Bring to me here the little casket.”

Leaving to get the little casket, which contained jewels, some of which Timon intended to give away, Flavius said to himself, “Yet more jewels! There’s no speaking to him when he is in the giving mood, I can’t cross his wishes, or else I would tell him — well, truly I should tell him that when he has spent everything, he’ll want to be crossed then, if he could.”

Timon was so generous that he was going bankrupt and did not realize it. When he had spent everything, including all he could borrow, he would want his debts crossed off, as they would be if they had been paid. He would also want his palms crossed with silver — for example, with silver coins that had been stamped with the image of a cross.

Flavius continued, “It is a pity that bounty — generosity — had not eyes behind, in the back of the head, so that a man might never be made wretched because of his generous mind.”

Flavius exited.

The first lord asked, “Where are our servants?”

A servant replied, “Here we are, my lord, standing in readiness to serve you.”

The second lord said, “Bring our horses!”

Flavius returned with the little casket of jewels.

Timon said, “Oh, my friends, I have a few words to say to you.”

He said to the first lord, “Look, my good lord, I must ask you to much honor me by accepting this jewel and wearing it and making it more valuable by your wearing it, my kind lord.”

The first lord said, “I have already received so many of your gifts —”

The other lords said, “So have we all.”

A servant entered and said to Timon, “My lord, certain nobles of the Senate have just now alighted from their horses, and are coming to visit you.”

“They are very welcome,” Timon said.

Flavius said to Timon, "I beg your honor, let me say a few words to you that seriously concern you."

"Seriously concern me! Why then, another time I'll hear you. Right now, let's have provided what is needed to entertain the new visitors."

Flavius murmured to himself, "I scarcely know how to do that."

A second servant entered the dining hall and said, "May it please your honor, Lord Lucius, out of his free and generous love, has presented to you four milk-white horses, with silver trappings."

"I shall accept them fairly," Timon said. "Let the presents be worthily dealt with."

A third servant arrived, and Timon asked, "What is it? What's the news you have for me?"

"If it pleases you, my lord, that honorable gentleman, Lord Lucullus, entreats your company tomorrow to hunt with him, and he has sent your honor two pairs of greyhounds."

"I'll hunt with him," Timon said, "and let the greyhounds be received, but not without a fair reward."

Timon meant to pay for the greyhounds, although they were a gift.

"What will this come to?" Flavius said to himself. "Timon commands us to provide and to give away great gifts, and all out of an empty coffer. Nor will he let me tell him his net worth, which is negative, or allow me to show him what a beggar his heart is because it has no power to make his wishes good. His promises fly so beyond his estate and possessions that what he speaks is all in debt; he owes for every word. He is so kind that he now pays interest on the loans he has taken out so that he can be generous. His

land's mortgaged and on the books of those to whom he gives gifts.

“Well, I wish that I were gently put out of my job as his steward before I am forced out! Happier is he who has no friends to feed than friends who even enemies exceed. His friends cost him more than enemies would. I bleed inwardly for my lord.”

Flavius exited.

Timon said to the lords, his guests, “You do yourselves much wrong by lessening too much your own merits: You are too critical of yourselves.”

He gave a jewel to the second lord and said, “Here, my lord, is a small token of our friendship for each other.”

“With more than common thanks, I will accept it,” the second lord said.

The third lord said about Timon, “Oh, he's the very soul of bounty!”

Hearing the third lord, Timon said, “And now I remember, my lord, you said good words of praise the other day about a bay stallion I rode on: It is yours, because you liked it.”

“Oh, I beg that you pardon me, my lord, in that,” the third lord said.

Perhaps the third lord meant that he wanted to be forgiven for having seemed to beg for the stallion by praising it. A cynical man such as Apemantus would think that the third lord was putting on an act now, and that the third lord really had praised the stallion in the hope that Timon would give it to him.

“You may believe my words, my lord,” Timon said, “when I say that I know no man can justly affect — praise —

nothing but what he really does like. I weigh my friends' affection with my own; I regard as equally important my friends' wishes and my own, to tell you the truth."

He then said to the lords, "I'll call on you."

Timon meant that he would visit them, but soon he would call on the lords for loans.

"No one is as welcome as you," the lords said.

"I take all of your many visits to me so kindly to heart that it is not enough for me to give you what I give," Timon said. "I think that I could give kingdoms to my friends, and never be weary of giving."

He then said, "Alcibiades, you are a soldier, and therefore you are seldom rich; what I give to you comes in charity to you because all your living is among the dead, and all the lands you have lie in a pitched field."

"Yes, the pitched field is defiled land, my lord," Alcibiades replied.

He was punning. In the Apocrypha, Ecclesiasticus 13:1 states, "*He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it.*" Pitch is a tar-like substance, and a pitched field is a battlefield in which lines, aka files, of soldiers are ready to engage in battle.

The first lord began to speak, "We are so virtuously bound —"

Timon interrupted, "— and so am I to all of you."

The second lord began to speak, "So infinitely bound in affection —"

Timon again interrupted, "— and so am I to all of you."

He then ordered, "Lights, more lights!"

The first lord said, “May the best of happiness, honor, and fortunes always be with you, Lord Timon!”

Timon said, “— so that he can keep them ready for his friends.”

Everyone left the great dining hall except for Apemantus and Timon.

“What a noisy disturbance is here!” Apemantus said. “What a serving of bows and jutting-out of butts! I doubt whether their legs are worth the sums that are given for them. How much money they make for their bowing! Friendship is full of dregs and impurities; I think that false hearts should never have sound legs. False friends should not be healthy enough to bow. Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on courtesies. Timon gives away many valuables to those who bow to him.”

Timon said, “Now, Apemantus, if you were not sullen, I would be good to you. I would be generous to you.”

“No, I’ll accept nothing,” Apemantus replied, “for if I should be bribed, too, there would be no one left to rail upon and criticize you, and then you would sin all the faster. You have given away so much for so long, Timon, that I am afraid that you will have nothing to give away except IOUs shortly. What is the need for these feasts, pompous activities, and vainglorious events?”

“Whenever you begin to rail against society, I am sworn not to give any notice to you,” Timon said. “Farewell, and come back again with better music — with noncritical words.”

Timon exited.

Apemantus said to himself, “So be it. You will not hear me now; you shall not hear me later. I’ll lock your Heaven

away from you by not giving you the advice that would keep you happy. Oh, that men's ears should be deaf to good advice, but not to flattery!"

CHAPTER 2 (Timon of Athens)

— 2.1 —

Examining some financial papers in his house, a Senator said to himself about Timon, "... and lately, five thousand. To Varro and to Isidore he owes nine thousand; besides my former sum, which makes it five and twenty. Still in motion of raging waste? His wastefulness with money is like a raging flood. It cannot hold; it will not hold. He cannot continue like this and be solvent. If I want gold, all I need to do is to steal a beggar's dog, and give it to Timon — why, the dog coins gold for me when Timon rewards me with a gift."

Dogs were sometimes trained to lead blind beggars.

The Senator continued, "If I want to sell my horse, and buy twenty more horses better than it, why, all I need to do is to give my horse to Timon — ask nothing for it, but just give it to him — and it immediately foals for me strong, healthy horses. No porter is at his gate to keep away unwelcome visitors; instead, he has a porter who smiles and always invites inside all who pass by. This state of affairs cannot hold, it cannot continue, no rational person can examine Timon's financial affairs and think that Timon's estate is safe. If we were to sound the depth of his wealth, we would find it growing shallower and shallower — no ship could safely sail on it. The only thing growing deeper is his debts."

The Senator called a servant, "Caphis, ho! Caphis, I say!"

Caphis entered the room and said, "Here I am, sir; what is your pleasure? What do you want me to do?"

"Put on your cloak, and hasten to Lord Timon. Importune

him for my money that he owes me; don't be put off with an offhand denial, and don't then be silenced when he says, 'Commend me to your master,' and takes off his cap and plays with it in his right hand, like this."

The Senator demonstrated what he meant, and then he continued, "Instead, tell him that my financial needs cry to me, and I must meet my need with my own money; the days and times that he ought to have repaid his debt to me are past and my reliance on his broken promises to repay me has hurt my credit. I love and honor him, but I must not break my back to heal his finger; immediate and pressing are my needs, and my relief must not be tossed and returned to me in words like a ball in tennis, but it must find a supply of money immediately.

"Get you gone. Put a very pressing, insistent look on your face, a visage of demand, because I am afraid that when every borrowed feather is returned and is stuck in the wing of the bird to whom the feather belongs, Lord Timon will be left a naked gull, although now he flashes like the remarkable mythological bird we call the phoenix. Get you gone."

"I go, sir," Caphis said.

"Take the bonds along with you, and clearly mark the due dates of the loans."

"I will, sir."

"Go."

— 2.2 —

Just outside Timon's house, Flavius, holding many past-due bills in his hands, talked to himself.

"No care, no stop! Timon is so senseless of expense that he will neither learn how to maintain the income to pay his

expenses, nor cease his flow of riotous extravagance. He takes no account of how valuable things go away from him, nor does he assume any care about what is needed for him to continue his extravagant spending and giving of gifts. Never has a mind been so foolish as to be so kind. What shall be done? He will not listen to me until he feels the result of his extravagance. I must be blunt with him once he returns from hunting.”

He saw Caphis and the servants of Isidore and of Varro coming and said, “Damn! Damn! Damn! Damn!”

Caphis said, “Good afternoon, Varro’s servant. Have you come for money?”

Varro’s servant replied, “Isn’t that your business here, too?”

“Yes, it is,” Caphis said, “and is it yours, too, Isidore’s servant?”

Isidore’s servant replied, “It is.”

“I wish that we were all paid!” Caphis said.

“I am afraid that that won’t happen,” Varro’s servant said.

“Here comes lord Timon,” Caphis said.

Returning from their hunt, Timon, Alcibiades, some lords, and others arrived.

Timon said, “As soon as we’ve eaten dinner, we’ll go out again, my Alcibiades.”

Seeing the people waiting for him, he said, “Do you have business with me? What do you want?”

Caphis said, “My lord, here is a note of certain dues. You owe my master money.”

“Dues! From where are you?” Timon asked. His land holdings were vast and stretched all the way to Lacedaemon, where the city of Sparta was located, and he did not recognize Caphis.

“I am from Athens, my lord,” Caphis replied.

“Go and see Flavius, my steward,” Timon said.

“Please, your lordship, he has put me off from day to day all this month. My master is forced by important business to call for repayment of his own money, and he humbly requests that you, in accordance with your other noble qualities, will give to him what is rightfully his.”

Timon said, “My honest friend, please return to me tomorrow morning.”

“No, my good lord —” Caphis said forcefully.

“Be calm, good friend,” Timon said. “Restrain yourself.”

Varro’s servant said, “I am one of Varro’s servants, my good lord —”

Isidore’s servant said, “I come from Isidore; he humbly asks for your speedy payment.”

Caphis said, “If you knew, my lord, my master’s need for money —”

Varro’s servant said, “The note was due on forfeiture, my lord, six weeks ago — and more.”

Timon had borrowed money by pledging security for it. All of his land was mortgaged, and the land would be forfeited if he could not repay his debts.

Isidore’s servant said, “Your steward puts me off, my lord, and so I am sent expressly to your lordship to ask for repayment of the loan.”

“Give me room to breathe,” Timon said to the three servants who were crowding around him.

He then said to Alcibiades and the other lords with whom he had been hunting, “Please, my good lords, go inside. I’ll follow and be with you quickly.”

Alcibiades and the other lords went inside.

Seeing Flavius, Timon said, “Come here. Please tell me what is wrong with the world that I thus encounter clamorous demands about broken bonds and I hear about the failure to pay long-since-due debts, which are things that are contrary to and hurt my reputation?”

Flavius said to the three servants asking Timon for money, “If you please, gentlemen, the time is unsuitable for this business. Stop importuning Timon for money until after dinner so that I may make his lordship understand why you are not paid.”

“Do that, my friends,” Timon said to the three servants.

He then said to Flavius, “See that they are well entertained.”

He went inside.

Flavius said to the three servants, “Please, come with me.”

He went inside.

Apemantus and a Fool, whose job was to entertain his boss — in this case, a woman — and make her laugh, walked nearby. Seeing Apemantus and the Fool, the three servants stayed outside rather than immediately go inside Timon’s house.

Caphis said, “Wait, wait. Here comes the Fool with Apemantus. Let’s have some fun with them.”

Varro's servant said, "Hang Apemantus — he'll abuse us with words."

Isidore's servant said, "A plague upon him, the dog!"

Varro's servant asked, "How are you doing, Fool?"

Apemantus asked, "Are you talking to your shadow?"

"I am not speaking to you."

"No, you are speaking to yourself," Apemantus said.

He then said to the Fool, "Let's go."

Isidore's servant said to Varro's servant, "There's the fool hanging on your back already."

He meant that the name of fool had been affixed to the back of Varro's servant. It was like Varro's servant was wearing the distinctive clothing of a professional Fool. He also meant that Varro's servant was being ridden — criticized — by a fool.

Apemantus said to Isidore's servant, "No, you are standing alone and by yourself — you are not on him yet."

Apemantus meant by this kind of riding homosexual riding.

"Where's the fool now?" Caphis asked Isidore's servant.

"Who is really the fool?"

Sparing none of the three servants, Apemantus said to Caphis, "The fool is he who last asked the question 'Who is the fool?'"

He then said about the three servants, "Poor rogues, and usurers' men! You are bawds between gold and want!"

A want can be a need; people can need or want money and people can need or want sex.

Usurers were people who lent money at interest, something that many people in this society felt that the god of Christians prohibited. Usurers were often compared to bawds, aka pimps, because both trafficked in money when money ought not to be involved. Money ought not to be lent at interest, and money ought not to be exchanged for sex.

“What are we, Apemantus?” the three servants asked.

“You are asses.”

“Why?”

“Because you ask me what you are, and you do not know yourselves,” Apemantus said.

He then said, “Speak to them, Fool.”

“How are you, gentlemen?” the Fool asked.

“Thank you for asking, good Fool,” the servants said.

“How is your mistress?”

“Mistress” simply meant “female boss.”

“She’s just now setting water on a fire to heat up and scald such chickens as you are,” the Fool said.

Chickens were scalded in boiling water to remove their feathers. Another kind of chicken — young fools — sat in hot water as a treatment for venereal disease.

The Fool added, “I wish that we could see you at Corinth!”

Corinth was a Greek port city famous for its brothels. The red-light district of Athens was referred to in slang as Corinth.

“Good!” Apemantus said to the Fool. “Many thanks!”

He was thanking the Fool for speaking to and insulting the

servants.

“Look,” the Fool said. “Here comes my mistress’ page.”

The page, a young servant, walked over and said to the Fool, “Why, what’s going on, Captain? What are you doing in this wise company?”

The page then asked, “How are you, Apemantus?”

“I wish that I had a rod in my mouth, so that I could answer you profitably.”

Apemantus was referring to these 1599 Geneva Bible verses:

Proverbs 22:15

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child: but the rod of correction shall drive it away from him.

Proverbs 23:13-14:

13 Withhold not correction from the child: if thou smite him with the rod, he shall not die.

14 Thou shalt smite him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Proverbs 26:3:

Unto the horse belongeth a whip, to the ass a bridle, and a rod to the fool’s back.

The page said, “Please, Apemantus, read me the addresses on these letters. I don’t know which is which.”

Apemantus asked, “Can’t you read?”

“No.”

“Little learning will die then on the day you are hanged,” Apemantus said.

He looked at the letters and said, "This letter is addressed to Lord Timon; this one is addressed to Alcibiades. Go; you were born a bastard, and you'll die a bawd."

The page replied, "You were whelped as a dog, and you shall famish and die of starvation and so die a dog's death. Don't answer me, for I am gone."

The page exited.

Taking the word "gone" to mean "damned," Apemantus said to the page's back, "Even so you are outrunning grace."

He meant that his words of criticism could keep the page out of Hell if the page were to learn from the criticism.

Apemantus then said, "Fool, I will go with you to Lord Timon's."

"Will you leave me there?" the Fool asked.

"If Timon stays at home," Apemantus said, meaning that as long as Timon was at home, a fool was in his home.

Apemantus asked the three servants, "Do you three serve three usurers?"

"Yes; we wish that they served us!"

"So do I — I wish that they served you as good a trick as ever a hangman served a thief," Apemantus said.

"Are you three usurers' men?" the Fool asked.

"Yes, Fool."

"I think no usurer lacks a fool to serve as his servant," the Fool said. "My mistress is a usurer, in her own way, which is that of a bawd, and I am her Fool. When men come to borrow from your masters, they approach sadly, and go

away merrily; but they enter my mistress' house merrily, and go away sadly. Why is this?"

Men with light pockets went to the usurer; leaving the usurer, they had heavy pockets. Men with heavy pockets went to the bawd; leaving the bawd, they had light pockets.

Varro's servant said, "I can give you a reason."

"Do it then," Apemantus said, "so that we may know that you are a whoremaster and a knave, which notwithstanding, you shall be no less esteemed than you are now."

Being the servant of a usurer had the same status as being the servant of a bawd.

"What is a whoremaster, Fool?" Varro's servant asked. He knew what a whoremaster was — a person who used the services of whores — but he wanted to hear the Fool make a joke.

"A whoremaster is a fool who wears good clothes, and he is something like you," the Fool said. "The whoremaster is a spirit. Sometime he looks like a lord; sometimes he looks like a lawyer; sometimes he looks like a philosopher, with two stones more than his artificial one."

The artificial stone was the philosopher's stone, which alchemists believed could turn base metal into gold. The philosopher's two natural stones were his testicles.

The Fool continued, "The whoremaster very often looks like a knight; and, generally, the whoremaster takes on the appearance of all shapes that man goes up and down in from fourscore to thirteen."

"Up and down" is a motion made in sex; it is also what happens to a penis when its owner is between eighty and thirteen years old.

Varro's servant said, "You are not altogether a fool."

Many Fools are wise.

The Fool replied, "Nor are you altogether a wise man. As much foolery as I have, just as much wit you lack."

Apemantus, who much appreciated the joke, said, "That answer might have come from me: Apemantus."

The three servants said, "Step aside, step aside. Here comes Lord Timon."

Timon and Flavius approached the group of men.

Apemantus said, "Come with me, Fool, come."

The Fool replied, "I do not always follow lover, elder brother, and woman; sometimes I follow the philosopher."

According to various proverbs, lovers, elder brothers, and women were all thought to be foolish:

It is impossible to love and be wise.

The younger brother has the more wit.

"Because" is a woman's reason.

Apemantus and the Fool exited.

Flavius said to the three servants, "Please, walk a little distance away so that I can talk with Timon privately. I'll speak with you soon."

The servants exited.

"You make me marvel," Timon said. "Why before this time did you not fully lay the state of my financial affairs before me, so that I might have estimated my expenses and my means of paying them? I could have lessened my expenses to fit my income."

“You would not hear me out,” Flavius replied. “Many times when you were at leisure I proposed to explain to you the state of your financial affairs.”

“Bah!” Timon said. “Perhaps you proposed to do that at a few opportune times, but my indisposition put you off, and my indisposition at those times served as your excuse not to bring up the matter again.”

“Oh, my good lord, many times I brought in my accounts to you and laid them before you; you would throw them off the table, and say that you found me to be honest and so you had no need to examine the accounts. When, for some trifling present, you have ordered me to give the giver a much larger gift, I have shaken my head and wept. Yes, in opposition to the good manners a servant owes a master, I have requested that you hold your hand more closed — you were too open-handed with your wealth and possessions. Not seldom have I endured not-slight rebukes, when I have informed you of the ebb of your estate and your great flow of debts. My loved lord, although you hear me now, too late — yet now’s a time, for late is better than never — your possessions even rated at their greatest possible value won’t pay even half of your present debts.”

“Let all of my land be sold,” Timon said.

“All of your land is mortgaged,” Flavius replied. “Some of it has been forfeited because of nonpayment of debts and is gone, and what remains will hardly stop the mouths of creditors calling for present dues. The future comes apace. What shall we do in the meantime? And what can we do in the future?”

“To Lacedaemon did my land extend,” Timon said.

“Oh, my good lord, the world is but a word. Were the world all yours to give away in a breath, how quickly would it be gone!”

“You are telling me the truth,” Timon said.

“If you suspect my husbandry of falsehood, call me before the most exacting auditors and put me on trial. So the gods bless me, I swear that when all our kitchens, butteries, and serving rooms have been oppressed with riotous feeders, when our wine cellars have wept with drunken spills of wine, when every room has blazed with lights and drunken asses have brayed with minstrel songs, I have retired to a wine cellar by a wasteful, running spigot, and my eyes have flown with tears to add to the spillage.”

“Please, no more.” Timon was referring both to Flavius’ flow of words and current flow of tears.

“Heavens, I have said, the bounty and generosity of this lord! How many prodigal bites of food have slaves and peasants this night swallowed! Who is not Timon’s friend? What heart, head, sword, force, fellowship, but is Lord Timon’s? Great Timon, noble, worthy, royal Timon!

“Ah, when the means are gone that buy this praise, the breath is gone whereof this praise is made. Feast-won, fast-lost. The ‘friends’ who are won by feasts are quickly lost when the ‘friends’ are forced to fast. When one cloud of winter showers appears, these flies — parasites — seek shelter elsewhere.”

“Come, sermon me no further,” Timon said. “No villainous act of bounty and generosity yet has passed my heart. I have given unwisely, but not ignobly. Why do you weep? Can you lack knowledge? Can you actually think I shall lack friends? Set your heart free from worry. If I would broach the vessels of my love, and test the contents of my friends’ hearts by borrowing from them, I would be able to borrow from men — my friends — and use their fortunes as frankly as I can bid you to speak. They would help me the way that you serve me.”

“Broach the vessels of my love” meant to tap his friends the way that a barrel of wine is tapped. Timon expected that his friends would be full of generosity, and not just full of his wine.

“May assurance bless your thoughts!” Flavius said. “May what you say be true!”

“And, in a way, these needs of mine can be regarded as blessings; for by these I will test my friends. You shall perceive how you are mistaken about my fortunes; I am wealthy in my friends.”

He called, “Inside there! Flaminius! Servilius!”

Flaminius, Servilius, and other servants appeared.

“My lord?” they said.

“I will dispatch you separately to some of my friends,” Timon said.

Pointing to various servants, he said, “Servilius, you go to Lord Lucius. Flaminius, you go to Lord Lucullus; I hunted with his honor today.”

He ordered a third servant, “You go to Sempronius.”

He then said to the servants, “Commend me to their friendships, and say that I am proud that my situation has made this an opportune time to ask them to supply me with money. Let the request be for fifty talents.”

Flaminius said, “We will do what you have said, my lord.”

Flavius was skeptical that Timon would get money. He thought, *Lord Lucius and Lord Lucullus? Hmm!*

Timon said to Flavius, “Go you, sir, to the Senators — because of what I have done to ensure the state’s best health, I deserve for them to hear this request — ask them

to send immediately a thousand talents to me.”

Flavius replied, “I have been bold — because I knew that it was the best way to get money to pay the most creditors — to go to them and use the seal of your signet ring and your name to ask them for money, but they shook their heads, and I returned here no richer.”

“Is it true?” Timon asked. “Can it be true?”

“They answered, in a joint and corporate and united voice, that now they are at a low ebb, lack treasure, cannot do what they want to do, are sorry ... you are honorable ... but yet they could have wished ... they know not ... something has been amiss ... a noble nature may suffer a mishap ... wish that all were well ... it is a pity — and so, turning to other serious matters, after looks of distaste at this subject matter and after uttering these hard fragments of sentences, with certain half-courteous and cold nods they froze me into silence.”

“You gods, reward them!” Timon said. “Please, man, look cheerful. These old fellows have their ingratitude in them through heredity and original sin. Because of their old age, their blood is caked, it is cold, it seldom flows. Because of a lack of kindly warmth, they are not kind. Human nature, as it grows again toward earth — old people become stooped — is made ready for the journey to the grave, for it becomes dull and heavy.”

He ordered a servant, “Go to Ventidius.”

He said to Flavius, “Please, don’t be sad. You are true and honest; I am speaking ingenuously. No blame belongs to you.”

He said to the servant, “Ventidius recently buried his father, by whose death he’s stepped into a great estate. When he was poor, was imprisoned, and lacked friends, I

cleared his debt by paying five talents. Greet him from me. Tell him to suppose some good necessity touches his friend, who craves to be remembered with those five talents. Ask him to return to me those five talents I paid to clear his debt and get him out of prison.”

The servant exited.

He then said to Flavius, “Once you have those five talents, give it to these fellows to whom it is now due. Never say, or think, that Timon’s fortunes among his friends can sink.”

Flavius replied, “I wish I could not think it. That thought is bounty’s foe.”

If one thinks that one’s friends are parasites, then one will not be generous to them.

Flavius continued, “Being free and generous himself, a generous person thinks all others so.”

CHAPTER 3 (Timon of Athens)

— 3.1 —

Alone, Flaminius waited in a room in Lucullus' house.

A servant arrived and said to him, "I have told my lord about you; he is coming down to you."

"I thank you, sir."

Lucullus entered the room, and the servant said, "Here's my lord."

Seeing Flaminius, Lucullus said to himself, "One of Lord Timon's servants? He has a gift from Timon for me, I bet. Why, I should have expected this; I dreamt of a silver basin and pitcher last night."

He then said out loud, "Flaminius, honest Flaminius; you are very respectfully welcome, sir."

He ordered his servant, "Fill a glass for me with some wine."

The servant exited.

Lucullus asked, "And how is that honorable, complete, free-hearted gentleman of Athens, your very bountiful good lord and master, doing?"

"His health is good, sir," Flaminius said.

"I am very glad that his health is good, sir, and what do you there have under your cloak, excellent Flaminius?"

"Truly, I have nothing but an empty box, sir," Flaminius replied. "In my lord's behalf, I have come to entreat your honor to fill it with money. My master, Timon, having great and immediate need to borrow fifty talents, has sent

to your lordship to furnish him with that money. Timon does not at all doubt that you will immediately provide him with your assistance.”

“Hmm! Hmm! Hmm! Hmm!” Lucullus said. “‘Not at all doubt,’ he said? Alas, good lord! He would be a noble gentleman, if he would not keep so generous a house. Many a time and often I have dined with him, and told him not to be so generous, and then I have come again to eat supper with him, with the purpose of persuading him to spend less, and yet he would embrace no advice and take no warning from my coming. Every man has his fault, and generosity is his. I have told him about it, but I could never get him to stop being generous.”

Lucullus’ servant returned, carrying wine.

“If it pleases your lordship, here is the wine,” the servant said.

“Flaminius, I have always known you to be wise. Here’s to you.”

Lucullus drank.

“Your lordship speaks what it pleases you to say,” Flaminius replied.

Lucullus said to Flaminius, “I have observed that you always have a helpful and ready-and-willing spirit — to give you your due — and that you are a man who knows what belongs to reason. You can use the time well, if the time uses — treats — you well. You can take advantage of a good opportunity, and you have good qualities in you.”

He then said to his servant, “You can leave now.”

His servant exited.

“Come closer to me, honest Flaminius,” Lucullus said.

“Your lord’s a bountiful gentleman, but you are wise and you know well enough, although you have come to me, that this is no time to lend money, especially upon bare friendship, without some security such as land that can be forfeited if the loan is not repaid in time. Here are three coins for you. Good boy, wink at me — close your eyes — and say that you did not see me. Fare you well.”

“Is it possible that the world should change so much, and that we who are now alive have lived through such major change?” Flaminius said. “Fly, damned baseness, back to him who worships you!”

He threw the three coins back to Lucullus.

“Bah!” Lucullus said. “Now I see that you are a fool and fit for your master.”

Lucullus exited.

“May those three coins add to the number that may scald you!” Flaminius said. “Let molten coins be your damnation. You are a disease of a friend, and not a true friend!”

Contrapasso is an Italian term for an appropriate punishment. Many people think that the punishments in Hell for sins are *contrapassos*, and so the punishment for greed could be being dipped in molten gold.

Flaminius continued, “Has friendship such a faint and milky heart that it turns sour and curdles in less than two nights? Oh, you gods, I feel my master’s passion — his agony! This slave, up to this hour, has my lord’s food inside him. Why should my master’s food thrive and turn to nutriment, when my master’s ‘friend’ is turned to poison? Oh, may only diseases be caused by my master’s food that this ‘friend’ has eaten! And, when Lucullus is sick to death, let not that part of him that my lord paid for, have any

power to expel sickness — instead, let it prolong his agony and lengthen the time it takes him to die!”

— 3.2 —

Lucius spoke with three strangers in a public place in Athens.

“Who, the Lord Timon?” Lucius said. “He is my very good friend, and he is an honorable gentleman.”

“We know him to be no less,” the first stranger said, “although we are but strangers to him. But I can tell you one thing, my lord, which I hear from common rumors. Lord Timon’s happy hours are now done and past, and his estate shrinks from him. He is losing his wealth.”

“Bah, no, do not believe it,” Lucius said. “Timon cannot need money. He is extremely wealthy.”

“Believe this, my lord,” the second stranger said. “Not long ago, one of Timon’s men was with Lord Lucullus to borrow so many talents — indeed, Timon’s servant urgently requested the loan and showed how necessary the loan was, and yet was denied the loan.”

The second stranger did not know the exact number of talents that Timon was attempting to borrow other than Timon wanted to borrow many talents, and so he used the phrase “so many talents.”

“What!” Lucius said.

“I tell you that Timon was denied the loan, my lord,” the second stranger said.

“What a strange case was that!” Lucius said. “Now, before the gods, I swear that I am ashamed to hear it. That honorable man was denied a loan! There was very little honor showed in the denial. As for my own part, I must

confess that I have received some small kindnesses from Timon, such as money, gold and silver household utensils, jewels, and such-like trifles, although nothing compared to what Lucullus received from Timon, yet had Timon sent a servant by mistake to ask me for a loan, I would never have denied his occasion so many talents.”

His words were ambiguous.

“Occasion” can mean 1) “need,” and it can mean 2) “favorable set of circumstances”:

1) “I would never have denied his need so many talents” meant that he would lend Timon the money Timon needed.

2) “I would never have denied his favorable set of circumstances so many talents” meant that he would lend Timon the money as long as Timon did not actually need the money (and so would be sure to repay it, most likely with a large amount of self-imposed interest).

“Deny” can mean 1) “refuse to give someone something,” and it can mean 2) “refuse to admit the truth of something”:

1) “I would never have denied [for] his need so many talents” meant that he would lend Timon the money Timon needed; he would not refuse to give Timon the money.

2) “I would never have denied his need [for] so many talents” or “I would never have denied so many talents [to be] his need” meant that he would acknowledge Timon’s need for the money (but may or may not lend him the money); he would not refuse to admit the truth that Timon needed money.

Servilius arrived on the scene and said to himself, “I see, by good luck, yonder is the lord, Lucius, whom I have worked hard and sweated to find.”

He said to Lucius, “My honored lord —”

Lucius wished to avoid Servilius, whom he recognized as having been sent to him by Timon, who was currently asking friends for loans of money, so he said, “Servilius! You are kindly met, sir. Fare you well. Commend me to your honorable and virtuous lord, my very exquisite friend.”

He started to leave.

“May it please your honor, my lord has sent —” Servilius began.

“Ha!” Lucius said, thinking that the stranger was wrong and that Timon was still rich and still giving gifts. “What has he sent? I am so much endeared to that lord; he’s always sending something to me. How shall I thank him, do you think? And what has he sent me now?”

“He has sent only his present need now, my lord,” Servilius said, handing Lucius a note from Timon. “He is requesting your lordship to supply so many talents for his immediate use.”

“I know his lordship is just joking with me,” Lucius said. “He cannot need fifty — or even five hundred — talents.”

Lucius was trying to make the point that Timon, who was asking to borrow fifty talents, was so rich that fifty — or even five hundred — talents would not be much to him.

“But in the meantime he wants less than five hundred talents, my lord,” Servilius said. “If his need were not virtuous, I would not urge you to lend him the money half so faithfully as I am doing now.”

Timon needed the money because of his excessive giving of gifts, not because of gambling or whoremongering.

“Are you speaking seriously, Servilius?” Lucius asked.

“On my soul, I swear that it is true, sir.”

“What a wicked beast was I to not be prepared for such a good opportunity when I might have shown myself to be an honorable friend!” Lucius said. “How unluckily it has happened that I should use up my money just the day before for something little, and by doing so deprive myself of a great deal of honor! Servilius, now, before the gods, I am not able to do ... I am all the more beast, I say ... I myself was sending to Lord Timon to borrow money, as these gentlemen can witness! But I would not, for the wealth of Athens, have done it knowing what I know now.

“Commend me bountifully to his good lordship, and I hope his honor will conceive the fairest opinion of me, although I have no power to be kind, and tell him from me that I count it one of my greatest afflictions, tell him, that I cannot gratify such an honorable gentleman.

“Good Servilius, will you befriend me so far as to use my own words when you speak to Timon?”

“Yes, sir, I shall.”

“I’ll keep an eye open for when I can do you a good turn, Servilius.”

Servilius exited.

Lucius said to the first stranger, “What you said is true: Timon has been brought low indeed. A man who has been once denied will hardly speed. A man who has been once rebuffed will hardly prosper.”

Lucius exited.

The first stranger said, “Do you see this, Hostilius?”

Hostilius, the second stranger, replied, “Yes, all too well.”

“Why, this is the world’s soul, and just of the same piece is

every flatterer's spirit," the first stranger said.

The world's soul is the world's animating principle. Most thinkers of the time thought that it is a principle of harmony, but after observing Lucius, the first stranger thought that it is the principle of self-interest.

The first stranger continued, "Who can call him his friend that dips in the same dish?"

He was referring to sharing a meal together and dipping pieces of bread into such things as olive oil and sauces. He also was referring to Matthew 26:23: "*And he [Jesus] answered and said, He that dippeth [his] hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.*" Jesus was referring to Judas, who betrayed him after the Last Supper, during which they had eaten together.

The first stranger continued, "I know that Timon has been like this lord's father, and kept Lucius' credit good with Timon's money, which has supported Lucius' estate; indeed, Timon's money has paid Lucius' servants their wages. Lucius never drinks without one of Timon's silver goblets treading upon his lip. And yet — oh, see the monstrosity of man when he appears in an ungrateful shape! — Lucius refuses to give to Timon, in proportion to Lucius' wealth, what charitable men give to beggars."

The third stranger said, "Religion groans at it."

The first stranger said, "As for my own part, I never fed on Timon in my life, and never have any of his bounties come to me to mark me as his friend, yet I protest that, because of his very noble mind, illustrious virtue, and honorable and moral conduct, had Timon's troubles made it necessary for him to ask for help from me, I would have used my wealth to make a donation to him — and I should have sent to him in reply to his request for a loan the best half of my wealth. That's how much I love Timon's heart. But I perceive that

men must learn now to dispense with pity, for policy sits above conscience. Men must be without pity because self-interest rules conscience.”

— 3.3 —

Sempronius and one of Timon’s servants were speaking together in a room in Sempronius’ house.

“Must Timon trouble me with his problems — hmm! — before all others?” Sempronius complained. “He might have tried Lord Lucius or Lucullus, and now Ventidius, whom he redeemed from prison, is wealthy, too. All these men owe their estates to Timon.”

Sempronius was saying that he was upset because Timon had approached him first for help.

“My lord, they have all been touched and have been found base metal, for they have all denied him a loan,” Timon’s servant said.

Timon’s servant was using a metaphor. Those three men had been tested with a touchstone, which showed that they were made of base metal rather than precious metal. To find out whether a metal was precious — gold or silver — or was base and of low value, it was rubbed on a touchstone. The color left on the touchstone showed whether the metal was precious or base.

“What!” Sempronius said. “Have they denied him a loan? Have Ventidius and Lucullus denied him a loan? And does he now send you to me to ask for a loan? Three? Hmm! It shows that he has very little friendship for me and he has very little good judgment in him. Must I be his last refuge! His friends, like physicians, thrive and then give him over. Must I take the cure upon me?”

He was comparing Ventidius, Lucullus, and Lucius to

physicians who thrive by taking their patients' money and then give the patients up for dead.

Sempronius continued, "He has much disgraced me by doing it, by asking me last for money. I'm angry at him because he ought to have known my place: I should have been at the top of the list of people whom he could ask for a loan."

Before, he had said that he was angry when he thought that Timon had come to him first to borrow money; now, he was saying that he was angry that Timon had come to him last to borrow money.

Sempronius continued, "I see no sense in why he did not in his need come first to me for help, for in my understanding I was the first man who ever received a gift from him. And does he think so backwardly of me now, that I'll repay that gift last?"

"No, I will not repay his gift last. If I did, it may prove to be a subject that causes laughter to the rest of the lords, and the lords would think that I am a fool. I would prefer that he had asked to borrow from me three times the amount he wants to borrow, as long as he had asked me first. I would prefer that for the sake of my mind because I would have such a desire to do him good.

"But now return to him, and with the faint reply of those three other lords join this answer: Who abates and lessens my honor shall not know my coin."

Sempronius exited.

Timon's servant said to himself, "Excellent! Your lordship's a splendid villain. The Devil did not know what he did when he made men politic — cunning when it comes to self-interest. The Devil crossed himself by doing it; he thwarted himself by making men his rivals in evil.

And I cannot think but, in the end, the villainies of men will make the Devil appear innocent by comparison.

“How fairly this lord strives to appear foul! He takes on the appearance of virtue in order to be wicked, like those who under hot ardent zeal would set whole realms on fire. He is like a religious zealot who is willing to start a war — of such a nature is his politic, cunning self-love.

“Sempronius was my lord’s best hope; now all his other hopes have fled, except only the gods. Now that his friends are dead to him, doors that were never acquainted with their locks during the many bounteous years that Timon was generous must be employed now to guard securely their master. And this is all a liberal — freely generous — course allows: Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house. A man who cannot keep his wealth must keep inside his house so that he will not be arrested for debt.”

— 3.4 —

Two of Varro’s servants and one of Lucius’ servants arrived outside Timon’s house, where they met Titus, Hortensius, and other servants of Timon’s creditors. All of them waited for Timon to come out of his house.

Varro’s first servant said, “We are well met; good morning, Titus and Hortensius.”

Titus replied, “The same to you, Varro’s kind first servant.”

“Lucius’ servant!” Hortensius said. “Do we meet together?”

“Yes, and I think that one and the same business is why all of us are here,” Lucius’ servant replied. “The reason I am here is money.”

Titus said, “So is theirs and ours.”

Philotus walked up to the others.

Lucius' servant said, "And Sir Philotus, too!"

The "Sir" was a joke, not a real title.

"Good day to all of you," Philotus said.

Lucius' servant said, "Welcome, good brother. What do you think the time is?"

"The hour hand of the clock is laboring to reach nine," Philotus replied.

"Is it that late?" Lucius' servant said.

"Hasn't Timon, the lord I am waiting to see, been seen yet?" Philotus asked.

"Not yet," Lucius' servant replied.

"I wonder about this," Philotus said. "Timon was accustomed to rise and shine at seven."

"Yes, but the days are grown shorter with him," Lucius' servant replied. "You must consider that a prodigal course is like the course of the Sun — days that are long in the summer grow short in the winter in the northern hemisphere — but it is not, like the Sun's, recoverable. The Sun's appearance during winter is less long than its appearance during summer. However, summer will return and the Sun will return to its old course across the sky and shine longer on the Earth. I fear that it is deepest winter in Lord Timon's moneybag; that is, one may reach deep into it, and yet find little. It is like an animal digging in the winter snow for food; the animal may dig deep but find little food."

"I share your fear that Timon's moneybag lacks anything to fill it," Philotus said.

“I’ll teach you how to observe and interpret a strange event,” Titus said. “Your lord sends now for money from Timon.”

Hortensius replied, “That is very true, he does.”

“And your lord is wearing jewels now that Timon gave to him, and that is the reason that I am waiting for Timon to give me money. Timon borrowed money from my lord to give jewels to your lord, and because of that Timon is in debt and I am waiting for him to pay the debt.”

“It is against my heart,” Hortensius replied. “I don’t like it, and I wish that it were not true.”

Lucius’ servant said, “Note how strange this is — it shows that Timon because of this must pay more than he owes. It is as if your lord should wear rich jewels and send for the money that was needed to pay for the jewels.”

“I’m tired of this task, as the gods can witness,” Hortensius said. “I know my lord has spent part of Timon’s wealth, and now my lord’s ingratitude makes his trying to get money from Timon worse than stealthy stealing.”

Varro’s first servant said, “You are right. The debt my lord is trying to collect is three thousand crowns. What is the debt that your lord is trying to collect?”

Lucius’ servant replied, “Five thousand crowns.”

Varro’s first servant said, “It is a very large amount, and it seems by the sum that your master’s confidence in Timon was above my master’s confidence that Timon would repay the loan, or else, surely, the amount of money that my master lent Timon would have equaled what your master lent him.”

Flaminius came outside Timon’s house.

Titus said, "He is one of Lord Timon's servants."

Lucius' servant said, "Flaminius! Sir, may I have a word with you? Please, is your lord ready to come outside?"

"No, indeed, he is not," Flaminius replied.

"We are waiting for him," Titus said. "Please, tell him that."

"I need not tell him that," Flaminius said. "He knows you are very diligent in seeking him."

Flaminius exited.

Flavius came onto the scene. Seeing the creditors' servants, he attempted to leave without being seen. He held up his cloak to partially hide his face.

Lucius' servant said, "Look! Isn't that man holding his cloak up to muffle his face Timon's steward? He is going away in a cloud."

The cloud was a cloud of despair, and going away in a cloud also meant disappearing; in this case, Flavius was trying to hide his face so that he could leave without his master's creditors recognizing him.

Lucius' servant continued, "Call to him! Call to him!"

Titus said to Flavius, "Do you hear us, sir?"

Varro's second servant said, "By your leave, sir —"

Letting his cloak fall away from his face, Flavius asked, "What do you ask of me, my friend?"

"We are waiting here for certain amounts of money, sir," Titus said.

"Yes, you are," Flavius said. "If money were as certain as your waiting, it would be sure enough. Why didn't you

bring your sums and bills when your false masters were eating my lord's food? Then they could smile and fawn upon his debts and take the interest — the food — into their gluttonous mouths. You are doing yourselves wrong by making me angry. Let me pass quietly. Believe it, my lord and I have made an end; I have no more sums to reckon in his accounts, and he has no more money to spend.”

Lucius' servant said, “Yes, but this answer will not serve. This answer is not good enough.”

Flavius muttered, “If it will not serve, it is not as base as any of you because you serve knaves.”

Flavius went inside Timon's house.

Varro's first servant said, “What did his cashiered — fired — ‘worship’ mutter?”

He used the word “worship,” which was used to refer to a man worthy of respect, sarcastically; he was angry at Flavius.

“It doesn't matter,” Varro's second servant said. “He's poor, and that's revenge enough. Who can speak more critically than a man who has no house to put his head in? Such a man may rail against and criticize great buildings.”

Servilius came out of Titus' house.

Titus said, “Oh, here's Servilius; now we shall know some answers to our questions.”

“If I might persuade you, gentlemen, to return at some other hour, I would derive much benefit from it,” Servilius said, “for I swear that my lord leans wondrously to discontent and unhappiness. His cheerful temper has forsaken him; he is not healthy, and he stays in his room.”

Lucius' servant said, “Many who stay in their homes are

not sick, and if his health is that far gone, I think that he should all the sooner pay his debts so that when he dies he will have a clear path to the gods.”

“Good gods!” Servilius said.

“We cannot take this for an answer to our demand for money, sir,” Titus said.

From inside Timon’s house, Flaminius shouted, “Servilius, help!”

He then shouted to Timon, “My lord! My lord!”

Enraged, Timon came out of his house. Flaminius followed him.

“Are my doors opposed against my passage through them to go outside?” Timon said. “Have I been always free, and must my house now be my confining enemy, my jail? This place where I have given feasts, does it now, like all Mankind, show me an iron heart?”

Lucius’ servant said, “Present your bill now, Titus.”

“My lord, here is my bill,” Titus said to Timon.

“Here’s mine,” Lucius’ servant said.

“And mine, my lord,” Hortensius said.

Both of Varro’s servants said, “And ours, my lord.”

Philotus said, “Here are all our bills.”

One meaning of “bill” was a long-handled weapon with an axe-head at one end.

Timon said, “Knock me down with your bills. Cleave me in half all the way to my belt.”

Lucius’ servant said, “It’s a pity, my lord.”

“Cut my heart into sums of money,” Timon replied.

Titus’ servant said, “The sum of money I need is fifty talents.”

“I will pay it with my blood,” Timon replied. “Count out each drop of my blood.”

Lucius’ servant said, “The sum of money I need is five thousand crowns, my lord.”

“Five thousand drops of my blood will pay that,” Timon said.

He then asked Varro’s two servants, “How much do you need? And you?”

Varro’s two servants said, “My lord —”

Timon interrupted, “— tear me to pieces, take all of me, and may the gods fall upon you!”

Timon went back inside his house.

Hortensius said, “Truly, I see that our masters may throw their caps at their money: They will never get their money back. These debts may well be called desperate ones because a madman owes them.”

All of the people trying to get money from Titus exited.

Inside his house, Timon said to himself, “They have even made me be out of breath because of my anger, the slaves. Creditors? They are Devils!”

Flavius said, “My dear lord —”

Not hearing him, Timon said to himself, “I have an idea. I wonder if it will work.”

“My lord —” Flavius said.

“I’ll do it,” Timon said.

He called, “My steward!”

Flavius replied, “Here I am, my lord.”

“So opportunely?” Timon asked. “Go and invite all of my friends again, Lucius, Lucullus, and Sempronius, all, sirrah, all. I’ll once more feast the rascals.”

“Sirrah” was a word used to address a man of lower status than the speaker.

“Oh, my lord,” Flavius said. “You say that only because your soul is confused and distracted. Not enough food is left to furnish even a moderate table.”

“Don’t you worry about that,” Timon said. “Go. I order you to invite them all to a feast here. I will let in the tide of knaves once more; my cook and I will provide the feast.”

— 3.5 —

Senators were meeting in the Senate House of Athens. They were discussing the punishment of a soldier who served under Alcibiades. The soldier had gotten drunk, quarreled with another man, and killed him.

The first Senator said to the second Senator, “My lord, you have my vote for it; the crime is bloodthirsty; it is necessary he should die. Nothing emboldens sin as much as mercy.”

“That is very true,” the second Senator said. “The law shall crush him.”

Alcibiades and some attendants entered.

Alcibiades greeted the Senators, “May honor, health, and compassion be characteristics of the Senate!”

The first Senator asked, “What do you want, Captain?”

“I am a humble suitor to your virtuous selves,” Alcibiades said. “Pity is the virtue of the law, and none except tyrants use the law cruelly. It pleases time and fortune to lie heavy upon a friend of mine, who, in hot blood, has stepped into the jurisdiction of the law, which is past depth to those who, without heed, plunge into it.

“He is a man, setting his fate aside — the fate that made him do what he did — of comely virtues. Nor did he blemish his deed with cowardice — an honor in him that makes up for his fault — for with a noble fury and fair spirit, seeing his reputation stained to death, he opposed his foe, and with such sober and hardly noticeable passion he controlled his anger before it was spent that it was as if he had simply made a point in an argument.”

The deed committed was serious enough that the Senators had considered it a capital crime — one that would be punished with death. Alcibiades was trying to make it seem much less serious than that.

The first Senator replied, “You are making too forced a paradox as you strive to make an ugly deed look fair. Your words have taken such pains as if they labored to make manslaughter a lawful procedure and make fighting duels one of the acts of valor. That indeed is a bastard form of valor that came into the world when sects and factions were newly born. But the truly valiant man is one who can wisely suffer the worst that another man can say, and who can make his wrongs something external to him and wear them like his clothing, in a carefree way, and who can never take his injuries to heart. If he were to take his injuries to heart, he would put his heart in danger. If wrongs are evils that force us to kill, what folly it is to hazard life for ill! We would be risking our lives for the sake of evil.”

“My lord —” Alcibiades began.

The first Senator interrupted, “— you cannot make gross sins look innocent and clear; to get revenge is not valorous, but to bear and endure wrongs is valorous.”

“My lords, then, if you will, pardon me if I speak like a military Captain. Why do ‘foolish’ men expose themselves in battle, and not endure all threats? Should they go to sleep after being threatened, and let their foes quietly cut their throats, without opposition? If such valor is found in bearing wrongs, why do we go to wars abroad? Why then, if there is such valor in bearing, women who stay at home and bear the weight of men in the act of sex and then bear children are more valiant than soldiers who fight abroad. If bearing is valorous, then the ass who bears burdens is more of a Captain than the lion; if there is wisdom in suffering, then the felon who is weighed down with irons is wiser than the judge.

“Oh, my lords, as you are great, be good and show compassion. Who cannot condemn rashness in cold blood? To kill, I grant, is sin’s most extreme outburst. But to kill in self-defense, if we take a merciful view of it, is very just.

“To be angry is impious; but what man has never been angry? Weigh this man’s crime with mercy.”

“You speak in vain,” the second Senator said.

“In vain!” Alcibiades said. “This soldier’s military service done at Lacedaemon and Byzantium is a sufficient bribe for his life.”

He meant that the soldier’s military service in far places ought to excuse his crime in Athens.

Hearing the word “bribe,” and not liking it, the first Senator said, “What’s that?”

Alcibiades replied, “I say, my lords, this soldier has done fair service, and slain in battle many of your enemies. How full of valor did he bear himself in the last conflict, and made plenteous wounds!”

The second Senator said, “He has made too much plenty with them. He’s a sworn rioter — he carouses as if he had made an oath to carouse. He has a sin — drunkenness — that often drowns him and takes his valor prisoner. If there were no foes, his crime of constant drunken carousing would be enough to overcome him.”

By “If there were no foes,” the second Senator meant, “If there were no civilian or military foes [whom he had killed],” but Alcibiades could easily understand it as saying, “If there were no foes of Athens.” Athens was currently fighting no wars; otherwise, Alcibiades would be elsewhere, fighting in the war, and the soldier would be needed to fight in the war.

The second Senator continued, “In that beastly fury caused by drunkenness, he has been known to commit outrages and support dissension. It has been reported to us that his days are foul and his drink is dangerous.”

“He dies,” the first Senator said.

“That is a hard fate!” Alcibiades said. “He might have died in war, which would have been a better fate. My lords, if not for any good qualities in him — though his right arm might purchase his own time of natural life and be in debt to no one — yet, the more to move you, take my merits and join them to his, and because I know your reverend ages love security — safety and collateral — I’ll pawn my victories and all my honors to you because I know that he will make good returns. If by this crime he owes the law his life, why, let the war receive it in valiant gore — let him die in battle. Law is strict, and war is no less.”

“We are for law,” the first Senator said. “He dies. Argue about it no more, or our displeasure will heighten. No matter whether a man is your friend or your brother, that man forfeits his own blood when he spills the blood of another.”

“Must it be so?” Alcibiades said. “It must not be. My lords, I beg you, know me for who I am.”

“What!” the second Senator said, outraged.

“Remember me and my deeds,” Alcibiades said.

“What!” the third Senator said, outraged.

“I cannot but think that because of your old age you have forgotten me and what I have done for Athens — it could not be otherwise. That is the only reason that I should be so treated so badly — I beg you for a favor and I am denied what should be quickly granted to me. The wounds I have received in battle ache when I look at you.”

“Do you dare to face our anger?” the first Senator said. “It is in few words, but it is spacious in effect. We banish you from Athens forever.”

“Banish me!” Alcibiades said. “You ought to banish your dotage; you ought to banish your usury that makes the Senate ugly.”

“If, after two days, you are still in Athens,” the first Senator said, “you will face a more serious judgment than banishment. And, so that you will lack your reason to swell our anger, the man you want to be pardoned shall be executed immediately.”

The Senators exited.

Alcibiades said to himself, “Now I pray that the gods will preserve you so that you may live to be old enough that you

are nothing but bones, so that no one will want to look at you! I'm worse than mad: I have kept back their foes, while they have counted their money and lent out their coins for much interest, while I myself am rich only in large wounds. All those wounds for treatment such as this? Is this the healing ointment that the usuring Senate pours onto military Captains' wounds? Banishment! Banishment isn't so bad; I don't hate being banished. It is a worthy reason for my anger and fury and an excuse to attack Athens. I'll cheer up my discontented troops, and play for hearts to be loyal to me. It is an honor to be at odds with most lands; soldiers should tolerate as few wrongs as do the gods."

— 3.6 —

The banqueting room in Timon's house was filled with tables and busy servants as several lords, Senators, and other people entered. Musicians played.

The first lord said, "Good day to you, sir."

"I also wish a good day to you," the second lord said. "I think this honorable lord — Timon — was only testing us the other day when he wanted to borrow money."

"Upon that were my thoughts being exercised, when we met just now," the first lord said. "I hope it is not so low with him as he made it seem in the test of his various friends."

"It should not be, by the evidence of this new feast that he is hosting," the second lord said.

"I should think so. Timon sent me an earnest invitation, which my many personal needs urged me to decline, but he has conjured me beyond them, and I must necessarily appear at his feast. His powers of persuasion are like those of a magician."

“In like manner was I under obligation to my pressing business, but he would not hear my excuse. I am sorry that when he sent a servant to borrow money from me, my supply of money was out.”

“I am sick from that grief, too, since I now understand how all things go,” the first lord said, meaning that he understood now that Timon was simply testing his friends to see if they would lend him money when Timon was suffering a financial emergency.

“Every man here’s in the same situation and feeling the same grief,” the second lord said. “What would he have borrowed from you?”

“A thousand coins.”

“A thousand coins!”

“What did he want to borrow from you?” the first lord said.

“He sent to me, sir —” the second lord began, but seeing Timon, he said, “Here he comes.”

Timon and some attendants walked toward the two lords.

“From all my heart to both of you gentlemen,” Timon said, “and how are you doing?”

“Always I am doing the best, when I hear good things about your lordship,” the first lord said.

“The swallow does not follow summer more willingly than we follow your lordship,” the second lord said.

Timon thought, *Nor more willingly leaves winter; such summer-birds are men.*

He was thinking of this proverb: Swallows, like false friends, fly away upon the approach of winter.

He said out loud, “Gentlemen, our dinner will not recompense you for this long wait. Feast your ears with the music for a while, if they will metaphysically dine on the harsh sound of the trumpet; we shall get to the feast soon.”

“I hope that your lordship takes it not unkindly that when you asked me for a loan I returned to you an empty-handed messenger,” the first lord said.

“Oh, sir, don’t let that trouble you,” Timon replied.

“My noble lord —” the second lord said.

“Ah, my good friend, what is wrong?” Timon asked.

“My most honorable lord, I am even sick from shame, that, when your lordship this other day sent to me to borrow money, I was so unfortunate a beggar that I lacked money to lend to you.”

“Don’t worry about it, sir,” Timon said.

“If you had sent your messenger to me just two hours earlier —” the second lord said.

“Don’t let it distress your brain, which ought to entertain better memories,” Timon said.

He ordered his servants, “Come, bring in everything all together.”

The servants brought in the feast.

The second lord said, “All covered dishes!”

The best food was served under covered dishes.

“Royal cheer, I warrant you,” the first lord said. “This is food fit for a King, I bet.”

A third lord who had just arrived said, “There is no reason to doubt that; if money can buy it and it is in season, it is

here.”

“How are you?” the first lord asked. “What’s the news?”

“Alcibiades has been banished. Have you heard about it?”

“Alcibiades banished!” the other lords said.

“It is so,” the third lord said. “You can be sure of it.”

“What? What?” the first lord exclaimed.

“Please, tell us why he was banished,” the second lord requested.

“My worthy friends, will you come closer?” Timon asked.

“I’ll tell you more soon,” the third lord promised. “Here’s a noble feast ready.”

“Timon is still the man we knew of old,” the second lord said.

“Will he continue to be?” the third lord said. “Will he continue to be?”

“He has so far,” the second lord said, “but time will tell truth — and so —”

“I understand,” the third lord said.

They were a little cautious; Timon had recently asked to borrow money from them. Would he do so again?

Timon said, “Each man go to his stool with that same eagerness as he would go to the lips of his mistress. Your diet of food shall be in all places alike. Let’s not make a City feast of it and let the food cool before we can agree upon who shall sit in the first place, the place of honor. Sit, sit.”

In this society, people sat on stools. Only a very high-

ranking person would be offered a chair. A City feast was a formal feast in London with the higher-ranking people sitting at the head of the table and people of lower status sitting lower. At a City feast the best food would be placed at the head of the table, but at Timon's feast everyone was to be served the same diet of food.

Timon said, "The gods require our thanks."

He prayed, "You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness. As for your own gifts, make yourselves praised, but always reserve some gifts to give later, lest you deities be despised because you have no more gifts to give. And keep something back for yourself so that you are not despised because you have nothing. Lend to each man enough, so that one man need not lend to another; as you know, if your godheads asked to borrow money from men, men would forsake the gods. Make the food be loved more than the man who gives it. Let no assembly of twenty men be without a score — twenty — of villains. If twelve women sit at the table, let a dozen of them be — what women are. Gods, concerning the rest of your foes — the Senators of Athens, together with the common rabble of people — be aware that what is amiss in them makes them suitable for destruction. For these my present — and present-loving — friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing are they welcome."

Timon then ordered, "Uncover the dishes, dogs, and lap."

The dishes were uncovered and found to be full of warm water.

"What does Timon mean by this?" someone said.

"I don't know," others answered.

"May you a better feast never behold, you knot of mouth-friends — you 'friends' who say that I am your friend only

as long as I feed you,” Timon said. “Smoke — steam that dissipates and vanishes — and lukewarm water are the perfect feast for you and the perfect representation of your friendship for me. This is Timon’s last supper; I, Timon, who is adorned and spangled with your flatteries, washes your reeking villainy off, and sprinkles it in your faces.”

He dipped his hands in the lukewarm water and then flung the water in the faces of his “friends.”

He shouted, “Live loathed and long, you most smiling, smooth, detested parasites, you courteous destroyers, you affable wolves, you meek bears, you fools who follow fortune, you plate-friends who are friends only when given plates full of food, you flies who appear only during the good times of summer, you cap-and-knee slaves who doff your caps and bend your knees in flattery, you vapors as insubstantial as air, and you minute-jacks!”

A jack is a figure that strikes the chime on a clock. Metaphorically, a minute-jack is a time-server, an opportunist who adjusts his behavior minute by minute according to what will bring the most profit to him.

Timon continued, “May the infinite number of maladies affecting men and beasts infect you and make your skin be completely scab covered!”

A lord stood up to leave and Timon said, “What, are you going? Wait a minute! Take your medicine first — you, too — and you —”

He threw stones at his fleeing guests.

Mockingly, he said, “Stay. I will lend you money. I won’t borrow any.”

He threw the stones and dishes at them, scattered their hats and cloaks, and drove them out.

He shouted, "What, all in motion? All running away! Henceforth let there be no feast where a villain's not a welcome guest. Burn, house! Sink, Athens! From now on, let all men and all humanity be hated by Timon!"

He ran out of his house.

The lords re-entered Timon's house, accompanied by some late-arriving Senators.

The first lord asked, "How are you now, my lords?"

"Do you know the reason for Lord Timon's fury?" the second lord asked.

"Bah!" the third lord said. "Did you see my cap?"

A fourth lord said, "I have lost my cloak."

The first lord said, "Timon is nothing but a mad lord, and nothing but his whims sway him. He gave me a jewel the other day, and now he has beaten it out of my hat in which I was wearing it. Have you seen my jewel?"

The third lord asked, "Did you see my cap?"

"Here it is," the second lord said.

"Here lies my cloak," the fourth lord said.

"Let's stay here no longer," the first lord said.

"Lord Timon's mad," the second lord said.

"I literally feel it upon my bones," the third lord said.

"One day he gives us diamonds, the next day stones," the fourth lord said.

CHAPTER 4 (*Timon of Athens*)

— 4.1 —

Outside the wall protecting Athens, Timon said to himself, “Let me look back upon you. Oh, you wall, which girdles and keeps in those wolves, dive into the earth, and cease to be a protective fence around Athens!

“Married women, become promiscuous!

“Obedience, fail in children!

“Slaves and fools, pluck the grave, wrinkled Senators from the bench, and govern in their steads!

“Innocent virgins, convert instantly and become general filths — common whores! Have sex in front of your parents’ eyes!

“Bankrupts, hold fast; rather than give back the money you borrowed, take your knives out, and cut the throats of those who trusted you!

“Indentured servants, steal! Your grave masters are sticky-fingered robbers, and the law allows them to pillage and steal.

“Maiden, go to your master’s bed. Your mistress is of the brothel — she is a bawd or a whore!

“Son of sixteen, pluck the padded crutch away from your old, limping father, and then use it to beat out his brains!

“Piety and fear, devotion to the gods, peace, justice, truth, respect given to parents, peaceful nights, and neighborliness, teaching and knowledge, manners, skilled occupations, and trades, social ranks, observances, customs, and laws — may all of you decline and become

your opposites, and yet allow confusion to continue to increase!

“Plagues, which are likely to happen to men, heap your powerful and infectious fevers on Athens, which is ripe to be struck!

“You cold sciatica, cripple our Senators, so that their limbs may limp as lamely as their manners.

“Lust and licentiousness, creep in the minds and marrows of our youth, so that against the stream of virtue they may strive and drown themselves in revelry!

“Itches and blisters, sow your seeds in all the Athenian bosoms, and may their crop be general leprosy! May breath infect breath, so that their society, like their friendship, may merely poison others! I’ll carry nothing away from you, except nakedness, you detestable town!”

He removed a garment and threw it through the gate he had just passed through, saying, “Take you that, too, with my curses that multiply! Timon will go to the woods, where he shall find the unkindest beast kinder — more caring and showing more kinship — than Mankind.”

He paused and then shouted, “May the gods destroy — hear me, all you good gods — the Athenians both within and outside that wall! And grant, as Timon grows older, that his hatred may grow to extend to the whole race of Mankind, high and low! Amen.”

— 4.2 —

Flavius talked with two of Timon’s servants in Timon’s old house in Athens. As steward, he was the highest-ranking servant, and so it fell to him to let the other servants know that they were now out of a job. This was serious; unless the servants could find new masters, they could become

destitute.

The first servant asked, "Listen, master steward. Tell us where's our master? Where's Timon? Are we ruined? Cast off and abandoned? Is nothing remaining?"

"I am sorry, my fellows," Flavius said, "but what can I say to you? Let the righteous gods record that I am as poor as you."

"Such a house broken and bankrupt!" the first servant mourned. "So noble a master fallen! All is gone! And he does not have one friend to take his misfortunate self by the arm, and go along with him!"

The second servant said, "As we turn our backs from our companion thrown into his grave, so his associates who are familiar with his buried fortunes all slink away and leave their false vows of friendship with him, like a pickpocket leaving behind an empty wallet. And Timon, his poor self now a beggar dedicated to living in the open air, with his disease of poverty that everyone shuns, walks, like contempt, alone.

"Here come more of our fellow servants."

The other servants walked over to them.

Flavius said, "We are all broken implements of a ruined house."

The third servant said, "Yet our hearts still wear Timon's livery — the distinctive clothing that identifies us as being Timon's servants. I can see that by looking at our faces; we are still colleagues, serving alike in sorrow. Our ship is leaking, and we, poor mates, stand on the sinking deck, on which we could die, hearing the surging waves threaten us. We must all depart into this sea of air. We must leave the house."

“All you good fellows, the last of my wealth I’ll share among you,” Flavius said. “Wherever we shall meet, for Timon’s sake, let’s still be colleagues; let’s shake our heads, and say, as if we were a funeral bell tolling our master’s misfortunes, ‘We have seen better days.’ Let each take some money.”

The servants held back, reluctant to take some of Flavius’ last remaining money.

He said, “No, all of you put out your hands. Not one word more. Thus part we rich in sorrow, but poor in money.”

The servants embraced and then departed, leaving Flavius alone.

Flavius said to himself, “Oh, the fierce and drastic wretchedness that glory brings us! Who would not wish to be excluded from wealth, since riches point to misery and contempt? Who would want to be so mocked with glory? Who would want to live in what is only a dream of friendship and not the real thing? Who would want to have his pomp and ceremony and all of what makes up magnificence be only superficial, like a thin layer of paint, and like his so-called friends? Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart, undone and ruined by his goodness! It is a strange, unusual nature when a man’s worst sin is that he does too much good! Who, then, dares to be half as kind and generous as Timon again? Generosity, that makes gods, always mars men. My dearest lord was blessed, and now he is most accursed. He was rich, only to now be wretched. Timon, your great fortunes have been made your chief afflictions. Poor, kind lord! He has dashed away in rage from this ungrateful seat of monstrous friends, and he does not have with him those things that are needed to sustain his life, and he lacks the money to buy those things.

“I’ll follow after him and inquire about and find out where

he is. I'll always serve his desires with my best will. While I have gold, I'll be his steward still."

Flavius lacked physical gold, but as long as he had gold in his heart, he wanted to serve Timon.

— 4.3 —

Timon was living in a cave in the woods, near the seashore.

He came out of the cave and said to himself, "Oh, blessed infection-breeding Sun, draw up from the earth noxious vapors that cause things to rot. Below your sister's orbit, infect the air!"

In mythology, the sister of the Sun was the Moon. According to this society's beliefs, the Earth was the center of the universe, and whatever was under the Moon was corruptible, while whatever was above the Moon was incorruptible. Timon wanted the Sun to corrupt the air in between the Earth and the Moon. Infected air would cause plague in the land under the air.

Timon continued, "Let's consider twinned brothers of one womb, whose procreation, residence in the womb, and birth scarcely makes them different. Suppose that they are put to the test by being given different fortunes; the brother with the greater fortune will scorn the brother with the lesser fortune. Let me go further and apply this to humans as a whole. Human nature, to which all afflictions lay siege, cannot bear great fortune except by being contemptuous of human nature."

People who enjoy great good fortune will come to despise people who do not enjoy great good fortune. People who enjoy great good fortune will come to believe that they are better than other people. After all, they think, I am rich, so why isn't everyone else rich? There must be something wrong with them. This applies to things other than riches

— for example, fame, success, and so on.

Alexander the Great was wondrously successful, and he came to believe that he was a god.

We should keep in mind that all afflictions lay siege to human nature. Those afflictions include the seven deadly sins, of which the foremost is pride. If we could keep that in mind, we would not think that being fortunate makes us better than other people.

Timon continued, “Raise this beggar and make him successful, and make that lord lack success. If that happens, then the Senator shall be regarded with contempt as if his contemptuousness were his inheritance, and the beggar will be regarded with honor as if it were his birthright.”

Successful people are honored; unsuccessful people are not. Very fortunate people can regard the two groups of people as two different species.

Timon continued, “It is the pasture that lards the brother’s sides, and the lack of land that makes the other brother lean. The brother with pastureland can raise cattle that he can eat and that will make him fat.”

Much success is the result of birth. In the age of primogeniture, the older brother gets the bulk of the inheritance. A twin, but younger, brother inherits little.

A person born into a middle-class, or higher, family often has a better chance of success than one born into a destitute family.

Timon continued, “Who dares, who dares, in purity of manhood — a man who is pure and morally upright — to stand upright, and say, ‘This man’s a flatterer’? If one man is a flatterer, then so are they all because the people on every step of fortune are flattered by the people on the step

below. The learned head bows to the golden fool; an educated man bows to a fool when the fool has money. All is oblique and slanting. There's nothing level and direct in our cursed natures, except straightforward villainy. Therefore, let all feasts, societies, and throngs of men be abhorred! I, Timon, disdain all human beings, including myself. May destruction use its fangs to grab Mankind!"

He began digging with a spade and said, "Earth, give me edible roots! Whoever seeks for something better from you, season his palate with your most powerful poison!

"What is here? Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold? No, gods, I am no idle vow-maker. I asked for edible roots, you innocent, pure Heavens!

"This amount of gold will make black white, foul fair, wrong right, base noble, old young, and coward valiant. Ha, you gods! Why this? What is the reason for this, you gods? Why have you allowed me to find gold? Why, this amount of gold will haul your priests and servants away from your sides, and it will pluck healthy men's pillows from below their heads."

When people were dying, their pillows were taken away from under their heads to make it easier to die. The sixteenth-century *Shiltei Hagiborim* by R. Joshua Boaz argued against what he regarded as a form of what we would probably call euthanasia:

"There would appear to be grounds for forbidding the custom, practiced by some, in the case of someone who is dying and his soul cannot depart, of removing the pillow from underneath the goeses [someone who is expected to die within 72 hours] so that he will die quickly. For they say that the bird feathers in the bedding prevent the soul from leaving the body."

In some societies, people believe that a lone pigeon is an

omen of death, and people believe that pigeon feathers in a pillow prolong the agony of dying, and so they remove pillows containing pigeon feathers from sickrooms.

When Timon said that gold would pluck healthy men's pillows from below their heads, he meant that gold would cause greedy people to cause healthy men to die.

Timon continued, "This yellow slave will knit and break religions, bless the accursed, make those with hoary, white leprosy adored, place thieves into positions of high status and make them equivalent to Senators on the bench in terms of rank and title, deference and the right to be knelt to, and approval and approbation.

"This gold is what makes the wappened widow wed again. She, whom those with ulcerous sores in the hospital-house would vomit at the sight of, is embalmed and preserved with golden spices until she takes on the appearance of an April day again."

Possibly, Timon was referring to two women, depending in part on the meaning of the unusual word "wappened." If the word meant "worn out," then he was perhaps referring to one woman, a worn-out widow who was afflicted with ulcerous sores.

However, if "wappened" meant either "saddened" or "frightened," then Timon could be referring to two women. The widow would be saddened by the death of a good husband or frightened by a possible marriage to a bad husband, but a man who owns gold will overcome either her sadness or her fear. In that case, the woman with ulcerous sores could be a different woman.

Timon continued, "Come, damned earth, you common whore of Mankind, which everyone treads on and plows, and which makes the rout — the disorderly mobs — of nations at odds with each other, I will make you do what is

your right nature — I will make you give me edible roots.”

Timon heard the sounds of marching soldiers.

“Ha! A military drum?” Timon said. “You, gold, are quick, but I’ll still bury you.”

The word “quick” meant “alive.” Gold is alive in the sense that it can reproduce. Usurers make gold reproduce by lending it out at interest. Gold is also quick in that it is quickly spent or lost.

Timon continued, “You shall go, gold, you strong thief, when gouty keepers of you cannot stand.”

Gold shall continue to move and circulate even when its gouty owners are unable to stand and when they have died.

Timon then said, “I’ll keep some of you as ‘earnest money’ — money to use as a down payment for things that I want to happen.”

He kept some of the gold and buried the rest.

To the sound of military drum and fife, Alcibiades arrived, accompanied by two whores, one on each arm. The whores were named Phrynia and Timandra.

“Who are you there?” Alcibiades asked. “Speak.”

He did not recognize Timon, who was not wearing fine clothing anymore. Timon looked wild.

“I am a beast, as are you,” Timon replied. “May the cankerworm gnaw your heart because you showed me again the eyes of man! I don’t want to ever again see a human being!”

“What is your name? Is man so hateful to you, who are yourself a man?”

“I am Misanthropos, and I hate Mankind,” Timon replied.

Misanthropos is Greek for Man-Hater.

He continued, “As for your part, I wish you were a dog, so that I might love you somewhat.”

Recognizing Timon, Alcibiades said, “I know you well, but I am ignorant about what has happened to you.”

“I know you, too,” Timon said, “and more than that I know you, I do not desire to know. Follow your military drum away from here, and with man’s blood paint the ground, red, red. Religious canons and civil laws are cruel, so then what should war be? This deadly whore of yours has in her more destruction than your sword, for all her angelic look.”

Earlier, a page had given Timon a letter from the Fool’s boss, the proprietor of a whorehouse, so he recognized that at least one of the women with Alcibiades was a whore.

Insulted, Phrynia said, “May your lips rot off!”

The rotting off of lips was a sign of venereal disease.

“I will not kiss you,” Timon said. “That way, the rot returns to your own lips again.”

In this society, people believed that one way to cure themselves of venereal disease was to pass it on to another person. By refusing to kiss Phrynia, Timon was refusing to catch her venereal disease and so she would keep it and her lips would rot.

“How came the noble Timon to this change of fortune?” Alcibiades asked.

“As the Moon does, by lacking light to give,” Timon replied. “But then renew it I could not, like the Moon is able to. There were no Suns to borrow of.”

The Moon lacks light of its own; it reflects the light of the Sun. Each month the Moon renews itself with a new Moon. Timon had run out of money to give away, and he had been unable to borrow more, and so now he was living in a cave.

“Noble Timon, what friendly act may I do for you?” Alcibiades asked.

“None, but to help me maintain my opinion,” Timon replied.

“What friendly act would that be, Timon?”

“Promise me friendship, but perform no friendly acts for me,” Timon replied. “If you will not promise to be my friend, then may the gods plague you because you are a man! If you do perform a friendly act for me, then confound you because you are a man!”

“I have heard a little about your miseries,” Alcibiades said.

“You saw my miseries, when I had prosperity.”

“I see your miseries now; when you had prosperity, that was a blessed time.”

“Then I was as blessed as you are now — you are tied to a brace of harlots.”

A brace is a pair; sometimes the word “brace” is used to refer to a pair of dogs. Timon was saying that Alcibiades was not blessed now; being with a pair of whores — aka bitches — was no blessing.

Timandra, one of the brace of harlots, asked, “Is this the Athenian minion whom the world praised so much?”

A “minion” is a darling, but the word is often used sarcastically.

“Are you Timandra?” Timon asked.

“Yes.”

“Be a whore always,” Timon said. “Those who use you sexually do not love you. Give them diseases in return for them giving you their lust. Make use of your lecherous hours. Season the slaves for tubs and baths. Bring down rose-cheeked youth to the tub-fast and the diet.”

In this society, a treatment for venereal disease was to soak and sweat in hot tubs and baths. During the treatment for venereal disease, people would refrain from sex (a kind of fast) and they would adhere to a special diet, including refraining from eating rich food.

“Hang you, monster!” Timandra said.

“Pardon him, sweet Timandra,” Alcibiades said, “for his wits are drowned and lost in his calamities. I have but little gold of late, splendid Timon, the lack whereof daily makes revolt in my poverty-stricken band of soldiers. I have heard, and grieved over, how cursed Athens, mindless of your worth, forgetting your great deeds, when neighbor nations, except for your sword and your fortune, would have defeated and trod upon them —”

“Please, strike up your drum, and get you gone,” Timon said.

“I am your friend, and I pity you, dear Timon.”

“How do you pity a man whom you cause trouble? I prefer to be alone.”

“Why, fare you well,” Alcibiades said. “Here is some gold for you.”

“Keep it,” Timon said. “I cannot eat it.”

“When I have laid proud Athens in ruins on a heap —”

Timon interrupted, “Are you warring against Athens?”

“Yes, Timon, and I have cause to war against Athens.”

“May the gods destroy all the Athenians when you conquer them, and may they destroy you afterward, when you have conquered them!”

“Why me, Timon?”

“Because you were born to conquer my country by killing villains,” Timon replied.

Timon wanted everyone to be destroyed, including those who destroyed his enemies.

Taking out some of his gold, he said to Alcibiades, “Put away your gold. Go on, put it away. Here’s gold — go on, take it. Be like a planetary plague, when Jove decides to hang his poison in the sick air over some high-iced city.”

In this society, people believed that Jupiter, aka Jove, King of the gods, caused plague by poisoning the air.

Timon continued, “When you conquer Athens, don’t let your sword skip even one person.

“Don’t pity an honored, aged man because he has a white beard — he is a usurer.

“Strike down for me the counterfeit matron. It is her clothing only that is honest and chaste — she herself is a bawd.

“Don’t let the virgin’s cheek make soft your trenchant sword; for those milk-paps, those nipples, that through the lattice-work of the bodice bore at men’s eyes, are not written down in the list that is on the leaf of pity, but write them down in the list of horrible traitors.”

During the conquest of a city, rapes occur. In saying not to let a virgin’s cheek make soft a sword because the man with a hard “sword” feels pity for the virgin, Timon was

advocating the rape of virgins. But by referring to milk-paps — milk-producing nipples — he was also saying that the “virgins” and virgins were likely to be now or to be soon mothers rather than virgins.

Timon continued, “Don’t spare the babe, whose dimpled smiles arouse the mercy of fools. Think that the babe is a bastard whom the oracle has ambiguously pronounced the throat shall cut, and cut the babe into tiny bits without remorse.”

An oracle is a priest or a priestess through whom a god can make prophecies. Oracles of ancient times were often ambiguous. In a famous case, Croesus, King of Lydia, wondered whether to attack the mighty Kingdom of Persia, so he went to the oracle of Delphi and sought advice. The oracle replied, “If you attack Persia, a mighty Kingdom will fall.” Croesus attacked Persia, and a mighty Kingdom did fall — the mighty Kingdom of Lydia.

“The throat shall cut” is ambiguous. Whose throat? Shall the babe grow up and cut Alcibiades’ throat? Or shall Alcibiades cut the babe’s throat? Timon was advising Alcibiades not to wait, but to cut the babe’s throat now and be safe. Pretend that an oracle has spoken, and then act to keep yourself safe.

Timon continued, “Swear against objections. Put metaphorical armor on your ears and on your eyes; put tested and proven armor on so that the yells of mothers, nor maidens, nor babes, nor the sight of bleeding priests wearing holy vestments, shall pierce the armor even a tiny bit.”

He gave Alcibiades some gold and said, “There’s gold to pay your soldiers. Cause much destruction, and once your fury against Athens is spent, may you yourself be destroyed! Speak no more to me! Leave!”

“Do you still have gold?” Alcibiades asked, surprised. “I’ll take the gold you give me, but I won’t take all of your advice to me.”

“Whether you do, or you don’t, may Heaven’s curse be upon you!” Timon said.

Phrynia and Timandra, the two whores, said, “Give us some gold, good Timon. Do you have more?”

“I have enough to make a whore forswear her trade and to become a bawd and make other women whores,” Timon said.

With the gold that Timon had, a whore could set herself up as the proprietor of a whorehouse and let other women do the whoring. No doubt Timon believed that if the new whores were recently sweet, young virgins, so much the better.

He continued, “Hold up, you sluts, your aprons mountant.”

He wanted the two whores to hold their aprons up so that they could catch the gold he threw to them. The aprons were mountant — always being lifted — because the whores would lift their dresses so the whores could be mounted and make money.

Timon continued, “You are not oathable, although, I know, you’ll swear, terribly swear into strong shudders and to Heavenly agues the immortal gods who hear you.”

The two whores were not oathable because although they were very willing to swear oaths to the gods, they could not be trusted to keep them. “Strong shudders” and “Heavenly agues” are characteristics of orgasms and of venereal diseases. An ague is a fever, sickness, or shaking caused by a fever.

Timon continued, “Spare your oaths, I’ll trust to your

personal characters: Once a whore, always a whore. Be whores always. When you meet a man whose pious breath seeks to convert you, be strong in whoredom.”

In Ephesians 6:10 Saint Paul advises, “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*”

Timon continued, “Allure him, burn him up with lust and venereal disease. Let your enclosed fire dominate his smoke, and you two don’t be turncoats.”

An enclosed fire is a vagina. Smoke is the vapor of words not believed by the person who speaks them. Some people blow smoke up a place near an enclosed fire.

He continued, “Yet may your pain-sick mounts be quite contrary to your best interests, and thatch your poor thin roofs with burdens you get from the dead — including some who were hanged.”

Venereal disease was thought to cause baldness. The burdens of the dead referred to hair harvested from corpses and made into wigs.

Timon continued, “It doesn’t matter — wear the wigs, betray your customers with them by looking attractive so men will have sex with you. Always be a whore. Apply cosmetics to your face so thickly that a horse could sink in the mire on your face. May you have a plague of wrinkles you have to cover up with cosmetics!”

“Pain-sick mounts” referred to sexual mountings that caused the pain of venereal disease. However, Timon sometimes muttered, and he may have said, “pain-sick months,” which might be a reference to the months a whore could spend in prison, during which time she might acquire hair from corpses to use to make herself a wig and/or to sell in order to get money to buy cosmetics. However, the usual

punishment for prostitution was a whipping.

What is clear is that Timon wanted the two whores to cause men to suffer from venereal disease, and he wanted the whores to also suffer from venereal disease.

Phrynia and Timandra said, “Well, give us more gold. What do you want us to do then? Believe that we’ll do anything for gold.”

Timon replied, “I want you to sow wasting venereal diseases in the bones of men and make them hollow. I want you to strike their sharp shins, and mar men’s spurring.”

The spurring referred to riding, both of horses and of whores.

He continued, “Crack the lawyer’s voice, so that he may never more plead a false legal case, nor sound his quibbles shrilly.

“Hoar — make white with disease — the priest, who scolds against the nature of flesh, and does not believe what he himself says.

“Down with the nose. Down with it flat. Take the bridge entirely away from the nose of the man who, hunting to provide for his particular, individual good, loses the scent of the general good.”

Venereal disease destroyed the bridge of the nose, thereby making the nose flat.

Timon continued, “Make curly-headed ruffians bald, and let the unscarred braggarts of the war derive some pain from you.”

Unscarred braggarts were cowards; in contrast to cowards, brave men who fought in battles tended to have scars.

He continued, “Plague all so that your activity may defeat

and destroy the source of all erection.”

He threw more gold onto their laps and said, “There’s more gold. May you damn others, and let this damn you, and may all of you find your graves in ditches!”

Phrynia and Timandra said, “Give us more advice and more money, generous Timon.”

“More whore and more mischief first,” Timon said. “I have given you a down payment for what I want from you.”

“Strike up the drum and let us march towards Athens!” Alcibiades said. “Farewell, Timon. If I thrive well, I’ll visit you again.”

“If I hope well, I’ll never see you any more,” Timon said.

“I never did you harm.”

“Yes, you did. You spoke well of me.”

“Do you call that harm?”

“Men daily find that it is,” Timon replied.

Luke 6:26 states, “*Woe be to you when all men speak well of you: for so did their fathers to the false prophets.*”

He continued, “Go away from here, and take your beagles with you.”

“Beagles” was a slang word for whores.

Alcibiades said, “We are only offending him. Strike the drum and let’s leave!”

The drum sounded, and everyone except Timon exited.

Alone, Timon said to himself, “It’s odd that my human nature, which is sick of man’s unkindness, should still continue to get hungry!”

He started digging into the ground, hoping to find edible roots.

He continued, “Earth, you common mother, your immeasurable womb prolifically gives birth to all, and your infinite breast feeds all. Earth, the same essence that creates your child, arrogant man, who is puffed up with pride, also engenders and gives birth to the black toad and blue adder, the gilded newt and eyeless poisonous worm, along with all the abhorred births below the pure Heaven where the Sun’s life-giving fire shines. Earth, give to me, whom all your human sons hate, from forth your plenteous bosom, one poor edible root!

“Dry up your fertile and fruitful womb, and let it no more give birth to ungrateful man! May your belly grow large with tigers, dragons, wolves, and bears! May it teem with new monsters, whom your upward face has to the marbled mansion — the cloud-laced Heaven — above never presented!”

His spade upturned an edible root, and Timon said, “Oh, a root! I give you my dear thanks!”

He paused, and then he continued with his prayer, “Dry up your marrows, vines, and plow-torn fields, from which ungrateful man, with liquorish drinks and fatty morsels of food, greases and corrupts his pure mind, so that from it all consideration for others and ability to think slips!”

Marrows are the edible insides of plants and fruits.

Apemantus the philosopher appeared, and Timon said, “Another man is visiting me? It’s a plague, a plague!”

“I was told to come here,” Apemantus said. “Men report that you are imitating my manners, and acting the way I act.”

“The reason for it, then, is that you do not keep a dog, whom I would imitate,” Timon said. “May you contract a wasting disease!”

“This is in you a nature that is only an infection; it is not intrinsic in you because you were not born with it,” Apemantus said. “This is a poor unmanly melancholic depression sprung from a change in fortune. Why do you have this spade? Why are you in this place? Why are you wearing this slave-like clothing? And why do you have these looks of sorrow?”

“Your flatterers still wear silk, drink wine, lie on soft beds, hug their diseased, perfumed mistresses, and have forgotten that Timon ever existed. Don’t shame these woods by putting on the cunning of a carping critic.

“Instead, become a flatterer now, and seek to thrive by doing that which others did that has undone you. Bend your knee and bow so deeply that the breath of the man whom you flatter will blow off your cap; praise his most vicious strain of character, and call it excellent.

“You were flattered like that. You gave your ears like bartenders who bid welcome to knaves and everyone else who approached them. Bartenders welcome all men. It is very just that you turn rascal — you are like a young, weak deer. If you had wealth again, human rascals would get it. Do not assume my likeness.”

“If I were like you, I would throw myself away,” Timon said.

“You cast away yourself by being like yourself,” Apemantus replied. “You were a madman for so long, and now you are a fool. Do you think that the bleak air, your boisterous personal servant, will warm your shirt by the fire before you put it on? Will these mossy trees, which have outlived the long-lived eagle, act like pages and follow you

at your heels, and skip to perform any errand you point out for them to do? Will the cold brook, crystalized with ice, make you a caudle — a warm medicinal drink — to take away the bad taste you have in your mouth when you wake up with a hangover?

“Call the creatures whose naked natures are continually exposed to the spite of vengeful Heaven; call the creatures whose bare unprotected trunks, exposed to the conflicting elements, encounter raw nature. Tell them — animals and trees — to flatter you. Oh, you shall find —”

Timon interrupted, “— that you are a fool. Depart and leave me alone.”

“I love you better now than I ever did.”

“I hate you worse.”

“Why?”

“You flatter misery.”

“I don’t flatter you; instead, I say that you are a caitiff,” Apemantus said. “You are a miserable wretch.”

“Why do you seek me out?”

“To vex you.”

“That is always the work of a villain or a fool,” Timon said.

“Does vexing me please you?”

“Yes.”

“Then you must be a knave, too.”

“If you had adopted this sour and cold manner of living in order to castigate your pride, it would be well done,” Apemantus said, “but you act like this because you are forced to. You would be a courtier again if you were not a

beggar.

“Willing misery outlives uncertain pomp and greatness.”

According to Apemantus, a person who willingly embraces poverty outlives a person who has good fortune but who can at any time lose it.

He continued, “Willing misery is crowned before and achieves glory sooner than the person who has good fortune but who can at any time lose it.

“The one person keeps trying to get his fill of material things, but is never completely full. The other person, who wishes for little, can fulfill his wishes.

“The person who has great fortune, but is unhappy, has a distracted and most wretched existence that is worse than the existence of a person who has little fortune, but is happy.

“You should wish to die, since you are miserable.”

Timon replied, “I won’t accept the advice of a man who is more miserable than I am. You are a slave, whom Lady Fortune’s tender arm never hugged with favor; you were bred a dog.

“Had you, like us — other wealthy men and I — from our first swaddling clothes, advanced through the sweet degrees that this brief world affords to such as may freely command its passive drudges — whores who lie passively under us — you would have plunged yourself in wholesale dissipation. You would have melted down your youth in different beds of lust. You would have never learned the icy rules that a respectable person must follow — they are icy because they cool the hot blood of unethical lust. Instead, you would have followed the sugared game — sweet sexual prey — in front of you.

“But I had the world as my confectionary, my source of sweet things. I had the mouths, the tongues, the eyes, and the hearts of men on duty, waiting to serve me. I had more men waiting to serve me than I could find employment for. These men, whom I was unable to count because there were so many and who upon me stuck as leaves stick upon an oak tree, have with one winter wind’s brush fallen from their boughs and left me exposed to the natural elements, bare to every storm that blows.

“For me, who never knew anything except good fortune, to bear this is a real burden.

“In contrast, your mortal life began with suffering, and time has made you hardened to it. Why should you hate men? They never flattered you. What have you given away as gifts? If you will curse people, then you must curse your father, that poor rag, who in spite stuffed a female beggar and put stuff in her that made her pregnant with you and made you a poor rogue. Being a poor rogue is your inheritance. Therefore, leave and be gone!

“If you had not been born the worst and least fortunate of men, you would have been a knave and flatterer.”

“Are you still proud?” Apemantus asked.

“Yes, I am proud that I am not you.”

“I am proud that I was no prodigal. I did not waste money the way you did.”

“I am proud that I am a prodigal now,” Timon replied. “If all the wealth I have were shut up in you, I would give you leave to hang it. That way, I would get rid of you and all my wealth. Get you gone.”

Holding up an edible root, he said, “I wish that the whole population of Athens were in this! Thus would I eat it.”

He took a big bite of the root.

“Here,” Apemantus said. “I will improve your feast.”

He offered Timon a medlar, a kind of apple-sized fruit that was eaten when it had partially rotted.

Ignoring the medlar, Timon said, “First mend my company by taking away yourself.”

“By doing that, I shall mend my own company, by the lack of your company.”

“It is not well mended that way, for it is only botched,” Timon said. “Your company will be worse because you will have only your own company. If what I say is not true, then I wish that it were true.”

“What would you have sent to Athens?” Apemantus asked, meaning what message would Timon like Apemantus to take back to the Athenians.

“I would have you sent there in a whirlwind so it can cause destruction to Athens. But if you will, tell the people in Athens that I have gold.”

Timon knew that this news would make the Athenians envious of him, thereby making them unhappy.

He showed Apemantus the gold and said, “Look, what I say is true.”

“Here is no use for gold.”

“Here is the best and truest use for gold,” Timon said. “For here it sleeps and does no hired harm. Here it is not used to bribe and corrupt.”

“Where do you lie at night, Timon?”

“Under that which is above me — the sky. Where do you

eat during the day, Apemantus?”

“Where my stomach finds food — or, rather, where I eat it.”

“I wish that poison were obedient and knew my mind!”

“What would you do with poison?” Apemantus asked.

“Use it to season and spice your food.”

“The middle of humanity you never knew; you knew only the extremity of both ends,” Apemantus said. “You knew what it is like to be very rich, and then you knew what it is like to be very poor. When you wore gilt clothing and perfume, people mocked you for your excessive fastidiousness. Now, in your rags you know no fastidiousness, but you are despised because you lack gilt and perfume.”

He again offered Timon food and said, “There’s a medlar for you, eat it.”

“On what I hate I feed not.”

“Do you hate a medlar?”

“Yes, although it looks like you,” Timon said.

This, of course, was an insult. Timon was saying that Apemantus’ face looked like a half-rotten apple-sized fruit.

“If you had hated meddlers sooner, you would have loved yourself better now. Have you ever known a spendthrift man who was loved after his money ran out?”

“Have you ever known a man without money who was loved?” Timon asked.

“Myself,” Apemantus replied.

“I understand you; you had some money that allowed you

to keep a dog.”

“To what things in the world can you most closely compare your flatterers?”

“Women are the closest, but men — men are the things themselves. Women are like flatterers, but men are flatterers,” Timon replied, and then he asked, “What would you do with the world, Apemantus, if it lay in your power?”

“Give it to the beasts, so I would be rid of the men. The world would no longer contain men, and the beasts would be rewarded with the world for their having gotten rid of the men.”

“Would you have yourself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts?” Timon asked.

One kind of “fall” is to “descend.” Apemantus could descend from being a man to being a beast. One kind of “fall in” is to “line up with.” Apemantus could line up with the beasts and help them to destroy men.

“Yes, Timon,” Apemantus replied.

Timon said, “That is a beastly ambition, which I hope that the gods grant to you. If you were the lion, the fox would beguile you.”

He was referring to one of Aesop’s fables, in which an elderly lion wanted a fox to help him get something to eat by luring a stag into his cave. The fox went to the stag and said, “The lion, King of the wilderness, is dying, and he wants you to be King after him. I am going to see the lion, and you ought to come, too, in order to be with him in his last moments of life.” The stag went with the fox to the lion’s cave, and the lion tried to kill the stag but managed only to make bloody one of the stag’s ears before the stag

succeeded in fleeing. The fox went after the stag, who reprimanded him for trying to get him killed, but the fox said, "You are mistaken. The lion wasn't trying to kill you; he was trying to whisper some important information in your ears. You panicked and jumped around, and you are the reason your ear is bloody. After much persuading, the stag returned to the lion's cave with the fox, and this time the lion succeeded in killing the stag. The lion feasted on the stag and then slept, and while the lion slept the fox ate the stag's brains. When the lion woke up and wanted to eat the stag's brains, the fox said, "You won't find any brains. Any stag dumb enough to walk twice into a lion's cave doesn't have any brains."

Timon continued, "If you were the lamb, the fox would eat you.

"If you were the fox, the lion would suspect you, when perchance you were accused by the ass."

Apparently, this was a reference to another folk tale or fable, perhaps this one: An ass and a fox were walking together when they met a lion, and they were afraid that the lion would kill and eat them. The fox said to the ass, "Wait here, and I will go to the lion and convince him not to kill and eat us." The ass agreed, and the fox approached the lion and made a deal with it out of the hearing of the ass. The deal was that the fox would find a way to trap the ass so that the lion could kill and eat it, and the lion would leave the fox alone. The lion agreed, and the fox managed to trick the ass so that it fell into a pit that was so deep that the ass could not climb out but not so deep that the lion could not jump in and out. But the ass said to the lion, "The fox tricked me, and if you allow it to live, the fox will trick you, too." So the lion killed and ate the fox, and later the lion killed and ate the ass.

Timon continued, "If you were the ass, your dullness would

torment you, and all the time you lived you would fear becoming a breakfast to the wolf.

“If you were the wolf, your greediness would afflict you, and often you would hazard your life for your dinner.

“If you were the unicorn, pride and wrath would confound you and make your own self the conquest of your fury.”

He was referring to the tradition that unicorns so hated lions that the unicorn would rush at a lion in an attempt to use its horn to spear the lion as it attempted to escape by climbing a tree. Often the lion successfully climbed the tree and the unicorn’s horn would be deeply embedded in the trunk of the tree, and then the lion would jump out of the tree and kill the unicorn.

Timon continued, “If you were a bear, you would be killed by the horse.

“If you were a horse, you would be seized by the leopard.

“If you were a leopard, you would be closely related to the lion and the spots — the moral blemishes — of the lion would sit in judgment like jurors on your life. They would bear false witness against you. All your safety would lie in flight to a faraway place, and your best defense would be absence.”

“What beast could you be that is not subject to a beast?

“And what a beast are you already, who does not see your loss if you were transformed into a beast?”

Apemantus replied, “If you could please me with speaking to me, you might have hit upon it here and now when you call me a beast and not a man.”

He paused and then added, “The commonwealth of Athens has become a forest of beasts.”

“How has the ass broken the wall, that you are out of the city?” Timon asked.

“From yonder are coming a poet and a painter,” Apemantus replied. He knew that as soon as they heard that Timon had gold they would plan to visit Timon.

He added, “May the plague of company light upon you! I fear to catch that plague and so I leave. When I don’t know what else to do, I’ll see you again.”

“When there is nothing living except you, you shall be welcome,” Timon replied. “I had rather be a beggar’s dog than Apemantus.”

“You are the cap of all the fools alive,” Apemantus said. “You are the best example of a fool.”

“I wish that you were clean enough for me to spit upon!” Timon said.

“A plague on you!” Apemantus said. “You are too bad to curse.”

“All villains who stand beside you are pure and innocent in comparison.”

“There is no leprosy except what you speak —”

“— if I say your name,” Timon interrupted. “I would beat you, but I would infect my hands.”

“I wish my tongue could rot your hands off!”

“Go away, you offspring of a mangy dog!” Timon said.

“My anger that you are alive is killing me. I swoon because I see that you are alive.”

“I wish that you would burst!” Apemantus said.

“Go away, you tedious rogue! I am sorry I shall lose a

stone because of you.”

Timon threw a stone at Apemantus, who said, “Beast!”

“Slave!”

“Toad!”

“Rogue! Rogue! Rogue!” Timon said. “I am sick of this false world, and I will love nothing except only the mere necessities on it. So then, Timon, immediately prepare your grave, for death is a necessity. Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat your gravestone daily. Make your epitaph, so that even when you are dead you can laugh at others’ lives.”

He said to the gold, “Oh, you sweet King-killer, and dear divorce between blood-related son and sire! You bright defiler of Hymen, the god of marriage’s purest bed! You valiant war-god Mars, who committed adultery with Venus! You ever young, fresh, loved, and delicate wooer, whose blush — shine — thaws the consecrated snow that lies on the virgin goddess Diana’s lap! Gold, you can convince even Diana not to be a virgin! You visible god that sexually welds firmly together impossibilities, and makes them kiss! Gold, you speak with every language, to every purpose! Oh, you touchstone — you tester — of hearts! Believe that your slave — Mankind — rebels, and by your virtue set all men into ruinous conflict, so that beasts may have the world as their empire!”

“I wish that it would be so!” Apemantus said. “But not until I am dead. I’ll tell people in Athens that you have gold. People will throng to you shortly.”

“Throng to me!” Timon said.

“Yes.”

“Show me your back, please,” Timon requested. “Leave.”

“Live, and love your misery,” Apemantus said.

“Long may you live, be miserable, and die miserably,” Timon replied.

Apemantus left.

Timon said to himself, “I am quit of him.”

He saw some men coming toward him, so he withdrew and said to himself, “More things like men! Eat, Timon, and hate them.”

The men, who were bandits, did not see Timon withdraw.

The first bandit said, “How can he have this gold? It is some poor fragment of his former fortune, some slender scrap of what he had left. His complete lack of gold, and his falling away from his friends, drove him into this melancholy.”

“It is rumored that he has a mass of treasure,” the second bandit said.

“Let us make a trial attempt to get his gold by simply asking for it,” the third bandit said. “If he does not care for it, he will supply us with it easily — he will give it to us. But if he covetously keeps it for himself, how shall we get it?”

“It’s true that it would be hard to get in that case,” the second bandit said. “He does not carry the gold on his person; the gold is hidden.”

Seeing Timon, the first bandit asked, “Isn’t that him?”

“Where?” the third bandit asked.

“He fits the description,” the second bandit said.

“It is him,” the third bandit said. “I recognize him.”

“May God save you, Timon,” the bandits said.

“How are you, thieves?” Timon asked.

“We are soldiers, not thieves,” the bandits replied.

They may have been some soldiers serving under Alcibiades, or they may have deserted Alcibiades’ army.

“You are both, and you are women’s sons,” Timon said.

“We are not thieves, but we are men who much do want,” the bandits replied.

The word “want” meant either “desire” or “lack,” or sometimes both.

“Your greatest want is that you want much food,” Timon said. “Why should you want? Look, the earth has edible roots. Within a mile are a hundred springs of water. The oaks bear acorns. The scarlet roses bear the fruit called hips. The generous housewife, Mother Nature, on each bush lays her complete menu before you. Want! Why should you want?”

“We cannot live on grass, on berries, and on water, as beasts and birds and fishes do,” the first bandit said.

“Nor can you live on the beasts themselves and on the birds and fishes,” Timon said. “You must eat men. Yet I must give you thanks because you are confessed thieves and because you do not work in holier shapes, for there is boundless theft in limited professions. Even legal professions have much theft in them.”

Timon gave them some gold and said, “Rascal thieves, here’s gold. Go, suck the subtle blood of the grape until you get drunk and the high fever makes your blood boil until it is froth, and so die from alcoholism-induced fever, thereby escaping death by hanging. Do not trust the

physician; his antidotes are poison, and he slays more people than you rob. He takes his patients' wealth as well as their lives. Do villainy, do, since you confess you do it, like workmen — as if you were skilled workers in the profession of committing villainy.

“I'll give you some examples of thievery.

“The Sun's a thief, and with his great attraction he robs the vast sea. The Sun evaporates seawater.

“The Moon's an arrant thief, and she snatches her pale fire from the Sun — she reflects the light that she steals from the Sun.

“The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge — the tide — resolves the Moon into salt tears. The sea steals from the Moon what is needed to cause the tide. Since high tide involves a great amount of salty seawater, the sea must dissolve the Moon in its phases so that it becomes salty seawater.

“The Earth's a thief that feeds and breeds by a compost stolen from the excrement of animals, including men.

“Each thing's a thief.

“The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power have unchecked theft. Who polices the police?

“Do not love yourselves. Go away. Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats. All whom you meet are thieves. Go to Athens, go. Break open shops; there is nothing you can steal that does not belong to thieves.

“Steal no less although I give you this. Although I give you gold, steal more gold, and may gold destroy you whatever you do! Amen.”

The third bandit said, “He has almost charmed —

persuaded — me not to engage in my profession, by attempting to persuade me to engage in my profession.”

“He advises us to be bandits because he hates Mankind,” the first bandit said, “not because he is interested in our being successful and thriving in our profession.”

“I’ll believe him as if he were an enemy, and I’ll give over my trade,” the second bandit said. “I will do the opposite of what he tells me to do, and so I will give up being a bandit.”

“Let us first see peace in Athens before we reform,” the first bandit said. “There is no time so miserable but a man may be true and honest and law-abiding. Since we can reform at anytime, let’s reform when it’s peacetime — a time when it is harder to be a successful bandit.”

The bandits exited.

Flavius, Timon’s old steward, arrived.

“Oh, you gods!” Flavius said. “Is yonder despised and ruinous man my lord? He is full of decay and failing! Oh, memorial and wonder of good deeds evilly bestowed! He did good deeds for evil men! What an alteration of honor has desperate need made in him! What viler thing is upon the Earth than friends who can bring the noblest minds to the basest ends! This time’s custom contrasts splendidly with another time — a time when man was urged to love his enemies! May God grant that I may always love, and rather woo those who openly say they want to do mischief to me than those who pretend to be my friend and yet do mischief to me!

“He has caught me in his eye. I will present my honest grief to him, and I will continue to serve him, my lord, with my life.”

He said loudly, “My dearest master!”

“Go away!” Timon replied. “Who are you?”

“Have you forgotten me, sir?” Flavius asked.

“Why do you ask me that? I have forgotten all men. Therefore, if you grant that you are a man, I have forgotten you.”

“I am an honest poor servant of yours.”

“Then I don’t know you,” Timon replied. “I have never had an honest man about me. All the servants I kept were knaves to serve food to villains.”

“The gods are witnesses that never has a poor steward experienced a truer grief for his ruined lord than my eyes do for you,” Flavius said.

“Are you weeping?” Timon asked. “Come closer. Then I love you, because you are a woman, and you disclaim and deny flinty, hard-hearted Mankind, whose eyes never yield tears except through lust and laughter. Pity is sleeping. These are strange times — men weep with laughing, but not with mourning!”

“I beg you to recognize and know me, my good lord,” Flavius said. “I beg you to accept my grief and while this poor wealth lasts to employ me as your steward still.”

The wealth referred to both the little amount of money that Flavius possessed and his still-living body.

“Did I have a steward so true and loyal, so just, and now so comforting?” Timon asked. “It almost turns my dangerous nature mild. Let me see your face. Surely, this man was born of woman.”

Timon was referencing Job 14:1: *“Man that is born of woman is of short continuance and full of trouble.”*

Job, like Timon, had been successful, but then had suffered. In Job 14:1, Job was saying that man, born of woman, endures a short and troubled life.

Timon continued, “Forgive my general and indiscriminate rashness, you perpetually sober gods! I do proclaim that one honest man exists — don’t mistake me — there is only one honest man — no more, I pray — and he’s a steward.

“How willingly would I have hated all Mankind! But you redeem yourself. Everyone except you, only you, I fell with curses.

“I think that you are more honest now than wise. For, by oppressing and betraying me, you might have more quickly gotten another job. For many acquire second masters that way: They stand upon their first lord’s neck.

“But tell me truly — because I must always doubt, even when I have never been surer — isn’t your kindness cunning, greedy, maybe even a kindness that is grounded in usury — a kindness like that of a rich man giving a gift and expecting in return twenty for one?”

“No, my most worthy master, in whose breast doubt and suspicion are unfortunately placed too late,” Flavius said. “You should have feared false times when you feasted your ‘friends.’ Suspicion always comes where an estate is least.

“That which I show you, Heaven knows, is merely love, duty, and zeal to your unequalled mind, concern for your food and living, and believe me, my most honored lord, I would exchange any benefit that may come to me, either in the future or now in the present, for this one wish — that you had the power and wealth to reward me because you yourself were rich.”

Showing Flavius the gold, Timon said, “Look, what you said is so! I am rich. You singly and uniquely honest man,

here, take gold. Out of my misery, the gods have sent you treasure.

“Go, live rich and be happy, but with these conditions. You shall build a house distant from men. You shall hate all men, curse all men, and show charity to no men; instead, you shall let the famished flesh slide away from the bone before you relieve the hunger of the beggar. Give to dogs what you deny to men; let prisons swallow men, and let debts wither them to nothing. Let men be like blasted woods, and may diseases lick up and consume their false blood!

“And so farewell and may you thrive.”

“Oh, let me stay and comfort you, my master!” Flavius pleaded.

“If you hate to be cursed, don’t stay here,” Timon replied. “Flee, while you are blest and free from curses. Never see another man, and let me never see you.”

Taking the gold Timon had given to him, Flavius exited.

Timon went inside his cave.

CHAPTER 5 (*Timon of Athens*)

— 5.1 —

The poet and the painter arrived. Unseen by them, Timon watched them from inside his cave.

“As far as I remember, we cannot be far from where Timon lives,” the painter said.

“What are we to think about him?” the poet asked. “Should we believe that the rumor is true and that he is wealthy with gold?”

“The rumor is certainly true. Alcibiades reports that Timon has gold; Phrynia and Timandra received gold from him. He likewise enriched some poor straggling soldiers with a great quantity of gold. It is said that he gave to his steward a mighty sum in gold.”

The poor straggling soldiers were the bandits.

The poet said, “Then this ‘bankruptcy’ of his has been only a test of his friends.”

“Nothing else,” the painter said. “You shall see Timon a palm in Athens again, and he will flourish with the highest.”

According to Psalm 92:12, “*The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, and shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*”

The painter continued, “Therefore it is not amiss that we offer our friendship to him, in this supposed distress of his. It will make us appear to be honest and honorable, and it is very likely to load our purposes with what they work and travel for, if it is a just and true report that states that he is rich. We want gold, and we are likely to get some gold from Timon.”

“What have you now to present to him?” the poet asked.

“Nothing at this time except for my visit,” the painter said, “only I will promise him an excellent piece to be given to him later.”

“I must serve him so, too,” the poet said. “I will tell him of a planned work of literature that will be delivered to him in the future.”

“Promising is as good as the best,” the painter said. “Promising is the very fashion of the time: It opens the eyes of expectation. Performance is always the duller for its act; the finished work of art never lives up to the promise. And, except for the plainer and simpler kind of people, the keeping of a promise is quite out of the usual practice — it’s just not done anymore. To promise is very courtly and fashionable. To actually do what one promised to do is a kind of will or testament that argues a great sickness in his judgment of the person who makes the will or keeps the promise. When people are very ill and therefore, in my opinion, lacking in judgment, they make wills.”

Timon said to himself, “Excellent workman as you are, you cannot paint a man who is as bad as yourself!”

“I am thinking about what I shall tell Timon I have provided for him,” the poet said. “It must be an impersonation of himself and his situation: a satire against the softness of prosperity, with an exposé of the infinite flatteries that follow youth and opulence.”

Timon said to himself, “Must you impersonate a villain in your own work? Will you whip your own faults in other men? If you do so, I have ‘gold’ for you.”

The poet was going to say that he would write a satire against flattery, and yet the poet was himself a flatterer. The poet had the fault that he would censure other people

for having, and so it was like he was whipping people who shared his fault.

“Let’s seek him,” the poet said. “Let’s get to Timon before he gives all his gold away to people other than us. We would sin against our own state, when we may meet with profit, and come too late to benefit.”

“That is true,” the painter said. “While the day serves our goals and the Sun shines, before black-cornered night arrives, we should find what we want by freely offered light. Come.”

“I’ll meet you at the turn,” Timon said. “I’ll play your game and beat you at it. I’ll pretend that you two are honest, but then I’ll make clear that I know what you two really are!

“What a god is gold! He is worshipped in a baser temple than where swine feed! Gold, it is you that rigs the ship and plows the foam of the sea. You make a slave give his rich master admired reverence. Gold, may you be worshipped! And may your saints who obey only you forever be crowned with plagues!

“It is the right time for me to meet the poet and painter.”

Timon came out of his cave and approached the poet and painter.

“Hail, worthy Timon!” the poet said.

“Our late noble master!” the painter said.

“Have I lived to see two honest men?” Timon said.

The poet replied, “Sir, having tasted often of your open generosity, and hearing that you had retired from society, with your friends fallen off, whose thankless natures ... oh, abhorred spirits! ... not all the whips of Heaven are large

enough ... what! ... to you, whose star-like nobleness gave life and influence to their whole being!”

The poet was pretending to be so overcome with indignation that Timon’s friends had abandoned him that the poet was unable to speak in complete sentences.

He continued, “I am carried away with emotion and cannot cover the monstrous bulk of this ingratitude with any size — number — of words. The words available to me are inadequate to express my feelings.”

“Don’t cover the monstrous bulk of this ingratitude,” Timon said. “Let it go naked, so men may better see it. You who are honest, by being what you are, make them — ungrateful men — best seen and known.”

“He and I have traveled in the great shower of your gifts, and sweetly felt it,” the painter said.

“Yes, you are honest men,” Timon said.

“We have come here to offer you our service,” the painter said.

“Most honest men!” Timon said. “Why, how shall I repay you? Can you eat roots, and drink cold water?”

The poet and painter looked unhappy; they wanted gold.

Timon answered the question for them: “No.”

The poet and painter said, “What we can do, we’ll do, to do you service.”

“You are honest men,” Timon said. “You’ve heard that I have gold. I am sure you have. Speak the truth. You’re honest men.”

“It is rumored that you have gold, my noble lord,” the painter said, “but that is not why my friend and I came

here.”

“Good honest men!” Timon said. “Painter, you draw a counterfeit the best of all the painters in Athens. You are, indeed, the best. You counterfeit most lively.”

Timon’s words were ambiguous. A counterfeit is a painting, or a lie. To counterfeit means to paint, or to tell a lie.

“I am only so-so, my lord,” the painter said.

“What I say is true,” Timon replied.

He turned to the poet and said, “And, as for your fiction, why, your verse swells with stuff so fine and smooth that you are even natural in your art.”

“You are even natural in your art” is ambiguous. It can mean, “Your art is like nature because you hide the artifice in your art.” But a “natural” is a “born fool.” In addition, Timon was saying that the poet was gifted at creating fiction — at telling lies. And of course, “stuff” — as in stuff and nonsense — may not refer to something good. It may refer to worthless ideas.

Timon said to the poet and painter, “But, for all this, my honest-natured friends, I must say that you have a little fault. Indeed, it is not monstrous in you, nor do I wish you to take many pains to mend it.”

The poet and painter said, “Please, your honor, tell us what our fault is.”

“You’ll take it badly,” Timon replied.

“We will thank you very much for telling us, my lord.”

“Will you, indeed?”

“Don’t doubt that we will, worthy lord.”

“Each of you trusts a scoundrel who mightily deceives you,” Timon said.

“Do we, my lord?”

“Yes, and you hear him cheat, see him deceive, know his gross knavery, love him, feed him, keep him in your bosom. Yet I assure you that he is a complete villain.”

“I know of no one like that, my lord,” the painter said.

“Nor do I,” the poet said.

“Look, both of you, I love you well,” Timon said. “I’ll give you gold. Rid these villains from your companies for me. Hang them or stab them, drown them in a sewer. Destroy them by some course of action, and then come to me. I’ll give you gold enough.”

“Name them, my lord,” the poet and painter said. “Let’s know who they are.”

Timon said to the poet and the painter, who were standing a few feet apart, “You are standing here, and you are standing over here, and there are two of you. Each man of you is apart, all single and alone, yet an arch-villain keeps each of you company.”

Timon said to the painter, “If where you are, two villains shall not be, do not come near the poet.”

Timon said to the poet, “If you don’t want to reside except where just one villain is, then abandon the painter.”

He said to both the poet and the painter, “Leave, go packing!”

He started throwing stones at them, saying, “There’s ‘gold’ — you came for gold, you slaves.”

He said to the poet, “You have worked for me; there’s

payment for you. Flee!”

He said to the painter, “You are an alchemist; make gold out of that stone.”

By mixing paints, the painter could make different colors — a kind of alchemy. Alchemists attempted to find the philosopher’s stone, which could turn base metal into gold.

Timon shouted, “Get out, rascal dogs!”

He beat them until they ran away, and then he went into his cave.

Flavius arrived, accompanied by two Senators from Athens, which was at war with Alcibiades. Athens wanted the help of Timon — he and Alcibiades were friends and so Timon might be able to convince Alcibiades not to attack Athens.

“It is in vain that you want to speak with Timon,” Flavius said, “for he is so wrapped up in himself that nothing except himself that looks like a man is friendly with him.”

“Bring us to his cave,” the first Senator said. “It is our duty to speak to Timon, and we have promised the Athenians that we will speak with him.”

“Men are not always the same at all times alike,” the second Senator said. “It was time and griefs that made him like this. Time, with a fairer hand, offering him the fortunes of his former days, may make him the man he used to be. Bring us to him, and whatever will happen, will happen.”

“Here is his cave,” Flavius said.

He called, “May peace and contentment be here! Lord Timon! Timon! Look out of your cave, and speak to friends. The Athenians, in the person of two of their most reverend Senators, greet you. Speak to them, noble Timon.”

Timon came out of his cave and said, “You Sun, that comforts, burn!”

He said to his visitors, “Speak, and be hanged. For each true word, may you get a blister! And may each false word be as searing with pain to the root of your tongue, consuming it with speaking!”

The first Senator said, “Worthy Timon —”

Timon interrupted, “I am worthy of none but such as you, and you are worthy of Timon.”

“The Senators of Athens greet you, Timon,” the first Senator said.

“I thank them,” Timon said, “and I would send back to them the plague, if only I could catch it for them.”

The first Senator said, “Oh, forget the offenses that we ourselves are sorry for having committed against you. The Senators with one voice of love entreat you to come back to Athens. The Senators have thought about special high offices that lie vacant, but which you will best fill and possess.”

The second Senator said, “The Senators confess that they have neglected you in a way that is grossly evident to all, and now the public body, which seldom admits that it made a mistake, feeling in itself a lack of and need for Timon’s aid, acknowledges its own failing and mistake when it withheld aid to Timon. Therefore, the Athens Senate sent us to make to you their sorrowful admission of fault and its apology, together with recompense greater than its offense, even counting every last bit of its offense against you. Yes, the Senate offers to you even such heaps and sums of love and wealth as shall blot out for you what wrongs were theirs and write in you as if you were an account book the figures of their love, which you can read forever.”

“You bewitch me with this offer,” Timon said. “You surprise and overwhelm me emotionally so much that I am on the very brink of crying. Lend me a fool’s heart and a woman’s eyes, and I’ll weep over these comforts, worthy Senators.”

He was sarcastic.

The first Senator said, “Therefore, if it pleases you to return with us and to take the Captainship of our Athens — yours and ours — and defend us against Alcibiades and his army, you shall be met with thanks, you shall be legally assigned absolute power, and your good name will continue to be associated with authority; then very soon we shall drive back the wild attacks of Alcibiades, who, like a very savage boar, roots up his country’s peace.”

“He shakes his threatening sword against the walls of Athens,” the second Senator said.

“Therefore, Timon —” the first Senator said.

Timon interrupted, “Well, sir, I will; therefore, I will, sir.

One meaning of the word “will” is “wish.”

“This is what I will: If Alcibiades should kill my countrymen, let Alcibiades know this about Timon, that Timon cares not. But if he should sack fair Athens, and take our good, aged men by the beards, giving our holy virgins to the stain and defilement and rape of insolent, beastly, mad-brained war, then let him know, and tell him Timon speaks it, out of pity for our aged and our youth, I cannot choose but tell him, that I care not, and let him take it at the worst, for their knives care not, while you have throats to cut. As for myself, there’s not a knife in the unruly camp but that I prize it and love it more than I love the most reverend throat in Athens.

“So I leave you to the protection of the propitious gods, as I would leave thieves to the protection of jailors.”

Since jailors were also often executioners, such “protection” was not reassuring. And all too often, the gods seem not to be bothered by the suffering of humans.

Flavius advised the two Senators, “Don’t stay and talk to Timon, for all’s in vain.”

Timon said, “Why, I was just now writing my epitaph; it will be seen tomorrow. My long sickness of health and living now begins to mend, and oblivion will bring me everything I want.

“Go, continue to live. May Alcibiades be your plague, may you be his plague, and may this be the case for a long time!”

“We speak in vain,” the first Senator said.

“But yet I love my country,” Timon said, “and I am not one who rejoices in the destruction of the community, as common rumor in the community says I do.”

“That’s well spoken,” the first Senator said.

“Commend me to my loving countrymen —” Timon said.

“These words become your lips as they pass through them,” the first Senator said.

“And they enter our ears like great conquerors enter the city through gates where people applaud,” the second Senator said.

“Commend me to them,” Timon repeated, “and tell them that, to ease them of their griefs, their fears of hostile strokes of war, their aches, losses, their pangs of love, with other incident throes that nature’s fragile vessel — the body — sustains during life’s uncertain voyage, I will do them

some kindness: I'll teach them to escape wild Alcibiades' wrath."

"I like this well," the first Senator said. "Timon will return again to Athens."

"I have a tree, which grows here beside my cave," Timon said, "that my own need requires me to cut down, and soon I will fell it. Tell my friends, tell the people of Athens, in the sequence of degree from the high class to the low class, that whoever wants to stop affliction, let him make haste and come here, before my tree has felt the axe, and hang himself. Please, give my greeting to the Athenians."

"Trouble him no further," Flavius said. "You always shall find him like this."

"Come not to me again," Timon said, "but say to the people of Athens that Timon has made his everlasting mansion upon the beach of the salty flood we call the sea, and once a day with its foaming froth the turbulent surge of waves shall cover him. There come, and let what will be written on my gravestone be your oracle:

"Lips, let sour words go by and language end.

"What is amiss may plague and infection mend!

"May graves be men's only works and death their gain!

"Sun, hide your beams! Timon has done his reign."

Timon went into his cave.

The first Senator said, "His discontent is coupled to his character, and the two cannot be separated."

"Our hope in him is dead," the second Senator said. "Let us return to Athens, and stretch to the utmost what other means and resources are left to us in our dire peril."

“We must act quickly,” the first Senator said.

The two Senators headed to Athens.

Flavius may have stayed with Timon because he had learned that Timon was dying. Even if Timon wanted to die alone, someone needed to bury him after he died.

— 5.2 —

Two Senators different from the two who had visited Timon talked with a messenger at the main gate of Athens. The messenger had brought to them news concerning Alcibiades and his army.

The third Senator said, “You have taken pains to discover this information, which is painful for Athens. Are his soldiers really as numerous as you report them to be?”

“I have given to you the lowest estimate of the number of his soldiers,” the messenger replied. “Besides that information, I need to tell you that the speed of his army promises that it will arrive before Athens almost immediately.”

“We are in a very hazardous situation, if the other two Senators do not bring Timon back with them,” the fourth Senator said.

“I met a courier, an old friend of mine,” the messenger said. “Although he and I are on opposite sides in this war, yet our old friendship made itself felt, and we spoke in a friendly way together. This man was riding from Alcibiades to Timon’s cave with a letter of entreaty desiring him to enlist his fellowship in the war against your city, a war that was instigated in part for his sake.”

Seeing the two Senators returning from visiting Timon, the third Senator said, “Here come our brothers.”

The first Senator said, "Let's have no talk about Timon; expect no help from him. The enemies' drum is heard, and the fearful and hostile movement of enemy soldiers chokes the air with dust. Let's go inside the city, and prepare. Our future is the fall, I fear; our foes are the snare."

— 5.3 —

One of Alcibiades' soldiers, seeking Timon, arrived at Timon's cave. A crude tomb was near the cave.

The soldier said to himself, "By the description I have been given, this should be the place."

He called, "Who's here? Speak! Ho!"

He said to himself, "No answer! What is this?"

He picked up a wooden board on which some words were written and read this:

"Timon is dead, who has outstretched his life span.

"Some beast read this; there does not live a man."

Timon was cynical to the end. Whoever would read this would have to be a beast, for all men are beasts.

The soldier said to himself, "Timon is dead, for sure; and this is his grave."

Something was written on the tomb. Apparently, what was written on the wooden board was Timon's epitaph, or a first draft of Timon's epitaph.

The soldier said to himself, "What's written on this tomb is in a language I cannot read; I'll write on my wax table what is written. Our Captain has skill with all languages. As an interpreter, he is aged — experienced — although he is young in days.

“By this time he’s arrived at Athens, whose fall is the goal of his ambition.”

— 5.4 —

In front of the walls of Athens, Alcibiades stood with his soldiers and trumpeters.

He told his trumpeters, “Blow and announce to this cowardly and lascivious town our terrifying approach.”

The sound of the trumpets announced the request for a parley between the opposing sides.

Some Athenian Senators looked over the walls of Athens.

Alcibiades said to them, “Until now you have gone on and filled the time with all kinds of licentious acts, making your wills the scope of justice. To you, what is just is whatever will give you what you want. Until now I and people like me who have stepped within the shadow of your power have wandered with our arms crossed — not threatening you with weapons — and we have complained about our suffering in vain. Now the time is ripe, when the suppressed courage in us strongly cries, ‘No more.’ Now you breathless wrongdoers shall sit and pant in your great chairs of ease, and you short-winded insolent men shall break your wind with fear and horrid flight.”

A chair of ease can be a comfortable position of high office, or it can be a comfortable chair that a flatulent high-ranking man would sit in.

The first Senator said, “Noble and young Alcibiades, when your first grievances were only a mere notion and unimportant, before you had power or we had cause to fear, we sent to you, offering to give balm to your rages and offering to wipe out our ungrateful acts with acts of friendship above their quantity.”

The second Senator said, “So also did we woo transformed Timon to our city’s friendship by sending him a humble message and by promising him resources. We were not all unkind, nor do we all deserve the indiscriminate stroke of war.”

The first Senator said, “These walls of ours were not erected by the hands of those from whom you have received your griefs, nor are they such that these great towers, monuments, and public buildings should fall because some particular men who are at fault are in them.”

The second Senator said, “Nor are those men still living who were the instigators of your exile. They were ashamed because they lacked intelligence when they exiled you, and that excess of shame has broken their hearts and killed them. March, noble lord, into our city with your banners spread. By decimation, and a tithed death — one out of every ten men to die — if your desire for revenge hungers for that cannibalistic food that nature loathes — take you the destined tenth, and by the hazard of the spotted die let die those who are spotted with sin.”

The first Senator said, “Not everyone has offended you. It is not fair to take revenge on those who have not offended you for the sins of those who have offended you.

“Crimes, like lands, are not inherited.”

This is an interesting sentence. Most likely, the first Senator had misspoken and meant to say, “Crimes, unlike lands, are not inherited.” Certainly, lands are left to heirs in wills. Or perhaps the first Senator meant that land can never really be owned, for the land was here long before the “owner” was born and will be here long after the “owner” has died. And perhaps the first Senator was also saying that if lands cannot be inherited, then crimes certainly cannot. A crime is immaterial, while land is

material. If a material thing cannot be inherited, then certainly an immaterial thing cannot be inherited.

The first Senator continued, "So then, dear countryman, bring into Athens your ranks of soldiers, but leave outside the city your rage. Spare your Athenian cradle and those kin of yours who in the bluster of your wrath must fall along with those who have offended. Like a shepherd, approach the fold and cull the infected forth, but kill not all together."

The second Senator said, "Whatever it is you want, it is better for you to use your smile to get it rather than hew with your sword to get it."

The first Senator said, "Simply set your foot against our gates that are fortified with ramps of earth, and the gates shall open as long as you will metaphorically send your gentle heart first to say you shall enter as a friend."

The second Senator said, "Throw your glove, or any other pledge of your honor, to let us know that you will use the wars to redress the wrongs done to you and not to destroy us all. If you do this, all your soldiers shall make their harbor in our town, until we have carried out your full desire and redressed the wrongs done to you."

Alcibiades threw down his glove and said, "Then there's my glove. Descend, and open your gates, which I have not attacked. Those enemies of Timon's and my own enemies whom you yourselves shall pick out for reproof shall fall and no more, and to appease your fears with my more noble purpose, not a soldier of mine shall go outside the boundary of his quarters, or offend the stream of regular justice in your city's boundaries. If any soldier of mine does this, he shall be delivered to your public courts and pay the heaviest penalty."

The two Senators said, "This is most nobly spoken."

“Descend, and keep your words,” Alcibiades said.

The two Senators descended and opened the gates.

The soldier who had been sent to see Timon arrived and said to Alcibiades, “My noble general, Timon is dead. He has been entombed upon the very edge of the sea, and on his gravestone was written this inscription, which I copied onto a wax tablet and brought away. The soft impression of the letters on the wax will reveal to you what my poor ignorance was unable to interpret.”

Alcibiades translated and read the inscription out loud:

“Here lies a wretched corpse, of wretched soul bereft.

“Seek not my name. May a plague consume you wicked wretches who are still left!

“Here lie I, Timon, who, when I was alive, all living men did hate.

“Pass by and curse your fill, but pass and stay not here your gait.”

Alcibiades said, “These words, Timon, well express in your epitaph your latter spirits and mood. Though you hated in us our human griefs, scorned our brain’s flow — our droplets, our tears, that fall from parsimonious human nature — yet your rich imagination taught you to make the sea-god Neptune’s vast sea weep always during its high tide on your low grave, on faults forgiven. Death forgives faults.

“Noble Timon is dead. We will speak more about his memory soon.

“Bring me into your city, and I will use the olive branch as well as my sword. I will make war breed peace, and make peace stop war. I will make each prescribe to the other as if

they were each other's physician.”

He ordered, “Let our drums strike,” and he and the others marched into the city.

NOTES (Timon of Athens)

— 4.3 —

- This is a quotation from Francis Bacon about a belief that he rejects:

*Wherefore there are axioms, or rather certain conceits, which, received by philosophers, and transferred to astronomy, and unfortunately being credited, have corrupted the science. Our rejection of them will be simple, as well as our judgment upon them; for it is not suitable to waste precious time on silly refutations. The first of these is, that **all things above the moon inclusively are incorruptible**; and in no degree or form whatever do they undergo new beginnings or changes; of which it has been said elsewhere, that it is a fond and silly saying.*

Bold added.

Source: Francis Bacon, *The Works of Francis Bacon* (1884) Volume 1.djvu/548.

- The quotation from the sixteenth-century *Shiltei Hagiborim* by R. Joshua Boaz comes from this book:

Windows onto Jewish Legal Culture: Fourteen Exploratory Essays, edited by Hanina Ben-Menahem, Arye Edrei, Neil S. Hecht. Page 127.

- For what it's worth, I found this paragraph online:

The Voodoo religion makes wide use of feathers. Pillow magic is the practice of placing objects into the pillow of a person to cause wasting sickness and even death. Feather pillows are the best type to use because of feathers' magical properties. By using secret spells the "Voodoo" can cause bird or animal monsters to take shape out of the

pillow feathers. It will grow slowly and only at night. When it is completely formed the person who has been sleeping on the pillow will die.

The above paragraph is from the May 2012 article “Strange Superstitions About Feathers” for *Nature Center Magazine*.

I also found this paragraph online:

PIGEONS: a lone white pigeon perching on a chimney is said to be a death omen. For quite a long time when feather beds were popular, it was claimed that pigeon feathers in such a bed only prolonged the agonies of someone dying, and consequently any pillow or mattress containing them was invariably removed from a sick-room.

Source: SUPERSTITIONS and OLD WIVES' TALES

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- I retold the Aesop's fable about the fox, lion, and stag from this book:

Aesop's Fables: A New Translation by V. S. Vernon Jones. With an Introduction by G. K. Chesterton and Illustrations by Arthur Rackham. 1912 Edition. Pp. 212-214.

Aesop's Fables: A New Translation is available at Project Gutenberg.

- I adapted the Aesop's fable about the ass, fox, and lion so that the ass accused the fox of treachery.

Chapter XXXII: TITUS ANDRONICUS

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Titus Andronicus*)

Male Characters

SATURNINUS, Son to the late Emperor of Rome, and afterwards declared Emperor.

BASSIANUS, Brother to Saturninus, in love with Lavinia.

TITUS ANDRONICUS, a Roman, General against the Goths.

MARCUS ANDRONICUS, Tribune of the People, and brother to Titus.

LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS, and MUTIUS, Sons to Titus Andronicus. Lucius is Titus' oldest son.

YOUNG LUCIUS, a Boy, Son to Lucius.

PUBLIUS, Son to Marcus Andronicus.

SEMPRONIUS, CAIUS, and VALENTINE, Kinsmen to Titus.

AEMILIUS, a noble Roman.

ALARBUS, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON, Sons to Tamora. Alarbus is Tamora's oldest son; he becomes a human sacrifice.

AARON, a Moor, beloved by Tamora. Aaron's skin color is black.

A Captain, Tribune, Messenger, and Clown; Romans.

Goths and Romans.

Female Characters

TAMORA, Queen of the Goths.

LAVINIA, Daughter to Titus Andronicus.

Minor Characters

A Nurse, and a black Child.

Senators, Tribunes, Officers, Soldiers, and Attendants.

SCENE

Rome, and the country near it.

NOTES

ANDRONICI: Plural of ANDRONICUS.

SIRRAH: A term used to address a male who is of lower social status than the speaker.

CHAPTER 1 (Titus Andronicus)

— 1.1 —

The Roman Emperor had recently died, and his two sons hoped to become the new Emperor. Saturninus based his claim on being the oldest son, while Bassianus based his claim on merit — Bassianus believed that he was more worthy than his older brother to be the new Emperor.

Before the Capitol, Saturninus and his supporters arrived at the same time that Bassianus and his supporters arrived. Both Saturninus and Bassianus wanted to enter the gates and climb up to the Capitol. The gates to the Capitol were located by the Tomb of the Andronici.

Saturninus said, “Noble patricians, supporters of my right to succeed as Emperor, defend the justice of my cause with your weapons, and, countrymen, my loving followers, plead my right to succeed my father as Emperor with your swords. I am my father’s first-born son; my father was the most recent to wear the imperial crown of Rome. Therefore, let my father’s honors, fame, and glory live on in me by making me Emperor. Do not wrong my seniority and insult me by making my younger brother Emperor.”

Bassianus said, “Romans, friends, followers, all of you who support my right to be Emperor, if ever Bassianus, Caesar’s son, has been gracious and esteemed in the eyes of royal Rome, then guard this passage to the Capitol and do not allow a dishonorable man to approach the imperial seat. Instead, be dedicated to virtue and to justice, continence and self-control, and nobility. Let desert and worth prevail in a free election, and, Romans, fight for the freedom to make your own choice.”

Marcus Andronicus arrived, holding the Emperor’s crown.

He was in the Capitol, looking down at Saturninus and Bassianus. Marcus was a Tribune and the brother of Titus Andronicus.

Marcus Andronicus said, “You two Princes, who strive by factions and by friends ambitiously for rule and authority, know that the people of Rome, for whom we act as a special party and whose interest we represent as a Tribune, have, by common voice, in election for the Roman Emperor, chosen Titus Andronicus, who has been given the surname Pius — which means pious, patriotic, and dutiful — for the many good and great deeds he has done for Rome. A nobler man, a braver warrior, does not live this day within the city walls. He is our General, and the Roman Senate has summoned him home from fighting weary wars against the barbarous Germanic people known as the Goths. With his sons, Titus Andronicus, a terror to our foes, has yoked a strong nation that has been trained up in weapons. He has made the Goths submit to Roman rule. Ten years have passed since he first undertook this cause of Rome and wielded weapons to chastise our enemies’ pride. Five times he has returned bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons in coffins from the battlefield, and now at last, laden with the spoils of honor, good Titus Andronicus returns to Rome — he is renowned and flourishing in arms.

“Let us entreat you, Saturninus and Bassianus, out of respect for the name of the late Emperor, the man whom you would like to now worthily succeed as Emperor, and out of respect for the rights of the Capitol and the Senate, rights that you profess to honor and adore, that you withdraw and abate your strength by disarming. Dismiss your followers and, as suitors should, plead your merits and make your case to be Emperor in peace and humbleness.”

Saturninus said, “How civilly the Tribune speaks to calm my thoughts!”

Bassianus said, “Marcus Andronicus, I so trust in your uprightness and integrity, and I so love and honor you and yours, your noble brother Titus and his sons, and Titus’ daughter, gracious Lavinia, who humbles all my thoughts and is Rome’s rich ornament, that I will here dismiss my loving friends, and to my fortunes and the people’s favor I will commit my cause in balance to be weighed.”

The followers of Bassianus left.

Saturninus said, “Friends, who have been thus forward in supporting my right to be Emperor, I thank you all and here dismiss you all, and to the love and favor of my country I commit myself, my person, and my cause.”

The followers of Saturninus left.

Saturninus added, “Rome, be as just and gracious to me as I am confident and kind to you.”

He then said to the people in the Capital, “Open the gates, and let me in.”

Bassianus added, “Tribunes, let me, a poor candidate, in.”

The gates opened, and Saturninus and Bassianus went inside the Capitol.

A Captain arrived before the Capitol and said, “Romans, make way. Clear a path for the good Titus Andronicus, patron of virtue, Rome’s best champion, successful in the battles that he fights. He has returned to Rome with honor and with fortune from the place where he rounded up the enemies of Rome with his sword and brought them to yoke.”

Drums and trumpets sounded.

Martius and Mutius, two of Titus Andronicus’ four remaining living sons, entered. Next came men carrying

two coffins covered with black. Next came Titus Andronicus' two remaining living sons: Lucius and Quintus — Lucius was Titus' oldest living son. Next Titus Andronicus himself arrived. He was followed by Tamora, the Queen of the Goths, and by her sons: Alarbus, Demetrius, and Chiron. Tamora and her sons were Titus' prisoners. With them was Aaron, a Moor who was Tamora's lover. Some other Goths, who were also prisoners, followed, along with some Roman soldiers and Roman citizens.

The men carrying the coffins set them down.

Titus Andronicus said, "Hail, Rome, victorious in your mourning clothes! Just as the ship, which has discharged her freight, returns with precious new cargo to the bay from whence at first she weighed her anchors, here returns me, Andronicus, my temples bound with laurel boughs, to re-salute my country with his tears — tears of true joy for my return to Rome.

"Jupiter, King of the gods and great defender of this Capitol, show favor to the rites that we intend to observe!

"Romans, of my twenty-five valiant sons, half of the fifty sons that King Priam of Troy had, behold the poor remains, alive and dead! Here are two of my sons in coffins, and only four of my sons are left alive! Let Rome reward with love these sons of mine who still live. Let Rome reward with burial among their ancestors these of my sons whom I bring to their final home."

He paused and then said, "The Goths have given me leave to sheathe my sword."

Titus meant that by being conquered, the Goths had made it unnecessary for him to brandish his sword and fight them.

He then said, addressing himself, "Titus, you are unkind

and negligent to your own dead. Why do you allow your sons, who are still unburied, to hover on the dreadful shore of the River Styx in the Underworld? Until your sons have been properly buried, their spirits cannot cross the River Styx and enter the Land of the Dead.”

He ordered, “Make way so that I can lay them in the tomb by their brethren.”

Some men opened the Tomb of the Andronici.

Titus Andronicus said, “Dead sons of mine, greet your ancestors in silence, as the dead are accustomed to be, and sleep in peace, you who were slain in your country’s wars!

“Oh, sacred repository of my joys, sweet room of virtue and nobility, how many sons of mine you have inside you — sons whom you will never give to me again!”

Lucius, Titus’ oldest living son, said to him, “Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths so that we may cut off his limbs and on a pile of wood sacrifice his flesh *ad manes fratrum* — to the spirits of our brothers — in front of this earthy prison of their bones. That way, their spirits will not be unappeased and we will not be disturbed by unnatural happenings on Earth.”

Titus Andronicus replied, “I give to you the noblest Goth who survives — the eldest son of this distressed Queen.”

“Stop, Roman brethren — Roman religious observers!” Tamora, the Queen of the Goths, and a mother, said as she knelt. “Gracious conqueror, victorious Titus, pity the tears I am shedding. These are a mother’s tears shed in great grief for her son. If your sons were ever dear to you, then think that my son is as dear to me! Isn’t it enough that we have been brought to Rome, captive to you and to your Roman yoke, to appear in and beautify your triumphal procession at your return, but must my sons be slaughtered in the

streets because of their valiant doings in their country's cause?

“If to fight for King and nation is piety in your sons, it is also piety in these boys — my sons. Andronicus, do not stain your tomb with blood. Do you want to emulate the nature of the gods? Then emulate them in being merciful. Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge. Thrice noble Titus, spare my first-born son.”

“Be calm, madam, and pardon me,” Titus Andronicus said. “These are their brethren, their brothers, whom you Goths beheld alive and dead, and for their slain brethren, they ask for a sacrifice as part of their religion. To be this sacrifice, your son has been selected, and he must die to appease the groaning spirits of those who are dead and gone.”

“Away with him!” Lucius ordered. “Make a fire right away, and with our swords, upon a pile of wood, let's cut off his limbs and burn them until they are entirely consumed.”

Titus Andronicus' four living sons — Lucius, Martius, Mutius, and Quintus — exited with Alarbus, Tamora's oldest son, as their prisoner.

“This is cruel, irreligious piety!” Tamora mourned as she stood up.

“Scythia is known for the barbarism of its inhabitants,” Tamora's son Chiron said, “but have the Scythians ever been half as barbarous as these Romans?”

“Don't compare the Scythians to the ambitious Romans,” Tamora's son Demetrius said. “Alarbus goes to his eternal rest, and we survive to tremble under Titus' threatening looks. Therefore, madam, accept that this sacrifice will happen, but hope as well that the same gods who gave Hecuba, the Queen of Troy, the opportunity to exact severe

and merciless revenge upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent will favor Tamora, the Queen of the Goths — when Goths were Goths and Tamora was Queen — to avenge these bloody wrongs upon her foes.”

The Thracian tyrant was Polymestor, to whom Hecuba’s son Polydorus had been sent — with treasure — for his safety during the Trojan War. After Troy fell, King Polymestor of Thrace killed Polydorus so he could keep the treasure. The leader of the Greeks, Agamemnon, had fallen in love with Cassandra, one of Hecuba’s daughters, and Hecuba was able to get Agamemnon to allow her and some other Trojan women to see Polymestor and his sons. The Trojan women killed Polymestor’s sons, and Hecuba scratched out his eyes and blinded him, thus getting revenge for the death of her son Polydorus.

Titus Andronicus’ four living sons — Lucius, Martius, Mutius, and Quintus — returned. Their swords were bloody.

Lucius said to his father, Titus, “See, lord and father, how we have performed our Roman rites. Alarbus’ limbs have been cut off, and his entrails now feed the sacrificing fire, whose smoke, like incense, perfumes the sky. Nothing remains to be done except to inter our brethren in the tomb, and with loud trumpet calls welcome them to Rome.”

Titus Andronicus replied, “Let it be done, and let Titus Andronicus make this his last farewell to their souls.”

Trumpets sounded, and the two coffins were placed in the Tomb of the Andronici.

Titus said, “In peace and honor rest here, my sons. Rome’s readiest champions, repose here in rest, secure from worldly chances and mishaps! Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells, here grow no damned grudges; here are no storms, no noise, but only silence and eternal sleep. In

peace and honor rest here, my sons!”

Lavinia, Titus’ daughter, arrived in time to hear the end of Titus’ speech.

She said, “In peace and honor may Lord Titus live long. My noble lord and father, live on in fame! At this tomb my tears I render as tribute for my brethren’s funeral obsequies, and at your feet I kneel, with tears of joy, shed on the earth, for your return to Rome. Oh, bless me here with your victorious hand, whose fortunes Rome’s best citizens applaud!”

“Kind Rome, you have thus lovingly kept safe the comfort of my old age to gladden my heart! Lavinia, live; outlive your father’s days, and as a reward for your virtue outlive even eternal fame!”

Marcus Andronicus and the Tribunes came out of the Capitol to greet Titus Andronicus. So did Saturninus and Bassianus.

Marcus Andronicus said, “Long live Lord Titus, my beloved brother, who is a gracious conquering general in the eyes of Rome!”

“Thanks, gentle Tribune, my noble brother Marcus,” Titus replied.

“And welcome, nephews, home from successful wars,” Marcus Andronicus said. “I mean you who survive, as well as you who sleep in fame! Fair lords who drew your swords in your country’s service, your fortunes are alike. But the safer triumph belongs to those for whom we hold this funeral pomp because they have aspired to Solon’s happiness and they have triumphed over chance by being in honor’s bed — the grave!”

When Croesus, King of Lydia, asked the wise Athenian

Solon who was happier than he, Croesus, Solon named three men, all of whom were dead. He then said, "Call no man happy until he is dead." By this, he meant that the goddess Fortune is fickle, and a man who is happy and fortunate today may be unhappy and unfortunate tomorrow.

Marcus continued, "Titus Andronicus, the people of Rome, whose friend in justice you have ever been, send to you by me, their Tribune and their trust, this robe of white and spotless hue, and they have nominated you as a candidate to be Emperor, as are these our late-deceased Emperor's sons. Therefore, be a candidate and put on this white robe and help to set a head on headless Rome."

"Rome's glorious body needs a better head than mine, which shakes because of old age and feebleness," Titus replied. "Why should I don this white robe, and trouble you? I might be chosen with proclamations today, but tomorrow yield up my rule and give up my life and die, and then all of you will have to redo all this business."

"Romans, I have been your soldier for forty years, and I have led my country's strength successfully and buried twenty-one valiant sons who were knighted on the battlefield, slain manfully while bearing weapons and performing rightful service for their noble country. Give me a staff of honor for my old age, but do not give me a scepter with which I can control the world. The man who held that scepter most recently, lords, wielded it justly."

Marcus Andronicus, who knew the will of the people, said, "Titus, if you ask to be Emperor, you will be elected."

Saturninus said, "Proud and ambitious Tribune, are you really quite sure of that?"

"Be calm, Prince Saturninus," Titus said.

Saturninus, who was not calm, said, "Romans, do right by

me. Patricians, draw your swords and do not sheathe them until I, Saturninus, am Rome's Emperor.

"Titus Andronicus, I wish you would be shipped to Hell rather than rob me of the people's hearts!"

Lucius, who understood what his father, who respected old customs and values, wanted to do, said, "Proud Saturninus, you are interrupting the good thing that noble-minded Titus intends to do for you!"

Titus said, "Be calm, Prince Saturninus. I will restore to you the people's hearts, and I will have them elect you as Emperor although you are not their first choice."

Bassianus made a bid for Titus' support: "Andronicus, I do not flatter you, but I do honor you, and I will honor you until I die. I will be most thankful if you strengthen my faction — those who want me to be Emperor — with your friends. To men of noble minds, thanks are an honorable reward."

Titus did not change his mind about supporting Saturninus' candidacy to be Emperor: "People of Rome, and people's Tribunes here, I ask for your support and your votes: Will you bestow them in a friendly way and support whom Andronicus supports?"

The Tribunes replied, "To gratify the good Andronicus and to welcome his safe return to Rome, the people will accept as Emperor whomever he supports."

"Tribunes, I thank you," Titus said, "and I make a formal request that you elect your old Emperor's eldest son, Lord Saturninus, as Emperor. His virtues will, I hope, reflect on Rome the way that the Sun-god's rays reflect on Earth, and ripen justice and make it flourish in this commonwealth. Therefore, if you will elect to be Emperor the person whom I support, crown Saturninus and say, 'Long live our

Emperor!”

Romans shouted their approval, and Marcus Andronicus crowned Saturninus as Emperor.

Saturninus said, “Titus Andronicus, for your favors done to us in our election as Emperor this day, I give you thanks in partial payment of what you deserve from me, and I will with deeds reward your nobility and courtesy. And, for the first deed, Titus, I will advance your name and honorable family by making your daughter, Lavinia, my Empress, Rome’s royal mistress, and mistress of my heart. In the sacred Pantheon, I will marry her. Tell me, Andronicus, does this proposal please you?”

Titus replied, “It does, my worthy lord; and in this match I regard myself to be highly honored by your grace. Here in sight of the Romans, I consecrate my sword, my chariot, and my prisoners to Saturninus. These presents are well worthy of Rome’s imperial lord. Receive them; they are the tribute that I owe you. These are the symbols of my honor, and they lie humbled at your feet.”

“Thanks, noble Titus, father of my life!” Saturninus said. “Rome shall record how proud I am of you and of your gifts, and when I forget the least of these indescribable rewards, Romans, forget your duty to be loyal to me.”

Titus said to Tamora, “Now, madam, you are prisoner to an Emperor. He is a man who, because of your honor and your status, will treat you and your followers nobly.”

Looking at Tamora closely for the first time, Saturninus thought, *Tamora is a beautiful lady, believe you me. She is of the hue and complexion that I would choose, were I to choose anew. If I had not already chosen to marry Lavinia, I would choose to marry Tamora.*

He said to Tamora, “Clear up, fair Queen, your cloudy

countenance. Though the deeds of war have wrought this change in your countenance, you have not been brought to Rome to be made an object of mockery. You shall be treated like nobility in every way. Believe what I say, and do not let unhappiness daunt all your hopes. Madam, he who comforts you — and I am the one comforting you — can make you greater than the Queen of the Goths.”

He then said to Lavinia, who of course had heard what he said to Tamora, “Lavinia, are you displeased by what I have said?”

“No, my lord,” Lavinia replied, “I know that your true nobility has caused you to say these words with a Princely courtesy.”

“Thanks, sweet Lavinia,” Saturninus said. “Romans, let us go. Here we set our prisoners free without ransom.”

He added, “Proclaim our honors, lords, with trumpets and drums.”

As the trumpets and drums sounded, Saturninus spoke quietly to Tamora.

Bassianus, who was previously engaged to Lavinia, said, “Lord Titus, by your leave, this maiden is mine.”

He put his arms around Lavinia.

Titus said to him, “What, sir! Are you in earnest then, my lord?”

“Yes, noble Titus,” Bassianus replied, “and I am entirely resolved to do myself the right and reasonable course of action of marrying Lavinia.”

“‘*Suum cuique*’ — ‘to each his own’ — is our Roman justice,” Marcus Andronicus said. “This Prince is justly seizing nothing but what is already his own.”

Lucius said, “And he will and shall have Lavinia if I, Lucius, live.”

Titus Andronicus, who had just given permission to Saturninus to marry Lavinia, said, “Traitors, get away from here! Where is the Emperor’s guard? Treason, my lord! Lavinia is ambushed and captured!”

“Captured!” Saturninus said. “By whom?”

Bassianus answered, “By him who justly may carry his betrothed away from all the world.”

Bassianus, Marcus Andronicus, and Lavinia ran through a door.

Titus’ son Mutius said, “Brothers, help to convey Lavinia away from here, and with my sword I’ll guard this door and keep anyone from pursuing Lavinia.”

Titus’ sons Lucius, Martius, and Quintus ran through the door to help Lavinia run safely away.

Titus said to Saturninus, “My lord, continue to follow your plan to marry Lavinia. I’ll soon bring her back.”

He approached the door through which Saturninus and Lavinia had fled.

His son Mutius said, “My lord, you shall not pass through the door here.”

“What, villain boy!” Titus said. “Do you bar my way anywhere in Rome?”

He stabbed his son.

Mutius cried, “Help, Lucius, help!”

Then he died.

During the fight, Saturninus, Tamora, Demetrius, Chiron,

and Aaron went through a door and climbed up into the Capitol. They were able to look down and see Titus Andronicus.

Lucius came back, saw that Titus had killed Mutius, and said to his father, “My lord, you are unjust, and more than unjust, because you have slain your son without a just reason.”

Titus replied, “Neither you, nor he, are any sons of mine. My sons would never so dishonor me as you have done. Traitor, restore Lavinia to the Emperor.”

“I will restore her dead, if you wish,” Lucius said, “but I will not give Lavinia to him to be his wife because she is another man’s lawfully promised love.”

He exited through the door.

Looking down on Titus, Emperor Saturninus said, “No, Titus, no; the Emperor does not need Lavinia. The Emperor does not need her, or you, or any of your stock. I’ll trust, but only very slowly, a man after he mocks me once, but I will never trust you or your traitorous haughty sons — all of you worked together to dishonor me in this way. Was there no one else in Rome to make a laughingstock other than me? Very well, Andronicus, this deed is consistent with that proud brag of yours — you said that I begged you to make me Emperor.”

Of course, this accusation was not true.

“Monstrous!” Titus said. “What reproachful words are these?”

“Go. Now. Leave here,” Emperor Saturninus said. “Go and give that fickle woman to the man who drew his sword and flourished it in the air to win her. You shall enjoy a valiant son-in-law; he is fit to join with and fight beside your

lawless sons in the commonwealth of Rome.”

“These words are like razors to my wounded heart,” Titus said.

Saturninus then proposed to Tamora: “And therefore, lovely Tamora, Queen of Goths, who like the stately Moon goddess Phoebe among her nymphs outshines the most splendid dames of Rome, if you should be pleased with this my sudden choice, behold, I choose you, Tamora, to be my bride, and I will make you Empress of Rome.

“Speak, Queen of Goths, do you applaud my choice? Will you marry me?”

“I swear here by all the Roman gods, since priest and holy water are so near and candles burn so brightly and everything stands in readiness for Hymenaeus, the god of marriage, I will not walk the streets of Rome, or climb up to my palace, until from forth this place I lead my married bride beside me.”

Kneeling, Tamora replied, “And here, in the sight of Heaven, to the Romans I swear that if Saturninus marries the Queen of Goths and makes her Empress, she will be a handmaid to his desires, and a loving nurse and mother to his youth.”

“Arise, fair Queen, and let us go to the Pantheon to be married,” Saturninus said. He ignored Titus as he said, “Lords, accompany your noble Emperor and his lovely bride, sent by the Heavens for Prince Saturninus; her wisdom in agreeing to marry me has conquered her misfortune. Go with us to the Pantheon, and there we shall perform our marriage rites.”

Everyone except Titus departed.

Alone, Titus said to himself, “I am not invited to wait upon

this bride. Titus, when were you ever accustomed to walk alone, dishonored like this, and accused of wrongs and crimes?”

Marcus Andronicus and Titus’ three remaining living sons — Lucius, Martius, and Quintus — returned.

Marcus Andronicus said, “Titus, see, oh, see what you have done! You have killed a virtuous son in a bad quarrel. You did not have a good reason to kill him.”

“No, foolish Tribune,” Titus replied. “I have not killed unworthily any son of mine, and I have not killed you, or these sons of mine, who are confederates in the deed that has dishonored all our family. You are an unworthy brother, and these are unworthy sons!”

Lucius requested, “Allow us to give our brother burial, as is fitting. Allow us to give Mutius burial with our brethren.”

“Traitors, go away!” Titus shouted. “He will not rest in this tomb. For five hundred years has stood this monument, which I have sumptuously re-built. Here none but soldiers and Rome’s officers repose in fame; none basely slain in brawls are buried here. Bury him wherever you can; he will not be buried here.”

Marcus said to Titus, “My lord, this is impiety in you. My nephew Mutius’ honorable deeds plead for him. He must be buried with his brethren.”

Quintus and Martius said, “And he shall, or we will accompany him in death.”

Titus asked, “What villain was it who said, ‘And he shall’?”

Quintus replied, “He who would maintain it in any place but here.”

“What, would you bury him to spite me?” Titus asked.

“No, noble Titus,” Marcus Andronicus said, “but I beg you to pardon Mutius and to bury him.”

“Marcus, even you have metaphorically struck my helmet,” Titus replied. “And, with these boys, you have wounded my honor. I consider every one of you to be my enemy, so trouble me no more, but get you gone.”

Martius said, “He is not himself; let us withdraw.”

Quintus said, “Not I — not until Mutius’ bones have been buried.”

Marcus Andronicus and Titus’ three living sons kneeled before him.

Marcus Andronicus said, “Brother, for that is what you are to me —”

Quintus said, “Father, for that is what you are to me —”

Titus said, “Speak no more, if you know what is good for you.”

Marcus said, “Renowned Titus, you are more than half my soul —”

Lucius said, “Dear father, you are the soul and substance of us all —”

Marcus pleaded, “Permit me, your brother, to inter my noble nephew here in the nest of virtue. Mutius died honorably as he helped Lavinia. You are Roman; do not be barbarous. The Greeks after careful consideration buried Great Ajax, who slew himself; wise Laertes’ son, Ulysses, graciously pleaded for Great Ajax’ funeral. Let not young Mutius, then, who was your joy, be barred his entrance here into the Tomb of the Andronici.”

Great Ajax was the second strongest warrior of the Greeks during the Trojan War; Achilles was the first. After Achilles died, Achilles' mother, the sea goddess Thetis, wanted to award Achilles' magnificent armor, which had been made by the blacksmith god Vulcan, to one of the Greek warriors. Both Great Ajax and Ulysses argued that he should be awarded the armor, which was eventually given to Ulysses. Great Ajax went insane and killed some sheep, thinking that they were Ulysses and Agamemnon, who was the leader of the Greeks. When Great Ajax regained his sanity, he was so ashamed that he committed suicide. Ulysses convinced his fellow Greeks that Great Ajax should be given a proper funeral.

Marcus had pleaded well. He knew that Titus, his brother, would respond favorably to an ancient exemplum, especially one involving famous warriors.

Titus said, "Rise, Marcus, rise. This is the most dismal day that I have ever seen. On this day my sons dishonored me in Rome! Well, bury him, and next you shall bury me."

Marcus Andronicus and Titus' living sons placed Mutius in the Tomb of the Andronici. Great Ajax had died because he valued honor so much; Titus realized that Mutius, his son, had believed that he was protecting the honor of Lavinia, his sister, who was engaged to Saturninus.

Lucius said, "There your bones will lie, sweet Mutius, with your friends, until we adorn your tomb with memorial tokens."

All knelt and said, "Let no man shed tears for noble Mutius: He who died for the sake of virtue lives on in fame." Then they stood again.

"My lord, let us step out of these dreary dumps and this melancholy," Marcus said to Titus. "How came it to happen that the cunning Queen of Goths is so suddenly

advanced in Rome? She has gone from being a captive to being the Roman Empress!”

“I don’t know how it happened, Marcus,” Titus replied, “but I know it did happen. Whether or not it happened as part of a plot, the Heavens can tell. Is she not then indebted to the man who brought her to such a height? Yes, and she will nobly remunerate him.”

Saturninus and Tamora walked through one door. With them were Tamora’s sons Demetrius and Chiron, and Aaron the Moor. Saturninus and Tamora were now married.

Bassianus, Lavinia, and some attendants walked through another door. Bassianus and Lavinia were now married.

Angry, Saturninus said, “So, Bassianus, you have won your bout.” He added, sarcastically, “May God give you joy, sir, of your gallant bride!”

“And you of yours, my lord!” Bassianus said. “I have no more to say to you, nor do I wish any less for you; and so, I take my leave of you.”

“Traitor, if Rome has law or we have power,” Saturninus said, using the royal plural, “you and your faction shall repent this kidnapping of Lavinia.”

“Do you call it kidnapping, my lord, when I seize what is my own — my truly betrothed love who is now my wife? But let the laws of Rome determine all; in the meanwhile I possess what is mine.”

“Very well, sir,” Saturninus said. “You are very short with us, but if we live, we’ll be as sharp with you.”

Bassianus replied, “My lord, what I have done, as best I may I must answer for it and shall do with my life. However, I want your grace to know this: By all the duties

that I owe to Rome, this noble gentleman, Lord Titus here, has had his reputation and honor wronged. When I rescued Lavinia, Titus with his own hand slew his youngest son because of his zeal to serve you and because he was so highly moved to wrath when his desire to freely give Lavinia to you was balked. Return him, then, to your favor, Saturninus. Titus has shown in all his deeds that he is a father and a friend to you and Rome.”

Titus Andronicus said, “Prince Bassianus, stop pleading for me and my deeds. It is you and those who helped you who have dishonored me.”

He knelt and said, “May Rome and the righteous Heavens be my judge for how I have loved and honored Saturninus!”

Tamora said to Saturninus, her husband, “My worthy lord, if ever Tamora were gracious in those Princely eyes of yours, then hear me speak impartially for all, and at my request, sweetheart, pardon what is past.”

Saturninus replied, “What, madam! Shall I be dishonored openly, and basely put my sword in its sheath without getting revenge?”

Tamora said, “No, my lord; may the gods of Rome forbid that I should be a person who causes you to be dishonored! But on my honor I vouch for good Lord Titus’ innocence in everything; his fury — which is not faked — shows that his grievances are real. Therefore, at my request, look graciously on him. Do not lose so noble a friend on an idle supposition, and do not afflict his gentle heart with sour looks.”

She then said quietly to Saturninus so that others could not hear, “My lord, do as I advise you. Be won over at last. Hide all your feelings of grief and discontent. You are only newly planted in your throne. Be afraid, then, that the

common people — and the patricians, too — after justly considering the situation, will take Titus' part and replace you as Emperor because you are showing ingratitude, which Rome considers to be a heinous sin. Yield to my entreaty; and then leave it to me. I'll find a day to massacre them all and raze their faction and their family, the cruel father and his traitorous sons, to whom I begged for my dear son's life, and I will make them know what it is to let a Queen kneel in the streets and beg for mercy in vain."

She said out loud so all could hear, "Come, come, sweet Emperor; come, Titus Andronicus. Emperor, tell this good old man to stand up, and cheer up Titus' heart that now dies in the tempest of your angry frown."

"Rise, Titus, rise," Saturninus said. "My Empress has prevailed over me."

"I thank your Majesty, and her, my lord," Titus said, standing up. "These words, these looks, infuse new life in me."

"Titus, I am now a part of Rome," Tamora said. "I am now a happily adopted and naturalized Roman, and I must advise the Emperor for his good. This day all quarrels die, Andronicus. Let it be to my honor, my good lord, that I have reconciled your friends and you. As for you, Prince Bassianus, I have given my word and promise to the Emperor that you will be more mild and obedient. Do not be afraid, my lords, and you, Lavinia. Take my advice, all of you, and humble yourselves by getting on your knees and asking for a pardon from his Majesty."

Marcus, Lavinia, and Titus' three remaining living sons knelt.

Lucius said, "We kneel, and we vow to Heaven and to his Highness that what we did was done as mildly as we could, considering the situation — we protected our sister's honor

and our own.”

Marcus said, “On my honor, I say that this is true.”

Saturninus said, “Go away now, and talk no more; trouble us no more.”

“No, no, sweet Emperor, we must all be friends,” Tamora said. “Marcus the Tribune and his nephews kneel and ask for your grace. I will not be denied: Sweetheart, look at them.”

Saturninus said, “Marcus, for your sake and your brother Titus’ here, and at my lovely Tamora’s entreaty, I pardon these young men’s heinous faults. All of you, stand up.”

They stood up.

Saturninus continued, “Lavinia, although you left me as if I were a churl — a peasant — I found a sweetheart, and as sure as death I swore I would not part from the priest as a bachelor. If the Emperor’s court can feast two brides, you are my guest, Lavinia, and so are your friends.

“This day shall be a love-day, Tamora. On this day, I shall forgive faults and resolve disputes.”

Titus Andronicus said, “Tomorrow, if it will please your Majesty to hunt the panther and the male deer with me, with horns and hounds we’ll give your grace *bonjour* — a good day.”

Saturninus replied, “So be it, Titus, and gramercy — great thanks — too.”

CHAPTER 2 (Titus Andronicus)

— 2.1 —

In front of the palace, Aaron the Moor stood alone.

He said to himself, “Now Tamora has climbed to the top of Mount Olympus, home of the gods. She is safe from the slings and arrows of Lady Fortune, and she sits aloft, on high, safe from the crack of thunder and the flash of lightning. She has advanced so high that she is above the threatening reach of pale and envious people.

“Tamora now is just like the golden Sun that salutes the morning and after having gilded the ocean with its yellow beams gallops through the zodiac in its glistening coach, and looks over the highest hills. Upon her does Earthly honor wait, and virtue stoops and trembles at her frown.

“So, then, Aaron, arm your heart and fit your thoughts to mount aloft with your imperial mistress, and mount with her as high as she goes, whom you in triumph have long held prisoner, fettered in amorous chains and faster bound to Aaron’s eyes that bewitch and charm than Prometheus is tied to a rock in the Caucasus, a mountain range in Caucasia.”

Aaron had been having an affair with Tamora and so he had mounted her, and he intended to benefit from her rise in fortune. She was bound by love to him as securely as Prometheus, who had stolen fire from the gods to give to human beings, was chained to a rock in the Caucasus — as Prometheus’ punishment for helping human beings, Zeus had chained him to that rock. Each day, an eagle ate Prometheus’ liver, which grew back each day and was eaten again the following day.

Aaron continued, “Away with slavish clothing and servile thoughts! I will be bright and shine in pearl and gold as I serve this newly made Empress. To serve, did I say? I mean to wanton sexually with this Queen, this goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph, this Siren, who will charm Rome’s Saturninus, and see the shipwreck of himself and his commonwealth.”

Aaron compared Tamora to Semiramis, an Assyrian Queen who was known for her power, sexual appetite, cruelty, and beauty.

He also compared her to a Siren, who would sing beautifully in order to cause sailors to become entranced by her song and wreck their ships on the shore of her island.

Aaron, hearing some people fighting, said, “Hello! What storm is this?”

Tamora’s two living sons — Demetrius and Chiron — came near Aaron. They were shouting and swaggering.

Demetrius said, “Chiron, you are not as intelligent as your age suggests, and your intelligence cannot be sharp since you intrude where I am welcomed and may, for all you know, be loved.”

Chiron replied, “Demetrius, you presume too much in everything, just like you are doing now as you try to intimidate me with your boasts. You are older than I am by only a year or two, and that is not enough to make me less gracious than you or to make you more fortunate than me. I am as able and as fit as you are to serve and to deserve my mistress’ favor. I shall use my sword to prove that to you, and I shall use it to plead my passion for Lavinia and her love.”

Aaron said quietly to himself, “Clubs! Clubs! These lovers will not keep the peace.”

The phrase “Clubs! Clubs!” was a call to the city watch to come and use their clubs to break up a fight in the city streets — or a call to apprentices to grab clubs and come and fight on one or the other side.

Demetrius said, “Why, boy, although our mother, unwisely, gave you a dancing-rapier — used for fashion and decoration while dancing, and not used for fighting — to wear by your side, have you grown so desperate that you threaten your friends? Ha! Have your useless sword — a stage prop! — glued inside your sheath until you know better how to handle it.”

Chiron replied, “Meanwhile, sir, you shall perceive very well how much I dare to do with the little skill I have.”

Addressing him by an insulting title, Demetrius said, “Boy, have you grown that brave?”

They drew their swords.

Having naked weapons so near the palace was illegal, and could result in serious punishment, including death, and so Aaron now intervened.

He came forward and said, “Why, what is going on now, lords! Do you dare to draw your swords so near the Emperor’s palace and engage in such a quarrel openly? I know very well the reason for all this quarreling. I would not for a million gold pieces allow that reason to be learned by them it most concerns, and your mother — even for much more than a million gold pieces — would not allow herself to be so dishonored in the court of Rome as that would make her. For shame, put up your swords.”

Demetrius said, “Not I, not until I have sheathed my rapier in his bosom and completely thrust down his throat these reproachful speeches that he has breathed to my dishonor here.”

“I am prepared and fully resolved to fight you,” Chiron said. “You are a foul-spoken coward, who thunders with your tongue, but who dares to do nothing with your weapon!”

“Put your swords away, I say!” Aaron thundered. “Now, by the gods that warlike Goths adore, this petty quarrel will ruin us all. Why, lords, aren’t you thinking how dangerous it is to encroach upon a Prince’s right? Lavinia is married to Prince Bassianus. Has Lavinia then become so loose, or Bassianus so degenerate, that for her love such quarrels may be raised without check, justice, or revenge? Young lords, beware! If the Empress should learn the reason for this discord, the music would not please her.”

“I don’t care whether she and all the world know,” Chiron said. “I love Lavinia more than all the world.”

Demetrius said, “Youngster, learn to choose to love someone of a lower social status. Lavinia is your elder brother’s desired.”

“What! Are you mad?” Aaron asked. “Don’t you know how furious and impatient men can be? Don’t you know that they cannot tolerate competitors in love? I tell you, lords, you are pursuing your own deaths when you pursue Lavinia in this way.”

“Aaron, I would be ready to meet a thousand deaths in order to achieve her whom I love,” Chiron replied.

“To achieve her!” Aaron said. “What do you mean?”

“Why are you pretending not to understand?” Demetrius asked. “She is a woman, and therefore may be wooed. She is a woman, and therefore may be won. She is Lavinia, and therefore must be loved. Why, man, more water glides by the mill than the miller knows of; and we all know it is easy to steal a slice from a cut loaf of bread. Why can’t we steal

a piece of ass? Although Bassianus is the Emperor's brother, better than he have worn Vulcan's badge."

Vulcan's badge was the horns of a cuckold — a man whose wife had cheated on him. Vulcan, the blacksmith god, was married to Venus, who had an affair with Mars, the war god.

Aaron thought, *Someone as high ranking as Saturninus may wear Vulcan's badge.*

Demetrius continued, "Then why should a man despair who knows to court a woman with the help of words, fair looks, and liberality? Haven't you very often struck a doe, and carried her by the gamekeeper's nose without getting caught?"

"Why, then, it seems, some certain snatch or so would serve your turns," Aaron said.

He meant that Demetrius and Chiron could snatch — kidnap — Lavinia and forcibly make her serve them sexually. In other words, Demetrius and Chiron could take turns raping her.

"Yes, so the turn were served," Chiron said. He wanted to make sure that he had his turn.

"Aaron, you have hit it — you have hit on the solution to our problem," Demetrius said.

"I wish that you had already hit it — by shooting your arrow into the center of your target," Aaron said. "Then we should not be troubled with this business. Why, listen! Are you two such fools that you would you argue over this solution to your problem? Would it offend you, then, if both of you would have sex with Lavinia?"

"Truly, that would not bother me," Chiron said.

“Nor me, so long as I had my turn with her,” Demetrius said.

“For shame, be friends, and join together so that you can both get what you are fighting for,” Aaron said. “Plots and stratagems must get you what you want; therefore, you must resolve that since you cannot achieve what you want the way you want to achieve it — that is, with words — you must therefore achieve it by what works — that is, with force.

“Learn this from me: Lucrece was not more chaste than this Lavinia, Bassianus’ love.”

Lucrece was an ancient Roman gentlewoman who committed suicide after being raped.

One meaning of chastity is abstinence from sex, but the meaning of chastity used here was abstinence from illicit sex, including extramarital sex.

Aaron continued, “A speedier course than lingering languishment you must pursue, and I have found the path. My lords, a ceremonious hunt will take place today. There the lovely Roman ladies will troop. The forest paths are wide and spacious, and many unfrequented places in the forest are suitable for rape and villainy. Separate this dainty doe from the rest of the herd in such a place and strike her home — have sex with her — by force, since words will not get you what you want. This is the only way you will have sex with Lavinia.

“Come, come, we will tell our Empress, Tamora, who has consecrated her wit and intelligence to villainy and vengeance, as if they were her religion, everything that we intend to do. She will sharpen our plot with advice and make it better. She will not allow you to fight each other, but she will help you get everything you wish.

“The Emperor’s court is like the house of rumor and gossip. The palace is full of tongues, eyes, and ears. In contrast, the woods are ruthless and pitiless, dreadful, deaf, and dull. There speak, and strike, daring boys, and take your turns with Lavinia. There satisfy your lust, hidden from the eye of Heaven, and revel deep in Lavinia’s treasury.”

“Your counsel, lad, smells of no cowardice,” Chiron said to Aaron.

Demetrius said, “*Sit fas aut nefas*, until I find the stream that will cool this heat I feel, a charm to calm these fits, *per Styga, per manes vehor*.”

Sit fas aut nefas is Latin for “Whether right or wrong.” *Per Styga, per manes vehor* is Latin for “I am borne through the Stygian realms.” The Styx is a river in Hell, and so Demetrius was saying, “I am in Hell.”

Considering the way that Demetrius was planning to treat Lavinia, whom he — and Chiron — had said they loved, he — and Chiron — deserved to be in Hell.

— 2.2 —

Titus Andronicus and his sons Lucius, Martius, and Quintus were in a forest near Rome. Also present were Marcus Andronicus and some hunters, hunting hounds, and attendants.

Titus Andronicus said, “The hunt is afoot. The early morning is bright and grey, the fields are fragrant, and the woods are green. Release the hunting hounds, and let them bay and awaken the Emperor Saturninus and his lovely bride and rouse Prince Bassianus. Also let the horns sound a hunter’s peal so that all the court may echo with the noise.

“Sons, let it be your responsibility, as it is ours, to attend the Emperor’s person carefully. I was troubled in my sleep last night, but this dawning day has inspired new comfort.”

Hounds bayed and horns sounded. Saturninus and Tamora arrived, as did Bassianus and Lavinia. Demetrius and Chiron then arrived, along with some attendants.

Titus Andronicus said, “I give many good mornings to your Majesty. Madam, to you I give as many and as good. I promised your grace a hunter’s peal.”

“And you have rung it lustily, my lord,” Saturninus said, “but somewhat too early for newly married ladies.”

Bassianus asked, “Lavinia, what do you say to that?”

“I say that it is incorrect,” Lavinia said. “I have been wide awake two hours and more.”

“Come on, then,” Saturninus said. “Let us have horses and chariots, and let us begin our hunt.”

He said to Tamora, “Madam, now you shall see our Roman hunting.”

“I have dogs, my lord,” Marcus Andronicus said, “that will rouse the proudest panther in the hunting ground, and climb the top of the highest hill.”

Titus Andronicus said, “And I have horses that will follow where the game makes its way and runs like swallows over the plain.”

Demetrius said quietly to his brother, “Chiron, we will not hunt with horse or hound, but we hope to pluck a dainty doe from the crowd and throw her to the ground.”

— 2.3 —

In a lonely part of the forest, Aaron, holding a bag of gold,

stood by an elder tree.

He said to himself, “A man who has intelligence would think that I had none because I am burying so much gold under a tree and never afterward will possess it. Let him who thinks so badly of me know that this gold will coin a plot, which, cunningly effected, will beget a very excellent piece of villainy.”

He buried the gold under the tree and said, “And so repose, sweet gold, for the unrest of those who receive alms out of the Empress’ chest.”

The “alms” were the gold that he had taken from the treasure chest of Tamora, who was now the Roman Empress.

Tamora entered the scene and said, “My lovely Aaron, why do you look solemn and serious, when everything is making a gleeful display? The birds chant melody on every bush, the snake lies coiled in the cheerful Sun, and the green leaves quiver with the cooling wind and make a checkered shadow on the ground. Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit, and, while the babbling echo mocks the hounds’ cries and replies shrilly to the well-tuned horns, as if a double hunt were heard at the same time, let us sit down and listen to their yelping noise, and after such ‘conflict’ such as the wandering Prince and Dido are supposed to have once enjoyed, when a happy and fortuitous storm surprised them and they then curtained themselves within a secret-keeping cave, we may, each of us wreathed in the other’s arms, our pastimes done, enjoy a golden slumber while hounds and horns and sweet melodious birds be to us as is a wet nurse’s song of lullaby to bring her babe sleep.”

The wandering Prince was Aeneas, the Trojan warrior who survived the Fall of Troy and who was destined to go to

Italy and become an important ancestor of the Roman people. Before he settled in Italy, a storm blew his ships and him to Carthage. Hoping to keep Aeneas from fulfilling his destiny, the goddess Juno created the right conditions for Aeneas and Dido, the Queen of Carthage, to have a love affair. During a hunt, a storm arose, and Aeneas and Dido sought shelter in a cave, where they made love for the first time.

Aaron replied, “Madam, although Venus governs your desires, Saturn is the planet that is the astrological dominator over my desires. What signifies my death-dealing eye, my silence and my cloudy melancholy, my fleece of woolly hair that now uncurls even as an adder does when she uncoils in order to perform some fatal execution? No, madam, these are not signs of sexual desire. Vengeance is in my heart, death is in my hand, and blood and revenge are hammering in my head.

“Listen, Tamora, the Empress of my soul, which never hopes to have more Heaven than rests in you. This is the day of doom for Bassianus. He will die today, and his Philomela will lose her tongue today. Your sons will make pillage of her chastity, and they will wash their hands in Bassianus’ blood.”

Philomela was an Athenian Princess who was raped by her sister’s husband, Tereus, who cut out her tongue so that she could not tell anyone that he had raped her. Philomela wove a tapestry, however, that revealed the rape and rapist.

Aaron asked, “Do you see this letter?”

He handed it to Tamora and said, “Take this letter, which is written in a scroll and is integral to a deadly plot. Please give the letter to the King.”

He saw Bassianus and Lavinia coming toward them and said, “Now ask me no more questions; we are seen. Here

comes a part of the booty we hope for. They do not yet fear the destruction of their lives.”

Tamora said, “Ah, my sweet Moor, you are sweeter to me than life!”

“No more, great Empress; Bassianus is coming. Be angry with him; and I’ll go and fetch your sons to back you up in your quarrels, whatever they are.”

Aaron exited.

Bassianus said to Tamora, “Who have we here? Rome’s royal Empress, unaccompanied by her appropriate escorts? Or is it the goddess Diana, clothed like Tamora? Has Diana abandoned her holy groves to see the many people hunting in this forest?”

Bassianus was being gallant in comparing Tamora to Diana because goddesses are more beautiful than any mortal woman could ever be.

The choice of Diana to compare Tamora to was, however, ironic. Tamora was cuckolding her husband, while Diana was fiercely protective of her virginity. In fact, while hunting with his hounds the Theban Actaeon unintentionally saw Diana bathing naked in a pool of water. Diana turned him into a stag with a human mind, and then his hunting hounds picked up his scent and ripped him to pieces.

As Aaron had advised, Tamora picked a quarrel with Bassianus: “Saucy critic of our private steps! Had I the power that some say Diana had, your temples should be planted presently with horns, as were Actaeon’s temples; and the hounds would fall upon your newly transformed limbs, unmannerly intruder as you are!”

Lavinia was angry and said, “By your leave, noble

Empress, it is thought that you have an excellent gift for giving men horns.”

She was referring to the horns of a cuckold; an unfaithful wife was said to give her husband horns.

Lavinia continued, “It is also suspected that your Moor and you have separated yourselves from the others so that you can try sexual experiments. May Jove, King of the gods, shield your husband from his hounds today! It would be a pity if they should mistake him for a stag.”

Referring to Aaron the Moor, Bassianus said, “Believe me, Queen, your swarthy Cimmerian — a dark person who dwells in darkness — makes your honor his body’s hue: stained, detested, and abominable. Why are you separated from all your train of followers, and why have you dismounted from your snow-white, good-looking steed and wandered here to an obscure plot of land, accompanied by only a barbarous Moor, if not because of your foul desire?”

Lavinia added, “Your being intercepted in your sport with the Moor is a great reason for you to berate my noble lord for what you call saucy and insolent rudeness.”

She said to her husband, “Please, let us go away from here and let her enjoy her raven-colored love. This valley fits that purpose surpassingly well.”

Bassianus said to Tamora, “The King my brother shall hear about this.”

Lavinia added, “Yes, for these sexual slips of yours have long disgraced him. He is too good a King to be so mightily abused!”

Tamora said, “Why, I have patience to endure all this.”

She had seen her sons, Demetrius and Chiron, coming, and she knew that she would soon get revenge for what they

had said to her.

Demetrius said to her, “How are you, dear sovereign, and our gracious mother! Why does your Highness look so pale and wan?”

Tamora replied, “Don’t I have reason to look pale? These two — Bassianus and Lavinia — have enticed me here to this place: You see that it is a barren and detested valley. The trees, although it is summer, are yet forlorn and lean, overcome with moss and baleful, parasitic mistletoe. Here the Sun never shines; here nothing breeds, except for the night-haunting owl or the ominous raven. And when they showed me this abhorrent pit, they told me that here, at the dead of night, a thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes, ten thousand poisonous toads that cause swelling, and as many goblins would make such fearful and confused cries that any mortal body hearing the sounds would immediately become insane, or else die suddenly.

“No sooner had they told this Hellish tale than immediately they told me they would tie me here to the body of a dismal yew tree, and leave me to this miserable death. And then they called me a foul adulteress, a lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms that any ear ever heard to such effect, and, if you had not by wondrous fortune come, they would have executed this vengeance on me.

“Revenge it, as you love your mother’s life, or henceforth you will not be called my children.”

Demetrius said to Tamora as he stabbed Bassianus with a dagger, “This is a witness that I am your son.”

Chiron took the dagger from Demetrius, stabbed Bassianus, and said, “And this is a witness for me, struck home to show my strength.”

Bassianus died.

Lavinia said to Tamora, “Yes, come, Semiramis — no, I should say barbarous Tamora, for no name fits your evil nature but your own!”

Semiramis was an Assyrian Queen who was known for her power, sexual appetite, cruelty, and beauty. Lavinia was insulting Tamora by saying that Semiramis’ name was not associated with enough evil to be suitable as a name for Tamora.

Tamora said to Chiron, “Give me your dagger. My boys, you shall witness and know that your mother’s hand shall right your mother’s wrong.”

“Stop, madam,” Demetrius said. “More belongs to Lavinia than her life. First thresh the corn, and afterward burn the straw. This hussy made an issue of her chastity, her nuptial vow, and her loyalty to her husband, and with that false and old-fashioned pride confronted and insulted your mightiness. Shall she carry her chastity into her grave?”

“If she does, then I wish that I were a eunuch,” Chiron said. “Let us drag her husband away from here to some secret hole, and make his dead trunk a pillow to our lust.”

Tamora said, “But when you have the honey you desire, do not let this wasp survive and sting both of you two and me.”

“I promise you, madam,” Chiron said, “that we will make sure that she can do us no harm.”

He said to Lavinia, “Come, mistress, now by force we will enjoy that nicely preserved chastity of yours.”

Lavinia began to beg: “Oh, Tamora! You have the face of a woman —”

“I will not hear her speak,” Tamora said to her sons. “Away with her!”

“Sweet lords, entreat her to listen to only a word from me,” Lavinia begged Demetrius and Chiron.

“Listen, fair madam,” Demetrius said to his mother, “let it be your glory to see her tears; but let your heart be to them as unrelenting and hard flint is to drops of rain.”

“When did the tiger’s young ones teach the mother?” Lavinia said to Demetrius. “Oh, do not teach her wrath; she taught wrath to you. The milk you sucked from her breasts turned to marble. Even as you sucked at her teats you learned your tyranny. Yet not every mother breeds identical sons.”

Knowing that Demetrius would not help her, Lavinia turned to Chiron and begged, “Entreat her to show pity to a woman.”

“What, would you have me prove myself a bastard?” Chiron replied.

“It is true; the raven does not hatch a lark,” Lavinia said to him. “Yet I have heard — I wish I could find it to be true now! — that the lion, moved by pity, endured having his princely paws pared all away. Some say that ravens foster forlorn children, while their own young birds stay famished in their nests. Be to me, although your hard heart say no, not nearly as kind as the lion or the raven, but show me at least some pity!”

Lavinia had referred to a fable by Aesop in which a lion fell in love with a woman and agreed to have its claws pared and its teeth pulled so that her human relatives would not be afraid of it. Once these things were done, however, the woman’s relatives drove away the defenseless lion.

She had also referred to a folktale in which a raven fed lost human children. In her version of the folktale, the raven’s nestlings went hungry.

Neither story was likely to be effective with Tamora and her two sons, especially since Lavinia had, in her fear, mistakenly referred to paring the lion's paws instead of claws. Both stories also had bad consequences: The lion did not get his love, and the raven's own nestlings went hungry.

"I don't know what it means!" Tamora said. "Away with her!"

"Oh, let me teach you what I mean!" Lavinia said. "Let me teach you for my father's sake, who allowed you to live, when he might well have slain you. Be not obdurate — open your deaf ears."

"Had you personally never offended me," Tamora said, "I would be pitiless for his sake."

She said to her sons, "Remember, boys, I poured forth tears in vain to save your oldest brother, Alarbus, from the sacrifice, but fierce Titus Andronicus would not relent. Therefore, away with her, and use and treat her as you will. The worse you treat her, the better I love you."

"Oh, Tamora," Lavinia begged, "be called a gentle Queen, and with your own hands kill me in this place! For I have not begged so long for my life. I — poor me — was slain when Bassianus died."

She knelt and hugged Tamora's knees.

"What are you begging for, then?" Tamora asked. "Foolish woman, let me go."

"I beg for immediate death," Lavinia said. "And I beg for one thing more that womanhood will not allow my tongue to tell."

Lavinia was begging not to be raped, but she did not want to say the word "rape." She wanted Tamora to pity her and

not allow her to be raped.

She begged Tamora, “Oh, keep me from their worse-than-killing lust and tumble me into some loathsome pit, where no man’s eye may ever behold my body. Do this, and be a charitable murderer.”

In her fear, Lavinia chose words badly. To tumble a woman meant to have sex with a woman.

“If I would do that, I would rob my sweet sons of their fee,” Tamora said. “They hunted you and so they are entitled to a taste of you. I say no to your request; instead, I will let my sons satisfy their lust on you.”

“Let’s go!” Demetrius said. “Lavinia, you have kept us here too long.”

Lavinia said to Tamora, “No grace? No womanhood? Ah, beastly creature! You are a blot and enemy to the name of woman! May ruin fall —”

She had been about to curse Tamora by saying, “May ruin fall upon you,” but Chiron covered her mouth with his hand and said, “You will say no more, for I have stopped your mouth.”

He said to Demetrius, “Bring the body of her husband. This is the hole where Aaron told us to hide it.”

Demetrius threw the body of Bassianus into the pit, and then he and Chiron dragged Lavinia away.

Alone, Tamora said to herself, “Farewell, my sons. Make sure that Lavinia can do no harm to us. May my heart never be merry again until all the Andronici are done away with and killed. Now I will go from here to seek my lovely Moor, and let my passionate sons deflower this whore.”

She exited.

Aaron arrived. With him were Titus Andronicus' two younger sons: Martius and Quintus.

Aaron said, "Come on, my lords, put the better foot forward — hurry. Straightaway I will bring you to the loathsome pit where I saw the panther fast asleep."

"My sight is very dim," Quintus said. "It may forebode something bad."

"My sight is also very dim, I promise you," Martius said. "If it were not that I would be ashamed, I would be willing to leave the hunting and sleep awhile."

Aaron had covered the opening to the pit with vegetation. He maneuvered Martius so that Martius fell into the pit.

Quintus asked, "What have you fallen into? What treacherous and disguised hole is this, whose mouth is covered with wild, uncultivated briars, upon whose leaves are drops of newly shed blood as fresh as morning dew trickling down flowers? This is a very deadly place, I think. Speak, brother, have you hurt yourself in the fall?"

"Brother, I am hurt by the sight of the most dismal spectacle that ever a seeing eye has made a heart lament!"

Aaron thought, *Now I will fetch the King to find Martius and Quintus here, so that he will very likely think that these were the men who murdered his brother.*

He exited to find Emperor Saturninus.

Martius said, "Why don't you assist me, and help me out of this unholy and wicked and bloodstained hole?"

"I am bewildered by a strange fear," Quintus replied. "A chilling sweat overruns my trembling joints. My heart suspects more than my eye can see."

"To prove that you have a prophetic heart that is capable of

discerning the truth, Aaron and you can look down into this den and see a fearful sight of blood and death.”

Quintus looked around for Aaron, but did not see him. He said, “Aaron is gone, and my compassionate heart will not permit my eyes once to behold the thing it imagines and trembles at. Tell me what it is, for never until now was I a child who feared something I did not know.”

Martius replied, “Lord Bassianus lies soaked in blood here, prostrate, like a slaughtered lamb in this detested, dark, blood-drinking pit.”

“If it is dark, how do you know it is he?”

“Upon his bloody finger he wears a precious ring with a jewel that lightens all the hole. Like a candle in some tomb, it shines upon the dead man’s pale cheeks, and shows the harsh interior of the pit. So pale did shine the Moon on Pyramus when he by night lay bathed in his virgin blood.”

Pyramus loved Thisbe, and he arranged to meet her at night. Thisbe arrived first, and saw a lion. She ran away, leaving her mantle behind her, which the lion mauled. Pyramus arrived and found the mantle. He thought that a lion had killed Thisbe, and so he committed suicide.

Martius continued, “Oh, brother, help me with your fainting hand — if fear has made you faint, as it has me — out of this deadly devouring repository that is as hateful as the misty mouth of Cocytus, one of the rivers of Hell.”

“Reach your hand out to me, so that I may help you out,” Quintus said. “Or, if I lack the strength to do you so much good, reach your hand out to me so that I may be pulled into the swallowing womb of this deep pit, poor Bassianus’ grave.”

He pulled Martius’ hand, let loose of it, and said, “I have

no strength to pull you to the brink.”

“And I have no strength to climb without your help.”

“Give me your hand once more; I will not let loose again until you are here aloft with me, or I am below with you.”

He pulled Martius’ hand, and then he said, “You cannot come to me, and so I come to you.”

He fell into the pit.

Aaron and Emperor Saturninus saw Quintus fall into the pit.

“Come along with me,” Saturninus said, walking over to the pit. “I’ll see what hole is here, and who he is who just now has leaped into it.”

He then called into the pit, “Say who you are who just now descended into this gaping hollow of the earth.”

From the pit, Martius replied, “I am the unhappy son of old Titus Andronicus. I came here in a most unlucky hour, and I found your brother, Bassianus, dead.”

“My brother dead!” Saturninus said. “I know that you are only joking. He and his lady are both at the lodge upon the north side of this pleasant hunting ground. It is not an hour since I left him there.”

Martius said, “We don’t know where you left him alive, but — I hate to say this — here we have found him dead.”

Tamora arrived with her attendants. Also accompanying her were Titus Andronicus and Lucius, his oldest son.

“Where is my lord the King?” Tamora asked.

“Here I am, Tamora, although I am wounded with killing grief.”

“Where is Bassianus, your brother?”

“Now you are probing my wound to the bottom. Poor Bassianus lies here murdered.”

“Then all too late I bring this deadly document,” Tamora said. “It reveals the plot of this untimely tragedy, and I wonder greatly that a man’s face can hide such murderous tyranny in the wrinkles of pleasing smiles.”

She gave Saturninus the letter that Aaron had given to her.

Saturninus read the letter out loud: *“If we do not meet him at a convenient time and place — sweet huntsman, it is Bassianus we mean — dig his grave for him. You know what we mean. Look for your reward among the nettles at the elder tree that shades the mouth of the pit where we decided to bury Bassianus. Do this, and make us your lasting friends.”*

He said, “Oh, Tamora! Have you ever heard anything like this? This is the pit, and this is the elder tree. Look around, sirs, and see if you can find the huntsman who murdered Bassianus.”

Aaron dug under the elder tree and said, “My gracious lord, here is the bag of gold.”

Saturninus said to Titus Andronicus, “Two of your whelps, cruel curs of bloody character, have here bereft my brother of his life.”

He ordered, “Sirs, drag them from the pit and take them to the prison. There let them stay until we have devised some never-heard-of torturing pain for them.”

“What, are they in this pit?” Tamora said. “Oh, what a wondrous thing! How easily murder is exposed!”

Some attendants got Martius and Quintus out of the pit.

Titus Andronicus knelt and said, “High Emperor, upon my feeble knee I beg this boon, with tears not lightly shed, that this fell fault of my accursed sons — they are accursed if it is proved that they have committed this fell fault —”

“*If* it is proved!” Saturninus said. “You can see that it is obvious that they committed the murder.”

He asked, “Who found this letter? Tamora, was it you?”

She replied, “Titus Andronicus himself found it and picked it up.”

She had changed Aaron’s plan.

“I did pick up the letter, my lord,” Titus said, “yet let me be my two sons’ bail. By my father’s sacred tomb, I vow that they shall be ready at your Highness’ will to answer what they are suspected of even with their lives.”

“You shall not bail them,” Saturninus said. “See that you follow me.”

Titus Andronicus stood up.

Saturninus ordered, “Some of you bring the murdered body, and some of you bring the murderers. Let them not speak a word; their guilt is plain. By my soul, I say that if something was worse than death, it would be done to them.”

As Saturninus exited, Tamora said, “Titus Andronicus, I will entreat the King for mercy. Fear not for your sons; they shall do well enough.”

She exited.

Titus Andronicus said, “Come, Lucius, come; don’t stay and try to talk to your brothers or their guards.”

In another part of the forest, Demetrius and Chiron were taunting Lavinia, whom they had raped. They had also cut off her hands at the elbows and cut out her tongue so that she could not reveal who had raped and mutilated her.

Demetrius said to her, "So, now go and tell people, if your tongue can speak, who it was who cut out your tongue and raped you."

Chiron said to her, "Write down your mind and in that way reveal what you want to communicate, if your stumps will let you be an author."

Lavinia was flailing about.

Demetrius said, "Look at how she can communicate with signs and gestures."

"Go home, call for perfumed water, and wash your hands," Chiron said.

"She has no tongue to call for water, nor hands to wash, and so let's leave her to her silent walks," Demetrius said.

"If I were her, I would go hang myself," Chiron said.

"If you had hands to help you tie the noose," Demetrius said.

Demetrius and Chiron left Lavinia alone in the forest.

Marcus Andronicus, who was hunting, rode up on a horse, and saw Lavinia, who, ashamed, ran from him.

"Who is this?" he asked himself. "My niece, who flies away so fast! Niece, let me say a word to you. Where is your husband? If I am dreaming, I would give all my wealth if I could wake up! If I am awake, I wish that some planet would strike me down with its malevolent astrological influence so that I could slumber in eternal sleep! Speak, gentle and kind niece, and tell me what stern

and cruel hands have lopped off and hewed and made your body bare of her two branches, those sweet ornaments, in whose circling hugs Kings have sought to sleep? These Kings could never find a happiness that would equal half your love. Why do you not speak to me?"

Lavinia opened her mouth, and blood poured out.

"Alas, a crimson river of warm blood, resembling a bubbling fountain stirred by wind, rises and falls between your rose-red lips, coming and going with your honey-sweet breath. But, surely, some Tereus has raped you, and, lest you should reveal his guilt, he has cut out your tongue.

"Ah, now you turn away your face because of shame! And, notwithstanding all this loss of blood, as from a fountain with three issuing spouts, still your cheeks look as red as the Sun's face when it blushes as it encounters a cloud at dawn or Sunset.

"Shall I speak for you? Shall I say that it is so — that the man who raped you has mutilated you? Oh, I wish that I knew your heart, and I knew the beast, so that I might rant at him and ease my mind!

"Sorrow concealed, like an oven with its door shut, burns the heart to cinders.

"Fair Philomela lost only her tongue after Tereus raped her, but she painstakingly sewed a piece of embroidery that revealed what she had in her mind.

"But, lovely niece, that means of communication is cut from you. You have met a craftier Tereus, niece, and he has cut those pretty fingers off that could have sewed better than Philomela. If the monster had seen your lily-white hands tremble, like aspen-leaves, upon a lute and make the silken strings delight to kiss them, he would not then have touched them for his life!

“Or, if he had heard the Heavenly harmony that your sweet tongue has made, he would have dropped his knife, and fell asleep as Cerberus did at the Thracian poet’s feet.”

The Thracian poet was Orpheus, who traveled to the Land of the Dead in an attempt to rescue his wife. To get past Cerberus, the three-headed guard dog of Hell, he played his lute and sang. Cerberus, put under a spell by the music, fell asleep.

Marcus Andronicus continued, “Come, let us go, and make your father blind, for such a sight will blind a father’s eye. One hour’s storm will drown the fragrant meadows. What will whole months of tears do to your father’s eyes? Do not draw away from me, for we will mourn with you. Oh, how I wish our mourning could ease your misery!”

He and Lavinia departed.

CHAPTER 3 (Titus Andronicus)

— 3.1 —

On a street in Rome, Martius and Quintus, guarded and with their hands tied, were being taken to the place of execution. Walking with them were Judges, Senators, and Tribunes. Titus Andronicus was begging for the lives of his sons.

Titus Andronicus begged, “Hear me, grave fathers! Noble Tribunes, stop! Out of pity for my old age, whose youth was spent in dangerous wars while you securely slept, and out of pity for all the blood of my sons that was shed in Rome’s great war, and out of pity for all the frosty nights that I have watched on guard, and out of pity for these bitter tears, which you see now filling the aged wrinkles in my cheeks, have pity on my condemned sons, whose souls are not corrupted although people think they are. For twenty-two of my sons, I have never wept because they died honorably.”

Titus Andronicus now regarded his son Mutius as having died honorably. Mutius had resisted the will of Saturninus, and Saturninus had now sentenced two of Titus’ other sons to death. Also, Mutius had died helping his sister, Lavinia.

Titus fell to the ground. Everyone walked past him, continuing to the place of execution.

He said, “For these two sons, Tribunes, in the dust I write my heart’s deep grief and my soul’s sad tears. Let my tears quench the earth’s dry appetite. My two sons’ sweet blood will make the earth shame and blush. Oh, earth, I will befriend you with more rain that shall fall from these two ancient urns than youthful April shall provide with all its showers. In summer’s drought I’ll drop tears upon you

continually. In winter I'll melt the snow with warm tears and keep eternal springtime on your face, provided that you refuse to drink my dear sons' blood."

Lucius, carrying a drawn sword, walked over to his father.

Titus, his head still down, said, "Oh, reverend Tribunes! Oh, gentle, aged men! Unbind my sons, reverse the judgment of death, and let me, who has never wept before, say that my tears are now prevailing orators. Tell me that my tears have been successful at persuading you to pardon the lives of my two sons."

Lucius said, "Oh, noble father, you lament in vain. The Tribunes cannot hear you; no man is nearby. You are telling your sorrows to a stone."

"Ah, Lucius, let me plead for your brothers," Titus Andronicus said. "Grave Tribunes, once more I beg of you —"

"My gracious lord, no Tribune hears you speak."

"Why, it does not matter, man," Titus Andronicus said. "If they did hear me, they would ignore me, or if they did pay attention to me, they would not pity me, and yet I must plead; therefore, I tell my sorrows to the stones, which, although they cannot relieve my distress, yet in some ways they are better than the Tribunes because they will not interrupt my tale. When I weep, they humbly at my feet receive my tears and seem to weep with me, and if they were only dressed in solemn clothing, Rome could support no better Tribunes than these. A stone is as soft as wax — Tribunes are harder than stones. A stone is silent, and does not offend, but Tribunes with their tongues condemn men to death."

Titus stood up and asked, "But why are you standing with your weapon drawn?"

“I tried to rescue my two brothers from their deaths,” Lucius said. “I failed, and because of my attempt to rescue my brothers the judges have pronounced my everlasting doom of banishment.”

“Oh, happy and fortunate man!” Titus Andronicus said. “They have befriended you. Why, foolish Lucius, don’t you perceive that Rome is only a wilderness of tigers? Tigers must prey, and Rome affords no prey except for me and mine. How happy and fortunate you are, then, because you are banished from these devourers!”

Titus saw his brother, Marcus, coming toward them. Behind Marcus was a figure that Titus could not see clearly.

Titus asked, “But who is coming here with my brother, Marcus?”

Marcus said, “Titus, prepare your aged eyes to weep, or if you do not do so, prepare your noble heart to break. I bring consuming, devouring sorrow to your old age.”

“Will it consume me?” Titus asked. “Let me see it, then.”

He was ready for his life to be consumed so that he could die.

“This was your daughter,” Marcus said as Lavinia stepped closer.

“Why, Marcus, so she still is.”

Seeing Lavinia’s bloody stumps, Lucius knelt and said, “This sight kills me!”

Titus said, “Faint-hearted boy, arise, and look upon her.”

Lucius got up.

Titus Andronicus said to his daughter, “Speak, Lavinia,

what accursed hand has made you handless in your father's sight? What fool has added water to the sea, or brought a faggot to bright-burning Troy? My grief was at the height before you came here to me, and now my grief is like the Nile River, which disdains all bounds — it overflows and floods.

“Give me a sword, and I'll chop off my hands, too, because they have fought for Rome, and all in vain. My hands have also nursed my woe by feeding me and keeping me alive. They have been held up in unavailing prayer, and they have served me ineffectively. Now all the service I require of them is that the one will help to cut off the other.

“It is well, Lavinia, that you have no hands, because hands that do Rome service are useless.”

Lucius asked Lavinia, “Speak, gentle sister, who has mutilated you?”

Marcus answered for her: “Oh, that delightful instrument of her thoughts that blabbed them with such pleasing eloquence has been torn from forth that pretty hollow cage, her mouth, where, like a sweet melodious bird, it sang sweet and varied notes, enchanting every ear!”

“Can you say for her who has done this deed?” Lucius asked.

Marcus replied, “I found her like this, straying in the enclosed hunting ground, seeking to hide herself, as does the deer that has received some terminal wound.”

Titus said, “Lavinia is my dear, and the man who wounded her has hurt me more than he would have if he had killed me. For now I stand like a man upon a rock surrounded by a wilderness of sea, who sees the incoming tide grow wave by wave, expecting always that some malicious surge of the sea will swallow him in its brinish bowels.”

Titus pointed and said, "My wretched sons have traveled down this way to their deaths."

He then said, "Here stands my other son, a banished man, and here is my brother, weeping at my woes. But that which gives my soul the greatest hurt is dear Lavinia, who is dearer than my soul."

He said to her, "Had I but seen your picture in this plight, it would have made me insane. What shall I do now that I behold your living body like this? You have no hands to wipe away your tears, nor a tongue to tell me who has mutilated you. Your husband is dead, and being found guilty of his death, your brothers were condemned to die, and they are dead by this time."

Lavinia expressed her sorrow by crying.

"Look, Marcus!" Titus said. "Ah, son Lucius, look at her! When I mentioned her brothers, then fresh tears fell on her cheeks, like honey-dew falls upon a plucked lily that is almost withered."

Marcus said, "Perhaps she weeps because her brothers killed her husband, or perhaps she weeps because she knows that they are innocent."

Titus said to Lavinia, "If they killed your husband, then be joyful because the law has taken revenge on them."

Then he said, "No, no, they would not do so foul a deed. Witness the sorrow that their sister shows.

"Gentle Lavinia, let me kiss your lips. Or make some sign to me to tell me how I may ease your pain. Shall your good uncle, and your brother Lucius, and you, and I sit round about some fountain, all of us looking downwards at the reflection to see how our cheeks are stained like still-wet meadows that have muddy slime left on them by a flood?"

And in the fountain shall we gaze so long that the fresh taste is taken from that clear, fresh water and made a brine-pit with our bitter tears?

“Or shall we cut off our hands, like yours?”

“Or shall we bite off our tongues, and pass the remainder of our hateful days in mime?”

“What shall we do?”

“Let us, who have our tongues, plot some device of further misery that will make us wondered at in the times to come.”

Lucius said, “Dear father, stop crying. Look at how my wretched sister sobs and weeps at your grief.”

Marcus said, “Patience, dear niece. Good Titus, dry your eyes.”

He offered Titus his handkerchief.

“Ah, Marcus, Marcus!” Titus said. “Brother, I know well that your handkerchief cannot drink a tear of mine because you, poor man, have drowned it with your own tears.”

Pulling out his handkerchief, Lucius said, “My Lavinia, I will wipe your cheeks.”

“Look, Marcus, look!” Titus said. “I understand her gestures. If she had a tongue with which to speak, now she would say to her brother what I said to you. His handkerchief, which is soaked with his own true tears, can do no good on her sorrowful cheeks. Oh, what a harmony of woe is this! Our handkerchiefs are as far from being of use to us as Limbo is from the bliss of Heaven!”

Aaron, who was wearing a scimitar by his side, walked over to them.

He said, "Titus Andronicus, my lord the Emperor sends you this message — that, if you love your sons, let Marcus, Lucius, or yourself, old Titus, or any one of you, chop off your hand and send it to the King. In return for the hand, he will send to you here both of your sons alive. The hand shall be the ransom for their crime."

Happy, Titus Andronicus said, "Oh, gracious Emperor! Oh, kind and gentle Aaron! Did a raven ever sing so much like a morning lark that gives sweet tidings of the Sun's rise? With all my heart, I'll send the Emperor my hand. Good Aaron, will you help to chop it off?"

"Stop, father!" Lucius said. "That noble hand of yours, which has thrown down and conquered so many enemies, shall not be sent to the Emperor. My own hand will serve the turn. My youth can better spare my blood than you can spare your blood, and therefore my hand shall save my brothers' lives."

Marcus Andronicus said to Titus and Lucius, "Which of your hands has not defended Rome, and reared aloft the bloody battle-axe to write destruction on the enemy's castle? Oh, both of you deserve so much. My own hand has been entirely idle; let it serve to ransom my two nephews from their deaths. Now I know that I have kept my hand until now so that it can have a worthy end."

Aaron said, "Come, agree quickly whose hand I shall take to the Emperor out of fear that Martius and Quintus will die before their pardon arrives."

"My hand shall go," Marcus said.

"By Heaven, it shall not go!" Lucius said.

"Sirs, argue no more," Titus said. Referring to his hands, he said, "Such withered herbs as these are suitable for being plucked up, and therefore Aaron shall carry my hand to the

Emperor.”

“Sweet father, if I am to be thought your son,” Lucius said, “let me redeem both my brothers from death.”

Marcus said to Titus, “And, for our father’s sake and mother’s care, now let me show you a brother’s love.”

Titus said, “You two come to an agreement. I will spare my hand.”

He was being deliberately ambiguous. Marcus and Lucius thought that the word “spare” meant “leave unharmed,” but Titus was using the word “spare” to mean “do without.”

“Then I’ll go and fetch an axe,” Lucius said.

“But I will use the axe to cut off my hand,” Marcus said.

Marcus and Lucius departed to get an axe.

“Come here, Aaron,” Titus said. “I’ll deceive them both. Lend me your hand, and I will give you mine. Help me cut off my hand.”

Aaron thought, *If what Titus is doing is called deceit, then I will be an honest man. Never will I deceive men the way that Titus is deceiving these two men. But, you, Titus, I will deceive in a different way, as you will realize before half an hour passes.*

Aaron used his scimitar to cut off Titus’ hand at the elbow.

Marcus and Lucius came back.

Titus Andronicus said to them, “Now stop your strife. What had to be done has been done.”

He then said, “Good Aaron, give his Majesty my hand. Tell him it was a hand that guarded him from a thousand dangers; bid him bury it. My hand has deserved more and

better, but let it at least be buried. As for my sons, say I value them as if they were jewels purchased at an easy and low price, and yet they are dear, too — both loved and expensive — because I bought what was already rightfully mine.”

Aaron replied, “I go, Titus Andronicus, and in return for your hand look to have your sons with you soon.”

He thought, *Your son’s heads, I mean. Oh, how this villainy nourishes and delights me when I merely think of it! Let fools do good, and let fair men call for grace. Aaron prefers to have his soul black like his face.*

He left, carrying Titus’ severed left hand.

Titus Andronicus knelt and said, “Here I lift this one hand up to Heaven, and I bow this feeble ruin — my body — to the Earth. If any power pities wretched tears, to that power I call!”

Lavinia knelt.

He said to Lavinia, “What, will you kneel with me? Do, then, dear heart, for Heaven shall hear our prayers or we will breathe foggy sighs and dim the sky, and stain the Sun with fog, as sometimes clouds do when they hug the Sun in their raining bosoms.”

Marcus Andronicus said to Titus, “Oh, brother, speak about actions that are possibilities, and do not break into these deep, extreme, and outrageous exaggerations.”

“Is not my sorrow deep, because it has no bottom?” Titus replied, “Then my passionate outbursts should be bottomless with them.”

“But still let the power of reason govern your laments.”

“If there were reasons for these miseries, then I could bind

my woes into limits,” Titus said. “When Heaven weeps, doesn’t the earth overflow? If the winds rage, doesn’t the sea grow mad and threaten the sky with his big, swollen waves? And will you have a reason for this turmoil?”

“I am the sea; listen, how Lavinia’s sighs blow like wind! She is the weeping sky; I am also the earth. My sea must then be moved with her sighs. My earth must then with her continual tears become a flood, overflowed and drowned. This is why my bowels cannot hide her woes, but like a drunkard I must vomit them. So give me leave to speak, for losers will have leave to ease the resentment in their stomachs with their bitter tongues.”

A messenger arrived. He was carrying Titus’ severed hand and the heads of his sons Martius and Quintus.

The messenger said, “Worthy Titus Andronicus, you are badly repaid for your good hand that you sent to the Emperor. Here are the heads of your two noble sons, and here’s your hand, sent back to you in scorn. Your griefs are their entertainment; they mock your resolution. When I think about your woes, I feel more sorrow than I do when I remember my father’s death.”

The messenger exited.

Marcus Andronicus said, “Now let the hot volcano Aetna cool in Sicily, and let my heart be an ever-burning Hell! These miseries are more than may be endured. To weep with them who weep does ease grief somewhat, but sorrow jeered and mocked at is double death.”

Lucius said, “I am amazed that this sight should make so deep a wound, and yet detested life does not shrink away and leave this body dead! I am amazed that death should ever let life bear the name of life, where life does nothing more than breathe!”

Lavinia kissed Titus.

Marcus Andronicus said, "I am sorry, poor heart, but that kiss is as comfortless as frozen water is to a frozen snake."

Titus Andronicus said, "When will this fearful slumber filled with nightmares come to an end?"

Marcus said, "Now, farewell, delusion. Die, Andronicus: You are not sleeping. Look at your two sons' heads, your warlike hand, your mangled daughter here, and your other son, who has been banished and who has been struck pale and bloodless with this grievous sight. And look at me, your brother, who is now like a stony image, cold and numb. Ah, I will now no more curb your griefs. Tear off your silver hair, and gnaw your other hand with your teeth. Let this dismal sight result in the closing up of our most wretched eyes."

Titus was silent.

Marcus said to him, "Now is a time to rant and storm. Why are you silent?"

Titus Andronicus laughed long, loud, and hard.

"Why are you laughing?" Marcus asked. "It is not suitable for this hour."

"Why am I laughing?" Titus replied. "Because I don't have another tear to shed. Besides, this sorrow is an enemy, and would take over my watery eyes and make them blind with tears shed in tribute to my sorrow, and how then shall I find the way to the goddess Revenge's cave? For these two heads of my sons seem to speak to me, and threaten that I shall never come to bliss until all these evils be returned again and thrust down the throats of those who have committed them."

"Come, let me see what task I have to do. You sorrowful

people, circle round about me, so that I may turn to each of you, and swear upon my soul to right your wrongs.”

He swore the oaths and then said, “The vow is made. Come, brother, take a head, and in this hand I will bear the other head. Lavinia, you shall also be employed. Carry my hand, sweet girl, between your teeth. As for you, Lucius, my boy, get yourself away from my sight: You are an exile, and you must not stay here. Hurry to the Goths, and raise an army there, and, if you love me, as I think you do, let’s kiss and part, for we have much to do.”

Titus and Lucius kissed each other, and then Titus, Marcus, and Lavinia exited.

Alone, Lucius said, “Farewell, Titus Andronicus, my noble father, the most woeful man who ever lived in Rome. Farewell, proud Rome. Until Lucius comes here again, he leaves his pledges dearer than his life — his loved ones. Farewell, Lavinia, my noble sister. I wish you were as you heretofore have been! But now neither Lucius nor Lavinia lives except in oblivion and hateful griefs. If I, Lucius, shall live, I will requite your wrongs and make proud Saturninus and his Empress beg at the gates, like Tarquin and his Queen.”

After King Tarquin’s son, who was also named Tarquin, raped Lucrece, who committed suicide, King Tarquin was overthrown. Lucius Junius Brutus led the revolt against King Tarquin.

Lucius continued, “Now I will go to the Goths and raise an army with which I will be revenged on Rome and Saturninus.”

— 3.2 —

A light meal was set out on a table in Titus Andronicus’ house. Around the table sat Titus Andronicus, Marcus

Andronicus, Lavinia, and Lucius' son: young Lucius.

Titus said, "So, so; now sit, and be careful to eat no more than will preserve just so much strength in us that will allow us to revenge these bitter woes of ours."

Titus fed Lavinia during the meal.

He said to his brother, who had folded his arms in front of himself, which was a sign of sorrow, "Marcus, unknit that knot that is a wreath of sorrow. Your niece and I, poor creatures, lack our hands, and cannot passionately express our tenfold grief with folded arms. This poor right hand of mine is left to tyrannize upon my breast; when my heart, all mad with misery, beats in this hollow prison of my flesh, then I use my hand to thump it down."

Titus said to Lavinia, "You map and pattern of woe, who thus talks in signs! When your poor heart beats with extremely violent beating, you cannot strike it like this to make it still."

"Wound it with sighing, girl, kill it with groans, or get some little knife between your teeth, and just against your heart make a hole so that all the tears that your poor eyes let fall may run into and soak that sink, and drown the lamenting sweet fool with sea-salt tears."

"No, brother, no!" Marcus said to Titus, "Don't advise her to lay such violent hands upon her young and tender life."

"What!" Titus replied. "Has sorrow made you deranged already? Why, Marcus, no man but I should be insane. What violent hands can she lay on her life? Ah, why do you mention the word 'hands'? Would you ask Aeneas to twice tell the tale of how Troy was burnt and he was made miserable? Oh, don't discuss the theme of hands, lest we remember now that we have none. Oh, how stupid it is to regulate talk, as if we should forget we had no hands if

Marcus did not say the word ‘hands’!

“Come, let’s fall to the meal; and, gentle girl, Lavinia, eat this.”

Titus, noticing that the servants had forgotten to bring in something to drink, said, “Here is no drink!”

Lavinia indicated with gestures that she did not need anything to drink and Titus said, “Pay attention, Marcus, to what she is saying. I can interpret all her mutilated and tortured signs. She says she drinks no other drink but tears, brewed with her sorrow, fermented upon her cheeks.”

He said to Lavinia, “Speechless complainer, I will learn your thought. In interpreting your mime, I will be as perfect as begging hermits are in their holy prayers. They are word-perfect in saying their prayers, and I will be word-perfect in interpreting your gestures. You shall not sigh, nor hold your stumps up to Heaven, nor close your eyes, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign, but I will wrest an alphabet from your gestures and by constant practice learn to know your meaning.”

Young Lucius said to Titus, “Good Grandfather, stop making these bitter deep laments; instead, make my aunt merry with some pleasing tale.”

Marcus said, “Alas, the young and tender boy, moved by strong emotion, weeps to see his grandfather’s misery.”

“Be at peace, tender sapling,” Titus said to young Lucius. “You are full of tears, and tears will quickly melt your life away.”

Marcus struck at his dish with a knife.

Titus asked, “What did you strike at, Marcus, with your knife?”

“I struck at something that I have killed, my lord: a fly.”

“Get out, murderer!” Titus said. “You kill my heart. My eyes are gorged with sights of tyranny. It is not fitting for Titus’ brother to commit a deed of death on the innocent. Get out! I see you are not fit for my company.”

Marcus said, “My lord, I have killed only a fly.”

Titus said, “‘Only’? But what if that fly had a father and a mother? How would the father hang his slender gilded wings and buzz sad laments in the air! Poor harmless fly, that, with his pretty buzzing melody, came here to make us merry! And you have killed him.”

“Pardon me, sir,” Marcus said. “It was a black, ugly, ill-favored fly that looked like the Empress’ Moor; therefore, I killed him.”

“Oh,” Titus said. “Then pardon me for reprimanding you, because you have done a charitable deed. Give me your knife; I will triumph over him, pretending to myself that it is the Moor, who has come here intending to poison me.”

Titus took the knife and stabbed at the dead fly, saying, “There’s for yourself, and that’s for Tamora. Ah, sirrah! I think that we are not yet brought so low that between us we cannot kill a fly that comes to us in the likeness of a coal-black Moor.”

Marcus said to himself, “Poor man! Grief has so stricken him that he thinks that false shadows are true substances.”

“Come, take away the meal,” Titus said. “Lavinia, come with me. I’ll go to your private chamber and read to you sad stories that happened in the days of old. Come, boy, and go with me. Your sight is young, and you shall read when my sight begins to be dazzled.”

CHAPTER 4 (*Titus Andronicus*)

— 4.1 —

In Titus' garden in Rome, Lavinia ran after young Lucius, who was carrying books under his arm. Titus and Marcus entered the garden and saw them.

Young Lucius dropped his books and ran to Titus and Marcus, yelling, "Help, Grandfather, help! My aunt Lavinia follows me everywhere, I don't know why. Good uncle Marcus, see how swiftly she comes. Alas, sweet aunt, I don't know what you want."

"Stand by me, Lucius," Marcus said. "Do not fear your aunt."

"She loves you, boy, too well to do you harm," Titus said.

"Yes, when my father was in Rome, she loved me," young Lucius said.

"What does my niece Lavinia mean by these gestures she is making?" Marcus asked.

"Don't be afraid of her, young Lucius," Titus said. "She means something. See, young Lucius, see how much she gestures to you. She would have you go somewhere with her. Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care read to her sons than Lavinia has read to you sweet poetry and Cicero's book *Orator*."

Cornelia Africana's sons, whom she educated well, were known as the Gracchi. They were social reformers of Rome when Rome was a republic.

"Can't you guess why Lavinia keeps at you like this?" Marcus asked.

“My lord, I don’t know, nor can I guess, unless some fit or frenzy is possessing her. I have heard my grandfather say very often that an extremity of griefs would make men mad, and I have read that Queen Hecuba of Troy became insane through sorrow after Troy fell and so many of her children died.

“My lord, although I know my noble aunt loves me as dearly as my mother ever did, and would not, except in delirium, frighten my youth, I was frightened, which made me throw down my books, and run away — without a good reason to, perhaps.

“But pardon me, sweet aunt. And, madam, if my uncle Marcus goes with me, I will most willingly go with your ladyship.”

“Young Lucius, I will go with you,” Marcus said.

Lavinia and the others went to the books that young Lucius had dropped, and Lavinia began to look through them, moving them with her stumps.

Titus Andronicus said, “How are you, Lavinia! What are you doing? Marcus, what does this mean? She wants to see a particular book.

“Which is it, girl, of these? Open them, boy. But you, Lavinia, are deeper read, and better skilled at reading, and can read harder books than young Lucius. Come, Lavinia, and take your choice of all the books in my library, and so forget for a while your sorrow, until the Heavens reveal the damned contriver of this evil deed.”

Lavinia raised her stumps.

Titus asked, “Why is she lifting up her arms like this now?”

Marcus answered, “I think she means that there was more than one confederate in the crime. Yes, there was more than

one, or else she heaves her arms to Heaven as a way of asking for revenge.”

Titus asked, “Young Lucius, what book is that she is tossing about?”

“Grandfather, it is Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. My mother gave it to me.”

Marcus said, “Perhaps she selected it from among the rest for the love of her who is gone.”

“Look!” Titus said. “See how busily she turns the pages!”

He helped her turn the pages and asked, “What is she looking for?”

Lavinia stopped at a passage in the *Metamorphoses*.

Titus said, “This is Ovid’s account of the tragic tale of Philomela. It tells about Tereus’ treason and his rape. And rape, I fear, is the root of your distress.”

“Look, brother, look,” Marcus said. “Note how she closely observes the pages.”

Titus asked, “Lavinia, were you attacked, sweet girl, raped, and wronged, as Philomela was, and forced to have sex in the ruthless, desolate, and gloomy woods?”

She nodded, and Titus said, “See, see! Yes, such a place there is, where we hunted — oh, I wish that we had never, never hunted there! That place was just like the place that the poet here describes; nature made that place for murders and rapes.”

Marcus Andronicus asked, “Why should nature build so foul a den, unless the gods delight in tragedies?”

Titus said to Lavinia, “Give us signs, sweet girl, for here are none but friends. With signs let us know which Roman

lord it was who dared to do the evil deed. Did Saturninus slink — it is possible that he did — as Tarquin did formerly when he slunk out of the military camp to commit rape in Lucrece’s bed?”

Marcus said, “Sit down, sweet niece. Brother, sit down by me. Apollo, Pallas, Jove, or Mercury, inspire me so that I may find who did this treason!

“My lord, look here. Look here, Lavinia: This sandy plot of land is level. Lavinia, guide, if you can, my staff. Watch me and then imitate me. I will use my staff to write my name without the help of any hand at all.”

He held one end of the staff in his mouth and used his feet to guide the other end of the staff and write his name in the sand.

He said, “Cursed be that heart that forced us to this makeshift!

“Write, you good niece, and here display, at last, what God wants to be revealed so that we may take revenge. May Heaven guide your pen to print your sorrows plainly so that we may know the traitors and the truth!”

Lavinia took one end of the staff in her mouth, and she used her stumps to write with the staff.

Titus said, “Do you read, my lord, what she has written? ‘*Stuprum*. Chiron. Demetrius.’”

The word *Stuprum* is Latin for “Rape.” Lavinia had succeeded in telling Titus and Marcus that Chiron and Demetrius had raped her.

Marcus said, “What! The lustful sons of Tamora are guilty of this heinous, bloody deed?”

Titus said, “*Magni Dominator poli, tam lentus audis*

scelera, tam lentus vides?"

This is Latin for "Ruler of the great heavens, are you so slow to hear crimes, so slow to see them?" Titus was quoting a passage from the Roman playwright Seneca's tragedy *Hippolytus*.

Marcus said to Titus, "Calm yourself, gentle lord, although I know enough is written upon this earth in front of us to stir a rebellion in the mildest thoughts and arm the minds of infants to make outcries of protest.

"My lord, kneel down with me; Lavinia, kneel; and kneel, sweet boy, the Roman Hector's hope."

They knelt.

Hector was the foremost Trojan warrior; his hope was his son. Marcus was calling the elder Lucius the Roman Hector.

Marcus said, "Swear with me, as, along with the woe-stricken spouse and father of that chaste dishonored dame, Lucrece, Lucius Junius Brutus swore for her rape, that we will pursue a good plan to get deadly revenge upon these traitorous Goths, and see their blood, or else we will die with this disgrace."

They swore and rose.

"Revenge is certain, if you know how to get it," Titus said. "But if you hunt these bear-cubs, then beware. The dam will wake up; and, if she once catches your scent ... she's still deeply in league with the lion, and lulls him while she plays sexually on her back, and when he sleeps she does whatever — and whoever — she wishes.

"You are an inexperienced huntsman, Marcus, so leave the plot to me. Come, I will go and get a leaf of brass, and with a pen of steel I will write these words on it, and store it.

That will make our oath of revenge permanent.

“The angry northern wind will blow these sands, like the Sibyl’s leaves, abroad, and where’s your lesson, then?”

The Sibyl was a prophetess who wrote her prophecies on leaves that the wind scattered.

Titus asked, “Boy, what do you have to say?”

Young Lucius replied, “I say, my lord, that if I were a man, not even their mother’s bedchamber would be a safe harbor for these bad men — these slaves who are under the yoke of Rome.”

Marcus said, “Yes, that’s my boy! Your father has very often done the like for his ungrateful country.”

“And, uncle, so will I, if I live,” young Lucius said.

“Come, go with me into my armory,” Titus said. “Young Lucius, I’ll outfit you; and my boy, you shall carry from me to the Empress’ sons presents that I intend to send to both of them. Come, come; you’ll deliver the message, won’t you?”

“Yes, with my dagger in their bosoms, Grandfather.”

“No, boy, no,” Titus said. “I’ll teach you another course of action. Lavinia, come. Marcus, look after my house. Young Lucius and I will go and swagger at the court. Yes, by the virgin Mary, we will, sir; and we’ll not be ignored.”

Titus, Lavinia, and young Lucius exited.

Marcus Andronicus, who felt that Titus was exhibiting signs of insanity and therefore would not be able to get revenge, said to himself, “Heavens, can you hear a good man groan, and not relent or feel compassion for him? I, Marcus, will attend Titus in his bout of insanity. He has more scars of sorrow in his heart than enemy soldiers’

marks upon his battered shield, but yet he is so just that he will not get revenge. Get revenge, Heavens, for old Titus Andronicus!”

— 4.2 —

In a room in the palace, Aaron, Demetrius, and Chiron were talking when young Lucius, with an attendant carrying a bundle, entered the room. The bundle consisted of weapons with a scroll of writing wrapped around them.

Chiron, who like the others had heard rumors of Titus Andronicus’ insanity, said, “Demetrius, here’s the son of Lucius. He has some message to deliver to us.”

Aaron said, “Yes, some mad message from his mad grandfather.”

Young Lucius, who had heard the comment, said, “My lords, with all the humbleness I may, I greet your honors from Titus Andronicus.”

He thought, *And I pray that the Roman gods destroy both of you!*

“Thank you, lovely young Lucius,” Demetrius said. “What’s the news?”

Young Lucius thought, *The news is that we now know that you two villains have committed rape and mutilation.*

He said out loud, “May it please you, my grandfather, who is sound of mind, has sent by me the best weapons from his armory to please you honorable youths, who are the hope of Rome — so he told me to say, and so I say it. He wanted me to present your lordships with these gifts of weapons so that, whenever you have need to be, you will be well armed and well equipped, and so I now leave you both.”

The attendant handed over the gift of weapons, and young

Lucius thought, *And so I now leave you both, Demetrius and Chiron, you bloody villains.*

Young Lucius and the attendant exited.

Demetrius said, “What’s this? A scroll, with words written round about it? Let’s see.”

He read out loud, *“Integer vitae, scelerisque purus, non eget Mauri jaculis, nec arcu.”*

This is Latin for “He who is of upright life and free from crime does not need the javelins or the bow of the Moor.”

Chiron said, “Oh, it is a verse in Horace; I know it well. I read it in my grammar book long ago.”

The passage is a quotation from Horace’s *Odes*, I, xxii, 1-2.

“Yes, correct,” Aaron said. “It is a verse in Horace; right, you have it.”

He thought, *What a thing it is to be an ass! Here’s no sound jest — this is not at all a joke! Titus Andronicus, that old man, has discovered their guilt, and he sends them weapons wrapped about with a scroll containing a message that wounds to the quick although Demetrius and Chiron are too stupid to feel it. If our intelligent Empress were up and about instead of giving birth, she would applaud Andronicus’ ingenuity, but I will let her rest in her unrest for a while longer.*

Aaron said out loud, “And now, young lords, wasn’t it a happy star that led us to Rome, although we were strangers, and more than that, we were captives, and we have advanced to this height? It did me good before the palace gate to defy Marcus the Tribune in his brother Titus’ hearing.”

Demetrius said, “But it does me more good to see so great a

lord as Titus basely curry favor with us by sending us gifts.”

He thought that Titus had given them the weapons as a way of gaining entry into the royal court.

Aaron said, “Doesn’t he have a good reason to give you gifts, Lord Demetrius? Didn’t you treat his daughter in a very friendly way?”

Demetrius replied, “I wish we had a thousand Roman dames cornered in a desolate place so that they would be forced to take turns satisfying our lust.”

Chiron said, “That is a charitable wish and full of love.”

Aaron said, “All that is lacking is for your mother to say ‘amen’ and give you her blessing.”

“And she would do that even if we wished for twenty thousand more Roman dames,” Chiron said.

“Come, let us go and pray to all the gods for our beloved mother in her pains of childbirth,” Demetrius said.

Aaron thought, *Pray to the devils; the gods have abandoned us. Titus Andronicus knows who raped and mutilated Lavinia.*

Trumpets sounded.

“Why do the Emperor’s trumpets sound like this?” Demetrius asked.

“Probably for joy,” Chiron said. “Probably the Emperor has a son.”

Demetrius said, “Quiet! Who is coming toward us?”

A nurse entered the room. In her arms, she carried a newly born black infant: a boy.

“Good morning, lords,” the nurse said. “Tell me, have you seen Aaron the Moor?”

Aaron answered, “Well, more or less, or never a whit at all.”

He added, “Here Aaron is: I am he. What do you want with Aaron?”

“Oh, gentle Aaron, we are all undone and ruined!” the nurse said. “Now help us, or may woe overwhelm you forevermore!”

“Why, what a caterwauling you keep up!” Aaron said to her. “What do you have so clumsily wrapped in your arms?”

“I have that which I would hide from the eyes of Heaven. I have our Empress’ shame, and stately Rome’s disgrace! She is delivered, lords; she is delivered.”

“Delivered?” Aaron said. “To whom?”

“I mean that she has given birth,” the nurse said.

“Well, God give her good rest! What has God sent her?” Aaron said.

“A devil.”

This society regarded the devil as being the color black.

“Why, then she is the devil’s dam; this is a joyful issue.”

“A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue,” the nurse said. “Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad among the light-complexioned parents of our land. The Empress sends it to you. This babe is your stamp, your seal, your issue, and she bids you to christen it with your dagger’s point.”

The Empress Tamora wanted Aaron to kill his own child. If

the Emperor Saturninus were to see the child, he would know immediately that he was not the father and that Tamora had cheated on him.

“Damn, you whore!” Aaron said. “Is black so base a color?”

He looked at his son and said, “Sweet blowse, you are a beauteous blossom, to be sure.”

A “blowse” was a red-faced girl. Of course, Aaron was speaking ironically.

Demetrius and Chiron knew immediately that Aaron had fathered the infant.

“Villain, what have you done?” Demetrius said.

“I have done that which you can not undo,” Aaron replied.

“You have undone our mother,” Chiron said. “You have ruined her reputation. Now the Emperor will know that she has been unfaithful to him.”

“Villain, I have done your mother,” Aaron said. “I have slept with her.”

“And therein, Hellish dog, you have undone her,” Demetrius said. “Woe to her luck, and may her loathed choice be damned! The offspring of so foul a fiend is cursed!”

“The infant shall not live,” Chiron said.

“The infant shall not die,” Aaron said.

“Aaron, it must die,” the nurse said. “The mother wants it to be killed.”

“What! Must it be killed, nurse?” Aaron said. “Then let no man but I execute my flesh and blood.”

He meant that no man would execute his flesh and blood — he certainly would not.

“I’ll pierce the tadpole on my rapier’s point,” Demetrius said. “Nurse, give it to me; my sword shall soon dispatch and kill it.”

“Sooner than that, this sword shall plow your bowels up,” Aaron said as he took the infant from the nurse and drew his sword.

“Stop, murderous villains!” Aaron shouted. “Will you kill your brother? Now, by the burning candles of the sky that shone so brightly when this boy was conceived, whoever touches this my first-born son and heir dies upon my scimitar’s sharp point. I tell you, youngsters, that the giant Enceladus, with all his threatening band of the giant Typhon’s giant brood — all of whom threatened the Olympic gods — shall not seize this prey out of his father’s hands. And neither great Hercules nor the war-god Mars shall seize this prey out of his father’s hands.

“What! What! You red-faced, shallow-hearted boys! You white-limed walls! You alehouse painted signs! You are copies of men — not real men! Coal-black is better than another hue because it scorns to bear another hue — black cloth cannot be dyed another color. All the water in the ocean can never turn the swan’s black legs white, although the sea washes them hourly in the tide.

“Tell the Empress from me that I am of an age to keep what is my own, excuse it how she can.”

“Will you betray your noble mistress in this way?” Demetrius asked.

“My mistress is my mistress,” Aaron replied. “This infant is myself, the vigor and the picture of my youth. I prefer this infant to all of the world. I will keep this infant safe in

spite of all the world, or some of you shall smoke for it in Rome.”

The word “smoke” was a metaphor for “be punished.” The metaphor came from the smoke arising from a burning at the stake.

“By this our mother is forever shamed,” Demetrius said.

“Rome will despise her for this foul sexual escapade,” Chiron said.

“The Emperor, in his rage, will sentence the Empress to death,” Demetrius said.

“I blush when I think about this ignominy,” Chiron said.

“Why, there’s the privilege your fair beauty bears,” Aaron said. “A white face can blush. White is a treacherous hue that will betray with blushing the secret resolutions and counsels of the heart!”

Referring to his infant son, he said, “Here’s a young lad framed of another leer. Look at how the black slave smiles upon the father, as if he should say, ‘Old lad, I am your own.’ He is your brother, lords, clearly nourished with that blood that first gave life to you, and from that same womb where you were imprisoned, he is freed and come to light.

“Certainly, he is your brother by the surer side, although my seal is stamped in his face.”

The surer side is the mother’s. In the days before DNA testing, people could be sure who a child’s mother is, but because of the existence of cheating wives, people could not always be certain who the child’s father is.

“Aaron, what shall I say to the Empress?” the nurse asked.

“Advise us, Aaron, what is to be done,” Demetrius said.

“And we will all subscribe to your advice. Save the child,

as long as we may all be safe.”

“Then let us sit down, and let us all consult,” Aaron said. “My son and I will keep downwind of you. Stay there.”

Aaron was mistrustful. He wanted to keep Demetrius and Chiron at a distance from him and his son in order to protect his son’s life.

Demetrius and Chiron sat down.

Aaron then said, “Now we can talk as we wish about your safety.”

“How many women saw this child of Aaron’s?” Demetrius asked.

“Why, that’s the way to act, brave lords!” Aaron said. “When we join together in league, I am a lamb, but if you challenge and defy the Moor, then the angered boar, the mountain lioness, the ocean swells not as much as Aaron storms. You asked a good question. But let me ask it again: How many saw the child?”

“Cornelia the midwife and myself,” the nurse replied. “And no one else but the Empress who gave birth to it.”

“The Empress, the midwife, and yourself,” Aaron said. “Two may keep a secret when the third’s away. Go to the Empress, and tell her I said this.”

He killed the nurse.

Aaron imitated the sounds the nurse made as she died and said, “So cries a pig when it is being prepared to be spitted and roasted.”

Demetrius and Chiron jumped up.

Demetrius asked, “What do you mean by this, Aaron? Why did you do this?”

“Oh, Lord, sir, it is a deed of policy,” Aaron replied. “It is part of a plan. Should the nurse — a long-tongued babbling gossip — live to betray this guilt of ours? No, lords, no. And now I will tell you my full plan. Not far away from here, a man named Muli lives. He is my countryman, and his wife just last night gave birth. His child looks like her; his child is as fair and white as you are. Go and make an agreement with him, and give the mother gold. Tell them everything, and tell them that their child shall be advanced in life — it will be treated as and believed to be the Emperor’s heir. You can substitute their infant for mine and so calm this tempest whirling in the court. Let the Emperor dandle their son on his knee as he thinks that it is his own son.”

Aaron added, “Look, lords; you see that I have given the nurse medicine. And you must now provide a funeral for her. The fields are near, and you are gallant fellows. Once she has been buried, don’t waste time but make sure that you send the midwife immediately to me. Once the midwife and the nurse are dead, then let the court ladies gossip as they please.”

Aaron had said, “Two may keep a secret when the third’s away,” but he preferred this proverb: “Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead.”

“Aaron, I see that you will not trust even the air with secrets,” Chiron said.

“For this taking care of Tamora, she and hers are highly bound to you,” Demetrius said.

Demetrius and Chiron carried away the corpse of the nurse.

Alone, Aaron said, “Now I will go to the Goths as swiftly as a swallow flies. There I will dispose of this treasure — my infant — that I am holding in my arms, and I will secretly greet the Empress’ friends.”

He said tenderly to his infant son, “Come on, you thick-lipped slave, I’ll carry you away from here because it is you who puts us to our makeshifts. I’ll make you feed on berries and on roots, and feed on curds and whey, and suck goats’ milk, and take shelter in a cave, and I will bring you up to be a warrior and command a military camp.”

— 4.3 —

Titus Andronicus had prepared several arrows by attaching letters to them. With him were Marcus Andronicus, young Lucius, Publius (Marcus’ son), and two kinsmen of the Andronici: Sempronius and Caius. They were carrying bows. Other gentlemen were also present. Some people were carrying nets and tools.

“Come, Marcus; come, kinsmen,” Titus said. “This is the way. Sir boy, now let me see your archery. Make sure that you draw the bow fully, and the arrow will arrive at its destination immediately.”

He then said, “*Terras Astraea reliquit.*”

Terras Astraea reliquit is Latin for “Astraea, the goddess of justice, has left the Earth.”

Titus said, “Remember, Marcus, the goddess of justice is gone — she’s fled.”

He then ordered, “Sirs, take you to your tools. You, kinsmen, shall go and search the ocean, and cast your nets. Perhaps, and happily, you may catch her in the sea. Yet there’s as little justice in the sea as on land.

“Publius and Sempronius, you must dig with mattock and with spade, and pierce the inmost center of the earth. Then, when you come to Pluto’s region — the Land of the Dead — then please give him this petition. Tell him that the petition asks for justice and for aid and that it comes from

old Titus Andronicus, who is shaken with sorrows in ungrateful Rome.

“Ah, Rome! Well, well; I made you miserable that time I threw the people’s votes to him — Saturninus — who thus tyrannizes over me.”

He said to some other gentlemen, “Go, get you gone; and please be careful, all of you, and leave not a man-of-war ship unsearched. This wicked Emperor may have shipped the goddess of justice away from here; and, kinsmen, if that is true then we may go and whistle for justice — we won’t find the goddess.”

Believing that Titus’ words showed that he was insane, Marcus said to his son, “Publius, isn’t this so sad — to see your noble uncle thus mentally disturbed?”

Publius replied, “Therefore, my lord, we must by day and night take care to always be near him and to indulge his mood as kindly as we can until time produces some healing remedy.”

Marcus said, “Kinsmen, Titus’ sorrows are past remedy. But let us live in hope that Lucius will join with the Goths and with war take revenge for this ingratitude and wreak vengeance on the traitor Saturninus.”

Titus said, “Publius, how are you now! How are you now, my masters! Have you met with the goddess of justice?”

“No, my good lord,” Publius replied, “but Pluto sends you word that if you want to have the goddess Revenge come from Hell, you shall get what you want. But as for Justice, she is so employed, he thinks, with Jove in Heaven, or somewhere else, that you must necessarily wait a while longer.”

“Pluto does me wrong to feed me with delays,” Titus said.

“I’ll dive into the burning lake below in Hell, and pull the goddess of justice out of Acheron by the heels.

“Marcus, we are only shrubs — no cedars are we.”

Titus was alluding to this proverb: “High cedars fall when low shrubs remain.”

He continued: “We are not big-boned men framed with the size of the one-eyed giants called the Cyclopes, but we are metal, Marcus. We are steel to our backs. Yet we are wrung with more wrongs than our backs can bear. And, since there’s no justice on Earth or in Hell, we will solicit Heaven and move the gods to send down Justice so she can avenge our wrongs.

“Come, let’s attend to this business. You are a good archer, Marcus.”

Titus handed the others the arrows he had prepared, and he said these things:

“The arrow with the letter to Jove, that’s for you.

“Here you are, the arrow with the letter to Apollo.

“The arrow with the letter to Mars, that’s for myself.

“Here, boy, the arrow with the letter to Pallas Athena.

“Here, the arrow with the letter to Mercury.

“This is the arrow with the letter to Saturn, Caius — the letter is not to Saturninus. You might as well shoot against the wind as ask Saturninus for justice.

“Way to go, boy!

“Marcus, let loose your arrow when I tell you to.

“On my word, I have written to good effect. There’s not a god that I have left unsolicited.”

Marcus ordered quietly, “Kinsmen, shoot all your arrows into the courtyard of Saturninus’ palace. We will afflict the Emperor in his pride.”

Titus’ own words showed that his plan was to have everyone shoot the arrows to the constellations so that the gods could read the letters attached to the arrows.

Titus ordered, “Now, masters, draw your bows.”

They all shot their arrows.

“Oh, well done, young Lucius!” Titus said. “Good boy, you shot your arrow into Virgo’s lap; you gave it to Pallas Athena.”

Virgo is the constellation of the Virgin in the Zodiac. Astraea, the goddess of justice, was the last god to leave Humankind. She lived on Earth during the Golden Age, but when Humankind became wicked, she fled to the sky and became the constellation Virgo. Like Pallas Athena, she was a virgin goddess.

Marcus said, “My lord, I aimed a mile beyond the Moon; your letter is with Jupiter by this time.”

Titus laughed and said, “Publius, Publius, what have you done? See, see, you have shot off one of Taurus’ horns.”

Taurus is the constellation of the Bull. Aries is the constellation of the Ram.

“This is entertaining, my lord,” Marcus said. “When Publius shot the arrow, the Bull, being scratched, gave Aries such a knock that both the Ram’s horns fell down into the courtyard. And who should find them but the Empress’ villain: Aaron? The Empress laughed, and told the Moor he should give the horns to his master — Saturninus — for a present.”

In other words, Aaron had cuckolded Saturninus and given him metaphorical horns.

“Why, there the horns go,” Titus said. “May God give his lordship — Saturninus — joy with his present!”

A rustic man, aka yokel, who carried two pigeons in a basket, walked over to them.

Titus said, “News, news from Heaven! Marcus, the postman has come.”

He said to the yokel, “Sirrah, what are the tidings? What is the news? Have you any letters for me? Shall I have justice? What does Jupiter say?”

“Oh, the gibbet-maker!” the yokel said, mistaking “Jupiter” for “gibbiter.” A gibbet is a gallows.

The yokel continued, “He says that he has taken the gallows down again, for the man must not be hanged until next week.”

Titus asked, “But I am asking you what does Jupiter say?”

“Alas, sir, I know not Jubiter; I never drank with him in all my life,” the yokel replied.

“Why, villain, aren’t you the letter-carrier?” Titus asked.

“I am a carrier, sir, but of pigeons, not of letters,” the yokel replied. “I carry nothing but pigeons.”

“Why, didn’t you come from Heaven?”

“From Heaven! Alas, sir, I never came there. God forbid that I should be so bold as to press my way to Heaven in my young days. When I am older, I hope to go to Heaven. Why, right now I am going with my pigeons to the *tribunal plebs*, to take up a matter of a brawl between my uncle and one of the emperial’s men.”

The yokel misused words. By *tribunal plebs*, he meant *tribunus plebis*, which is Latin for “Tribune of the Common People.” He was carrying the pigeons as a gift, aka bribe, to the Tribune so that he would help his uncle resolve the case. By “emperial’s,” he meant “Emperor’s.”

Marcus said to Titus, “Why, sir, this man is as suitable as can be to deliver your petition; let him deliver the pigeons to the Emperor from you.”

Titus asked the yokel, “Tell me, can you with grace deliver a petition to right a wrong to the Emperor?”

By “with grace,” Titus meant “gracefully,” but the yokel understood it to mean “with a prayer before a meal.”

The yokel replied, “No, truly, sir, I could never say grace in all my life.”

“Sirrah, come here,” Titus said to the yokel. “Make no more trouble, but give your pigeons to the Emperor. By me you shall have justice at his hands. Wait, wait; meanwhile, here’s money for your expenses.”

Titus gave him some money and then said, “Get me a pen and some ink.”

He then said to the yokel, “Sirrah, can you with grace deliver a petition?”

With money in his hand, the yokel replied, “Yes, sir.”

“Then here is a petition for you to deliver. And when you come to the Emperor, at the first approach you must kneel, then kiss his foot, then deliver up your pigeons, and then look for your reward. I’ll be at hand, sir; see you do it with a fine flourish.”

“I promise you that I will, sir. Leave it to me.”

Titus asked, “Sirrah, have you a knife?”

The yokel indicated that he had a knife, and Titus said, “Come, let me see it.”

Titus took the knife and then said, “Here, Marcus, fold the petition around it.”

After Marcus was done, Titus handed the petition and the knife to the yokel and said, “You must hold it like a humble suppliant. After you have given it to the Emperor, come and knock at my door, and tell me what he says.”

“May God be with you, sir; I will.”

Titus said, “Come, Marcus, let us go. Publius, follow me.”

— 4.4 —

In a room of the palace were Saturninus, Tamora, Demetrius, Chiron, and some lords and attendants.

Holding in his hand the arrows that Titus Andronicus and his kinsmen had shot, Saturninus said, “Why, lords, what insults are these! Was there ever seen an Emperor in Rome thus put down, troubled, and confronted like this, and, because he has dispensed justice fairly and evenly, treated with such contempt?”

“My lords, you know, as do the mighty gods — no matter how much these disturbers of our peace buzz lies in the people’s ears — that nothing has occurred except what is in accordance with the law against the headstrong sons of old Titus Andronicus. And so what if his sorrows have so overwhelmed his wits and sanity? Shall we be thus afflicted and suffer because of his vengeance, his fits, his frenzy, and his bitterness?”

“And now Titus writes to Heaven to redress the wrongs he claims were done to him. See, here’s a letter to Jove, and this letter is to Mercury. This letter is to Apollo; this letter is to the god of war. These are sweet scrolls to fly about the

streets of Rome!

“What’s this but libel against the Senate, and proclaiming everywhere what Titus considers to be our injustice? A goodly sentiment, is it not, my lords? He would say that no justice is in Rome.

“But if I live, his feigned madness shall be no shelter to allow him to commit these outrages without being punished. He and his kinsmen shall know that justice lives in Saturninus’ health. If justice sleeps, he will so awake her that she in fury shall cut down the proudest conspirator who lives.”

Tamora said, “My gracious lord, my lovely Saturninus, lord of my life, commander of my thoughts, be calm, and bear the faults of Titus’ age, the effects of sorrow for his valiant sons, whose loss has pierced him deep and scarred his heart. Instead, comfort his distressed plight rather than prosecute the lowest- or the highest-ranking for these acts of contempt toward you.”

She thought, Why, it shall be best if quick-witted Tamora speaks fair — but false — words about everyone. But, Titus, I have touched you to the quick. Your life-blood is pouring out. If Aaron will now be wise and kill his and my child, then all is safe — the anchor’s in the port.

The yokel entered the room and Tamora said to him, “How are you now, good fellow! Do you want to speak with us?”

“Yes, indeed, if your mistress-ship is imperial.”

“I am the Empress, but yonder sits the Emperor.”

“It is he,” the yokel said.

He said to Saturninus, “May God and Saint Stephen give you a good day. I have brought you a letter and a couple of pigeons here.”

Saturninus took the letter and read it, and then he ordered, “Go and take this rustic fellow away, and hang him immediately.”

Mishearing “hung” as “hand,” the yokel asked, “How much money will I be handed?”

Tamora said, “Come, sirrah, you must be hanged.”

“Hanged!” the yokel said. “By our lady, then I have brought up a neck to a fair end. My neck and my legal case both come to an end.”

Guards took away the yokel.

Saturninus complained, “Despiteful and intolerable wrongs! Shall I endure this monstrous villainy? I know from whence this plot proceeds. Must I endure this? Titus believes that his traitorous sons, who died lawfully for the murder of our brother, have by my means been butchered wrongfully!

“Go and drag the villain Titus here by his hair. Neither old age nor honor shall confer immunity on him. Because of this proud insult of his, I’ll be his butcher. He is a sly frantic wretch who helped to make me great, in hopes that he would rule both Rome and me.”

Aemilius, a noble Roman, entered the room.

Saturninus asked, “What news have you brought, Aemilius?”

“Prepare for war, my lord — Rome never had more reason to do so. The Goths have gathered soldiers, and with an army of highly determined men who are resolved to plunder Rome, they are quickly marching here under the leadership of Lucius, son to old Andronicus. Lucius threatens, in the course of this revenge, to do as much as ever Coriolanus did.”

Coriolanus had been a heroic warrior and general for Rome, but he ended up leading an enemy army against Rome.

Saturninus asked, “Is warlike Lucius the general of the Goths? These tidings nip me the way that a gardener pinches off the buds of a plant, and I hang my head as flowers do with frost or grass that is beaten down with storms.

“Yes, now our sorrows begin to approach. Lucius is the man the common people love so much. I myself have often overheard them say, when I have walked in their midst while disguised like a private man, that Lucius was wrongfully banished. I have heard them say that they wished that Lucius were their Emperor.”

Tamora said, “Why should you fear the invading army? Is not your city strong?”

“Yes, but the citizens favor Lucius, and they will revolt from me and aid him.”

Tamora said, “King, let your thoughts be imperious, like your name. The name ‘Saturninus’ comes from the name of the god Saturn. Is the Sun dimmed when gnats fly in its beams? The eagle allows little birds to sing and does not care what they mean when they sing because the eagle knows that with the shadow of his wings he can, whenever he wishes, stop their melody. Like the eagle, you can stop the frivolous and irresponsible men of Rome. So cheer up your spirit.

“Know, Emperor, that I will enchant old Titus Andronicus with words that are more sweet, and yet more dangerous, than bait is to fish, or honey-stalks to sheep. The fish are wounded with the bait, and the sheep are rotted with excessive consumption of the delicious honey-stalks.”

This society believed that sheep became bloated and died from liver rot when they overfed on honey-stalks.

“But Titus will not ask his son not to attack us,” Saturninus said.

“If I, Tamora, ask Titus to do that, then he will. For I can sooth and flatter and fill his aged ear with golden promises, with the result that, even if his heart were almost impregnable and his old ears were deaf, his ears and his heart would still obey my tongue. Titus will do whatever I ask him to do — I can be very persuasive.”

She said to Aemilius, “Go to Lucius now and be our ambassador to him. Say that the Emperor requests a parley with warlike Lucius, and set up the meeting at the house of his father, old Titus Andronicus.”

Saturninus said, “Aemilius, honorably deliver this message. And if he insists on hostages to ensure his safety, ask him to identify which hostages will please him best.”

“I shall earnestly do as you wish,” Aemilius said, and he exited.

Tamora said, “Now I will go to old Titus Andronicus, and manipulate him with all the art I have so that we can pluck proud Lucius from the warlike Goths.

“And now, sweet Emperor, be blithe and happy again, and bury all your fear and have faith in my plan.”

Emperor Saturninus replied, “Go immediately to Titus, and plead with him.”

CHAPTER 5 (Titus Andronicus)

— 5.1 —

Near Rome, Lucius talked to some of the Goths in his army.

He said, “Proven warriors, and my faithful friends, I have received letters from great Rome, which tell how the Romans hate their Emperor and how desirous they are to see us. Therefore, great lords, be, as your titles witness, imperious and impatient to right the wrongs done to you, and where Rome has done you any harm, wreak triple satisfaction on Saturninus.”

A Goth leader replied, “Brave scion, sprung from the great Titus Andronicus, whose name was once our terror, but is now our comfort, and whose high exploits and honorable deeds ungrateful Rome requites with foul contempt, have confidence in us. We’ll follow wherever you lead us. We will be like stinging bees on the hottest summer’s day led by their master to the flowered fields, and we will be avenged on cursed Tamora.”

The other Goths said, “And as he speaks, so say we all with him.”

“I humbly thank him, and I thank you all,” Lucius said. “But who is coming here, led by a strong, powerful Goth?”

A Goth with a drawn sword led Aaron to Lucius. Aaron had his infant son in his arms.

The Goth who had taken Aaron prisoner said, “Renowned Lucius, from our troops I strayed to gaze upon a ruined monastery, and as I earnestly looked upon the destroyed building, suddenly I heard a child cry underneath a wall. I went to the noise, and soon I heard the crying babe calmed

with this affectionate discourse: ‘Peace, black slave, half me and half your mother! If only your hue had not betrayed whose brat you are, if only nature had lent you your mother’s look, if only your skin color were white instead of black, villain, you might have been an Emperor. But when the bull and cow are both milk-white, they never beget a coal-black calf. Quiet, villain, quiet!’ — and so he talked to the babe — ‘For I must carry you to a trusty Goth, who, when he knows you are the Empress’ babe, will treat you well for your mother’s sake.’

“Hearing this, I drew my weapon and rushed upon him, surprised him suddenly, and brought him here so you can treat him as you think best.”

Lucius replied, “Worthy Goth, this is the incarnate devil who robbed Titus Andronicus of his good left hand. This is the pearl that pleased your Empress’ eye, and this babe here is the base fruit of his burning lust.”

Lucius was referring to a proverb when he called Aaron a pearl: A black man is a pearl in the eyes of a fair woman.

He said to Aaron, “Say, glaring-eyed slave, where would you convey this growing image of your fiend-like face? Why don’t you speak? What, are you deaf? Not a word will you speak to me? Bring a noose, soldiers! Hang him on this tree and by his side hang his fruit of bastardy.”

“Don’t touch the boy,” Aaron said. “He is of royal blood.”

“He is too much like the father to ever be good,” Lucius said. “First hang the child, so that Aaron may see the child’s death throes: a sight that will vex the father’s soul.”

Aaron, filled with bravado, said, “Get me a ladder.”

A Goth brought a ladder, and Aaron climbed it. Some Goths tied a noose to a tree.

Aaron said, “Lucius, save the child, and carry it from me to the Empress. If you do this, I’ll tell you wondrous things that may be highly to your advantage to hear. If you will not, then befall whatever may befall, I’ll speak no more but ‘May vengeance rot you all!’”

“Speak on, and if what you say pleases me, your child shall live, and I will see that it is taken care of,” Lucius replied.

“And if what I say pleases you?” Aaron said. “Why, be assured, Lucius, what I have to tell you will vex your soul to hear because I must talk of murders, rapes, and massacres, acts of black night, abominable deeds, evil plots, treasons, villainies lamentable to hear and performed with full knowledge that they would cause people to feel pity. All of this shall be buried by my death, unless you swear to me my child shall live.”

“Tell me what you have to say,” Lucius said. “I say your child shall live.”

“Swear that he shall live, and then I will begin.”

“By whom should I swear? You believe in no god. That granted, how can you believe an oath?”

“So what if I do not believe in any god?” Aaron asked. “It is true, indeed, that I do not, but because I know that you are religious and have a thing within you called conscience, with twenty popish tricks and ceremonies that I have seen you being careful to observe, I therefore want your oath. If I know that an idiot fool regards his bauble — a jester’s stick with a carved head on one end — as a god and keeps the oath that he swears by that god, then I would want him to make an oath. Therefore, you shall vow by that god, whatever god it is, whom you adore and hold in reverence, to save my boy, to nourish and nurse and bring him up — or else I will reveal nothing to you.”

“By my god, I swear to you I will take care of your son,” Lucius said.

“First know that I begot him on the Empress,” Aaron said. “Tamora is my son’s mother.”

“She is a most insatiable and lecherous woman!”

“Tut, Lucius, this was but a deed of charity in comparison to that which you shall hear me tell you now. It was her two sons who murdered Bassianus. They cut out your sister’s tongue and raped her and cut off her hands and trimmed her as you have seen.”

“Detestable villain! Do you call that trimming?”

“Why, she was washed and cut and trimmed, and it was trim entertainment for them who had the doing of it.”

The word “trim” has multiple meanings. “To trim” means “to prune” or “to cut.” Lavinia had been pruned of her hands. “Trim” also had a sexual meaning in their society: A woman who has been trimmed is no longer a virgin. The “trim” entertainment enjoyed by Demetrius and Chiron was a sexual entertainment. Aaron’s sentence also compared Lavinia to a piece of meat that was washed and cut and trimmed so that it could be cooked.

“Tamora’s two sons are barbarous, beastly villains, like yourself!” Lucius shouted.

“Indeed, I was their tutor and instructed them. Their lecherous nature they inherited from their mother. She is like a high card guaranteed to win a game of cards; her lecherous nature guaranteed that their nature would be lecherous. The bloodthirstiness of their minds, I think, they learned from me. I am as true a dog as ever fought at head; I am like a bulldog that always attacks a bull head-on.

“Well, let my deeds be witness of my worth. I guided your

brothers to that treacherous hole where the dead corpse of Bassianus lay. I wrote the letter that your father found, and I hid the gold that the letter mentioned. I was a confederate with the Queen and her two sons. What haven't I done that you have cause to rue? I always was involved in whatever has caused you grief. I cheated your father out of his hand, and, when I had his severed hand, I drew myself apart and almost injured my heart with extreme laughter — I nearly died from laughing. I was looking through the crevice of a wall when Titus, in exchange for his hand, received his two sons' heads. I saw his tears, and I laughed so heartily that both of my eyes were as rainy as his. And when I told the Empress about this entertainment, she almost swooned at my pleasing tale, and for my good news gave me twenty kisses."

The Goth leader said, "Can you say all this, and admit to doing all these evil deeds, and never blush?"

"I can blush like a black dog, as the common saying goes," Aaron replied.

"Aren't you sorry for committing all these heinous deeds?" Lucius asked.

"Yes, I'm sorry," Aaron replied. "I'm sorry that I have not done a thousand more evil deeds. Even now I curse the day — and yet, I think, few days come within the compass of my curse — wherein I did not do some notorious evil, such as kill a man, or else plan his death; rape a virgin, or plot the way to do it; accuse some innocent person and commit perjury; make two friends hate each other and wish the other to die; set snares to make poor men's cattle break their necks; set barns and haystacks on fire in the night, and tell the owners to quench the fires with their tears. Often I have dug up dead men from their graves, and set them upright at their dear friends' doors, at a time when their friends had almost recovered from sorrow, and on the dead

men's skins, as if on the bark of trees, I have with my knife carved in Roman letters, *'Let not your sorrow die, although I am dead.'* Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things as willingly as one would kill a fly, and nothing grieves me heartily indeed except that I cannot do ten thousand more dreadful things."

Lucius said, "Bring down the devil; for he must not die so sweet a death as hanging immediately."

Aaron climbed down from the ladder and said, "If there are devils, I wish I were a devil and would live and burn in everlasting fire, so that I might have your company in Hell and torment you with my bitter tongue!"

"Sirs, gag his mouth, and let him speak no more," Lucius said.

Some Goths gagged Aaron.

Another Goth walked over to Lucius and said, "My lord, a messenger has come from Rome and wants to be admitted to your presence."

"Let him come near," Lucius ordered.

A Goth brought Aemilius, the noble Roman who was serving as a messenger, to Lucius, who recognized him.

"Welcome, Aemilius. What's the news from Rome?"

"Lord Lucius, and you Princes of the Goths, the Roman Emperor sends all of you his greetings, and because he understands that you are armed and marching to Rome, he wants a parley with you at your father's house. If you want hostages to guarantee your safety, they shall be immediately delivered."

The Goth leader asked Lucius, "What does our general say?"

Lucius said, “Aemilius, let the Emperor give his pledges — the hostages — to my father and my uncle Marcus, and we will come.”

He then ordered the Goths, “Let us march away.”

— 5.2 —

Before Titus’ house, Tamora and her two sons, Demetrius and Chiron, stood. They were dressed in fantastic costumes.

The disguised Tamora said, “Thus, in this strange and dark-colored costume, I will meet with Titus Andronicus, and tell him that I am Revenge, sent from below — the Land of the Dead — to join with him and right the heinous wrongs done to him.

“Knock at his study, where, they say, he stays and thinks about strange plots of dire revenge. Tell him that Revenge has come to join with him and work destruction on his enemies.”

Demetrius and Chiron knocked on Titus’ door.

Holding a document, Titus appeared at an upstairs window and asked, “Who molests my contemplation? Is this a trick to make me open the door so that my sad decrees may fly away, and all my study may be to no effect? You are deceived because what I intend to do you can see is here written in bloody lines I have set down; and what is written shall be executed.”

“Titus, I have come to talk with you,” Tamora replied.

“No, not a word,” Titus replied. “How can I grace my talk when I lack a hand to gesture with? You have the advantage of me; therefore, say no more.”

“If you knew who I am, you would talk with me,” Tamora

said.

“I am not mad; I know you well enough,” Titus replied. “Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines I have written with my blood in this document; witness these trenches — these wrinkles — made by grief and care, witness the tiring day and dark night, witness all sorrow that I well know you are our proud Empress, mighty Tamora. Is not your purpose for coming here to take my other hand?”

Tamora said. “Know, you sad and solemn man, I am not Tamora. She is your enemy, and I am your friend. I am Revenge, and I have been sent from the infernal kingdom to ease the gnawing vulture of your mind by working retributive vengeance on your foes.

“Come down, and welcome me to this world’s light. Confer with me about murder and about death. There’s not a hollow cave or lurking-place, no vast obscurity or misty valley where bloody murder or detested rape can hide for fear, but I will find them out; and in their ears I will tell them my dreadful name — Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake.”

“Are you Revenge?” Titus asked. “And have you been sent to me to be a torment to my enemies?”

“I am; therefore, come down and welcome me.”

“Do something for me, before I come to you,” Titus said. “See by your side where Rape and Murder stand. Now give me some guarantee that you are Revenge. Stab them, or tear them on your chariot-wheels.”

In this society, wheels were sometimes used to painfully kill people. One torture using a wheel was similar to that of the rack; people’s bodies would be stretched on the wheel until the joints were dislocated or until one or more limbs

were torn off. People who were to be broken on the wheel would be tied to a wheel, and their bones would be broken. They would then be left to die.

Titus continued, “Do this, and then I’ll come and be your charioteer and whirl along with you about the globe. Provide two proper palfreys, as black as jet, to pull your vengeful wagon swiftly away, and find out murderers in their guilty caves, and when your chariot is loaded with their heads, I will dismount, and by the chariot wheel I will trot, like a servile footman, all day long, even from Sun’s rising in the east until the Sun sets in the sea. And day by day I’ll do this heavy and difficult task, as long as you destroy Rapine and Murder there.”

Tamora replied, “These are my ministers, and they come with me.”

“Are these your ministers?” Titus asked. “What are they called?”

The disguised Tamora, wanting to humor Titus, whom she thought was mad, used the same names that Titus had used earlier: “They are called Rape and Murder, and they are called those names because they take vengeance on men who rape and murder.”

“Good Lord, how like the Empress’ sons they are!” Titus said. “And how similar are you to the Empress! But we mortal men have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes.”

“Sweet Revenge, now I come to you, and if one arm’s embracement will content you, I will hug you with my one arm soon.”

Titus exited from the window and started to climb downstairs.

“Titus’ agreeing with what I say suits his lunacy — the

madman believes me,” the disguised Tamora said. “Whatever I invent to feed his brain-sick fits and moods, you, my sons, will uphold and maintain in your speeches because now he firmly believes that I am Revenge, and since he is credulous in this mad thought and amendable to accept suggestions, I’ll make him send for Lucius, his son. Then, while I at a banquet have him securely in my control, I’ll find some impromptu scheme to scatter and disperse the irresponsible Goths, or at least make them his enemies.”

Titus began to open the door and Tamora said to her sons, “See, here he comes, and I must pursue my plot.”

Titus said, “Long have I been pitifully lonely, and all because I wanted you, Revenge. Welcome, dread Fury, you goddess who pursues revenge, to my house that is filled with sorrows. Rape and Murder, you are welcome, too. How you resemble the Empress and her sons!

“Revenge, you would be well equipped if only you had a Moor. Could not all Hell lend you such a devil? For well I know the Empress never wags but in her company there is a Moor.”

He thought, *When Tamora wags her tail, you can bet that the Moor is in bed with her.*

He continued, “And, if you would represent our Queen correctly, it would be fitting for you to have such a devil. But you are welcome as you are. What shall we do?”

“What would you have us do, Titus Andronicus?” the disguised Tamora asked.

“Show me a murderer, and I’ll deal with him,” Demetrius said.

“Show me a villain who has committed a rape, and I will exact revenge on him,” Chiron said.

“Show me a thousand people who have done you wrong, and I will get revenge for you on all of them,” Tamora said.

Titus said, “Look round about the wicked streets of Rome; and when you find a man who resembles yourself, good Murder, stab him — he’s a murderer.

“Go with him, Rape, and when it is your luck to find another man who resembles you, good Rape, stab him — he’s a rapist.

“Go with them, Revenge, and in the Emperor’s court there you will find a Queen, who is attended by a Moor. You will recognize her by your bodily proportions because up and down she resembles you.

“Please, give these people a violent death; they have been violent to me and my loved ones.”

“Well have you taught us,” Tamora said. “This we shall do. But would it please you, good Titus Andronicus, to send for Lucius, your thrice-valiant son, who leads towards Rome a band of warlike Goths, and tell him to come and banquet at your house? When he is here at your ceremonious feast, I will bring in the Empress and her sons, as well as the Emperor himself and all the rest of your foes, and they shall be at your mercy and stoop and kneel, and on them you shall ease your angry heart.

“What do you say to this plan?”

Titus called, “Marcus, my brother! Sad and solemn Titus is calling you.”

Marcus entered the room.

Titus said, “Go, kind and gentle Marcus, to your nephew Lucius. You will find him among the Goths. Tell him to come to me, and bring with him some of the most important Princes of the Goths. Tell him to have his

soldiers camp where they are. Tell him that the Emperor and the Empress shall feast at my house, and he shall feast with them. Do this for me out of love for me, a love that I return, and so let him come here if he has any regard for his aged father's life."

"I will do this, and I will soon return again," Marcus said.

He exited.

Tamora said to Titus, "Now I will leave and go about your business, and I will take my ministers along with me."

"No, no," Titus said. "Let Rape and Murder stay with me, or else I'll call my brother back again, and cleave to no revenge except what Lucius shall get for me."

Tamora whispered to her sons, "What do you say, boys? Will you stay with him, while I go and tell my lord the Emperor how I have managed the jest we planned? Yield to Titus' moods, flatter and speak nicely to him, and stay with him until I return again."

Titus Andronicus thought, *I know them all, although they suppose me to be insane, and I will outwit them in their own plots. They are a pair of cursed Hell-hounds and their dam, aka mother!*"

Demetrius said to his mother, "Madam, depart when you like; leave us here."

"Farewell, Titus Andronicus," the disguised Tamora said. "Revenge now goes to lay a plot with which to betray your foes."

"I know you do," Titus replied, "and, sweet Revenge, farewell."

Tamora exited.

"Tell us, old man, how shall we be employed?" Chiron

asked. "What do you want us to do?"

"Tut, I have work enough for you to do," Titus said. "Publius, come here, and Caius and Valentine come, too!"

Caius and Valentine were Titus' kinsmen; Publius was Marcus' son.

They entered the room, and Publius asked, "What do you want?"

Indicating Demetrius and Chiron, Titus asked, "Do you know these two men?"

Publius replied, "I think that they are the Empress' two sons: Chiron and Demetrius."

Titus said, "Really, Publius! You are too much deceived. One is named Murder, and the other is named Rape. Therefore tie them up, gentle Publius. Caius and Valentine, lay hands on them and keep them from running away. Often have you heard me wish for such an hour, one in which these two were in my control, and now I find it; therefore, bind them tightly, and gag their mouths if they begin to cry out."

He exited, and his kinsmen began to restrain and tie up Demetrius and Chiron.

Chiron shouted, "Villains, stop! We are the Empress' sons."

Publius replied, "And for that reason we do what Titus commands us to do."

He said to Caius and Valentine, "Gag their mouths, and don't let them speak a word. Make sure that you tie them securely."

Titus returned with Lavinia. He was carrying a knife, and she was carrying a basin with her stumps. Although her

hands had been cut off at the elbows, she was able to carry the basin with her stumps by using her teeth to bite down on an edge of the basin.

“Come, come, Lavinia,” Titus said. “Look, your foes are bound.”

“Kinsmen, stop their mouths, don’t let them speak to me. But do let them hear the words I utter — my words will cause dread and fear.

“Oh, you villains, Chiron and Demetrius! Here stands the spring — Lavinia — whom you have stained with mud. You mixed your winter with this good summer. You killed her husband, and for that vile crime two of her brothers were condemned to death and my hand was cut off and made a merry jest. You cut off both of her sweet hands as well as her tongue, and you inhuman traitors forcibly violated that which was dearer to her than her hands or tongue — her spotless chastity. What would you say if I should let you speak? Villains, for shame you could not beg for mercy and grace.

“Pay attention, wretches! Listen to how I mean to butcher you. This one hand is still left to cut your throats while Lavinia holds between her stumps the basin that will receive your guilty blood.

“You know your mother intends to feast with me, and calls herself Revenge, and thinks that I am insane. Pay attention, villains! I will grind your bones to fine powder and I will make pie dough with your blood and ground-up bones. Out of that dough I will make a piecrust that will be a coffin for the meat inside the pie — that meat will come from your shameful heads. Then I will tell that whore, your unholy dam, to swallow her own produce — her own children. She will be like the earth that first gives birth to us and then swallows us when we die and are buried in her.

“This is the feast that I have invited her to, and this is the banquet she shall glut on. You treated my daughter worse than Philomela was treated, and my revenge will be worse than that of Procne.”

After Procne’s husband, Tereus, raped her sister, Philomena, and cut out her tongue. Procne got revenge by killing the son she had had with Tereus, cooking him, and feeding him to Tereus.

Titus continued, “And now, Demetrius and Chiron, prepare for your throats to be cut. Lavinia, come and catch their blood.”

Titus cut their throats, and Lavinia began catching their blood in the basin.

Titus said, “When they are dead, I will go and grind their bones to fine powder and with this hateful liquid mix it, and in that dough I will bake their vile heads.

“Come, come, everyone, be diligent in making this banquet, which I hope may prove to be sterner and bloodier than the Centaurs’ feast.”

When Pirithous, the King of the Lapiths, married Hippodamia, he invited the half-man, half-horse Centaurs to the wedding feast. The Centaurs got drunk, and tried to rape Hippodamia and carry away the Lapith women. Pirithous and the Lapiths fought back and defeated the Centaurs.

Titus said, “So, now bring their bodies inside my house, for I’ll play the cook, and see that they are ready to be eaten when their mother comes.”

— 5.3 —

Lucius, Marcus, and some Goths arrived in the courtyard of Titus Andronicus’ house. With them was Aaron, their

prisoner. A Goth carried Aaron's son.

Lucius said, "Uncle Marcus, since my father wants me to come to Rome, I am happy to do so."

A Goth leader said, "We are also happy to do so, no matter what happens as a result."

Lucius said, "Good uncle, take this barbarous Moor, this ravenous tiger, this accursed devil, inside my father's house. Let him receive no food, but fetter him until he is brought before the Empress to give testimony of her foul proceedings. Also, see that our soldiers are prepared and ready to ambush enemy soldiers if needed. I fear that the Emperor means no good to us."

Aaron said, "I wish that some devil would whisper curses in my ear and prompt me so that my tongue could utter forth the venomous malice of my swelling heart!"

"Away with you, inhuman dog! Unholy slave!" Lucius said.

He ordered the Goths, "Sirs, help our uncle to convey him inside."

The Goths and Aaron exited.

Trumpets sounded.

Lucius said, "The trumpets show that the Emperor is very near."

Saturninus and Tamara, accompanied by Aemilius, some Tribunes, some Senators, and others, walked over to Lucius.

Saturninus said, "Has the firmament more Suns than one?"

Lucius replied, "How does it benefit you to call yourself a Sun?"

Marcus Andronicus said, “Rome’s Emperor, and nephew, stop arguing. These quarrels must be quietly debated. The feast is ready that the sorrowful Titus has ordered for honorable reasons: for peace, for love, for alliance, and for good to Rome. Please, therefore, draw near, and take your places.”

“Marcus, we will,” Saturninus said.

Everyone sat down at a table, and Titus and Lavinia came into the courtyard. Titus was dressed like a cook and carrying dishes, and Lavinia was wearing a veil. With them were young Lucius and others.

Titus placed the dishes on the table.

He said, “Welcome, my gracious lord; welcome, revered Queen; welcome, warlike Goths; welcome, Lucius; and welcome, all. Although the food is poor, it will fill your stomachs; please eat.”

“Why are you dressed like a cook, Titus Andronicus?” Saturninus asked.

“Because I wanted to be sure to have everything done well to entertain your Highness and your Empress.”

“We are beholden to you, good Titus Andronicus,” Tamora said.

“If your Highness knew my heart, you would be,” Titus replied.

Titus’ ironic remark meant this: If Tamora knew the trouble that he had gone to in order to serve her a meat pie and why he was serving it to her, she would know she owed him something — her life.

Tamora began to eat.

Titus then said, “My lord the Emperor, answer me this.

Was it well done of the rash Virginius to slay his daughter, Virginia, with his own right hand because Appius Claudius had raped, stained, and deflowered her?"

"It was, Titus Andronicus," Saturninus replied.

"Your reason, mighty lord?"

"Because the girl should not survive her shame, and by her presence continually renew his sorrows."

"That is a reason mighty, strong, and conclusive," Titus said. "It is an example, precedent, and vivid authorization, for me, who is most wretched, to perform the same act."

Titus said, "Die, die, Lavinia, and let your shame die with you."

With full knowledge of what was to come, Lavinia deliberately ran to Titus, embracing both her father and the knife he used to kill her.

As Lavinia died, Titus lifted her veil and said, "And, with your shame dead, let your father's sorrow die!"

"What have you done, unnatural and unkind man!" Saturninus said. "Have you no love for your daughter?"

"I have killed my daughter, for whom my tears have made me blind," Titus said. "I am as woeful as Virginius was, and I have a thousand times more cause than he to do this outrage: and it now is done."

"What, was she raped?" Saturninus asked. "Tell us who did the deed."

"Will it please you to eat?" Titus asked. "Will it please your Highness to feed?"

Tamora asked, "Why have you killed your only daughter like this?"

“It was not I who killed her,” Titus replied. “It was Chiron and Demetrius. They raped her, and cut out her tongue; and they — it was they who did her all this wrong.”

Saturninus ordered some of his attendants, “Go and bring them here to us immediately.”

Titus said, “Why, there they are both, baked in that pie, which their mother has been eating and enjoying. She has eaten the flesh that she herself has bred. It is true, it is true — my knife’s sharp point is evidence that it is true.”

Titus slit Tamora’s throat and killed her.

“Die, frantic wretch, for this accursed deed!” Saturninus said as he drew his sword and killed Titus.

Lucius, Titus’ only remaining living son, said as he drew his sword, “Can the son’s eyes see his father bleed, and shall the son do nothing? There’s meed for meed, measure for measure, and death for a deadly deed!”

Lucius killed Saturninus.

All was in tumult. The Goths ran to defend Lucius as the Romans ran to kill Lucius. The Romans thought that a coup was occurring and that Lucius had treacherously assassinated Saturninus and was attempting to become the new Emperor.

Lucius, Marcus Andronicus, young Lucius, and others went to the balcony.

Marcus Andronicus said to the Romans below the balcony, “You grave-looking men, people and sons of Rome, you have been separated by uproar like a flight of fowl that has been scattered by winds and high tempestuous gusts. You have been divided into factions. Oh, let me teach you how to knit again this scattered wheat into one mutual sheaf, how to knit again these broken limbs into one body.”

An aged Roman replied, “Let Rome herself be poison to herself, and she whom mighty kingdoms curtsy to, like a forlorn and desperate castaway, execute shameful acts on herself.”

From the aged Roman’s point of view, Lucius had led an army of Goths into Rome and had murdered the Roman Emperor. In such a case, rather than being united with the Goths and ruled by Lucius, it might be better for Rome to destroy itself. After all, suicide can be preferable to loss of freedom.

The aged Roman continued, “But if my frosty white hair and wrinkles of old age, which are grave witnesses of true experience, cannot induce you to listen to my words, then speak, Marcus, you who as Tribune are Rome’s dear friend, as previously our ancestor, Aeneas, spoke when with his solemn tongue he told love-sick Dido’s attentive ears the story of that baleful, burning night when cunning Greeks ambushed King Priam’s Troy through the stratagem of the Trojan Horse. Tell us what Sinon has bewitched our ears, or who has brought in the fatal engine — the Trojan Horse — that gives our Troy, our Rome, the wound of civil war.”

The aged Roman wanted to know who had betrayed Rome by allowing the Goths inside the city. He wanted to know who was Rome’s Sinon — Sinon was the treacherous Greek who convinced the Trojans to bring the Horse inside Troy. He had pretended that the Greeks wanted him dead, but he had escaped from them, and he told the Trojans about a false prophecy that stated that Troy would never fall if the Horse were brought inside the city.

Of course, the aged Roman was using the wrong story to describe the current situation. The better, more accurate stories were the Rape of Philomela and the Rape of Lucrece. Following Lucrece’s rape, she committed suicide, and the Romans deposed the King.

Marcus replied, “My heart is not composed of flint or steel, nor can I utter all our bitter grief because floods of my tears will drown my oratory and stop my speech, even in the times when what I say should move you to listen to me most attentively, and force you to commiserate with me.”

Pointing to Lucius, Marcus said, “Here is a captain. Let him tell the tale. Your hearts will throb and weep as you hear him speak.”

Using the royal plural, Lucius said, “Then, noble listeners, know that cursed Chiron and Demetrius murdered Bassianus, our Emperor’s brother. Also know that cursed Chiron and Demetrius raped Lavinia, our sister, and it is because of their terrible crimes that our brothers were beheaded, our father’s tears despised, and he was basely cheated of that true hand that had fought Rome’s war to its end and sent her enemies to the grave. Lastly, I myself was cruelly banished from Rome, the gates were shut on me, and I was turned weeping out to beg for relief among Rome’s enemies, who drowned their hatred in my sincere tears and opened their arms to embrace me as a friend.

“I am the exile, you should know, who has protected Rome’s welfare with my blood; I have sheathed the points of the enemy’s weapons in my risk-taking body, diverting them from Rome’s bosom. In my body, I have sheathed the enemy’s steel.

“You know that I am no boaster. My scars can witness, although they cannot talk, that what I say is just and full of truth.

“But, wait! I think that I digress too much in talking about my worthless praise of myself. Oh, pardon me, for when no friends are nearby, men praise themselves.”

Marcus said, “Now it is my turn to speak. Look at this child.”

He pointed to the son of Aaron and Tamora; an attendant was holding the boy.

“Tamora delivered this child,” Marcus said. “It is the child of an irreligious Moor who is the chief architect and plotter of these sorrows. The villain is alive in Titus’ house, and he will give testimony that this is true.

“Now judge the reasons that Titus had to avenge these wrongs that are unspeakable, past all patience, more than any living man could bear.

“Now that you have heard the truth, what do you say, Romans? Have we done anything wrong? If so, show us, and from this high place where you see us now, the poor remaining Andronici will, hand in hand, all headlong jump and cast ourselves down and on the ragged stones below beat out our brains and bring the family of the Andronici to an end.

“Speak, Romans, speak; and if you say we should jump, then, hand in hand, Lucius and I will jump and fall.”

Aemilius, a noble Roman, replied for the Romans, “Come, Marcus, come, you revered man of Rome, and bring our new Emperor gently in your hand — Lucius is our new Emperor — for I know well that he has popular support and the voices of the people say that he shall be Emperor.”

The Romans shouted, “Lucius, all hail, Rome’s royal Emperor!”

Marcus ordered some attendants, “Go into old Titus’ sorrowful house, and bring that misbelieving Moor here so that he can be judged and given some dire and dreadful death as punishment for his most wicked life.”

The attendants left to get Aaron, and Lucius, Marcus, young Lucius, and the others descended from the balcony.

The Romans shouted, “Lucius, all hail, Rome’s gracious governor!”

“Thanks, noble Romans,” Lucius said. “I hope that I may govern in such a way that will heal Rome’s harms, and wipe away her woe! But, gentle people, bear with me for awhile, because nature gives me a heavy task. Everyone, stand back except you, uncle. You come nearer so that you can shed loving tears upon Titus’ body.”

Lucius kissed Titus’ lips and said, “Take this warm kiss on your pale cold lips, these sorrowful drops upon your blood-stained face — the last true duties of your noble son!”

Marcus said to Titus’ body, “Tear for tear, and loving kiss for kiss, Marcus, your brother, presents on your lips. Even if the sum of these kisses that I should pay you were countless and infinite, yet I would pay them!”

Lucius said to his son, “Come here, boy. Come, come, and learn from us how to melt in showers. Titus, your grandfather, loved you well. Many a time he danced you on his knee, and sang you asleep with his loving breast serving as your pillow. Many a story he has told to you, and told you to keep his pretty tales in your mind, and talk about them when he was dead and gone.”

Marcus said to young Lucius, “How many thousand times have Titus’ poor lips, when they were living, warmed themselves on your lips in kisses! Now, sweet boy, give them their final kiss! Tell your grandfather farewell, and commit him to the grave. Do his lips the kindness of kissing them, and take your leave of them.”

Young Lucius said, “Oh, Grandfather, Grandfather! With all my heart, I wish that I were dead if it would make you live again!

“Oh, lord, I cannot speak to him because I am crying. My

tears will choke me if I open my mouth.”

The attendants returned with Aaron.

Aemilius said, “You sad Andronici, be done with your sorrows. Give this execrable wretch his sentence; he has been the breeder of these dire events.”

Lucius ordered, “Bury him breast-deep in the earth, and starve him. There let him stand, and rave, and cry for food. If any person relieves or pities him, for that offence that person dies. This is our judgment.

“Some of you stay here to carry out our sentence and to see him buried breast-deep in the earth.”

Aaron said, “Oh, why should wrath be mute, and fury not speak? I am no baby — not I. I am not one who with base, unworthy prayers will repent the evils I have done. I would do ten thousand evils worse than those I have done, if I could do what I want to do. If in all my life I did one good deed, I repent that good deed from my very soul.”

Lucius said, “Some loving friends convey the late Emperor away from here, and give him burial in his fathers’ grave. My father and Lavinia shall without delay be enclosed in our household’s tomb. As for that heinous tiger, Tamora, she shall have no funeral rite and no man in mourning clothes, and no mournful bell shall ring her burial. Instead, throw her body to beasts and birds of prey. Her life was beast-like, and devoid of pity; and, being so, her body shall have a similar want of pity. See that our just sentence is carried out on Aaron, that damned Moor, by whom our heavy misfortunes had their beginning. We will then rule well the state, so that similar events never may destroy it.”

A NOTE (*Titus Andronicus*)

In Shakespeare's play, both of Lavinia's hands are cut off and Titus' left hand is cut off. In this book, I write that they are cut off at the elbow.

Evidence for that include these things:

- Marcus talks about Lavinia's branches being cut off. (2.4)
- Titus says that he and Lavinia cannot fold their arms to express sorrow. (3.2)
- Titus says that Lavinia cannot thump on her chest. (3.2)
- Titus talks about not being able to gesture to grace his speech because he lacks a hand. If his hand and forearm are missing, that would make it hard for him to gesture. He could gesture oratorically much better if he had a forearm on the arm with the missing hand. (5.2)
- Titus talks about embracing Revenge, the disguised Tamora, with one arm. If he still had both forearms, he could embrace her with both arms. (5.2)

Evidence against the hands being cut off at the elbow — and rebuttals — include these things:

- Lavinia carries Titus' hand in her mouth. If this includes the forearm, it would be heavy. (3.1)

I think that Lavinia could do this. If necessary, she could use her stumps to help carry the hand.

- Lavinia uses her stumps to turn pages. (4.1)

It would be difficult, but Lavinia could turn pages without the use of her forearms. Also, she quickly gets help turning pages.

- Lavinia is able to use her stumps to guide Marcus' staff as she writes in the sand that Demetrius and Chiron raped her.

When Marcus comes up with the idea of writing in the sand and gives an example of doing that, he uses his feet to guide the staff as he writes. He may have done that because he thought that writing with upper arms only would be difficult. Besides, if Lavinia had forearms, she could use a forearm to write in the sand. (4.1)

- Lavinia uses her stumps to carry a basin. (5.2)

If the basin has handles on the side, she could use her mouth to bite on a handle and so carry the basin. Even if the basin lacks handles, she could bite on a side of the basin or put a side of the basin under her chin to help hold it steady.

Chapter XXXIII: TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Troilus and Cressida*)

Male Characters: Trojan

PRIAM, King of Troy.

HECTOR, Priam's oldest Son. Crown Prince of Troy.

TROILUS, Priam's youngest Son. In love with Cressida. "Troilus" has two syllables. In other works of literature, Polydorus is Priam's youngest son.

PARIS, Priam's Son. Kidnapped Helen, wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, thereby causing the Trojan War.

DEIPHOBUS, Priam's Son.

HELENUS, Priam's Son. A priest.

MARGARELON, a Bastard Son of Priam.

AENEAS & ANTENOR, Trojan Warriors.

CALCHAS, a Trojan Priest, taking part with the Greeks.

PANDARUS, Uncle to Cressida.

Male Characters: Greek

AGAMEMNON, the Greek General.

MENELAUS, his Brother. Menelaus is the lawful husband of Helen, whom Paris, Prince of Troy, ran away with.

ACHILLES, Greek Warrior.

AJAX, Greek Warrior. In this play, Ajax' mother is Hesione, sister to Priam, King of Troy. This makes him the first cousin of Hector, whose father is Priam. In other works of literature, it is Teucer, Ajax' half-brother (they

share the same father), whose mother is Hesione.

ULYSSES, Greek Warrior. Ulysses is his Roman name; his Greek name is Odysseus.

NESTOR, Greek Advisor. Nestor is aged.

DIOMEDES, Greek Warrior.

PATROCLUS, Greek Warrior. Friend to Achilles.

THERSITES, a deformed and scurrilous Greek.

ALEXANDER, Servant to Cressida.

Servant to Troilus.

Servant to Paris.

Servant to Diomedes.

Female Characters

HELEN, Legal Wife to Menelaus. Kidnapped by Paris. In many works of literature, it is ambiguous whether Helen went willingly with Paris.

ANDROMACHE, Wife to Hector.

CASSANDRA, Daughter to Priam. She is a prophetess.

CRESSIDA, Daughter to Calchas.

Minor Characters

Trojan and Greek Soldiers, and Attendants.

Note

Ilium, Ilion: These are other names for Troy.

PROLOGUE (*Troilus and Cressida*)

“Our scene lies in Troy. From the isles of Greece, proud Princes, their noble blood enraged, to the port of Athens have sent their ships, fraught with the soldiers and weapons of cruel war. Sixty-nine Princes, who wore their regal coronets, from the Athenian bay put forth toward Phrygia, site of Troy, and their vow is made to ransack Troy, within whose strong walls the kidnapped Helen, Menelaus’ Queen, sleeps with wanton, lecherous Paris, and that is the reason for the Trojan War.

“To Tenedos, an island near Troy, they come, and the large ships that displace much water disgorge there their warlike freightage — their cargo fraught with danger to Trojans. Now on the Dardan — Trojan — plains the fresh and still unbruised Greeks pitch their splendid pavilions. Priam’s city has six gates named Dardan, Tymbria, Helias, Chetas, Troien, and Antenorides; they have massive metal brackets and corresponding bolts that fit in the brackets to lock the gates. This city stirs up the sons of Troy. Now expectation that tickles lively spirits on one and the other side, Trojan and Greek, leads them to risk everything — winner take all.

“And hither I have come. I am an armed Prologue telling you all this, but I am not armed with an author’s pen or actor’s voice, but instead I am suited with armor and am carrying weapons as is relevant to our theme and story. I am here to tell you, fair beholders, that our book leaps over the first battles and their results; instead, our book starts and then ends with what may be recounted as relevant to the theme of this book. This book will not tell you how the war started but will instead begin *in medias res* — in the middle of the war.

“Like this book or find fault with it; do what you please.

Whether good or bad, it is but the chance of war.”

CHAPTER 1 (Troilus and Cressida)

— 1.1 —

Troilus and Pandarus stood before Priam's palace. Troilus was the youngest son of Priam, King of Troy, and he was in love with Cressida, the niece of Pandarus. The time was morning, and Troilus had put on his armor in preparation to fight the Greeks outside the city of Troy.

“Call here my servant; I'll take off my armor,” Troilus said. “Why should I make war outside the walls of Troy, when I find such cruel battle here within myself? Let each Trojan who is master of his heart go to the battlefield. I, Troilus, unfortunately have no heart because I have given it to Cressida.”

“Will this problem never be solved?” Pandarus asked.

Troilus said, “The Greeks are strong and skillful in proportion to their strength, they are fierce in proportion to their skill, and they are valiant in proportion to their fierceness, but I am weaker than a woman's tear, tamer than sleep, more foolish than ignorance, less valiant than the virgin in the night, and as without skills as unpracticed and inexperienced infancy.”

“Well, I have told you enough of this,” Pandarus said. “As for my part, I'll not concern myself any further. He who will have a cake made out of wheat must wait for the wheat to be ground into flour.”

“Haven't I waited?”

“Yes, you have waited for the grinding, but you must also wait for the bolting — the sifting — of the flour,” Pandarus said.

“Haven’t I waited?”

“Yes, you have waited for the bolting, but you must also wait for the leavening. You must wait for the dough to rise.”

“I have also waited for that,” Troilus said.

“Yes, you have waited for the leavening; but the waiting also includes the kneading, the making of the cake, the heating of the oven and the baking. Indeed, you must wait for the cake to cool, too, or you may chance to burn your lips.”

Pandarus was making a series of bawdy puns. “Grinding” referred to the act of sex — grinding crotch against crotch. “Bolt” referred to penis. “Leavening” referred to a developing pregnancy. “Oven” was a slang word for vagina or womb.

“Patience herself, whatever goddess she is, flinches less at suffering than I do,” Troilus said. “I suffer greatly from unrequited love. I sit at Priam’s royal table, and when beautiful Cressida comes into my thoughts — I am a traitor when I say that because for her to come into my thoughts she would have to be absent from my thoughts, and she is never absent from my thoughts!”

“Last night she looked more beautiful than I have ever seen her — or any other woman — look,” Pandarus said.

“I was about to tell you — when my heart, as if a sigh had been wedged into it, would split in two, then lest Hector or my father should perceive that I am in love, I have, as when the Sun comes out and lights up a storm, buried this sigh in the wrinkle of a smile. However, a sorrow that is concealed by the appearance and not the reality of gladness is like a laugh that fate turns to sudden sadness.”

“If Cressida’s hair were not somewhat darker than Helen’s — well, forget I said that — there would be no comparison between the women: Cressida would be regarded as the greater beauty. But, of course, she is my relative, my niece, and so I don’t want to praise her because I would be called biased, but I wish that somebody — such as you — had heard her talk yesterday, as I did. I will not dispraise your sister Cassandra’s wit, but —”

“Oh, Pandarus!” Troilus said. “I tell you, Pandarus — when I tell you that there my hopes lie drowned, don’t tell me how many fathoms deep my hopes are submerged. I tell you that I am mad — insane — because of my love for Cressida, and you tell me that she is beautiful. In doing that, you pour in the open ulcer of my heart her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, and her voice. You handle in your discourse — you talk about her — oh, her hand, in whose comparison all other white hands are as black as ink, writing their own reproach, and compared to the softness of her hand the young swan’s down is harsh and the gentlest touch is as hard as the palm of a plowman. When I say I love her, you tell me these things, and these things are true. But by saying such things, you put, instead of medicinal oil and balm, in every gash that unrequited love has given me the knife that made those gashes.”

“I speak no more than truth,” Pandarus said.

“You do not speak the full truth,” Troilus replied. “She is more beautiful than you say she is.”

“Indeed, I’ll not meddle in this love you have for her. Let her be as she is. If she is fair, it is the better for her; and if she is not fair, she has the remedy in her own hands. She can wear cosmetics.”

“Good Pandarus, what are you saying, Pandarus!”

“I have had my labor for my trouble,” Pandarus said. “I am

ill thought of by her and ill thought of by you. I have gone between you and her, but I have received small thanks for my labor.”

“What, are you angry, Pandarus? Are you angry with me?”

“Because Cressida is related to me, I say that she’s not as beautiful as Helen, lest I be thought biased in the favor of my niece. But if Cressida were not related to me, I would say that she is as beautiful in her everyday clothing as Helen is in her Sunday best. But what do I care? I don’t care if Cressida is black and ugly; it is all one and the same to me whether she is ugly or beautiful.”

“Did I say that she is not beautiful?”

“I do not care whether you do or not,” Pandarus said. “She’s a fool to stay in Troy after her father, Calchas, deserted the Trojans and joined the Greeks. Let her go to the Greeks and join her father; that is what I’ll tell her the next time I see her. As for me, I’ll meddle no more and do no more in this matter.”

“Pandarus —”

“I said I won’t, and I won’t.”

“Sweet Pandarus —”

“Please, speak no more to me. I will leave everything the way I found it, and that’s the end to my participation.”

As Pandarus exited, military trumpets sounded.

Troilus said to himself, “Be quiet, you ungracious clamors! Be quiet, you rude, cacophonous sounds! Fools on both sides! Helen must necessarily be beautiful, when with your blood you daily paint her thus — your blood is the stuff of her cosmetics. I cannot fight upon this point of contention; why should I fight because of Helen? She is too starved and

meager a subject for my sword. She is not a good reason for me to risk my life in battle.

“But Pandarus — gods, how you plague me! I cannot come to Cressida except by Pandarus, and he’s as peevish and fretful to be wooed to woo as she is stubbornly chaste against all wooing.

“Tell me, Apollo, you loved Daphne, who fled from you and was metamorphosed into a laurel tree. Tell me, for your love of Daphne, what Cressida is, what Pandarus is, and what I am. Cressida’s bed is analogous to wealthy India; there she lies, a pearl. Let the area between Priam’s palace and where she resides be called the wild and wandering ocean. I will be the merchant, and this sailing Pandarus will be my uncertain hope, my convoy, and my ship. I hope to use Pandarus to take me to Cressida, and I hope that I will take possession of her.”

Military trumpets sounded once more as Aeneas walked over to Troilus.

“How are you, Prince Troilus? Why aren’t you on the battlefield?”

“Because I am not there. This woman’s answer — ‘because’ — is fitting because it is womanish for a man to stay away from the battlefield. Aeneas, what is the news from the battlefield today?”

“Paris is wounded and has returned home.”

“Aeneas, who wounded him?”

“Troilus, he was wounded by Menelaus.”

“Let Paris bleed; it is but a scar to scorn; Paris is gored with Menelaus’ horn.”

The wound was a scar to scorn because Paris had scorned

Menelaus by running away with Helen, Menelaus' wife, and Paris would bear a scar from the wound that he would not have received had he respected Menelaus. Menelaus had horns to use to wound Paris because Paris had cuckolded him. A cuckold is a man whose wife is unfaithful; in this culture, people joked that cuckolds had horns on their head. The scar could be scorned also because a cuckold gave the wound — and resulting scar — to a cuckold-maker instead of the wound's being received for a worthier reason.

Again, military trumpets sounded.

Aeneas said, "Listen! What good sport is out of the city and on the battlefield today!"

"The sport would be better at home, if 'I wish I might' were 'yes, I may,'" Troilus replied.

"Sport" means entertainment. Aeneas used it to refer to the excitement of fighting in a battle; Troilus used it to refer to the excitement of 'fighting' in a bed in which there was a woman.

Troilus added, "But about the sport on the battleground. Are you going there?"

"Yes, and quickly."

"Come, let us go together."

They exited.

— 1.2 —

Cressida and Alexander, one of her servants, spoke together on a street in Troy.

"Who were those people who went by just now?" Cressida asked.

“Queen Hecuba and Helen,” Alexander answered.

“And where are they going?”

“Up to the eastern tower, whose commanding height makes all the low-lying land its subject. They want to see the battle. Hector, whose patience is normally steadfast like all virtues, today was in a bad mood. He rebuked Andromache and struck his armorer, and, just as if there were husbandry in war, before the Sun rose he put on light armor, and he went to the battlefield, where every flower, as if they were prophets, wept with dew at what they foresaw — many deaths of Greeks — in Hector’s wrath.”

“What was the cause of Hector’s anger?” Cressida asked.

“The rumor is that it was this: There is among the Greeks a lord of Trojan blood who is first cousin to Hector. They call him Ajax.”

“I understand, but what of him?”

“They say he is a thoroughgoing man in himself, and stands alone.”

“So do all men, unless they are drunk, are sick, or have no legs,” Cressida joked.

“Lady, Ajax has robbed many beasts of their particular distinctions,” Alexander said. “He is as valiant as the lion, as churlish as the bear, and as slow as the elephant. He is a man into whom nature has so crowded moods and dispositions that his valor is crushed into folly and his folly is sauced with discretion: His courage is definitely mixed with folly, and his folly is seasoned with discretion — what is good in him is mixed with what is bad, and what is bad in him has a touch of good. No man has a virtue that Ajax has not a glimpse of, and no man has a flaw that Ajax has not some stain of it: He is melancholy without cause, and

he is merry when he ought not to be merry. He has the joints of everything, but everything is out of joint. He has good qualities as well as bad, and everything is so badly put together that he cannot make good use of his good qualities. He is like Briareus, the mythological monster who has a hundred hands, but he is like a Briareus who has the gout — he has a hundred hands but cannot use them. Or he is like an Argus, a mythological monster who has a hundred eyes, but he is like an Argus who is blind — he has a hundred eyes but cannot use them.”

“But how could this man named Ajax, the description of whom makes me smile, make Hector angry?”

“They say that yesterday he fought Hector in the battle and struck him down, the disdain and shame of which has ever since kept Hector fasting and waking. Hector is so angry that he cannot eat or sleep.”

Cressida saw someone approaching and asked, “Who is coming here?”

“Madam, it is your uncle Pandarus,” Alexander replied.

Cressida said, “Hector’s a gallant man.”

“As gallant as may be in the world, lady,” Alexander said.

As Pandarus joined them, he said, “What’s that? What’s that?”

“Good morning, uncle Pandarus,” Cressida said.

“Good morning, niece Cressida. What are you talking about? Good morning, Alexander. How are you, niece? When were you last at Priam’s palace?”

“This morning, uncle,” Cressida replied.

“What were you talking about when I came here just now?” Pandarus asked. “Was Hector armed and gone before you

came to Priam's palace? Helen was not up, was she?"

"Hector was gone, but Helen was not up."

"I see. Hector was up and stirring early."

"That is what we were talking about, and about Hector's anger."

"Was he angry?" Pandarus asked.

"That is what Alexander here said," Cressida replied.

"True, Hector was angry," Pandarus said. "I know the cause, too. He'll lay about him with his sword today, I can tell them that. He will fight well, and Troilus will not come far behind him. Let the Greeks take heed of Troilus, I can tell them that, too."

"What, is he angry, too?"

"Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two," Pandarus said.

Pandarus was praising Troilus in an attempt to persuade Cressida to fall in love with him, but Hector was definitely the best Trojan warrior.

"Oh, Jupiter! There's no comparison between the two men," Cressida said.

"What, no comparison between Troilus and Hector? Do you know a man if you see him?"

"Yes, if I ever saw him before and knew him," Cressida said.

"Well, I say Troilus is Troilus," Pandarus said.

"Then you say what I say; for, I am sure that he is not Hector."

“No, he is not, and Hector is not Troilus in some ways.”

“That is just and fitting to each of them; each man is himself.”

“Himself!” Pandarus said. “You think that Troilus is himself? Alas, poor Troilus! I wish that he were himself.”

Pandarus meant that Troilus was not himself because he was suffering from his unrequited love for Cressida.

“So he is,” Cressida said. “He is himself.”

“That statement is as true as the statement that I walked barefoot to India.”

“Troilus is not Hector.”

“But is Troilus himself? No, he’s not himself. I wish that he were himself! Well, the gods are above; time must befriend him or end him. Well, Troilus, well. I wish that my heart were in her body. No, Hector is not a better man than Troilus.”

“Excuse me. I don’t believe you.”

“He is elder.”

In fact, Hector was the eldest son of Priam.

“Pardon me, pardon me,” Cressida said. “If you mean that Troilus is elder than Hector, you are wrong.”

“The other one — Troilus — has not fully come to maturity,” Pandarus said. “You shall tell me another tale about who is the elder and the more mature when the other one — Troilus — has fully come to maturity. Hector shall not have Troilus’ intelligence this year. Troilus will be more intelligent than Hector.”

“Hector shall not need Troilus’ intelligence, if he has his

own,” Cressida said.

“Nor will Hector have Troilus’ qualities.”

“No matter.”

“Nor his beauty.”

“Troilus’ beauty would not be becoming for Hector; his own beauty is better.”

“You have no judgment, niece,” Pandarus said. “Helen herself swore the other day, that Troilus, for a brown complexion — for so it is, I must confess — well, no, his complexion is not brown —”

In this culture, fair complexions were valued more highly than black or suntanned or sunburnt complexions.

“No, it is brown,” Cressida said.

“Indeed, to say the truth, his complexion is brown and not brown.”

“To say the truth, what you have said is true and not true.”

“She praised his complexion above the complexion of Paris.”

“Why, Paris has color enough,” Cressida said.

“So he has.”

“Then Troilus has too much color. If Helen praised his complexion above that of Paris, then his complexion is higher than Paris’. If Paris has color enough, and Troilus has a higher color, then Helen made too flaming — too extravagant — praise for a good complexion. I would like just as much that Helen’s golden tongue had praised Troilus for having a copper nose.”

A copper nose can be a suntanned nose, but in this culture

people who had lost their nose as a result of venereal disease or fighting sometimes wore a prosthetic nose made of copper.

“I swear to you that I think Helen loves Troilus better than Paris,” Pandarus said.

“Then she’s a merry Greek indeed.”

Helen, of course, was Greek, and in this culture a “merry Greek” was a wanton person.

“I am sure she loves Troilus more than she loves Paris,” Pandarus said. “She came to him the other day by the bay window — and, you know, he has not more than three or four hairs on his chin —”

“Indeed, a tapster’s arithmetic may soon bring his particular hairs to a total,” Cressida said.

A tapster is a bartender or a server in a bar. They use arithmetic to total the tabs in the bar.

“Why, he is very young, and yet he is able to lift as much weight, within three pounds, as his brother Hector.”

“Is he so young a man and so old a lifter?”

Cressida was punning. A “lifter” is a thief, as in shoplifter.

“But I can prove to you that Helen loves Troilus,” Pandarus said. “She came and put her white hand up to his cloven chin —”

Pandarus meant that Troilus had a cleft chin but Cressida pretended that he had said that Troilus’ chin was split in two.

“May Juno, Queen of the gods, have mercy!” Cressida said. “How came his chin to be cloven?”

“Why, you know it is dimpled,” Pandarus said. “I think his smiling becomes him better than any man in all Phrygia.”

“Oh, he smiles valiantly.”

“Doesn’t he?”

“Oh, yes, as if it were a cloud in autumn.”

Cressida was being sarcastic about and critical of Troilus’ smile. A sunny day in autumn is often beautiful; a cloudy day in autumn is often dull and dreary. A valiant smile likened to a cloud in autumn could be a reference to the Sun valiantly attempting to shine through the clouds during the season of autumn.

“Why, bah, then, but to prove to you that Helen loves Troilus —”

“Troilus will stand to the proof, if you’ll prove it so,” Cressida said.

One meaning of what Cressida had said was that Troilus would pass the test if he were tested, but there was a second meaning. She was being bawdy. “To stand” means “to have an erection.” She was saying that Troilus would have an erection if Pandarus could prove that Helen loved Troilus.

“Troilus!” Pandarus said. “Why, he esteems Helen no more than I esteem an addled — a rotten — egg.”

“If you love an addled egg as well as you love an idle and empty head, you would eat chickens in the shell,” Cressida said.

Addled eggs often had an embryonic, but dead, chick inside.

“I cannot choose but laugh, when I think how Helen tickled Troilus’ chin,” Pandarus said. “Indeed, she has a marvelously white hand, I must necessarily confess —”

“That is a confession you have made without first having been tortured on the rack.”

“And Helen spied a white hair on his chin.”

“Alas, poor chin!” Cressida said. “Many a wart is richer because it has more hairs than one.”

“But there was such laughing! Queen Hecuba laughed so much that her eyes ran over.”

“With millstones, but not with tears,” Cressida said. She did not understand how this anecdote could be so funny that it would make anyone cry with laughter.

“And Cassandra laughed,” Pandarus said.

“But there was more temperate fire under the cooking pot of her eyes,” Cressida said. “Did her eyes run over, too?”

Cassandra was not the type of person to laugh much. In mythology, she had the gift of prophecy, but she also had the curse of her prophecies never being believed. And as a prophetess, she knew before other people bad events that would soon occur.

“And Hector laughed.”

“At what was all this laughing?” Cressida asked. “What were they laughing at?”

“Indeed, at the white hair that Helen spied on Troilus’ chin.”

“If it had been a green hair, I would have laughed, too,” Cressida said.

“They laughed not so much at the hair as at his ingenious answer.”

“What was his answer?”

“Helen said, ‘Here’s only two and fifty hairs on your chin, and one of them is white.’”

“This is her observation, not his answer,” Cressida pointed out.

“That’s true; make no question of that,” Pandarus replied. “‘Two and fifty hairs,’ Troilus replied, ‘and one hair is white. That white hair is my father, and all the rest are his sons.’”

Troilus was punning. Most of his hairs were heirs — Priam’s fifty sons.

Pandarus continued, “‘By Jupiter!’ said Helen, ‘which of these hairs is Paris, my husband?’ ‘The forked one,’ said he. ‘Pluck it out, and give it to him.’ But there was such laughing! And Helen so blushed, and Paris so fretted, and all the rest so laughed, that it surpasses description.”

Priam had fifty sons. Troilus had one white hair, and fifty black hairs, but one black hair was forked (had a split end) and so was counted as two, making a total (in the anecdote) of fifty-two hairs.

The forked hair represented Paris, and the fork in the hair represented horns. Paris had made a cuckold of Menelaus and given him horns, and Troilus was joking that Helen had made a cuckold of Paris and given him horns.

“So let your anecdote pass by now; for it has been a while going by,” Cressida said.

“Well, niece,” Pandarus said. “I told you something important yesterday; think about it.”

The “something important” was Troilus’ love for her.

“So I do.”

“I’ll be sworn it is true; he will weep, as if he were a man

born in April, the month of showers.”

“And I’ll spring up in his tears, as if I were a nettle anticipating May,” Cressida said.

She had changed the proverb “April showers bring May flowers” so that she could criticize Troilus.

Trumpets sounded retreat. Now the Trojan warriors would return to Troy.

“Listen,” Pandarus said. “The warriors are coming from the battlefield. Shall we stand up here, and see them as they pass toward Troy? Good niece, do, sweet niece Cressida.”

“As you wish.”

“Here, here, here’s an excellent place,” Pandarus said. “Here we may see them very well. I’ll tell you all their names as they pass by; but be sure to pay special attention to Troilus more than the rest.”

“Don’t speak so loudly,” Cressida said, embarrassed lest Pandarus be overheard.

Aeneas walked by them.

“That’s Aeneas,” Pandarus said. “Isn’t he a splendid man? He’s one of the flowers of Troy, I can tell you, but be sure to look at Troilus; you shall see him soon.”

Antenor walked by them.

“Who’s that?” Cressida asked.

“That’s Antenor,” Pandarus replied. “He has a shrewd intelligence, I can tell you, and he’s a good enough man. He’s one of the soundest judges in Troy and has the greatest wisdom, and he is handsome. But when is Troilus coming? I’ll show you Troilus soon. If he sees me, you shall see him nod at me.”

“Will he give you the nod?”

“Give you the nod” was slang for “make a fool out of you.”

“Yes, you will see him nod at me,” Pandarus said.

“If he nods at you, the rich shall have more,” Cressida said.

Cressida was willing to be critical of Pandarus, her uncle, as well as of Troilus. A noddy is a fool. Cressida was referring to Matthew 13:12, part of which states, “*For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance [...].*” If Troilus were to nod to Pandarus, he would make Pandarus a noddee, and Pandarus would be more of a fool than he already was.

Hector walked by them.

“That’s Hector, that, that, look, that man,” Pandarus said.

“There’s a fellow!”

He yelled, “Way to go, Hector!”

Then he said to Cressida, “There’s a brave man, niece. Oh, brave Hector! Look how he looks! There’s a countenance! Isn’t he a splendid man?”

“Yes, he is a splendid man!”

“Isn’t he, though!” Pandarus said. “Seeing him does a man’s heart good. Look at the dents on his helmet! Look yonder, do you see them? Look there. There’s no jesting; there’s evidence that Hector has been fighting hard in battle and laying blows on the enemy. That’s evidence that no naysayers can deny — there are dents in his helmet!”

“Were those dents made by swords?”

“Swords! Yes, and by other weapons such as spears. Hector does not care what enemy he faces. If the Devil were to come to fight him, it’s all one to Hector — he doesn’t care

whether he fights a Greek or the Devil. By God, it does one's heart good to see Hector. But look. Yonder comes Paris, yonder comes Paris."

Paris walked by them.

"Look yonder, niece. Isn't he a gallant man, too, isn't he? Why, this is splendid now. Who said that Paris was wounded and had returned home today? He's not wounded. Why, this will do Helen's heart good now, ha! I wish I could see Troilus now! You shall see Troilus soon."

Helenus walked by them.

"Who's that?" Cressida asked.

"That's Helenus. I wonder where Troilus is. That's Helenus. I think that Troilus did not go out to fight today. That's Helenus."

"Can Helenus fight, uncle?" Cressida asked, aware that Helenus was a priest.

"Helenus? No," Pandarus said. Quickly, he changed his answer — one ought not to criticize a Prince. "Yes, he'll fight moderately well. I wonder where Troilus is. Listen! Don't you hear the people cry 'Troilus'? Helenus is a priest."

"What sneaking fellow comes yonder?" Cressida asked. She knew who the "sneaking fellow" was.

Troilus walked by them.

"Where? Yonder? That's Deiphobus," Pandarus said. He was wrong, but he quickly recognized his mistake and said, "It is Troilus! There's a man, niece!"

He called loudly, "Ha! Brave Troilus! The Prince of chivalry!"

“Be quiet!” Cressida said. “You are embarrassing me, and you yourself ought to be embarrassed. Be quiet!”

“Look at him. Look closely at him,” Pandarus said. “Oh, brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece. Look how his sword is bloodied, and how his helmet is more hacked than Hector’s, and see how he looks, and how he walks! Oh, admirable youth! He is not yet twenty-three years old. Keep it up, Troilus, keep it up! If I had a sister who was one of the goddesses known as the Graces, and if I had a daughter who was also a goddess, I would give Troilus his choice of which of them to marry. Oh, admirable man! Paris? Paris is dirt compared to him; and, I promise you that Helen would give one of her eyes to exchange Paris for Troilus.”

“Here come more soldiers,” Cressida said.

More soldiers walked by them.

“These are asses, fools, dolts!” Pandarus said. “They are chaff and bran, chaff and bran! They are mere porridge after one has eaten meat! We have seen the best men and the best man — Troilus. I could live and die in the eyes of Troilus. Don’t look at them! Don’t look at them! The eagles are gone. What we see now are crows and jackdaws, crows and jackdaws! I would rather be a man such as Troilus than Agamemnon and all the Greek warriors.”

“Among the Greeks is Achilles, who is a better man than Troilus,” Cressida said.

“Achilles!” Pandarus said. “He is a cart-driver, a porter, a camel — he is a stupid beast of burden!”

“Well, well,” Cressida said.

“Well, well!” Pandarus repeated. “Why, don’t you have any ability to distinguish a real man among ‘men’? Haven’t you any eyes? Don’t you know what a man is? Aren’t birth,

beauty, good shape, good conversation, manliness, learning, nobleness, virtue, youth, generosity, and other such things the spice and salt that season a man?"

"Yes, a minced man," Cressida said. "And then they are baked with no date in the pie, for then the man's date's out."

Cressida was criticizing Troilus again. Pandarus had highly praised him and mentioned many good qualities that he claimed that Troilus possessed, but she was questioning his manhood. A date is a phallic-shaped fruit, and she was saying that Troilus' date was staying out of the vaginal pie. One meaning of "to mince" is "to walk very primly," and a stereotype of gay men is that they mince. Another meaning of "mince" is "to cut into very small pieces for cooking." Of course, a man whose date is out is a man who is out of fashion and of lesser value — he is after his sell-by date.

"What a woman you are!" Pandarus said. Aware that she was metaphorically fencing with words against his attempts at persuading her to love Troilus, he said, "One does not know at what ward you lie."

A ward is a parrying — defensive — movement in fencing.

Cressida said, "I lie upon my back, to defend my belly."

To lie on her back to defend her belly — say, against a sexual "attack" — seems to be a poor defensive position for such a purpose. But perhaps she meant that she would rely on her back to defend her belly. Or perhaps she was not much interested in defending her belly if it were "attacked" by the right man.

She added, "I rely upon my wit, to defend my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend my chastity; upon my mask, to defend my beauty; and upon you, to defend all these."

She could satisfy her wiles — cunningly get her wishes — and then use her wit and intelligence to defend them and keep away from herself any bad consequences. One way for her to defend her reputation for chastity was by keeping silent — not telling anyone about an affair, if she should have one. Like other ladies of the time, she wore a mask when in the Sun to protect her face from being tanned by the Sun. The mask hid her face from the Sun the way her secrecy could hide an affair from being known by other people. She also relied on her uncle to protect her; her father was not present in Troy, and so Pandarus was her male protector in Troy. As her uncle, he had a moral obligation to protect her. However, she may have been sarcastic when she said that she would rely upon him. Events would show that Pandarus was in favor of his niece having an affair with Troilus.

She added, “And at all these wards I lie, at a thousand watches — I will have all these defenses during a thousand sleepless nights.”

Cressida was hinting at bawdiness. A thousand nights would be sleepless because a male lover would keep her awake. Because she would not be legally married to the male lover, she would have to rely on her own intelligence and secrecy — and her uncle — to keep other people from learning about the affair.

“Tell me about one of your watches — one of your sleepless nights,” Pandarus said.

“No, I’ll watch you if I have any sleepless nights, and you are one of the chief things that I will have to carefully watch,” Cressida said. “If I cannot ward — defend — what I would not have hit, I can watch you for telling how I took the blow. In other words, if I cannot ward off and keep a penis from penetrating me, I will carefully watch you to guard against your telling on me. Of course, if I get

pregnant and my belly swells up and cannot be hidden, then it's past watching. I won't then be able to guard against my sexual activity being known."

In her answer, Cressida was punning on the words "watch" and "ward," aka "defend," which were the duties of a watchman.

"What a woman you are!" Pandarus said.

Troilus' servant, a boy, walked over to them and said to Pandarus, "Sir, my lord wants to speak with you right away."

"Where?" Pandarus asked.

"At your own house; he is taking off his armor there."

"Good boy, tell him I am coming," Pandarus said.

The boy exited.

"I doubt that Troilus is wounded," Pandarus said. "Fare you well, good niece."

"*Adieu*, uncle."

"I'll be with you, niece, by and by."

"To bring me something, uncle?"

"Yes, a token from Troilus."

As Pandarus exited, Cressida said to herself, "By the same token, you are a bawd, a pimp, a procurer."

She paused and then added to herself, "Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice, he — Pandarus — offers in another's — Troilus' — enterprise, but I see a thousand-fold more in Troilus than there is in the mirror of Pandarus' praise. Yet I hold Troilus off. Women are thought to be Angels while they are being wooed; they are not thought to

be worth so much after they are won. Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing. A woman who is beloved knows nothing unless she knows this: Men prize the thing they have not gained more than it is worth. No woman has ever known a man to love her as sweetly after he got her than while he was pursuing her. Therefore I teach this maxim out of love: What is achieved is commanded; what is not yet gained is beseeched. When a man has won a woman, he commands her; while he is still pursuing her, he beseeches her. Therefore, although my heart bears much love for Troilus, nothing of my love for him shall in my eyes appear. I love Troilus, but I will not let him know that."

— 1.3 —

Agamemnon, the elderly advisor Nestor, Ulysses, Menelaus, Diomedes, and other important Greeks met in front of Agamemnon's tent in the Greek camp.

Agamemnon said to the others, "What grief has made your cheeks jaundiced? The ample promise of success that hope makes in all plans begun on Earth below fails at first. We do not immediately receive the promised largeness: Obstacles and disasters grow in the veins of the highest reared plans. These obstacles and disasters are like knots that block the sap and so infect the sound pine and divert its grain, twisting and turning it from its natural course of growth.

"Princes, it is not news to us that we have come so far short of our hope that after seven years of siege Troy's walls still stand. Every planned action of which we have historical record had a period of testing in which the people faced problems that thwarted and did not help them achieve their goal, and that thwarted and did not help them carry out the plan that their abstract thought had formed.

“Why then, you Princes, do you with abashed cheeks look at our deeds, and call them shameful? The troubles we face are indeed nothing other than the protracted trials that great Jove has given to us because the King of gods wants to find persistent constancy in men.”

Jove was another name for Jupiter, King of the gods.

Agamemnon continued, “The fineness of men’s metal — and mettle — is not found in the favor of Lady Fortune; for then the bold and the cowardly, the wise and the foolish, the well-educated and the unread, and the hard and the soft would all seem to be related to each other and much the same, but it is found instead in the wind and tempest of the frown of Lady Distinction, who with a broad and powerful fan blows air at all, winnowing the light stuff away, and leaving behind whatever has mass or matter — the stuff that by itself lies rich in virtue and unmingled with anything base.”

Nestor said, “With due observance of your godlike power, Great Agamemnon, Nestor shall explicate your most recent words. In the reproof of chance lies the true proof of men. To know whether a man is really a man, that man must be tested. When the sea is smooth, many shallow baubles — toy-like boats — dare to sail upon her patient breast, making their way with those ships of nobler bulk! But let the ruffian Boreas — the north wind — once enrage the home of the gentle sea-goddess Thetis, and immediately you see the ships with strong ribs cut through liquid mountains, bounding between the two moist elements — the sea and the air — like the hero Perseus’ winged horse, Pegasus. Where then is the saucy, insolent boat whose weak sides lack a strong frame? A moment ago, such toy-like boats dared to rival great ships! But now, the toy-like boats have either fled to a harbor or they have made a toast for Neptune — they are like a piece of toast that has been

soaked in water and has sunk.

“In such storms of fortune, we distinguish the appearance of valor from the reality of valor. When the Sun is shining brightly, a herd of cattle is more annoyed by the gadfly than by the tiger, but when the splitting wind makes the trunks of gnarled oaks flexible so that they bend their knee, forcing the trunk to grow naturally in a bent shape suitable for the building of ships — we call it knee-timber — and when flies have fled to find shelter under the stormy sky, why then the thing of courage, which is roused by the rage of the storm and which sympathizes with rage, replies to chiding fortune in a voice with an accent tuned in the selfsame key. A courageous man reacts vigorously when vigorously challenged.”

Ulysses said, “Agamemnon, you are our great commander, the sinew and bone of Greece, the heart of our numbers of soldiers, our soul and only spirit, and in you the temperaments and the minds of all should be embodied. Please hear what I, Ulysses, have to say besides the applause and approbation that I give to the speeches that you, Agamemnon, who are mightiest because of your position and power, and that you, Nestor, who are most revered because of your long and stretched-out life, made. I give applause and approbation to both your speeches, which were such as Agamemnon, the hands of the Greeks should hold up high after they are engraved in brass, and also are such as venerable Nestor, whose hair is streaked with silver, should with a bond of air, as strong as the axle-tree — the Earth — around which the planets and the Heavens revolve, knit all the Greek ears to his experienced tongue. Nestor is such an excellent speaker that he could recite both your speeches and use the waves of sounds to bind Greek ears to the words. Yet may it please you both — you, great Agamemnon, and you, wise Nestor — to hear me, Ulysses, speak.”

“Speak, Ulysses, Prince of the island of Ithaca,” Agamemnon replied. Using the royal plural, he said, “We are confident that when rank and foulmouthed Thersites opens his dog-like jaws we shall never hear music, intelligence, and divine prophecy. We are even more confident that you will not divide your lips in order to talk unnecessarily about unimportant matters.”

Ulysses said, “Troy, which still stands on its foundation, would have fallen and the great Hector’s sword would have lacked a master by now, except for these reasons I will explain now. The specialty of rule — the rights of and obligations to authority — has been neglected. Look, many hollow Greek tents stand upon this plain; we have that many hollow — false and unsound — factions.

“Whenever the army general is not like the beehive to whom the foragers for food shall all repair, what honey can be expected? When a person of high degree wears a mask, the men who are the unworthiest appear to be just as high of degree while they are also wearing a mask.

“The Heavens themselves, the planets and this center — the Earth — observe degree, priority and proper place and station, regularity of position, course, proportion, season, form, office and custom, according to their rank. And therefore the glorious Sol — the Sun — in noble eminence is enthroned and set in its sphere amid the other Heavenly bodies. The Sun’s medicinal eye corrects the ill aspects of evil astrological planets, and speeds, like the commandment of a King, without check, to good and bad.

“But when the planets wander into an evil and disordered conjunction, what plagues and what portents result! What mutiny and rebellion! What raging of the sea! What shaking of the Earth! What commotion in the winds! What frights, changes, and horrors divert, crack, tear, and uproot the unity and married calm of states and governments quite

from their fixed position!

“Oh, when rank is forgotten, rank that is the ladder to all high designs, then enterprise is sick! How could communities, degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities, peaceful commerce from shores separated by seas, the right of primogeniture and the due of birth, the prerogative of age, crowns, scepters, and laurel wreaths stand in an authentic place except by rank and degree?

“But if you take rank and degree away, if you untune that string, then — hark! — what discord follows! Each thing meets in complete opposition. The waters that are bounded by the shores would lift their bosoms — their waves — higher than the shores and make sodden all this solid globe.

“Strength would be the lord of weakness, the strong would rule the weak, and the rude and violent son would strike his father dead. Might would be right; or rather, might would be right and wrong. Justice weighs in its scales what is right and what is wrong, but without the observance of degree and rank, both right and wrong would lose their names and be forgotten, and the same would happen to justice, too.

“Without the observance of degree and rank, everything becomes subservient to power, power becomes subservient to willfulness, and willfulness becomes subservient to appetite, aka desire.

“Appetite is a universal wolf, and because it is doubly seconded with willfulness and power, it must necessarily make a universal prey, and at last eat up himself. Hungry wolves will kill each other one by one until only one is left. But appetite is so strong that the last wolf left will kill itself.

“Great Agamemnon, this chaos, when degree and rank are suffocated, follows the choking. Chaos necessarily follows the neglect of degree and rank. And because of this neglect

of degree and rank, a person who takes a step goes lower, although he intends to climb higher.

“The general is disdained by the man who is one step below him, that man is disdained by the next man, and that next man is disdained by the man beneath him, so every step, following the example of the first step of the man who is sick of his superior, grows to an envious fever of pale and bloodless and jealous rivalry. Each man follows the bad example of the man just above him.

“And it is this fever that keeps Troy from being conquered, not her own sinews. To end a lengthy tale, Troy still stands because of our weakness, not because of her strength.”

Nestor said, “Most wisely has Ulysses here revealed the fever that has made all our authority sick.”

“You have described the problem, Ulysses, but what is the solution?” Agamemnon asked. “You have described the illness, but what is the remedy?”

Ulysses replied, “The great Achilles, whom public opinion crowns the strongest and the greatest warrior of our army, having his ear full of his airy fame, grows vain of his worth, and he lies in his tent and mocks our plans. With him Patroclus lies upon a lazy bed the livelong day and makes scurrilous jests. And with ridiculous and awkward actions, which — slanderer that he is — Patroclus calls imitations, he mimics us.

“Sometimes, great Agamemnon, he assumes your supreme position, and, like a strutting actor on a stage, whose imagination lies in his hamstrings, and who thinks it wonderful to hear the wooden dialogue and the wooden sound that his long strides make on the wooden stage — he pretends to be your greatness and acts with such a to-be-pitied and over-strained performance. And when he speaks, it is like a metal bell being ground down to tune it — the

words are unfitting and even if they were to come from the tongue of Typhon, a mythological monster who roared with a hundred mouths, they would seem to be hyperbolic.

“At this musty and moldy stuff, the huge Achilles, lolling on his bed, which is pressed with his weight, laughs out a loud applause from his deep chest and cries, ‘Excellent! It is exactly Agamemnon! Now play Nestor for me — hem, and stroke your beard, as if he were preparing to make some oration.’ Once that is done, and Patroclus has portrayed Nestor as nearly accurate as the extreme ends of parallel lines are near to each other, or as like Nestor as the ugly and deformed Vulcan is like his wife — Venus, the goddess of sexual passion — godly Achilles continually cries, ‘Excellent! It is Nestor exactly. Now play Nestor again for me, Patroclus. This time show him arming himself in response to a night alarm.’

“And then, truly, the frail defects of age must be the subject of a scene of mirth. Patroclus coughs and spits, and fumbles while putting on his gorget — armor for the throat — with palsied, shaking hands. His hands tremble as he puts in the rivet holding the pieces of the gorget together and then accidentally pulls out the rivet. Sir Valor — Achilles — dies laughing. He cries, ‘Oh, enough, Patroclus; stop, or give me ribs of steel! I shall split all my ribs with the pleasure of my laughing.’

“And in this fashion, all our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes, individual and group virtues of great merit, achievements, plots and plans, orders, preventions and defensive maneuvers, exhortations to do battle, or diplomatic speeches to arrange a truce, success or loss, what is or is not, serves as stuff for these two to mock.”

Nestor said, “And in the imitation of these two — Achilles and Patroclus — who, as Ulysses says, opinion crowns with an authoritative voice — many are infected. Ajax is

grown self-willful, and he bears his head in such a rein, in fully as proud a place as broad-chested Achilles. He keeps to his tent like him. He gives feasts to his supporters; he rails against our management of the war, he is as bold as an oracle, and he sets on Thersites, who is a villain whose gall coins slanders as quickly as a mint makes coins. Thersites compares us to dirt, and he weakens and discredits our exposed position, however thickly hemmed in with danger we are.”

Ulysses said, “They censure our policy, and they call it cowardice. They believe that wisdom is not relevant in war, they obstruct foresight and planning, and they value no action except that of physical fighting. The quiet and intellectual people, who plan how many soldiers shall strike the enemy in battle, who decide when the time is right and everything is properly prepared to give the best chance of victory, and who know by careful scouting the enemies’ number and strength — why, this has not a finger’s dignity to them. They call this bed-work, map-making, armchair strategy. They value more highly the battering ram that batters down the wall, because of the battering ram’s great swing and its violent, heavy blows, than the engineer who made the battering ram, or those people who with the fineness of their souls and intellect guide the use of the battering ram.”

Nestor said, “Let all this be granted, and we can conclude that the horse of Achilles is worth many sons of Thetis.”

Achilles was the son of the sea-goddess Thetis.

A trumpet sounded.

“What trumpet is that?” Agamemnon asked. “Go and find out, Menelaus.”

Menelaus said, “Someone has come from Troy.”

Aeneas walked over to the Greeks.

Agamemnon asked, “What do you want here before our tent?”

“Is this great Agamemnon’s tent?” Aeneas asked. “Please tell me.”

“Yes, it is,” Agamemnon replied.

“May one who is a herald and a Prince deliver a fair and courteous message to his Kingly ears?” Aeneas asked.

“Yes, you can, with a guarantee that you will not be hurt — a guarantee that is stronger than Achilles’ arm,” Agamemnon said. “You can deliver your message in front of all the Greek leaders who with one voice call Agamemnon head and general.”

“That is fair permission and strong security,” Aeneas replied. “How may a stranger to those most imperial looks know them from the eyes of other mortals? How can I tell who is Agamemnon?”

“How!” Agamemnon asked. He was surprised that Aeneas could not tell that he was Agamemnon, leader of the Greek warriors.

“Yes,” Aeneas replied. “I ask so that I might awaken reverence and put on a face full of respect, and bid my cheek to be ready with a blush as modest as morning with its blushing dawn when she coldly eyes the youthful Phoebus Apollo the Sun-god as he begins to drive his Sun-chariot across the sky. Which of you is that god in office, that god who guides men? Which of you is the high and mighty Agamemnon?”

Using the royal plural, Agamemnon said, “This Trojan scorns us; or else the men of Troy are ceremonious courtiers who are full of formal etiquette.”

Aeneas replied, “When the Trojans are unarmed and not at war, they are courtiers as generous, as courtly, and as debonair as bowing Angels; that’s their fame and reputation in peace. But when they need to be soldiers, they have venomous anger, good arms, strong joints, and true swords, and with Jove willing, they are unequalled in courage. But peace, Aeneas. Be quiet, Trojan. Lay your finger on your lips! Praise is worth nothing if the praised person is himself doing the praising, but when the grumbling enemy praises, that is the praise that gets talked about; that praise, solely and surely, is real and leads to fame and good reputation.”

Agamemnon asked, “Sir, you man of Troy, do you call yourself Aeneas?”

“Yes, Greek, that is my name.”

“Please state what your business is here.”

“Sir, pardon me; my business here is for Agamemnon’s ears to hear.”

“He hears privately nothing that comes from Troy,” Agamemnon said.

“I have not come from Troy to whisper and talk confidentially to him,” Aeneas replied. “I brought a trumpeter to awaken his ears so that he will pay close attention, and after his ears are awakened I will speak.”

“Speak as frankly and freely as the wind. It is not Agamemnon’s sleeping hour. That you shall know, Trojan, he is awake, he tells you so himself — I am Agamemnon.”

“Trumpeter, blow loud,” Aeneas said. “Send your brass voice through all these lazy tents, and every Greek of mettle, let him know that Troy’s message shall fairly be spoken aloud.”

The trumpet sounded.

Aeneas said, “We have, great Agamemnon, here in Troy a Prince named Hector — Priam is his father — who in this dull and long-continued truce has grown rusty. He ordered me to take a trumpeter, and to speak this message. Kings, Princes, lords! If there is one among the fairest of Greece who holds his honor higher than his ease, who seeks his praise more than he fears his peril, who knows his valor and does not know his fear, who loves his woman more than is shown by the profession of sweet nothings to her own lips, and who dares to avow her beauty and her worth in other arms than hers, by fighting for her — to him Hector makes this challenge.

“Hector, in view of the Trojans and of the Greeks, shall make it good, or do his best to prove it by arms, that he has a lady who is wiser, fairer, and truer than any woman any Greek ever held in his arms. Tomorrow, Hector will with his trumpet call midway between your tents and the walls of Troy to rouse a Greek who is true in love to come and fight him.

“If any Greek comes and fights him, Hector shall honor that Greek; if no Greek comes and fights him, he’ll say in Troy when he returns that the Greek dames are sunburnt and are not worth a splinter from a lance. That is my message.”

“This message shall be told to the lovers in our army, Lord Aeneas,” Agamemnon replied. “If none of them has that kind of soul, then we left them all at home, but we are soldiers, and may that soldier prove to be a mere recreant who means not to be in love, has not been in love, or is not in love! If one of our soldiers is, or has been, or means to be in love, then that one meets Hector; if no one else will fight him, I am the man who will fight him.”

Nestor said, “Tell Hector about Nestor, who was a man when Hector’s grandfather was still being breastfed. Nestor

is old now, but if there is not in our Greek army one noble man who has one spark of fire to fight Hector on behalf of his loved one, tell Hector from me that I'll hide my silver beard behind the gold beaver of a helmet and in my forearm-protecting armor I will put this withered arm, and when I meet him to fight him, I will tell him that my lady was fairer than his grandmother and as chaste as any woman in the world. Although Hector's youth is in flood, I'll back up what I tell him with my three remaining drops of blood."

"May the Heavens now forbid such scarcity of youth!" Aeneas said.

"Amen," Ulysses said.

"Fair Lord Aeneas, let me shake your hand," Agamemnon said. "To our pavilion I shall lead you, sir. Achilles shall hear your message and so shall each lord of Greece; your message shall be announced from tent to tent. You yourself shall feast with us before you go and find welcome from a noble foe."

All began to leave except Ulysses.

Ulysses hissed, "Nestor!"

Nestor stayed behind with Ulysses; they were alone together.

"What do you want, Ulysses?"

"I have the beginning of an idea in my brain; stay with me for a while and help me make it a mature idea."

"What is your young idea?"

"This is it. Blunt wedges split hard knots. In our camp we have a hard knot that we must split without the use of subtlety. The seed of pride that was in Achilles has fully

matured and is developing its own seeds that can be sown in others. The pride that rank Achilles has must now be cropped and cut down unless it releases its seeds and breed a nursery of similar evil in other warriors who will tower over and overpower all of us.”

“True, but what can we do in response?”

“This challenge that the gallant Hector sends, however it is expressed as a challenge to any Greek warrior, is in reality a challenge to Achilles only.”

“That is correct,” Nestor said. “The object of the challenge is evident and obvious. We see that in the details.”

It was widely known in the Greek camp that Achilles was in love with a Trojan woman: one of Hector’s sisters.

“By looking at the details, we can see the big picture,” Nestor said. “A row of little numbers in an accounting ledger can add up to a sum of great wealth. When the challenge is publicly announced, there is no doubt that Achilles, even if his brain were as barren as the sandbanks of Libya — though, Apollo knows, Achilles’ brain is dry and barren enough — will, with great speed of judgment, yes, with celerity, realize that Hector is explicitly challenging him.”

“And Achilles will answer the challenge and fight Hector, don’t you think?” Ulysses asked.

“Yes, and it is most fitting for Achilles to fight Hector. Who else may you get to oppose Hector and defeat him and gain — not lose — honor, except for Achilles? Although this will be a recreational combat that is not to the death, yet in the duel much reputation is at stake. For here in this duel the Trojans will taste our dearest repute with their finest palate — their best warrior will fight our best warrior. Believe me, Ulysses, our reputation shall be oddly

balanced in this trivial action — our reputation as warriors will be at risk in this duel, although it involves only one of our warriors.

“Although the duel involves only two particular warriors, it shall give a reputation of good or bad to the general body of soldiers. A table of contents is small compared to the entire book, but the table of contents is a good indicator of the worth of the entire volume. In the table of contents is seen the baby figure of the giant mass of things to come at large. A victory in this duel can make our warriors think that a victory in the war is likely. It is supposed that the man who meets Hector is chosen by us to meet him. Because all of us choose our champion, we know that the choice is made on the basis of merit — naturally, we would choose our best warrior to fight Hector. Since we would choose a warrior whom we consider our best — a warrior who figuratively is boiled so that his virtues are concentrated — if that warrior were to lose the duel, then the conquering Trojans will be heartened and will form a strong, steely opinion of themselves. Once warriors have such good morale and such a good opinion of themselves, then their limbs become weapons that are no less effective than the swords and bows that the limbs direct.”

Ulysses replied, “Pardon me for what I have to say because I am going to say something contrary to what you just said. I conclude that it is meet — fitting — Achilles does not meet — fight — Hector. We must not allow Achilles to fight Hector in a duel. Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares, and think, perhaps, they’ll sell; if they don’t sell, the luster of the better wares that we have yet to show shall show all the better. Let a warrior worse than Achilles fight Hector. Perhaps he’ll win. If he does not, we can say that we have better warriors who did not fight Hector. Do not consent that Hector and Achilles ever meet in a duel because both our honor and our shame in this are dogged

with two bad consequences.”

“I don’t see them with my old eyes,” Nestor said. “What are they?”

“The two bad consequences follow from this fact: Either Achilles will win the duel or he will be defeated.

“Whatever glory our Achilles wins from Hector, we all would share with him, if he were not proud. But Achilles is already too insolent, and we would be better off being parched in the African Sun than in the pride and bitter scorn of his eyes. That is what would happen if he defeated Hector.

“But if Hector were to defeat Achilles, why then the reputation of our entire army is hurt because the reputation of our best warrior has been tainted.

“Let us avoid both bad consequences by making a lottery, and, through use of a trick, we will have the blockheaded Ajax draw the lot to fight with Hector. Among ourselves we will praise him for being our best warrior because that will be a dose of medicine for the great Myrmidon — Achilles — who basks in loud applause, and it will make him lower his helmet crest that curves prouder than the rainbow along which the goddess Iris travels.

“If the dull, brainless Ajax should come safely away from the duel, we will dress him up with shouts of acclamation. If he fails and loses the duel, we will still have the opinion that we have better men than him — better men who could have defeated Hector.

“But, hit or miss, whether Ajax wins or loses, the outcome of our project will have this consequence: Our employing Ajax in this way will pluck down Achilles’ plumes — Achilles will become less proud.”

“Ulysses, now I begin to relish your advice, and I will give a taste of it forthwith to Agamemnon. Let’s go to him right away. Two curs shall tame each other. Pride alone must provoke the mastiffs on, as if it were their bone.”

CHAPTER 2 (Troilus and Cressida)

— 2.1 —

Ajax and Thersites met in the Greek camp.

“Thersites!” Ajax called.

Ignoring Ajax, Thersites said to himself, “Agamemnon, what if he had boils? Fully all over his body, generally, since he is a general?”

“Thersites!”

“And suppose those boils did run and ooze pus. Let us say they did. Wouldn’t the general run then? The general would run with ooze, and the general body of soldiers would run away in fright. Wouldn’t that be a botchy core? Wouldn’t that be the infected center of a boil? Wouldn’t that be a corps of soldiers who were unwilling to fight?”

“Dog!” Ajax called.

“Then would come some matter from him; I see none coming from him now,” Thersites said.

He was punning. “Matter” referred to the pus that would ooze from the boil. “Matter” also meant “intelligence.” Thersites saw no pus oozing from Agamemnon; he also saw nothing intelligent coming from him.

“You bitch-wolf’s son, can’t you hear me?” Ajax said. He hit Thersites while saying, “Since you can’t hear me, feel me.”

“May the plague of Greece fall upon you, you mongrel beef-witted lord!” Thersites said.

The plague sometimes fell upon the crowded Greek camp.

Being ill spirited as always, Thersites wanted Ajax — whom he called a mongrel because Ajax' father was Greek and his mother was Trojan — to get the plague. Thersites also called Ajax “beef-witted” because eating beef was reputed to lower the eater's intelligence.

“Speak then, you moldiest leaven, speak,” Ajax said. “I will beat you until you cease being ugly and instead become handsome.”

“It's much more likely that my criticisms of you will make you intelligent and holy,” Thersites said, “but, I think, your horse will sooner memorize an oration than you learn a prayer by heart. You can strike me, can't you? I call down a red plague on your sorry-ass tricks!”

“Toadstool, tell me about the proclamation,” Ajax said.

Ajax called Thersites “toadstool” because Thersites' words tended to be poisonous like a toadstool. The insult also included the sense of “toad's excrement.”

“Do you think I have no sense, and therefore you can strike me thus?”

“Tell me about the proclamation!”

“You are proclaimed a fool, I think.”

“Do not insult me, porcupine, do not; my fingers itch for a fight.”

Ajax' intelligence was lacking; sometimes his insults backfired on him. If Ajax' fingers were itching, the pain caused by the porcupine's quills would stop the itching.

“I wish you itched from head to foot and I had the task of scratching you; I would make you the loathsome scab in Greece.”

Thersites was punning on “scab,” one meaning of which

was “loathsome fellow.”

He continued, “When you go forth in the battle incursions, you strike as slowly as the other soldiers.”

“I say, tell me about the proclamation!”

“You grumble and rail every hour about Achilles, and you are as full of envy of his greatness as Cerberus is of Proserpine’s beauty, yes, and your envy makes you bark at Achilles.”

Cerberus was the three-headed dog that guarded Hades, Land of the Dead. Proserpine was the beautiful goddess who was Queen of Hades. Cerberus, the ugliest thing in Hades, envied Proserpine, the most beautiful being in Hades.

“Mistress Thersites!” Ajax said, attempting to insult Thersites by calling him a woman.

“You should strike Achilles!” Thersites continued.

“Cob loaf!”

A cob loaf was a bun — a round loaf or lump of bread.

Thersites said, “Achilles would pound you into pieces with his fist, just as a sailor breaks a hard biscuit.”

Ajax hit Thersites while shouting, “You cur! You son of a whore!”

“Do carry on,” Thersites said sarcastically.

“You stool for a witch!” Ajax shouted.

Thersites was a jester. Sometimes, a jester carried a monkey on his back. Ajax was saying that a witch could replace the monkey and sit on Thersites’ back. In addition, Ajax was calling Thersites a witch’s excrement. A stool

was also a seat on which one sat while using a chamberpot, and so a stool was a privy. Sometimes, Ajax' insults backfired on him. He had just called Thersites a privy, but "Ajax" is similar to "a jakes," and a jakes is a privy.

"Keep it up," Thersites, who realized that Ajax' joke had backfired, said. "You sodden-witted lord! You alcohol-crazed lord! You have no more brain than I have in my elbows! An *assinigo* — Spanish for 'little ass' — may tutor you, you scurvy-valiant, heartily contemptible ass! You are here only to thrash Trojans; and you are bought and sold among those of any wit, like a barbarian slave. If you continue to beat me, I will begin at your heel, and tell you what you are by inches, you thing of no feelings and sensitivity, you!"

"You dog!"

"You scurvy lord!"

Ajax beat him while shouting, "You cur!"

"You are Mars' idiot," Thersites said. "Keep it up, rude man. You camel, keep it up, you beast of burden."

Achilles and Patroclus walked over to them.

"Why, how are you now, Ajax?" Achilles said. "Why are you acting like this? Hello, Thersites! What's the matter, man?"

"Do you see this man there?" Thersites asked, pointing to Ajax.

"Yes," Achilles replied. "What's the matter?"

"No, look at him," Thersites said.

"I am. What's the matter?"

"No, look at him well and closely."

“Well’!” Achilles said. “Why, I do.”

“But yet you are not looking well upon him; for whosoever you take him to be, he is Ajax,” Thersites said.

Thersites was punning on “Ajax” and “a jakes,” and he was saying that Achilles was not looking well upon Ajax because he did not realize Ajax was a privy.

“I know that, fool,” Achilles replied.

Pretending that Achilles had said, “I know that fool,” Thersites replied, “Yes, but that fool does not know himself.”

“Therefore I beat you,” Ajax said, unwittingly agreeing that he was a fool.

“Lo, lo, lo, lo, what tiny amounts of wit he utters!” Thersites said. Putting his hands to his head and mimicking an ass’ ears, he added, “His verbal sallies have ears thus long. I have beat his brain more than he has beat my bones. I can buy nine sparrows for a penny, and his *pia mater* — his brain — is not worth the ninth part of a sparrow. Achilles, I’ll tell you what I say of this lord — Ajax — who wears his wit in his belly and his guts in his head.”

“What?” Achilles asked.

“I say, this Ajax —” Thersites began.

Ajax raised his hand as if he were going to hit Thersites.

“Don’t, good Ajax,” Achilles said.

“— has not as much wit —”

Achilles grabbed Ajax and kept him from hitting Thersites, saying, “No, Ajax. I must hold you and prevent you from hitting Thersites.”

“— as will stop the eye of Helen’s needle, for whom he comes to fight.”

One meaning of the eye of Helen’s needle was her vagina.

“Peace, fool!” Achilles said. “Shut up!”

“I would have peace and quietness, but the fool will not,” Thersites said. He pointed at Ajax and said, “The fool is he there — that he. Look at him there.”

Ajax began, “Oh, you damned cur! I shall —”

Achilles interrupted him: “Will you set your wit against a fool’s?”

“No, I assure you,” Thersites said, “for a Fool’s wit will shame Ajax’ wit.”

Many Fools — professional jesters — in fact were wise, or at least clever.

“Speak good words, Thersites,” Patroclus said. “Be nice.”

“What’s the quarrel between you two?” Achilles asked Ajax.

“I bade the vile owl — this vile bird of omen — to tell me the content of the proclamation, and he rails upon and insults me.”

“I am not your servant,” Thersites said.

“Whatever,” Ajax said.

“I serve here voluntarily.”

“Your last service was sufferance and involved suffering; it was not voluntary,” Achilles said. “No man is beaten voluntarily. Ajax was just now the volunteer, and you were under an impress — he drafted you to be beaten without your permission.”

“That is true,” Thersites replied. “A great deal of your intelligence, too, lies in your muscles, or else I have been listening to liars.”

He added sarcastically, “Hector shall have a great catch, if he knocks out either of your brains. It would be as good as cracking a moldy nutshell that contained no nut.”

“Are you saying that about me as well as about Ajax, Thersites?” Achilles asked.

“Ulysses and old Nestor, whose wit was moldy before your grandsires had nails on their toes, yoke you as if you were draft-oxen and make you plow up the wars. They order you about and make you do heavy fighting in the war.”

“What!” Achilles said.

“Yes, indeed,” Thersites said. “Pull that load, Achilles! Pull it, Ajax! Pull!”

“I shall cut out your tongue,” Ajax said.

“It doesn’t matter,” Thersites replied. “I shall speak as much as you afterwards.”

Ajax was a warrior, not a diplomat; he also was not an intelligent man. Thersites would speak as much sense as Ajax even if Thersites’ tongue were cut out. And if a person makes sounds that are nonsense, is that person speaking?

“No more words, Thersites,” Patroclus said. “Peace!”

“I will hold my peace when Achilles’ brooch, or should I say ‘brach,’ bids me, shall I?” Thersites said.

Both “brooch” and “brach” were insults. A brooch is worn on clothing — it hangs on clothing. Thersites was calling Patroclus Achilles’ hanger-on. A “brach” is a female dog, a bitch. Thersites was calling Patroclus Achilles’ bitch — his

male prostitute.

“There’s an insult for you, Patroclus,” Achilles said.

“I will see you hanged, like clodpoles, like blockheads, before I come any more to your tents,” Thersites said. “I will keep myself among people of wit and intelligence and leave the faction and the company of fools.”

He exited.

“A good riddance,” Patroclus said.

Achilles said to Ajax, “Sir, it is proclaimed through all our host of soldiers that Hector, by the fifth hour after sunrise, will with a trumpet between our tents and Troy tomorrow morning call some knight to arms who has a stomach to fight and such a knight who dares to maintain — I know not what. It is trash and doesn’t matter. Farewell.”

“Farewell,” Ajax said, then added, “Who shall answer his challenge and fight him?”

“I don’t know,” Achilles replied. “A lottery will be held, otherwise Hector knows which man would fight him.”

“Oh, meaning you,” Ajax said. “I will go and learn more about this.”

They exited.

— 2.2 —

In a room in King Priam’s palace in Troy, a council was being held. Priam, Hector, Troilus, Paris, and Helenus attended it and spoke.

King Priam said, “After so many hours, lives, and speeches spent, thus once again Nestor gives us this message from the Greeks: *‘Deliver Helen into our hands, and all other damages — such as honor, loss of time, travail and travel,*

expense, wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consumed in the hot digestion of this war that is insatiable as a cormorant, a bird of prey — shall be struck off the list of damages and forgotten.’ Hector, what do you have to say about this?”

Hector said, “Though no man less fears the Greeks than I as far as I am personally concerned, yet, revered Priam, no lady has feelings that are more tender and more spongy to suck in the sense of fear for others, and no lady is more ready to cry out ‘Who knows what follows?’ than Hector is. Peace is wounded by overconfident confidence, but sensible caution is called the beacon and guiding light of the wise — it is the cloth swab that cleans to the bottom of the worst wound. Let Helen go; let her return to the Greeks. Since the first sword was drawn about this question, every tithe-soul, among many thousands of tithes, has been as valuable as Helen; I am referring to the Trojan soldiers who have died in the war over Helen. If we have lost so many tenths of our soldiers, to guard a thing — Helen — that is not ours and is not worth to us, even if she were Trojan, the value of one tithe, what merit is in the argument against yielding her up? I say that Helen is not worth the death of even one Trojan soldier, and yet one tenth of our soldiers have died in the war over her.”

“Wrong, you are wrong, my brother!” Troilus said. “Do you weigh the worth and honor of a King as great as our revered father in a scale that measures only ounces and not great weights? Will you use useless counters to add up the immeasurability of his vastness? Will you buckle in a waist most fathomless with spans and inches that are as diminutive as fears and arguments? Be ashamed, for godly shame!”

Troilus believed that the deaths of so many Trojan soldiers were justified. To give up Helen would cause his and

Hector's father, King Priam, to lose honor.

Helenus said to Troilus, "It's no wonder that you bite so sharply at reasons since you are so empty of them. Are you saying that our father should not govern the great command of his affairs with reasons? Your speech has no reasons that tell him to govern that way. A ruler should use reason and arguments to determine how best to rule; in your speech you have shown no reason, no arguments, and no concern for ruling well."

Troilus replied, "You are for dreams and slumbers, brother priest; you fur your gloves with reason. You use reason and reasons to make your life more comfortable. Here are your reasons to give Helen back to the Greeks: You know an enemy intends you harm, and you know that an employed sword is perilous. Reason flees the object that causes harm. Who marvels then that when Helenus sees a Greek and the Greek's sword he attaches the wings of reason on his heels and flees like chidden Mercury from Jove, or like a star falling from its Heavenly sphere?"

Mercury was the fleet messenger-god who served Jove, aka Jupiter, King of the gods. Mercury had wings on his ankles, which made him fast. He was mischievous and did such things as steal the cattle of his fellow god Apollo, which resulted in Mercury being chidden by Jove.

Troilus continued, "If we talk about reason, let's shut our gates and sleep. We won't need to go out on the battlefield and fight; instead, we can stay home and take naps. Manhood and honor would have the hearts of cowardly hares, if they would make fat their thoughts by cramming them with reason. Reason and prudence make men cowardly and youthful vigor dejected."

Hector said to Troilus, "Brother, Helen is not worth what she costs us to hold her."

Troilus replied, “What is the worth of anything, except the value people put on it?”

“But value dwells not in a particular, subjective desire,” Hector said. “Something gets its value and worth from itself — its objective value and worth — as well as from what value and worth a person prizes it as. The objective worth and value are more important than the subjective worth and value. It is mad idolatry to make the religious service greater than the god; the will loves and desires foolishly when the will is inclined to attach value to the thing that it — to its own harm — loves and desires, when it has no objective perception of the value of the thing it desires.”

A person’s will is that person’s desire. Free will means that we can choose whether or not to try to satisfy our desire. In some cases, reason will tell us that a certain desire is bad and moral reasoning will tell us that we ought not to try to satisfy that desire. In other cases, reason will tell us that a certain desire is good and moral reasoning will tell us that we ought to try to satisfy that desire.

Part of what Hector was saying is that good and bad are objective. Something is really good or it is really bad, and whether it is good or bad is not a matter of opinion. Part of what Troilus was saying is that good and bad are subjective. Something is good if you think it is good; something is bad if you think it is bad.

Many people believe that good and bad, and right and wrong, are objective — not dependent upon opinion, and incumbent upon all rational beings. According to objectivism, moral values and principles do not depend upon a particular person’s opinions. According to objectivism, moral values and principles allow us to judge ethical statements such as “Murder is morally wrong” as either true or false.

Nevertheless, objectivists realize that some things are subjective. You and I may feel a breeze blowing. You may think that breeze feels cold; I may think that the breeze feels warm. Both of us are right. The breeze feels cold to you, and it feels warm to me. However, the temperature of the breeze is objective; if the temperature is 68 degrees Fahrenheit, then the temperature is not 48 degrees Fahrenheit.

Troilus replied, "Suppose that I take today a wife, and my deliberate choice of a wife is led on and guided by my will. My eyes and ears inflamed my will; my wife is beautiful and has a pleasing voice. My sense of sight and my sense of hearing are two experienced pilots that travel between the dangerous shores of will and judgment. I saw and heard a woman, I desired her, and I married her. Suppose that time passes and I no longer desire the woman I made my wife? How may I reject her, now that I no longer desire her? After all, she is my wife; I chose to marry her. If I am an honorable man, I cannot evade the decision I made and flinch away from her. We do not return silks to the merchant after we have soiled the silks, and we do not throw away all the leftover food simply because we are now full. Instead, we see first if we can use any of the leftover food rather than throwing it away or feeding it to animals.

"It was thought fitting that Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks. Your breath and voices of full consent bellied his sails and helped him sail to Greece to get that vengeance."

The vengeance was retribution for an act committed many years earlier. The gods Apollo and Neptune built the walls of Troy for King Laomedon, who then refused to pay them the wages he had promised. To get vengeance, Neptune sent a sea monster to Troy. Soothsayers said that if

Hesione, the daughter of King Laomedon and the sister of the future King Priam, were sacrificed to the sea monster, then Troy would no longer suffer from the sea monster. Hercules, a Greek, came to Troy during his travels, and said that he would kill the sea monster and save Hesione in return for a reward. Hercules killed the sea monster, but King Laomedon refused to give him the reward, so Hercules kidnapped Hesione and gave her to Telamon, a Greek King. They became the parents of Ajax. To get vengeance for Hercules' kidnapping of Hesione, Paris went to Greece and kidnapped Helen, the wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta.

Troilus continued, "The seas and winds, old enemies, made a truce and gave Paris good service. He visited the ports he desired, and for an old aunt — Hesione, Paris' aunt — whom the Greeks held captive, Paris brought back to Troy a Greek Queen, Helen, whose youth and freshness make the god Apollo seem wrinkled, and make the fresh morning seem stale.

"Why do we keep Helen? The Greeks keep our aunt. Is Helen worth keeping? Why, Helen is a pearl whose price has launched more than a thousand ships, and turned crowned Kings into merchants who want to purchase that pearl.

"If you'll affirm that it was wise that Paris went to Greece — as you necessarily must, for you all cried, 'Go, go,' and if you'll confess that he brought home a noble prize — as you necessarily must, for you all clapped your hands and cried, 'Inestimable!' — why do you now berate the outcome of your proper wisdom, and do a deed that fortune never did, which is to berate and rate as worthless the thing that you prized as being richer than sea and land?

"Oh, it is a very base theft when we are afraid to keep something that we have stolen! But we are thieves, and we

are unworthy of the thing we stole — we disgraced the Greeks in their own country by stealing that thing, yet we are afraid in our own country to justify that theft!”

Outside the council chamber, Cassandra screamed, “Cry, Trojans, cry!”

Cassandra was one of King Priam’s daughters. She had agreed to sleep with the god Apollo if he gave her the gift of prophecy, but after he gave her that gift, she reneged on her promise. Apollo was unable to take his gift back, but he gave her another “gift”: Her prophecies would be true, but no one would believe them until after they came true. Rather than believing her prophecies, her hearers would consider her mad — insane.

“What noise is this?” Priam asked. “What shriek is this?”

“It is our mad sister,” Troilus replied. “I recognize her voice.”

“Cry, Trojans!” Cassandra screamed.

“It is Cassandra,” Hector confirmed.

Cassandra, raving, entered the council chamber.

“Cry, Trojans, cry! Lend me ten thousand eyes, and I will fill them with prophetic tears!”

“Peace, sister, peace!” Hector said. “Be quiet, sister!”

“Virgins and boys, middle-aged men and wrinkled elders, soft infants who can do nothing but cry, add to my clamors!” Cassandra screamed. “Let us pay now a part of that mass of moans to come. Cry, Trojans, cry! Employ your eyes by creating tears! Troy must cease to exist, and our beautiful palace will no longer stand. Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.”

When Queen Hecuba was pregnant with Paris, she dreamed

that she gave birth to a firebrand — a torch — that burned the city of Troy.

Cassandra screamed, “Cry, Trojans, cry! A Helen and a woe! Cry, cry! Either Troy burns, or else you let Helen go!”

Cassandra ran from the council chamber.

Hector said, “Now, youthful Troilus, do not these high strains of divination in our sister create in you some feelings of remorse? Or is your blood so madly hot that no discourse of reason, nor fear of a bad outcome in a bad cause, can diminish the hotness of your blood?”

Troilus replied, “Why, brother Hector, we may not think the justness of each act is formed only by its outcome, and we may not even once lessen the courage of our minds just because Cassandra’s mad. Her brainsick raptures cannot make distasteful the goodness of a quarrel in which all our honor is engaged — our honor makes that quarrel gracious and righteous. For my private part, I am no more personally affected than all Priam’s sons, and may Jove forbid that there should be done among us such things as might convince the least courageous among us not to fight for and keep Helen!”

Paris said, “If we were to do that, the world might find guilty of levity my undertakings as well as your counsels. But I call on the gods to give evidence that your full consent gave wings to my inclination to get vengeance, and I swear to the gods that your full consent cut off all fears accompanying so dire a project.

“For what, alas, can these my arms do by themselves? What fighting ability is in one man’s valor that can stand the assault and enmity of those this quarrel would excite? Yet, I protest, if I alone were to experience the difficulties and if I had as ample power as I have will and desire, then

I, Paris, would never retract what I have done, nor would I lose courage in the endeavor.”

Priam said, “Paris, you speak like one drunk on your sweet delights. You still have the sweet honey, but these men have the bitter gall, so your being valiant is not at all praiseworthy.”

Paris replied, “Sir, I propose not merely to keep for myself the pleasures such a beauty brings with it, for I want to have the soil of Helen’s fair rape wiped off, by honorably keeping her.”

One meaning of the word “rape” is “violent seizure” — Paris had kidnapped Helen. In a moment he would refer to Helen as “the ransacked Queen” — the word “ransack” means “plundered.”

Paris continued, “What treason would it be to the ransacked Queen, what disgrace would it be to your great reputations and what shame would it be to me to now deliver her possession up on terms of base and dishonorable compulsion! It would be a disgrace for us to return Helen simply because we were forced to! Can it be that so degenerate a strain of disposition as this should once set foot in your generous bosoms?

“Not even the meanest and lowest man in our faction is without a heart to dare or a sword to draw when Helen is defended, nor is there anyone so noble that his life would be ill bestowed and his death would be without fame where Helen is the subject. So then, I say, well may we fight for her whom, we know well, the world’s large spaces cannot parallel. The world does not have Helen’s equal.”

Hector said, “Paris and Troilus, you have both spoken well, and on the cause and question now in hand have given a commentary, but you have done that superficially. You are much like the young men whom Aristotle thought unfit to

learn moral philosophy. The arguments you make contribute more to increasing the hot passion of distempered blood than they do to making a fair determination between right and wrong that is free from the influence of pleasure and revenge, which have ears deafer than the ears of adders to the voice of any true and unbiased decision. Nature craves that all dues be rendered to their owners. Now, what family relationship in all humanity is closer than a wife is to her husband? In case this law of nature is corrupted through sexual appetite, and in case great minds, because of biased indulgence given to their paralyzed wills, resist that law of nature, there is a law in each well-ordered nation to curb those raging sexual appetites that are most wanton and rebellious.

“If Helen then is the wife of Sparta’s King, as we know she is, these moral laws of nature and of nations speak loudly to have her returned to her husband. To persist in doing wrong does not extenuate that wrong, but instead makes it much heavier and more serious.

“My — Hector’s — opinion is truly what I have just said — Helen ought to be returned to her husband. Nevertheless, my spirited brothers, I am inclined to agree that we resolve to always keep Helen because this is a cause that has no mean consequences for our collective and individual honors. We will gain honor if we fight to keep Helen. Glory and honor are objectively valuable.”

“Why, there you touched upon the life of our undertaking,” Troilus said. “If we did not favor glory more than the performance of our aroused anger, I would not wish a single drop of Trojan blood to be spent in keeping Helen. But, worthy Hector, Helen is a theme — a reason to take action — of honor and renown. She is a spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds. The courage of those deeds may beat down our foes now, and it may achieve for us fame in the

times to come — fame that will canonize and immortalize us. People will remember our names and our brave deeds long after we are dead. I say this because I presume that brave Hector would not lose so rich an opportunity for achieving glory as now so promisingly smiles upon the forehead of this action even if he could get the wide world's revenue instead of glory.”

“I am on your side, you valiant offspring of great Priam,” Hector said. “I have sent a roistering challenge to the lifeless and quarreling nobles of the Greeks. I was informed that their great general, Agamemnon, slept while factious rivalry and ambitious conflict into his army crept. My challenge, I presume, will awaken him.”

— 2.3 —

Thersites stood in front of Achilles' tent in the Greek camp and talked to himself. Thersites had been Ajax' Fool, but now he was Achilles' Fool. Fools, aka jesters, had the freedom to satirize other people. Much of their job was to be amusing, but they could be very critical.

“How are you doing now, Thersites! What! I see that you are lost in the labyrinth of your fury! Shall the elephant-like — slow and proud — Ajax win the day and defeat me? He beats me, and I rail at him. Oh, is this worthy satisfaction? I wish it were otherwise; I would like to beat him while he railed at me. By God, I'll learn to make spells and raise Devils, but I'll see that my spiteful curses have some kind of result.

“Then there's Achilles, an exceptional plotter and contriver! If Troy cannot be taken until these two — Achilles and Ajax — undermine it, the walls will stand until they fall by themselves.

“Oh, you great thunder-thrower of Olympus, forget that you are Jove, the King of gods, and you, Mercury, lose all

the serpentine craft of your caduceus — your wand with the two serpents wound around it — if you do not take that little little — less than little — wit away from them that they have! They have less than little intelligence — take it away from them! Even short-armed ignorance — ignorance has short arms and therefore little intellectual reach — itself knows that their intelligence is so abundantly scarce that it will not form a plan to deliver a fly from a spider that does not include drawing their massive iron swords and cutting the web.

“After you steal these two men’s little intelligence, then take vengeance on the whole camp! I know! Give them the bone-ache — give them syphilis! For that, I think, is the curse belonging to those who war for a placket.”

A placket was literally a petticoat, and metaphorically a woman. Another meaning of “placket” was literally a hole in the front of a petticoat, and metaphorically a vagina.

Thersites continued, “I have said my prayers and the Devil Envy says, ‘Amen.’”

Thersites was self-aware. He called the curses he uttered “spiteful,” and he believed that the Devil Envy approved of his “prayers,” aka “curses.”

He heard something and said, “What! My Lord Achilles!”

The noise was caused not by Achilles, but by Patroclus, who said, “Who’s there? Thersites! Good Thersites, come in and rail. We want to hear you curse and criticize people.”

Thersites said, “If I could have remembered a gilt counterfeit, you would not have slipped out of my contemplation.”

A gilt counterfeit was a counterfeit coin — one made of

brass and then covered with silver or gold. A slang term for such a counterfeit coin was a “slip.”

Thersites was saying that if he could have remembered Patroclus, he would have cursed him in his contemplation. Thersites was calling Patroclus a counterfeit man — a homosexual. Thersites regarded Patroclus as a “gilt counterfeit” — metaphorically, he was a gelt, aka gelded or castrated, counterfeit man, aka homosexual.

Thersites continued, “But it does not matter because I can curse you now: thyself upon thyself! The worst curse I can give you is to tell you to keep on being yourself!

“May the common curse of mankind, folly and ignorance, be yours in great abundance! May Heaven bless you by keeping you away from a tutor, and may discipline and learning not come near you! Let your passions be your masters until your death! Don’t think rationally about what you ought to do, but instead do whatever you want to do.

“Then if the woman who lays you out and prepares you for burial says that you are a good-looking corpse, I’ll be sworn in a court of law and swear that she never shrouded any bodies but those of lepers.

“Amen. Where’s Achilles?”

“What, are you devout?” Patroclus asked. “Were you in prayer?”

“Yes,” Thersites replied. “I pray that the Heavens hear my prayer!”

Achilles walked onto the scene and asked, “Who’s there?”

Patroclus answered, “Thersites, my lord.”

“Where? Where?” Achilles asked. Seeing Thersites, he said, “Have you come? Why, my cheese, my digestion,

why haven't you served yourself in to my table for so many meals?"

Cheese was served at the end of meals because people thought that cheese aided digestion. Achilles wanted Thersites — his cheese — to entertain him at the end of meals.

Achilles said to Thersites, "Tell me, what is Agamemnon?"

"Your commander, Achilles," Thersites replied. He then said, "Tell me, Patroclus, what is Achilles?"

"Your lord and boss, Thersites," Patroclus replied. "Tell me, please, what are you?"

"I am the person who knows what you are, Patroclus," Thersites replied. "Tell me, Patroclus, what are you?"

"You are the person who said he knows what I am," Patroclus said. "So you tell me what I am."

"Tell us! Tell us!" Achilles said.

"I'll tell what everybody is," Thersites said. "Agamemnon commands Achilles; Achilles is my lord; I am the person who knows what Patroclus is, and Patroclus is a fool."

"You rascal!" Patroclus said.

"Silence, fool!" Thersites said. "I have not finished."

Achilles said to Patroclus, "Thersites is a privileged man."

As a Fool, Thersites was allowed to speak freely and to criticize freely.

Achilles said, "Proceed, Thersites."

Thersites said, "Agamemnon is a fool; Achilles is a fool; Thersites is a Fool, and, as I said before, Patroclus is a fool."

“Explain this,” Achilles said. “How did you arrive at this conclusion? Tell us.”

Thersites said, “Agamemnon is a fool to try to command Achilles; Achilles is a fool to be commanded by Agamemnon; Thersites is a Fool to serve such a fool as Achilles, and Patroclus is a complete and utter fool.”

“Why am I a fool?” Patroclus asked.

“Ask your Creator,” Thersites replied. “It is enough for me to know that you are a fool.”

Seeing some people coming toward them, Thersites said, “Look. Who is coming here?”

Achilles said, “Patroclus, I’ll speak with nobody. Come in with me, Thersites.”

Achilles disappeared into his tent.

Thersites said, “Here is such foolishness, such trickery, and such knavery! All this argument is over a cuckold named Menelaus and a whore named Helen.”

He added sarcastically, “This is a good quarrel to break up into competing factions over and to bleed to death upon.”

He added honestly, “May a skin disease metaphorically spread on the subject! And may war and lechery destroy them all!”

Thersites disappeared into Achilles’ tent.

Agamemnon, Ulysses, Nestor, Diomedes, and Ajax walked over to Patroclus.

“Where is Achilles?” Agamemnon asked.

“He is inside his tent, but he is not feeling well, my lord,” Patroclus replied.

Using the royal plural, Agamemnon said, “Let it be known to him that we are here. He insulted our messengers, and we are setting aside our prerogatives of rank by visiting him. Let him be told so, lest perhaps he should think that we don’t dare bring up the fact of our position or that we don’t know our high rank.”

“I shall say so to him,” Patroclus said. He disappeared into Achilles’ tent.

“We saw Achilles just now at the opening of his tent,” Ulysses said. “He is not sick.”

“Yes, he is sick,” Ajax said. “He is lion-sick — that is, he is sick because he has a proud heart. You may call it by the nice term ‘melancholy,’ if you want to support the man and justify his actions, but, by my head, it is pride that he suffers from and that causes his actions. But why, why? Let Achilles show us the cause. Let him explain why he acts the way he does.”

He then asked Agamemnon, “May I have a private word with you, my lord?”

He and Agamemnon went a short distance away and talked.

Nestor asked Ulysses, “What moves Ajax thus to bay and bark at Achilles?”

“Achilles has inveigled Ajax’ Fool to stop being Ajax’ Fool and instead become Achilles’ Fool.”

“Ajax’ Fool? Who, Thersites?”

“Yes, Thersites.”

Nestor said, “Then Ajax will lack matter and content to talk about, if he has lost his argument — that thing that he constantly complains about.”

Ulysses replied, “No, because you see, the person is his

argument who has his argument: Achilles. Achilles took away Ajax' subject to complain about, and so now Achilles becomes Ajax' subject to everlastingly complain about."

Ulysses was well read. He was alluding to this sentence that appears in Erasmus' *Adagia*: "*Denique rationem aut argumentum Achilleum vocant, quod sit insuperabile & insolubile.*" This is Latin for "Finally, they call a reason or an argument *Achillean* because it is insuperable and insoluble." Ulysses' knowledge of Erasmus' work is especially impressive because Erasmus lived and wrote centuries after Ulysses had died. Another well-read warrior was Hector, who knew about Aristotle, who lived and wrote centuries after Hector had died.

The traditional date of the fall of Troy is 1184 BCE. Aristotle lived during 384–322 BCE. Desiderius Erasmus lived during 1466–1536 CE.

Nestor said, "It's all the better that Ajax dislikes Achilles. We prefer their fraction to their faction. It's better that they quarrel with each other than unite against us."

He added sarcastically, "It was a strong combination if a fool could disunite it."

The fool meant was the Fool Thersites, but Ajax was another fool — as was Achilles.

"If wisdom does not tie together friends, folly may easily untie them," Ulysses said. "Here comes Patroclus."

Patroclus returned.

"No Achilles is with him," Nestor observed.

"The elephant has joints, but none for courtesy," Ulysses said. "The elephant's legs are legs for necessity, not for bending."

He meant that the elephant, symbol of pride, would bow to no one. Achilles, because of his pride, would not be submissive to Agamemnon.

Patroclus said, “Achilles told me to say to you, Agamemnon, that he is very sorry if anything more than your entertainment and pleasure moved your greatness and these nobles with you to call upon him; he hopes your visit is for no other reasons than for the sake of your health and your digestion, and for an after-dinner’s walk.”

“Listen to me, Patroclus,” Agamemnon said. “We are too well acquainted with these answers: We have heard them before. But his evasion, winged thus swiftly with scorn, cannot outfly our apprehensions. We are not fooled. Achilles has a great reputation, and great are the reasons why we give him that reputation, yet all his virtues, which now he is not displaying, begin to lose their gloss in our eyes. Yes, they — like beautiful fruit in a dirty dish — are likely to be uneaten and to rot.

“Go and tell him that we have come to speak with him. You shall not sin if you say that I think he is over-proud and under-honorable — excessively proud and less than honorable — and that I think his opinion of himself is greater than others’ opinion of him, and that I who am a man greater than he is am here witnessing the unsociable aloofness he puts on. I who am greater than he is rein in the holy strength of my command and submit in an obsequious manner to his humorous predominance — to whatever bodily fluid is controlling his actions.”

Doctors in this culture believed that the human body had four humors, or vital fluids. Each humor made a contribution to the personality, and for a human being to be sane and healthy, the four humors had to be present in the right amounts. If a man had too much of a certain humor, it would harm his personality and health.

Blood was the sanguine humor. A sanguine man was optimistic.

Phlegm was the phlegmatic humor. A phlegmatic man was calm.

Yellow bile was the choleric humor. A choleric man was angry.

Black bile was the melancholic humor. A melancholic man was gloomy and morose.

The English word “morose” is derived from the Latin word ‘*morosus*,’ which means “self-willed.” A person who is self-willed insists on doing what he or she — in this culture, it is almost always he — wants to do without regard for the feelings of any other people.

Earlier, Ajax had said that other people could call Achilles melancholic if they wished, but he considered Achilles’ illness to be excessive pride.

Using the royal plural, Agamemnon continued, “We watch his petulant tantrums, his ebbs, his flows, as if the events and whole management of this war rode on his tide. Go tell him this, and add that if he overestimates his value so much, we’ll have nothing to do with him. Instead, we will treat him like a war machine that is not portable and so cannot be moved and used. We will say, ‘Let’s leave this war machine behind and go to the battle because this war machine cannot go to war: We will give credit to an active dwarf before we will give credit to a sleeping giant.’ Tell him we said so.”

“I shall,” Patroclus said, “and I will bring back his answer quickly.”

He disappeared into the tent.

Agamemnon said, “I will not have Achilles’ subordinate

bring me Achilles' answer. We have come here to speak with him. Ulysses, enter the tent. You bring me Achilles' answer."

Ulysses disappeared into Achilles' tent.

Ajax said to Agamemnon, "What is Achilles more than another man?"

"He is no more than what he thinks he is," Agamemnon replied.

He was acknowledging that Achilles was the greatest warrior among the Greek soldiers. Ajax was a good warrior, but when Achilles fought, Achilles was a better warrior than Ajax.

"Is he so much?" Ajax said. "Don't you think that he thinks he is a better man than I am?"

"Without question," Agamemnon replied.

"Do you agree with his thought, and say he is?"

"No, noble Ajax; you are as strong, as valiant, as wise, no less noble, much more gentle, and altogether more tractable."

Agamemnon was giving credit to Ajax for — so far, at least — taking orders. Achilles was a greater warrior than Ajax, but Ajax was willing — so far, at least — to take orders from Agamemnon.

"Why should a man be proud?" Ajax asked. "How does pride grow? I don't know what pride is."

Agamemnon replied, "Your mind is clearer than Achilles' mind, Ajax, and your virtues are fairer than Achilles' virtues. A man who is proud eats himself up: Pride is its own mirror, its own trumpet, its own chronicle; and whatever praises itself except but in the deed, devours the

deed in the praise. Praising one's own deed lessens that deed. It is better when others praise your deed."

"I hate a proud man just as I hate the breeding and multiplying of toads," Ajax said.

Nestor murmured to Diomedes, "Yet Ajax loves himself. Isn't it strange?"

Ulysses returned.

He said, "Achilles will not go to the battlefield tomorrow."

"What's his excuse?" Agamemnon asked.

"He gives none," Ulysses replied. "He continues to float on the stream of his own disposition and pays no attention and gives no respect to the thoughts of other people. He is self-willed and spends his time in self-admiration."

"Why won't he, as we have politely requested, come out of his tent and spend some time with us?"

"He treats as important issues things that are as small as nothing simply because they have been asked," Ulysses said. "He makes a big issue out of trivial things such as people simply asking him for a small courtesy. He is obsessed with his own greatness, and he is so proud that he cannot speak to himself without starting a quarrel. The worth that he imagines himself to have has so heated his blood that the war between his rational mind and his passions makes him like a Kingdom enduring civil war. He is filled with rebellion and rages and batters himself down. What should I say? He is so plaguy proud that the signs of death resulting from his plague of pride cry, 'No recovery.' His pride is like the plague, and all the symptoms he displays make me think that he will not recover from it."

"Let Ajax go and speak to Achilles," Agamemnon said.

He said to Ajax, “Dear lord, go and greet Achilles in his tent. It is said he well respects you, and he will be led at your request a little from himself. If you ask him, he will be less rebellious.”

“Agamemnon, don’t let Ajax go to Achilles!” Ulysses said. “We’ll consecrate the steps that Ajax makes when they go away from — not toward — Achilles. This proud lord who bastes his arrogance with his own fat as if he were basting roast beef with its own juice and who never allows anything in the world to enter his thoughts, except such things as revolve around and concern himself — shall he be worshipped and adored and sucked-up-to by a man whom we regard as being more worthy of worship than he?”

Ulysses was fulsomely praising Ajax. Ulysses, Agamemnon, Nestor, and Diomedes all knew that Achilles was a better warrior than Ajax, and they all knew that Ajax was a greater fool than Achilles — or anyone — but they wanted to build up Ajax so that he would be a rival to Achilles. They wanted Ajax to fight Hector and, if possible, win the duel. They wanted to praise Ajax so highly that Achilles would feel jealous and would come out of his tent and fight again for and take orders from Agamemnon.

Ulysses continued, “No, this thrice worthy and very valiant lord must not so debase his honor, which is nobly acquired; nor would I want him to ass-subjugate his own merit, despite how amply titled with complimentary epithets Achilles is, by going to Achilles. If he were to go to Achilles, that would only fatten more Achilles’ already obese pride, and it would add more coals to Cancer when the zodiacal sign burns by entertaining great Hyperion.”

The Sun — the Titan Helios, whose father is Hyperion — enters the part of the zodiac devoted to Cancer when the summer solstice occurs in late June, when the weather in most of the northern hemisphere is already hot and will

soon grow hotter.

Ulysses continued, “This lord go to Achilles! May Jupiter forbid that, and may Jupiter say, ‘No, Achilles shall go to this lord!’”

Nestor murmured to Diomedes, “Oh, this is wonderful; Ulysses is manipulating Ajax’ state of mind.”

Diomedes murmured back to Nestor, “Ajax is silent, but his silence is drinking up this applause!”

Ajax said, “If I go to him, I’ll bash him in the face with my armored fist.”

He began to swagger, and he continued to swagger.

“Oh, no, you shall not go to Achilles,” Agamemnon said.

“And if Achilles acts proud in front of me, I’ll fix his pride,” Ajax said. “Let me go to him.”

“Not for everything that we have spent on fighting this war,” Ulysses said.

“Achilles is a paltry, insolent fellow!” Ajax said.

Nestor murmured, “How he describes himself!”

“Can’t Achilles be sociable?” Ajax asked.

Ulysses murmured, “The raven chides blackness. The pot calls the kettle black.”

“I’ll make him bleed until his disposition improves,” Ajax said.

Agamemnon murmured, “The man who wants to be the physician should instead be the patient.”

“If all men were of my mind —” Ajax began.

Ulysses quietly finished Ajax’ sentence, “— wit and

intelligence would be out of fashion.”

Ajax finished his sentence: “— he would not get away with his bad attitude. He would eat swords — and ’s words — first. Shall pride get away with this and win and carry the day? Shall pride carry it?”

Nestor murmured, “If pride carries it, Ajax, you would carry half.”

“He would have ten out of ten shares,” Ulysses said. “He would carry all of it.”

“I will knead Achilles with my fists,” Ajax said. “I’ll make him supple.”

Nestor murmured to Ulysses, “Ajax is not yet thoroughly warm. Force him to eat and stuff himself with praises. Pour in, pour in, pour the praises into him — his ambition is still dry and withered.”

Ulysses said to Agamemnon, “My lord, you feed too much on this discord and dissention. You are thinking too much about Achilles’ bad behavior.”

Nestor said, “Our noble general, do not do so. Don’t think so much about Achilles.”

Diomedes said, “You must prepare to fight without Achilles.”

“Why, it is our talking so much about Achilles that makes him proud and does him harm,” Ulysses said. “Here in our presence right now is a man — but I should not talk about him and praise him to his face; I will be silent.”

“Why should you be silent?” Nestor asked. “He is not greedy for praise, as Achilles is.”

“The whole world knows that he is as valiant and courageous as Achilles,” Ulysses said.

“Achilles is a son of a bitch, a son of a whore,” Ajax said. “He should not be treating us like this! I wish that he were a Trojan so I could fight him and kill him!”

“What a vice it would be in Ajax now —” Nestor said.

“— if he were proud —” Ulysses said.

“— or covetous of praise —” Diomedes said.

“Yes,” Ulysses said, “or surly mannered —”

“— or aloof, or self-affected!” Diomedes said.

Ulysses said to Ajax, “Thank the Heavens, lord, that you have a sweet composure. Praise the father who begot you and the woman who breastfed you. May your tutor be famous, and your natural talents be three times famous, beyond the fame of all your erudition.

“But let he who disciplined your arms to fight — Mars, god of war — divide eternity in two, and give him half. As for your vigor, the famous athlete Milo, who carried a bull several yards and then killed it with a single blow and cooked and ate it all in one day, must yield his strongman title to muscular Ajax.

“I will not praise your wisdom, which is like a boundary, a fence, a shore that confines your spacious and ample accomplishments. Here in our presence is Nestor, who has learned much in his long life. He must be, he is, he cannot but be wise. But pardon me, father Nestor, when I say that if your days were as green and youthful as Ajax’ days and if your brain were molded like Ajax’ brain, then you would not be more eminent than him; instead, you would be like Ajax.”

Ulysses said that he would not praise Ajax’ wisdom, and he did not. Of course, Ulysses did not think that Ajax was wise. His words about Ajax’ ‘wisdom’ were ambiguous.

Ajax' wisdom *confined* Ajax' "spacious and ample accomplishments." Shouldn't wisdom *extend* one's spacious and ample accomplishments? And Ulysses said that Nestor is wise, but if Nestor were as young and inexperienced as Ajax and his brain were molded like Ajax' brain, then he would not be wiser than Ajax — he would be as stupid as Ajax.

Ajax asked Nestor, "Shall I call you father?"

"Yes, my good son," Nestor replied.

"Be ruled by him, Lord Ajax," Diomedes said. "Take whatever advice he gives you."

Ulysses said, "We ought not to tarry here. Achilles is like a deer that hides in a thicket. May it please our great general, Agamemnon, to call together all his armed forces. Fresh Kings have come to Troy. Tomorrow with all the might of our armed forces we must stand fast. And here before us is a lord: Ajax. If knights from east to west should come to Troy, and select their best, Ajax shall match the best."

"Let's go to council," Agamemnon said. "Let Achilles sleep: Light boats sail swift, though greater hulks draw deep. Light boats can be useful in war because they sail quickly; bigger ships sink deeper into the sea because of their weight, but that makes them slower."

CHAPTER 3 (Troilus and Cressida)

— 3.1 —

Pandarus and a servant talked together in a room in Priam's palace in Troy.

Pandarus said, "Friend, you! Please, let me have a word with you. Don't you follow the young Lord Paris?"

By "follow," Pandarus meant "serve"; that is, he was asking the man if he was one of Paris' servants.

Taking the word "follow" literally, the servant replied, "Yes, sir, when he goes before me."

"You depend upon him, I mean?" Pandarus said.

By "depend upon," Pandarus meant "wait upon." Servants were dependents on the Princes they served; they received room and board from the Princes.

The servant replied, "Sir, I do depend upon the Lord."

Now the servant had begun to use religious language. "The Lord" equals "God." But while the servant spoke of God, Pandarus spoke of social status. For him, "the lord" equals "the nobleman Paris."

"You depend upon a noble gentleman; I must necessarily praise him."

"Praise the Lord!" the servant said.

"You know who I am, don't you?" Pandarus asked.

"Yes, sir, but only superficially."

"Friend, know me better; I am the Lord Pandarus."

"I hope I shall know your honor better," the servant said.

The servant meant that he hoped he would learn that Pandarus had become a better and more honorable person, but Pandarus thought that the servant was saying that he wanted to be better acquainted with Pandarus.

“I do desire it,” Pandarus said.

The servant said, “You are in the state of Grace.”

A person in the state of Grace is a person who will go to Paradise when he or she dies, but Pandarus understood the word “Grace” to mean the way that a high-ranking person such as a Duke is addressed.

“‘Grace’! I am not so, friend. ‘Honor’ and ‘Lordship’ are my titles,” Pandarus said.

Music began to play.

“What music is this?” Pandarus asked.

The servant replied, “I do but partly know, sir. It is music in parts.”

Music in parts had parts written for various musical instruments.

“Do you know the musicians?”

“Wholly, sir.”

“Whom do they play to?”

“To the hearers, sir,” the servant said.

“At whose pleasure, friend?”

“At mine, sir, and theirs who love music.”

“I mean, command, friend,” Pandarus said.

“Whom shall I command, sir?”

“Friend, we don’t understand one another,” Pandarus said. “I am too courtly and use too formal language, and you are too cunning and too willing to make puns. I am asking at whose command these musicians are playing — at whose request do these men play?”

“That’s clear language and to the point, sir,” the servant said. “Indeed, sir, the musicians are playing at the request of Paris, who is my lord, who is there in person; with him is the mortal Venus, the heart-blood of beauty, love’s visible soul —”

“Whom do you mean? My niece Cressida?”

“No, sir. I mean Helen,” the servant said. “Couldn’t you tell by the way I described her?”

Venus was the immortal goddess of sexual passion, and Helen was the mortal Venus. Souls are invisible, but Helen was very visible and very beautiful.

“It should seem, fellow, that you have not seen the Lady Cressida,” Pandarus said.

Cressida was also very visible and very beautiful.

Pandarus continued, “I have come from the Prince Troilus to speak with Paris. I will make a complimentary assault upon Paris. I will batter him with compliments because my business seethes.”

“Seethes” means “boils.” Pandarus meant that his business with Paris was urgent.

“This is a sodden business!” the servant said. “There’s a stewed phrase indeed!”

The servant was punning again. A sodden business was overboiled; overboiling makes food insipid. And the stews were brothels. By this time, many people, including the

servant, Paris, and Helen, knew that Troilus and Cressida were in love — or at least infatuated — with each other and ready to hop into bed together. Pandarus was not willing to admit to himself that other people knew this.

Paris and Helen, accompanied by the musicians, entered the room.

Pandarus said, “Fair wishes to you, my lord, and to all this fair company! May fair desires, in all fair measure, fairly guide all of you! Especially you, fair Queen! May fair thoughts be your fair pillow!”

“Dear lord, you are full of fair words,” Helen said.

“You speak your fair pleasure, sweet Queen,” Pandarus replied. “Fair Prince, here is good broken music.”

By “broken,” he meant that the music was broken into different parts and arranged for different instruments.

“You have broken the music by interrupting it, friend,” Paris said, “and, by my life, you shall make it whole again; you shall piece it out — augment it — with a piece of your own performance.”

Helen said, “Pandarus is full of harmony.”

“Truly, lady, no,” he replied.

“Oh, sir —”

“My musical ability is amateurish,” Pandarus said. “Truly, it is very amateurish.”

“Well said, Pandarus!” Paris said. “Well, you say so in fits.”

Paris was punning. “Fit” can mean “part of a song.” But it can also mean “spasm.” Pandarus was speaking in short bursts of words. Paris could also mean that Pandarus only

sometimes stated that he was amateurish when it came to music.

“I have business with Paris, dear Queen,” Pandarus said.

He then said to Paris, “My lord, will you grant me a word with you?”

Helen, who thought that Pandarus was making an excuse to get out of singing, said, “No, this shall not put us off. We’ll hear you sing, certainly.”

“Well, sweet Queen, you are joking with me,” Pandarus said. “But, indeed, Paris, this is what I have to say: My dear lord and most esteemed friend, your brother Troilus —”

Helen interrupted, “My Lord Pandarus; honey-sweet lord —”

“In a moment, sweet Queen, in a moment,” Pandarus said, then he started to complete the sentence that Helen had interrupted, “— commends himself most affectionately to you —”

Helen interrupted again, “You shall not cheat us out of our melody. If you do, then our melancholy will be upon your head!”

“Sweet Queen, sweet Queen!” Pandarus said. “You are a sweet Queen, truly.”

“And to make a sweet lady sad is a sour offence,” Helen said.

“No, that is not going to work,” Pandarus said. “Your words shall not work, truly. No, I don’t care for such words; no, no. And, Paris, Troilus wants you to make an excuse for him if King Priam calls for him at supper.”

“My Lord Pandarus —” Helen said.

“What says my sweet Queen, my very, very sweet Queen?” Pandarus asked.

“What exploit is at hand?” Paris asked. “Where will Troilus eat tonight?”

Helen said to Pandarus, “No, but, my lord —”

“What says my sweet Queen?” Pandarus said. “My friend Paris will fall out with you if you keep interrupting me.”

Helen said to Paris, “You must not know where Troilus eats tonight. Pandarus doesn’t want you to know.”

Paris replied, “I’ll bet my life that Troilus will dine with my disposer Cressida.”

A “disposer” is “one who commands.” Paris was being gallant and saying that he obeyed Cressida’s wishes.

“No, no, no such matter,” Pandarus said. “You are wide of the mark. Come, your disposer is sick.”

“Well, I’ll make an excuse for Troilus’ absence from the evening meal,” Paris said.

By doing so, he was obeying Cressida’s wishes; Cressida wished to spend time with Troilus.

“Good, my good lord,” Pandarus said. “But why did you mention Cressida? No, your poor disposer’s sick.”

“I spy,” Paris said.

He meant that his eyes were open and could see what was going on around him.

“You spy! What do you spy?” Pandarus blurted out of surprise.

To change the subject, he quickly said, “Come, give me a musical instrument. Now, sweet Queen.”

“Why, this is kindly done,” Helen said.

Realizing that Paris and Helen already knew about Troilus and Cressida, Pandarus said, “My niece is horribly in love with a thing you have, sweet Queen.”

The word “thing” was slang for “penis.” Helen had a lover; Cressida wanted a lover.

“She shall have it, my lord, if it is not my lord Paris’,” Helen said.

She meant that Cressida could have the thing, as long as it was not the “thing” that belonged to Paris.

“Paris’?” Pandarus said. “No, she’ll have no part of him; Paris and Cressida are twain.”

He meant that they were two separate beings and would not become one.

Helen said, “Falling in, after falling out, may make them three.”

In other words, a man and a woman falling into bed together, after having quarreled and falling out of bed, could make the female pregnant. One meaning of “falling in” was “being reconciled,” and one meaning of “falling out” was “quarreling.” A penis could also “fall in” a vagina.

“Come, come, I’ll hear no more of this,” Pandarus said. “I’ll sing you a song now.”

“Yes, yes, now, please,” Helen said. Flirtatiously, she said, “Truly, sweet lord, you have a fine forehead.”

“You are joking with me,” Pandarus said.

“Let your song be love. Sing this song: ‘This Love will Undo Us All,’” Helen said. “Oh, Cupid, Cupid, Cupid!”

“Love!” Pandarus said. “Yes, that it shall, truly.”

“Yes, good now,” Paris said. He sang the first few lines of the song: “*Love, love, nothing but love.*”

“Indeed, that is the way the song begins,” Pandarus said.

He sang the song:

“*Love, love, nothing but love, still more!*

“*For, oh, love’s bow*

“*Shoots buck and doe.*

“*The shaft confounds,*

“Not what it wounds,

“*But tickles always the sore.*”

The song stated that love affects males and females. The shaft of the arrow — symbol for penis — overwhelmed the wound — symbol for vagina. It did not distress the vagina; instead, it sexually tickled the vagina. By the way, the word “sore” also was used to refer to a four-year-old stag.

Pandarus continued to sing:

“*These lovers cry, ‘Oh! Oh!’ They die!*

“*Yet that which seems the wound to kill,*

“*Does turn ‘Oh! Oh!’ to ‘Ha! Ha! Ha!’*

“*So dying love lives still:*

“*‘Oh! Oh!’ a while, but then ‘Ha! Ha! Ha!’*

“*‘Oh! Oh!’ groans become ‘Ha! Ha! Ha!’*

“*Heigh-ho!*”

The phrase “to die” was slang for “to have an orgasm.” In

the song, the penetration caused by the arrow — penis — hurt the wound, aka vagina, for a while, but then the pain of initial penetration turned into the pleasure of sexual orgasm.

“That is love, truly, to the very tip of the nose,” Helen said.

A nose is something that prominently protrudes, much like a male part used in sex.

Paris said to Helen, “Love, Pandarus eats nothing but doves — the birds of Venus — and that breeds hot blood, and hot blood begets hot thoughts, and hot thoughts beget hot deeds, and hot deeds are love.”

“Is this the generation — the genealogy — of love? Is this how love is created?” Pandarus asked. “Hot blood, hot thoughts, and hot deeds? Why, they are vipers: Is love a generation of vipers?”

The offspring of vipers are cruel. If love were to be a generation — an offspring — of vipers, then love would be cruel. People in this culture incorrectly believed that vipers were born by gnawing their way out of the body of their mother.

This is Matthew 3:7 in the 1599 Geneva Bible: “*Now when he saw many of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath forewarned you to flee from the anger to come?*”

This is Matthew 12:34 in the 1599 Geneva Bible: “*O generations of vipers, how can you speak good things, when ye are evil? For of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*”

Pandarus asked Paris, “Sweet lord, who’s on the battlefield today?”

Paris replied, “Hector, Deiphobus, Helenus, Antenor, and

all the gallant nobility of Troy. I would have gladly armed myself and fought today, but my Nell — my Helen — would not allow me to do so. How does it happen that my brother Troilus did not go to the battlefield today?”

Helen said, “He is pouting at something. You know everything about Troilus, Lord Pandarus.”

“Not I, honey-sweet Queen,” Pandarus replied. “I long to hear how our soldiers fared today.”

He said to Paris, “You’ll remember to make an excuse at the evening meal tonight for your brother Troilus?”

“Yes, exactly as you wish,” Paris replied.

“Farewell, sweet Queen,” Pandarus said.

“Give my best wishes to your niece,” Helen said.

“I will, sweet Queen,” Pandarus said.

He exited.

A military trumpet sounded.

“They’re returning from the battlefield,” Paris said. “Let us go to Priam’s hall to greet the warriors. Sweet Helen, I must persuade you to help unarm our Hector. His buckles, which can be unyielding, shall obey the touch of your white enchanting fingers more than they do the steel edge of a Greek sword or the force of Greek muscles. You shall do more than all the Greek Kings who rule islands can do — disarm great Hector.”

“It will make us proud to be his servant, Paris,” Helen said, using the royal plural. “Yes, what he shall receive of us in duty will give us more honor than we receive because of our beauty — the honor we receive by serving Hector will outshine ourself.”

“Sweetheart, above thought I love you,” Paris said.

Paris did love her more than thought. If he had taken thought, he might have come to believe that Helen was not worth the death of so many Trojans and Greeks and the destruction of Troy. Perhaps in some cases love really is the offspring of vipers.

— 3.2 —

In his garden, Pandarus spoke to Troilus’ servant, a young boy.

“Hello!” Pandarus said to the servant. “Where’s your master? At my niece Cressida’s?”

“No, sir; he is waiting for you to lead him there.”

Pandarus said, “Oh, here he comes.”

Troilus entered the garden.

Pandarus said, “Hello. How are you now?”

He said to Troilus’ servant, “You may leave.”

The servant exited.

Pandarus asked Troilus, “Have you seen my niece?”

“No, Pandarus. I stalk about her door, like a soul who has newly arrived at the banks of the River Styx and who is waiting for waftage — transport by boat across the river — by Charon, the ferryman to the Land of the Dead. Oh, be my Charon, and give me swift transport to those Elysian Fields, the abode of the good souls in Hades. In the Elysian Fields, I may wallow in the lily-beds that are promised for the good souls. Oh, gentle Pandarus, from Cupid’s shoulder pluck his colorful wings and use them to fly with me to Cressida! Help me to cross the threshold of your niece’s door!”

“Walk here in the garden,” Pandarus said. “I’ll bring her to you quickly.”

He exited.

Alone, Troilus said to himself, “I am giddy and dizzy; anticipation whirls me round. The imaginary relish is so sweet that it enchants my sense. What will the reality be when the salivating palate tastes for real love’s thrice purified nectar? I am afraid that the result will be death, swooning destruction, or some joy too fine, too subtle-potent and powerfully refined and tuned too sharp in sweetness, for the capacity of my ruder powers. I very much fear this; and I also fear that I shall lose distinction in my joys, as does an army when the soldiers charge in mass to pursue and kill the fleeing enemy.”

“Distinction” means “the ability to differentiate.” If Troilus and Cressida were to have sex, two would become one. When they orgasmed, they would “die.” An army pursuing fleeing enemies can kill indiscriminately — kill quickly and without discriminating soldiers of high rank from soldiers of low rank.

Pandarus returned and said, “She’s getting ready; she’ll come here soon. You must keep your wits about you. She blushes very much, and she breathes quickly and shallowly, as if a ghost had frightened her. I’ll bring her to you. She is the prettiest villain. She breathes as quickly and shallowly as a newly taken sparrow.”

Newly captured birds are very frightened, and because of their fright they breathe quickly and shallowly.

Pandarus exited.

Alone, Troilus said to himself, “Exactly such a passion embraces my bosom. My heart beats faster than a feverish pulse, and I am losing the use of all my senses, as if I were

a lowly born person unexpectedly seeing his King looking at him.”

Pandarus returned, leading Cressida.

Pandarus said to her, “Come, come, what need do you have to blush? Shame’s a baby.”

Pandarus meant that shame was something little; however, in this culture a child of shame was a baby born out of wedlock.

He said to Troilus, “Here she is now. Now swear the oaths to her that you have sworn to me.”

Cressida moved as if she were going to leave the garden. Pandarus grabbed her arm and said, “What, are you gone again? You must be watched before you are made tame, must you? Come on, come on; if you draw backward, we’ll put you in harness.”

When Pandarus referred to Cressida, he used terms that likened her to a bird or other animal. He had already likened her to a newly caught sparrow. When he mentioned watching her until she be made tame, he was referring to a method of taming a hawk: breaking its will by not allowing it to sleep. And he referred to her as a skittish horse that needed to be harnessed to a cart.

Pandarus said to Troilus, “Why don’t you speak to her?”

Pandarus then said to Cressida, who was wearing a veil, “Come, draw this curtain, and let’s see your picture.”

In this culture, a curtain was hung before a painting. To see the painting, one had to draw the curtain. To see Cressida’s face, her veil had to be removed.

Pandarus removed Cressida’s veil and said, “Pity the day; how loath you are to offend daylight! If it were dark, you

would close sooner.”

Night had not yet fallen. Pandarus was saying that he felt sorry for the daylight, in the presence of which Cressida was unwilling to offend — to stumble morally. But if it were dark, she would close the distance between herself and Troilus and they would offend together.

Troilus moved to Cressida, and they kissed.

Pandarus said to Troilus, “Good, good. Rub on, and kiss the mistress.”

Pandarus’ language referred to the game of bowls, in which “to rub” is “to negotiate an obstacle” and “to kiss the mistress” is “to gently touch the little ball aimed at in the game of bowling.” Of course, Pandarus used the phrase “to rub” to mean “to create sexual friction by rubbing against Cressida” and “to kiss the mistress” to mean “to kiss Cressida.”

Pandarus said, “Great! A kiss in fee-farm!”

He was referring to a long kiss. “Fee-farm” meant “in perpetuity.” It is a legal term referring to land granted in perpetuity with a permanently fixed rent.

Pandarus said to Troilus, “Build there, carpenter; the air is sweet.”

Where the air is sweet is a good place to build a structure. In this case, Pandarus wanted Troilus to build a six-inch structure.

Pandarus said to both Troilus and Cressida, “You shall fight your hearts out before I part you. The falcon as the tercel, for all the ducks in the river. Go to it. Go to it.”

The kind of “fight” that Pandarus referred to involved a kind of wrestling in bed. A falcon is a female hawk; a tercel

is a male hawk. Pandarus was saying that when it comes to the act of sex, males and females are alike — ready and eager to get down to it. He would bet everything — all the ducks in the river — that this is true.

Troilus said to Cressida, “You have bereft me of all words, lady.”

Pandarus said to Troilus, “Words pay no debts, give her deeds, but she’ll bereave — deprive — you of the deeds, too, if she calls your activity into question.”

The “deeds” Pandarus referred to were sexual deeds, or acts, but “deeds” also means “legal documents.” In this culture, “to pay one’s debts” was slang for “to have sex.” Sex is something a wife owes a husband, and it is something a husband owes a wife. “Activity” means “vigorous action,” or “virility.” If Cressida were to call into question — doubt — Troilus’ virility, or ability to have sex with her, she would deprive him of the opportunity to have sex with her. However, if calling his virality into question involved testing his virality, she would leave him sexually exhausted and unable to perform any longer.

Troilus and Cressida kissed again.

Pandarus added, “What, billing again? Here’s ‘In witness whereof the parties interchangeably.’”

“Billing” meant both “kissing” and “drawing up a legal document.”

Legal contracts used language such as “In witness whereof the parties interchangeably” in which “interchangeably” meant “reciprocally.” One kind of legal contract is a marriage. In this culture, the man and woman could hold hands in front of witnesses and pledge themselves to each other in a prelude to a legal marriage.

Pandarus said, “Come in, come in. I’ll go get a fire.”

He left to start a fire in the bedroom where he hoped Troilus and Cressida would spend the night together.

“Will you walk into my house, my lord?” Cressida said to Troilus.

In this culture, wives called their husband “lord.”

“Oh, Cressida, how often have I wished to do that!”

“Wished, my lord! May the gods grant — oh, my lord!”

“What should the gods grant?” Troilus asked. “What is the reason for this pretty interruption? What too-curious — hidden — dreg does my sweet lady see in the fountain of our love?”

“I see more dregs than water, if my fears have eyes,” Cressida replied.

“Fears make Devils of the high order of Angels known as the Cherubim,” Troilus replied. “Fears never see truly.”

“Blind fear that is led by seeing reason finds safer footing than blind reason that stumbles without fear,” Cressida said. “Seeing reason leads to prudence, while blind reason leads to sin. Fearing the worst often cures the worse. If we fear, we can often avoid the worst.”

“Oh, let my lady apprehend no fear,” Troilus said. “In all Cupid’s pageant, no monster appears.”

In this culture, one meaning of “pageant” is “a performance intended to trick.” Another meaning is “a theatrical play.” Troilus wanted to take Cressida to bed, and so he was minimizing the monsters that can participate in plays featuring Cupid, aka love. Romantic love has its pleasures, but it can also have its pains. Infidelity can greatly hurt one who loves.

“Nor nothing monstrous either?” Cressida asked.

“Nothing, but our undertakings — the things we promise to do,” Troilus replied. “When we vow to weep seas, live in fire, eat rocks, tame tigers, we think it harder for our female loved one to devise difficult enough tasks than for us to undergo any difficulty imposed. The monstrosity in love, lady, is that the will is infinite and the execution is confined, and that the desire is boundless and the act is a slave to limit.”

This is true in more ways than one. The desire to have sex is boundless, but the act of sex lasts only a short time. A lover can promise to be faithful — and mean it — but not live up to the promise.

Knowing this, Cressida said, “They say all lovers swear more performance than they are capable of and continue to keep in reserve an ability that they never perform, vowing more than the perfection of ten and discharging less than the tenth part of one. Lovers who have the voice of lions and the act of hares, are they not monsters?”

“Do such lovers exist?” Troilus asked. Using the royal plural, he said, “We are not like them. Praise us according to how we act when put to the test, acknowledge us as we show ourself to be; our head shall go bare until merit crown it. No perfection expected to be possessed in the future shall have any praise in the present. We will not name desert before its birth, and, being born, its title of honor shall be humble. Judge me by my actions.

“You know the proverb ‘Where many words are, the truth goes by,’ so let me say a few words about my fair faith. Troilus shall act in such a way to Cressida as to make the worst that envy and malice can say about him is to mock him for his faithfulness to you. The truest speech of truth itself shall not be truer than the speech of Troilus.”

“Will you walk into my house, my lord?” Cressida asked Troilus.

Pandarus returned.

“What, blushing still?” he said. “Haven’t you two finished talking yet?”

“Well, uncle,” Cressida said, “whatever folly I commit, I dedicate to you.”

“I thank you for that,” Pandarus said. “If Troilus gets you pregnant with a boy, you’ll give him to me.”

Pandarus was giving Troilus credit for masculinity: If Troilus were to get Cressida pregnant, it would be with a boy.

Pandarus continued, “Be true to Troilus; if he flinches and sneaks away, rebuke me for it.”

Of course, Pandarus knew that Troilus would not flinch and sneak away.

“You know now your hostages: your uncle’s word and my firm faith,” Troilus said.

Hostages were guarantees of good conduct. In war, an important person might enter an enemy camp to parley. Before the important person entered the camp, an important enemy would be sent to the important person’s camp to be a hostage. If anything happened to the important person, the important hostage would be killed.

“I’ll give my word for her, too, as well as for you,” Pandarus said. “Our kindred, although they have to be wooed for a long time, are faithful once they are won. They are burs, I can tell you; they’ll stick where they are thrown.”

“Boldness comes to me now, and brings me courage,”

Cressida said. “Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day for many weary months.”

“Why was my Cressida then so hard to win?” Troilus asked.

“I seemed hard to win,” she replied, “but I was won, my lord, with the first glance that ever — pardon me — if I confess much, you will play the tyrant and lord it over me. I love you now, but I did not love you, until now, so much but I could master it. Actually, I lie. My thoughts were like unbridled, uncontrolled children, grown too headstrong for their mother to manage. See, my thoughts and I are fools! Why have I blabbed? Who shall be true to us and keep our secrets, when we cannot keep our own secrets? But, although I very much loved you, I did not woo you. And yet, truly, I wished that I had a man, or that we women had men’s privilege of speaking and confessing our love first. Sweetheart, tell me to hold my tongue because in this rapture of emotion I shall surely say something that I shall repent saying. I see that your silence, which is cunning in its lack of speech, from my weakness draws the heart of speech! Stop me from speaking!”

“I shall, albeit sweet music comes from your mouth,” Troilus said, kissing her.

“This is indeed a pretty sight,” Pandarus said.

“My lord, I ask you to pardon me,” Cressida said to Troilus. “I did not intend to beg for a kiss. I am ashamed. Oh, Heavens! What have I done? For this time I will take my leave, my lord.”

“You are leaving, sweet Cressida!” Troilus said.

“Leave!” Pandarus said. “If you take leave until tomorrow morning —”

“Please,” Cressida said. “Don’t talk about that.”

“What offends you, lady?” Troilus asked.

“Sir, my own company.”

“You cannot shun yourself.”

“Let me go and try,” Cressida replied. “I have a kind of self that stays with you, but it is an unnatural self that will leave itself in order to be another’s fool. I want to leave. Where is my good sense? I don’t know what I am saying.”

“People who speak so wisely know well what they are speaking,” Troilus said.

The part of Cressida’s speech that Troilus thought was wise was the part about the self that stayed with him.

Cressida replied, “Perhaps, my lord, I am showing more cunning than love, and fell so outspokenly into a frank confession in order to fish for your thoughts, but you are too wise to reveal your thoughts, or in other words you do not love, for to be wise and to love exceeds the power of man; only the gods above can be both wise and in love.”

“Oh, I wish that I thought it could be in a woman — as, if it can, I will presume that it could be in you — to feed forever her lamp and the flames of love, to keep her faithfulness in as fit and youthful a condition as it was when it was plighted with the result that it will outlive outward beauty, with a mind that renews love swifter than passion decays! I also wish that I could be persuaded that my integrity and faithfulness to you might be equaled by your own integrity and faithfulness to me. Let us both have an equal amount of pure love winnowed from the chaff. How elated would I then be! But unfortunately I am as true as the simplicity of truth and I am more innocent than the infancy of truth. I am more innocent than infants, and I am

more innocent than Adam before the fall.”

“When it comes to faithfulness, I’ll war — compete — with you,” Cressida said.

“Oh, this is a virtuous fight, when right wars with right over who shall be most right!” Troilus said. “Faithful lovers shall in the world of the future confirm their faithfulness by comparing it with that of Troilus. When their rhyming love poems, full of declarations of love, of oaths and big comparisons, lack similes, when faithfulness is described with tired comparisons — as faithful as steel, as faithful as plants are to the Moon, as faithful as the Sun is to the day, as faithful as the turtledove is to her mate, as faithful as iron is attracted to a magnet, as faithful as the Earth is to its center — after all these comparisons of faithfulness are made, then faithfulness’ authentic author shall be cited. ‘As faithful as Troilus’ shall crown the verse, and sanctify the verses.”

“May you prove to be a prophet!” Cressida said. “If I am unfaithful to you, or swerve a hair from being true to you, then when time is old and has forgotten itself, when drops of rain have worn down the stones of Troy, and blind oblivion has swallowed entire cities up, and mighty states are worn away by time into dusty nothing and leave no trace of themselves, yet let memory, from unfaithfulness to unfaithfulness, among unfaithful maidens in love, upbraid my unfaithfulness! When they’ve said ‘as false as air, as false as water, wind, or sandy earth, as false as fox to lamb, as false as wolf to heifer’s calf, as false as panther to the deer, or as false as evil stepmother to her stepson,’ then let them say to stick the heart of unfaithfulness, ‘as unfaithful as Cressida.’”

How can air, water, wind, and sandy earth be false, aka unfaithful? The ancient Roman poet Catullus once wrote, “*Sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti / in vento et rapida*

scribere oportet aqua.” Translated into English: “But the words a woman says to a passionate lover / ought to be written on wind and running water.” If the words were to be written on air or sandy earth, they would not last long.

Pandarus said, “All right, this is a bargain you two have made. Seal it, seal it. I’ll be the witness. In this hand I hold Troilus’ hand, and in this hand I hold my niece’s hand. If ever you prove false — unfaithful — one to the other, since I have taken such pains to bring you together, let all pitiful goers-between be called until the world’s end after my name — call them all Panders. Let all faithful men be Troiluses, all unfaithful women Cressidas, and all brokers-between Panders! Say, ‘Amen.’”

Troilus said, “Amen.”

Cressida said, “Amen.”

Pandarus said, “Amen. Now I will take you to a chamber with a bed; because the bed shall not speak of your pretty encounters, press it to death. Go into the bedroom now!”

In the act of lovemaking, Troilus’ weight would be on Cressida, and the weight of both would press on the bed. In this culture, “to die” meant “to have an orgasm” and so Pandarus wanted Troilus and Cressida to press the bed until they both had orgasms. But Pandarus’ words also referred to an act of torture or capital punishment. A prisoner could be pressed to death. More and more weight would be piled on his chest until his torturers heard the words they wanted the prisoner to say, or until the prisoner’s chest was crushed and he died.

Pressing was done when a prisoner would refuse to stand trial for an offense. Sometimes, a prisoner would refuse to plead guilty or not guilty in a trial because if they were found guilty their property would be forfeited to the state, which often meant that the prisoners’ loved ones would be

destitute. Rather than risking being found guilty, sentenced to death, and having his property forfeited to the state, thereby making his loved ones destitute, the prisoner would choose to die by being pressed to death. This is what Giles Corey chose in the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts.

Troilus and Cressida went inside the house and into the bedroom, and Pandarus said to you, the reader, “And may Cupid grant all tongue-tied virgins — male or female — reading this a bed, a bedchamber, and a Pander to provide all this gear!”

In all the conversation among Troilus, Cressida, and Pandarus, no one mentioned legal marriage.

— 3.3 —

Agamemnon, Ulysses, Diomedes, Nestor, Ajax, Menelaus, and Calchas met in the Greek camp near Achilles’ tent. Calchas was a Trojan — Cressida’s father. He was a prophet who knew that Troy would be defeated in the war and who had joined the Greeks.

Calchas said, “Now, Princes, for the service I have done you, the opportunity provided to me at this time prompts me to call aloud for recompense. May you remember that, through the prophetic foresight I have, I know that Troy will lose the war. Therefore, I have abandoned Troy, left my possessions, incurred a traitor’s name for myself, left certain and possessed advantages, and exposed myself to doubtful fortunes, separating myself from all that time, acquaintance, custom, and social rank made habitual and most familiar to my nature, and here, to do you service, I am become like a new person entering into the world, a foreigner, unacquainted with anyone. I ask you, as a foretaste of what will be in the future, to give me now a little benefit, out of those many benefits that you have

promised to me, which, you say, will come to me in the future.”

“What would you ask of us, Trojan?” Agamemnon asked. “Make your demand.”

“You have a Trojan prisoner, named Antenor, who was captured yesterday,” Calchas said. “Troy regards him as very valuable. Often have you — and often have you received my thanks because of it — desired my Cressida in exchange for an important Trojan held prisoner by you, but Troy has always refused to make the exchange. However, this Antenor, I know, is such a tuning peg in the Trojans’ affairs that their negotiations all must go out of tune when the Trojans lack his managerial skills. Antenor is the key to the harmonious management of Trojan affairs, and therefore the Trojans will almost give us a Prince of blood, a son of Priam, in exchange for him. Let Antenor be sent, great Princes, in exchange for my daughter, and her presence shall quite pay for all the service I have done in most willingly endured pain.”

“Let Diomedes bear Antenor to Troy, and bring Cressida to us here,” Agamemnon said. “Calchas shall have what he requests of us. Good Diomedes, get everything you need for this exchange. Also take word to Troy that Hector will tomorrow be answered in his challenge: Ajax is ready.”

“This shall I undertake,” Diomedes said, “and it is a burden that I am proud to bear.”

Diomedes and Calchas exited.

Achilles and Patroclus came out of their tent and stood there. They could see the other Greeks, but they could not hear them.

Ulysses said, “Achilles is standing in the entrance of his tent. May it please our general, Agamemnon, to pass like a

stranger by him, as if Achilles were forgotten, and for all the Princes to lay negligent and casual regard upon him. We ought not to pay any special attention to Achilles, although we did in the past when he fought well for us. I will bring up the rear. It is likely that Achilles will ask me why such disapproving eyes are bent on him. If he does ask me, I will use your derision as medicine for him. Your disapproval will injure his pride, he will ask me why you disapprove, and I will give him medicine that, because he asked for it, he desires to drink. This may turn out well. Pride has no other mirror to show itself but pride because supple knees feed arrogance and are the proud man's fees. If Achilles sees us acting proud, he may realize how proudly he has been acting. If we show courtesy to him, he will become even more arrogant and will think that we are only paying him the respect that is due him."

"We'll execute your plan, and put on an appearance of coldness and disapproval as we pass by Achilles," Agamemnon said. "Each lord here, do this. Either don't speak to and greet Achilles, or if you do, do it disdainfully, which shall shake him more than if we don't even look at him. I will lead the way."

The Greeks walked toward Achilles' tent, intending — all but Ulysses — to pass by it.

Achilles said, "Is the general, Agamemnon, coming here to speak with me? You know my mind, I'll fight no more against Troy."

Agamemnon asked Nestor, "What did Achilles say? Does he want anything?"

Nestor asked Achilles, "Do you, my lord, have anything to say to Agamemnon?"

"No," Achilles replied.

Nestor said to Agamemnon, "He wants nothing, my lord."

"Very good," Agamemnon said.

Agamemnon and Nestor exited.

Seeing Menelaus, Achilles said, "Good day. Good day."

Menelaus replied, "How are you? How are you?"

Menelaus exited.

Achilles to Patroclus, "Does the cuckold scorn me?"

Ajax said, "How are you now, Patroclus?"

"Good morning, Ajax," Achilles said.

"What?" Ajax said.

"Good morning."

"Yes, and it will be a good next day, too."

Ajax exited.

"Why are these fellows acting like this?" Achilles said.

"Don't they know that I am Achilles?"

Patroclus said, "They pass by you as if you were a stranger. They used to bend their knee to you and to send their smiles before themselves to you, Achilles. They used to come to you as humbly as they used to approach holy altars."

"Have I become poor recently?" Achilles said. "It is certain that a great man, once fallen out with fortune, and therefore out of luck, must fall out with men, too. What the man whose fortunes have declined is, he shall as soon read in the eyes of other people as feel in his own fall, for men, like butterflies, don't show their powdered wings except to the summer. No man receives any honor for simply being a

man; he receives honor for those honors that are outside him, such as social rank, riches, and favor. These are prizes of accident as often as they are prizes of merit. When these prizes fall, as is likely they will since they are slippery supports, the respect that leaned on them will be as slippery, too. One will fall and pull down another, and both of them will die in the fall. But it is not so with me: Fortune and I are friends. I still enjoy at the highest point all that I ever did possess, with the exception of these men's looks, which once were respectful but now are not. These men, I think, have discovered something in me that is not worth such rich beholding as they have often previously given to me. Here is Ulysses; I'll interrupt his reading."

"How are you, Ulysses?" Achilles said.

Closing the book he had been looking at, Ulysses said, "Hello, great Thetis' son!"

"What are you reading?"

Ulysses replied, "A strange fellow here writes, 'That man, however dearly gifted by nature, however much he possesses in material objects, however blessed he is either outwardly or inwardly, cannot boast about having that which he has, and does not feel what he owns, except by reflection, as when his virtues shining upon others heat them and they return that heat again to the first giver.'"

A person cannot boast about great wealth unless there are other people to whom that person can boast; a person cannot know that he possesses a virtue such as courage unless that person exhibits courage to witnesses who then acknowledge that that person is courageous.

"This is not strange, Ulysses," Achilles said. "A beautiful person does not know the beauty that is borne here in the face; the beauty presents itself to the eyes of other people. Also, the eye itself, sight being the purest of senses, does

not behold itself; an eye cannot leave itself and turn around and look at itself. However, one eye opposed to another can salute each other with each other's form; I can look at your eye, and you can look at my eye. Sight cannot look at itself until it has traveled and is mirrored in a place where it may see itself; we can see our eyes in a mirror or on the surface of calm water. This is not strange at all."

"I do not have difficulty accepting the hypothesis — it is well known — but I have difficulty accepting the author's conclusion," Ulysses said. "The author, in his detailed argument, expressly proves that no man is the lord of anything, though in and of himself he possesses many good qualities, until he communicates his good qualities to other people. Nor does the man himself know that he possesses the good qualities until he beholds them formed in the applause of those people to whom they're extended. These people, like an arch, echo the voice again, or, like a gate of steel facing the Sun, receive and render back his figure and his heat. In other words, the man displays the good qualities in front of and for the benefit of other people, they acknowledge the good qualities with applause, and the man knows for sure that he has the good qualities."

Ulysses had said that he had difficulty accepting the author's conclusion. His difficulty concerned reputation because a man could get an undeserved reputation for possessing qualities he did not actually possess; however, it is possible for a man to prove by his actions that he definitely possesses certain qualities. Ulysses wanted Achilles to show his good qualities; one way for Achilles to display his fighting ability was to battle the Trojans.

Ulysses continued, "I was much interested by what the author said, and I immediately thought of the unknown Ajax here. Heavens, what a man is there! A veritable horse, who has he knows not what. Nature, what things there are

that are most despicable in reputation and yet are precious in use!

“And what things again are most dear in esteem and yet are poor in worth!

“Now we shall see tomorrow — an act that true chance throws upon him — Ajax renowned.”

Ulysses was referring to the duel that Ajax would fight with Hector the next day. Supposedly, chance — a lottery — had chosen Hector’s opponent, but Ulysses had rigged the lottery so that Ajax would be chosen.

He continued, “Oh, Heavens, what some men do, while some men leave undone! How some men creep into fickle Fortune’s hall, while others act like idiots in her eyes! Some people pursue Fortune’s gifts, while others neglect Fortune’s gifts. Some people move slowly and carefully to get Fortune’s gifts, while others showily act like idiots as they ignore Fortune’s gifts. How one man eats into another’s pride, while pride is fasting in his wantonness!”

Achilles was the man who was leaving things undone. He was not fighting on the battlefield. Ajax and Hector, however, were dueling the next day. Achilles was the man who was neglecting the gifts that Lady Fortune had given to him, while Ajax was the man approaching Lady Fortune and asking her for gifts. Achilles was the proud man who was fasting; he was not doing the things that would add to his reputation. Ajax was doing those things — dueling with Hector and fighting on the battlefield — and therefore he was eating and acquiring the pride that should have been Achilles’.

Part of Ulysses’ strategy to get Achilles to obey Agamemnon and return to fighting was to make him feel that Ajax was receiving the honor that Achilles should earn, and that Ajax did not deserve that honor.

Ulysses continued, “To see these Greek lords! Why, even already they clap the blundering Ajax on the shoulder, as if his foot were on brave Hector’s breast and the citizens of great Troy were shrieking at Hector’s death.”

“I believe it,” Achilles said, “for the Greek lords passed by me the way that misers pass by beggars; they gave to me neither respectful words or looks. Have my deeds been forgotten?”

Ulysses replied, “Time has, my lord, a bag on his back in which he puts good deeds that are destined for oblivion, which is a huge monster of ingratitude. Things that ought to be remembered are instead forgotten. Those good deeds are past good deeds; they are devoured as fast as they are made, and they are forgotten as soon as they are done. Perseverance, my dear lord, keeps honor bright. To continue to be honored and respected, you must continue to do deeds that bring you honor and respect. If you stop doing those deeds, you become quite out of fashion; you are like a rusty coat of armor hanging on the wall — a monument that mocks past deeds.

“Take the quickest way, for honor travels in a cramped passage so narrow that only one can walk abreast at a time. Keep then to the path, for emulation and ambitious rivalry have a thousand sons that in single file pursue you. If you give way, or deviate from the direct and straight path, then they will all rush by you like a tide flooding in and leave you behind. Or if you give way, or deviate from the direct and straight path, then like a gallant horse fallen in the front line, you will lie there and serve as pavement for the abject and despicable soldiers in the rear; you will be run over and trampled on.

“Then what deeds people do in the present, although those deeds are less than your past deeds, must overtop and surpass your deeds because time is like a fashionable host

who slightly shakes hands with his parting guest, and with his arms outstretched, as if he would fly, embraces the newcomer. Welcome always smiles, and farewell goes out sighing.

“Oh, let not virtue seek remuneration for the thing it was because beauty, wit and intelligence, high birth, vigor of body, desert in service, love, friendship, and charity are all subject to envious and slanderous time.

“One trait of human nature makes everyone in the whole world kin — all with one consent praise new and gaudy toys, although they are made and molded of old things, and they give more praise to dust that is sprinkled with a little gold than they give to gold that is sprinkled with a little dust. The present eye praises the present object; what gets praised is what is in front of people’s eyes.

“Then marvel not, you great and complete man, that all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax since things in motion sooner catch the eye than what does not stir or move. The cry of approval went once to you, and still it might, and yet it may again, if you would not entomb yourself alive and encase your reputation in your tent. Your glorious deeds, which you displayed in the fields of battle recently, made the envious gods go to war themselves and even drove great Mars to take sides in the war.”

Mars supported the Trojans and even occasionally fought in battles on their side.

“I have strong reasons for my isolation,” Achilles said.

“But the reasons against your isolation are more potent and heroic,” Ulysses said, adding, “It is known, Achilles, that you are in love with one of Priam’s daughters.”

“Really!” Achilles said. “It is known!”

“Is that a surprise?” Ulysses asked. “The providential foresight that’s in a watchful government knows almost every grain of gold belonging to the god of the underworld, Pluto. It finds the bottom in the incomprehensible deeps of the sea, it keeps pace with thought and it almost, like the gods, unveils thoughts as soon as they are born and placed in their dumb cradles.”

In other words, the leaders of the Greek army had a very good spy network.

Ulysses continued, “The heart of the government is a mystery, a secret — which open discussion dares never meddle with. It has an operation more divine than breath and speech or pen and writing can give expression to.

“All the commerce and interaction that you have had with Troy we know about as well as you do, my lord, and it would be more fitting for Achilles to throw down Hector in the dust than Hector’s sister Polyxena on a bed.

“But it must grieve your son, the young Pyrrhus Neoptolemus, who is now at home in Greece, when rumor shall in our islands sound her trumpet, and all the Greek girls shall dance and sing, ‘Great Hector’s sister did Achilles win, but our great Ajax bravely beat down him.’”

The word “him” was ambiguous and referred to both Hector and Achilles. Ajax beat down Hector by defeating him in battle or a duel, and Ajax beat down Achilles by acquiring a greater reputation in war than Achilles did.

Ulysses concluded, “Farewell, my lord. I speak as your friend when I say that the fool slides over the ice that you should break.”

The fool is Ajax, who skates over ice and does not break it. Achilles, in contrast, would break the ice. He is the one who would make a good beginning in a difficult enterprise.

He would be like a big ship that goes first and breaks the ice so that other, smaller ships can follow in his wake. He is the warrior who would break the line of the opposing warriors.

Ulysses exited, leaving Achilles with things to think about.

Patroclus said, “To this effect, Achilles, have I appealed to you. A woman who is impudent and mannish is not more loathed than an effeminate man during a time in which action is required. The woman here is Polyxena, who is impudent and like a man because she loves a warrior who is an enemy to her city and family. The man is me, who stands condemned because the other Greek warriors think my little stomach for the war and your great friendship for me restrains you and keeps you away from the war. Sweet Achilles, rouse yourself; and the weak, wanton Cupid shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold, and, like a dew-drop from the lion’s mane, Cupid shall be shook into the air. Give up Polyxena, and go to war.”

“Shall Ajax fight with Hector?” Achilles asked.

“Yes, and perhaps he will receive much honor by dueling him,” Patroclus said.

“I see that my reputation is at stake,” Achilles said. “My fame is seriously and deeply wounded.”

“Oh, then, beware,” Patroclus said. “Wounds that men give themselves heal badly. Neglecting to do what is necessary gives a blank check to danger, and danger, like a fever, deceitfully infects us even when we sit idly in the Sun.”

In this culture, people believed that sitting in the sunshine in March could give one a fever.

“Go call the Fool Thersites here, sweet Patroclus,” Achilles said. “I’ll send the Fool to Ajax and ask him to invite the

Trojan lords here to see us unarmed after the combat. I have a woman's longing, an appetite that I am sick with, to see great Hector in his clothing of peace rather than in his armor, to talk with him and to wholly see his face rather than to see only the little that is visible when he wears a helmet."

Thersites came walking over to them.

Seeing Thersites, Achilles said, "A labor saved!"

"A wonder!" Thersites said.

"What?" Achilles asked.

"Ajax goes up and down the field, asking for himself," Thersites said.

If Ajax were asking for himself, he was asking for a jakes — a toilet.

"How so?" Achilles asked.

"He must fight a duel tomorrow with Hector, and he is so prophetically proud of an heroic cudgeling that he raves in saying nothing," Thersites said.

Ajax was confident that he would defeat Hector the following day. Thersites was equally confident that Hector would defeat Ajax.

"How can that be?" Achilles asked.

"Why, Ajax stalks up and down like a peacock, a symbol of pride — a stride and a stop. He ruminates like a hostess who has no arithmetic but her brain to add up and set down the customers' bill. He bites his lip with a shrewd regard, attempting to look intelligent, as who should say, 'There is intelligence in this head, as all would know if it would get out,' and so there is, but the intelligence in his head lies as coldly in him as fire in a piece of flint, which will not show

itself without knocking the flint against metal. To get to Ajax' intelligence, you will have to break his head.

“Ajax is undone — ruined — forever because if Hector does not break Ajax' neck in the duel, Ajax will break his own neck in vainglory, aka excessive vanity.

“Ajax doesn't know me. I said, ‘Good morning, Ajax,’ and he replied, ‘Thanks, Agamemnon.’ What do you think of this man who mistakes me for the general? He's grown and become a very land-fish — a fish on land — without knowledge of language and unable to speak, aka a monster.

“A plague on opinion and reputation! A man may wear it on both sides, like a reversible leather jacket.”

Opinion and reputation are two sides of the same coin, or of the two sides — inside and outside — of a reversible leather jacket. Opinion is inside a man; it is what he thinks about himself. Reputation is outside a man; it is what other people say about him. Both opinion and reputation can ruin a man. Ulysses had wanted to build up Ajax' pride in order to bring Achilles' pride down, but Ajax was well on his way to becoming as proud as Achilles.

“You must be my ambassador to Ajax, Thersites,” Achilles said.

“Who, I?” Thersites replied. “Why, he'll answer nobody; he practices not answering. Speaking is for beggars; he wears his tongue in his arms — he lets his fighting do his speaking for him. I will pretend to be him: Let Patroclus ask me questions as if I were Ajax, and you shall see a play starring Ajax.”

“Do it, Patroclus,” Achilles said. “Tell him that I humbly desire the valiant Ajax to invite the most valorous Hector to come unarmed to my tent, and to procure safe-conduct for his person from the magnanimous and most illustrious six-

or-seven-times-honored captain-general of the Greek army, Agamemnon, et cetera. Do this.”

“Jove bless great Ajax!” Patroclus said.

“Hmm!” Thersites replied in the character of Ajax.

“I come from the worthy Achilles —” Patroclus began.

“Ha!”

“— who most humbly desires you to invite Hector to his tent —”

“Hmm!”

“— and to procure safe-conduct from Agamemnon.”

“Agamemnon!”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Ha!”

“What do you say to this request?”

“God be with you, with all my heart, and goodbye,” Thersites replied in the character of Ajax.

“What is your answer, sir?” Patroclus asked.

“If tomorrow is a fair day, by eleven o’clock it will go one way or the other, and we will know who has won the duel; howsoever it turns out, Hector shall receive a beating before he beats me.”

“What is your answer, sir?” Patroclus asked again.

“Fare you well, with all my heart, and goodbye,” Thersites replied in the character of Ajax.

Achilles asked, “Why, but Ajax is not in this tune, is he? He isn’t really in this state of mind, is he?”

“No, he is not in this tune, but he’s out of tune just the way I have portrayed him,” Thersites replied. “What music will be in him when Hector has knocked out his brains, I don’t know; but, I am sure, none, unless the fiddler-god Apollo get Ajax’ sinews to make musical strings from.”

“Come, you shall carry a letter to Ajax immediately,” Achilles said.

“Let me carry another letter to Ajax’ horse; for that’s the more capable creature,” Thersites said.

“My mind is troubled, like a stirred fountain that is clouded with sediment,” Achilles said, “and I myself cannot see its bottom.”

Achilles and Patroclus exited.

Alone, Thersites said to himself, “I wish the fountain of your mind were clear again, so that I might bring to drink an ass — Ajax — at it! I had rather be a tick on a sheep than such a valiant ignorant fool as Ajax.”

CHAPTER 4 (Troilus and Cressida)

— 4.1 —

On a street in Troy, Aeneas and a servant with a torch met Paris, Deiphobus, Antenor, the Greek Diomedes, and some other people who were carrying torches.

Paris said, “I see someone. Ho! Who is that there?”

“It is the Lord Aeneas,” Deiphobus said.

Aeneas asked, “Is Prince Paris there in person? Had I as good a reason as Helen to lie long in bed as you, Prince Paris, have, nothing but Heavenly business would rob my bedmate of my company.”

“That’s what I think, too,” Diomedes said. “Good morning, Lord Aeneas.”

“This is a valiant Greek, Aeneas,” Paris said. “Shake his hand. Witness the theme of your speech, wherein you told how Diomedes, for a whole week of days, haunted you on the battlefield.”

“I wish you good health, valiant sir, while talks continue during all this gentle truce,” Aeneas said to Diomedes, “but when I meet you armed on the battlefield after the truce, then I will greet you with as black defiance as heart can think or courage can execute.”

“I welcome both the good health and the black defiance,” Diomedes replied. “Our emotions are now calm because of the truce, and for as long as the truce lasts, I wish you good health! But when we meet on the battlefield later, by Jove, I’ll hunt for your life with all my strength, speed, and cunning.”

“And you shall hunt a lion that will flee with his face

backward, facing you,” Aeneas said. “In humane gentleness, welcome to Troy! Now, by my mortal father Anchises’ life, welcome, indeed! By my immortal mother Venus’ hand, I swear that no man alive can respect more excellently than I the thing he means to kill.”

As recounted in Homer’s *Iliad*, Diomedes had once fought Venus, who was on the side of the Trojans, and wounded her wrist.

“We feel the same way,” Diomedes said. “Jove, let Aeneas live, if he is not fated to bring me glory by dying on my sword, a thousand complete courses of the Sun! Let him live a thousand years if I do not kill him on the battlefield! But, to increase my honor, which I am greedy for, let me kill him, with each of his joints wounded, and let that happen tomorrow!”

“We know each other well,” Aeneas said.

“We do, and we long to know each other worse,” Diomedes replied.

Rather than know each other to be well and healthy, they each hoped to know that the other was wounded or dead.

“This is the most spiteful gentle greeting, the noblest hateful love, that ever I heard of,” Paris said.

He then asked Aeneas, “What business, lord, do you have so early?”

“King Priam sent for me,” Aeneas said, “but why, I don’t know.”

“The reason meets you here and now,” Paris said. “It was to bring this Greek, Diomedes, to Calchas’ house, where Cressida, his daughter, is living, and there to render him, in exchange for the freed Antenor, the fair Cressida.”

Paris then walked to the side with Aeneas, and they held a private, quiet conversation.

Paris said, "Let's have your company, or if you please, you can hasten to Calchas' house before us. I firmly think — or rather, call my thought a certain knowledge — that my brother Troilus lodges there tonight. Rouse him and give him notice of our approach. Because of the reason we are coming there, I fear we shall be much unwelcome."

"I assure you that we will be much unwelcome," Aeneas replied. "Troilus had rather Troy were carried to Greece than Cressida carried away from Troy."

"There is no help for it," Paris said. "The bitter disposition of the time will have it so. It is necessary."

Paris then said loudly, "Go on ahead of us, Aeneas; we'll follow you."

"Good morning, everyone," Aeneas said.

Aeneas and the servant carrying the torch exited.

Paris then asked, "Tell me, noble Diomedes, indeed, tell me truly, even in the soul of sound and good friendship, who, in your thoughts, deserves fair Helen best, myself or Menelaus?"

"Both of you deserve her equally," Diomedes said. "Menelaus well deserves to have her because he seeks her without being bothered by her dirty lack of chastity, which has caused such a Hell of pain and world of expense as we fight this war to get her back for him. And you deserve as well to keep her because you defend her without noticing the taste of her dishonor, her lack of faithfulness, her adultery, which has led to such a costly loss of wealth and friends.

"Menelaus, like a whining cuckold, would drink up the lees

and dregs of a flat tamed piece — a wine that has been exposed to the air and gone flat, or a piece of female flesh that has been in bed with men so much that she has become stale.

“You, like a lecher, are happy to breed your inheritors — your children — out of Helen’s whorish genitals.

“Weighing both merits with a set of scales, each weighs neither less nor more than the other, but both are heavier — sadder — because of a whore named Helen.”

“You are too bitter to your countrywoman,” Paris replied.

“Helen is bitter to her country,” Diomedes said. “Listen to me, Paris. For every false drop in her bawdy veins a Greek’s life has sunk and been lost; for every tiny bit of her contaminated carrion weight, a Trojan has been slain. Since Helen has been able to speak, the number of words she has spoken does not equal the number of Greeks and Trojans who have died in this war over her.”

“Fair Diomedes, you are doing what merchants do,” Paris said. “You dispraise the thing that you desire to buy. But we in silence hold this virtue well, we’ll commend only what we intend to sell.”

Paris did not commend — praise — Helen because he had no desire to sell her.

Paris said, “Here lies our way.”

They then walked to Calchas’ house.

— 4.2 —

Troilus and Cressida stood and talked in the courtyard of Calchas’ house.

Troilus said, “Dear, do not trouble yourself. The morning is cold.”

Now that it was morning, it was time for Troilus to leave. Cressida wanted to protect her reputation; she did not want other people to know that Troilus had spent the night with her.

“Then, my sweet lord, I’ll call my uncle down,” Cressida said. “He shall unbolt the gates to let you out.”

Pandarus lived next to Cressida. The houses shared the same court and were adjoined.

“Don’t trouble him,” Troilus said. “Go to bed, to bed. Let sleep kill — overcome — those pretty eyes, and give as soft arrest to your senses as infants’ senses that are empty of all thought!”

“Good morning, then,” Cressida said.

“Please, go to bed now.”

“Are you weary of me?”

“Oh, Cressida! Except that the busy day, awakened by the morning lark, has aroused the ribald crows, and dreaming night will hide our joys no longer, I would not go away from you.”

“Night has been too brief,” Cressida said.

“Damn the witch called night! With malignant people thinking evil thoughts at night, she stays as tediously as Hell and allows time to pass only slowly, but she flies past the grasps of love with wings more momentary-swift than thought. You will catch cold, and curse me.”

“Please, tarry. Stay a while longer,” Cressida said. “You men will never tarry. Oh, foolish Cressida! I might have still held off and not slept with you, and then you would have tarried. Listen! There’s someone up.”

Pandarus said from inside, “Why are all the doors open

here?”

“It is your uncle,” Troilus said.

“A pestilence on him!” Cressida said. “Now he will be mocking me. What a life I shall have!”

Pandarus entered the courtyard and said, “How are you now! How are you now! How go maidenheads? What is the price of virginity?”

Pretending not to recognize Cressida, who was no longer a virgin, he said to her, “Hey, you maiden! Where’s Cressida, my niece?”

“Go hang yourself, you naughty mocking uncle!” Cressida said. “You bring me to do, and then you flout me, too.”

One meaning of “to do” is “to have sex.”

“To do what?” Pandarus said. “To do what? Let her say what! What have I brought you to do?”

“Come, come, curse your heart!” Cressida said. “You’ll never be good, nor will you allow others to be good.”

“Ha! Ha!” Pandarus laughed. “Alas, poor wretch! Ah, poor *chipochia*! Haven’t you slept tonight?”

Chipochia was poorly pronounced Italian for “pussy.”

Using baby talk, he said to her, “Would he, a naughty man, not let it sleep? May a bugbear take him!”

Cressida said to Troilus, “Didn’t I tell you that he would tease me! I wish that he were knocked in the head!”

Knocking sounded on the door of the courtyard.

She said to Pandarus, “Who’s that at the door? Good uncle, go and see.”

She then said to Troilus, “My lord, come again into my bedchamber.”

Cressida wanted him to go back to her bedchamber because she did not want him to be found with her. She wanted to keep their sexual relationship secret.

He smiled, and she said, “You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily, as if I wanted to have sex again with you.”

Troilus laughed.

“Come, you are deceived. I am thinking of no such thing.”

Knocking sounded again at the door.

“How earnestly they knock!” Cressida said. “Please, come inside. I would not for half of Troy have you seen here.”

Troilus and Cressida exited.

“Who’s there?” Pandarus said. “What’s the matter? Will you beat down the door? What is it now! What’s the matter?”

He opened the door, and Aeneas entered the courtyard.

“Good morning, my lord, good morning,” Aeneas said.

“Who’s there?” Pandarus asked. “My Lord Aeneas! I swear that I didn’t know who you are. What news gets you up so early?”

“Isn’t Prince Troilus here?” Aeneas asked.

“Here! What should he be doing here?” Pandarus asked, pretending to be surprised by the question.

“Come, he is here, my lord,” Aeneas said. “Do not deny it. He needs to speak with me about a matter that is important to him.”

“Troilus is here, you say?” Pandarus said. “It is more than I know, I’ll be sworn. As for my own part, I came in late. What would he be doing here?”

“What? Do you mean *who* would he be doing here?” Aeneas asked. “Well, then. Come, come, you’ll do him wrong without meaning to. You’ll be so true to him that you will be false to him. By trying to help him by pretending that he is not here, you will hurt him by keeping me from talking with him. Let’s agree to pretend that you do not know about him being here, but still go and fetch him here; go.”

Troilus, who had been eavesdropping, came out into the courtyard.

“How are you now?” Troilus asked Aeneas. “What’s the matter?”

“My lord, I scarcely have leisure to greet you because my business with you is so urgent. Nearby are your brother Paris, and Deiphobus, the Greek Diomedes, and our Antenor, who has been freed by the Greeks and delivered to us; and for him forthwith, before the first sacrifice, within this hour, we must hand over to Diomedes’ hand the Lady Cressida. She is being exchanged for Antenor.”

“Has this been definitely decided?” Troilus asked.

“Yes, it has been decided by Priam and the general assembly of Troy. People are at hand and ready to put the decision into effect.”

“How my achievements mock me!” Troilus said.

He had just won Cressida, and now he had to give her up.

He continued, “I will go and meet them, and, my Lord Aeneas, say that we met by chance; you did not find me here.”

“Yes, that is a good idea, my lord,” Aeneas said. “The secrets of nature are not more gifted in taciturnity than I am. Nature holds on to her secrets, and I will hold on to your secret.”

Troilus and Aeneas exited.

Pandarus said, “Is it possible? No sooner gotten but lost? May the Devil take Antenor! The young Prince Troilus will go mad: a plague upon Antenor! I wish the Greeks had broken his neck!”

Cressida came into the courtyard and asked, “What’s going on! What’s the matter? Who was here?”

Pandarus sighed.

“Why do you sigh so deeply?” Cressida asked. “Where’s my lord? Gone! Tell me, sweet uncle, what’s the matter?”

“I wish that I were as deep under the earth as I am above it!”

“Oh, the gods! What’s the matter?”

“Please, go inside,” Pandarus said. “I wish that you had never been born! I knew you would be Troilus’ death. Oh, poor gentleman! A plague upon Antenor!”

“Good uncle, I beg you, on my knees!” Cressida said. “I beg you, tell me what’s the matter.”

“You must leave Troy, girl, you must leave Troy; you have been exchanged for Antenor,” Pandarus said. “You must go to your father, and be gone from Troilus. It will be his death; it will be his bane, his poison, his ruin; he cannot bear it.”

“Oh, you immortal gods!” Cressida said. “I will not go.”

“You must.”

“I will not, uncle,” Cressida said. “I have forgotten my father; I know no feeling of blood relationship to him; I know no sense of relationship, love, blood, soul for him that comes close to what I feel for the sweet Troilus. Oh, you divine gods, make Cressida’s name the very crown of falsehood if she ever leaves Troilus! Time, force, and death, do to this body what extremes you can, but the strong base and building of my love is like the very center of the Earth, and draws all things to it. I’ll go in and weep —”

“Do, do,” Pandarus said.

Cressida continued, “— tear my bright hair and scratch my praised cheeks, crack my clear voice with sobs and break my heart with calling the name of Troilus. I will not go away from Troy.”

— 4.3 —

Paris, Troilus, Aeneas, Deiphobus, Antenor, and the Greek Diomedes walked to the street in front of Calchas’ house. Paris and Troilus stood apart from the others.

Paris said loudly, “It is full morning, and the hour fixed for Cressida’s delivery to this valiant Greek, Diomedes, is coming quickly.”

He and Troilus then talked quietly.

“My good brother Troilus, tell the lady what she is to do, and urge her to make haste.”

“Walk into her house,” Troilus said. “I’ll bring her to the Greek quickly, and when I deliver her to his hand, think that his hand is an altar and your brother Troilus is a priest there who is offering to it his own heart.”

Paris said, “I know what it is to love, and I wish that I could help as much as I shall feel pity!”

Troilus exited.

Paris said loudly, “May it please you to walk into her house, my lords.”

— 4.4 —

Pandarus and Cressida were talking inside her house.

“Be calm, be calm,” Pandarus advised.

“Why are you telling me to be calm?” Cressida said. “The grief that I taste is pure and entirely perfect, and it rages as strongly as that which causes it, so how can I moderate it? How can I be calm? If I could moderate my affection, or brew it for a weak and colder palate, then I could give my grief some moderation that would weaken the senses. My love for Troilus, however, admits no qualifying impure dross; and neither does my grief because it suffers such a precious loss.”

“Here, here, here he comes,” Pandarus said.

Troilus entered the room, and Pandarus said affectionately, “Ah, sweet ducks!”

“Oh, Troilus! Troilus!” Cressida said as she embraced him.

“What a pair of sights is here!” Pandarus said. “Let me hug, too.”

He put his arms around both of them and hugged them and then said, “‘Oh, heart,’ as the goodly saying is, ‘— oh, heart, heavy and sorrowful heart, why do you sigh without breaking?’ Where he answers again, ‘Because you cannot ease your smart — your hurt — by friendship or by speaking.’”

Pandarus paused and then said, “There was never a truer rhyme. Let us cast away nothing, for we may live to have need of such a verse. We see it happen. We see the need for

it. How are you doing now, lambs?”

“Cressida, I love you in so distilled and pure a way that the blessed gods are angry with my love for you, which is brighter in zeal than the devotion that cold lips blow in prayers to their deities,” Troilus said. “That is why the gods are taking you from me.”

“Have the gods envy and jealousy?” Cressida asked.

“Yes, yes, yes, yes,” Pandarus said. “It is all too plainly the case here.”

Cressida asked, “And is it true that I must go away from Troy?”

“It is a hateful truth,” Troilus said.

“And from Troilus, too?” Cressida asked.

Troilus replied, “Yes, from Troy and Troilus.”

“Is it possible?” she asked.

“Yes, and it has happened suddenly,” Troilus said. “The injury of chance events — bad luck — refuses to give us time to properly say goodbye. The injury of chance events jostles roughly by all time of pause and rudely beguiles our lips of all reunions and kisses, it forcibly prevents our arms from locking in embraces, and it strangles our dear vows even in the birth of our own laboring breath — it cuts off the vows we attempt to make to each other even before we can say them. We two, who bought each other with so many thousand sighs, must sell ourselves at a cheap price with the rude brevity and discharge of only one sigh. Injurious time now with a robber’s haste stuffs his rich thievery willy-nilly in a small sack. As many farewells as there are stars in Heaven, each farewell with its own distinct breath and kisses, he fumbles up into a casual *adieu*, and scants us with a single famished kiss, which

tastes of the salt of the tears of broken lovers.”

Aeneas called from outside the room, “My lord, is the lady ready?”

“Listen,” Troilus said. “He is calling for you. Some say the Genius similarly cries, ‘Come,’ to the man who immediately must die.”

The Genius is a Guardian Spirit that accompanies a human being during life and then guides the soul to its abode after death.

Troilus called to Aeneas, “Tell them to be patient; she shall come quickly.”

Pandarus said, “Where are my tears? Rain, tears, to slow down this wind — my sighs — or my heart will be blown up by the root.”

Pandarus was referring to the belief that rain causes a wind to slow down.

Pandarus exited.

Cressida asked Troilus, “Must I then go to the Greeks?”

“There’s no remedy. There’s no alternative,” Troilus replied.

“I will be a woeful Cressida among the merry Greeks!” she said.

One meaning of “merry Greeks” in this culture was “dissolute and wanton rogues.”

She continued, “When shall we see each other again?”

Troilus said, “Listen to me, my love. Be true —”

“To be true” means “to be faithful and not fall in love with someone else.”

“Can you doubt that I will be true! What! What wicked thought is this?”

“We must use remonstrations kindly because we are parting and will be unable to speak to each other. I say, ‘Be true,’ not because I fear that you intend to be otherwise, for I will throw my glove to and challenge Death himself so I can prove by force of arms that there’s no stain in your heart. But I say, ‘Be true,’ to introduce my following words: ‘Be true, and I will see you.’”

“Oh, if you go to the Greek camp, you shall be exposed, my lord, to dangers as infinite as they are imminent!” Cressida said. “But I’ll be true.”

“And I’ll become friends with danger,” Troilus said. “Wear this sleeve.”

In this culture, sleeves were detachable from the rest of the upper garment. They were sometimes given as love tokens.

“And you wear this glove,” Cressida said, giving him a glove as he gave her the sleeve. “When shall I see you?”

Both garments — sleeve and glove — had holes into which one or more phallic-like objects could be thrust.

“I will corrupt — bribe — the Greek sentinels so I can visit you at night. But yet be true.”

“Oh, Heavens! ‘Be true’ again!”

“Pay attention as I explain why I speak those words, love,” Troilus said. “The Greek youths are full of good qualities. They’re loving, well composed with gifts of nature such as good looks, and flowing and swelling over with arts and exercise: They have studied and practiced arts that make them attractive. How novelty and good qualities with a fine figure may move a woman — alas, a kind of godly jealousy, which I beg you to call a virtuous sin, makes me

afraid.”

Understanding that Troilus was afraid that she would fall in love with a Greek, Cressida said, “Oh, Heavens! You don’t love me!”

“May I die a villain, then!” Troilus said. “In saying these things, I do not call your faith in question as much as I call into question my merit: I cannot sing, nor dance the high-jumping dance called the lavolt, nor sweeten my talk, nor play at crafty games; these are all fair virtues that the Greeks are most prompt and ready to practice. But I can tell that in each of these virtues there lurks a still and dumb-discursive — that is, a still and silently persuasive — Devil that tempts most cunningly, but don’t you be tempted.”

“Do you think I will be tempted?” Cressida asked.

“No, but something may be done that we will not.”

Troilus was using “will” to mean “wish.”

He continued, “And sometimes we are Devils to ourselves, when we tempt the frailty of our powers, presuming on their changeful potency. Sometimes, we rely too much on our own strength, but our strength can grow weak.”

Aeneas called again, “It’s time, my good lord.”

“Come, kiss me,” Troilus said, “and let us part.”

Paris called, “Brother Troilus!”

Troilus called back, “Good brother, come here, and bring Aeneas and the Greek with you.”

“My lord, will you be true to me?” Cressida asked.

“Who, I? Unfortunately, being true is my vice, my fault. While others fish with cunning to get a great reputation for a good character, I with great truth catch total simplicity.

Because I tell the truth, I get a reputation for being simple — a fool. While some with cunning gild their copper crowns to make them appear to be gold, with truth and plainness I wear my crown bare.”

The crowns were both coins and the tops of heads. Unlike some other people, Troilus did not put on an act to make himself look gilded — better than he really was.

He added, “Fear not my truth — my faithfulness to you. The moral of my intelligence is ‘plain and true’; that’s all there is to my character.”

Aeneas, Paris, Antenor, Deiphobus, and the Greek Diomedes entered the room.

Troilus said, “Welcome, Sir Diomedes! Here is the lady whom we deliver to you in exchange for Antenor. At the city gate, lord, I’ll give her into your hand, and as we walk to the gate I’ll tell you about her. Treat her well; and, by my soul, fair Greek, if ever you stand at the mercy of my sword, say the name ‘Cressida’ and your life shall be as safe as Priam is in Troy.”

Diomedes said, “Fair Lady Cressida, if it pleases you, save the thanks this Prince expects. You owe him nothing. The luster in your eyes and the Heaven in your cheeks plead for you to be treated well, and you shall be my mistress and command Diomedes wholly.”

Diomedes was using courtly language. “Mistress” meant a woman who could command a man — called her “servant” — to do things for her because the man admired her; however, another meaning of “mistress” in this culture was “a woman who is pursued by a man.”

“Greek, you are not treating me with courtesy,” Troilus said. “Instead, by praising her you shame the zeal of my petition to you. I tell you, lord of Greece, she is as far high

soaring over your praises as you are unworthy to be called her servant. I order you to treat her well simply for the reason that I have ordered you to treat her well. For, by the dreadful Pluto, god of the Land of the Dead, if you do not treat her well, even if the great bulk of Achilles is your bodyguard, I'll cut your throat."

"Oh, don't be angry, Prince Troilus," Diomedes replied. "Let me be privileged by my position as ambassador and messenger to speak freely: When I am away from Troy, I'll answer to my lust."

"I'll answer to my lust" can mean several things: 1) "I'll do as I like," 2) "I'll meet you on the battlefield," 3) "I'll treat Cressida well simply because I want to, not because you order me to," and/or 4) "I'll seduce Cressida."

Diomedes continued, "You should know, lord, that I'll do nothing because I have been ordered to do it. Cressida shall be prized according to her own worth. If you tell me, 'Prize her because I tell you to prize her,' I'll reply in accordance with my spirit and honor, 'No.'"

"Come, let's go to the gate," Troilus said. "I'll tell you, Diomedes, this boast of yours shall often make you hide your head."

He then said to Cressida, "Lady, give me your hand, and, as we walk, we shall say to each other what needs to be said."

Troilus, Cressida, and Diomedes exited.

A trumpet sounded.

Paris said, "Listen! That is Hector's trumpet."

"How we have spent this morning! We have wasted time," Aeneas said. "Prince Hector must think that I am tardy and remiss. I swore that I would ride before him to the battlefield."

“It is Troilus’ fault that handing over Cressida to Diomedes took so long,” Paris said. “Come, let’s go to the battlefield with Hector.”

“Let’s get ready immediately,” Aeneas said.

“Yes, let’s get ready with a bridegroom’s fresh eagerness,” Paris said. “Let us prepare to tend on Hector’s heels. The glory of our Troy lies this day on his fair worth and single chivalry. This is the day that he will fight a duel with Ajax.”

— 4.5 —

Ajax, wearing armor, walked over to Agamemnon, Achilles, Patroclus, Menelaus, Ulysses, Nestor, and some others. They were at the place where Ajax would duel Hector. The lists — barriers surrounding the place where the duel would take place — were already set out.

Agamemnon said to Ajax, “Here you are wearing fresh and fair armor, early for the duel, and with abundant courage. Give with your trumpeter a loud note to Troy, you awe-inspiring Ajax, so that the appalled air may pierce the ears of the great combatant Hector and bring him hither.”

“Trumpeter, here’s some money,” Ajax said. “Now crack your lungs, and split your brazen pipe. Blow, villain, until your sphered and swollen cheeks outswell the gassy colic of the puffing Aquilon — the North Wind. Come, stretch your chest and let your eyes spout blood with the effort of blowing. You blow to summon Hector.”

A trumpet sounded.

“No trumpet answers,” Ulysses said.

“It is still early,” Achilles said.

Seeing two people coming toward them, Agamemnon

asked, “Isn’t that Diomedes yonder, with Calchas’ daughter?”

“It is Diomedes,” Ulysses said. “I know the manner of his gait. He rises on the toe: His aspiring spirit lifts him from the earth.”

Diomedes led Cressida over to Agamemnon.

“Is this the Lady Cressida?” Agamemnon asked.

“Yes, it is she,” Diomedes replied.

“You are very dearly welcome to the Greeks, sweet lady,” Agamemnon said, kissing her.

“Our general salutes you with a kiss,” Nestor said.

“Yet the kindness is only particular,” Ulysses said. “It would be better if she were kissed in general.”

“That is very courtly counsel,” Nestor, who was an old man, said. “I’ll begin.”

He kissed Cressida and said, “So much for Nestor.”

Referring to Nestor’s old age — he was in the December of his life — Achilles said, “I’ll take that winter from your lips, fair lady.”

He kissed her and said, “Achilles bids you welcome.”

“I had a good argument for kissing once,” Menelaus said.

By “argument,” he meant “cause or reason.” That argument was Helen.

“But that’s no argument for kissing now,” Patroclus said, using “argument” with its usual meaning.

He kissed Cressida and said, “For thus popped Paris in his hardiment, and parted thus you and your argument.”

Patroclus was making fun of Menelaus, whose wife, Helen, was sleeping with Paris, Prince of Troy. “Hardiment” is an archaic word meaning “act of valor” and “erect penis.” “Pop in” means to “arrive unexpectedly” and “move in suddenly.” Paris had popped in to visit Menelaus, King of Sparta, and he had popped his erect penis into Helen.

“Oh, this is deadly gall, and the theme of all our scorns!” Ulysses said. “For this we lose our heads to gild his horns.”

Menelaus was a cuckold, a man with an unfaithful wife. Cuckolds were said to have horns. By fighting the Trojan War to get Helen back for Menelaus, the Greeks were fighting to gild his horns — to get back some of the honor that Paris had taken from him.

“The first kiss I gave you was Menelaus’ kiss,” Patroclus said. “This kiss is mine.”

He kissed Cressida and said, “Patroclus kisses you.”

“Oh, this is excellent!” Menelaus said, sarcastically.

Patroclus said, “Paris and I kiss evermore for Menelaus.”

Paris kissed Helen for Menelaus, and now Patroclus was kissing Cressida for Menelaus.

“I’ll have my kiss, sir,” Menelaus said to Patroclus.

He then said to Cressida, “Lady, by your leave.”

Cressida was a young Trojan woman who was surrounded by Greek men in what could very well be a dangerous situation for her.

Silent up to now, Cressida said to Menelaus, “In kissing, do you give or receive?”

Menelaus said, “I both take and give.”

Cressida said, "I'll bet my life that the kiss you take is better than the kiss you give; therefore, you get no kiss."

"I'll give you something in addition," Menelaus said. "I'll give you three kisses in return for one kiss."

"You're an odd man," Cressida said. "Give even odds or give none."

By "odd," Cressida meant "eccentric or unusual."

"An odd man, lady!" Menelaus said. "Every man is odd."

Menelaus was saying that every man is a unique individual.

"No, Paris is not," Cressida said, "for you know it is true that you are odd, and he is even with you."

Cressida was saying that Paris was even because he was part of a couple, while Menelaus was odd — a single man who was odd man out and who was at odds with Paris.

Menelaus replied, "You hit me on the head."

Cressida's comments were cutting him close to the bone — she was hitting him on his cuckold's horns.

"No, I'll be sworn," Cressida said.

"It is no contest, your fingernail against his horn," Ulysses said. "His horns are tougher than your fingernails."

He then asked, "May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?"

"You may," Cressida replied.

"I do desire a kiss."

"Why, beg, then."

Ulysses, who was unwilling to beg in any serious way, said, "Why then for Venus' sake, give me a kiss when Helen is a maiden — a virgin — again, and when she

belongs to Menelaus again.”

Helen would never be a virgin again, and having cuckolded Menelaus, would she ever really be his again?

“I am your debtor,” Cressida said. “Claim your kiss when it is due.”

“Never is my day to claim my kiss, and then I will get a kiss of you,” Ulysses said.

Cressida had managed to use her wits to avoid being kissed by Menelaus and by Ulysses.

Diomedes said to her, “Lady, a word. I’ll bring you to your father.”

Diomedes and Cressida exited.

Nestor said, “She is a woman of quick sense.”

“Sense” could mean “wits” or “sensuality.”

“Damn her!” Ulysses, who had not received a kiss, said. “There’s language in her eye, her cheek, her lip — you can read her or listen to her. Her foot speaks; her wanton spirits appear in every joint and motion of her body. Oh, these flirts, so glib of tongue, who accost men and give them welcome before they come near, and widely unclasp the tablets of their thoughts to every ticklish, lecherous reader! Set them down for sluttish spoils of opportunity and daughters of the game. Set them down in the records as the whores they are.”

Was Ulysses accurate in thinking that Cressida was a slut? Or was he just angry at not having received a kiss?

A trumpet sounded.

All the Greeks said, “The Trojans’ trumpet.”

Or perhaps they said, in response to Ulysses' words, "The Trojan strumpet."

"Yonder comes the Trojans' troop," Agamemnon said.

Hector, along with Aeneas, Troilus, and other Trojan soldiers and some attendants, walked over to the Greeks. Hector was wearing armor.

"Hail, all you rulers of Greece!" Aeneas said. "What shall be done to him who commands victory? What shall the victor win? Or do you purpose that a victor shall be known? Do you want the knights to fight to the death, or shall the knights be separated before death occurs by any voice or order of the marshal of the lists? Hector bade me ask you this."

"Which way would Hector have it?" Agamemnon asked.

"He has no preference," Aeneas replied. "He'll obey whatever conditions you set."

Achilles said, "This is done like Hector; but it is done overconfidently. It is done a little proudly, and a great deal disparaging the knight opposing Hector."

Aeneas asked, "If not Achilles, sir, what is your name?"

"If not Achilles, my name is nothing," Achilles replied.

"Therefore your name is Achilles," Aeneas said, "but, whatever it is, know this: In the extremity of great and little, valor and pride excel themselves in Hector. The one is almost as infinite as all; the other is blank as nothing. He has much courage and is not at all proud. Weigh him well, and you will see that what looks like pride is courtesy. This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood. Out of love for that half, half of Hector stays at home; half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek this blended knight who is half Trojan and half Greek."

Hector and Ajax were first cousins. Ajax' mother was Hesione, who was the sister of Priam, Hector's father.

Achilles said sarcastically, "A maiden battle, then? Not a fight to the death? No bloodshed? Oh, I see."

Having delivered Cressida to Calchas, her father, Diomedes returned.

"Here is Sir Diomedes," Agamemnon said. "Go, honorable knight, and stand by our Ajax. As you and Lord Aeneas consent upon the order of their fight, so be it. The fight can be either to the uttermost — to the death — or else it can be exercise. Because the combatants are related by blood, their fight is half restrained before their strokes begin."

Ajax and Hector entered the lists; they were ready to duel.

"They are opposed already," Ulysses said.

Seeing Troilus, Agamemnon asked Ulysses, "What Trojan is that one who looks so sorrowful?"

"He is the youngest son of Priam, and he is a true knight. He is not yet fully mature, yet he is matchless and firm of word. He does his speaking with his deeds, and he does not boast about his deeds with his tongue. He is not soon provoked, but once he is provoked he is not soon calmed. His heart and hand are both open and both free and both generous; for what he has he gives, and what he thinks he shows. Yet he does not give until his rational judgment guides his bounty, nor does he dignify an impure thought by saying it out loud. He is as manly as Hector, but more dangerous; for Hector in his blaze of wrath shows mercy to tender objects that arouse his pity, but this man, the youngest son of Priam, in the heat of action is more vindictive than jealous love. They call him Troilus, and on him erect a second hope, as fairly built as Hector. They think of him as an up-and-coming second Hector. Thus

says Aeneas, who knows the youth from top to bottom; from his heart Aeneas thus described Troilus to me when I was an ambassador inside Troy.”

Trumpets sounded, and Hector and Ajax began to duel. The marshals of the duel were Aeneas and Diomedes.

“They are in action,” Agamemnon said.

“Now, Ajax, hold your own!” Nestor shouted.

“Hector, you are asleep!” Troilus shouted. “Wake up!”

“His blows are well placed,” Agamemnon said to Nestor.

Agamemnon shouted, “There, Ajax!”

Diomedes said to Hector and Ajax, “You must fight no more.”

The trumpeters stopped blowing.

“Princes, enough, if it pleases you,” Aeneas said.

“I am not warm yet,” Ajax said. “I haven’t broken a sweat. Let us fight again.”

“Whatever Hector pleases,” Diomedes replied.

“Why, then I fight no more today,” Hector said to Diomedes.

He then said to Ajax, “You are, great lord, my father’s sister’s son, a first cousin to me, the son of great Priam. The obligation of our blood relation forbids a gory rivalry between us two. Were your Greek and Trojan mixture such that you could say, ‘This hand is all Greek, and this hand is all Trojan; the muscles of this leg are all Greek, and the muscles of this leg are all Trojan; my mother’s blood runs here on the right cheek, and my father’s blood runs here on the left cheek,’ then by most powerful Jove, you would not

go away from me bearing a Greek limb or other body part in which my sword had not made its mark during our violent duel, but the just gods forbid that any drop of blood you got from your mother, my sacred aunt, should by my mortal sword be drained from your body! Let me embrace you, Ajax. By Jove who thunders, you have strong arms.”

Hector hugged Ajax and said, “Hector would have your strong arms fall upon him like this. Cousin, I give all honor to you!”

“I thank you, Hector,” Ajax said. “You are too gentle, too noble, and too free a man. I came to kill you, cousin, and bear away from here a great addition to my honor — a great addition earned by your death.”

Hector replied, “Not even the admirable Pyrrhus Neoptolemus, Achilles’ son — on whose bright crest Fame loudly cried, ‘Oyez — hear me — this is he,’ could promise to himself a thought of added honor torn from Hector. Not even the admirable Neoptolemus can promise to himself that he will be able to kill me and to take my honor for himself.”

“Soldiers from both sides are expectantly awaiting what you will do,” Aeneas said.

“We’ll let them know,” Hector said. “The conclusion of the duel is a hug.”

He added, “Ajax, farewell.”

Ajax replied, “If I might in my entreaties find success — as I seldom have the chance to ask you this — I would like you, my famous cousin, to visit our Greek tents.”

“It is Agamemnon’s wish,” Diomedes said, “and great Achilles longs to see unarmed the valiant Hector.”

“Aeneas, call my brother Troilus to me,” Hector said, “and

report this friendly face-to-face meeting between me and the Greeks to the Trojans who are awaiting news. Request that they return to Troy.”

He then said to Ajax, “Shake hands with me, my cousin. I will go and eat with you and see your knights.”

Agamemnon came forward.

Ajax said, “Great Agamemnon comes to meet us here.”

Hector said to Ajax, “Tell me name by name the worthiest of them except for Achilles because my own searching eyes shall find him by his large and imposing size.”

Hector did not recognize many of the Greeks because on the battlefield, the soldiers wore helmets. Ulysses and Diomedes, however, had been ambassadors to Troy, and so Hector recognized them, and they recognized many of the Trojans.

Agamemnon said to Hector, “You are worthy of arms!”

Agamemnon hugged Hector. Agamemnon’s words had two meanings: 1) Hector was worthy of being hugged. 2) Hector was worthy of his armor and weapons.

Agamemnon added, “You are as welcome as you can be to one who would be rid of such an enemy — but that’s no welcome. Understand more clearly: Both what’s past and what’s to come are strewn with husks and the formless ruin of oblivion, but in this existing moment, my good faith and trustworthiness, strained pure from all insincere crooked-dealing, bid you, with the most divine integrity, from the bottom of my heart, great Hector, welcome.”

“I thank you, most imperial Agamemnon,” Hector said.

Agamemnon said to Troilus, “My well-famed lord of Troy, I give no less welcome to you.”

“Let me confirm my Princely brother’s greeting,” Menelaus said. “You pair of warlike brothers, welcome hither.”

“Who must we answer?” Hector asked Aeneas. Hector did not recognize Menelaus.

Aeneas replied, “He is the noble Menelaus.”

“Oh, you are Menelaus, my lord?” Hector said. “By Mars’ gauntlet, I thank you! Don’t mock me because I use the fancy oath ‘by Mars’ gauntlet,’ which I seldom use. Your former wife swears still by Venus’ glove that she’s well, but she bade me not to commend her to you.”

Hector was subtly mocking the cuckold Menelaus by bringing up Mars, god of war, and Venus, goddess of sexual passion, who had had an affair together, thereby cuckolding Venus’ husband, Vulcan.

“Don’t name her now, sir,” Menelaus said, referring to Helen. “She’s a deadly theme.”

“Pardon me,” Hector said. “I have offended you.”

Nestor said, “I have, you gallant Trojan, seen you often, laboring for fate, make your cruel way through ranks of young Greek soldiers, and I have seen you, as hot as Perseus, who slew the Gorgon Medusa, who had snakes for hair, spur your Trojan steed, despising many soldiers whom you had defeated and who had thereby forfeited their lives, when you have hung your advanced sword in the air and not let it fall on the fallen. Then I have said to some people standing by me, ‘Look, Jupiter is yonder, dealing life to those from whom he could take life!’ And I have seen you pause and take your breath, when a ring of Greeks has hemmed you in, as if they were watching a wrestler in a match at the Olympics. These things I have seen. But this your countenance, which has always been locked in a steel helmet, I never saw till now.

“I knew your grandfather Laomedon, and I once fought with him. He was a good soldier, but by great Mars, the captain of us all, I have never seen a soldier like you. Let an old man embrace you, and, worthy warrior, I bid you welcome to our tents.”

Actually Nestor had fought *against* Hector’s grandfather, but Nestor used the word *with*, which was accurate but less likely to cause offense due to ambiguity: To fight “with” could mean to fight “against” or to fight “on the side of.” Nestor addressed Hector in a friendly manner, as did Hector when he replied to Nestor.

“He is the old Nestor,” Aeneas said to Hector.

“Let me embrace you, good old chronicle,” Hector said. “You are a living history book because you have lived so long — you have for so long walked hand in hand with time. Most revered Nestor, I am glad to hug you.”

“I wish my arms could match you in contention — in a battle — as they contend now with you in courtesy and etiquette,” Nestor said.

“I wish they could,” Hector said.

“Ha! By this white beard, I would fight with you tomorrow,” Nestor said. “Well, welcome, welcome! I have seen the time when I was young enough to fight you on the battlefield, but that time is past.”

“I wonder now how yonder city stands when we have here her base and pillar by us,” Ulysses said. “The very foundation of Troy is here in the Greek camp.”

“I know your face, Lord Ulysses, well,” Hector said. “Ah, sir, there’s many a Greek and Trojan dead, since I first saw you and Diomedes in Troy, while you two were on your Greek embassy.”

When the Greeks first arrived at Troy, they conquered Tenedos, an island lying near Troy, and then they sent Ulysses and Diomedes on an embassy to Troy, unsuccessfully hoping to get Helen and reparations.

“Sir, I foretold to you then what would ensue,” Ulysses said. “My prophecy is but half fulfilled yet. In order for my prophecy to be fulfilled, yonder walls, which boldly stand in front of your town, and yonder towers, whose wanton tops kiss the clouds, must kiss their own feet. In order for my prophecy to be fulfilled, Troy’s walls and towers must fall.”

“I must not believe you,” Hector said. “That will never happen. Troy’s walls and towers stand there yet, and modestly, I think, the fall of every Trojan stone will cost a drop of Greek blood. The end of this war will tell all, and that old resolver of all quarrels, Time, will one day end this war.”

“So to Time we leave it,” Ulysses said. “Most noble and most valiant Hector, welcome. After you feast with the general, Agamemnon, I ask that you next feast with me and see me in my tent.”

Achilles interrupted: “I shall forestall thee, Lord Ulysses, thou! Now, Hector, I have fed my eyes on thee. I have with exact view perused thee, Hector, and examined thee joint by joint.”

Achilles was being rude. He was using the familiar “thee” to refer to Ulysses, an older man to whom he ought to show respect, and he was using the familiar “thee” to refer to Hector, an honored guest in the Greek camp. Achilles should have used the formal “you” to refer to both men.

“Is this Achilles?” Hector asked.

“I am Achilles.”

“Stand in full view, I ask thee,” Hector said. “Let me look on thee.”

Hector was irritated by Achilles and so called him “thee.” Previously, Hector and Ulysses had respectfully called each other “you.”

Achilles came forward and said, “Behold thy fill.”

“No, I am done already,” Hector said.

“Thou are too brief,” Achilles said. “I will look at thee a second time, as if I were going to buy thee. I will view thee limb by limb.”

Achilles’ words contained a suggestion of buying and then butchering an animal.

Angry and using the less respectful words “thou” and “thine,” Hector said, “Oh, like a book on sport thou shall read me over. But there’s more in me than you understand. Why do thou so stare at me with thine eye?”

Achilles got on his knees to pray to the gods and said, “Tell me, you Heavens, in which part of Hector’s body shall I destroy him?”

He pointed to various parts of Hector’s body and said, “Whether there, or there, or there? So that I may give the local wound a name and make distinct the very breach from out of which Hector’s great spirit flew, answer me, Heavens!”

“It would discredit the blest gods, proud man, to answer such a question,” Hector said. “Stand up again.”

Achilles stood up.

Hector asked, “Do thou think that thou can catch my life so pleasantly and easily that thou can name in advance and precisely where thou will hit and kill me?”

“I tell thee, yes,” Achilles said.

“Even if thou were an oracle telling me this, I would not believe thee. Henceforth, guard thee well, for I’ll not kill thee there, nor there, nor there,” Hector said, pointing to various parts of Achilles’ body, “but, by the forge that forged Mars’ helmet, I’ll kill thee everywhere, yes, over and over.”

Hector paused, and then he said, “You wisest Greeks, pardon me for making this brag. Achilles’ insolence draws foolish words from my lips, but I’ll work hard to make my deeds to match these words, or may I never —”

Ajax interrupted, “Thou should not allow yourself to be angry, cousin. And you, Achilles, stop making these threats until either chance or purposeful action brings you to face Hector on the battlefield. You may have enough every day of Hector if you have the stomach to face him. The general assembly of Greek leaders, I fear, can scarcely persuade you to be at odds with him on the battlefield.”

Ajax was treating his first cousin Hector correctly by using the familiar and less formal “thou” to refer to him, and he was treating Achilles correctly by using the formal and respectful “you” to refer to him. But he was also correctly pointing out that Achilles was staying in camp and not fighting on the battlefield.

Mollified by Ajax’ words, Hector used the formal and respectful “you” to refer to Achilles: “I ask you to let us see you on the battlefield. We have had petty, paltry battles since you refused to fight for the Greeks.”

Still disrespectful, Achilles replied, “Do thou entreat me, Hector? Tomorrow I will meet thee, and I will be as cruel as death; tonight we shall all be friends.”

“Reach out thy hand, and we will shake on that meeting,”

Hector said.

They shook hands.

“First, all you lords of Greece, go to my tent,” Agamemnon said. “There we will feast to the fullest. Afterwards, as Hector’s leisure and your bounties shall concur together, individually entertain and treat him.”

He then ordered, “Beat loud the drums and let the trumpets blow, so that this great soldier may his welcome know.”

Everyone exited except Troilus and Ulysses.

Troilus asked, “My Lord Ulysses, tell me, please, in what place of the Greek camp does Calchas sleep?”

“He sleeps in Menelaus’ tent, most Princely Troilus,” Ulysses replied. “Diomedes feasts with him there tonight; Diomedes looks upon neither the Heavens nor the Earth, but bends all his gazes and amorous views on the fair Cressida.”

“I shall, lord, be bound to you so much, if, after we depart from Agamemnon’s tent, you take me there to Menelaus’ tent.”

“You shall command me, sir,” Ulysses said. “I shall do what you ask. Now kindly tell me the reputation this Cressida had in Troy. Did she have a lover there who bewails her absence?”

“Oh, sir, people who display their scars and boast about them ought to be mocked,” Troilus said. “Will you walk on, my lord? Cressida was loved, and she loved; she is loved, and she does love. But still sweet love is food for fortune’s tooth.”

CHAPTER 5 (Troilus and Cressida)

— 5.1 —

Achilles and Patroclus talked together in front of Achilles' tent.

Achilles said about Hector, "I'll heat his blood with Greek wine tonight, and tomorrow with my curved sword I'll cool his blood by making it spurt from his body. Patroclus, let us feast him to the uttermost tonight."

"Here comes Thersites," Patroclus replied.

Thersites walked over to the two men.

"Hello, now, you core of envy!" Achilles said. "You crusty botch of nature, what's the news?"

Achilles was insulting Thersites by calling him a boil — a botch — that had crusted over. The core was the center of the boil.

"Why, you picture of what you seem to be, and idol of idiot worshippers, here's a letter for you," Thersites said.

Thersites had in return insulted Achilles by saying that Achilles had no substance. To Thersites, Achilles was all picture — all appearance — with nothing underneath.

"A letter from where, fragment?" Achilles asked.

A fragment was a small piece of food.

"Why, you full dish of fool, from Troy," Thersites replied.

"Who keeps the tent now?" Patroclus asked.

Previously, Achilles had kept to his tent and stayed close to it or in it, but now things seemed to be in motion for him to

go to the battlefield in the morning and fight Hector. Now, Thersites kept — cleaned — the tent.

Deliberately misunderstanding the word “tent” to mean a surgeon’s probe for wounds, Thersites replied, “The surgeon’s box, or the patient’s wound.”

“Well said, Adversity!” Patroclus said. “And what is the need for you to use these tricks of wordplay?”

“Please, be silent, boy,” Thersites said. “I do not profit by your talk. You are thought to be Achilles’ male varlet.”

More insults: “boy” and “male varlet.”

“Male varlet, you rogue!” Patroclus said. “What’s that?”

“Why, you are Achilles’ masculine whore,” Thersites said. “Now, may the rotten venereal diseases of the south, guts-gripping hernias, colds and phlegm-producing illnesses, loads of kidney stones, unnatural drowsiness, cold paralysis of the limbs, sore eyes, dirt-rotten livers, wheezing lungs, bladders full of internal abscesses, sciaticas, psoriasis in the palm, incurable bone-ache, and wrinkle-causing chronic skin lesions take and take again — attack repeatedly — such absurd monstrosities as you!”

“Why, you damnable box of envy, thou, what do you mean by cursing like this?” Patroclus asked.

“Am I cursing you?” Thersites asked.

Patroclus was unwilling to admit that he was the target of these insults, so he replied, “Why, no, you ruinous butt, you bastard misshapen cur, no.”

“No! Why are you then exasperated, you idle flimsy skein of silk thread, you green thin-silk flap for a sore eye, you tassel of a prodigal’s purse, thou? Ah, how the poor world is pestered with such waterflies — mosquitoes, diminutives

of nature!”

Thersites was gifted at invective. These insults compared Patroclus to flimsy decorations. A tassel is a hanging decoration, and a purse is a bag in which such things as precious stones can be carried. Thersites was calling Patroclus a penis and scrotum. But since the penis and scrotum belonged to a pauper, the penis was spent — limp — and the purse was empty.

“Get out, gall!” Patroclus shouted at Thersites.

“Finch-egg!” Thersites shouted at Patroclus.

Patroclus was much smaller than Achilles, and so many of Thersites’ insults referred to Patroclus’ diminutive stature. A finch and its egg are both small.

Achilles, who had been reading the letter he had received from Troy, interrupted the quarrel by saying, “My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted entirely in my great plan to fight Hector in tomorrow’s battle. Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba and a love token from Polyxena, her daughter, my fair love. Both Queen Hecuba and Polyxena are badgering me and requiring me to keep an oath that I have sworn. I will not break my oath. Let the Greeks fall in battle; let my reputation vanish, let my honor either go or stay — my major vow lies here, and this vow I’ll obey.”

Achilles had vowed not to fight the Trojans and to try to bring the Trojan War to a peaceful end because he had fallen in love with Polyxena.

Achilles then said, “Come, come, Thersites, help to straighten up my tent. This night in banqueting must all be spent. Let’s go, Patroclus!”

Achilles and Patroclus exited.

Alone, Thersites said to himself, “With too much anger and

too little brain, these two may run mad; but if they run mad with too much brain and too little anger, then I'll be a curer of madmen.

“Here's Agamemnon, an honest fellow enough and one who loves quails.”

The word “quails” was used as slang for “prostitutes,” as well as referring to the game birds.

Thersites continued, “But Agamemnon has not as much brain as he has earwax, and just consider the goodly transformation of Jupiter there, his brother, the bull — the primitive statue and oblique memorial of cuckolds.”

Jupiter had transformed himself into a bull so that he could run away with the beautiful mortal woman Europa. Menelaus was similar to Jupiter's transformation because bulls have horns and Menelaus had the horns of a cuckold. However, Jupiter's transformation into a bull is only an “oblique memorial of cuckolds” because Jupiter was not a cuckold although he was wearing horns.

Thersites continued, “Menelaus is a thrifty shoeing-horn in a chain, hanging at his brother's leg.”

Thersites was comparing Menelaus to a shoehorn, a curved tool used to help ease one's heel into a shoe. Menelaus' brother, Agamemnon, used Menelaus as a thrifty tool and so kept him nearby.

Consider this. Why would the Greeks and Trojans spend years fighting over Helen? Many warriors lost their lives, many Greek husbands were separated from their wives and children for years, and for many years, two groups of people were unable to do anything constructive such as build cities, raise herding animals, or grow crops. Thersites knew that Helen wasn't worth all this death, despair, and destruction, and therefore Agamemnon must be using

Menelaus' cuckoldry as an excuse for attacking Troy in order to sack and take its treasures as the spoils of war.

In addition, Menelaus was like a tool hanging from Agamemnon's belt — he was a hanger-on.

Thersites continued, "Into what form should I transform Menelaus, other than what he is, if my wit could be intermingled with my malice and my malice stuffed with my wit? To transform Menelaus into an ass would be to do nothing; he is both ass and ox. He is a fool, and he is a horned cuckold. To transform him into an ox would be to do nothing; he is both ox and ass.

"How about if I were transformed? If I were to be a dog, a mule, a cat, a polecat, a toad, a lizard, an owl, a greedy puttock such as a hawk or kite, or a herring without a roe, I would not care; but if I were to be Menelaus, I would conspire against my destiny and resist it every way I could.

"Don't ask me what I would be if I were not Thersites, for I would not care if I were a louse on a leper, as long as I were not Menelaus!"

He saw some torches and said, "Hey-day! Spirits and fires!"

The torches were lighting the way of Hector, Troilus, Ajax, Agamemnon, Ulysses, Nestor, Menelaus, and Diomedes.

Some of the Greeks had had too much to drink, and they were lost in their own camp.

Agamemnon said, "We are going the wrong way. We are going the wrong way."

"No, yonder Achilles' tent is," Ajax said. "There, where we see the lights."

"I am a trouble to you," Hector said.

“No, not a whit,” Ajax replied.

“Here comes Achilles himself to guide you,” Ulysses said.

Achilles walked over to the group and said, “Welcome, brave Hector; welcome, all you Princes.”

“So now, fair Prince of Troy,” Agamemnon said to Hector, “I bid you good night. Ajax commands the guards who will see that you return safely to Troy.”

“Thanks and good night to the Greeks’ general,” Hector said to Agamemnon.

“Good night, my lord,” Menelaus said to Hector.

“Good night, sweet lord Menelaus,” Hector replied.

“Sweet draught,” Thersites said to himself. “‘Sweet’ says he! Sweet sink, sweet sewer.”

The words “draught,” “sink,” and “sewer” all referred to cesspools and waste pits. Such was Thersites’ opinion of Menelaus.

“Good night and welcome, both at once, to those who go or tarry,” Achilles said.

“Good night,” Agamemnon replied.

Agamemnon and Menelaus exited.

Achilles said, “Old Nestor tarries and stays here; and you also, Diomedes, should keep Hector company for an hour or two.”

“I cannot, lord,” Diomedes replied. “I have important business that I must attend to now.”

He then said, “Good night, great Hector.”

“Give me your hand,” Hector said.

They shook hands.

Ulysses said quietly to Troilus, "Follow Diomedes' torch; he is going to Calchas' tent. I'll go with you and keep you company."

"Sweet sir, you honor me," Troilus said quietly to Ulysses.

"And so, good night," Hector said to Diomedes.

Diomedes exited. Ulysses and Troilus followed him.

Achilles said to his guests, "Come, come, enter my tent."

Achilles, Hector, Ajax, and Nestor entered Achilles' tent.

Alone, Thersites said to himself, "That same Diomedes is a false-hearted rogue, a most unjust scoundrel. I will no more trust him when he leers than I will trust a serpent when it hisses. Diomedes will open his mouth and make promises, exactly like Brabblers the hound that brays although it has no scent. But when Diomedes actually delivers on a promise, astronomers foretell it; it is a rare and unusual portent, and there will occur some major change in the world — the Sun borrows light from the Moon when Diomedes keeps his word."

Is Thersites always accurate in his assessment of other people? Doesn't Diomedes at least usually actually do what he says he will do?

Thersites continued, "I prefer to not see Hector than to not dog and follow Diomedes: They say that Diomedes keeps a Trojan whore, and uses the traitor Calchas' tent. I'll follow Diomedes. Nothing but lust and lechery! They are all unchaste varlets who cannot control their sexual urges!"

— 5.2 —

Diomedes walked over in front of Calchas' tent and called, "Are you still up? Speak to me."

From inside the tent, Calchas replied, "Who is calling?"

"I am Diomedes. You are Calchas, I think. Where's your daughter?"

From within the tent, Calchas said, "She will come out to you."

Troilus and Ulysses arrived, but they stayed out of sight of Diomedes. Thersites followed them, and he stayed out of sight of Diomedes as well as of Troilus and Ulysses.

Ulysses whispered to Troilus, "Stand where the torch will not reveal our presence."

Cressida came out of the tent.

Troilus said quietly, "Cressida comes forth to Diomedes."

"Hello, my charge!" Diomedes said to Cressida.

"Hello, my sweet guardian!" Cressida replied.

Diomedes had been given the task of taking Cressida out of Troy, and so for that period of time, at least, he had been her guardian and she had been his charge or responsibility.

Cressida said to Diomedes, "Listen, I want to have a word with you."

She whispered to him.

"They are so familiar with each other!" Troilus said.

"She will sing with any man at first sight," Ulysses replied.

He meant that Cressida would make advances to any man she saw. He also meant that she could look at a man and "read" him as if she were playing music at first sight, or sight-reading the music.

Thersites, who could hear what Troilus and Ulysses were

saying, said to himself, “And any man may make music with her, if he can take her clef; she’s noted.”

The word “clef” referred to a musical note, but Thersites was punning on “cleft” — Cressida’s vulva was cleft. By “noted,” Thersites meant “notorious.”

Diomedes said to Cressida, “Will you remember?”

“Remember?” Cressida replied. “Yes.”

“Do it, and not just remember it,” Diomedes said. “Let your mind be coupled with your words.”

“What should she remember?” Troilus asked quietly.

“Listen,” Ulysses replied.

“Sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to sin,” Cressida said.

“This is roguery!” Thersites said to himself.

“No, then —” Diomedes said.

“I’ll tell you what —” Cressida began.

Diomedes interrupted, “Tell me nothing. You have forsworn yourself. You said that you would do it, but you won’t do it.”

“Truly, I cannot,” Cressida said. “What then would you have me do?”

Thersites said to himself, “A juggling trick — to be secretly open.”

Thersites understood Diomedes and Cressida to be talking about sex. The juggling trick would be for Cressida to pretend to be chaste in public while having an affair with Diomedes in private — Cressida would open her private parts for Diomedes secretly and in private.

Diomedes asked Cressida, “What did you swear you would bestow on me?”

“Please, do not hold me to my oath,” Cressida said. “Bid me do anything but that, sweet Greek.”

“Good night,” Diomedes said curtly.

Troilus said, “Stop! Patience!”

Troilus was praying for calmness when he said, “Patience!”

“What is wrong, Trojan?” Ulysses asked Troilus.

“Diomedes —” Cressida began.

“No, no, good night,” Diomedes replied. “I’ll be your dupe no more.”

Troilus said, “A better man than you will be her dupe.”

Troilus was referring to himself.

“Listen,” Cressida said. “Let me say one word in your ear.”

“Oh, plague and madness!” Troilus said.

“You are angry, Prince,” Ulysses said. “Let us depart, I beg you, lest your displeasure should grow and make you act in anger. This place is dangerous for you; the time is very deadly for you. I beg you, go now.”

“Let’s stay and watch, I beg you!” Troilus said.

“No, my good lord, leave now,” Ulysses said. “Your anger is reaching high tide; come with me, my lord.”

“Please, let’s stay here awhile.”

“You are not calm enough to stay. Come with me.”

“Please, let’s stay here,” Troilus said. “I promise by Hell and all Hell’s torments that I will not speak a word!”

“And so, good night,” Diomedes said.

Cressida replied, “But you are departing in anger.”

“Does that grieve you?” Troilus said. “Oh, withered truth and faithfulness!”

“How are you now?” Ulysses asked.

“By Jove, I will be calm and patient,” Troilus said.

Diomedes turned to leave, and Cressida said to him, “Guardian — why, Greek!”

“Bah!” Diomedes said. “Goodbye. You are jerking me around.”

“Truly, I am not,” Cressida replied. “Come here once again.”

Ulysses said to Troilus, “You are shaking, my lord, at something. Will you go now? You will break out in an angry fit.”

Troilus said, “Cressida is stroking Diomedes’ cheek!”

“Come, come,” Ulysses said.

“No, let’s stay,” Troilus said. “By Jove, I will not speak a word. There is between my will and all offences against me a guard of calmness and patience. Stay a little while longer.”

“How the Devil named Lechery, with his fat rump and potato-finger, tickles these together!” Thersites said. “Fry, lechery, fry!”

In this culture, potatoes were regarded as aphrodisiacs. The kind of tickling that Thersites was referring to is a sexual tickling, and a kind of sexual tickling was going on between Cressida and Diomedes. As for frying, the sexual

tickling was heated and burning, sexual tickling can lead to the burning sensation of venereal disease, and mortals who die without sincerely repenting the sin of lechery end up burning in Hell.

“But will you, then?” Diomedes asked.

“Truly, I will,” Cressida replied. “Never trust me again if I don’t keep my word.”

“Give me some token as a guarantee that you will keep your word,” Diomedes requested.

“I’ll fetch you a token,” Cressida said.

She exited.

Ulysses said to Troilus, “You have sworn to be calm.”

“Don’t worry about me, sweet lord,” Troilus said. “I will not be myself, nor will I allow myself to have knowledge of what I feel. I am all patience and nothing but calm.”

Cressida returned, carrying the sleeve that Troilus had earlier given to her as a love token.

Thersites said, “Now the pledge that she will keep her word! Now! Now! Now!”

“Here, Diomedes, keep this sleeve,” Cressida said as she handed him the sleeve.

“Oh, Beauty!” Troilus said. “Where is your faith? Where is your loyalty to me?”

“My lord —” Ulysses began.

“I will be calm,” Troilus said. “Outwardly I will.”

“Look upon that sleeve; behold it well,” Cressida said, “He loved me — oh, I am a false wench! — give it back to me.”

“Whose was it?” Diomedes asked.

He knew it must have belonged to Troilus, but he wanted her to say it.

“It doesn’t matter, now that I have it again,” Cressida said, holding the sleeve she had snatched back from Diomedes. “I will not meet with you tomorrow night. Please, Diomedes, visit me no more.”

“Now she sharpens,” Thersites said. “Well said, whetstone!”

Thersites thought that Cressida was playing hard to get. By doing so, she was sharpening Diomedes’ desire for her.

“I shall have it,” Diomedes said.

“What, this sleeve?” Cressida asked.

“Yes, that.”

“Oh, all you gods!” Cressida said. “Oh, pretty, pretty pledge! Your master is now lying in his bed and thinking of you and me, and he sighs, and he takes my glove that I gave to him, and he gives it dainty kisses as he remembers me, just as I kiss the sleeve he gave to me.”

Diomedes snatched the sleeve away from her.

She said, “No, do not snatch it from me. He who takes that takes my heart with it.”

“I had your heart before,” Diomedes said. “This follows it.”

Troilus said to himself, “I swore to be calm and patient.”

“You shall not have it, Diomedes; indeed, you shall not,” Cressida said. “I’ll give you something else.”

“I will have this sleeve,” Diomedes said. “Whose was it?”

“It doesn’t matter.”

“Come, tell me whose it was.”

“It belonged to one who loved me better than you will,” Cressida said. “But, now you have it, take it.”

“Whose was it?” Diomedes asked again.

“By all Diana’s waiting-women yonder, and by herself, I will not tell you whose.”

Diana was the Moon-goddess, and her waiting women were the stars near the Moon. Diana was a virgin goddess.

Diomedes replied, “Tomorrow I will display this sleeve on my helmet, and it will grieve the spirit of a man who dares not challenge it.”

Troilus said to himself, “If you were the Devil himself, and you wore it on your horn, it would be challenged.”

“Well, well, it is done, it is past,” Cressida said, “and yet it is not; I will not keep my word.”

“Why, then, farewell,” Diomedes said. “You shall never mock Diomedes again.”

“You shall not go,” Cressida replied. “One cannot speak a word without it immediately disturbing you.”

“I do not like this fooling,” Diomedes said.

Thersites said to himself, “Nor I, by Pluto, but whatever you don’t like pleases me best.”

“Shall I come and visit you?” Diomedes asked. “At what time?”

“Yes, come — oh, Jove! — do come — I shall be plagued,” Cressida said.

“Farewell until then.”

“Good night,” Cressida said. “Please, come.”

Diomedes exited.

“Troilus, farewell!” Cressida said to herself. “One eye still looks on you, but my other eye sees with my heart. Ah, we poor women! I find that this fault is in us: The error — the straying — of our eye directs our mind. What error leads must err. Oh, then conclude that minds swayed by eyes are full of turpitude and wickedness.”

Cressida went back into her father’s tent.

Thersites said to himself, “A stronger proof of what she is she could not make clearer unless she said, ‘My mind is now turned whore.’”

“All’s done, my lord,” Ulysses said to Troilus. “There’s nothing more to see.”

“You are right,” Troilus said.

“Why are we staying here, then?”

“To make a record in my soul of every syllable that here was spoken,” Troilus replied. “But if I tell how these two carried on together, shall I not lie in publishing a truth? I still have a belief in my heart, a hope so obstinately strong that it inverts the testimony of my eyes and ears, as if those organs had deceptive functions that were created only to defame and slander. Was Cressida here?”

“I am not a magician,” Ulysses replied. “I cannot conjure her spirit and make it appear, Trojan.”

“Cressida was not here, I am sure.”

“Most surely and definitely Cressida was here,” Ulysses replied.

“Why, my negation of your assertion has no taste of madness,” Troilus said.

“Nor does my assertion have a taste of madness, my lord,” Ulysses said. “Cressida was here just now.”

“Let it not be believed for the sake of womanhood!” Troilus said. “Remember, we had mothers; do not give advantage to stubborn critics and satirists who are apt, without a credible reason for believing in female depravity, to judge the female sex in general by Cressida’s example. It is much better to think that this woman we just saw is not Cressida.”

“What has she done, Prince, that can soil our mothers?” Ulysses asked.

“Nothing at all, unless this woman we saw just now were in fact Cressida,” Troilus replied.

Thersites said to himself, “Will he force himself not to believe his own eyes?”

“Is this woman my Cressida?” Troilus asked. “No, this is Diomedes’ Cressida. If beauty has a soul, this is not my Cressida. If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonious, if sanctimony be the gods’ delight, if there be rule in unity itself and if one thing can be only one thing, then this is not my Cressida.

“Oh, what a mad argument — it gives reasons for and against itself! This argument has twofold authority! In it reason can revolt against itself without perdition, and madness — the loss of reason — can assume all reason without revolt. In this argument reason can contradict itself without being insane, and insanity can be rational without contradicting itself.

“The conclusion of this argument is that this woman we

saw just now is, and is not, Cressida.

“Carrying on within my soul is a fight of this strange nature — a thing that is inseparable divides much wider than the sky and Earth, and yet the spacious breadth of this division admits no opening for a point through which it can enter Ariachne’s broken threads.”

Troilus was trying to understand the two Cressidas: the Cressida who had been attracted to him and whom he loved and the Cressida who was attracted to Diomedes and who had surrendered to Diomedes. The two Cressidas shared the same body and yet they seemed to be as far from each other as the sky is to the Earth.

The dual nature of the two Cressidas appeared in the dual nature of Ariachne, a name that combined the names of Arachne and Ariadne.

Arachne was a mortal woman who was skilled at weaving and who challenged the goddess Minerva to a weaving contest. The gods punish such mortal pride. Minerva tore the weaving that Arachne had created, and then Minerva turned Arachne into a spider.

Ariadne fell in love with Theseus, who had come to Crete to rid the island of the monstrous half-man, half-bull Minotaur, which lived in a maze and feasted on the flesh of the youths and maidens whom Athens sent each year to Crete as tribute. Ariadne gave Theseus a spool of thread that he could unwind in the maze and so find his way out after killing the Minotaur. Theseus and Ariadne left Crete together after he killed the Minotaur, but Theseus was soon unfaithful to her.

Troilus continued, “Here is an excellent piece of evidence — it is as strong as the gates that lead to the god Pluto’s realm: Hell! Cressida is mine, tied with the bonds of Heaven.

“Here is another excellent piece of evidence — it is as strong as Heaven itself. The bonds of Heaven are slipped, dissolved, and loosed, and with another knot, five-finger-tied as she holds hands with Diomedes, the fractions of her faith, the tiny bits of her love, and the fragments and scraps, the bits and greasy relics of her over-eaten and finished faith — the faith that she had given to me — are now bound to Diomedes.”

“Is worthy Troilus even half as seized with great emotion as he appears be?” Ulysses asked, drily.

“Yes, Greek,” an upset Troilus replied, “and that shall be divulged well in symbolic wounds written in blood as red as Mars’ heart when it was inflamed with sexual passion for Venus. Never has a young man loved with as eternal and as constant a soul as I have loved.

“Listen, Greek. As much as I love Cressida, by that much I hate her Diomedes. That sleeve is mine that he’ll bear on his helmet. Even if the skill of the blacksmith-god Vulcan created that helmet, my sword will bite into it. Not even the dreadful hurricane-caused waterspout that sailors call the hurricano, gathered together in mass as it rises high and approaches the almighty Sun, shall dizzy with more clamor the ears of the sea-god Neptune as the waterspout falls back into the sea than shall my eager sword as it falls on Diomedes.”

Thersites said to himself, “He’ll tickle it for his concupy.”

“Concupy” was a word combining the meanings of “concubine” and “concupiscence,” or lust. Thersites meant that Troilus would rain blows on Diomedes’ helmet to get revenge for taking Troilus’ concubine — concupiscence, aka lust, both Troilus’ and Diomedes’, for Cressida would make Troilus do this.

Troilus said, “Oh, Cressida! Oh, false Cressida! False,

false, false! Unfaithful, unfaithful, unfaithful! Let all untruths stand by your stained name, and they'll seem glorious by comparison.”

“Oh, control yourself,” Ulysses said to Troilus. “Your passionate outburst draws ears hither.”

Aeneas walked over to Troilus and said, “I have been seeking you for the past hour, my lord. Hector, by this time, is arming himself in Troy. Ajax, your guard, is waiting to conduct you home.”

“I'm coming, Prince,” Troilus replied to Aeneas.

He then said to Ulysses, “My courteous lord, farewell.”

He looked at the tent where Cressida was staying and said, “Farewell, faithless but fair woman! And, Diomedes, prepare yourself, and wear a castle on your head!”

Troilus felt that Diomedes would need strong protection for his head in this day's battle.

“I'll take you to the gates,” Ulysses said.

“Accept my agitated thanks,” Troilus said.

Troilus, Aeneas, and Ulysses exited.

Alone, Thersites said to himself, “I wish I could meet that rogue Diomedes! I would croak like a raven, that bird of omens; I would bode, I would bode. I would be an omen, I would prophesy.

“Patroclus will give me anything for information about this whore. A parrot will not do more for an almond than he will for a commodious drab — an accommodating whore.

“Lechery, lechery; always, there are wars and lechery; nothing else is fashionable. May a burning Devil take people who engage in wars and lechery! Let them burn

with lust and combativeness and then burn with venereal disease and wounds and finally burn in Hell!”

— 5.3 —

Hector, armed and ready for battle, stood in front of the palace of his father, Priam, in Troy. With him was his wife, Andromache.

“When was my lord so much unkindly tempered that he would stop his ears against admonishment?” Andromache said. “Disarm, disarm, and do not fight today.”

“You tempt me to offend you,” Hector replied. “Get inside the palace. By all the everlasting gods, I’ll go and fight today!”

“My dreams will, I am sure, prove to be ominous signs for this day.”

“Tell me no more, I say.”

As Cassandra walked over to Andromache, she asked, “Where is my brother Hector?”

“Here he is, sister-in-law,” Andromache replied. “He is armed, and bloodthirsty in intent. Join with me in loud and heartfelt petition. Let’s pursue him on our knees; for I have dreamed of bloody turbulence, and this whole night’s dreams have been filled with the shapes and forms of slaughter.”

“Oh, your dreams are true,” Cassandra said.

Cassandra had the gift of prophecy — she was able to foretell the future.

“Let my trumpet sound!” Hector called to his trumpeter.

“Sound no notes of sally, for the Heavens, sweet brother,” Cassandra pleaded.

A sally announced an attack.

“Be gone, I say,” Hector said. “The gods have heard me swear an oath that I would do battle today.”

“The gods are deaf to hot and headstrong vows,” Cassandra said. “Such vows are polluted offerings to the gods; they are more abhorred than spotted livers in the sacrifice.”

In a sacrifice, an animal was killed and its entrails were then examined. A spotted liver was a diseased liver — an ominous sign.

“Oh, be persuaded to stay in Troy today!” Andromache said. “Do not count it holy to hurt your loved ones by being just: it is as lawful to violently commit thefts and robberies simply so you can give lots of money to charity.”

“It is the purpose that makes strong the vow; however, vows to every purpose must not hold,” Cassandra said. “If one makes a vow for a bad purpose, that vow is not holy and ought not to be kept. Disarm, sweet Hector. Stay in Troy today.”

“Calm yourself, I say,” Hector said. “My honor keeps to the windward side of my fate — my honor takes precedence over my fated death. Every man holds life dear, but the brave man regards honor as far more precious and dearer than life.”

The windward side is the favorable side.

Troilus walked over to him.

Seeing that Troilus looked very angry, Hector asked him, “How are you now, young man? Do you mean to fight today?”

Andromache said, “Cassandra, call my father-in-law, Priam, here so he can persuade Hector, my husband, to stay

here in Troy today.”

Cassandra left to get Priam.

Knowing that fighting while very angry can be dangerous because anger can lead one to take unnecessary risks, Hector said, “No, indeed, young Troilus; take off your armor, youth. I am today in the mood to fight chivalrously. I intend to do gallant deeds in battle today. Let your muscles grow until their knots are strong, and do not yet risk the hostile battles of the war. Disarm yourself, go, and don’t doubt, brave boy, that I’ll stand today for you and me and Troy.”

“Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you, which better befits a lion than a man,” Troilus replied.

A proverb stated, “The lion spares the suppliant.”

“What vice is that, good Troilus?” Hector asked. “Criticize me for having it.”

“Many times a conquered Greek falls, knocked over by the fanning wind of your fair sword, and then you bid them rise, and live.”

“That is fair play,” Hector replied.

“It is fool’s play, by Heaven, Hector.”

“What! What!”

“For the love of all the gods, let’s leave the holy hermit called pity home with our mother, and when we have our armor buckled on, then let the venomous vengeance ride upon our swords. We will spur our swords to do work that will make others feel pity; we will use our reins to keep our swords away from the feeling of pity.”

“No, savage, no!” Hector replied.

“Hector, this is war.”

“Troilus, I don’t want you to fight today.”

“Who or what is able to keep me from fighting today?” Troilus said. “Not fate, not obedience, not the hand of fiery Mars beckoning me with his truncheon to retire from the fight. Not Priam and Hecuba on their knees, their eyes inflamed with the streaming of tears. Not you, my brother, with your true sword drawn, opposed to me with the intent to keep me from the battlefield, will keep me from fighting, unless you kill me.”

Cassandra returned with Priam.

“Lay hold on Hector, Priam,” Cassandra said. “Hold him fast. He is your crutch; if you now lose your prop and support, you who lean on Hector, and all Troy that leans on you, fall all together.”

“Come, Hector, come, and go back into the palace,” Priam said. “Your wife has dreamed ominous dreams; your mother has had visions; Cassandra foresees bad things happening; and I myself am like a prophet suddenly inspired to tell you that this day is ominous. Therefore, come back and go into the palace.”

“Aeneas is on the battlefield, and I have promised many Greeks, and even pledged my valor, that I will appear before them on the battlefield this morning. If I don’t appear on the battlefield, I will lose the valor that I have pledged.”

“To pledge” is “to make a solemn promise.” “A pledge” is “something given as security that a contract or a promise will be kept.”

“Yes, but you shall not go,” Priam said.

“I must not break my word,” Hector said. “You know that I

am dutiful; therefore, dear sir, let me not shame the respect I owe you, but instead give me permission to go to the battlefield with your consent and approval, which you here and now forbid me, royal Priam.”

“Oh, Priam, do not yield to him!” Cassandra requested.

“Do not, dear father-in-law,” Andromache said.

“Andromache, I am offended by you,” Hector said. “By the love you bear me, go inside the palace.”

An obedient wife, Andromache went inside the palace.

“This foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl — Cassandra — makes all these ominous prophecies,” Troilus said.

“Oh, farewell, dear Hector!” Cassandra said.

Visualizing the future, she said, “Look, how you die! Look, how your eye turns pale! Look, how your wounds bleed at many openings! Listen, how Troy roars! How Hecuba cries out! How poor Andromache shrills her pain forth! Behold, distraction, frenzy, and amazement, as if they were witless buffoons, meet one another, and they all cry, ‘Hector! Hector’s dead! Oh, Hector!’”

“Go away! Go away!” Troilus yelled.

“Farewell — yet wait a moment!” Cassandra said. “Hector! I take my leave. You do yourself and all our Troy deceive.”

Hector was the greatest Trojan warrior. If he were to die, Troy would soon fall.

Hector said to Priam, his father, “You are stunned, my liege, at her exclamations. Go in and cheer up the town. We’ll go forth and fight, do deeds worthy of praise, and tell you about them this night.”

“Farewell,” Priam said. “May the gods stand around you

and keep you safe!”

Priam went into the palace, and Hector left to go to the battlefield. Military trumpets announced action on the battlefield.

Troilus said to himself, “They are fighting, listen! Proud Diomedes, believe me, I am coming to fight you. I will lose my arm, or win my sleeve.”

Carrying a letter, Pandarus walked over to Troilus.

Pandarus said, “Have you heard, my lord? Have you heard?”

“Heard what?” Troilus asked.

“Here’s a letter come from yonder poor girl, Cressida,” he replied.

“Let me read it.”

As Troilus read the letter, Pandarus complained, “A vile cough, a vile rascally cough so troubles me, and the foolish fortune of this girl; and what with one thing, and what with another, one of these days I shall die and leave you, and I have a watery discharge from my eyes, too, and such an ache in my bones that, unless a man were cursed, I cannot tell what to think about it.”

Some of his complaints, such as an ache in the bones, were symptoms of syphilis.

He then asked, “What does Cressida say in the letter there?”

“Words, words, mere words,” Troilus said. “There is nothing from her heart. She intended to cause a certain result from the letter, but her letter affects me in a different way.”

He tore up the letter and tossed the pieces into the air, saying, “Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change together. She continues to feed my love with words and lies, but she benefits another man with her deeds.”

— 5.4 —

Alone on the battlefield, Thersites said to himself, “Now they are clapper-clawing — beating up — one another. I’ll go and watch. That dissembling abominable varlet Diomedes has got that same scurvy doting foolish young Trojan knave’s sleeve displayed in his helmet. I would like to see them meet so that that same young Trojan ass, who loves the whore there, might send that Greek whore-masterly and lecherous villain, who has the sleeve, back to the dissembling lecherous drab. Yes, let Troilus send Diomedes back to the lustful whore Cressida from a sleeveless — futile and fruitless — errand.

“On the other side, the Greek side, the cunning stratagem of those crafty swearing rascals, that stale old mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same cunning male-fox, Ulysses, has proven not to be worth a blackberry. They made a plan to set that mongrel cur, Ajax, against that dog of as bad a kind, Achilles. The result now is that the cur Ajax is prouder than the cur Achilles, and Ajax will not arm himself and fight today; whereupon the Greeks begin to proclaim and embrace ignorant barbarism, and political policy is beginning to have a bad reputation.

“Wait! Here comes the sleeve, and here comes the other one.”

Diomedes backed into view, with Troilus following him.

“Don’t run away,” Troilus said. “Even if you were to jump into the Styx, a river in Hell, I would jump in, too, and swim after you.”

“You are misinterpreting my strategic retreat,” Diomedes said. “I am not fleeing from you. My concern to get an advantage in battle led me to withdraw from a place where Trojans were more numerous than Greeks. Now let’s fight!”

As the two warriors fought, Thersites said to himself, “Fight for your whore, Greek! Now fight for your whore, Trojan! Now fight for the sleeve, the sleeve!”

The combat between Troilus and Diomedes carried them away from Thersites.

Hector appeared and asked Thersites, “Who are you, Greek? Are you an opponent for Hector? Do you have an honorable and noble birth? Is it appropriate for me to fight you?”

“No, no, I am a rascal,” Thersites replied. “I am a scurvy railing knave. I am a very filthy rogue.”

“I believe you,” Hector said. “You may continue to live.”

He exited to find an honorable opponent to fight.

“I thank God that you believed me,” Thersites said, “but I hope that a plague will break your neck because you frightened me! What’s become of the wenching rogues? I think they have swallowed one another. I would laugh at that miracle, yet it is true in a way that lechery eats itself. Lechery leads to venereal disease, which eats the body. I’ll go and seek them.”

— 5.5 —

Diomedes said to a servant, “Go, go, my servant, take Troilus’ horse with you and present the fair steed to my lady, Cressida. Fellow, commend my service to her beauty. Tell her I have chastised the amorous Trojan, and tell her that I am her knight by proof. By defeating Troilus in

battle, I have proven through combat that I, not Troilus, am her knight.”

“I am going, my lord,” the servant said.

He exited.

Agamemnon arrived and said to Diomedes, “Regroup! Regroup! The Trojans are overwhelming us! The fierce Polydamas has beaten down Menon. The bastard Margarelon has taken Doreus prisoner, and he stands like a colossus, waving his spear that is as huge as a beam, over the battered corpses of King Epistrophus and King Cedius. Polyxenes has been slain, Amphinachus and Thoas are mortally wounded, Patroclus has been captured or slain, and Palamedes is very hurt and bruised. The dreadful Sagittary, the Centaur who is a gifted archer, terrifies our soldiers. We must hasten, Diomedes, to reinforce the army, or we all will perish.”

Nestor arrived with some soldiers who were carrying the corpse of Patroclus. He told the soldiers, “Go, carry Patroclus’ body to Achilles, and tell the snail-paced Ajax to arm himself for shame. A thousand Hectors seem to be on the battlefield. Now he fights here on Galathe, his horse, and when he lacks work on horseback, soon he’s there on foot, and the Greeks flee or die, like scattering schools of fish fleeing the spouting whale. Then Hector is yonder, and there the Greeks, like wisps of straw ripe for his sword’s edge, fall down before him, like the mower’s swath. Here, there, and everywhere, he leaves — spares — a life and then he takes a life. His dexterity so obeys his desire that he does whatever he wants to do to us, and he does so much that proof is called impossibility. Although we see his deeds on the battlefield, it is impossible to believe what we see.”

Ulysses arrived and said, “Oh, have courage, have courage,

Princes! Great Achilles is arming himself, weeping, cursing, and vowing vengeance. Patroclus' wounds have roused his drowsy blood, together with his mangled Myrmidons, who noseless, handless, hacked and chipped, come to him, crying against Hector. Ajax has lost a friend and foams at the mouth, and he is armed and on the battlefield, roaring for Troilus, who has done today mad and fantastic slaughter, engaging himself in battle and getting out alive. He directs his efforts at hurting Greeks and not at being chivalric toward them like Hector, and he fights as if his lust for bloodshed, despite Greek cunning in the use of weapons, bade him conquer every Greek."

Ajax arrived and shouted, "Troilus! You coward Troilus!"

Then he exited.

Diomedes said, "Yes, there, there."

Diomedes, who also wanted to find and fight Troilus, followed Ajax.

Nestor said, "So, so, we draw together. We begin to fight together."

Achilles arrived and asked, "Where is Hector?"

He shouted, "Come, come, you boy-killer, show your face! Know what it is to meet Achilles when I am angry! Hector? Where's Hector? I will fight nobody but Hector!"

— 5.6 —

Ajax shouted, "Troilus, you coward Troilus, show your head!"

Diomedes arrived and shouted, "Troilus, I say! Where's Troilus?"

"What do you want with Troilus?" Ajax asked.

“I want to correct — punish — him by hurting him,” Diomedes replied.

“If I were the general, I would give you that position before I would allow you — and not me — to hurt Troilus,” Ajax said.

He shouted, “Troilus, I say! Where are you, Troilus?”

Troilus heard the shouts and showed up, saying, “Oh, traitor Diomedes! Turn your false face toward me, you traitor, and pay me your life that you owe me in return for my horse!”

To call a knight a traitor is the worst kind of insult — one that must be responded to with fighting.

“Ha, is that you there?” Diomedes asked.

“I’ll fight him alone,” Ajax said. “Stand aside, Diomedes.”

“He is my prize,” Diomedes replied. “I will not stand aside and be a spectator.”

“Come, both of you lying Greeks,” Troilus said. “I’ll fight you both!”

They fought.

Hector arrived and said, “Troilus? Yes! Oh, well fought, my youngest brother!”

Achilles arrived and said, “Now I see you, Hector! Let’s fight!”

Troilus fought Diomedes and Ajax, while Hector fought Achilles. During the fighting, the two groups became separated.

Hector had been fighting hard, and he said to Achilles, who was winded, “We can pause in our fighting, if you are

willing.”

“I do disdain your courtesy, proud Trojan,” Achilles said. “I feel contempt for your courtesy. Be happy that my arms are out of shape. I have spent too much time in my tent and not fighting. My rest and negligence befriend you now, but you shall soon hear from me again. Until then, go and seek your fortune.”

Achilles exited.

Hector said, “Fare you well. I would have held myself back and been a much fresher man had I expected to fight you.”

Seeing Troilus coming toward him, he said, “How are you now, my brother!”

“Ajax has captured Aeneas!” Troilus replied. “Shall this be allowed to happen? No, by the flame — the Sun — of glorious Heaven, Ajax shall not carry him away. I’ll be captured, too, or else I will rescue Aeneas! Fate, hear what I say! I don’t care if I die today!”

Troilus exited.

A Greek wearing splendid armor arrived.

Hector said, “Stand, stand and fight, you Greek; you are a splendid target.”

Frightened by Hector, the Greek ran away.

“No? You won’t stay and fight?” Hector said. “I like your armor well; I’ll smash it and tear off the rivets, but I’ll be the owner of it. Won’t you, beast, stay? Why, then flee; I’ll hunt you for your hide.”

He ran after the Greek wearing splendid armor.

Achilles said to his warriors, who were known as Myrmidons, “Come here around me, my Myrmidons. Listen carefully to what I say. Follow me while I search for Hector. Strike not a stroke against the Trojans, but keep yourselves in breath, and when I have found the bloodthirsty Hector, surround him with your weapons. In the cruelest manner, use your weapons on him. Follow me, sirs, and all my proceedings eye. It is decreed that Hector the great must die.”

They exited to search for Hector.

In another part of the battlefield, Menelaus and Paris were fighting while Thersites watched and provided commentary.

Thersites said to himself, “The cuckold and the cuckold-maker — Menelaus and Paris — are at it. Now, bull! Now, dog! ’loo, Paris, ’loo! Now, my double-horned Spartan! ’loo, Paris, ’loo! The bull has the game: Beware the horns, ho!”

He was pretending that he was watching a dog bait — that is, torment — a bull in a “sport” similar to bear-baiting. Sometimes, the bear could kill a dog, but several dogs often attacked the bear all at the same time and the dogs usually won. Thersites called Menelaus a bull because he wore the horns of a cuckold. “’loo” was an abbreviated form of “Halloo” — a cry to encourage the dog. Menelaus, the King of Sparta, was a double-horned Spartan because he had the two horns of a cuckold and — in this “sport” — the two horns of a bull.

Paris and Menelaus exited while fighting, and the Trojan Margarelon showed up and said to Thersites, “Turn, slave, and fight.”

“Slave” was a major insult.

Thersites asked, “Who are you?”

“A bastard son of Priam’s,” Margarelon replied.

“I am a bastard, too,” Thersites said. “I love bastards. I am a bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valor. In everything I am illegitimate. One bear will not bite another bear, and so why should one bastard bite another bastard? Take heed, the quarrel’s most ominous to us: If the son of a whore fights for a whore, he tempts judgment. If we fight for that whore Helen, we can end up being damned to eternity in Hell. Farewell, bastard.”

Thersites walked away.

“May the Devil take you, coward!” Margarelon shouted at Thersites, who ignored him.

Margarelon left Thersites alone and went off in a different direction from the one that Thersites had taken.

— 5.8 —

Hector had killed the Greek soldier wearing the splendid armor. Now he said to the corpse, which was still wearing the armor, “Most putrefied core, so fair on the outside, your splendid armor has cost you your life. Now that my day’s work is done, I’ll catch my breath. Rest, sword; you have had your fill of blood and death.”

He took off and put down his sword, helmet, and shield, and some pieces of his armor.

Achilles and the Myrmidons found him and surrounded him, cutting him off from his weapons and armor.

“Look, Hector, how the Sun begins to set,” Achilles said. “Look at how ugly night comes breathing at the Sun’s heels. With the setting and darkening of the Sun to end the day, Hector’s life is ended and done.”

“I am unarmed,” Hector said. “Don’t take this kind of advantage, Greek.”

“Strike, fellows, strike,” Achilles said. “This is the man I seek.”

They killed Hector.

“So, Troy, you will fall next!” Achilles said. “Now, all of Troy, sink down in despair! Here lies your heart, your muscles, and your bone. On, Myrmidons, and all of you shout with all your might, ‘Achilles has slain the mighty Hector.’”

Trumpets sounded. Night was falling.

“Listen!” Achilles said. “The Greek trumpets announce the end of the battle!”

More trumpets sounded.

A Myrmidon said to Achilles, “The Trojan trumpets also announce the end of the battle, my lord.”

“The dragon wing of night overspreads the Earth,” Achilles said, “and, as if they were obeying a tournament marshal, the armies separate. My half-sapped sword, that frankly would have fed on more, is pleased with this dainty bite, and thus it goes to bed.”

Achilles sheathed his sword and said, “Come, tie Hector’s body to my horse’s tail. Along the battlefield, I will the Trojan trail.”

— 5.9 —

On another part of the battlefield stood Agamemnon, Ajax, Menelaus, Nestor, Diomedes, and others. They were marching back to the Greek camp to the sound of military drums.

Shouts sounded.

“Listen! Listen!” Agamemnon said. “What are they shouting?”

Nestor ordered, “Quiet, drums!”

The drummers stopped playing.

Soldiers shouted, “Achilles! Achilles! Hector’s slain! Achilles!”

Diomedes said, “The rumor is, Hector’s slain, and by Achilles.”

“If that is true, Achilles ought not to brag about it,” Ajax said. “Great Hector was a man as good as Achilles.”

“March patiently along,” Agamemnon said. “Let someone be sent to ask Achilles to see us at our tent. If the gods have befriended us and gifted us with Hector’s death, great Troy is ours, and our sharp and painful wars are ended.”

— 5.10 —

In another part of the battlefield, Aeneas met some Trojans.

“Stand here! We are still masters of the battlefield,” Aeneas said. “Let’s not return to Troy; let’s stay the night here.”

Troilus arrived and said, “Hector is slain.”

“Hector! The gods forbid!” Aeneas said.

“He’s dead,” Troilus repeated, “and at the tail of the horse belonging to his murderer, he is being dragged as if he were a beast through the shameful battlefield. Frown on, you Heavens, effect your rage at Troy with speed! Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smile at Troy! I say, at once let loose your plagues on us. If your plagues kill us quickly, you will show us mercy. We are sure to be destroyed, so we

pray that you don't destroy us slowly — instead, destroy us quickly!"

"My lord, you are discouraging all the soldiers!" Aeneas said.

"You misunderstand me when you tell me that," Troilus replied. "I am not talking about flight, fear, and death; instead, I dare to face all approaching perils that gods and men can direct against us. Hector is dead and gone. Who shall tell Priam that, or tell Hecuba? Let him who will tell them be forever called a screech owl — a bird of bad omens. Go into Troy, and say there, 'Hector's dead.' Those words will turn Priam to stone. They will make wells and Niobes of the maidens and wives; their eyes will well with tears, and the mothers will grieve like Niobe when her seven sons and seven daughters all died on the same day. They will make cold statues of the youths, and they will scare Troy out of itself. But, march away to Troy. Hector is dead; there is no more to say.

"But wait a moment."

He looked at the Greek camp and said, "You vile abominable Greek tents, thus proudly set up on our Trojan plains, let Titan — the Sun — rise as early as he dares, I'll charge through you and through you! And, you great-sized coward, Achilles, no space of earth shall separate our two hatreds of each other. I'll constantly haunt you like a wicked conscience that creates goblins as swiftly as the thoughts of madness."

He then said to his fellow Trojans, "Have the drums strike a quick march to Troy! March back to Troy, and take with you this comforting thought: Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe."

Aeneas, the drummers, and the other Trojans marched away.

Pandarus walked over to Troilus and said, “Listen! Listen!”

Bitterly, Troilus said to Pandarus, “Go away, broker-lackey — go-between and hanger-on! May ignominy and shame pursue you throughout your life, and may they always be associated with your name!”

Troilus left.

Alone, Pandarus said bitterly to himself, “Troilus’ words are a ‘splendid medicine’ for my aching bones! Oh, world! World! World! Thus is the poor agent despised! Oh, traitors and bawds, how earnestly are you set to work, and how ill is your work rewarded! Why should our endeavor be so loved and the performance so loathed? What verse can express this? What example can I use? Let me see.”

He sang this song:

“Full merrily the bumblebee does sing,

“Until he has lost his honey and his sting;

“And being once subdued in armed tail,

“Sweet honey and sweet notes together fail.”

A bumblebee — that is, a man — can be happy and sing as long as his sting — his erect penis — can produce honey — semen. But when his tail — penis — no longer can get erect, then he can produce no honey and stops singing.

Pandarus then looked you readers of this book directly in the eyes and said, “Good traders in the flesh, write that song in your painted cloths.”

A painted cloth is a cheap substitute for a tapestry. Often, a painted cloth contains a moral of some kind.

Pandarus continued, “As many as be here in the pander’s hall — the place where you are reading this book — your

eyes, half blind, should weep at Pandarus' fall. But if you cannot weep, yet give some groans, though if you do not groan for me, you can still groan for your own aching bones.”

Aching bones are a symptom of syphilis.

“Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade — my fellow bawds and panders who watch the door while fornicators are in the room — approximately two months from now my will shall here be revealed. That is when I expect to die. My will should be read out loud and you should receive your bequests now, but my fear is this: Some galled goose — syphilitic whore — of the nearby brothel district would hiss. Let it be known that a hiss is an inappropriate critical response to this book. Until I die I'll sweat as a treatment for my venereal diseases and seek about for ways to ease the pain. For now I seek good eases, but when I die I bequeath to you my diseases.”

LATE ROMANCES

Chapter XXXIV: CYMBELINE

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Cymbeline*)

Male Characters

Cymbeline, King of Britain.

Cloten, son to the Queen by a former husband. The name “Cloten” rhymes with the word “rotten.”

Posthumus Leonatus, a gentleman, husband to Imogen.

Belarius, a banished Lord, disguised under the name of Morgan.

Guiderius and Arviragus, sons to Cymbeline, supposed sons to Morgan; their names as Morgan’s sons are Polydore and Cadwal. Guiderius (Polydore) is the older of the two. Guiderius and Arviragus are Welsh names.

Philario, friend to Posthumus.

Iachimo, friend to Philario.

A French Gentleman, friend to Philario.

Caius Lucius, general of the Roman forces, and an ambassador representing Caesar Augustus.

A Roman Captain.

Two British Captains.

Pisanio, servant to Posthumus, and to Imogen.

Cornelius, a physician.

Two Lords of Cymbeline’s Court.

Two Gentlemen of the same.

Two Jailers.

Female Characters

Queen, wife to Cymbeline.

Imogen, daughter to Cymbeline by a former Queen.

Helen, a Lady attending on Imogen.

Miscellaneous Characters

Lords, Ladies, Roman Senators, Tribunes, a Dutch Gentleman, a Spanish Gentleman, a Soothsayer, Musicians, Officers, Captains, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants, and Apparitions.

Scene: Sometimes in Britain, sometimes in Rome.

CHAPTER 1 (Cymbeline)

— 1.1 —

Two gentlemen were speaking together in the garden of Cymbeline, King of Britain.

The first gentlemen said, “Every man you meet frowns. Just as the astrological planets influence our emotions, so the face of King Cymbeline influences the faces of our courtiers.”

The second gentleman asked, “But what’s the matter?”

“King Cymbeline’s daughter, who is the heir of his Kingdom, and whom he intended to marry his wife’s sole son — his wife is a widow whom he married — has given herself to a poor but worthy gentleman. She married him. Now her husband has been banished from the Kingdom, and she is imprisoned. Everyone has put on an appearance of outward sorrow, although I think the King is truly wounded to the center of his heart.”

“None but the King has been wounded?”

“The man who has lost her is wounded, too; so is the Queen, who greatly desired the match. But none of the courtiers, although their faces bear the same grief-stricken look as the King’s face bears, has a heart that is not glad at the thing they scowl at.”

“Why is that?”

“The man who has lost the Princess is a thing too bad for a bad report, and he who has won her — I mean, the good man who has married her and has therefore been banished — is a creature such as, if you were to seek through the regions of the earth for another man who is his equal, there

would be something lacking in whatever man you found and compared him to. I do not think that any other man has as fair an outward appearance and such a good character within as he does.”

“You speak very highly of him.”

“He is better than I have said he is. I am understating his good points and not fully revealing them.”

“What’s his name and family?”

The first gentleman said, “I cannot trace his family back very far. His father was named Sicilius; he fought with King Cassibelan against the Romans but he received his titles from King Tenantius, whom he served with glory and remarkable success and so gained the additional name Leonatus, which in Latin means “born from a lion.” King Cassibelan was the great-uncle, and King Tenantius was the father, of King Cymbeline.

“Sicilius had, in addition to this gentleman who has married King Cymbeline’s daughter, two other sons, who in the wars of the time died with their swords in hand. Because of this, Sicilius, their father, then old and fond of children, grieved so much that he died, and his gentle wife, who was then pregnant with this gentleman who has married King Cymbeline’s daughter, died when he was born.

“King Cymbeline took the babe under his protection and named him Posthumus Leonatus. In our society, Posthumus is a common name for a baby born after the death of the father. King Cymbeline raised him and made him a member of his inner circle, and he made available to him all the education that was suitable for a person of his age. Posthumus received that education as we do air — as fast as it was ministered, and in his spring he became a harvest. He lived at court much praised and very loved — which is rare to do. He was an example to the youngest; to the more

mature he was a mirror that served as a model of behavior to them; and to the older and graver he was a child who guided dotards. As for his wife, for marrying whom he is now banished, her own price proclaims how she esteemed him and his virtue — she was willing to marry him although it meant that she is now imprisoned. We can truly know what kind of man Posthumus is by knowing that such a worthy woman as Princess Imogen chose to marry him.”

The second gentleman said, “I honor and admire Posthumus because of what you have told me about him. But please tell me, is Princess Imogen the sole child to King Cymbeline?”

“She is his only remaining child. He had two sons. If this is worth your hearing, take note of it. When the eldest of the two sons was three years old and the younger son was still in swaddling clothes, they were stolen from their nursery, and to this hour in all the fields of knowledge there is no credible guess which way they went.”

“How long ago did this happen?”

“Some twenty years.”

“It is difficult to believe that a King’s children should be so slackly guarded, so kidnapped, and the search for them so slow and unable to trace them!”

“Although it is strange, and although the negligence involved may well be laughed at, yet it is true, sir.”

“I entirely believe you.”

“We must stop,” the first gentleman said. “Here comes the gentleman Posthumus Leonatus, the Queen, and Princess Imogen.”

The two gentlemen exited.

The Queen said to Imogen, “No, be assured you shall not find me, stepdaughter, despite the bad reputation of most stepmothers, evil-eyed toward you. You’re my prisoner, but your jailer shall give you the keys that lock up your prison.

“As for you, Posthumus, as soon as I can win over the offended King, I will be your advocate; however, the fire of rage is still in him, and it would be good if you gave in to his sentence with whatever patience your wisdom may give to you.”

“If it please your highness,” Posthumus said, “I will go away from here today.”

“You know the danger,” the Queen said. “I’ll take a walk in the garden, pitying your pangs of barred affections, and allow you two to be together, although the King has ordered that you two should not speak together.”

The Queen exited.

Imogen, who disliked the Queen, said, “Oh, hypocritical kindness and courtesy! How well this tyrant can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband, I somewhat fear my father’s wrath, but although I will always honor my father, I do not fear what his rage can do to me. You must go into exile, and I shall here endure the continual glances of angry eyes. I will not enjoy the comforts of life, except that I know I may see again a jewel — you — who is in the world.”

Posthumus said to Imogen, “My Queen! My wife! Oh, lady, weep no more, lest I give cause to be suspected of crying and feeling more tender emotions than is suitable for a man. I will remain the most loyal husband who has ever made marriage vows. I will reside in Rome with a man named Philario who was a friend to my father, and to me is known only by letter. Write there to me, my Queen, and with my eyes I’ll drink the words you send, even if the ink

with which they are written is made of gall.”

Gall, which was then used in making ink, is a bitter substance that oak trees exude.

The Queen returned and said, “Be quick, please. If the King comes here and sees you two together, I shall incur I don’t know how much of his displeasure.”

She thought, *Yet I’ll persuade him to walk this way. I never do him wrong without him enduring my injuries in order to be friends with me. He pays dearly for my offences.*

The Queen exited.

Posthumus said, “Even if we were to take as long to say goodbye as we have years left to live, the loathness to separate would grow. *Adieu!*”

“No, stay a little longer,” Imogen said. “If you were going to ride on horseback a while to get some fresh air, this kind of goodbye would be too little. Look here, love; this diamond ring belonged to my mother. Take it, sweetheart; keep it until you woo another wife, after I, Imogen, am dead.”

“What!” Posthumus said. “Another wife? You gentle gods, give me only this wife I have, and wrap up in a shroud any embracings for a new wife. Instead of a new wife, give me death!”

He put Imogen’s ring on his finger and said to it, “Remain here while sense can keep it on.”

Posthumus intended to wear the ring for the rest of his life.

He then said to Imogen, “And, sweetest, fairest, just as I my poor self did exchange for you, to your so infinite loss, so in our gifts I still get the better of you. You are a better person than I am, and your gift to me is better than my gift

to you. For my sake, wear this; it is a manacle of love. I'll place it upon this fairest prisoner."

He put a bracelet on her arm.

Imogen said, "Oh, the gods! When shall we see each other again?"

King Cymbeline and some lords entered the garden.

"The King!" Posthumus said.

Seeing him, Cymbeline said, "You basest thing, leave! Go away, and get out of my sight! If after this command you burden the court with your unworthiness, you die! Go away! You are poison to my blood."

"May the gods protect you!" Posthumus said. "And may they bless the good people who remain in the court! I am leaving."

He exited.

Imogen said, "There cannot be a pain, even in dying, sharper than this pain is."

Cymbeline said to her, "Oh, disloyal thing, you should make me feel younger, but instead you have heaped an age of years on me."

"I beg you, sir, do not harm yourself with your vexation," Imogen replied. "I am oblivious to your wrath; a pain more exquisite than your wrath subdues all my pains, all my fears."

"Are you past grace? Past obedience?" Cymbeline asked.

Cymbeline used the word "grace" to mean "sense of propriety or sense of duty."

"I am past hope, and I am in despair," Imogen said. "In that

way, I am past grace.”

Imogen used the word “grace” to mean “mercy or forgiveness.” According to Christianity, a person who is in despair and feels that God cannot forgive him or her will not repent and so will be condemned to spend eternity in Hell. Such a person commits a sin of pride by believing that he or she has committed a sin so great that God cannot forgive it; God is great and merciful and can and will forgive any sin as long as it is sincerely repented. Imogen, however, was despairing because she and her husband were separated.

“You could have married the sole son of my Queen!”

“I am blest that I did not!” Imogen replied. “I chose an eagle, and I avoided choosing an ignoble, greedy, grasping puttock — a kite, a bird of prey.”

“You married a beggar; you would have made my throne a seat for baseness.”

“No; instead, I added a luster to your throne.”

“Oh, you vile person!”

“Sir, it is your fault that I have loved Posthumus. You raised him as my playfellow, and he is a man who is worth any woman. The sum he paid for marrying me — exile — is almost more than I am worth.”

“Are you mad?” Cymbeline asked.

“I am almost insane, sir. May Heaven restore me! I wish I were the daughter of a cowherd, and my Posthumus Leonatus were the son of our neighbor the shepherd! Then we could be married without any problems.”

“You foolish thing!”

The Queen returned, and using the royal plural King

Cymbeline said, "Posthumus and Imogen were together again. You have disobeyed our command."

He then ordered his attendants, "Away with Imogen, and pen her up."

"I beg you to be calm, Cymbeline," the Queen said. "Peace, dear lady stepdaughter, peace! Sweet sovereign, leave us for a while. Think about this matter for a while, and you will feel much better."

"No, let her languish and lose a drop of blood a day; and, when she is old, let her die from this folly!" Cymbeline said.

In this society, people believed that they lost a drop of blood each time they sighed. Cymbeline wanted his daughter to grieve and feel ill until she got old and died.

King Cymbeline and his lords exited.

The Queen said to him as he left, "Bah! You must give way. You must give in."

Pisanio, a servant to Imogen and Posthumus, entered the garden.

The Queen said to Imogen, "Here is your servant."

Then the Queen asked Pisanio, "How are you, sir! What news do you have?"

"My lord your son drew on my master. Your son drew his sword against my master, Posthumus."

"No harm, I trust, is done?"

"There might have been, except that my master played rather than fought — he kept calm and was not angry," Pisanio said. "They were parted by some gentlemen who were at hand."

“I am very glad of it,” the Queen said.

Imogen said to the Queen, “Your son is the friend of my father; he takes his part.”

She added sarcastically, “He drew his sword upon an exile! Oh, what a brave sir! I wish they were both together in Africa and I was nearby with a needle so that I might prick whoever tried to withdraw from their fight.”

She then said to Pisanio, “Why have you come here from your master?”

“He commanded me to come here,” Pisanio replied. “He would not allow me to accompany him to the harbor.”

Pisanio handed Imogen a paper and said, “He left these notes concerning what commands I should be subject to when it pleased you to employ me.”

The Queen said to Imogen, “This man has been your faithful servant. I dare to bet my honor that he will remain your faithful servant.”

“I humbly thank your highness,” Pisanio said to the Queen.

“Please, let us walk awhile,” the Queen said to Imogen.

Imogen said to Pisanio, “About a half-hour from now, please come and talk with me. You shall at least go help my husband get onboard his ship. Leave me and do that.”

— 1.2 —

The Queen’s son, Cloten, talked in a public place with two lords shortly after his fight with Posthumus.

The first lord said to Cloten, “Sir, I would advise you to change your shirt; the violence of action has made you reek — that is, steam — like a burnt sacrifice.”

Because the first lord was a flatterer, he added, “Where air comes out, air comes in. No air outside is as wholesome as the air you vent.”

Cloten replied, “If my shirt were bloody, then I would change it. Have I hurt Posthumus?”

The second lord thought, *No, truly; you have not hurt even his patience.*

“Hurt him!” the first lord said. “His body’s a passable and navigable carcass, if he is not hurt: It is a thoroughfare for steel, if it is not hurt. If you have not hurt him, then his body has hidden cavities into which you thrust your sword!”

The second lord thought, *Cloten’s steel sword was in debt; like a debtor, it avoided the creditor — Posthumus — and traveled the side streets rather going downtown.*

“The villain would not make a stand against me,” Cloten said. “He would not hold his ground.”

The second lord thought, *Posthumus fled, all right — he constantly fled forward, toward your face.*

The first lord said, “Make a stand against you! Hold his ground! You have land enough of your own, but he added to your having; he gave you some ground.”

The second lord thought, *Posthumus gave Cloten as many inches of ground as Cloten has oceans — none!*

He then thought about Cloten and the first lord, *Young pups!*

Cloten said, “I wish the bystanders had not come between Posthumus and me.”

The second lord thought, *I wish that they had not come between you two until you had fallen and measured upon*

the ground how long a fool you are.

Cloten complained, “And that she should love this fellow — Posthumus — and refuse me!”

The second lord thought, *If it is a sin to make a truly worthy choice of a man to be her husband, then she is damned.*

The first lord said, “Sir, as I have always told you, her beauty and her brain do not go together. She’s a pretty woman, but I have seen little evidence of any intelligence she might have. I have seen small reflection of her wit.”

The second lord thought, *She shines not upon fools, lest the reflection of her shine should hurt her.*

Cloten said, “Come, I’ll go to my chamber. I wish there had been some hurt done!”

The second lord thought, *I don’t wish that there had been some hurt done, unless it had been the fall of an ass, which is no great hurt.*

Noticing the second lord for the first time, Cloten asked him, “You’ll go with us?”

An uncomfortable silence followed — the second lord did not like Cloten’s company. To stop the silence, the first lord said, “I’ll go with your lordship.”

Cloten said to the second lord, “Come, let’s go together.”

As son to the Queen, Cloten was a powerful person, so the second lord said, “Very well, my lord.”

— 1.3 —

Imogen and Pisanio spoke together in a room in King Cymbeline’s palace.

Imogen said to Pisanio, “I wish you would cling to the shores of the harbor, and question sailors on every ship. If Posthumus should write me a letter and I not receive it, it would be a paper lost — a loss as serious as the loss of a pardon. What was the last thing that he said to you?”

Pisanio replied, “He spoke about you: ‘My Queen! My Queen!’”

“Did he then wave his handkerchief?”

“Yes, and he kissed it, madam.”

“Linen that was unaware of the kiss! And yet the linen was more fortunate than I am because it was kissed! And was that all?”

“No, madam; as long as he could make me with my eyes or ears distinguish him from the others onboard ship, he stayed on the deck and kept waving his glove, or hat, or handkerchief. It was like he was expressing the fits and starts of his mind — his soul all so slowly sailed away from you, no matter how swiftly his ship sailed.”

Imogen said, “You should have stayed and watched him until he was as small as a crow, or smaller, before you left. You should have gazed after him that long.”

“Madam, I did.”

“I would have broken my eyes and cracked them,” Imogen said. “I would have looked as long as I could look upon him, until the distance between us had made him the size of the sharp end of my needle. No, my eyes would have followed him until he had melted from the smallness of a gnat to invisible air, and then I would have turned my eyes away and wept. But, good Pisanio, when shall we hear from him?”

“Be assured, madam, he shall write you at the first

opportunity.”

“I did not take my proper leave of him,” Imogen said. “I had very pretty things to say to him, but before I could tell him how I would think certain thoughts about him at certain hours, and before I could make him swear that the women of Italy should not betray my interest and his honor, and before I was able to make him promise to pray at the same time as me — at the sixth hour of the morning, at noon, and at midnight — for then my solicitations on his behalf would be in Heaven, and before I could give him that parting kiss that I had set between two enchanting words to protect him from evil, my father came in and like the tyrannous breathing and blowing of the north wind, he shook all our buds of love and kept them from growing.”

A lady entered the room and said to Imogen, “The Queen, madam, desires your highness’ company.”

Imogen said to Pisanio, “Those things I told you to do, get them done. I will attend the Queen.”

“Madam, I shall,” Pisanio replied.

— 1.4 —

In a room in Philario’s house in Italy, a number of people were speaking about Posthumus. They were Philario, Iachimo, and a Frenchman, a Dutchman, and a Spaniard. Iachimo and the others were friends of Philario’s.

Iachimo said, “Believe it, sir, I have seen Posthumus in Britain. He was then of growing reputation, expected to prove as worthy as since he has been so called, but I could then have looked on him without the help of wonder and amazement, even if the catalog of his endowments had been written on a tablet by his side and I was able to peruse him with the benefit of the items written in the catalog. He was not all that impressive.”

Philario replied, “You are talking about him when he was less furnished than he is now with that which makes him distinguished both without and within. Now, he is more distinguished than he was then, both in his appearance and in his character.”

The Frenchman said, “I have seen Posthumus in France. We had very many men there who could behold the Sun with as firm eyes as he.”

The Frenchman was referring to the eagle, a symbol of nobility, which was reputed to be able to look at the Sun without blinking. Like Iachimo, the Frenchman was wondering if Posthumus’ excellent reputation was inflated.

Iachimo said, “This matter of marrying his King’s daughter, wherein he must be weighed rather by her value than by his own, has given him an excellent reputation that I am sure he does not deserve.”

The Frenchman said, “His banishment also plays a role in his reputation.”

“That is true,” Iachimo said. “Many who mourn the lamentable separation of Posthumus Leonatus and Princess Imogen and who are on the side of the Princess have given their approval of Posthumus, and this has greatly boosted his reputation and has served to justify her choice of him as husband. If not for that, a case might easily be made that she made the wrong choice when she took as her husband a beggar — which I say Posthumus is without even taking into account his lower rank. But how is it that he comes here to stay with you, Philario? How did he creep into your life and become acquainted with you?”

Philario replied, “His father and I were soldiers together; to his father I have been often bound for no less than my life. On more than one occasion, he saved my life.”

He heard a noise, looked up and saw Posthumus coming toward them, and said, "Here comes the Briton. Let him be so entertained among you as gentlemen of your savoir-faire should treat a stranger of his quality and rank. Treat him well. I beg all of you to become acquainted with this gentleman, whom I commend to you as a noble friend of mine. How worthy he is I will leave to appear hereafter, rather than to tell you his story and accomplishments in his own hearing."

The Frenchman said to Posthumus, "Sir, we have met in Orleans."

Posthumus replied, "Since that time I have been debtor to you for courtesies that I will never be able to pay for in full."

"Sir, you overrate my poor kindness," the Frenchman said. "I was glad I was able to reconcile my countryman and you. It would have been a pity if you two should have fought a deadly duel about so slight and trivial a matter."

"I beg your pardon, sir," Posthumus said. "I was then a young and inexperienced traveller; I did not always agree with what I heard because I did not want my every action to be guided by others' experiences. But upon my improved judgment — I hope that I do not offend anyone if I say that my judgment has improved — my quarrel was not altogether slight."

"I disagree," the Frenchman said. "The quarrel was to be decided by a duel fought by two people, one of whom would in all likelihood have destroyed the other, or perhaps both of you would have fallen."

Iachimo asked, "Can we, without causing offense, ask what the quarrel was about?"

"You can, I think," the Frenchman said. "It was a quarrel in

public, which I may tell you about without anyone contradicting me. It was much like the argument that fell out between us last night, where each of us began to praise our country's women. This gentleman — Posthumus — at that time was vouching — and pledging that he would bloodily fight anyone who disagreed — that his lady was more beautiful, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant and true, and less capable of being seduced than any of the rarest of our ladies in France.”

Iachimo said, “That lady is not now living, or this gentleman's opinion has changed by this time.”

Posthumus replied, “She is still alive and still virtuous, and I have not changed my opinion.”

Iachimo said, “You must not so far esteem her above our ladies of Italy.”

Posthumus said, “Even if I were as provoked as I was in France, I would not lessen my opinion of her, though I profess myself her adorer, not her lover. To me, she is more than a piece of flesh.”

“As beautiful and as good — a kind of hand-in-hand comparison; in other words, saying that British ladies and Italian ladies were equals — would have been an opinion too fair and too good for any lady in Britain,” Iachimo said. “If your lady goes before others I have seen, as that diamond ring of yours outshines many I have seen, I could not but believe that she excelled many ladies, but I have not seen the most precious diamond ring that exists, nor have you seen the most precious lady who exists.”

“I praised her as I rated her,” Posthumus said. “I do the same thing with my diamond ring.”

“What do you esteem it at?” Iachimo said. “What do you value it at?”

“I value it at more than the world possesses.”

“Either your unparagoned — unequalled — mistress is dead, or she’s outprized by a ring,” Iachimo said. “The lady is part of the world, so the diamond ring is more valuable than she is.”

Posthumus replied, “You are mistaken. The diamond ring may be sold, or given, if there were wealth enough for the purchase, or merit for the gift. The lady is not a thing for sale, and only the gods can give such a gift.”

“Is she a gift whom the gods have given you?” Iachimo asked.

“The lady is my wife: Princess Imogen. I will keep her, by the graces of the gods.”

“You have married her, and you may wear — enjoy — her because she is legally yours,” Iachimo said, “but, you know, strange fowl light upon neighboring ponds.”

In this society, the word “pond” was slang for “vagina.”

Iachimo continued, “Your ring may be stolen, too. Of your brace — your duo — of treasures beyond price, the lady is frail and the diamond ring is subject to accident and chance. A cunning thief or a that-way-accomplished courtier would run risks to win both.”

Posthumus said, “Your Italy does not contain a courtier accomplished enough to overcome the honor of my wife, if you think her frail in the holding or the loss of her honor. I don’t doubt that Italy has an abundance of thieves; notwithstanding, I’m not afraid I will lose my ring.”

“Let’s stop this conversation, gentlemen,” Philario said. “Let’s change the subject and talk about something else.”

“Sir, with all my heart,” Posthumus said. “This worthy

signior, I thank him, does not consider me a stranger; we are familiar — not formal — with each other right from the start.”

“With five times as much conversation,” Iachimo said, “I could get ground on your fair mistress, I could make her retreat, and I could even make her yield to me, if I had admittance into her company and the opportunity to befriend and become acquainted with her.”

“No, no,” Posthumus said.

“I dare to bet half of my estate against your ring,” Iachimo said. “In my opinion, half of my estate somewhat exceeds your ring in value, but I make my wager rather against your confidence in your wife than against her reputation, and to stop your giving offence with your confidence, I dare to attempt to seduce any lady in the world.”

Iachimo’s words are interesting. A close examination of his words reveals that he is betting that he can shake Posthumus’ confidence in the chastity of his wife. Chastity means refraining from unlawful sexual intercourse; a chaste woman can have lawful sex with her husband, but she will not engage in adultery. One of the ways for Iachimo to shake Posthumus’ confidence in the chastity of his wife would be for Iachimo to seduce her, but there are other ways for him to shake Posthumus’ confidence in the chastity of his wife.

Posthumus replied, “You are a great deal deceived in holding this very bold opinion of women, and I don’t doubt that you will receive what you deserve if you dare to attempt to accomplish what you say you will do.”

“What’s that?” Iachimo asked.

“You will deserve a repulse, though your ‘attempt,’ as you call it, deserves more; it deserves a punishment, too.”

Philario attempted to make peace between the two men: “Gentlemen, enough of this. This argument was born too suddenly; let it die as it was born, and, please, become better acquainted and friends with each other.”

“I wish that I had bet my estate *and* my neighbor’s that I can do what I have spoken about!” Iachimo said.

“What lady would you choose to assail and seduce?” Posthumus asked.

“Yours,” Iachimo replied, “your wife who in constancy and faithfulness to you, you think stands so safe. I will bet you ten thousand ducats against your ring that if you write me a letter of introduction to the court where your lady is and give me no more advantage than the opportunity of a second meeting with your wife, I will bring from thence that honor of hers that you imagine so preserved. If I can meet her only twice, I can seduce her.”

“I will wage against your gold the same amount of gold, but I will not bet my ring,” Posthumus replied. “My ring I value as dearly as I do my finger; it is part of it.”

“You are afraid to bet your ring, and therein you are the wiser. You know your wife well, and you know what you can afford to bet on her. Even if you buy ladies’ flesh at a million units of money for one dram — an exorbitant price — you cannot preserve it from being tainted. I see that you have some religion in you because you fear. My bet has put the fear of God in you. You are afraid that your lady will sin, and you are afraid that you will lose the bet.”

“This is only macho talk of the kind that you are accustomed to speak,” Posthumus said. “You have something more serious in mind, I hope.”

“I am the master of my speech, and I will undertake to do what I have said that I will do,” Iachimo said. “I swear it.”

“Will you? I shall give my diamond ring to Philario to hold until your return,” Posthumus said. “It shall be only a loan — I will get it back. Let there be a legal agreement drawn up between us concerning this bet. My wife exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking. I dare you to compete against her.”

He then offered his ring to Philario, saying, “Here’s my ring.”

“I will not allow this bet,” Philario said, declining to take the ring.

“By the gods, the bet is already made,” Iachimo said.

He then said to Posthumus, “If I bring you no sufficient testimony that I have enjoyed the dearest bodily part of your wife, my ten thousand ducats are yours, and your diamond ring, too. If I leave the court and give up my efforts and leave her with such honor as you trust she has, she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are yours — provided I have your letter of introduction so that I may be well received at the court and am able to have a conversation with your wife.”

“I agree to these conditions,” Posthumus said. “Let us have a legal agreement drawn up between us. However, let us add these conditions. If you make your attempt to seduce my wife and give me direct evidence that you have prevailed, I am no further your enemy; if she can be seduced, she is not worth our being enemies. However, if she remains unsexed, and you are not able to make it appear otherwise, then for your ill opinion of her and the assault you have made against her chastity, you shall answer me with your sword — we shall fight a duel.”

Posthumus’ words are interesting: “if she remains unsexed, *and* you are not able to make it appear otherwise” Part of the bet was that Iachimo would not

be able to convince Posthumus that his wife had committed adultery. Of course, it is possible that Iachimo could fail to seduce Posthumus' wife and yet convince Posthumus that he — Iachimo — had succeeded in seducing Posthumus' wife.

“Give me your hand,” Iachimo said. “Let us make a contract between us. We will have these things set down by lawful counsel, and I will leave immediately for Britain, lest our agreement catch cold and starve and die. I will fetch my gold ducats and we will have our two wagers recorded. Someone will hold on to my gold ducats and your ring until we know which of us has won our wager.”

Posthumus said, “I agree.”

Posthumus and Iachimo exited.

The Frenchman asked Philario, “Will they really do this, do you think?”

“Signior Iachimo will not back down from it,” Philario replied. “Come, let us follow them.”

— 1.5 —

In a room in King Cymbeline's palace in Britain, the Queen and Doctor Cornelius, who made medicines and poisons from plants, were speaking. Some ladies attended the Queen.

The Queen said, “While the dew is still on the ground, gather those flowers. Be quick. Who has the list of the flowers I need?”

The first lady said, “I do, madam.”

“Go, and hurry,” the Queen said.

The ladies exited to gather the flowers.

The Queen said, “Now, master doctor, have you brought those drugs?”

“If it pleases your highness, yes, I have,” Doctor Cornelius replied. “Here they are, madam.”

He gave her a small box and said, “But I beg your grace, without meaning to offend you — my conscience makes me ask you this — why have you commanded me to bring you these most poisonous compounds, which are the causers of a languishing death? Though those compounds work slowly, they are deadly.”

“I wonder, doctor, why you ask me such a question,” the Queen said. “Haven’t I been your pupil for a long time? Haven’t you taught me how to make perfumes? How to distil? How to preserve? Yes, I have been. Our great King himself often asks me for my confections. Having thus far proceeded — unless you think me devilish and engaging in black magic — isn’t it suitable for me to increase my knowledge in areas related to what I already know? I will try the effects of these your compounds on such creatures as we count not worth the hanging, but on no human. I will test the compounds’ vigor and apply antidotes to their poison, and by these experiments I will learn the compounds’ several virtues and effects.”

Doctor Cornelius replied, “Your highness shall from these experiments only make your heart hard. Besides, seeing these effects will be both harmful and infectious. Handling such poisons is dangerous.”

“Oh, settle down,” the Queen said. “Be calm.”

Pisanio, the servant of Posthumus Leonatus and Princess Imogen, entered the room.

The Queen thought, *Here comes a flattering rascal. Upon him I will first work. He’s loyal to his master, and he is an*

enemy to my son.

She asked, “How are you now, Pisanio?”

She then said to Cornelius, “Doctor, your service for this time is ended. Go on your way.”

Doctor Cornelius thought, *I suspect you, madam, but you shall do no harm.*

Rather than leaving immediately, he watched the Queen interact with Pisanio. He also kept an eye on the box of compounds she was holding.

The Queen said to Pisanio, “Listen, I want to have a word with you.”

They talked quietly.

Doctor Cornelius thought, *I do not like her. She thinks she has a box of strange, unnatural, slow-acting poisons. I know her spirit, and I will not trust one of her malice with a poison of such damned nature. Those compounds she has will stupefy and dull the senses for a while. First, probably, she'll test them on cats and dogs, and then afterwards on higher animals, but there is no danger in the show of death the compounds cause. All that will happen is that the spirit will be locked up for a while and then will revive, refreshed. She will be fooled by a very false and deceptive effect, and I will be all the truer the more I am false to her. By lying to her, I will be a better person.*

Noticing that Doctor Cornelius was still present, the Queen said to him, “No further service is needed, doctor, until I send for you.”

He replied, “I humbly take my leave,” and then he exited.

The Queen said to Pisanio, “She still weeps, you say? Don't you think that in time she will stop crying and follow

advice while rejecting the folly she now possesses? Work on her. When you bring me word that she loves my son, I'll tell you immediately that you are as great as is your master — no, greater, because all his fortunes lie speechless as if they were on a deathbed and his name is at its last gasp. He cannot return to our court, nor can he continue to remain where he is. To shift his place of residence is just to exchange one misery for another, and every day that comes to him is simply another day wasted. What shall you expect if you are dependent on a thing who leans and needs support, who cannot be newly built, and who has no friends, not even as many as are needed to prop him up?"

The Queen dropped the box of compounds, and Pisanio picked it up for her.

The Queen said to him, "You have picked up you know not what, but take it for your labor. It is a thing that I made, which has saved the King's life five times. I do not know anything that has better medicinal value. Please, take it; it is a down payment on the further good things that I mean to do for you. Tell the mistress you serve, Princess Imogene, how the case stands with her. Tell her to love my son, and tell her that as if it came from your heart. Think what an opportunity this is to change and improve your life. You will still serve Princess Imogen, but in addition my son will take notice of you. I'll persuade King Cymbeline to give you anything you desire, and I, who have set on you this course of action that shall give you good things, will chiefly and richly reward you for persuading Princess Imogen to love my son. Call my female servants to come to me. Most importantly, think about my words."

Pisanio exited to get the female servants to come to the Queen.

The Queen thought about Pisanio, *He is a sly and loyal knave. He is not one to be diverted from doing his duty to*

Posthumus Leonatus and to Princess Imogen. He acts as Posthumus' agent at the court, and he is a constant reminder to Princess Imogen to remain loyal to her marriage vows. I have given him compounds that, if he takes them, shall quite remove from Princess Imogen this chief advocate for her sweetheart. After Pisanio dies of poison, Princess Imogen — unless she changes her mind and loves my son — shall taste the poison, too.

Pisanio returned with the Queen's attendants.

The Queen said to the attendants, who were carrying the flowers they had gathered, "Good, good. Well done, well done. Take the violets, cowslips, and primroses to my private room."

She added, "Fare you well, Pisanio. Think about my words."

The Queen and her dependents exited.

Alone, Pisanio said to himself, "And I shall do so. But when to my good lord I prove untrue, I'll choke myself. That is all I'll do for you."

— 1.6 —

In another room of the palace, Princess Imogen sat alone.

She said to herself, "A cruel father, and a treacherous stepmother, a foolish suitor to a wedded lady whose husband has been banished — the banishment of my husband is my supreme crown of grief! These are my vexations, and I endure them day after day. If I had been kidnapped as my two brothers were, then I would have been happy because I could have married without problems the man I chose. Most miserable are those who have an unfulfilled longing for glorious things; blessed are those, however humble and impoverished, who have gotten their

humble and honest desires, thereby giving a relish to their comfort.”

She saw Pisanio and a strange man — Iachimo — coming toward her, and said to herself, “Who may this man be? Bah!”

Pisanio said to her, “Madam, this is a noble gentleman of Rome, who has come from my lord, Posthumus, with a letter.”

Iachimo, seeing Princess Imogen looking sad, said to her, “Cheer up, madam. I bring good news. The worthy Posthumus Leonatus is safe and he dearly and deeply greets your highness.”

He gave her a letter from Posthumus.

Imogen replied, “Thanks, good sir. You’re kindly welcome.”

Iachimo thought, *All of her that is on the outside is very rich! She is beautiful! If she has a mind that matches her rare beauty, she is alone the Arabian bird, and I have lost the wager.*

The Arabian bird is the mythological Phoenix, of which only one exists at a time. When old, the Phoenix burns itself and is reconstituted from the ashes. Iachimo, whose opinion of women was poor, believed that Imogen, if she had a mind that matched her beauty, was as rare as the Phoenix — she was the only chaste woman on the planet.

Iachimo thought, *May boldness be my friend! Arm me, audacity, from head to foot! Or, like the Parthian, I shall fight while fleeing. Or else I shall give up trying to win the wager and shall directly flee.*

The Parthians fought on horseback. They would charge their horses at the enemy and throw their spears, and then

shoot arrows while riding back to their ranks. Iachimo was praying for the boldness to directly attempt to seduce Imogen. The alternatives were to be indirect and convince Posthumus that he — Iachimo — had seduced Imogen, although he had not, or to give up trying to win the wager.

Imogen read part of the letter out loud, the part that praised Iachimo: *“He is one of the noblest reputation and distinction, to whose kindnesses I am most infinitely tied. Welcome him accordingly, as you value your trust — LEONATUS.”*

She then said, “So far I read aloud, but not the rest. But even the very middle of my heart is warmed by the rest, and takes it thankfully. You are as welcome, worthy sir, as I have words to bid you, and you shall find that you are welcome in all that I can do for you.”

“Thanks, fairest lady,” Iachimo said.

He then began his attempt to seduce Imogen by pretending to have distracting thoughts. He pretended to be wondering how Posthumus could be unfaithful to a woman such as Imogen. In doing so, he spoke disjointedly and not clearly.

He said, as if to himself but making sure that Imogen could hear him, “What, are men mad? Has nature given them eyes to see this vaulted arch, and the rich harvest of sea and land, which can distinguish between the fiery orbs above and the twinned stones upon the numbered beach? And can we not make division with spectacles so precious between fair and foul?”

Iachimo was saying, in unclear language, that he could not believe that Posthumus was unable to recognize the worth of Imogen. Men are able to see the sky, the sea, and the land, and they know the difference between the Sun and the Moon and the differences among the grains of sand of the beach — grains that look alike and are so numerous that

only God can count them. On the Earth we see sights and can tell them one from another and tell which sight is more spectacular and better than the others. Why then can't men — and especially Posthumus — tell the difference between fair and foul, between Imogen and other women?

Imogen asked him, “What is causing your amazement?”

Iachimo continued, “The faulty perception cannot be in the eye, because apes and monkeys between two such females would chatter approvingly toward the better female and condemn with grimaces the other female. Nor can the faulty perception lie in the judgment because idiots in this case of favor would be wisely definite — in such a case even fools would definitely make the wise choice and realize which is the best woman. Nor can the faulty perception lie in the sexual appetite. Sluttishness opposed to such elegant excellence would make sexual desire turn into dry heaves and not be tempted to feed.”

“What is the matter, I wonder?” Imogen said.

Iachimo said, “The overfilled sexual desire, which has been satiated and is yet unsatisfied, which is a tub that has been filled and is yet leaking, which has feasted first on the lamb and is yet longing to feast on garbage”

The lamb is a symbol of purity. Iachimo was hinting — make that lying — that Posthumus had enjoyed sex with Imogen but yet was pursuing sex with garbage, aka whores.

Imogen asked, “What, dear sir, is making you rapt? Are you well?”

“Thank you, madam,” Iachimo replied. “I am well.”

To get Pisanio out of the way, Iachimo said to him, “I beg you, sir, to tell my servant to wait for me where I left him. My servant is a foreigner here, and he is a worrier. He may

be wondering about what he should do.”

“I was going, sir,” Pisanio said, “to welcome him.”

Pisanio exited to carry out his errand.

“Is my husband well?” Imogen asked Iachimo. “Please tell me whether he is healthy.”

“He is well, madam.”

“Is he disposed to be mirthful? I hope he is.”

“He is very cheerful. None of the other foreigners there is as merry and playful. He is called the British reveler.”

“When he was here,” Imogen said, “he was inclined to be solemn and often he did not know why.”

“I have never seen him solemn,” Iachimo said. “There is a Frenchman who is his companion, a person who is an eminent monsieur who, it seems, loves very much a French girl at home. The Frenchman sends out like a furnace very many warm sighs, while the jolly Brit — your husband, I mean — laughs from his open and unimpeded lungs and cries, ‘Oh, can my sides hold, when I think that a man, who knows by history, report, or his own experience what women are, yes, what she cannot choose but must be, will during his free hours languish for assured and betrothed bondage?’”

“Does my husband say that?” Imogen asked.

“Yes, madam, with his eyes drowned in a flood of tears with laughter. It is entertaining to be nearby and hear him mock the Frenchman. But, Heavens know, some men are much to blame.”

“Not my husband, I hope.”

“Not he,” Iachimo said, “but yet Heaven’s bounty towards

him might be used more thankfully. In himself, Heaven has given him many gifts; Heaven has also given him you, whom I judge to be more valuable than all his other gifts. While I am bound to wonder at these gifts, I am bound to pity, too.”

“What do you pity, sir?”

“I heartily pity two creatures,” Iachimo replied, looking at Imogen.

He was pretending that he pitied Posthumus and Imogen.

“Am I one of the creatures you pity, sir?” Imogen asked. “You are looking at me. What fault do you see in me that deserves your pity?”

“This is lamentable! Should I hide myself from the radiant Sun and find solace in the dungeon by the smoldering burnt-out wick of a candle?”

Imogene was speaking deliberately unclearly, but he was saying that he was attracted to Imogen and the difference between her and any other woman was the difference between the Sun and the burning stub of a candle that was about to go out.

“Please, sir,” Imogen said, “speak more clearly when you answer my questions. Why do you pity me?”

“That others do — I was about to say — enjoy your — but it is the duty of the gods to avenge it, not mine to speak about it.”

Iachimo was lying that the gods needed to avenge what Posthumus was doing to his marriage — Iachimo was lying that other women were enjoying Imogen’s husband.

“You seem to know something about me, or something that concerns me,” Imogen said. “Please — since thinking that

things may be ill often hurts more than being sure that they are because certain knowledge means knowing that things cannot be remedied, or if the ill things are known in time, the way to remedy them is also known — tell me what you start to say and then stop saying.”

Iachimo said, “Suppose I had this cheek to bathe my lips upon. Suppose I had this hand, whose touch, whose every touch, would force the feeler’s soul to take an oath of loyalty. Suppose I had this object, which takes prisoner the wild motions of my eyes, fixing it only here.”

“This object” referred to Imogen; he was objectifying her.

Iachimo continued, “If I had all this, then would I, who would be damned if I should do these things, sloppily kiss lips as common as the stairs that everyone climbs to the Capitol in Rome; clasp hands made hard by telling lies each hour, hands made as hard by lying as by laboring; and then glance sideways into eyes as base and ill-lustrous as the smoky light that is fed with stinking tallow? If I would do these things, then it would be fitting that all the plagues of Hell should at the same time come to the one who revolts.”

Iachimo was lying that Posthumus was revolting against the vows of marriage.

Again, his language was unclear. What does it mean to say that hands are made hard by lying? A person who works hard will have hard hands. Prostitutes can work hard, but their work involves a kind of lying. Married people make a legal contract that allows them to have sex, but prostitutes have sex without having first made the legal contract; prostitutes act as if they are married, but they are not married — at least, not to their customers. Acting as if they are married although they are not married is a kind of lie. Iachimo was also saying that the prostitutes with whom Posthumus was having sex were hardworking — they slept

with many, many men. If they were to work in the fields rather than in bed, they would have hard hands indeed. Metaphorically, the hands of prostitutes are hard.

“My lord, I fear, has forgotten Britain,” Imogen replied.

“And himself,” Iachimo said. “I am not inclined to tell you this information regarding your husband’s change and descent into baseness, but your virtues charm this information from my most silent inmost thought and bring it to my tongue.”

“Let me hear no more,” Imogen said. “Tell me no more.”

“Oh, dearest soul!” Iachimo said. “Your situation strikes my heart with pity so much that it makes me sick. A lady as beautiful as you, the heir to an empire, would make the greatest King double in happiness and success. And yet you share your husband with prostitutes who are paid with money that you give to him. You share your husband with diseased whores who have sex with everyone for gold, despite their many infirmities that rottenness gives to a human being! Such stuff — whores — who ‘boil’ in vats filled with hot water used to treat venereal disease is enough to be poisonous to poison! Be revenged on your husband, or she who gave birth to you was no Queen, and you fall away from and make degenerate your great stock.”

“Be revenged on my husband!” Imogen said. “How should I be revenged? If this is true — my heart will not easily allow my ears to abuse it — if what you say is true, how should I be revenged?”

Iachimo replied, “Should he make me live, like Diana’s virginal priests, between cold sheets, while he is vaulting variable ramps — jumping on various whores — in contemptuous disregard of you, paying the whores with your money?”

Although Iachimo used the word “me,” referring to himself, he meant his words to apply to Imogen — why should she live without sex while her husband is having lots of sex with other women?

Iachimo continued, “Get revenge. I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure. I am nobler than that runaway from your bed, and I will remain steadfast to your affection. I will be secretive about what we do as well as loyal to you.”

“Pisanio!” Imogen called. “Come here!”

“Let me offer you my service by kissing your lips,” Iachimo said.

“Get away from me!” Imogen said. “I condemn my ears that have listened to thee for so long.”

This society used “you” as a respectful and more formal way of referring to someone and “thee” and “thou” as a less respectful and more informal way of referring to someone. Imogen no longer respected Iachimo. “Thee” and “thou” were used to talk to a servant or a child or a pet dog. “Thee” and “thou” could also be used when talking to a person with whom one had an intimate relationship, such as one’s husband or wife. In the King James Bible, God is “Thou” because human beings can have a personal relationship with God. Imogen, however, makes it clear that she is using “thee” and “thou” to refer to Iachimo because she does not respect him. Iachimo is a newcomer to the palace and so ought to be called by the formal “you.”

Imogen continued, “If thou were honorable, thou would have told this tale for a virtuous reason, not for such a contemptible end as the one thou seeks — as dishonorable as it is strange. Thou wrong a gentleman, who is as far from thy report as thou are from honor, and thou are soliciting here a lady who disdains thee as much as she does the devil.”

She called again, “Pisanio!”

She then said to Iachimo, “I shall tell the King my father about thy assault. If my father thinks it fitting that an impudent, insolent foreigner should do business in his court as if he were in a Roman stew — a Roman whorehouse — and to expound his beastly mind to us, he has a court he cares little for and a daughter whom he does not respect at all.”

She called again, “Pisanio!”

Iachimo had failed to seduce Imogen. Now he needed to stay out of trouble — and to not die. Kings had the power to impose capital punishment.

“Oh, happy Leonatus!” Iachimo said. “I may say the respect that your lady has for you deserves your trust, and your most perfect goodness deserves her assured faith in you.”

He said to Imogen, “May you be blessed and live long! You are the wife to the worthiest gentleman that a country has ever called its own! You, his wife, are suitable only for the very worthiest! Give me your pardon. Forgive me. I have spoken these things only to learn if your marriage vows were deeply rooted, and I have discovered that they are. Those vows shall make your husband that which he is, but renewed — your lover. He is the truest mannered man. He is such a holy warlock — he uses white magic — that he enchants societies of friends. Half of the heart of every man is given to him.”

Imogen forgave Iachimo and began to use “you” when speaking to him: “You make amends for what you said.”

“Your husband sits among men as if he were a god who had descended from Heaven. He has a kind of honor that sets him off; his appearance is that of more than a mortal

man. Do not be angry, most mighty Princess, that I have ventured to test how you would take a false report about your husband. This test has honored you by confirming your great judgment in choosing to marry so rare a gentleman — you know that your judgment in this matter cannot be wrong. The love I bear your husband drove me to fan and winnow — to test — you like this, but the gods made you, unlike all others, without chaff and unsullied. Please, I beg your pardon.”

“All is well, sir,” Imogen said. “You may use my power in the court as if it were yours.”

“I give you my humble thanks,” Iachimo said. “I had almost forgotten to ask your grace to fulfill a small request, and yet it is important, too, because it concerns your husband. He, myself, and other noble friends are partners in this particular matter.”

“Please, tell me what it is.”

“Some dozen of us Romans and your husband — who is the best feather of our wing — have mingled sums of money in order to buy a present for the Emperor. I, as agent for the rest, purchased the gift in France. It is a dish made of precious metal, remarkably well designed and inlaid with jewels of rich and exquisite form. The value of the dish is great, and I am somewhat anxious, being a foreigner, to have this gift placed in a safe place for now. May it please you to keep this gift to the Emperor safe for me?”

“I will do it willingly,” Imogen said. “I will pawn my honor for the safekeeping of this gift. Because my husband has an interest in it, I will keep it in my bedchamber.”

“It is in a trunk being looked after by my servants,” Iachimo said. “I will make bold to send the trunk to you for this night only. I must go onboard ship tomorrow.”

A good hostess, Imogen said, “No, no.”

“Yes,” Iachimo said. “I must, please. I shall fall short on what I promised if I lengthen the time of my return to Rome. From France I crossed the seas because I promised to see your grace.”

“I thank you for your pains,” Imogen said, “but do not sail away tomorrow!”

“Oh, I must, madam; therefore, I shall ask you, if you want to write to your husband, please do it tonight. I have taken up too much time; I must leave quickly because time is relevant to the giving of our present to the Emperor.”

“I will write my husband,” Imogen said. “Send your trunk to me; it shall safely be kept, and truly returned to you. You’re very welcome.”

CHAPTER 2 (Cymbeline)

— 2.1 —

Cloten and two lords spoke together in front of King Cymbeline's palace.

"Has any man ever had such bad luck!" Cloten complained. "I threw my ball so well that it kissed — touched — the target, but then it was hit away! I had bet a hundred pounds on the game, and I cursed, and then a bastardly upstart reprimanded me for swearing, as if I had borrowed my swearwords from him and could not spend them as I pleased."

"He got nothing by criticizing you," the first lord said. "You broke his head with your ball."

The second lord thought, *If the man with the broken head had weak and watery brains like Cloten, his brains would have all run out.*

Cloten said, "When a gentleman is disposed to swear, it is not for any bystanders to curtail his oaths, is it?"

"No, my lord," the second lord said.

He thought, *Nor to crop the ears of the gentleman.*

A curtail dog is a dog with a docked or cropped — that is, cut short — tail. The second lord was thinking of cropping the ears of an ass. Cloten was an ass, but his mother was Queen, and so no one could justly criticize him and thereby improve him — no one could crop Cloten's ears.

"The dog! That son of a whore!" Cloten said. "I gave him what he deserved. I wish that he had been one of my rank!"

Cloten would have liked to fight the man in a duel instead

of merely hitting him with a ball. But Cloten, a snob, believed that he could not fight the man in a duel because the man's social status was lower than his own. Of course, because Cloten's mother was the Queen, it would be very dangerous for a man of a lower social rank to duel Cloten. Anyone who killed Cloten would almost certainly be condemned to die.

The second lord thought, *Cloten said, "I wish that he had been one of my rank!" If he had been rank like Cloten, he would have stunk like a fool.*

Cloten said, "I am not vexed more at anything on the Earth — a pox on it! I had rather not be as noble as I am; they dare not fight with me because of the Queen my mother. Every Jack-slave has his bellyful of fighting, and I must go up and down like a cock — a rooster — that nobody can match."

The second lord said quietly to himself about Cloten, "You are cock and capon, too; and you crow, cock, with your comb on."

The second lord was calling Cloten a capon — a castrated rooster that had been fattened for eating — and a fool. Fools wore coxcombs — jesters' hats — on their heads.

"What did you say?" Cloten asked.

"It is not fitting that your lordship should take on and fight every fellow that you give offence to," the second lord said.

"I know that," Cloten said, "but it is fitting that I should give offence to my inferiors. It is suitable for me to deliberately offend my inferiors."

"Yes, it is fitting for your lordship only," the second lord said.

Such an action as deliberately insulting others because they

are “inferior” is fitting and suitable only for clods such as Cloten.

“Yes, that is what I am saying,” Cloten replied.

The first lord asked Cloten, “Did you hear about a stranger who came to the court last night?”

“A stranger came here! I did not know that! I was not informed about it!” Cloten said.

The second lord thought, *Cloten is a strange fellow himself, and he does not know it.*

“An Italian man has come here,” the first lord said, “and it is thought that he is one of Posthumus Leonatus’ friends.”

“Leonatus!” Cloten said, “He’s a banished rascal; and this Italian’s another rascal, whoever he is. Who told you about this stranger?”

“One of your lordship’s pages,” the first lord said.

“Is it fitting that I go to see him?” Cloten asked. “Is there any derogation in it? Will I be lowering myself?”

“You cannot derogate, my lord —” the second lord said.

He thought, — *because you cannot go any lower.*

Cloten said, “I cannot easily derogate, I think.”

The second lord thought, *Everyone already knows that you are a fool; therefore, your actions, being foolish, do not derogate you. Your performing foolish actions does not lower you because people expect you to act foolishly.*

Cloten said, “Come, I’ll go see this Italian. What I have lost today gambling at the game of bowls I’ll win tonight from him. Come, let’s go.”

“I’ll wait upon your lordship,” the second lord said.

Cloten and the first lord exited, and the second lord stayed behind and said to himself, “I can’t believe that such a crafty devil as his mother the Queen should yield the world this ass! His mother is a woman who overwhelms everyone with her brain, and this Cloten, her son, cannot subtract two from twenty, for his life, and come up with the answer eighteen. Alas, poor Princess, you divine Imogen, what you endure! You have a father who is ruled by your stepmother, who each hour forms plots. You also have a wooer — Cloten — who is more hateful than the foul exile of your dear husband and who is more hateful than that horrid act of divorce between you and your husband that he — Cloten — would make! May the Heavens hold firm the walls of your dear honor, and keep unshook that temple, your fair mind, so that you may endure and withstand such trials and may eventually enjoy your banished lord and this great land!”

— 2.2 —

Imogen was in bed, reading, just before bedtime. Iachimo’s chest was in her bedchamber.

Imogen called, “Who’s there? My servant Helen?”

In mythology, Helen was the name of the wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, and she became the cause of the Trojan War after either Paris, a Prince of Troy, kidnapped her or she ran away willing with him. Troy fell when the Greeks created the Trojan Horse, which was hollow and filled with armed Greek soldiers. The Trojans moved the Horse inside the city, and at night the Greek soldiers came out of the Horse and opened the city gates to let in the Greek army.

“I am here, if you please, madam,” Helen said.

“What time is it?”

“Almost midnight, madam.”

“I have read three hours then,” Imogen said. “My eyes are tired. Fold down the leaf where I have stopped reading. I am going to sleep. Do not take away the candle, leave it burning, and if you can awaken by four o’clock, please wake me up. Sleep has entirely overcome me.”

Helen exited.

Imogen prayed, “To your protection I commit myself, gods. Please guard me from malevolent fairies and the tempters of the night.”

She fell asleep, and Iachimo came out of the trunk — the Trojan Horse — where he had hidden himself.

He said quietly to himself, “The crickets sing, and man’s overworked senses repair themselves through rest. I am like our Roman Tarquin, who like me now did softly step on the rushes on the floor before he awakened the chastity he wounded.”

The ancient Roman Sextus Tarquinius had raped Lucretia, an evil act that led to the overthrow of the Roman King and the establishment of a republic. Iachimo did not dare to rape Imogen — such an act would lead to bad consequences for him — but he still wanted to win the bet that he had made with her husband.

Iachimo continued, “Imogen, you are Cytherea — Venus, who was born on the island of Cythera. How splendidly you become your bed, you fresh lily, symbol of purity, for you are whiter than the sheets! I wish that I might touch you! I want only a kiss — just one kiss! Rubies unparagoned, how dearly they do it! Your lips are like rubies, and they kiss each other. It is her breathing that perfumes the chamber. The flame of the candle bows toward her because smoke follows the most beautiful. The

candle flame wants to peep under her eyelids, to see the lights — the eyes — they enclose, which are now canopied under these window shutters, which are white and azure laced with blue of Heaven's own color. Her eyelids are white but have tiny blue veins.

“But let me carry out my plan. I will take note of her bedchamber so that I can describe it to her husband and convince him that I have slept with his wife. I will write everything down. Here are such and such pictures. There is the window. Such is the decoration of her bed. Here is the wall hanging. Here is a carving of figures on the mantle over the fireplace. Why, I see such and such, and the figures act out the contents of a story.

“Ah, but some personal notes about her body would be better evidence than over ten thousand notes about the items in her bedchamber; those personal notes would significantly enrich the inventory that I am writing down.”

He drew the covering away from Imogen's body and said, “Oh, sleep, you mimic of death, lie heavy upon her! Let her consciousness be like that of an effigy on top of a coffin lying in a chapel! Don't wake up!”

He began to take off her bracelet, saying, “Come off! Come off!”

It easily slipped off her arm, and he said, “It is as slippery and easy to remove as the Gordian knot was hard to untie!”

The Gordian knot was incredibly intricate, and according to prophecy, whoever was able to untie it would conquer Asia. Alexander the Great “untied” the knot by cutting it with his sword.

Holding the bracelet, Iachimo said, “It is in my possession; and this will be physical evidence that will aid me as I drive her husband to distraction.”

He looked at Imogen's body and said, "On her left breast is a mole with five spots like the crimson drops in the bottom of a cowslip flower. Here's a piece of evidence that is stronger than law could ever make. This secret knowledge of her body will force her husband to think that I have picked the lock and taken the treasure of her honor. I need no more evidence. It would not help make my case stronger. Why should I write this piece of evidence down? It is riveted — screwed — to my memory! She has been reading recently the tale of Tereus; here the leaf's turned down where Philomel gave up."

Imogen had been reading about Philomel, who was raped by Tereus, her brother-in-law. After raping her, he cut out her tongue to prevent her from telling anyone about the rape. However, she created a tapestry that told the story of the rape.

Iachimo was wrong when he said that Philomel had given up. He was the type of man who believes that it was a rare — perhaps nonexistent, given enough time for the seduction to take place — woman who could not be seduced. Philomel had not given up her chastity; Tereus had forcibly raped her.

Iachimo said, "I have enough evidence. I will go inside the trunk again, and shut its spring — its locking mechanism. Be swift, swift, you dragons of the night, so that dawning may bare the raven's eye!"

According to a myth, dragons drew the chariot of the Moon. Ravens are birds of omen — they are ominous — and they wake up with the dawn.

Iachimo continued, "I lodge in this trunk in fear. Although Imogen is a Heavenly angel, Hell is here."

A clock began to strike.

Iachimo counted, “One, two, three. It is time, time for me to go into the trunk!”

He went into the trunk and shut the lid.

— 2.3 —

In an antechamber adjoining Imogen’s apartments, Cloten and some lords were talking.

The first lord said to Cloten, “Your lordship is the most patient man when enduring loss. You are the very coldest man who ever turned up the lowest number on a die — an ace.”

“It would make any man cold to lose,” Cloten said.

The first lord had used “cold” as meaning “impassive,” but Cloten used the word as meaning “gloomy.”

“But not every man is patient after your lordship’s noble temper. You are most hot and excitable when you win,” the first lord said.

“Winning will put any man into courage,” Cloten said. “If I could get this foolish Imogen, I should have gold enough.”

Imogen was the presumed heir to the throne, so if Cloten married her, he would almost certainly become very, very rich.

Cloten asked, “It’s almost morning, isn’t it?”

“It is day, my lord,” the first lord replied.

“I wish the musicians I hired would come,” Cloten said. “I have been advised to provide music for Imogen in the mornings. They say the music will penetrate.”

The musicians arrived, and Cloten continued his indelicate puns: “Come on; tune your instruments. If you can

penetrate her with your fingering, good; we'll try to penetrate her with tongue — vocal music — too. If none will do for her, then let her alone; but I'll never give up.

“First, we will hear a very excellent cleverly devised thing; afterward, a wonderfully sweet air, with admirably rich words to it, and then let her consider me as a mate.”

A musician sang this song:

“Hark! Hark! The lark at Heaven’s gate sings,

“And Phoebus Apollo the Sun-god begins to arise,

“His steeds to water at those springs

“Where flowers with cup-like blossoms lie.

“And closed marigold blossoms begin

“To open their golden eyes.

“With everything that pretty is,

“My sweet lady, arise.

“Arise, arise.”

When the musicians had finished playing and singing the song, Cloten said, “So, leave now. If this penetrates, I will regard your music as being better than I have regarded it. If it does not penetrate, then it is a vice in her ears, which neither horsehairs and calves’ guts, nor the voice of an unpaved eunuch in addition, can ever amend.”

Horsehairs were used in bowstrings, and calves’ guts — intestines — were used in the strings of lutes and viols. An unpaved eunuch had no stones, aka testicles. A different kind of stones was used in paving roads.

The musicians exited.

The second lord said, "Here comes the King."

Cloten said, "I am glad I was up so late because that's the reason I was up so early — I have not gone to bed. The King — Imogen's father — cannot choose but take fatherly this service I have done."

King Cymbeline and the Queen came over to Cloten and the two lords.

Cymbeline said, "Are you waiting here at the door of our stern daughter? Won't she come out?"

Cloten said, "I have assailed her with music, but she gives no notice of it."

Cymbeline said, "The exile of her minion — Posthumus — is too new and recent. She has not yet forgotten him. Some more time must pass before she forgets him, and then she's yours."

"You owe the King, who lets go by no suitable opportunity to recommend you to his daughter," the Queen said. "Prepare yourself to pursue her in a methodical fashion. Take advantage of favorable opportunities. Whenever she rejects you, pursue her more doggedly. Seem as if you were inspired by love to do those duties that you offer to her. Obey her in everything except when she rejects you and commands you to let her alone — that command you shall ignore and be senseless to."

By "senseless," the Queen meant "incapable of hearing."

"Senseless!" Cloten said, misunderstanding her. "I am not senseless! I am not a fool!"

A messenger entered the room.

The messenger said to King Cymbeline, "Sir, ambassadors from Rome have come. The main ambassador is the Roman

general Caius Lucius.”

Using the royal plural, Cymbeline replied, “He is a worthy fellow, although he comes here now with an angry purpose, but that’s no fault of his. We must receive him in accordance with the honor of his sender, and we must treat him well because of his past goodness to us.”

He said to Cloten, “Our dear stepson, when you have said good morning to Imogen, attend the Queen and us; we shall have need to employ you in escorting this Roman.”

He then said, “Let us go, our Queen.”

Everyone except Cloten exited.

Cloten said to himself, “If Imogen is up, I’ll speak with her; if she is not up, then let her lie still and dream.”

He knocked on her door and said loudly, “Open, please!”

Then he said quietly to himself, “I know her female servants are around her. What if I line one of their hands with money as a bribe? It is gold that buys admittance, often it does; yes, and gold makes the virgin goddess Diana’s gamekeepers be false to their vows and yield their deer to the stand of the stealer.”

The Roman goddess Diana was a hunter who fiercely guarded her virginity. A mortal hunter named Actaeon once accidentally saw her bathing naked; Diana turned his body into that of a stag although he kept his human mind, and his own hounds tore him to pieces. Cloten believed that gold would make the female servants of Imogen, who carefully guarded her chastity, deliver her into his hands. As he often did, he made an indecent pun. A hunter’s stand was a spot from which the hunter could shoot game; a stand was also an erection.

Cloten continued, “And it is gold that kills the honest man

and saves the thief; no, sometimes gold hangs both thief and honest man. What can't gold do and undo? I will make one of her female servants be a lawyer — an advocate — for me, for I do not yet understand the case myself.”

The word “case” meant “lawsuit,” and it was slang for “vagina.” The indecent meaning of what Cloten had said was that his erection was not yet under Imogen’s vagina; it was not yet under standing — that is, standing under — it.

He knocked again on Imogen’s door and said, “Open, please!”

As one of Imogen’s female servants opened the door, she asked, “Who’s knocking?”

Cloten replied, “A gentleman.”

“No more than that?” the female servant replied, coming out of Imogen’s bedchamber.

“Yes, more than that. I am a gentlewoman’s son,” replied Cloten, who was expensively dressed.

“That’s more than some men, whose tailors are as expensive as yours, can justly boast of. What’s your lordship’s pleasure?”

“Your lady’s person is my pleasure. Is she ready?”

Cloten was asking if Imogen was up and decently dressed, but the female servant misunderstood, perhaps deliberately, the meaning of “ready,” as she answered, “Yes, she is ready to stay in her bedchamber.”

Cloten held out some money to her and said, “There is gold for you; sell me your good report.”

“What!” the female servant said. “Sell you my own good report? Sell you what people say about me? Sell you my good reputation? Or do you want me to report — to say —

good things about you to Imogen?”

Imogen walked through the door, and the female servant said, “The Princess!”

Cloten said to Imogen, “Good morning, fairest lady. Stepsister, give me your sweet hand.”

The female servant exited.

“Good morning, sir,” Imogen replied. “You take too many pains for purchasing nothing but trouble; the thanks I give you are to tell you that I am poor of thanks and scarcely can spare them.”

“Still, I swear I love you,” Cloten said.

“If you had just said you love me instead of swearing you love me, it would be the same to me. If you continue to swear, your recompense will continue to be the same — I will ignore what you say.”

“This is no answer,” Cloten said.

“I would say nothing to you except that I am afraid that if I am silent, you may say that I have yielded to your love. Please, spare me from speaking to you. Truly, I am afraid that I will give you discourtesy that will equal your best kindness. One of your ‘great knowledge’ should learn, being taught, forbearance.”

Imogen was being sarcastic when she said that Cloten possessed “great knowledge.”

“If I were to leave you in your madness, it would be my sin,” said Cloten, who believed that it would be mad for Imogen to reject him. “Therefore, I will not leave you.”

“Fools are not mad folks,” Imogen said.

She meant that she might be a fool for talking to Cloten,

but she was not mad, and therefore Cloten could leave her.

Misunderstanding as usual, Cloten asked, “Are you calling me a fool?”

“As I am ‘mad,’ I do,” Imogen said. “You call me mad; I call you a fool. If you’ll exercise self-restraint and leave me alone, I’ll no longer be mad; that will cure us both. I am very sorry, sir, that you make me forget a lady’s manners. A lady ought to be mostly silent, but I have been very verbal. So that I need not speak further words to you, learn now, once and for all, that I, who know my own heart, do here say, very truthfully, that I do not care for you, and I am so close to lacking Christian charity that I must — am forced to — accuse myself of hating you. I wish that you could understand what I feel without my expressing it verbally.”

“You sin against obedience, which you owe your father,” Cloten said. “You made a marriage contract without the approval of your father, and so it is only a pretend marriage contract that you made with Posthumus, that base wretch, who was brought up with alms and fostered with cold dishes, with leftover scraps of food from the court — it is no marriage contract, not at all. Such a marriage contract is allowed for lowly people — yet who is more lowly than Posthumus? — to knit their souls in a marriage arranged by themselves only. Relying on these people are no dependents other than brats and beggars.

“You, however, are not permitted that freedom because of your importance. You will inherit the crown, and you must not dishonor and soil its precious reputation by either marrying a base slave, a good-for-nothing, worthless man fit only for the uniform of a servant, for wearing the cloth of a squire, for being the servant who keeps the pantry, or by marrying a man who is not as eminent as these men are.”

Imogen replied, “Profane fellow, if you were the son of Jupiter and no more but what you are besides that, you would be too base to be Posthumus’ servant. If social rank were based on merit and not on birth, Posthumus would be a King and you would be an assistant executioner in his Kingdom. As a hangman’s apprentice, you would be raised high enough in status that other people would envy and hate you for being promoted so well. People would envy and hate you because they would think that you had been promoted beyond what you deserve.”

“I hope the south wind rots Posthumus!” Cloten said.

In this culture, the south wind was thought to be damp and unhealthy.

Using the less respectful “thou” to refer to Cloten, Imogen said, “He can never meet more misfortune than for thou to say his name. His meanest garment — his underwear — that has ever hugged his body is dearer to me than all the hairs above you if they were to be made such men as you.”

Suddenly noticing that the bracelet that Posthumus had given to her was missing from her arm, Imogen said, “What!”

She called, “Pisanio!”

Pisanio came to her.

Cloten muttered, “‘His garment!’ What the devil —”

Imogen said to Pisanio, “Hurry immediately to my servant Dorothy—”

Cloten muttered, “‘His garment!’”

Imogen said, “I am haunted by a fool. Something has happened that frightens — and worse, angers — me. Go tell Dorothy to search for a bracelet that accidentally and

too carelessly has left my arm. It was your master's gift to me. May I be cursed if I would lose it for the income of any King who is in Europe. I think I saw it this morning; I am confident that it was on my arm last night — I kissed it. I hope that it has not gone to make my husband think that I kiss anyone but he."

"We will find it," Pisanio said.

"I hope so," Imogen replied. "Go and search for it."

Pisanio exited.

Cloten said to Imogen, "You have insulted me. 'His meanest garment!'"

"Yes, I said that, sir. If you want to make a lawsuit out of it, call me as a witness to it."

"I will inform your father," Cloten said.

"Inform your mother, too," Imogen replied. Sarcastically, she said, "She's my 'good lady,'" and then added, "and will think, I think, only the worst of me. So, I leave you, sir, to the worst discontent and unhappiness."

Imogen exited.

Alone, Cloten said, "I'll be revenged on her. 'His meanest garment!' Well!"

— 2.4 —

Posthumus and Philario talked together in a room of Philario's house in Rome.

"Don't worry about it, sir," Posthumus said to Philario. "I wish I were as sure of winning over King Cymbeline as I am sure that Imogen's honor will remain intact."

"What are you doing to make King Cymbeline your

friend?”

“Nothing, except watching the passage of time, quaking in his present wintry mood and wishing that warmer days would come. With these seared, withered hopes of mine, I barely repay your friendship to me; if my hopes of being reconciled to King Cymbeline fail, I must die much your debtor.”

“Your true goodness and your company more than pay me for all I can do,” Philario said. “By this time, your King Cymbeline has heard from great Augustus Caesar, first Emperor of Rome. Caius Lucius will thoroughly do his commission of delivering Caesar’s message, and I think your King Cymbeline will grant that the tribute is owed and pay the as-yet-unpaid tribute, or else he will look upon our Roman legions, who recently caused the Britons much grief.”

Posthumus replied, “I believe, although I am not a politician or likely ever to be one, that this will cause a war; and you shall sooner hear that the legions now in France have landed in our courageous Britain than you will have news of even a penny of tribute paid. Our countrymen are more organized than when Julius Caesar smiled at their lack of skill, but found their courage worthy of his frowning at. The Britons’ discipline, now mingled with their courage, will make known to those who test them that they are people whose existence improves the world.”

Philario looked up and said, “Look! Iachimo is here!”

Posthumus said to him, “The swiftest deer have carried you quickly by land; and the winds of all the corners of the world have kissed your sails and made your ship nimble.”

“Welcome, sir,” Philario said.

Posthumus said to Iachimo, “I hope the shortness of the

answer you got from my wife when you attempted to seduce her made the speediness of your return necessary.”

Iachimo replied, “Your lady is one of the most beautiful whom I have looked upon.”

“And also the best and most virtuous, or let her beauty look through a window to allure false hearts and be false with them,” Posthumus said.

In this culture, prostitutes displayed themselves in windows to allure customers.

“Here is a letter for you from your wife,” Iachimo said, handing Posthumus a letter.

“The subject matter of the letter is good, I trust,” Posthumus said.

“It is very likely,” Iachimo replied.

He had not read the letter, which was sealed. He was hoping that Imogen had not written her husband that Iachimo had tried to seduce her, but had failed.

Posthumus scanned the letter as Philario asked Iachimo, “Was Caius Lucius in the British court when you were there?”

“He was expected, but he had not yet arrived.”

Having scanned the letter, Posthumus said, “All is still well.”

He then held out the hand wearing the diamond ring he had bet and asked Iachimo, “Does this diamond sparkle as it used to? Or is it too dull for you to wear?”

“If I had lost our bet, I would have lost the worth of the ring in gold because I bet my gold against your ring,” Iachimo said. “I would make a journey twice as far, to

enjoy a second night of such sweet shortness that was mine in Britain, for I have won the ring.”

“The diamond ring is too hard to come by,” Posthumus said.

“Not at all,” Iachimo said, “because your wife is so easy.”

“Sir,” Posthumus said, “do not make a joke out of your loss. I hope you know that we must not continue to be friends.”

“Good sir, we must continue to be friends, if you keep the terms of the bet we made. Had I not brought the carnal knowledge of your wife home with me, I grant that we would have to fight a duel, but I now say that I am the winner of your wife’s honor, and so I have also won the ring. However, I say that I have not wronged either her or you because I have done nothing that you two did not give me permission to do.”

“If you can prove that you have tasted my wife in bed, my hand of friendship and my ring are yours; if not, the foul opinion you had of my wife’s pure honor gains or loses either your sword or mine, or masterless leaves both swords to whoever shall find them. Either I shall kill you or you shall kill me or we shall kill each other.”

“Sir, my evidence, being so near the truth as I will make it, must first induce you to believe,” Iachimo said. “I will confirm the truth of my evidence with an oath, but I don’t doubt that you will give me permission not to swear an oath that my evidence is true because you will find that my evidence is so strong that you don’t need an oath to believe it.”

“Proceed,” Posthumus said. “Give me the evidence.”

“First, her bedchamber — where, I confess, I did not sleep,

but I confess that I had something that was well worth keeping awake for — had a hanging tapestry made of silk and silver thread. It told the story of when proud Cleopatra met her Roman, Mark Antony, and the Cydnus River swelled above its banks, either because of the weight of the many boats on it or from pride of being Cleopatra and Antony's meeting place. This was a piece of work so splendidly done, so rich, that I did not know which was greater — its workmanship or its value. I wondered how it could be so rarely and exactly wrought, since the true life on it was —”

Posthumus interrupted, “— this description is accurate, but you might have heard about the tapestry here, from me, or from some other person.”

“More particular details about your wife's bedchamber must prove my knowledge,” Iachimo said.

“So they must,” Posthumus said, “or do your honor injury.”

“The fireplace is on the south wall of her bedchamber, and the statues on the mantle depict the virgin goddess Diana bathing. I have never seen figures so likely to speak; the sculptor was like another Mother Nature, but silent; the sculptor outdid Mother Nature, except that his sculptures did not move or speak.”

“This is another thing that you might have learned without seeing it because this artwork is much spoken about,” Posthumus said.

“The ceiling of her bedchamber is elaborately adorned with golden angels. Her andirons — I had forgotten them — were two winking Cupids made of silver. Each was standing on one foot and ingeniously depicted leaning against their torches.”

“You think that this is evidence that you have taken my

wife's honor!" Posthumus said sarcastically. "Let it be granted you have seen all this — and I have to praise your memory — still the description of what is in my wife's bedchamber is no evidence that you have won the wager."

"Then, if you can, grow pale," Iachimo said as he took Imogen's bracelet out of a pocket and showed it to Posthumus. "I ask permission to air this bracelet. See it!"

He replaced the bracelet in his pocket and said, "And now I have put it up again. It must be married to your diamond ring. I'll keep them both together."

"By Jove!" Posthumus said, turning pale. "Let me see that again. Is that the bracelet I left with her?"

"Sir, I thank her for this bracelet," Iachimo said. "She stripped it from her arm; I see her doing it now. Her pretty action was worth more than her gift, and yet her action enriched the bracelet, too. She gave it to me, and she said that she had once valued it."

Posthumus said, "Maybe she plucked it off to send it to me."

"Did she write that in her letter to you, sir?" Iachimo said.

"Oh, no, no, no!" Posthumus said. "What you say about my wife is true. Here, take this, too."

He handed Iachimo his diamond ring and said, "It is a basilisk to my eyes. It kills me when I look at it."

A basilisk is a mythological serpent whose look can kill.

Posthumus ranted, "Let there be no honor where there is beauty; no truth, where there is only an outward appearance; and no love, where there is another man. May the vows of women be no more binding to the men they are made to than women are bound to their virtue — which is

not at all! Oh, my wife is unfaithful and cheating beyond measure!”

“Be calm, sir,” Philario said, “and take your ring back again. Iachimo has not yet won it. It may be probable she lost her bracelet; or who knows if one of her women, being corrupted, has stolen it from her?”

“That is very true,” Posthumus said, “and in one of those two ways, I hope, he came by her bracelet. Give me back my ring. Tell me something about my wife’s body that will be more evidence than this bracelet because this bracelet was stolen.”

“By Jupiter, I swear that I got it from her arm,” Iachimo said.

“Listen!” Posthumus said to Philario. “He swears; he swears by Jupiter! What he says must be true since he swears by the supreme god!”

He gave the diamond ring back to Iachimo, saying, “Keep the ring — what you say is true.”

He then said, “I am sure that my wife would not lose her bracelet. Her attendants are all sworn to obey her and be honorable. Could they be induced to steal it! Induced by a stranger! No, Iachimo has enjoyed my wife in bed. The symbol of her cheating is this ring. She has bought the name of whore grievously at great cost.”

He said to Iachimo, “There, take your winnings; and may all the fiends of Hell divide themselves between you and my wife, Imogen!”

“Sir, be calm,” Philario said to Posthumus. “This evidence is not strong enough to be believed about one you have thought so well about —”

Posthumus interrupted, “— never talk about not believing

it. Imogen has been colted — mounted — by him.”

“If you seek further evidence,” Iachimo said, “under her breast — which is worth squeezing — lies a mole, which is very proud of that most delicate place of residence. By my life, I kissed it; and it immediately made me hungry to feed again, though I was already full. You remember this mole — this stain and imperfection — on her?”

“Yes,” Posthumus said, “and it confirms another stain, as big as Hell can hold, even if she had no other stain than that.”

“Do you want to hear more?” Iachimo asked.

“Spare your arithmetic,” Posthumus said. “Don’t count the turns. Once, and a million, are both enough!”

“I’ll be sworn —” Iachimo began to say.

Posthumus interrupted, “— no swearing. If you will swear you have not done the deed with my wife, you lie, and I will kill you if you deny that you have made me a cuckold.”

“I’ll deny nothing,” Iachimo said.

“Oh, I wish that I had her here so I could tear her limb from limb!” Posthumus said. “I will go there and do it ... in the court ... in front of her father! I’ll do something —”

He exited.

Philario said to Iachimo, “He is quite beside himself! He has lost all self-control! You have won the bet. Let’s follow him, and turn aside the present wrath he has against himself. We don’t want him to hurt himself.”

“With all my heart,” Iachimo said.

Posthumus managed to elude Philario and Iachimo. Alone in another room of Philario's house, he said to himself, "Is there no way for men to come into existence but women must be half-workers and give birth to men? We are all bastards. That most venerable man whom I called my father was I know not where when I was created — stamped like a coin. Some coiner with his tools — one of them biological and located below his waist — made me a counterfeit. Yet my mother seemed to be the chaste goddess Diana of that time as my wife seemed to be the nonpareil of this time. Oh, I want vengeance, vengeance!

"She restrained me from enjoying my lawful pleasure of her and often begged me to be patient. She begged me with a modesty so rosy that the sweet view of her modesty might well have warmed the god Saturn, who is ancient and cold and melancholy. I thought that she was as chaste as unsunned snow. Oh, all the devils! This sallow-faced Iachimo, in an hour — was it an entire hour? Or less? Or immediately? Perhaps he did not even speak to her, but like a full-acorned boar, a German one, well fed and with huge testicles, cried 'Oh!' and mounted her and found no opposition but what he expected should oppose him and what she should from encounter guard."

Had Posthumus consummated the marriage with Imogen? Perhaps he had lied about seeing Imogen's mole. After all, Iachimo had made a mistake about the mole's location. When he had seen the mole, he had said that it was located on her breast, but he had just now told Posthumus that the mole was located under her breast. The opposition that Posthumus thought that Iachimo had expected could have been Imogen's hymen. Imogen may not have wanted to sleep with Posthumus until after she received her father's approval of the marriage.

Posthumus continued, "I wish I could find the woman's

part in me! There is no provocation that leads to vice in man, but I state that it comes from the woman's part. If the vice is lying, it comes from the woman's part. The same is true of flattering, deceiving, lustful and rank thoughts, revenges, ambitions, covetings, varieties of sexual excesses, disdain, lustful longing, slanders, inconstancy — all faults that may be named, nay, all that Hell knows. Why, they are women's, in part or all — but rather, all, because even when it comes to vice women are not constant and loyal but are always exchanging one vice, which is only a minute old, for another vice that is not half as old as that.

“I'll write against women, detest them, and curse them, yet it shows greater skill in a true hate to pray that women have their will. Not even devils can plague them better.”

CHAPTER 3 (Cymbeline)

— 3.1 —

In a hall of King Cymbeline's palace, Cymbeline, the Queen, Cloten, and some lords were meeting with Caius Lucius, who was one of Caesar Augustus' generals and ambassadors. Many of Caius Lucius' attendants and Cymbeline's attendants were also present. Cymbeline and Caius Lucius liked each other, but it was possible that they would soon be on opposite sides in a war between Britain and Rome.

King Cymbeline said, "Now tell us, what does Augustus Caesar want with us?"

Caius Lucius replied, "When Julius Caesar, the memory of whom still lives in men's minds and who will forever be spoken about, was in this Britain and conquered it, King Cassibelan, your great-uncle — who was famous because of Caesar's praises, and whose feats entirely deserved both the praise and the fame — granted Rome a tribute both from him and from his successors, three thousand pounds annually, which by you lately has not been paid."

The Queen said, "And, to stop the astonishment that this action causes, let me say that the tribute shall be paid no longer."

Cloten said, "There will be many Caesars before there is another Caesar like Julius. Britain is a world by itself; and we will pay nothing for wearing our own noses."

He was mocking the Roman nose, which often had a prominent bridge.

The Queen said to Caius Lucius, "In Julius Caesar's day, the Romans had the opportunity to make the Britons pay

tribute. Now the Britons have the opportunity to stop paying tribute.”

She said to her husband, the King, “Sir, my liege, remember the Kings your ancestors, together with the natural threatening appearance of your isle, which stands like the park of Neptune, god of the sea, enclosed as if within ribs and fenced in with unscalable rocks and roaring waters, and with quicksands that will not bear your enemies’ boats, but will suck them down all the way to the topmast. A kind of conquest Julius Caesar made here, but he did not here make his brag of ‘I came’ and ‘I saw’ and ‘I conquered.’ Instead, with shame — it was the first time that shame ever touched him — he was carried from off our coast, twice beaten; and his ships — poor inexperienced toys! — upon our terrible seas moved upon their waves like eggshells and cracked as easily as eggshells against our rocks. This brought much joy to the famed Cassibelan, who was once at the point — oh, Lady Fortune, you harlot! — of mastering Julius Caesar’s sword. To celebrate, Cassibelan made Lud’s town bright with rejoicing fires, and Britons strutted with courage.”

Lud’s town would in a later age be known as London.

Cloten said, “Come, we will pay no more tribute. Our Kingdom is stronger than it was at that time; and, as I said, there are no more such Caesars as Julius Caesar. Other Caesars may have crooked noses, but none own such straight, strong arms as did Julius.”

“Stepson, let your mother finish speaking,” Cymbeline said to Cloten.

Cloten continued, “We have yet many among us who can grip a sword as hard as Cassibelan. I do not say I am one of them, but I have a hand. Why tribute? Why should we pay tribute? If Caesar Augustus can hide the Sun from us with a

blanket, or put the Moon in his pocket, we will pay him tribute in return for light; otherwise, sir, we will pay no more tribute, if you please.”

King Cymbeline said, “You must know, Caius Lucius, that until the injurious and insulting Romans extorted this tribute from us, we were free. Caesar’s ambition, which swelled so much that it almost stretched the sides of the world, against all reason here put the yoke upon us; to shake off that yoke is fitting for a warlike people, whom we reckon ourselves to be.”

Cloten and the other lords present said, “We do.”

Cymbeline said to Caius Lucius, “Say, then, to Caesar Augustus, that our ancestor was that Mulmutius who established our laws, whose use the sword of Caesar has too much mangled, and whose restoration and free exercise shall, by the power we hold, be our good deed, although Rome thereby be made angry. Mulmutius made our laws, and he was the first man of Britain who put his brows within a golden crown and called himself King.”

Caius Lucius replied, “I am sorry, Cymbeline, that I am to pronounce Augustus Caesar — who has more Kings acting as his servants than you yourself have domestic servants — your enemy. Receive this sentence from me, then. In Caesar’s name I pronounce war and destruction against you. Expect Roman fury that cannot be resisted. Having thus delivered this sentence from Caesar Augustus, I now personally thank you for what you have done for me.”

“You are welcome, Caius,” Cymbeline said. “Your Caesar knighted me. I spent much of my youth serving under him. From him I gathered honor. Since he seeks to take that honor from me, I will resist him, of necessity, to the utmost. I am perfectly aware that the Pannonians in Hungary and the Dalmatians on the Adriatic Sea are now

up in arms and fighting for their liberties; this is a precedent that would show the Britons to be cold and apathetic if they did not follow it. Caesar Augustus shall not find us cold and apathetic.”

Caius Lucius said, “Let the outcome of the war do the speaking.”

“His majesty bids you welcome,” Cloten said. “Stay with us and enjoy yourself a day or two, or longer. If you seek us afterwards on other terms, you shall find us within the salt water that girdles our island. If you beat us out of our island, it is yours; if you fall in the venture, our crows shall fare the better because of feasting on you; and that’s all that needs to be said.”

“So be it, sir,” Caius Lucius replied.

King Cymbeline said, “I know your master’s message, and through you he will know mine. Our official business is over. All that remains to be done now is for me to say to you, personally, ‘Welcome!’”

— 3.2 —

Pisanio, who had two letters from Posthumus, was reading the one addressed to him.

He said to himself, “What! Imogen accused of adultery? Why didn’t you write about what monster is her accuser? Leonatus! Oh, master! What a strange infection has fallen into your ear! What treacherous Italian, as poisonous-tongued as poisonous-handed, has prevailed on your too ready hearing?”

Italians had a reputation for being talented in the use of poisons.

Pisanio continued, “Imogen disloyal! No! She’s being punished for being honest and loyal and true, and she

endures, more like a goddess than a wife, such assaults as would conquer some who are virtuous. Oh, my master! Your mind compared to her mind is now as low as were your fortunes. What! You write that I should murder her! I should do that because of my respect for you and my loyalty to you and my vows to serve you! I? Kill her? I? Spill her blood? If this is what it takes to do good service, then never let me be thought to do good service. How do I look? How can I seem to lack so much humanity that it appears that I would commit the murder that Posthumus Leonatus tells me to commit?"

He read part of the letter out loud, "*Do it. The letter that I have sent to her shall convince her to do something that will give you the opportunity to kill her.*"

He said, "Oh, damned paper! You are black as the ink that's on you! Letter, you are a worthless trifle that lacks human feeling and empathy! Letter, are you a confederate for this act of murder, and yet you look so virgin-like on the outside?"

He looked up and said, "Here Imogen comes. I will pretend to be ignorant of what I am commanded to do."

Imogen walked over and said, "Hello, Pisanio!"

"Madam, here is a letter from my lord."

"From whom? Your lord? He is my lord and husband: Posthumus Leonatus! Oh, learned indeed would be an astrologer who knew the stars as well as I do my husband's handwriting. Such an astrologer would reveal the future. You good gods, let what is contained in this letter taste of love, of my lord's health, of his happiness except for our being apart — let that grieve him. Some griefs are curative; that is one of them because it ministers to love. Let him be happy in everything except our being apart!"

Starting to break the beeswax that sealed — locked the contents of — the letter, she said, “Good wax, by your leave. Blest be you bees that make these locks of counsel! Lovers and men who have made dangerous contracts do not regard letters similarly. A letter can result in a defaulter’s being cast in prison, yet a letter can allow a lover to hold the writing of young Cupid. Please let this letter bear good news, gods!”

She read Posthumus’ letter out loud, “*Justice, and the wrath of your father, if he should capture me in his Kingdom, could not be so cruel to me, as you, dearest of creatures, would completely renew and restore me with your eyes.*”

Posthumus was writing a deceptive letter, but he could not prevent his anger from showing up in it. The beginning of the letter read, “*Justice, and the wrath of your father, if he should capture me in his Kingdom, could not be so cruel to me, as you*” But then he continued the letter and wrote that Imogen would be able to completely renew and restore him by looking at him.

Imogen continued to read the letter out loud, “*Take notice that I am in Wales, at the harbor town Milford Haven. What your own love will advise you to do after reading this, do. So he wishes you all happiness, you who remain loyal to his vow, and he wishes your increasing in love.* LEONATUS POSTHUMUS.”

Imogen, who immediately knew that she wanted to go to Wales, and who was so happy that she spoke excitedly and jumbled her thoughts, said, “Oh, for a horse with wings! Do you hear, Pisanio? Posthumus is at Milford Haven. Read this letter, and tell me how far it is to Milford Haven. If a person on ordinary business may plod it in a week, why can’t I glide there in a day? Then, true Pisanio ... who longs, like me, to see your lord; who longs ... let me amend

that ... who does not long like me ... yet who longs, but in a less longing way ... oh, not like me because my longing is beyond beyond ... tell me, and speak quickly because the adviser of a lover should fill the holes of hearing ... the ears ... to the smothering of the sense ... how far it is to this same blessed Milford Haven, and as we travel tell me how Wales was made so happy as to inherit such a haven, but first of all tell me how we may steal away from here, and how we shall excuse the gap that we shall make in time, from our going away until our return, but first, tell me how we shall get away from here. But why should we find an excuse for something we have not yet done? We'll talk about that excuse later. Please, tell me how many scores of miles can we ride between one hour and the next?"

Pisanio replied, "One score between sunrise and sunset, madam, is enough for you."

Knowing that Posthumus would not be at Milford Haven when they arrived, he thought, *And too much, too.*

Imogen said, "Why, one who rode to his execution, man, could never go so slowly. I have heard of people betting on horse races, where horses have been nimbler than the sands that run through an hourglass. But this delay is foolery. Go tell my woman servant to feign a sickness. Say that she'll go home to her father, and immediately provide for me traveling clothes, no costlier than would be suitable for the housewife of a franklin."

A franklin is a landowner below the rank of gentry.

"Madam, you had better consider carefully what you are doing," Pisanio said.

"I see the road that is in front of me, man," Imogen said. "I don't see what is on the right or what is on the left. The right and the left and what is in the future have a fog around them that I cannot look through. Go now, please,

and do what I told you to do. The only accessible path is the one that leads to Milford Haven.”

— 3.3 —

Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus came out of the cave that was their home in the mountainous country of Wales. A lord who had been banished from Cymbeline’s court, Belarius was using the name of Morgan. Guiderius and Arviragus were actually the kidnapped biological sons of Cymbeline, although they thought that they were the biological sons of Morgan; their names as Morgan’s sons were Polydore and Cadwal. Guiderius (Polydore) was the older of the two.

Belarius (Morgan) said as he came out of the cave, “This is an excellent day not to stay at home, especially a home with a roof as low as ours! Stoop, boys; this entrance instructs you how to adore the Heavens and bows you to a morning’s holy worship. In contrast to our entranceway, the gates of monarchs are arched so high that Muslim giants may strut through and keep their impious turbans on, without bowing a good morning to the Sun. Hail, you fair Heaven! We live in a cave in the rock, yet we do not treat you as harshly as those who live better than we do.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said, “Hail, Heaven!”

Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “Hail, Heaven!”

“Now for our mountain sport,” Belarius (Morgan) said. “Climb up yonder hill; your legs are young. I’ll tread this flat land. Consider, when you from above perceive me to look like the size of a crow, that it is one’s position, including social as well as physical, that lessens and enhances a person, and you may then revolve in your mind what tales I have told you about courts, about Princes, about tricks in war. Any act of service in public life is not service simply because it is done, but it becomes service as

a result of being acknowledged. What matters is not what you have done, but what your superiors think you have done.

“When we think about things in this way, we can profit from everything we see, and often, to our comfort, we shall find that the dung beetle is in a safer fortress than is the full-winged eagle.”

In part, this meant that the dung beetle was safer because it lived in a humble abode and stayed away from the lavish abode of the court; however, Belarius (Morgan) was familiar with Aesop’s fable of the dung beetle and the eagle: Once an eagle was chasing a hare, who appealed to a dung beetle — the only creature around — for help. The dung beetle promised to help the hare, but the eagle ignored the dung beetle’s appeals for mercy and killed and devoured the hare in front of the dung beetle. Thereafter, the dung beetle sought to avenge the hare. The eagle would lay its eggs in a nest, and the dung beetle would go to the nest and push the eagle’s eggs out of the nest to the ground, where they broke. The eagle appealed to Jupiter, King of gods and men, for help. Jupiter held the eagle’s eggs in his lap, thinking they would be safe there. But the dung beetle took flight, carrying a ball of dung, which it dropped in Jupiter’s lap. Without thinking, Jupiter stood up to get the ball of dung off him, and the eagle’s eggs fell to the ground and broke. Moral: Despise no one. No one is so small that he or she cannot avenge an insult.

Belarius (Morgan) continued, “Oh, this life is nobler than a life of providing service only to be rebuked, this life is richer than a life of accepting bribes and then doing nothing, and this life is prouder than a life of wearing unpaid-for silk that rustles. People who wear unpaid-for silk will be saluted by their tailors, who make them fine, but yet the finely dressed people never succeed in paying

off their bills. That is no life compared to our life.”

“You speak from your experience of life,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “We — Cadwal and me — are poor and unfledged. We have never winged away from the view of the nest, nor do we know what the air is like away from home. Perhaps this life is best, if quiet life is the best; it is sweeter to you, who have known a sharper life. It is well suited to your stiff old age, but to us it is a life of ignorance, with all traveling done while dreaming in bed. It is a prison for a debtor, who does not dare to step out of sanctuary because he will be arrested.”

“What will we speak about when we are as old as you?” Arviragus (Cadwal) asked. “When we shall hear the rain and wind beat during a dark December, how, in this our confining cave, shall we discourse the freezing hours away? We have seen nothing. We are like beasts. We are as subtle as the fox when it comes to seeking prey for food. We are as warlike as the wolf when it comes to what we eat. Our valor is to chase what flees away from us. We make our cage a choir, as does the imprisoned bird, and we freely sing in our bondage.”

“How you speak!” Belarius (Morgan) said. “If you only knew the city’s financial practices and had suffered from them! The art of the court is as hard to leave as it is to keep up. Attempting to climb to the top results in falling, or else the climb is so slippery that the fear of falling is as bad as falling. Think about the toil of the war, a pain that only seems to seek out danger in the name of fame and honor, both of which die in the search, and has as often a slanderous epitaph as a reputation for having done the right thing — many times a person who does the right thing is given what he does not deserve as recompense. What’s worse, the person who is censured must bow as he is censured!

“Boys, the world may read my story on my body. My body is marked with Roman swords, and my military reputation was once first among the best soldiers of note. King Cymbeline respected me, and when a soldier was the theme of conversation, my name was not far off. At that time I was like a tree whose boughs bent with fruit, but in one night, a storm or robbery — call it what you will — shook down my mellow hanging fruit, and also my leaves, and left me bare to the weather.”

“Uncertain favor!” Guiderius (Polydore) said.

“My fault was nothing — as I have told you often — but two villains, whose false oaths prevailed before my perfect honor, swore to Cymbeline that I was allied with the Romans,” Belarius (Morgan) said. “And so I was banished, and for twenty years this rock and these regions have been my world. Here I have lived in honest freedom and paid more pious debts to Heaven than in all the early years of my life.

“But go up to the mountains! I have not been speaking hunters’ language. Whoever first strikes the animal we shall eat shall be the lord of the feast; to him the other two shall minister, and we will fear no poison, which is a fear of those who live in greater state than we do. I’ll meet you in the valleys.”

Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal) exited to begin the hunt.

Alone, Belarius (Morgan) said to himself, “How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature! These boys don’t know that they are sons to the King, nor does Cymbeline dream that they are alive. They think they are my sons; and although they were raised up humbly in the cave with the ceiling that is so low that they must bow, their thoughts reach the roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them even in simple and

low things to act much more nobly than others are capable of doing.

“This Polydore is the heir of Cymbeline and Britain, and the King his father called him Guiderius. By Jove, when I sit on my three-foot stool and tell stories of the warlike feats I have done, Guiderius’ spirit joins and acts out my story. When I say, ‘Thus my enemy fell, and thus I set my foot on his neck,’ then the Princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats, he strains his young sinews, and he puts himself in the posture that acts out my words.

“The younger brother, Cadwal, who was named Arviragus by Cymbeline, with equally as good acting as his older brother strikes life into my speech and shows much more his own imagination.”

An animal rustled nearby and Belarius (Morgan) said, “Listen, the game is roused!”

He then said, “Oh, Cymbeline! Heaven and my conscience know that you unjustly banished me, whereupon I stole your babes when they were three and two years old, thinking to deprive you of having your sons succeed you as King of Britain, just as you deprived me of my lands.”

He looked upward, and addressed the boys’ wet nurse (a woman who breastfed the boys when they were infants), who was now deceased, “Euriphile, you were their wet nurse; they thought that you were their biological mother, and every day they honor your grave. They think that I, myself, Belarius, who am now called Morgan, is their natural father.”

He heard more rustling in the bushes and said, “The game is afoot. It’s time to hunt.”

Pisanio and Imogen talked together in the country near Milford Haven.

Imogen said, “You told me, when we dismounted from our horses, that the place where I would meet my husband was near at hand. When I was born, my mother never longed to see me for the first time as much as I long now to see my husband. Pisanio! Man! Where is Posthumus? What is in your mind that makes you stare at me like that? Why do you sigh so deeply? A figure in a painting who looked as you do now would be thought to be a thing perplexed beyond self-explication. Wear a less fear-inspiring face before mental wildness conquers my staid and calmer senses. What’s the matter?”

Pisanio gave her Posthumus’ letter to him — the one in which Posthumus had told him to murder Imogen.

Imogen asked, “Why tender you that paper to me, with a look that is so untender? If it is summer — good — news, smile. If the news is winterly, and bad, you should keep the countenance you have now.”

Pisanio did not smile.

Imogen looked at the letter and said, “My husband’s handwriting! That drug-damned Italy has been too crafty for him, and he’s in some tough spot!”

She said to Pisanio, “Speak, man! Your tongue may take away some of the shock of reading the letter, which otherwise might kill me!”

“Please, read the letter,” Pisanio said, “and you shall find that I am a wretched man, a thing that is the most disdained by Lady Fortune.”

Imogen read the letter out loud: “*Pisanio, Imogen has played the strumpet in my bed; the testimonies that this is*

true lie bleeding in me. I speak not out of weak surmises, but from proof as strong as my grief and as certain as I expect to get my revenge. That part you, Pisanio, must act for me, if your faith is not tainted by the breach of her faith. Let your own hands take away her life. I shall give you the opportunity to kill her at Milford Haven. She has my letter, which will lead her there. If you fear to strike her dead at Milford Haven and to make me certain that the murder has been done, then you are the pander to her dishonor and equally disloyal to me.”

Pisanio said to himself, “What need do I have to draw my sword? The letter has cut her throat already. No, it is slander, whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue is more poisonous than all the serpents of the Nile, whose breath rides on the swift winds and spreads lies over all the corners of the world. This viperous slander enters the lives of Kings, Queens, and lords, maidens, and matrons, and even creeps into the secrets of the grave.”

He said out loud, “How are you, madam?”

Ignoring him, Imogen said, “False to his bed! What is it to be false and cheat on him? To lie awake in bed and to think about him? To weep from hour to hour because he is not there? If sleep restores our natural powers, does being false to his bed mean to wake up because of having a dream about danger to him? Does it mean to cry myself awake? Is that what it means to be false to his bed?”

“I am sorry, good lady!” Pisanio said.

Still ignoring Pisanio, but addressing people who were not present, Imogen said, “I false! I unfaithful to you? I cheat on you!

“Posthumus, your conscience should be a witness that I am true to you!

“Iachimo, you accused Posthumus of being unfaithful to me. You then looked like a villain, but now I think that your appearance is good enough.

“Some jay — some gaudy whore — of Italy whose mother was painting — makeup, not nature — has betrayed my husband. Poor me! I am stale, a garment out of fashion, but because I am richer than to hang on the walls, I must be ripped.”

Imogen was comparing herself to a garment that was made of rich cloth but was out of fashion. Some old clothing was simply hung up on a wall of an old wardrobe and ignored (many of us have clothing hanging in our closets that we never wear), but unfashionable clothing made of a rich fabric would be disassembled so that the fabric could be reused.

Imogen said, “To pieces with me! Tear me to pieces! Oh, men’s vows are traitors to women! Because of your turning away from me, husband, all men who put on a good appearance — say, of fidelity — shall be thought to be putting on a good appearance only so they can commit villainy. Their good appearance shall not be born — that is, come from their nature — but it will be worn as a bait for ladies.”

“Good madam, listen to me,” Pisanio said.

Ignoring him, Imogen continued, “Aeneas was false to Dido, Queen of Carthage. He seduced and then abandoned her. Because of him, the true and honest men of his time were thought to be false.

“The treacherous Greek named Sinon wept in order to convince the Trojans to take the Trojan Horse into Troy. Because of him, holy tears were mistrusted. Because of him, pity was diverted from those who very truly deserved pity.

“And so you, Posthumus, will lay the leaven on all proper men. You shall be the sour dough that spoils the good dough. Because of your great fall, the good and gallant shall be thought to be false and perjured.”

Imogen then said to Pisanio, “Come, fellow, be honest. Do what your master ordered you to do: Kill me. When you see him, testify a little that I am obedient to him. Look! I draw the sword myself. Take it, and hit the innocent mansion of my love — my heart. Don’t be afraid. It is empty of everything except grief. Your master, Posthumus, is not there. He indeed was once the riches stored in my heart. Do what he ordered you to do. Strike me with your sword. You may be valiant in a better cause, but now you seem to be a coward.”

Pisanio threw away from him the sword that Imogen had placed in his hand and said, “Hence, vile instrument! You shall not damn my hand.”

Imogen said to him, “Why, I must die; and if I do not die by your hand, you are no servant of your master’s. Against self-slaughter — suicide — there is a prohibition so divine that it makes my weak hand cowardly. Come, here’s my heart. Something is in front of it. Wait! Wait! We’ll have no defense. My breast is as obedient as the scabbard; both are ready to admit the sword. What is here?”

She took some letters out of her bodice and said, “The scriptures of the ‘loyal’ Posthumus Leonatus, all turned to heresy!”

She threw Posthumus’ letters to her on the ground and said, “Away, away, corrupters of my faith! You shall no more be a decorative cover over my heart. Thus may poor fools believe false teachers; although those who are betrayed feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor stands in worse case of woe.

“And you, Posthumus, who encouraged my disobedience against my father the King and who made me reject with contempt the suits of Princely fellows who wanted to marry me, shall hereafter find that it is no act of common occurrence, but a strain of rareness, for a Princess to marry a commoner, and I grieve myself to think that you shall grow sated with the harlot whom you now feed greedily on, and then you will be pained by remembering me.”

She said to Pisanio, “Please, do your job. The lamb entreats the butcher to kill it. Where’s your knife? You are too slow to do your master’s bidding, when I desire it, too.”

“Oh, gracious lady,” Pisanio said, “since I received the command to do this business — to murder you — I have not slept one wink.”

“Murder me, and then go to bed and sleep,” Imogen replied.

“I’ll stay awake until my eyeballs fall out before I kill you.”

“Why then did you undertake to kill me?” Imogen asked. “Why have you traveled so many miles under a pretense? Why travel to this place? Why cause my journey and your own journey? Why cause our horses’ labor? Why make me spend time persuading you to undertake this journey? Why help me to leave the court and be absent from and perturb it — the court where I never intend to return? Why have you gone so far, only to unbend your bow with its arrow after you have gone to your hunting place and see the deer, which you have chosen to kill, in front of you?”

“I did those things only to win time and find a way to not engage in such bad employment,” Pisanio said. “It worked. While doing those things, I have thought of a course of action that we can take. Good lady, hear me patiently.”

“Talk until your tongue is weary,” Imogen replied. “Speak.

I have heard that I am a strumpet; and my ear, wrongly struck and injured by that word, can take no greater wound because no wound is deeper. But speak.”

“Then, madam, I have thought you would not go back to the court again.”

“That is very likely,” Imogen replied, “because you brought me here to kill me.”

“That is not true,” Pisanio said. “But if I am now being as wise as I am being honest, then my plan will prove to be a good one. It cannot be otherwise than that my master is being abused by being fed false information about you. Some villain, who is without equal in his art, has done this cursed injury to both you and your husband.”

“Some Roman prostitute has done this,” Imogen said.

“No, on my life,” Pisanio said. “Your husband is not involved with an Italian prostitute. I’ll tell your husband that you are dead, and I will send him some bloody sign of your death because he commanded that I should do so. You shall be missed at court, and that will well confirm that you are dead.”

“Why, good fellow, what shall I do in the meantime? Where shall I stay? How shall I live? What pleasure can I have in my life, when I am dead to my husband?”

“If you’ll go back to the court —” Pisanio began.

Imogen interrupted, “— no court, no father, and no more trouble with that harsh, high-ranking, simple nothing, that Cloten, whose lovesuit has been to me as fearful as a siege.”

“If you will not live at court, then you cannot live in Britain.”

“Where then can I live? Has Britain all the Sun that shines? Day, night, aren’t they only in Britain? Our Britain seems to be a part of the world, but not in it. It seems to be a swan’s nest in a great pool of water. Please think and tell me that people live outside of Britain.”

“I am very glad that you are thinking of places other than Britain,” Pisanio said. “The Roman ambassador, Caius Lucius, will come to Milford Haven tomorrow. Now, if you could wear a mind as dark as your fortune is, and if you could disguise that femininity that, if it were to appear as itself, as it should not because of danger to yourself, you should tread a course that is pretty and full of view — pleasing and full of good prospects. Yes, perhaps you could be near the residence of Posthumus — at least as near that although you may not see his actions, yet you could hear from other people truly what he is doing each hour.”

Imogen, who understood that she must disguise that she is a woman and pretend to be a man in order to avoid the danger of rape, said, “Oh, for the means to do that! Although it would put my modesty in danger, it would not be the death of my modesty, and so I would undertake it.”

“Well, then, here’s the point,” Pisanio said. “You must forget to be a woman. Change your noble right to command into a commoner’s obedience. Change fear and fastidiousness — the handmaids of all women, or, more truly, the essence of woman, its pretty self — into a playful courage. Be ready to make joking insults, to make sharp answers, and to be as saucy and as quarrelsome as a weasel. Indeed, you must forget that rarest treasure of your cheek and darken its complexion by exposing it — this is hard for a woman who takes pride in her light complexion to do, but make your heart hard because you must do this! — to the greedy touch of the Sun, which kisses everyone, and you must neglect your laborious and dainty adornments that

make you pretty, thereby making great Juno, the jealous wife of Jupiter, angry because she envies your beauty.”

Imogen would have to wear men’s clothing that would expose her face to the Sun and darken it through tanning. In her society, light complexions were valued, and upper-class women avoided exposing their faces to the Sun.

“Be brief in your speech,” Imogen said. “I understand your plan, and I am already almost a man.”

“First, make yourself look like one,” Pisanio said. “I planned ahead, and I previously packed men’s clothing for you in my cloak-bag — jacket, hat, breeches, all that is needed. With this clothing’s assistance, and with your imitation of young men who are your age, you shall present yourself before noble Caius Lucius and ask to be employed by him. Tell him your skills and use your musical voice to persuade him to hire you — if he has an ear for music, he will without doubt welcome you because he’s honorable and — better — he’s very holy. As for your means abroad, you have me, rich, and I will never fail you either now or later.”

Pisanio was not rich in money, but he was rich in qualities such as loyalty. As far as providing Imogen with food, subsequent events would show that he could not do that; for one thing, he needed to return to the court. Nevertheless, he remained loyal to her later, just as he was now. In addition, part of the job of certain servants is to hold the boss’ bag of money. As Imogen’s servant, he was holding on to Imogen’s money for the time being. To a servant such as Pisanio, that amount of money would seem to be riches, indeed. When he left to return to the court, he would hand over to Imogen her money. In addition, he was planning, when needed, to visit her and take to her money from the court.

“You are all the comfort the gods will diet me with,” Imogen said.

Imogen meant that she would have to rely on Pisanio; her words also subtly acknowledged that Pisanio might not be able to provide her with all the help she needed.

The gods do not always provide comfort and good diets. Imogen would not starve, but she would be hungry. But sometimes the gods allow bad things to happen before good things happen, just as a physician of the past could prescribe a course of fasting in an attempt to return a body to health and good appetite.

Fortunately, Imogen would receive help from people other than Pisanio.

She added, “Please, let’s go. There’s more to be planned and considered, but we’ll sort all that out in the good time available to us. I have the courage to do what we have planned, and I will face it with the courage of a Prince. Let’s go, please.”

“Well, madam, we must make only a brief farewell, lest, once you are missed, I am suspected of conveying you away from the court. My noble mistress, here is a box of medicine. The Queen gave it to me. What’s in it is precious: If you are sick at sea, or if you have an upset stomach on land, a little of this medicine will drive away your illness. Go into some thicket, and dress yourself like a man. May the gods take the best care of you!”

“Amen to that!” Imogen said. “I thank you.”

— 3.5 —

King Cymbeline, the Queen, Cloten, and Caius Lucius were talking in a room of Cymbeline’s palace. Some lords and attendants were also present.

Using the royal plural, Cymbeline said to Caius Lucius, “We have gone far enough, and so I say farewell to you.”

“Thanks, royal sir,” Caius Lucius replied. “My Emperor has written that I must leave, and I am very sorry that I must report to him that you are his enemy.”

“Our subjects, sir, will not endure his yoke, and if I were to appear less patriotic than they are, then I would appear less than a King.”

Caius Lucius replied, “So be it, sir. I request of you that you give me safe conduct — an escort — overland to Milford Haven.”

He then said to the Queen, “Madam, may all joy befall your grace!”

The Queen replied, “And to you!”

“My lords, you are appointed for that duty,” Cymbeline said to the lords present. “Give Caius Lucius safe conduct and escort him. Show him all honor that is due to him. Omit nothing.”

Cymbeline then said, “So farewell, noble Lucius.”

“Give me your hand, my lord.”

“Receive it friendly,” Cymbeline said, shaking hands with Caius Lucius.

Their hands separated, and Cymbeline said, “But from this time forth, this hand is the hand of your enemy.”

“Sir, the upcoming war has yet to name the winner,” Caius Lucius said. “Fare you well.”

“Don’t leave the worthy Lucius, my good lords,” Cymbeline said, “until he has crossed the Severn River.”

He said to Caius Lucius, "May happiness be a part of your life!"

Caius Lucius and the lords exited.

The Queen said to King Cymbeline, "He goes away from here frowning, but we have done the right thing in giving him cause to frown."

Cloten said, "It is for the best."

He then said to King Cymbeline, "Your valiant Britons want you to oppose the Romans."

"Lucius has already written to the Emperor what has happened here," Cymbeline said. "It is fitting for us therefore to immediately ensure that our chariots and our horsemen are in readiness. The troops that Lucius already has in France will soon be brought to full strength, and from France he will move to make war on Britain."

"This is not a time for sleeping," the Queen said. "Everything must be looked after speedily and strongly."

"Our expectation that war would occur has made us prepare early for it," Cymbeline said.

Using the royal plural, he said, "But, my gentle Queen, where is Imogen, our daughter? She did not appear before the Roman Caius Lucius, nor has she greeted us recently. To us, she seems more like a thing made of malice than a dutiful daughter. We have noticed it."

He ordered an attendant, "Tell her to appear now before us; we have been weak in allowing her to treat us this way."

An attendant left to summon Imogen to appear before her father.

The Queen said, "Royal sir, since the exile of Posthumus, her life has been most retired. She stays by herself most of

the time. The cure for this, my lord, is time, which tames the strongest grief. I ask your majesty to not speak sharply to her: She's a lady who is so sensitive to rebukes that words are strokes, and strokes are death to her."

The attendant returned.

Cymbeline said to him, "Where is she, sir? How can her contemptible treatment of me be accounted for?"

"If it please you, sir, her rooms are all locked; and there's no answer given to the loudest noise we make," the attendant said.

The Queen said to Cymbeline, "My lord, when I last went to visit her, she asked me to excuse her keeping to herself, saying that she was ill and therefore was unable to greet you each day, as she was supposed to do. She wanted me to tell you this, but our great court business with Caius Lucius caused me to forget."

"Her doors are locked?" Cymbeline said. "No one has seen her recently? Heavens, may that which I fear prove not to have happened!"

He exited to go to his daughter's chambers. His attendants followed him.

The Queen said to Cloten, "Go, son, and follow the King."

Cloten replied, "That man of hers, Pisanio, her old servant, has not been seen for the past two days."

"Go, look after the King," the Queen said.

Cloten exited.

Alone, the Queen said to herself, "Pisanio serves as the advocate at court for Posthumus! He has a poisonous drug of mine; I pray that his absence from court is the result of his swallowing my drug because he believes that it is a

most precious thing. But as for Imogen, where has she gone? Perhaps despair has seized her, or winged with the fervor of her love, she's flown to her desired Posthumus. She has gone either to death or to dishonor, and either one serves my purpose. With her out of the way, I can place the British crown on whose head I wish."

Cloten, who could possibly be the next King of Britain, returned.

The Queen said to him, "What is the news, my son?"

"It is certain that Imogen has fled. Go in and cheer up the King. He rages, and no one dares to come near him."

The Queen thought, *All the better. I hope that his rage kills him before the coming day!*

She exited.

Cloten said to himself about Imogen, "I love and hate her because she's beautiful and royal, and because she has all courtly accomplishments more exquisite than any other lady, ladies, woman. From everyone she has the best parts, and she, who is made of all the best parts blended together, surpasses everyone. I love her therefore, but her disdain me and throwing her favors on the lowly born Posthumus so disgraces her judgment that what would otherwise be rare is suffocated, and because of that I hate her — indeed, because of that, I will be revenged upon her. For when fools shall —"

Cloten stopped talking because Pisanio entered the room.

Cloten said, "Who is here?"

Recognizing Pisanio, he said, "What are you plotting, sirrah?"

The word "sirrah" was used to address a male of lower

social status than the speaker.

Cloten said to Pisanio, "Come here! Ah, you precious pander! Villain, where is your lady? Where is Imogen? Tell me quickly, or quickly I will send you to Hell so you can be with the fiends!"

"Oh, my good lord!"

"Where is your lady? Where is Imogen?" Cloten repeated. "Tell me, or by Jupiter I will not ask again. Secretive villain, I'll have this secret from your heart, or I'll rip your heart to find it. Is she with Posthumus? From Posthumus' many pounds of baseness even a part of an ounce of worth cannot be drawn."

"Alas, my lord," Pisanio said. "How can Imogen be with Posthumus? When was she discovered absent from the court? Posthumus is in Rome. She cannot have traveled that far so quickly to see him."

"Where is she then, sir?" Cloten asked. "Come nearer. No further faltering. Tell me exactly what has become of her."

"Oh, my all-worthy lord!"

"All-worthy villain!" Cloten replied. "Reveal to me where your mistress is at once, using your next word. Let me hear no more of 'worthy lord!' Speak, or your silence will result immediately in your condemnation and your death."

"Then, sir, this letter is the history of my knowledge concerning her flight," Pisanio said.

He held up the letter in which Posthumus had told Imogen to meet him at Milford Haven. In doing this, he was not betraying Imogen because he thought that she had left the region.

Cloten said, "Let me see the letter. I will pursue Imogen

even all the way to the throne of Caesar Augustus.”

He took it and began to read it.

Pisanio thought, *I had to do this, or perish. But Imogen is far enough away from Milford Haven to be safe, and what Cloten learns by reading this letter may prove to be his travail and not her danger.*

Reading the letter, Cloten grunted.

Pisanio thought, *I'll write to my lord, Posthumus, that she's dead. Oh, Imogen, safe may you wander, and safe return again!*

“Sirrah, is this letter true?”

“Sir, I think it is.”

“It is Posthumus’ handwriting; I recognize it,” Cloten said. “Sirrah, if you wish not to be a villain, but instead to do me true service, undertake with a serious industry those tasks in which I should have reason to use you; that is, whatever villainy I order you to do, perform it immediately and truly — I wish to think that you are an honest man. If you prove to serve me faithfully, you will neither want my means for your relief nor my voice for your advancement. You will be richly rewarded for your service.”

“Good, my good lord,” Pisanio replied.

“Will you serve me? Patiently and steadfastly you have stuck to the bare fortune of that beggar Posthumus, and so you cannot, in the course of gratitude, but be a diligent follower of mine. Posthumus could not reward you well for your service, but I can. Will you serve me?”

“Sir, I will.”

“Give me your hand,” Cloten said. “Here’s my bag of money for you to take care of. Do you have any of your

recent master's — Posthumus' — garments in your possession?"

"I have, my lord, at my lodging, the same suit of clothing that Posthumus wore when he took leave of my lady and mistress: Imogen."

"The first service you will do me is to fetch that suit of clothing and bring it here. Let it be your first service; go."

"I shall, my lord," Pisanio said as he exited.

"Posthumus and Imogen will meet at Milford Haven!" Cloten said. "I forgot to ask Pisanio one thing: I'll remember it soon. At Milford Haven, you villain Posthumus, I will kill you. I wish these garments of yours were here now. Imogen said once — the bitterness of it I now belch from my heart — that she held the garment of Posthumus in more respect than my noble and natural person even with the adornment of my qualities. While wearing Posthumus' clothing on my back, I will rape her. First I will kill him in front of her. That way, she will witness my valor, which will then be a torment to her because of her contempt of me. The insults I will say will end when he lies dead on the ground, and when my lust has dined on her body — which, as I say, to vex her I will rape her while I wear the clothes that she so praised — then I'll beat her back to the court, kicking her home again. She has despised me with delight, and I'll be merry in my revenge."

Pisanio had come back early enough to hear Cloten's plan to rape Imogen. Cloten had not been aware of Pisanio's presence because Pisanio had stopped a short distance away and had been quiet, but now Pisanio walked toward him, carrying a suit of clothing.

"Are those Posthumus' clothes?" Cloten asked.

"Yes, my noble lord."

Remembering what he had forgotten to ask Pisanio previously, Cloten asked, “How long has it been since Imogen went to Milford Haven?”

“She can scarcely have arrived there yet,” Pisanio answered.

“Take this apparel to my chamber; that is the second thing that I have commanded you to do. The third is that you will be a voluntary mute about my plan — don’t make me cut off your tongue! Don’t tell anyone what I am planning to do. Do your duty to me, and true advancement shall come to you. My revenge is now at Milford Haven. I wish that I had wings to follow it! Come, and serve me faithfully and truly.”

Cloten exited.

Pisanio said to himself, “You order me to do things that will be to my loss because if I am true to you, then I am false, which I will never be, to him — Posthumus — who is most true. To Milford Haven you will go, and you will not find her — Imogen — whom you are pursuing! Flow, flow, you Heavenly blessings, on her! May this fool’s speed be thwarted by slowness; may hard work be his reward!”

— 3.6 —

Imogen, wearing the clothing of a young man, stood in front of Belarius’ (Morgan’s) cave in Wales.

She said to herself, “I see a man’s life is a tedious one. I have attired myself in men’s clothing, and I have tired myself by walking, and for the past two nights I have made the ground my bed. I should be sick, but my determination to be near my husband helps me. Milford Haven, when Pisanio showed you to me from the mountaintop, you were within sight. By Jove, I think places where help can be found flee from the wretched — such people, I mean, who

deserve to be relieved from their distress. Two beggars told me that I could not miss my way. Will poor folks lie in order to get alms, although they know that their afflictions are a punishment or test sent from Heaven? Yes, and it is no wonder then that beggars lie when rich people will scarcely tell the truth. To sin when one is prosperous is worse than to lie because of need, and falsehood is worse in Kings than it is in beggars.

“My dear husband: Posthumus! You are one of the false ones! Now that I am thinking about you, my hunger’s gone; but just a moment before, I was ready to sink to the ground because of lack of food.

“But what is this? Here is a path to a cave: It is some stronghold for savages. It would be best if I did not call to whoever is here. I dare not call, yet famine, before it wholly overthrows a person’s nature, makes that nature valiant and courageous. Plenty and peace breed cowards: hardship is always the mother of courage.

“Hey! Who’s here? If you are anyone who is civilized, speak; if savage, act — take my money and life or lend me aid. Hey! No answer? Then I’ll enter.

“I had best draw my sword. If my enemy fears a sword like I do, he’ll scarcely look on it. May the good Heavens give me such a foe!”

She entered the cave.

Belarius (Morgan), Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal) arrived, carrying the game they had hunted.

Belarius (Morgan) said, “You, Polydore, have proved to be the best hunter and so you are the master of the feast. Cadwal and I will play the cook and servant; that is the agreement we made. The sweat of industry would dry and die, except for the end it works to. We would not do the

hard work of hunting except for the necessity of feeding ourselves. Come; our stomachs will make plain and simple food savory and delicious. A weary person can snore while lying upon flinty ground, while a lazy and slothful person finds a down pillow hard. Now may peace be here, poor cave and home, that we left all alone!”

“I am thoroughly weary,” Guiderius (Polydore) said.

“I am weak with toil, yet strong in appetite,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said.

“There is cold food in the cave,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “We’ll nibble on that while what we have killed is being cooked.”

Belarius (Morgan) looked into the cave and said to the others, “Stay outside; do not come in. Except that it eats our food, I would think here is a creature of enchantment.”

“What’s the matter, sir?” Guiderius (Polydore) asked.

“By Jupiter, I see an angel!” Belarius (Morgan) said. “Or, if not, an earthly paragon! Behold divineness no elder than a boy!”

Imogen came out of the cave and said, “Good masters, don’t hurt me. Before I entered the cave here, I called, and I intended to have begged or bought what I have taken. Truly, I have stolen nothing, nor would I, even though I had found gold strewn on the floor.”

She held out some money and said, “Here’s money for my food. I would have left it on the table as soon as I had finished my meal, and parted with prayers for the provider.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said, “Money, youth?”

Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “All gold and silver should turn

to dirt! Gold and silver are not thought to be better than dirt except by those who worship dirty, repulsive gods!”

Imogen said, “I see you’re angry. Know, if you kill me for my fault, I would have died had I not committed the fault of eating your food without first getting permission.”

“Where are you going?” Belarius (Morgan) asked her.

“To Milford Haven.”

“What’s your name?”

“Fidele, sir.”

Fidele is French for “the faithful one.”

Imogen (Fidele) continued, “I have a relative who is bound for Italy; he embarked at Milford Haven. I was going to him, when almost exhausted with hunger, I committed this offence.”

“Please, fair youth,” Belarius (Morgan) said. “Don’t think that we are brutes, and don’t judge our good minds by this rude cave we live in. It is good that you encountered us! It is almost night. You shall have better entertainment before you depart, and we will thank you to stay and eat our food.”

He then said, “Boys, make him welcome.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said, “Were you a woman, youth, I would woo you hard so I could be your legal bridegroom. I would bid for you as if I intended definitely to buy you.”

Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “I am glad that he is a man. I’ll love him as I love my brother, and such a welcome as I would give to my brother after a long absence, I give to you, Fidele. You are very welcome here! Be cheerful because you have fallen among friends.”

Imogen (Fidele) thought, *Among friends, as long as we are*

brothers. I wonder if you would still be friends if you knew that I am a woman. Being a lone woman among strange men is dangerous. I wish that you really were my brothers — my father's sons. If you were my father's sons, then I would not be heir to my father's kingdom, and so I would be more equal to you, Posthumus, and I would be much more likely to be allowed to be married to you.

Imogen (Fidele) did not know it, but these two young men — Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal) — really were her brothers, whom Belarius had kidnapped when they were very young.

Belarius (Morgan) said, “He wrings his hands because of some distress.”

“I wish that I could free him of that distress!” Guiderius (Polydore) said.

“As do I,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said, whatever that distress is, and whatever pain it would cost me, and whatever danger it would put me in. Gods!”

“Listen to me, boys,” Belarius (Morgan) said to Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal).

He whispered to them.

Imogen (Fidele) thought, *Great men who had a court no bigger than this cave, who served themselves instead of having others serve them, and who had the virtue that their own conscience ratified in them — disregarding that worthless gift of the adulation of fickle multitudes of people — could not surpass these two young men. Pardon me, gods! I would change my sex to be companions with them, since Leonatus is false to me.*

Belarius (Morgan) said to his two “sons,” “It shall be done. Boys, we’ll go prepare our game for cooking.”

He said to Imogen (Fidele), “Fair youth, come in. Conversation is difficult to make when we are hungry; when we have eaten, we’ll politely ask you to tell your story, as much as you are willing to tell of it.”

“Please, come near,” Guiderius (Polydore) said to Imogen (Fidele).

Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “The night to the owl and the morning to the lark are less welcome than you are to us.”

“Thanks, sir,” Imogen (Fidele) replied.

“Please, come near,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said to her.

— 3.7 —

Two Senators and some Tribunes met in a public place in Rome.

The first Senator said, “This is the substance of the Emperor’s command: That since the common men are now in action fighting against the Pannonians in Hungary and the Dalmatians on the Adriatic Sea, and since the legions now in France are too weak to undertake our wars against the rebelling Britons, that we summon the gentry to go to war against the Britons. Caesar Augustus makes Caius Lucius Proconsul, and he delegates to you the Tribunes his complete authority to raise this immediate levy of soldiers. Long live Caesar!”

“Is Caius Lucius the general of the armed forces?” the first Tribune asked.

“Yes,” the second Senator said.

“Is he still in France?” the first Tribune asked.

The first Senator replied, “He is with those legions of soldiers that I have spoken of, whereunto your levy of soldiers must be the reinforcements. The words of your

commission will stipulate the numbers of the soldiers you will draft and the time they will be dispatched to France.”

“We will do our duty,” the first Tribune said.

CHAPTER 4 (Cymbeline)

— 4.1 —

Cloten, wearing Posthumus' clothing, stood near Belarius' (Morgan's) cave.

Alone, he said to himself, "I am near the place where Posthumus and Imogen should meet, if Pisanio has mapped the place truly and correctly. How fittingly his garments serve me! Why shouldn't his mistress, who was made by Him — God — Who made the tailor, be fitting for me, too? I fit in Posthumus' clothing, so why shouldn't I fit in his wife? Pardon the sexual puns, but it is said a woman's fitness — readiness for a sexual workout — comes by fits and starts. Therein I must play the skilled workman and make sure that I fit in her.

"I dare to say this to myself — for it is not vainglorious for a man and his mirror to confer privately in his own bedchamber — I mean, the lines of my body are as well drawn as those of Posthumus' body. I am no less young, I am stronger, I am not beneath him in fortunes, I am superior to him in having the advantage of social connections, I am above him in birth, I am equally experienced as him in general military services, and I am more remarkable in single combat and duels.

"Yet this stubborn and blind thing — Imogen — loves him instead of me. What a thing human nature is!

"Posthumus, your head, which now is growing upon your shoulders, shall within this hour be cut off. Your wife shall be raped, your garments shall be cut to pieces before her face, and when all this is done, I will kick her home to her father. He may perhaps be a little angry for my very rough treatment of your wife, who is his daughter, but my mother,

who has the power to change his testiness, shall turn all his criticisms of me into commendations of me.

“My horse is tied up safely. Out, sword, because I will use you for a grievous purpose! Fortune, put Posthumus and Imogen into my hands! This place matches the exact description of their meeting place, and that fellow Pisanio does not dare to deceive me.”

— 4.2 —

Belarius (Morgan) came out of the cave. With him were Guiderius (Polydore), Arviragus (Cadwal), and Imogen (Fidele). Everyone still thought that Imogen was the young man Fidele.

Belarius (Morgan) said to Imogen (Fidele), “You are not well. Remain here in the cave, and we’ll come to you after hunting.”

Arviragus (Cadwal) said to her, “Brother, stay here. Are we not brothers?”

Not feeling well because of the hardships she had gone through, Imogen (Fidele) said, “Although both men are made from clay, and although both turn to dust when they die, yet they can differ in social class. But man and man should be brothers.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said to Belarius (Morgan) and Arviragus (Cadwal), “You two go and hunt. I’ll stay with him.”

“I am not sick, although I am not well,” Imogen (Fidele) said. “I am not so citified a pampered child that I seem ready to die before I am sick. Please, leave me here, alone. Stick to your normal daily activities. Breaking a routine upsets everything. I am ill, but your being beside me cannot heal me; society is no comfort to one who is not sociable. I

am not very sick, since I can talk reasonably about it — I am not delirious. Please, trust me to be alone here. I'll rob no one but myself; and let me die if I steal from one who is that poor. I will deserve to die since I am such a poor thief.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said to her, “I love you; I have said it. I love you as much and as deeply as I love my father.”

“What!” Belarius (Morgan) said, surprised.

“Even if it is a sin to say so, I share my good brother's fault,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said. “I don't know why I love this youth, and I have heard you say that love is without reason. If a bier were at the door, and I was asked who should die, I would say, ‘My father, not this youth.’”

Belarius (Morgan) marveled at how much his “sons” loved this young man whom they had just recently met. Such love must come from the young man's good and noble character, which must be like the good and noble character — a result of their noble heritage — of his “sons.” It was likely that the young man also had a noble heritage.

He thought, Oh, noble strain! Oh, worthiness of nature! Oh, breed of greatness! Cowards father cowards and base things sire base things. Nature has meal and bran, contempt and grace. I'm not these two boys' biological father; but whoever this Fidele is, it is a miracle that these two boys love him more than they love me.

He said out loud, “It is the ninth hour of the morning.”

“Brother, farewell,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said.

“I wish you good hunting,” Imogen (Fidele) said.

“I wish you health,” Arviragus (Cadwal) replied.

He said to Belarius (Morgan), “I am ready, sir.”

These are kind creatures, Imogen thought. By the gods, what lies I have heard! Our courtiers say everyone is savage except those who are at court. Experience, you have disproved what they say! The imperious seas breed monsters, but the poor tributary rivers breed no monsters although they breed as good fish for our dishes as the imperious seas do. I am still sick; I am heartsick. Pisanio, I'll now taste of the drug that you gave me.

She swallowed some of the drug that Pisanio had given to her; it was the same drug that the Queen had given to Pisanio.

The three men talked quietly together, away from Imogen.

Guiderius (Polydore) said about Imogen (Fidele), "I could not get him to say much about himself. He said he was well born, but unfortunate; he was afflicted by dishonorable people, but he himself was still honest and honorable."

"He said the same thing to me," Arviragus (Cadwal) said, "but he added that later I might learn more."

"To the field, to the field!" Belarius (Morgan) said. "It is time to hunt."

He said to Imogen (Fidele), "We'll leave you for awhile. Go in the cave and rest."

"We'll not be away for long," Arviragus (Cadwal) said.

"Please, don't be sick," Belarius (Morgan) said to her, "because you must manage our household."

"Whether I am well or ill, I am bound to you," Imogen (Fidele) said.

"And shall be forever," Belarius (Morgan) replied.

She had used the word "bound" to mean "obliged," but he had used it to mean "bound by mutual affection."

Imogen (Fidele) went into the cave.

Belarius (Morgan) then said, “This youth, however distressed he is, appears to have had good ancestors.”

“How like an angel he sings!” Arviragus (Cadwal) marveled.

“And his elegant cookery!” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “He cut our roots into shapes and letters, and he seasoned our broths just as if the goddess Juno — who would expect fine food — had been sick and he was her dietician.”

“Nobly he links a smile with a sigh, as if the sigh was what it was because it was not such a smile; the smile is mocking the sigh because it would fly from so divine a temple and mingle with winds that sailors rail at,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said.

“I noticed that grief and patience, both of which are rooted in him, mingle their roots together,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “He is sorrowful, but he manages his sorrow well.”

“May the root of patience grow in him,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said. “And may grief — the dying and destructive root of the stinking elder tree, from which Judas hanged himself — untwine itself from the growing vine of patience!”

“It is now fully morning,” Belarius (Morgan) said. “Come, let’s go and hunt!”

He saw something move and said quietly to his “sons,” “Who’s there?”

Cloten came into view, but he did not see the three men immediately.

Cloten said to himself, “I cannot find those renegades; that villain has fooled me. I am faint.”

Belarius (Morgan) said quietly, ““Those renegades!’ Doesn’t he mean us? I somewhat know him: He is Cloten, the son of the Queen. I fear some ambush. I have not seen him for many years, and yet I know it is he. We are regarded as outlaws! Run!”

Guiderius (Polydore) replied, “He is only one man; he is alone. You and my brother go and search to see which other people are near. Please, go. Let me alone with him. I will deal with him.”

Belarius (Morgan) and Arviragus (Cadwal) exited.

Cloten saw them leaving and called, “Wait! Who are you two who are running away from me like this? Are you some villainous criminals who live in the mountains? I have heard of such.”

He asked Guiderius (Polydore), “What slave are you?”

The word “slave” was an insult that meant “villain.”

“The most slavish thing I can ever do is to let you insult me without my giving you a blow in return,” Guiderius (Polydore) replied.

Cloten replied, “You are a robber, a law-breaker, a villain. Surrender, thief.”

“To whom? To you? Who are you? Don’t I have an arm as big as your arm? A heart as big? Your words, I grant, are bigger, for I don’t wear my dagger in my mouth. Say who you are. Explain why I should surrender to you.”

“You base villain, don’t you realize who I am by looking at the sort of clothing I am wearing?”

“No, I don’t know who you are,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “Nor, rascal, do I know who your tailor is, although he must be your grandfather. He made those clothes, and

you think that your clothes make you, and so your tailor is your grandfather.”

“You worthless rascal,” Cloten said, “My tailor did not make these clothes.”

Cloten was wearing Posthumus’ clothing.

“Leave, then, and thank the man who gave them to you. You are some fool, and so I am loath to beat you.”

“You insulting thief, hear what my name is, and tremble.”

“What’s your name?”

“Cloten, you villain.”

“If Cloten, you double villain, is your name, I cannot tremble at it. If your name were Toad, or Adder, or Spider, all of which are venomous creatures, it would make a bigger impression on me.”

“To your further fear — no, to your complete confusion, you should know that I am the Queen’s son.”

“I am sorry that you are the son of the Queen; you don’t seem to be worthy of your high birth.”

“Aren’t you afraid now?” Cloten asked.

“I fear those whom I revere, the wise. I laugh at fools — I do not fear them.”

“Now you shall die,” Cloten said. “After I have slain you with my own hand, I’ll follow those who just now fled from here, and on the gates of Lud’s town I will display your heads. Surrender, hillbilly mountaineer.”

They exited, fighting.

Belarius (Morgan) met Arviragus (Cadwal) and asked, “Did you see any people nearby?”

“None in the world. You mistook the identity of this man, I am sure.”

“Let me think,” Belarius (Morgan) said. “It has been a long time since I saw him, but time has not blurred the facial features that he had the last time I saw him. Also, the hesitations in his speech, followed by bursts of speaking, are exactly the same as they were. I am absolutely sure that this man is really Cloten.”

“We left my brother and Cloten in this place. I hope that my brother makes short work of him. You say that Cloten is so savage and cruel.”

Belarius (Morgan) replied, “Cloten roars as if he is a terror; he frightens people with his bluster. Your brother is young; he is scarcely a man. Because of his youth, he has no experience of such blustery roaring ‘terrors’ as Cloten. I hope that your brother is not afraid of him, as he may be if he mistakes the bluster of threats for the reality of danger. Defective judgment about a man’s character can cause that man to be feared. But, look, your brother is coming.”

Carrying Cloten’s head, Guiderius (Polydore) walked over to them and said, “This Cloten was a fool. His head is an empty purse with no money in it. Hercules performed many almost impossible labors, but even he would be unable to knock out Cloten’s brains, because Cloten had none. Yet if I had not cut off his head, the fool would be carrying my head instead of me carrying his head.”

Belarius (Morgan), who was aware of the seriousness of killing the son of the Queen, said, “What have you done!”

“I know exactly what I have done. I have cut off the head of Cloten, son of the Queen, according to his own report; he called me ‘traitor’ and ‘mountaineer,’ and he swore that with his own unassisted hand he would capture us and displace our heads from where — thank the gods! — they

grow, and display them in Lud's town."

"We are all undone, ruined, and destroyed," Belarius (Morgan) said.

"Why, worthy father, what have we to lose, except that which he swore to take, our lives?" Guiderius (Polydore) said. "The law does not protect us, so why then should we be so meek and spineless that we let an arrogant piece of flesh threaten us and play judge and executioner all by himself? Should we do that because we fear the law?"

He paused and then asked, "Did you discover any other men in this area?"

Belarius (Morgan) replied, "We have not laid an eye on a single soul, but level-headed reason tells me that he must have some attendants. His mood was very changeable, yes, and he changed from one bad thing to another that was worse; however, not frenzy, not even absolute madness could have so far possessed him that he would come here alone. Perhaps at court news is spread that such as we live in caves here, hunt here, are outlaws here, and in time may make some stronger fighting force; if he heard that news, then it is like him to break out in speech and swear that he would capture us and fetch us into the court, yet it is not probable that he would come alone. He is unlikely to want to come alone, and the others at court are unlikely to allow him to come alone, and so we have good grounds to fear that other men are near us. Like a scorpion, this body of men has a tail more perilous than the head. Cloten was not much of a danger, but the men he must have brought with him will be more dangerous than he."

"Let what is ordained come just as the gods foretell it," Arviragus (Cadwal) said. "However, my brother has done well."

"I was not in the mood to hunt today," Belarius (Morgan)

said. "The boy Fidele's sickness made my walk away from the cave seem long."

Guiderius (Polydore) said, "With Cloten's own sword, which he waved against my throat, I have taken his head away from him. I'll throw it into the creek behind our cave and let it go to the sea, where it will tell the fishes he's the Queen's son, Cloten. That's all I care about him."

Guiderius (Polydore) exited.

"I am afraid that Cloten's death will be revenged," Belarius (Morgan) said. "I wish, Polydore, you had not killed him, although valor becomes you well enough."

"I wish that I had killed him, as long as the revenge pursued only me!" Arviragus (Cadwal) said. "Polydore, I love you like the brother you are, but I am very envious of you because you have robbed me of this deed. I wish that avengers, whom we could fight with the strength we have, would thoroughly seek us and force us to fight them."

"Well, it is done," Belarius (Morgan) said. "Cloten is dead. We'll hunt no more today, nor will we seek danger where there's no profit in doing so. Please, go to our cave. You and Fidele be the cooks today; I'll stay here until impulsive Polydore returns, and I'll bring him home to dinner soon."

"Poor sick Fidele! To get his color back to him, I'd willingly make a parish full of Clotens bleed, and I would praise myself for acting charitably."

Arviragus (Cadwal) exited.

Belarius (Morgan) said to himself, "Oh, goddess, you divine Nature, how you proclaim yourself in these two Princely boys! They are as gentle as zephyrs blowing below the violets, not wagging their sweet heads; and yet they are as rough, once their royal blood is heated, as the

rudest wind that takes the top of a mountain pine and makes it stoop to the valley. It is wonderful that an invisible, unseen instinct should shape them to act royally and honorably without having been taught to act that way, and to act civilly without seeing models of such behavior. Valor grows wild in them, but it yields a crop as if it had been sowed. They act like Princes without having been taught how to act like Princes.

“Yet it’s still a mystery what Cloten’s being here signifies to us, and what his death will bring us.”

Guiderius (Polydore) came back and said, “Where’s my brother? I have sent Cloten’s idiot head down the stream on an embassy to his mother. His body is being held hostage until his head’s return.”

Solemn music began to play.

“My ingenious musical instrument!” Belarius (Morgan) said. “Listen, Polydore, it is playing! But why is Cadwal now making it play? Listen!”

He was referring to a musical instrument that he had built to be played only on important solemn occasions.

“Is he at home?”

“He went there just now.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said, “What does he mean by starting up the musical instrument? It has not played since the death of my very dear mother. All solemn things, including solemn music, should correspond to solemn events. What is the matter? Triumphs to celebrate nothing and laments over trifles are fun for apes and grief for boys. Is Cadwal mad? Is he playing this music to grieve over the death of Cloten?”

Belarius (Morgan) said, “Look, here he comes. We have

been blaming him for playing this music, but he carries the dire reason for this solemn music in his arms.”

Arviragus (Cadwal), carrying the stiff body of Imogen (Fidele) in his arms, walked over to them.

He said, “The bird is dead that we have made so much about. I would rather have skipped from sixteen years of age to sixty, to have turned my vigorous and youthful leaping-time into a time in which I need a crutch, than to have seen this.”

“Oh, sweetest, fairest lily!” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “My brother wears you like a flower that is not even one-half as good as when you were still alive and growing.”

Arviragus (Cadwal) placed the body on the ground.

“Melancholy!” Belarius (Morgan) said. “Whoever yet could sound your bottom as if you were a river and plumb your depths? Whoever could find the ooze at the bottom, to show what coast your sluggish small trading boat might most easily harbor in? You blessed thing! Jove knows what man you might have been when you grew up; but I know that you, a very rare boy, died of melancholy.”

He said to Arviragus (Cadwal), “How was he when you found him?”

“Stiff, as you see him now, and smiling like he is now, as if some fly had tickled him in his slumber, not as if he was laughing at death’s dart. His right cheek was resting on a cushion.”

“Where was he?” Guiderius (Polydore) asked.

“On the floor. His arms were crossed against his chest. I thought he slept, and took off my hobnailed boots, whose coarseness made my steps too loud.”

“Why, he is only sleeping,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “If he is dead and gone, he’ll make his grave into a bed. Female fairies will stay near his tomb —”

He turned to the body of Imogen (Fidele) and said, “— and worms will not come to you.”

Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “With the fairest flowers while summer lasts and I live here, Fidele, I’ll sweeten your sad grave. You shall not lack the flower that’s like your face, pale primrose, nor shall you lack the colored-like-a-clear-sky bluebell, which is the same color as your veins, nor shall you lack the leaf of eglantine, which I do not mean to slander when I say that it does not smell sweeter than your breath. The robin, with its charitable bill — the bill that greatly shames those rich heirs who allow their fathers to lie without a monument! — will bring your body all these flowers, and furred moss besides, when in winter there are no flowers, to cover your corpse.”

“Please, finish,” the practical Guiderius (Polydore) said, “and do not play with womanish words in that which is so serious. Let us bury him, and not defer with admiration and wonder what is now a due debt. Let’s carry his body to the grave.”

“Where shall we bury him?” Arviragus (Cadwal) asked.

“By good Euriphile, our mother.”

“Let’s do it,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “and let us, Polydore, though now our voices have the broken-voice quality of young men, sing as we bury him, as once we buried our mother. We will sing the same notes and words, except that we are singing for Fidele and not for Euriphile.”

“Cadwal, I cannot sing,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “I’ll weep and say the words with you. Sorrowful notes that are out of tune are worse than priests and oracles who lie.”

“We’ll speak the words, then.”

Belarius (Morgan) said, “Great griefs, I see, cure lesser griefs because Cloten is quite forgotten. He was a Queen’s son, boys, and although he came to us as our enemy, remember that he paid for that. Although the lowly and the mighty, rotting together, have one dust, yet respectful esteem, that angel of the world, makes a distinction of place between highly born and lowly born. Our foe was Princely, and although you took his life, because he was our foe, yet we should bury him as a Prince should be buried.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said to Belarius (Morgan), “Please, fetch Cloten’s body here. Thersites’ body is as good as Great Ajax’ body, when neither is alive.”

Great Ajax was a great Greek warrior in the Trojan War, second only to Achilles. Thersites, a common Greek soldier, was ugly and quarrelsome.

“If you’ll go and fetch him,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “we’ll say our song while you are gone. Brother, begin.”

Belarius (Morgan) exited to get Cloten’s body.

“No, Cadwal,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “The body is not placed correctly. We must lay his head to the east; my father has a reason for it.”

They were not Christian; they worshipped the Sun.

“That is true,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said.

“Come on then, and let’s move him.”

They moved the body, and Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “Good. Begin.”

Guiderius (Polydore) began the song:

“Fear no more the heat of the Sun,

“Nor the furious winter’s rages.

“You your worldly task have done,

“Home have you gone, and taken your wages.

“Golden lads and girls all must,

“Like chimney sweepers, come to dust.”

Arviragus (Cadwal) next took up the song:

“Fear no more the frown of the great;

“You are past the tyrant’s stroke.

“Care no more to clothe and eat;

“To you the reed is the same as the oak.

“The scepter, learning, physic, must

[*“The scepter, learning, physic”* referred to Kings and worldly power, scholars and education, and doctors and medicine.]

“All endure death, and come to dust.”

Guiderius (Polydore) spoke next:

“Fear no more the lightning flash,”

Then Arviragus (Cadwal) spoke:

“Nor the all-dreaded thunderstone.”

[The thunderstone was a lightning bolt, which people of that time thought came down with stones from the sky.]

Guiderius (Polydore):

“Fear not slander, censure rash;”

Arviragus (Cadwal):

“You have finished joy and moan.”

Both together:

“All lovers young, all lovers must

“Do like you, and come to dust.”

Guiderius (Polydore):

“May no exorciser [spirit-raiser] harm you!”

Arviragus (Cadwal):

“Nor no witchcraft charm you!”

Guiderius (Polydore):

“Ghost unlaid forbear you!”

[*“May no restless ghost trouble you!”*]

Arviragus (Cadwal):

“May nothing ill come near you!”

Both together:

“Quiet end of life have;

“And renowned be your grave!”

Belarius (Morgan) returned, carrying the headless body of Cloten.

Guiderius (Polydore) said, “We have done our obsequies. Come, lay him down.”

“Here are a few flowers,” Belarius (Morgan) said, “but at about midnight, there will be more. The herbs that have on them the cold dew of the night are the best and fittest to be strewn on graves. Put these flowers on the front of their bodies.”

He said to the two bodies, “You were like flowers, but now you are withered. So shall be these little herbs, which we now strew upon you.”

He then said to his two “sons”: “Come on, let’s go. Away from them, we’ll get upon our knees and pray. The ground that gave them first has them again. Their pleasures here in the living world are past, and so is their pain.”

They exited.

Imogen (Fidele) had not taken poison, but only a drug that made her sleep deeply for a while.

She woke up next to the headless Cloten, who was wearing her husband’s clothes.

Still dreaming and thinking that she was asking for directions to Milford Haven, she said, “Yes, sir, to Milford Haven; which is the way? ... I thank you. ... By yonder bush? ... Please, how much farther is it? ... God, have pity! Can it really be six more miles? ... I have walked all night. Indeed, I’ll lie down and sleep for a while.”

She then fully woke up, felt Cloten’s body next to her, and said, “But, wait! I need no bedfellow!”

She looked at Cloten’s body and said, “Oh, gods and goddesses! These flowers are like the pleasures of the world; this bloody man is like the sorrow in it. I hope I am dreaming because I also dreamt that I was a cave-dweller and a cook to honest men, but that is not so — it was but an arrow of nothing, shot at nothing, an arrow that the brain makes of fumes. Our own eyes are sometimes like our judgments, blind.”

People of the time thought that fumes rising from the body would go to the brain and cause dreams.

She continued, “Truly, I tremble stiff with fear, but if there

is yet left in Heaven a drop of pity as small as a wren's eye, feared gods, give me a part of it! The dream is still here. Even when I awake, it is outside me, as it was within me; it is not imagined — it is felt.”

Because Cloten was dressed in the clothing of her husband, Imogen (Fidele) thought that it was her husband lying dead beside her.

She continued, “A headless man! The garments of Posthumus! I know the shape of his leg. This is his hand. This is his foot like that of the messenger god Mercury. This is his thigh like that of Mars, the god of war. These are the muscles of Hercules, but his face that is like that of Jupiter ... is there murder in Heaven? ... what! ... his face is gone!

“Pisanio, may all the curses that insane Hecuba gave the Greeks, and my curses, also, be shot at you!”

Following the fall of Troy, its Queen, Hecuba, became insane as a result of grief. She cursed the Greeks for the deaths they had inflicted on members of her family.

Imogen (Fidele) continued, “Pisanio, you must have conspired with that lawless devil, Cloten, and have here killed my husband. To write and to read are from now on treacherous! Pisanio has with his forged letters — damned Pisanio — from this most splendid vessel of the world struck off the top of the main mast! Posthumus! I mourn! Where is your head? Where is it? Pisanio might have killed you by striking you in the heart, and left you your head.

“How could this come to be? Pisanio? He and Cloten have done this! Cloten's malice and Pisanio's greed have laid this woeful corpse here. Oh, it is clear, clear! The drug Pisanio gave me, which he said was precious and medicinal to me, have I not found it murderous to the senses? That completely confirms it. This is Pisanio's deed, as well as

Cloten's."

She smeared her cheeks with blood while saying to the corpse, "Give color to my pale cheek with your blood, so that we may seem all the more horrid to those who chance to find us. Oh, my lord, my lord!"

She lay on the corpse.

General Caius Lucius, a Roman Captain, some other officers, and a soothsayer arrived on the scene, but they did not immediately notice Imogen (Fidele) and the headless corpse. They were busy discussing military preparations.

The Captain said to Caius Lucius, "In addition to those forces, the legions garrisoned in France, following your orders, have crossed the sea, and are awaiting you here at Milford Haven with your ships. They are all ready."

Caius Lucius asked, "What forces are coming from Rome?"

The Captain replied, "The Senate has stirred up the inhabitants and gentlemen of Italy, who are very willing spirits and who promise to provide noble service, and they are coming here under the command of bold Iachimo, the brother of the Duke of Siena."

"When do you expect them?"

"I expect them to arrive with the next favorable wind."

"This state of preparedness makes our hopes of success fair," Caius Lucius said. "Command our present numbers to be mustered; order the captains to do it."

He then asked the soothsayer, "Now, sir, what have you dreamed recently about this war's outcome?"

"Last night the gods themselves showed me a vision — I fasted and prayed for them to give me information. I saw

Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, fly from the damp south to this part of the west, where it vanished in the sunbeams, which portends — unless my sins interfere with my divination — success to the Roman army.”

“Dream such dreams often, and may they always be true,” Caius Lucius replied.

Seeing Imogen (Fidele) and the corpse, he said, “Wait! What trunk is here without his top? The ruin shows that once this was a worthy building. What! A page! Either dead, or sleeping on him? But the page must be dead because it is not natural for him to make his bed by the deceased or to sleep on a corpse.”

Referring to Imogen (Fidele), he ordered, “Let's see the boy's face.”

The Captain said, “He's alive, my lord.”

“He'll tell us about this body,” Caius Lucius said.

He then said to Imogen (Fidele), “Young one, tell us about your fortunes, for it seems they must be told. Who is this whom you are making your bloody pillow? Or tell us who was he who has altered that good picture otherwise than noble nature did. What's your interest in this sad wreck? How came this to be? Who is he? Who are you?”

“I am nothing,” Imogen (Fidele) said. “Or if I am not nothing, it would be better if I were nothing. This was my master. He is a very good and valiant Briton who was slain here by mountaineers. Alas! There are no more such masters as he. I may wander from the east to the west, cry out for employment, try many masters, all good, and serve them truly and loyally, but never find another such master.”

“I pity you, good youth!” Caius Lucius said. “You move me no less with your grieving than your master moves me

with his bleeding. Tell me his name, good friend.”

“He was named Richard du Champ,” Imogen (Fidele) replied.

She thought, *If I lie but do no harm by lying, then if the gods hear my lie, I hope they’ll pardon it.*

Seeing Caius Lucius looking expectantly at her, she asked, “Did you say something, sir?”

“What is your name?”

“Fidele, sir.”

“You have proven that you are faithful, as your name says that you are. Your name fits your faith well, and your faith fits your name well. Will you take a chance and serve me? Will you enter my employ? I will not say you shall have as good a master as you did, but you can be sure that you will be no less beloved than you were. The Roman Emperor’s letters, sent by a consul to me, should not sooner than your own worth recommend you to me. Come, go with me and be in my employ.”

“I’ll follow you, sir,” Imogen (Fidele) said. “But first, if it please the gods, I’ll hide my dead master from the flies, as deep as these poor pickaxes — my fingers — can dig; and when with wild tree leaves and weeds I have strewn his grave, and on it said a hundred prayers that I know, twice, I’ll weep and sigh. Then, leaving his service, I will follow you, if it pleases you to employ me.”

“Yes, it does please me, good youth! And I will be more of a father to you than a master,” Caius Lucius said.

He then ordered, “My friends, the boy has taught us manly duties. Let us find the prettiest daisied plot we can, and make a grave with our pikes and partisans for the boy’s master. Come, carry the body in your arms.”

Pikes and partisans are long-handled weapons.

He then said to Imogen (Fidele), “Boy, your late master is recommended by you to us, and he shall be interred as well as soldiers can inter him. Be cheerful; wipe your eyes. Some falls are the means for happier things to arise. Good can come from evil.”

— 4.3 —

In a room in Cymbeline’s palace stood King Cymbeline, some lords, Pisanio, and some attendants. The Queen was not present because she was very ill.

Cymbeline ordered an attendant, “Go again to the Queen, and bring me word how she is.”

The attendant exited.

Cymbeline said, “The Queen has a fever because of the absence of her son. The fever is a result of madness, and her life’s in danger. Heavens, how deeply all at once you wound me with many cares! Imogen, who is a great part of my comfort and happiness, is gone. My Queen is desperately ill in bed. And at a time when I face fearful wars and her son is much needed, he is gone. These blows take from me all hope of happiness.”

He then said to Pisanio, “But as for you, fellow, who necessarily must know of Imogen’s departure although you pretend that you are ignorant of it, we’ll force you to give us information by using sharp, painful torture.”

“Sir, my life is yours,” Pisanio replied. “I humbly set it before you to do with as you will, but as for my mistress, I know nothing about where she is, why she is gone, or when she intends to return to the court. I beg your Highness to regard me as your loyal servant.”

The first lord said, “My good liege, the day that Imogen

was missed, Pisanio was here. I dare to vouch that he is loyal and shall perform all points of his service to you loyally. As for Cloten, we lack no diligence in seeking for him, and he will, no doubt, be found.”

“These times are troubled,” Cymbeline said.

He said to Pisanio, “We’ll allow you to be free for a while, but our suspicions still hang over you.”

“So please your majesty,” the first lord said, “the Roman legions, all drawn from France, have landed on your coast, with a supply of Roman gentlemen sent by the Roman Senate.”

“Now I wish I had the counsel of my son and my Queen!” Cymbeline said. “I am bewildered by so many important matters.”

“My good liege,” the first lord said, “your prepared and ready military forces can confront all the opposing forces that you have heard about. If more opposing forces come, you’re ready for them. All that is needed now is to put those military forces in motion — they already long to be employed.”

“I thank you,” Cymbeline said. “Let’s withdraw and meet the time as it seeks us. We don’t fear what comes from Italy to annoy us, but we grieve because of the other events that have happened here. Let’s go.”

Everyone except Pisanio exited.

Pisanio said to himself, “I have received no letter from my master, Posthumus, since I wrote him that Imogen was slain — it is strange. Nor have I heard from Imogen, who promised to often send me news. Neither do I know what has happened to Cloten. I remain perplexed and in doubt about everything. The Heavens still must do their work and

bring all to a good conclusion.

“When I am false, I am honest; I am not true because I can’t be true if I want to be true. I lie so that I can serve Posthumus and Imogen honestly and truly and faithfully. My service in this present war shall show that I love my country, bringing me recognition even from the King, or I’ll fall in the war.

“Let all other doubts be cleared by time. Fortune brings in some boats that are not steered.

“I can’t resolve all doubts by myself; fortunately, in time some boats, even though they lack a pilot, make it safely into the harbor.”

— 4.4 —

In Wales, in front of their cave, Belarius (Morgan), Guiderius (Polydore), and Arviragus (Cadwal) talked together.

Guiderius (Polydore) said, “The noise of soldiers preparing for war is all around us.”

“Let’s get away from it,” Belarius (Morgan) said.

“What pleasure, sir, shall we find in life, if we lock life up and keep it away from action and adventure?” Arviragus (Cadwal) asked.

Guiderius (Polydore) added, “And what are we are hoping for by hiding ourselves? If we hide, the Romans will find us and either slay us because we are Britons, or they will believe that we are barbarous and unnatural rebels whom they can use for a while and then slay afterward.”

“Sons,” Belarius (Morgan) said, “we’ll go higher in the mountains; there we will safely hide ourselves. We can’t go and join the King’s party. Because of Cloten’s death —

since we are not known to the King, and are not mustered among his forces — we may be forced to say where we have lived, and so they may extort from us the information that we have killed Cloten, and his death will result in our torture and death.”

“Sir, this fear in you at such a time does not become you, nor does it make us happy,” Guiderius (Polydore) said.

“It is not likely that when the British forces hear the Roman horses neigh, see the fires in the Romans’ camps, and have their eyes and their ears so crammed with important matters as they are now, that they will waste their time on us and want to know from whence we have come,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said.

“I am known by many people in the army,” Belarius (Morgan) said. “The last time I saw Cloten he was then young, but the many years that have passed did not erase him from my memory, as you have seen. And, besides, the King has not deserved my service or your respect. You have found in sharing my exile a lack of education and proper training as well as the certainty of this hard life. You cannot hope to have the courtly style that your birth as my sons in the court promised you; instead, you will always be the tanned ones of the hot summer and the shrinking, shivering slaves of winter.”

“It would be better not to exist than to be that,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “Please, sir, my brother and I are not known to the army. You, yourself, will not be questioned because you have been away so long that they no longer think about you. Also, your white hair and beard have so grown that they will not recognize you.”

“By this Sun that shines,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said, “I’ll go and join the British soldiers. How shameful it is that I have never seen a man die! I have scarcely ever looked at blood,

except that of coward hares, lecherous goats, and venison! I have never bestrode a horse, except one that had a rider like myself, who never wore a roweled spur or iron on his heel! I am ashamed to look upon the holy Sun, to have the benefit of the Sun's blest beams, because I have remained for so long a poor man with no reputation."

"By the Heavens, I'll go," Guiderius (Polydore) said. "If you will bless me, sir, and give me permission to leave, things will be better for me, but if you will not bless me, then let the danger that arises from being unblessed by you fall on me by the hands of the Romans!"

"Amen!" Arviragus (Cadwal) said.

"Since you set so slight a value on your lives, there is no reason why I should take more care of my cracked — wrinkled — life," Belarius (Morgan) said. "I am ready to go with you, boys! If you chance to die in your country's wars, a grave will be my bed, too, lads, and there I'll lie. Lead on! Lead on!"

He thought, *The time seems long; their blood thinks scorn, until it flies out and shows them to be Princes born. The time has come. They will scorn themselves until they are able to prove that they are true Princes.*

CHAPTER 5 (Cymbeline)

— 5.1 —

Posthumus stood in the Roman camp in Britain, looking at a bloody cloth he held in his hand. Pisanio had sent him the bloody cloth as evidence that he had killed Imogen. Of course, Pisanio had not killed Imogen, despite Posthumus' order to kill her.

Posthumus said, “Yes, bloody cloth, I'll keep you, for I wished you should be colored red like this. Anyone who is married, if each of you should take this course of revenge that I have taken, then many of you will murder wives much better than yourselves simply because your wives strayed a little from the path of virtue!

“Oh, Pisanio! Every good servant does not obey all commands. There is no obligation to obey any commands except the just ones.

“Gods! If you had taken vengeance on my faults, I never would have lived to commit this wrong. You should have saved the noble Imogen so she could repent, and you should have struck me, a wretch more worth your vengeance. But, unfortunately, you snatch some from the world of the living because they committed little faults; still, that's showing them love because you don't allow them to sin any more. You also permit some to reinforce old sins with new sins, each later sin worse, and so eventually make the sinners dread sin, to the sinners' spiritual benefit.

“But Imogen is your own now. Gods, do your best wills, and make me blest to obey your wills! I have been brought here among the Italian gentry, so I can fight against my lady's — Imogen's — Kingdom.

“It is enough, Britain, that I have killed your mistress. Peace! I’ll give no wound to you. Therefore, good Heavens, hear patiently what I intend to do. I’ll take off these Italian clothes and put on the clothing of a British peasant, and dressed like that I’ll fight against the army I came here with. In that way, I’ll die for you, Imogen, for whom my life is every breath a death. Thus, unknown, neither pitied nor hated, I will dedicate myself to face danger. Let me make men know that more valor and courage are in me than my peasant clothing shows.

“Gods, put the strength of the Leonati family in me! To shame the usual practice of the world, I will begin the fashion of showing less on the outside and more on the inside. Internal valor and courage are better than fashionable clothing.”

Leonati is the plural of *Leonatus*.

— 5.2 —

The battle began, with the forces of Caius Lucius and Iachimo making up the Roman army, which fought the British. Fighting on the side of the British was Posthumus Leonatus, who was dressed in the clothing of a peasant. At one point in the battle, Posthumus fought and defeated Iachimo, who did not recognize him. Posthumus did not kill Iachimo, but simply disarmed him and left him alive.

Iachimo said to himself, “The heaviness and guilt within my bosom are taking away my manhood. I have told lies about a lady, Imogen, the Princess of Britain, and the air of Britain gets revenge by making me feeble and weak. Otherwise, this churl, this natural-born peasant, this drudge of nature, would never have defeated me — fighting is my profession! Knighthoods and honors, borne as I wear mine, are titles only of scorn. Britain, if your gentry is that much better than this lout as he is better than our Italian lords, the

odds are that we Italians are scarcely men and you Britons are gods.”

The battle continued, and the Romans began to win. The British, routed, fled. King Cymbeline was captured, but Belarius (Morgan), Guiderius (Polydore), and Arviragus (Cadwal) arrived and began to fight to free him.

Belarius (Morgan) shouted to the retreating British soldiers, “Stand your ground! Stand your ground! We have the advantage of the ground. The lane is guarded. Nothing can rout us except our villainous fears!”

Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal) shouted, “Stand, stand, and fight!”

Posthumus Leonatus showed up and joined Belarius (Morgan), Guiderius (Polydore), and Arviragus (Cadwal). Together, they rescued King Cymbeline and took him to safety.

In another part of the battlefield, Caius Lucius stood with Iachimo and Imogen (Fidele).

Caius Lucius said to Imogen (Fidele), “Get away, boy, from the troops, and save yourself. In the confusion, friends are killing friends, and the disorder is such that it is as if soldiers were fighting while wearing blindfolds.”

Iachimo said, “The British are benefitting from fresh reinforcements.”

Caius Lucius said, “It is a day whose fortunes have turned strangely. We were winning, but now we are losing. It is time either to regroup or to flee.”

— 5.3 —

After the battle, Posthumus Leonatus, still wearing the clothing of a British peasant, met a British lord.

The lord asked him, "Have you come from the place where our soldiers have made a stand against the Romans?"

"I did. But you, it seems, come from the soldiers who were fleeing."

"I did," the lord replied.

"I don't blame you, sir, because all was lost, except that the Heavens fought on our side. King Cymbeline himself was in trouble, the wings of his army were destroyed, the rest of his army was broken, and only the backs of British soldiers could be seen because all of them were fleeing through a straight lane.

"The enemy was full-hearted, with their tongues hanging out like wolves as they slaughtered British soldiers. The number of British soldiers available to be killed was more numerous than Roman weapons could handle. The Romans killed some British soldiers, mortally wounded some others, lightly wounded some others, and frightened some others so badly that they fell down simply out of fear. The narrow pass became dammed with men who died from the wounds they received while running away and with cowards who were not wounded but will live with shame until they die."

"Where was this lane?" the lord asked.

"Nearby the battlefield. It was sunken, and walled with turf. This gave an advantage to an old, experienced soldier, an honorable one, I promise you, who deserves to be honored by his country for as many years as it took him to grow his long beard and have it turn white.

"He and two striplings faced the Romans. The striplings were lads more likely to play boyish games than to commit such slaughter, and they had delicate faces that were fit to wear masks such as women wear to protect their faces from

the Sun — actually, the boys' faces were even fairer than those of ladies who wear such masks to protect themselves from the Sun or to protect themselves from being stared at.

“The old man and the two boys made secure the narrow path. The old man shouted to those who fled, ‘British deer die while fleeing, not our men. May souls who flee and retreat now quickly make their way to the darkness of Hell! Stand your ground, or my sons and I will be Romans and will give you that beastly death that you shun like cowards. If you want to save your lives, all you need to do is turn around and frown at the Roman soldiers. Stand your ground! Stand your ground!’

“These three, who had the confidence of three thousand soldiers, and who in action were worth as many — for three soldiers are the army when all the rest of the soldiers do nothing — with this word ‘Stand! Stand!’ were able to put color into pale faces. They were given an advantage by the narrowness of the place, and they were all the more persuasive because of their own nobleness, which could have turned a woman using a distaff into a soldier using a lance. Some fleeing soldiers they shamed but they also renewed their spirit, and some, who had fled simply because others were fleeing — a sin in war, and damned in the first beginners! — began to look like the old man and his two sons, and to turn toward the Roman soldiers, and to grin like lions at the pikes of the hunters.

“Then the chasers began to stop, and then to retreat, and soon there was a rout, with thick confusion; and then the Roman soldiers fled like chickens back up the same path down which they had swooped like eagles. The same path they had strode like victors they now strode like slaves.

“And now our British cowards, like fragments of food during hard voyages, became the means of survival in an emergency. The Roman soldiers were fleeing, exposing

their backs to the British, and the back door was open that led to their unguarded hearts — as they fled, their exposed and unguarded backs became a target to strike to reach their hearts! Heavens, how the former cowards wounded the fleeing Romans!

“Some cowards who had pretended to be dead or dying, and some of these cowards’ friends whom the fierceness of the Romans had overcome, now fought back. Previously, one Roman soldier had chased ten British soldiers, but now each British soldier slaughtered twenty Roman soldiers. Those who had previously preferred to flee rather than resist, although fleeing meant dying, now became war machines on the battlefield.”

The lord said, “This was a strange joining together: a narrow lane, an old man, and two boys.”

“No, do not wonder at it,” Posthumus replied. “You are made to wonder at the things you hear rather than to yourself do anything that would cause wonder in others. You seem like a person who would mock heroism rather than yourself do anything heroic.

“Will you satirically rhyme upon this event, and then recite your poem so you can mock it? Here are two lines you can use:

“Two boys, an old man twice a boy, a lane,

“Preserved the Britons, and were the Romans’ bane.”

In the satiric lines, the old man was “twice a boy” because of senility; he was in his second childhood.

“Don’t be angry, sir,” the lord said.

Posthumus replied, “*Why would I be angry? For what end?*

“Of anyone who does not dare to face his foe, I’ll be the

friend,

“For if he’ll do as he is made to do,

“I know he’ll quickly flee from my friendship, too.

“You have forced me to rhyme and make satiric verses.”

“Farewell,” the lord said. “You’re angry.”

“Are you still fleeing?” Posthumus asked.

The lord exited.

“This is a lord!” Posthumus exclaimed. “Oh, noble misery, to be in the battlefield, and yet to have to ask me, ‘What is the news?’

“Today how many British soldiers would have given their honors away in order to have saved their carcasses! They took to their heels to save their lives, and yet they died, nevertheless! I, protectively charmed in my own woe, could not find Death where I heard Death groan, nor could I feel Death where he struck. Being that Death is an ugly monster, it is strange that he hides himself in fresh cups, soft beds, and sweet words, and it is strange that he has more ministers than we who draw his knives in the war.

“Well, I will find Death. For the time being he favors the British and keeps them alive.”

Posthumus took off his British-peasant clothing and said, “I am no longer a Briton. I have resumed again the part that I had when I came to Britain from Italy: I am a Roman soldier.

“I will fight no more, but I will surrender to the lowest peasant who shall touch my shoulder in the act of arrest. Great is the slaughter the Romans have made here; great is the retribution that the British must take.

“As for me, the only ransom I will offer will be death. I have come here to die, whether as a Roman or as a Briton. I will not keep breathing here or elsewhere; I will find some way to stop breathing because of what I did to Imogen.”

Two British Captains and some British soldiers came onto the scene.

The first Captain said, “Great Jupiter be praised! The Roman General Caius Lucius has been captured. It is thought that the old man and his sons were angels.”

The second Captain replied, “There was a fourth man, wearing peasants’ clothing, who made the attack with them.”

“So it is reported, but none of them can be found,” the first Captain said.

Seeing Posthumus, now dressed like a Roman soldier, the first Captain said, “Stop! Who’s there?”

Posthumus replied, “A Roman, who would not now be drooping here, if reinforcements had come to him.”

The second Captain ordered, “Arrest him; he is a dog! No dog — or even a leg of a dog — shall return to Rome to tell about the crows that have pecked Roman corpses here. He brags about his service as if he were a man of reputation. Take him to King Cymbeline.”

King Cymbeline, Belarius (Morgan), Guiderius (Polydore), Arviragus (Cadwal), and Pisanio arrived, along with some British soldiers and attendants, and some Roman prisoners. The Captains presented Posthumus Leonatus to King Cymbeline, who did not recognize him. Posthumus was then handed over to a jailer.

In an open area near the British camp stood Posthumus Leonatus and two jailors. Posthumus felt guilty because he believed that he had caused Imogen to die.

The first jailer bound Posthumus' hands and feet and said, "Now you are like an animal whose leg has been bound so that it can graze in a pasture but not wander off and be stolen. Since you are wearing fetters in this field, go ahead and graze if you find pasture."

The second jailer said, "Yes, if you find edible pasture and are hungry enough to eat it."

The jailers left, and Posthumus, now alone, said to himself, "Bondage, you are very welcome to me because, I think, you are a way for me to reach liberty. I am better off than a man who is sick with the gout since he will continue for a long time to groan in pain than be quickly cured by the sure physician, Death, who is the key that will open these fetters. My conscience, you are fettered by guilt. You are fettered more securely than my legs and wrists are. You good gods, give me penitence so that I can release the fetter that binds my mind, and then, after I am penitent, I can die and be free of guilt forever.

"Is it enough that I am sorry for causing Imogen to die? By feeling sorry, children appease their Earthly fathers; the gods are more full of mercy than are Earthly fathers.

"Must I repent? I cannot repent better than in fetters, which I desire and so they are not forced on me.

"If the main part of making amends for my sin is to give up my freedom, I can give up no more than my all — my life.

"Gods, I know that you are more merciful than are vile men, who from their broken debtors take a third of what they have, and then a sixth, and then a tenth, letting them 'thrive' again on their remaining means so that the creditor

can take more at a later date.

“In order for me to pay for Imogen’s dear life, take mine, and although my life is not as dear as her life, yet it is a life. You created and coined it. When money passes from one man to another, they do not weigh every coin to make sure that it has the correct weight. Even though some coins may be light of weight, the men treat the coins as being worth the figure stamped on them. I am stamped in your image, and so, great powers, if you will take me although I am light of weight through having sinned, then take this life of mine, and let it pay my debt in full.

“Oh, Imogen! I’ll speak to you in silence.”

He lay on the ground and slept.

Solemn music could be heard, and Posthumus’ dead relatives and other beings began to appear. First some musicians appeared. Then Posthumus’ father, Sicilius Leonatus, appeared; he was an old man who was dressed like a warrior. Sicilius held the hand of a mature woman who was his wife and Posthumus’ mother. Next appeared Posthumus’ two brothers; the mortal wounds that they had received in battle could be seen. All of these ghosts surrounded Posthumus as he slept.

Sicilius Leonatus said, “Bestow your spite no more, Jupiter, you thunder-master, on mortal flies such as Posthumus. Instead, bestow your spite on the gods. Quarrel with Mars, the god of war, and chide Juno, your wife, who hates your adulteries and criticizes them and gets revenge on them. Has my poor boy Posthumus, whose face I never saw in the world of the living, done anything but good? I died while he was still in the womb waiting for the time he would obey nature’s law and be born. Men say that you act as the father to orphans, and therefore you are Posthumus’ non-biological father. You should have acted like his father and

shielded him from the grief of this tormenting Earthly life.”

Posthumus’ mother said, “The goddess of childbirth, Lucina, did not give me her aid. Instead, she took my life when I was supposed to give birth. From my body Posthumus was ripped. He came crying into the midst of his enemies; he was a thing of pity!”

Sicilius, Posthumus’ father, said, “Great nature, like his ancestry, molded Posthumus so well that he deserved the praise of the world — he was the heir of great Sicilius.”

The first brother said, “When Posthumus became a mature man, where was the man in Britain who was his equal or who could be as promising a man in the eyes of Imogen, who best can appraise Posthumus’ worth?”

Posthumus’ mother said, “Once he married Imogen, why, Jupiter, did you mock him by allowing him to be thrown from the estate of the Leonati family and exiled from his dearest one, sweet Imogen?”

Sicilius, Posthumus’ father, said, “Why, Jupiter, did you allow Iachimo, that slight thing of Italy, to taint Posthumus’ nobler heart and brain with needless jealousy, and to become the sucker and scorn of Iachimo’s villainy?”

The second brother said, “We — Posthumus’ parents and his two brothers, who fought and died bravely for our country — came from stiller seats in the happy fields of Elysium, where the blest spirits of the dead reside. We want to maintain with honor our loyalty and the right that King Tenantius, King Cymbeline’s father, gave us. Tenantius gave our family the name Leonatus; for our family honor to be upheld, Posthumus must be treated with the respect he deserves.”

The first brother said, “We performed daring deeds in battle for King Tenantius, and Posthumus has performed daring

deeds in battle for King Cymbeline. Why, then, Jupiter, you King of gods, have you postponed giving Posthumus the honors he deserves, and instead are giving him sorrows?”

Sicilius, Posthumus’ father, said, “Jupiter, open the clear crystal window of your Heavenly palace, and look out. No longer exercise upon a valiant family your harsh and potent injuries. No longer use your power to treat Posthumus so harshly.”

Posthumus’ mother said, “Since, Jupiter, our son is good, take away his miseries.”

Sicilius, Posthumus’ father, said, “Peep through your marble mansion and help, or we poor ghosts will cry to the shining assembly of the rest of the gods against your deity.”

The word “marble” referred to a kind of pattern of light and color seen in the sky — imagine the Sun shining through parts of a cloudy sky so that it is “aglow with lacing streaks,” in the words of Shakespearean scholar Horace Howard Furniss, editor of *Othello* and other plays by Shakespeare.

Posthumus’ two brothers cried, “Help, Jupiter; or we will appeal to other gods, and flee from your justice.”

Jupiter heard the Leonati family’s prayers. Thunder sounded and lightning struck, and Jupiter, sitting on an eagle, flew down to Earth as he threw an additional thunderbolt. The ghosts of the Leonati family fell to their knees before him.

Jupiter said to them, “You petty spirits of the low region, the abode of the dead, offend me no more with your complaints. Be silent! How dare you ghosts accuse me, the thunderer, whose thunderbolt, as you know, is planted in the sky and batters all rebelling coasts?”

“You poor shadows of Elysium, leave this place, and rest upon your never-withering banks of flowers. Don’t distress yourselves with mortal events. They are no concerns of yours; you know that they are my concerns.

“Those whom I love best I thwart; the more delayed I make my gift, the more it delights when it arrives. Be patient; our godhead will uplift your low-laid son. His comforts will thrive, and his trials are almost over.

“Our majestic star — Jupiter, the planet of justice — reigned at Posthumus’ birth, and in our temple he was married.

“Rise, you ghosts, and fade back to Elysium.

“Posthumus shall be the lord and husband of Lady Imogen, and his afflictions will make him much happier than if he had never endured them.”

Jupiter gave Sicilius a tablet and said, “Lay this tablet upon his breast.”

The outside of the tablet was richly decorated; inside the tablet words were written.

Jupiter continued, “On this tablet I have written Posthumus’ full future. Once you have laid this tablet on his chest, all of you spirits leave. Complain no more, lest you make me angry.

“Climb, eagle, to my crystalline palace.”

Jupiter flew away on the eagle.

Sicilius Leonatus said, “Jupiter came in thunder; his celestial breath was sulfurous to smell. The holy eagle swooped as if to clutch us with its talons. Where Jupiter ascends is sweeter than our blest fields in Elysium. Jupiter’s royal bird, the eagle, trims the feathers of its

immortal wings and uses its claws to scratch its beak — this shows that Jupiter is pleased.”

All the spirits of the Leonati family prayed, “Thanks, Jupiter!”

Sicilius Leonati said, “The marble pavement of Heaven closes, Jupiter has entered his radiant home. Let’s leave! And, in order to be blest, let us carefully perform Jupiter’s great command.”

He placed the tablet on Posthumus’ chest, and then the spirits vanished.

Posthumus Leonatus woke up and said, “Sleep, you have been a grandfather and have begotten a father to me, and you have created for me a mother and two brothers. But, this is a bitter joke — they went away from here as soon as they were born, and so I am awake.

“Poor wretches who depend on the favor of great ones for their life dream as I have just done, and they wake up and find nothing. But, alas, I am wrong. Many people do not dream in order to find blessings, and they do not deserve to find blessings, and yet they receive blessings. I am in that situation. I want to die, and yet I have this golden event — this golden dream — and I do not know why.”

He felt the tablet on his chest and said, “What fairies haunt this ground? A tablet? It’s a rare and exceptional one! Don’t be, as is common in our fashion-obsessed world, a garment that is nobler than what it covers. Let the words written within your pages be as noble as what covers them, unlike our courtiers.”

He read the words of the tablet out loud:

“When a lion’s whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of tender air; and

when from a stately cedar shall be lopped branches, which, being dead many years, shall afterward revive, be joined to the old stock and freshly grow, then Posthumus shall end his miseries, and Britain shall be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.”

Posthumus did not understand the meaning of the words, but a soothsayer would later explain them.

He said to himself, “This is still a dream that I am having, or else it is such nonsense as madmen speak and don’t understand.

“Here are more possibilities: Either it is both of these or it is nothing; that is, either it is the speaking of a madman in a dream, or it is nothing.”

Madmen and “madmen” can speak falsely or truthfully, although what they say sounds like nonsense. The same is true of prophets and “prophets.”

He continued, “But the words on the tablet are a kind of speaking: The words on the tablet are the words of a prophecy, whether false or true. Therefore, either it is senseless speaking, or it is a speaking such as reason cannot untie — such speaking may be full of sense although I am not able to understand it.

“Whatever the words on this tablet mean, the action of my life is like them — difficult to understand, or perhaps senseless — and I’ll keep the tablet, if only because of the words’ resemblance to my life.”

The first jailer returned and said to Posthumus, “Come, sir, are you ready for death?”

“I am more than ready,” Posthumus replied. “If I were a piece of meat, I would be over-roasted; that is, I would have been ready for the dining table long ago.”

The first jailer replied, “Roasted meat is hung up so that its aging improves the flavor, sir. If you are ready to be hung, you are well cooked.”

“So, if I prove to be a good repast to the spectators, then the dish pays the shot,” Posthumus said.

The dish is food, and the shot is a reckoning — the bill. For some spectators, a hanging is a good repast — good entertainment. And before and after the entertainment, chances are excellent that spectators would go to a tavern and buy a drink, thereby giving the innkeeper a very profitable day. Posthumus’ hanging would draw in a big audience and help the innkeeper pay his bills.

The first jailor said, “That is a heavy reckoning for you, sir. But your comfort is that you shall be called to no more payments; you will fear no more tavern bills, which are often the sadness of parting, although the bills also procure mirth. You come in faint for lack of food, and then you depart reeling with too much drink. You are sorry that you have paid too much, and you are sorry that you are paid too much — drinking too much alcohol pays you back with a hangover. Your wallet and your brain are both empty. Your brain is all the heavier in the morning for being too light the previous night. Your wallet is too light because the drawing of beers resulted in drawing out of your wallet the money that had made it heavy. Death pays all bills, so by dying you won’t have to worry about these contradictions.

“Oh, the charity of a penny rope that is used in a hanging! It gives a reckoning of thousands of bills in a trice — a single pull on the gallows and in an instant. You will have no true debit or credit but death. You will be released for all liability for what is past, what is present, and what is to come. Your neck, sir, is pen, book, and counting pieces, so the exoneration of all your debts and the deliverance from all your troubles follow.”

“I am merrier to die than you are to live,” Posthumus said.

“Indeed, sir, he who sleeps does not feel the toothache, but I think a man who was going to sleep your permanent sleep would change places with the hangman who intended to help him to bed — the grave — because you see, sir, you don’t know which way you shall go when you die.”

“Yes, indeed, I do, fellow.”

“Your Death has eyes in his head then,” the first jailer said. “I have not seen the personification of Death so pictured — usually, he is depicted as a skeleton, including an empty skull. You must either be instructed by some who take upon them to know about Death, or you take upon yourself that which I am sure you do not know, or you risk the Final Judgment at your own peril, and I think you’ll never return to tell anyone in the living world how you shall speed in your journey’s end.”

“I tell you, fellow, there are none who lack eyes to direct them the way I am going, but such people close their eyes and will not use them.”

Posthumus was ready to die. He had repented his sin, and he was ready to atone for his sin by dying. Other men and women, if they wanted, could repent their sins and atone for them and so be ready to die.

The first jailer said, “What an infinite act of mockery is this, that a man should have the best use of his eyes to see the way of blindness! I am sure hanging’s a good way of closing one’s eyes.”

A messenger arrived and said to the first jailer, “Knock off his manacles; bring your prisoner to the King.”

“You bring good news,” Posthumus said. “I am called to be made free.”

By “be made free,” Posthumus meant “be hanged.”

“I’ll be hanged then,” the first jailer said.

“You shall be then freer than a jailer,” Posthumus said.
“There are no fetters for the dead.”

Posthumus and the messenger exited.

Alone, the first jailer said to himself, “Unless a man would marry a gallows and beget young gibbets, I never saw a man so eager to climb onto a gallows. Yet, on my conscience, there are worse knaves than this Roman who desire to live. This man is a Roman, and Romans are stoic and are supposed to not care about death, but there are some Romans, too, who die against their wills. So should I, if I were a Roman. I wish that we were all of one mind, and that one mind good. If that should happen, then there would be a desolation of jailers and gallows! I would lose my job, so what I am saying is against my present profit, but my wish has a preferment in it — I prefer a better world with better people and a better job for me.”

— 5.5 —

In front of King Cymbeline’s tent stood Cymbeline, Belarius (Morgan), Guiderius (Polydore), and Arviragus (Cadwal). Although Cymbeline did not know it, Polydore was his older son, Guiderius, and Cadwal was his younger son, Arviragus. Morgan was Belarius, a general whom Cymbeline had exiled years ago. To get revenge, Belarius (Morgan) had kidnapped Cymbeline’s two sons. Also present were Pisanio and some lords, military officers, and attendants.

King Cymbeline said to Belarius (Morgan), Guiderius (Polydore), and Arviragus (Cadwal), “Stand by my side, you whom the gods have made preservers of my throne. My heart is sorrowful because the peasant soldier who so

splendidly fought, whose rags shamed the gilded armor of other soldiers, who with his naked breast stepped before shields of proven strength, cannot be found. Whoever can find him shall be happy, if our recognition and respect can make him happy.”

“I never saw such noble fury in so poor a thing,” Belarius (Morgan) said. “I never saw such precious deeds done by one whose looks promised nothing except beggary and poverty.”

“Is there no news of him?” Cymbeline asked.

Pisanio replied, “He has been searched for among the dead and the living, but there is no trace of him.”

“To my grief, I am the heir of his reward,” Cymbeline said. “I still have what I would have given to him.”

He said to Belarius (Morgan), Guiderius (Polydore), and Arviragus (Cadwal), “But I will add what I would have given to him to you, who are metaphorically the liver, heart, and brain — the vital organs — of Britain, and I grant that she lives because of you three. It is now time for me to ask from where you come. Tell me.”

“Sir, we were born in Cambria,” Belarius (Morgan) said.

Cambria is the Latin name for Wales.

He continued, “We are gentlemen. For us to further boast would be neither virtuous nor modest, unless I add that we are honest and of good character.”

“Bow your knees,” King Cymbeline commanded.

They knelt, and King Cymbeline knighted them and said, “Arise, my knights of the battlefield. I now make you companions to our person and will give you dignities that are becoming to your new rank and status.”

Doctor Cornelius and some ladies arrived.

Seeing them, Cymbeline said, "From their faces, I can see that they have come about serious business."

He said to them, "Why do you welcome our victory so sadly? You look like Romans, not like you are part of the court of Britain."

Doctor Cornelius said, "Hail, great King! Although it will sour your happiness, I must report to you that the Queen is dead."

"Who worse than a physician could this report come from?" Cymbeline replied. "But I realize that although life may be prolonged by medicine, yet death will seize the doctor, too. How did she die?"

"With horror, madly dying, like her life, which, being cruel to the world, ended most cruelly to herself," Doctor Cornelius said. "I will report what she confessed, if you want me to. These women, her female attendants, can correct me, if I err; they have wet cheeks and were present when the Queen died."

"Please, tell me how she died," Cymbeline requested.

Doctor Cornelius replied, "First, she confessed that she never loved you, that she loved only the great status she got by being married to you. She did not marry you for yourself. She married your royalty; she was wife to your place in society; she hated you."

"She alone knew this," Cymbeline said. "I did not know it. And, except that she spoke it as she was dying, I would not believe her lips as she said these things. Proceed."

"Your daughter, whom she pretended to love with such integrity, she confessed was actually like a scorpion to her sight. The Queen would have taken away your daughter's

life by poisoning her except that your daughter's flight prevented it."

"The Queen was a most delicate fiend!" Cymbeline said. "Who can read a woman and know what she is thinking? Is there more?"

"Yes, there is more, sir, and it is worse," Doctor Cornelius said. "She confessed that she had ready for you a deadly poison, which, once you had taken it, would by each minute feed on your life and kill you little by little. During the lingering time during which you would die, she intended by watching over you, weeping over you, waiting on you, and kissing you, to overcome you with her pretense of loving you, and in time, after she had shaped you in such a way to accomplish her purpose, to work her son into the inheritance of the crown. However, she failed in her plan because of her son's strange absence, and so she grew shameless and desperate. She made known, in despite of Heaven and men, her plots. She repented only that the evils she had planned were not effected, and so in despair she died."

"Did you hear all this, my Queen's female attendants?"

One of the Queen's female attendants replied, "We did, so please your highness."

"My eyes were not at fault, for she was beautiful," Cymbeline said. "My ears, which heard her flattery, and my heart, which thought that she was like her appearance, were also not at fault because it would have been reprehensible to mistrust and misbelieve her. Yet my daughter may very well say, and have the experience to prove it, that I was foolish to have trusted my Queen. May Heaven mend all!"

Caius Lucius, Iachimo, the soothsayer, and other Roman prisoners arrived under guard. Posthumus Leonatus followed them, as did Imogen, who was still wearing male

clothing and still using the name Fidele.

King Cymbeline said, “You do not now come, Caius Lucius, for the tribute that the Britons have erased with their victory, though we Britons have lost many bold soldiers who died on the battlefield. The kinsmen of those dead soldiers have requested of me to appease the good souls of these slaughtered soldiers with the slaughter of you Romans who are now our captives. We as King have granted their request. So think now of the state of your soul and prepare your body to die.”

“Consider, sir, the chance of war,” Caius Lucius replied. “The day was yours by fate; if fate had favored us, we Romans would have won the battle. Had victory come to us, we would not, when soldiers’ blood and the heat of battle were cool, have threatened our prisoners with the sword. But since the gods will have it thus — that nothing but our lives may be called ransom — let death come. This is something that a Roman with a Roman’s heart can endure. Augustus lives to think about this.”

Caius Lucius believed that Caesar Augustus would send more Roman soldiers to conquer Britain and avenge the death of his soldiers, including Caius himself, and he wanted Cymbeline to think about this.

He continued, “So much for my individual concerns. One thing only I will ask you for. My young page is a Briton born. Let him be ransomed. Never has a master ever had a page who was so kind, so duteous, so diligent, so considerate over his occasions to serve me. He is so true and loyal, so adept at his duties, and so nurse-like. Let his virtue join with my request, which I strongly believe that your highness cannot deny. He has done no Briton harm, although he has served a Roman. Save him, sir, even if you spare no one else’s life.”

“I have surely seen him before,” Cymbeline said. “His face is familiar to me.”

He said to Imogen (Fidele), “Boy, your looks have made me favor you, and you are now my own servant. I don’t know why, exactly, I say to you, ‘Live, boy.’ You need not thank your master, Caius Lucius, for your life since it is your own appearance that makes me give you mercy. Live, and ask from me, Cymbeline, whatever boon you want that is suitable for me to give and for you to take. I’ll give that boon to you; I will grant your wish even if you demand that a prisoner, the noblest taken today, be spared from death.”

Cymbeline was hoping to be able to spare the life of Caius Lucius, who had been a friend before the war.

“I humbly thank your highness,” Imogen (Fidele) said.

“I do not ask you to beg that my life be saved, good lad,” Caius Lucius said, “and yet I know you will do that.”

“No, no,” Imogen (Fidele) replied. “I’m sorry, but there’s other work at hand: I see a thing that is as bitter to me as death. Your life, good master, must shift for itself.”

Imogen (Fidele) was looking at Iachimo, and the thing that she saw that was as bitter to her as death was the diamond ring — the ring that she had given Posthumus — that he was wearing on his finger.

“The boy disdains me,” Caius Lucius said. “He leaves me and scorns me. Quickly die the joys of those who make them depend on the loyalty of girls and boys.”

He looked at Imogen (Fidele) more closely and asked, “Why does he look so perplexed?”

“What do you want, boy?” Cymbeline asked. “I love you more and more. Think more and more about what’s best for you to ask for. Do you know the man you are looking at?”

Speak. Do you want him to live? Is he your kin? Is he your friend?"

"He is a Roman," Imogen (Fidele) replied, "and so he is no more kin to me than I am to your highness."

This was true of Fidele, if Fidele actually existed, but Imogen was Cymbeline's daughter, and so she added, "But I, being born your vassal, am somewhat nearer to you than I am to him."

"Why are you looking at him in that way?" Cymbeline asked.

"I'll tell you, sir, in private, if you please to give me a hearing."

"I will, with all my heart, and I will give you my best attention. What's your name?"

"Fidele, sir."

"You are my good youth; you are my page," Cymbeline said. "I'll be your employer. Walk with me; speak freely."

Cymbeline and Imogen (Fidele) spoke privately, away from the others.

Belarius (Morgan) said to Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal), "Has this boy been revived from death?"

"One grain of sand does not resemble another grain of sand more closely than this boy resembles that sweet rosy lad who died and was named Fidele," Arviragus (Cadwal) said.

He then asked his brother, "What do you think?"

"The same boy that we saw dead is now alive," Guiderius (Polydore) replied.

“Quiet! Quiet!” Belarius (Morgan) said. “Let’s wait and see. He does not see us. Let’s wait. Creatures may be alike. If this boy were our Fidele, I am sure that he would have spoken to us.”

“But we saw him dead,” Guiderius (Polydore) replied.

“Be quiet; let’s wait and see,” Belarius (Morgan) said.

Recognizing Imogen, Pisanio said, “It is my female boss. Since she is living, let the time run on, whether the end result is good or bad.”

Cymbeline and Imogen (Fidele) rejoined the others.

Cymbeline said to Imogen (Fidele), “Come and stand by our side. State your demand out loud.”

He ordered Iachimo, “Sir, step forward. Answer this boy’s questions, and do it freely, or by our greatness and the power that goes with it, which is our honor, bitter torture shall winnow the truth from falsehood.”

Iachimo stepped forward, and Cymbeline said to Imogen (Fidele), “Go on, speak to him.”

Imogen (Fidele) said loudly, “The boon I ask for is that this gentleman tells from whom he got this ring.”

Posthumus Leonatus thought, *What is my ring to him?*

Cymbeline said to Iachimo, “Say how you came to have this diamond ring that is on your finger.”

Iachimo replied, “If I say that, it will torture you, and you will torture me to take it back.”

“What? Torture me?” Cymbeline said.

“I am glad to be forced to utter that which torments me to conceal,” Iachimo said. “I got this ring by villainy. This

was Posthumus Leonatus' ring, whom you banished, and — which may grieve you more, as it does me — who is a nobler sir than any man who has ever lived between sky and ground. Will you hear more, my lord?"

"I want to hear everything that is relevant to him," Cymbeline replied.

"That paragon, your daughter — for whom my heart drops blood, and my false spirits quail to remember — give me permission to stop awhile. I am faint."

"My daughter! What about her? Regain your strength. I had rather you should live out your full natural life than die before I hear more. Make an effort, man, and speak."

"Once upon a time ... unhappy was the clock that struck the hour! ... it was in Rome ... accursed be the mansion where it happened! ... it was at a feast ... oh, I wish that all our food had been poisoned, or at least those bits of food that I heaved up to my head! ... the good Posthumus ... what should I say? He was too good to be where evil men were, and he was the best of all the men who are among the rarest and best of good men ... sitting sadly, hearing us praise our loves — our loved ones — of Italy.

"We praised our loves of Italy for their beauty — beauty that we said outdid even the biggest and most swelled boast that the man who could best speak about beauty could make.

"We praised our loves of Italy for their bodily features, features that we said in comparison made Venus lame in her shrine or that we said made tall, straight-backed Minerva lame. Both goddesses have postures much better than those of mortals who live only briefly.

"We praised our loves of Italy for their disposition, saying that our women were a shop of all the qualities that man

loves woman for, besides that enticing hook that persuades men to take wives, that hook of women's beauty that strikes the eye —”

Impatient at Iachimo's flowery way of speaking, Cymbeline interrupted, “I stand on fire; I am impatient and angry. Get to the point.”

“All too soon I shall,” Iachimo replied, “unless you want to grieve quickly. This Posthumus, who was most like a noble lord in love and one who had a royal lover, took his opportunity, and, not dispraising those whom we praised — therein he was as calm as virtue — he began to paint in words his wife's picture, which once being made by his tongue, he added a description of her mind to it, and we realized that either our brags were crowing about kitchen girls, or his description proved that we were idiots who were incapable of speech.”

“Get to the point,” Cymbeline again ordered Iachimo.

“Your daughter's chastity — there it begins. Posthumus spoke about your daughter as if in comparison to her the virgin goddess Diana had lecherous wet dreams and your daughter alone were chaste. Hearing this, I, wretch that I am, objected to his praise, and I wagered with him pieces of gold against this diamond ring that he then wore upon his finger, which was honored by the wearing. I bet him that by wooing his wife I could attain his place in her bed and win this ring by persuading her to commit adultery.

“He, a true knight, was completely confident of her honor — I later found that he was truly justified in his confidence — and he bet this ring, and he would have bet it even if it had been a ruby from one of the wheels of Phoebus Apollo's Sun-chariot. Indeed, he could have safely bet his ring even if it had been worth what the entire Sun-chariot is worth.

“I hurried away to Britain to carry out the seduction I had planned. Well may you, sir, remember me visiting your court, where your chaste daughter taught me the wide difference between faithful love and adulterous love.

“My hope being thus quenched, although my lust was not quenched, my Italian brain began in your Britain, which is located in a northern climate that produces dullness, to operate most vilely and excellently for my profit. And, to be brief, the plot I thought up so prevailed that I returned with enough fake but plausible evidence to make the noble Leonatus mad — insane. I wounded his belief in his wife’s reputation by doing such things as describing the wall tapestries and pictures in the bedchamber.”

He pulled her bracelet out of his pocket and said, “I also showed him her bracelet — it was cunning how I got it from her. In addition, I described some hidden marks on her body. I provided so much spurious evidence that he could not but think that her bond of chastity was quite cracked and broken, and that I had won our bet.

“Whereupon — but I think that I see Posthumus now —”

Angry, Posthumus, who had been a short distance away but unnoticed by most of the people present, advanced toward Iachimo and said, “Yes, you do see me, you Italian fiend! Call me the most credulous fool, egregious murderer, thief, any name used to refer to all the villains in the past, the present, and the future! Oh, I wish that upright justice would give me a rope, or a knife, or poison to use to kill myself! King Cymbeline, send out for ingenious torturers: I make all the abhorred things of the Earth seem better by comparison because I am worse than they are. I am Posthumus, who killed your daughter — but like a villain, I lie — I caused a lesser villain than myself, a sacrilegious thief, to do the killing. She was the temple of Virtue, yes, and she herself was the personification of Virtue.

“Spit on, throw stones at, and cast mire upon me. Sic the dogs of the street on me! Let every villain be called Posthumus Leonatus, and let villainy be less than it was because it is compared to the villainy I have done!

“Oh, Imogen! My Queen, my life, my wife! Oh, Imogen, Imogen, Imogen!”

Imogen, still dressed as the young man Fidele, went to him and said, “Be calm, my lord; listen, listen —”

Posthumus interrupted her: “Shall we make a play out of what is happening here? You scornful page, there lies your part.”

He hit her, and she fell down.

Pisanio, who had recognized Imogen because he was familiar with her disguise, said, “Oh, gentlemen, help! This is my employer and Posthumus’ wife! Oh, my lord Posthumus! You never killed Imogen until now! Help, help! My honored lady!”

“Does the world still go around?” Cymbeline asked, shocked by such strange events.

“Why do I feel so faint?” Posthumus asked, staggering.

“Wake up, Imogen!” Pisanio cried.

“If this is truly Imogen,” Cymbeline said, “then the gods mean to strike me dead by giving me more joy than I can take.”

Pisanio said to Imogen, “How are you?”

Imogen, who thought that Pisanio had given her poison when he left her in Wales, said angrily to him, “Get out of my sight! You gave me poison! Dangerous fellow, leave here! Do not breathe where Princes are! Stay away from royalty!”

“That is the voice of Imogen!” Cymbeline cried.

“Lady,” Pisanio said to Imogen, “may the gods throw stones of sulfur — thunderbolts — at me, if I did not think that box I gave you was a precious thing. I received it from the Queen.”

“Still more revelations?” Cymbeline said.

“Its contents poisoned me,” Imogen said.

Doctor Cornelius said, “Gods! I left out one thing that the Queen confessed, which will prove that Pisanio is honest and loyal. The Queen said, ‘If Pisanio has given Imogen that confection that I gave him and told him that it was medicine, she is served as I would serve a rat. It is poison, and she will die.’”

“What’s this all about, Cornelius?” Cymbeline asked.

“The Queen, sir, very often importuned me to mix poisons for her, always pretending that she wanted to gain knowledge by killing vile creatures, such as cats and dogs, of no esteem. I, fearing that she intended to do something more dangerous than that, mixed for her a certain substance, which, being taken, would stop the bodily functions that make people live, but after a short time all bodily parts would again do their due functions. The person swallowing some of the substance would ‘die’ — that is, appear to be dead — but only for a short time.”

He asked Imogen, “Did you swallow some of that substance?”

“Most likely I did, because I was dead.”

Belarius (Morgan) said to Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal), “My boys, we were wrong when we thought that Fidele was dead.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said, “This is certainly Fidele.”

Imogen said to Posthumus, “Why did you throw your wedded lady away from you? Imagine that you are standing upon a cliff, and throw me away from you now.”

She embraced him tightly. They were together now until death.

Posthumus said to his wife, “Hang there like a fruit, my soul, until the tree dies!”

He embraced her tightly. They were together now until death.

Cymbeline said to Imogen, “Now, my flesh, my child! Are you making me a dullard in this act by not allowing me to speak any lines? Won’t you speak to me?”

Imogen knelt before him and said, “I ask for your blessing, sir.”

Belarius (Morgan) said to Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal), “Although you loved this youth, I don’t blame you. You had a reason for it.”

That reason, although Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal) did not know it, was that Imogen was their sister.

Cymbeline said, “May my tears that fall prove to be holy water falling on you! Imogen, your mother-in-law is dead.”

“I am sorry, my lord,” she replied.

“Oh, she was evil, and it is because of her that we meet here so strangely, but her son, Cloten, is gone — we don’t know why or where.”

Pisanio said, “My lord, now that I am no longer afraid, I’ll speak the truth.”

Pisanio had been afraid first, that Imogen was hurt, and second, that he would be unjustly punished for “poisoning” her.

He continued, “After my lady, Imogen, was discovered to be missing from court, Lord Cloten came to me with his sword drawn. He foamed at the mouth, and he swore that unless I revealed which way she had gone, he would instantly kill me. I happened to have a deceptive letter written by my master, Posthumus, in my pocket. I gave the letter to Cloten; it directed him to seek Imogen on the mountains near Milford Haven. Frenzied, and wearing Posthumus’ clothing, which he forced me to bring to him, he hurried there with an unchaste purpose and with an oath to violate my lady’s honor and rape her. What then became of him I don’t know.”

Guiderius (Polydore) said, “Let me end the story: I slew Cloten in Wales.”

A commoner — or even a knight — killing a Prince was a serious offense, one that would be punished with death.

Cymbeline said, “The gods forbid! You have done deeds of note in battle for me, and killing the nobleman who wanted to rape my daughter is a notable good deed. I don’t want such a good deed to pluck from my lips a hard sentence of death. Please, valiant youth, deny what you just said.”

“I have spoken it, and I did it.”

“The man you killed was a Prince,” Cymbeline said.

“He was a very uncivil one,” Guiderius (Polydore) said. “The wrongs he did me were not things that a Prince would do. He provoked me with language that would make me spurn the sea, if it could roar to me like Cloten did. I cut off his head, and I am very glad that he is dead and is not standing here telling you that he cut off my head.”

“I am sorry for you,” Cymbeline said. “You are condemned by your own tongue, and you must endure our law: You are sentenced to die.”

Imogen said, “I thought that headless man was my husband.”

“Bind the offender, and take him away from our presence,” Cymbeline ordered.

“Wait, sir King,” Belarius (Morgan) said. “This man you are arresting is better and higher in rank than the man he slew. In fact, he is as well descended as you are, and because of his battle scars he has earned more from you than a band of Clotens ever has.”

He then said to the guards, “Let his arms alone; they were not born for bondage.”

King Cymbeline was angry. In his view, to say that an impoverished man like Polydore, even though he was recently knighted, was descended as well as a King such as Cymbeline was an insult.

He said, “Why, old soldier, will you throw away the rewards that you have not yet received by making me angry and tasting of our wrath?”

Using the royal plural, he asked, “How can this man be descended as well as we are?”

Arviragus (Cadwal), who did not know that he was Cymbeline’s son, said, “When Morgan made that claim, he claimed way too much.”

Cymbeline said, “And you, Morgan, shall die for it.”

Belarius (Morgan) said, referring to himself and his two “sons,” “In the long run, all three of us will die. But I will prove that two of us are as well descended as I have said

this man is.”

He then said to Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal), “My ‘sons,’ I must unfold a speech that will be dangerous for me, although it will, fortunately, help you.”

“Your danger is ours,” Arviragus (Cadwal) said to Belarius (Morgan).

“And our good is his,” Guiderius (Polydore) said to Arviragus (Cadwal).

“Let me do this, then, by your leave,” Belarius (Morgan) said to Cymbeline. “You had, great King, a subject who was called Belarius.”

“What about him? He is a banished traitor.”

“He has become aged, and he is the man whom you see before you; he is indeed a banished man, but I do not know how he is a traitor.”

Cymbeline ordered, “Take Belarius away. The whole world shall not save him.”

“Not so hasty,” Belarius replied. “First pay me for raising up your sons. If you want, confiscate all you pay me as soon as I have received my pay.”

“The raising up of my sons!”

“I am too blunt and insolent,” Belarius said. “I need to be more respectful.”

He knelt and said, “Here’s my knee. Before I arise, I will advance and promote my sons in life, and then you need not spare the old father. Mighty sir, these two young gentlemen, who call me father and think they are my sons, are not my sons. They are your sons. They are the issue of your loins, my liege, and they are blood of your begetting.”

“What! My sons!”

“They are your sons as surely as you are your father’s son. I, old Morgan, am that Belarius whom you once banished. I did no harm, but you thought I did, and it was your thoughts that caused me to be accused of and punished for treason. The only harm I did was to be unjustly punished for something I did not do.

“I have raised these gentle Princes — for such and so they are — for these past twenty years. I taught them those accomplishments that they have and that I was able to give them. My breeding was, sir, as your highness knows.

“Their nurse, Euriphile, whom I wedded because of the theft, kidnapped these children after I was banished. I persuaded her to do it. Having received the punishment before I did anything wrong, I did something that would deserve that punishment. Being beaten for having been loyal made me want to commit treason. The more that you would hurt because of the loss of your dear children, the more I wanted to steal them.

“But, gracious sir, here are your sons again; and I must lose two of the sweetest companions in the world. May the benediction and blessings of these covering Heavens fall on their heads like dew for they are worthy to inlay Heaven with stars. Once they die, they are worthy to become Heavenly constellations!”

Cymbeline said, “You weep, and speak. The service that you three have done is more remarkable than this story you tell me now. I believe the service you did for me in battle because I saw it, and therefore I ought now to believe your tears and your story. If these two young men are my sons, I don’t know how I could wish for a pair of worthier sons.”

Belarius said, “Be pleased awhile. This gentleman, whom I call Polydore, is really Guiderius, a most worthy Prince and

your elder son.”

“This gentleman, my Cadwal, is really Arviragus, your younger Princely son. He, sir, was wrapped in a most skillfully wrought mantle, created by the hand of his Queen mother, which for more evidence I can with ease produce. This additional evidence will help prove that what I am saying is true.”

Cymbeline said, “Guiderius had on his neck a mole, a blood-colored star. It was a birthmark of wonder.”

“This is he,” Belarius said. “He still has on him that natural stamp. Wise nature gave him that birthmark so that it would now serve as evidence of his identity.”

“What! Am I a mother to the birth of three children?” Cymbeline said. “Never has a mother rejoiced over delivery more than I do now.”

He said to his two sons, “May you be blessed. For a long time, you have been removed from your places at court, but may you now reign in them!”

He said to his daughter, “Oh, Imogen, you have lost a Kingdom by this finding of your two brothers.”

Daughters inherited the crown only when no sons existed or if existing sons were not able to inherit it.

“No, my lord,” Imogen replied. “I have gotten two worlds — two brothers — by it.”

She then said to Guiderius and Arviragus, “Oh, my gentle brothers, have we really met here? Oh, never say hereafter that I am not the truest speaker of us three. You called me brother, when I was really your sister; I called you brothers, when you were indeed my brothers.”

“Have you three met?” Cymbeline asked.

Arviragus replied, “Yes, my good lord.”

Guiderius added, “And at first meeting we loved him — our sister — and we continued to love him — our sister — until we thought he — our sister — died.”

Doctor Cornelius said, “She appeared to die because she swallowed a small portion of the Queen’s potion.”

“Oh, rare instinct!” Cymbeline said. “Brothers and sister immediately loved each other although they did not know that they were related!

“When shall I hear everything in detail? I have heard only a severely short summary of a story that has parts that are full of details I do not yet know.

“Imogen, where did you meet your brothers? How did you live? When did you come to serve our Roman captive: Caius Lucius? How did you part from your brothers? How did you first meet them? Why did you flee from the court and where did you go?

“These questions, and the reasons that Belarius and my two sons decided to fight in the battle, and I don’t know how many more questions, should be asked, and I should ask about all the other side issues, from event to event, but this time and this place are not suitable for the long question-and-answer session we will have later.

“Look, Posthumus anchors upon — holds tight to — Imogen, and she, like harmless lightning, directs her eye at her husband, her brother, me, and her master, Caius Lucius, looking at each person with joy. And everyone else does as Imogen does.

“Let’s leave this ground, and fill the temple with smoke from our sacrifices.”

He said to Belarius, “You are my brother.”

Using the royal plural, he said, “We’ll regard you as our brother forever.”

Imogen said to Belarius, “You are my father, too, and you assisted me with the result that I can see this gracious season.”

“All are overjoyed,” Cymbeline said, “except these captives who are in bonds. Let them be joyful, too, because they shall taste our mercy.”

Imogen said to Caius Lucius, “My good master, I will yet do you service.”

“May you be happy!” he replied.

Cymbeline said, “The peasant soldier, who so nobly fought in the front ranks, would have well become this place. I would like to give him words of gratitude from a King.”

Posthumus said, “I am, sir, the soldier who fought beside these three — Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus — and who had an appearance of poverty. It was a fit disguise for the goal I then had.

“Iachimo, say that I was that man. I had you down and might have killed you.”

Iachimo had not recognized Posthumus during the battle. Now he realized that Posthumus must have been the peasant soldier because Posthumus knew that the peasant soldier had defeated him and could have killed him.

Iachimo knelt and said, “I am down again, but now my heavy conscience makes my knee sink, just as your strength made my knee sink in the battle. Take that life, I beg you, which I so many times owe you because of my misdeeds, but let me give you back your ring first, and also the bracelet of the truest Princess who ever swore her faithfulness to a husband.”

“Don’t kneel to me,” Posthumus replied. “The power that I have over you is to spare your life, and the ‘malice’ that I have towards you is to forgive you. Live, and deal with others better in the future.”

“Nobly judged!” Cymbeline said. “We’ll learn generosity from our son-in-law. Pardon’s the word to all our Roman captives.”

Arviragus said to Posthumus, “You helped us in the battle, sir, as if you meant indeed to be our brother-in-law. We rejoice that in fact you are our brother-in-law.”

Posthumus replied, “I am your servant, Princes.”

He said to Caius Lucius, “My good lord of Rome, call forth your soothsayer. As I slept, I thought that great Jupiter, riding on the back of his eagle, appeared to me, with some spritely and ghostly shows of my own dead relatives. When I awakened, I found this tablet lying on my chest. Its content is so difficult that I cannot understand it. Let your soothsayer show his skill by interpreting it.”

“Philarmonus!” Caius Lucius called.

Philarmonus the soothsayer replied, “Here I am, my good lord.”

“Read the tablet, and explain its meaning.”

The soothsayer read the tablet out loud:

“When a lion’s whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopped branches, which, being dead many years, shall afterward revive, be joined to the old stock and freshly grow, then Posthumus shall end his miseries, and Britain shall be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.”

He then said to Posthumus, “You, Leonatus, are the lion’s whelp — the lion’s young. The fit and apt construction of your name *Leonatus*, which is Latin for ‘born from a lion,’ shows this.”

He then said to Cymbeline, “The ‘piece of tender air’ is your virtuous daughter, Imogen. *Mollis aer* is Latin for ‘tender air,’ and it is a near homonym for *mulier*, Latin for ‘woman,’ and Imogen is a masterpiece of a woman.”

He said to Posthumus, “Imogen is a very loyal woman, who, just now, in accordance with the letter of the oracle, embraced you. You thought she was dead, so you did not seek her, but you found her without looking for her, and she embraced you.”

“This interpretation makes sense,” Cymbeline said.

The soothsayer said to King Cymbeline, “The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline, symbolizes you, and your lopped branches are your two sons. They were stolen by Belarius and for many years were thought to be dead, but they are now revived and joined again to you, the majestic cedar, and your children promise peace and plenty to Britain.”

“This is good,” Cymbeline said. “We will begin by promoting peace. Caius Lucius, although we are the victors of the battle, we submit to Caesar Augustus and to the Roman Empire. We promise to pay our usual, accustomed tribute, which our wicked Queen persuaded us to not pay. The Heavens justly have laid a heavy hand both on her and on Cloten, her son.”

The soothsayer said, “The fingers of the powers above tune the harmony of this peace. The vision that I revealed to Caius Lucius before the beginning stroke of this yet scarcely cold battle is at this instant fully accomplished. My vision was that the Roman eagle, soaring aloft and traveling from south to west on its wings, seemed to grow smaller as

it flew and eventually vanished in the beams of the Sun. This vision foreshadowed that our Princely eagle, the imperial Caesar Augustus, would again unite his favor with the radiant Cymbeline, who shines here in the west.”

“Let us praise the gods,” Cymbeline said, “and let our curling smoke climb to their nostrils from the sacrifices on our blest altars. We publicly pronounce news of this peace to all our subjects. Let us go forward. Let a Roman flag and a British flag wave friendly together as we march through Lud’s town. In the temple of great Jupiter, we’ll ratify our peace and we will seal it with feasts.

“Let’s go! Never was there a war that did cease, before bloody hands were washed, with such a peace.”

Chapter XXXV: PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*)

Male Characters

ANTIOCHUS, King of Antioch.

PERICLES, Prince of Tyre.

HELICANUS and ESCANES, two Lords of Tyre.

SIMONIDES, King of Pentapolis.

CLEON, Governor of Tarsus.

LYSIMACHUS, Governor of Mitylene.

CERIMON, a Lord of Ephesus.

THALIARD, a Lord of Antioch.

PHILEMON, Servant to Cerimon.

LEONINE, Servant to Dionyza.

Marshal.

A Pandar.

BOULT, Servant to Pandar and Bawd.

Female Characters

The Daughter of Antiochus.

DIONYZA, Wife to Cleon.

THAISA, Daughter to Simonides.

MARINA, Daughter to Pericles and Thaisa.

LYCHORIDA, Nurse to Marina.

A Bawd.

Minor Characters

Lords, Ladies, Knights, Gentlemen, Sailors, Pirates,
Fishermen, and Messengers.

DIANA.

JOHN GOWER, as Chorus.

SCENE. — *Various Mediterranean Countries.*

CHAPTER 1 (*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*)

— Prologue —

Addressing you the reader, John Gower, a resurrected 14th-century contemporary of Geoffrey Chaucer, and a poet who wrote on the topic of Pericles, said, “To tell a tale that was told of old, I, ancient John Gower, from ashes have come. I have taken for myself a human body and again taken on man’s infirmities so that I can gladden your ears and please your eyes.

“What you are about to hear has been sung at festivals, and on ember-eves and holy-ales.”

Embers are three-day periods of religious fasting. Often, people would enjoy themselves on the eve of an ember. A holy-ale was a happy religious festival.

Gower continued, “And lords and ladies in their lives have read this tale, which has appeared in many books, because of its restorative power — this feel-good tale is medicine for the reader. The benefit of reading this tale is to make men glorious. *Et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius.* Translation: And the older a good thing is, the better it is.

“If you, born in these latter times — later than my times — when learning is more sophisticated, accept my words and occasional rhymes, and if to hear an old man may bring pleasure to you, I would wish for life, so that I might spend it for you, like a burning candle that is spent as it gives light.

“Know that this location is Antioch. Antiochus the Great built up this city to be his chiefest seat, his capital. This city is the fairest in all Syria. I tell you now what I have learned from my authorities. This King took for himself a peer — a

wife — who died and left a female heir, who was so lively, carefree, and beautiful of face that it was as if Heaven had lent her all his grace. The father, Antiochus, took a liking to her and provoked her to commit incest. Bad child; worse father! The father enticed his own daughter to do evil that should be done by none. But with time the incest they committed began to seem no sin to them — when one is accustomed to sin, the sin seems to be no sin.

“The beauty of this sinful dame made many Princes go to her, to seek her as a wife and bedfellow, and make her in marriage-pleasures his playfellow.

“To prevent her marrying one of her suitors, Antiochus made a law to keep her always with him and to keep men in awe so that they would not seek to wed her. The law stated that whoever asked her to be his wife must find the answer to a riddle. If he did not know the answer, he lost his life.

“So for her many a poor creature did die, as yonder grim looks do testify.”

Gower pointed to some decapitated heads that had been stuck on the ends of spikes.

He continued, “What now follows in this book, I give to the judgment of your eyes. You will be the judges of what follows and decide if it is good or bad. You will judge for yourself whether this book gladdens your spirits.”

— 1.1 —

In a garden of King Antiochus’ palace in Antioch, Antiochus and Pericles, Prince of Tyre, talked. Pericles had come to Antiochus’ palace in order to make Antiochus’ daughter his wife.

King Antiochus said, “Young Prince of Tyre, you have fully heard about the danger of the task you undertake.”

“I have, Antiochus, and with a soul emboldened with the glory of your daughter’s praise, I think that death is no hazard in this enterprise.”

“Bring in our daughter, clothed like a bride for the embraces even of Jupiter, King of the gods, himself,” King Antiochus said. “From my daughter’s conception until Lucina, goddess of childbirth, reigned, Nature gave my daughter this dowry: To gladden my daughter, the senate-house of planets all did sit and gave her their best perfections. All the astrological signs were propitious from the time my daughter was conceived until she was born.”

Music played, and King Antiochus’ daughter entered the garden.

“See where she comes, clothed like the Spring,” Pericles said. “The Three Graces — sister goddesses who bestow beauty and charm — are her subjects, and her thoughts dwell on the Kingliest form of every virtue that gives renown to men! Her face is the book of memorable praises, where is read nothing but exquisite pleasures, as if from thence sorrow had been forever erased and testy wrath could never be her mild companion.

“You gods who made me man, and made me sway in love, who have inflamed desire in my breast to taste the fruit, the daughter, of yonder celestial tree, Antiochus, or die in the attempt, be my helpers, as I am son and servant to your will — help me to achieve such a boundless happiness!”

“Prince Pericles —” Antiochus began.

Pericles interrupted, “— who would be a son-in-law to great Antiochus.”

Antiochus continued, “Before you stands this fair garden of the Hesperides, with golden fruit, but dangerous to be touched, for deadly dragons are here to fiercely frighten

you.”

One of Hercules’ twelve labors was to go to the garden of the Hesperides — goddesses of the evening — and steal some golden apples that were guarded by a hundred-headed dragon.

Antiochus continued, “My daughter’s face, like Heaven, entices you to view her countless — as numerous as the stars — glories, which merit must gain. If you lack the merit to achieve my daughter, then because your eye presumes to acquire what it does not deserve, all the entire heap of your body must die.”

Antiochus pointed to the decapitated heads and said, “These once famous Princes, like yourself, drawn by reports of my daughter’s graces, made adventurous by desire for her, tell you, with the speechless tongues and pale faces, that without any covering, save a field of stars, here they stand martyrs, slain in Cupid’s wars, and with their dead cheeks they advise you to desist from going so early into the net of Death, whom none can resist.”

“Antiochus, I thank you,” Pericles said. “You have taught me to know that I am frail and mortal, and you have used those fearful objects — those heads impaled on spikes — to prepare this body, which is similar to their bodies, for what I must do someday, which is to die.

“For death remembered should be like a mirror, which tells us that life is only breath, and to trust that we will continue always to live is an error. For mortal men, death is not optional.”

Mirrors are used to see if someone is dead. The mirror is held against the person’s nose and mouth. If the person is breathing, mist appears on the mirror.

Pericles continued, “I’ll make my will then, and I will do as

sick men do who know the world and see Heaven, but, feeling woe, they do not grasp at Earthly joys as formerly they did. Heaven is preferable to ill life on Earth.

“So in my will I bequeath a happy peace to you and to all good men, as every Prince should do. If I die, do not feel guilty.”

Pericles then looked at Antiochus’ daughter and said, “My riches — my body — will return to the Earth from whence they came, but I leave my unspotted and pure fire of love to you.”

He continued, “Thus ready for the way of life or the way of death, I await the sharpest blow, Antiochus.”

“Since you scorn and reject advice,” Antiochus replied, “read the riddle out loud. If you cannot solve the riddle after you have read it, it is decreed that like these Princes who tried and failed before you, you yourself shall bleed.”

Antiochus’ daughter said, “In all save this, may you prove to be successful! In all save this, I wish you happiness!”

She did not want her sin — committing incest with her father — to be made known, so she did not want Pericles to solve the riddle; however, Pericles had made enough of an impression on her that she did not want him to die.

Pericles said, “Like a bold champion, I enter the combat arena, and I do not ask help from any other thought except faithfulness and courage.”

He read the riddle out loud:

“I am no viper, yet I feed

“On mother’s flesh which did me breed.”

The first two lines referred to the belief that vipers were born by eating their way out of their mother’s body.

“I sought a husband, in which labor

“I found that kindness in a father:

“He’s father, son, and husband mild;

“I mother, wife, and yet his child.

“How they may be, and yet in two,

“As you will live, resolve it you.”

Pericles solved the riddle immediately, but solving it gave him no pleasure: King Antiochus and his daughter were incestuous lovers.

Of course, the daughter was the child of King Antiochus. Because she was sleeping with him, it was as if she were his wife. Because she was sleeping with him, it was as if she had taken the place of her mother.

Of course, King Antiochus was the father of his daughter. Because he was sleeping with her, it was as if he were her husband. Because he was sleeping with his daughter and because it was as if she had taken the place of her mother, it was as if he were her son-in-law.

Pericles thought, *The last line of the riddle is strong medicine. If I want to live, I must solve the riddle, and I must show that I have solved it by stating the answer out loud. Since King Antiochus will hardly want his sin to be publicly known, I will be killed whether I speak up or not. You powers who give Heaven countless eyes — stars — to view men’s acts, why haven’t you clouded those eyes perpetually and kept this sin hidden if this sin is true — this sin which makes me pale to read it?*

Pericles looked at Antiochus’ daughter and said to her, “Fair glass of light, I loved you, and could still, were not this glorious casket stored with ill.”

The daughter was like a looking glass, a mirror. It reflected but did not contain light. Its appearance was beautiful, but its reality was not beautiful. The daughter's body was like a beautiful casket, but what was inside — her soul — was ill.

Pericles continued, "But I must tell you, now my thoughts revolt — he's no man on whom perfections wait who, knowing sin is within, will touch the gate."

In this society, "gate" was slang for "vagina."

Pericles continued, "You are a fair viol, and your body and senses are the strings. If your strings were fingered to make lawful music for a man, as a husband and a wife can lawfully do, then Heaven and all the gods would come down to Earth to listen.

"But your strings have been played upon before the right time. Only Hell dances to so harsh a music.

"Truly, I do not care for you."

Pericles made a movement that King Antiochus interpreted as Pericles' being about to touch his daughter, and he immediately warned him, "Prince Pericles, do not touch my daughter, upon your life. If you touch her, you die. That's an article within our law — this article is as dangerous as anything else in our law. Your time is up. Either give the answer to the riddle now, or receive your sentence."

"Great King," Pericles said, "few love to hear the sins they love to act; it would touch yourself too nearly for me to tell the answer to the riddle. Whoever has a book of all the actions that monarchs do will be safer if he keeps that book shut than if he shows it to others.

"Vice gossiped about is like the wandering wind. As the gossip spreads his news, he blows dust in others' eyes. Sometimes the gossip deceives others, and sometimes the

news is true. The gossip's news irritates both the hearers and the guilty parties. This is done at a high price. After the gossip has spread the news, the sore eyes of the guilty see clearly who is spreading the news, and to stop the news being spread further, they hurt the gossip.

“The blind mole casts peaked hills — molehills — towards Heaven, to reveal that the Earth is crushed by man's sins; and the poor mole dies for it.”

A mole builds molehills like men of excessive pride built the tower of Babel to reach Heaven, and so each molehill is a reminder of men's sin. By building the molehill and broadcasting news of men's sins, the mole reveals its presence and the gardener kills it.

Pericles continued, “Kings are the gods of Earth; when it comes to vice, their law is their will — they do whatever they want. If Jupiter should stray and commit adultery, as he has many, many times, who dares to say that Jupiter commits a sin?”

“It is enough that you know that I know, and it is fitting to smother news of a sin when the sin grows worse when it is widely known.

“All love the womb that first gave birth to their being, so then give my tongue similar permission to love my head.”

Pericles was telling King Antiochus that he preferred being silent to losing his head. He was willing to keep King Antiochus' secret if the King would allow him to live. Earlier, the King's daughter had made it clear that she did not want her secret sin to be revealed and that she did not want Pericles to die, so her wishes might make her father more merciful to Pericles.

King Antiochus thought, *By Heaven, I wish that I had your head! I would like to have your intelligence. I also would*

like to have your head off your shoulders so that I can be certain that my secret is not publicly revealed. Pericles has found the meaning of the riddle, but I will speak duplicitous flattering words to him.

He said, “Young Prince of Tyre, though by the terms of our strict law, because you have not explained the riddle, we might proceed to cancel all of your days and have you killed immediately, yet hope, proceeding from so fair a tree as your fair self — we hope that you will have fruit, aka children, one day — does importune us to do otherwise. We will give you a respite of forty more days, if by which time you reveal the secret of the riddle, this mercy shows that we will take joy in such a son-in-law. Until then your entertainment here shall be as befits our honor and your merit.”

Everyone left except Pericles, who said to himself, “King Antiochus’ courtesy is an attempt to cover up his sin, but this is done by a hypocrite who is good in nothing except appearance! If it were true that I solved the riddle incorrectly, then it would be certain that you — Antiochus — were not so bad as with foul incest to abuse your soul. However, you’re both a father and a son-in-law because of your ill and untimely claspings with your child. That kind of pleasure is fitting for a husband, not a father, and she has become an eater of her mother’s flesh because of her defiling of her parents’ bed. She has taken her mother’s place in her father’s bed, and she has taken the pleasure reserved for the mother. Both are like serpents, for although father and daughter feed on sweetest flowers, yet they breed poison.

“Antioch, farewell! Wisdom knows that those men who do not blush as they perform actions blacker than the night will shun no course of action to keep those black actions from the light.

“One sin, I know, another does provoke; murder is as near to lust as flame is to smoke. Poison and treason are the hands of sin, yes, and also the shields to ward off the shame.

“So then, lest my life be cut down to keep you, King Antiochus, clear, with my flight I’ll shun the danger that I fear.”

Pericles left the garden, and King Antiochus returned to it.

King Antiochus said to himself, “Pericles has found the meaning of the riddle, for which we mean to have his decapitated head. He must not live to trumpet forth my infamy, nor tell the world that I, Antiochus, sin in such a loathed manner, and therefore immediately this Prince must die, for by his fall my honor must remain high.”

He said loudly, “Who is waiting on us?”

Thaliard, an important lord, entered the garden and asked, “Is your Highness calling me?”

Using the royal plural, King Antiochus replied, “You are of our inner circle, and you know our secrets. Because of your faithfulness to us, we will advance and promote you.”

He gave Thaliard some items and said, “Thaliard, look, here’s poison, and here’s gold. We hate Pericles, the Prince of Tyre, and you must kill him. Don’t ask the reason why. It is enough that you know we want you to kill him. Tell me, will it be done?”

“My lord, it will be done.”

“Good.”

A messenger, out of breath because he had hurried to bring King Antiochus important news, ran into the garden.

King Antiochus said to him, “Let your breathing cool

yourself as you tell us the reason for your haste.”

The messenger said, “My lord, Prince Pericles has fled,” and then he left.

King Antiochus said to Thaliard, “If you want to continue to live, run after Pericles, and like an arrow shot by a much-experienced archer hits the target that his eyes aim at, make sure that you never return here unless you can tell me, ‘Prince Pericles is dead.’”

Thaliard replied, “My lord, if I can get him within the range of my pistol, I’ll kill him — he will be sure to do no damage to you. So, farewell to your Highness.”

“Thaliard, *adieu!*”

Thaliard exited.

King Antiochus said to himself, “Until Pericles is dead, my heart can lend no relief to my head.”

— 1.2 —

Pericles had returned to Tyre and was standing in a room of his palace.

Pericles said to the lords who were just outside the room, “Let no one disturb us.”

He then said to himself, “Why should this change of thoughts, this sad companion, this dull-eyed melancholy, be my so accustomed guest that not an hour, whether in the Sun’s glorious walk across the sky, or in the peaceful night, which is the tomb where grief should sleep, can produce for me quiet? I used to be happy, but now I am continually melancholy.

“Here pleasures court my eyes, but my eyes shun them, and danger, which I feared, is at Antioch, the aim of whose King seems far too short to hit me here. Yet neither

pleasure's art can add joy to my spirits, nor can danger's distance comfort me.

“Then this must be true: The passionate feelings of the mind, which have their first conception by misdread — the fear of evil — have later sustenance and life by worry. And what was at first only fear of what might happen, grows elder now and takes action so that what is feared does not happen.

“And so it is with me. The great Antiochus, against whom I am too little to contend, since he's so great that he can do whatever he wants, will think I am speaking to others about his sin, although I swear that I am silent. Nor will it help me if I say that I honor him if he suspects that I may dishonor him by revealing his sin. Knowing that it would make him blush if it were known, he'll stop the course by which it might be known. To keep me from talking about his sin, he will kill me.

“With hostile forces he'll overspread our land, and with the show of war he will look so huge that terror shall drive courage from our state. Our men will be vanquished before they resist, and our subjects will be punished although they have never thought of causing offense.

“My concern for them, not pity for myself, who am no more but as the tops of trees, which guard the roots they grow by and defend them, makes both my body pine and my soul languish, and it punishes me before Antiochus can punish me.”

Helicanus, who was an older lord, and some other lords entered the room.

The first lord said to Pericles, “May joy and all comfort be in your sacred breast!”

The second lord said, “May joy and all comfort, until you

return to us, keep you peaceful and comfortable!”

The lords were aware that Pericles had been melancholy lately. They were wishing peaceful and comfortable feelings for Pericles until he returned to normal and became a man of action again.

Helicanus, however, objected to this. Instead of the lords’ encouraging Pericles to be inactive, he felt that they should encourage him to immediately cast off his melancholy and immediately become a man of action again.

“Peace, peace, and let an experienced man speak,” Helicanus said. “They who flatter the King abuse him, for flattery is the bellows that blows up sin. The thing that is flattered is only a spark, to which the blast of the bellows gives heat and stronger glowing. Flattery misleads Kings and encourages them to do the wrong thing.

“In contrast, reproof, when obedient and in order, befits Kings, as they are men, for men and Kings may err.”

Referring to the second lord, Helicanus said, “When Signior Flattery here advises peace for you, he flatters you: He tells you that your inactivity is justified, and in so doing he makes war upon your life.”

Seeing that Pericles looked angry, Helicanus knelt and said, “Prince, pardon me, or strike me, if you please. I cannot be much lower than my knees.”

Pericles said to the other lords, “All except Helicanus leave us, but take care to go to the harbor and see what ships and cargoes are there. I must be on the lookout for ships from Antioch. Once you are done, return to us.”

This may have gladdened Helicanus — Pericles was taking at least a little action. However, Pericles was angry at Helicanus’ criticism of the second lord — and Pericles

wanted to wallow in his melancholy.

The lords exited, and using the royal plural, Pericles said, “Helicanus, you have moved us emotionally. What emotion do you see in our face?”

“I see an angry brow, deeply honored lord.”

“If there is such an arrow in the frowns of Princes, how can your tongue dare to make me angry and show anger in our face?”

“How dare the plants look up to Heaven, from whence they receive their nourishment?”

“You know that I have the power to take your life from you,” Pericles said.

“I have sharpened the axe myself; all you have to do is strike the blow.”

Pericles stopped being angry; Helicanus was a good and loyal lord.

“Rise, please, rise,” Pericles said. “Sit down. You are no flatterer. I thank you for it, and Heaven forbid that Kings should let their ears hear words that hide the Kings’ faults! You are a fitting counselor and servant for a Prince, who by your wisdom make a Prince your servant — a wise Prince will follow wise advice. What do you want me to do?”

“I want you to bear with patience such griefs as you yourself lay upon yourself. I want you to stop moping about and become again a man of action.”

Pericles replied, “You speak like a physician, Helicanus, who gives a potion to me that you would tremble to take yourself.

“Listen to me, therefore, and let me give you more information about what has happened to me. I went to

Antioch, where as you know, against the face of death, I sought the acquisition of a glorious beauty with whom I might have children — children who are a strength to Princes and a joy to the Prince's subjects. Her face was to my eye beyond all wonder. The rest — listen carefully — was as black as incest. After the sinful father realized that I knew that he had committed incest, he put on an appearance. Instead of striking me, he flattered me with smooth words. But as you know, it is time to fear when tyrants seem to kiss.

“Such fear so grew in me, I fled back home, here, under the protective covering of night, which seemed to be my good guardian, and, once I was here, I thought about what was past, and what the future might bring.

“I knew that Antiochus was tyrannous, and we know that tyrants' fears do not decrease — instead, they grow faster than the years. And should he fear, as no doubt he does, that I should reveal to the listening air how many worthy Princes had their blood shed to keep his incestuous bed of blackness secret, then to stop that fear he'll fill this land with weapons and soldiers, and pretend that I have done something wrong to him.

“I realize that everyone in this land, including the innocent, must feel war's blow because of my offense — if I can call it offense. I love all of my subjects, of which you yourself are one, and you just now criticized me for my melancholy —”

“Alas, sir!”

“I know that a tempest is coming to this land. I have drawn sleep out of my eyes and blood from my cheeks, and I have placed musings into my mind, along with a thousand fears, as I tried to find a way for me to stop this tempest before it came, but I found little that would comfort and relieve my

mind. I thought it Princely charity to grieve for my subjects. This is why I have been melancholy.”

“Well, my lord, since you have given me leave to speak, I will speak freely,” Helicanus said. “You regard me as a wise and loyal counselor, and I will try to give you wise and loyal advice. You fear Antiochus, and justly, too, I think. You fear the tyrant, who either by public war or by private treason will take away your life and kill you.

“Therefore, my lord, I advise you to go and travel for a while, until Antiochus’ rage and anger are forgotten, or until the Destinies — the Fates — cut his thread of life.

“Delegate your authority to rule to anyone you choose; if you delegate it to me, day will not serve light more faithfully than I’ll serve you.”

“I do not doubt your loyalty,” Pericles said, “but what if he should wrong my liberties — my royal prerogatives, my territories, my subjects’ freedoms — in my absence?”

Helicanus’ advice was good. If Pericles were not at Tyre, Antiochus’ making war against Tyre would not result in Pericles’ death. Therefore, Antiochus was much less likely to attack Tyre if Pericles were no longer there. Still, Pericles was cautious. He wanted his subjects to be safe.

Helicanus knew that sometimes force had to be met with force, although it is better to use diplomacy and seek peace.

He replied, “If that should happen, we’ll mingle our bloods together in the earth, from whence we had our being and our birth.”

Pericles became a man of action again.

He said, “I now look away from you, Tyre, and I intend to travel to Tarsus, where I’ll hear from you, Helicanus, and I’ll act in accordance with the information I read in your

letters to me. The care I had and have to ensure my subjects' good I lay on you whose wisdom's strength can bear it. I have acted to take good care of my subjects, and in my absence I give you my authority, which I expect you to use to take good care of my subjects. I'll take your word that you will do this, and I will not ask you to take an oath. Anyone who will break his word will also break his oath. But in our separate spheres of action, we'll live so honestly and trustworthily that time shall never confute this truth of both of us: You are a loyal subject and I am a true Prince."

— 1.3 —

Thaliard had arrived in Tyre on his mission to assassinate Pericles, its Prince.

Standing in an antechamber of the palace, he said to himself, "So, this is Tyre, and this is the court. Here I must kill King Pericles, and if I do not kill him, I am sure to be hanged at home. This job is dangerous.

"Well, I perceive that the ancient poet Philippides was a wise fellow, and had good discretion, in that, when he was told to ask for what he wanted from the King, he desired that he might know none of his secrets. Now I see he had some reason for it, for if a King orders a man to be a villain, that man is bound by the contract of his oath to be a villain!

"Quiet! Here come the lords of Tyre."

Helicanus and Escanes, and other lords of Tyre, entered the antechamber. Helicanus immediately recognized Thaliard, who was an important lord of Antioch, but pretended not to see him. The information that he was going to now give to the lords, he knew would be overheard by Thaliard.

Helicanus said, "You shall not need, my fellow peers of Tyre, to question me further about your King's departure.

His commission, which bears the royal seal and gives me authority to act for him, he left in trust with me. It communicates sufficiently that he's gone to travel."

Thaliard thought, *What! King Pericles is gone!*

Helicanus continued, "If you want further information about why, without your loving permission, he would leave Tyre, I can give some light to you. While he was at Antioch ..."

Thaliard thought, *What about his being at Antioch?*

Helicanus continued, "... royal Antiochus — for what reason I don't know — took some displeasure at him; at least Prince Pericles judged this to be the case. And fearing lest that he had erred or sinned, to show his sorrow, he decided to reprimand himself, and so he put himself to the toil of a sailor, to whom each minute can bring life or death. Pericles is now traveling on the seas."

Thaliard thought, *Well, I see that I shall not be hanged now, although I would be if Pericles were here and I did not kill him. But since Pericles has gone, the King's ears will be pleased to hear that Pericles has escaped death on the land, only to perish at sea. I will tell King Antiochus that Pericles drowned at sea. But now I'll present myself to Helicanus.*

He said loudly, "Peace to the lords of Tyre!"

Helicanus was a good advisor and a good leader. He wished the peace between Antioch and Tyre to continue, and so he intended to treat Thaliard well.

He said, "Lord Thaliard from Antiochus is welcome."

Thaliard replied, "From him I have come with a message for Princely Pericles, but since my landing I have understood that your lord has taken himself to unknown

travels, and so my message must return to where it came from.”

“We have no reason to desire to see the message,” Helicanus replied, “since it is addressed to our master, not to us. Yet, before you depart, we desire, since we are friends to Antioch, that we and you may feast in Tyre.”

— 1.4 —

Cleon, the governor of Tarsus, and his wife, Dionyza, were outside the governor’s house in Tarsus. Around them were other people, including starving citizens of Tarsus.

Cleon said, “My Dionyza, shall we rest ourselves here, and by relating tales of the griefs of other people, see if it will help us to forget our own?”

“To do so would be like blowing on a fire in hopes to put it out,” Dionyza replied. “Whoever digs on a hill to lower it because it rises high accomplishes nothing except to move dirt from one spot to another. He throws down one mountain only to cast up a higher. My distressed lord, our griefs are like that. Here we feel them, and we look around and see them with our eyes because they afflict other people, but our griefs are similar to groves; after they are pruned, they rise higher. If we were to try to forget our griefs by talking about the griefs of other people, it would only make us feel our griefs more sharply.”

“Oh, Dionyza, who lacks food, and will not say he wants it? Who can conceal his hunger until he starves? Our sorrowful tongues deeply sound our woes into the air; our eyes weep while our lungs draw in breath so that our tongues may proclaim our griefs louder so that, if the gods slumber while their creatures lack food, our tongues may awaken the gods so that the gods may comfort their creatures. I will now talk about our woes, which we have felt for several years. When I lack breath to speak, help me

with your tears.”

“I’ll do my best, sir,” Dionyza replied.

“This is Tarsus,” Cleon said, “over which I govern. It is a city over which Copia, the goddess of abundance and plenty, held out a full hand, for she strewed riches even in the streets. Our city’s towers bore tops so high they kissed the clouds, and strangers never beheld our city without admiring it. Our city’s men and dames so strutted and adorned themselves that each was like a mirror for another person to use while dressing. Their tables were heaped full of food, to gladden the sight, and the purpose of the food was not so much to feed on as to delight. All poverty was scorned, and pride was so great that people hated to use the word ‘help.’”

“That is so true,” Dionyza said.

“But see what Heaven can do!” Cleon said. “Just recently, the earth, sea, and air, although they gave their creatures in abundance, were all too little to content and please the mouths of our citizens. But things have changed, and these mouths are like houses that become dirty and polluted because they are not used — these mouths are now starved for want of exercise. They have nothing to chew and eat. Those palates that, not even two summers ago, required fresh, novel dishes to delight the taste, would now be glad to taste bread, and they beg for it. Those mothers who, to rear and bring up their babes, thought nothing too finely and elaborately made, are so hungry that they are ready now to eat those little darlings whom they loved. So sharp are hunger’s teeth that man and wife draw lots to see who first shall die to lengthen the other’s life. With one dead, the other has more food, and the living may feast on the dead. Here stands a lord and there stands a lady weeping. Here many sink dead to the ground, yet those who see them fall have scarcely enough strength left to give them burial.

Is not this true?"

"Our hollow cheeks and hollow eyes are evidence that it is true," Dionyza said.

"Oh, let those cities that of the goddess of plenty's cup and her prosperities so largely taste with their wasteful, indulgent behavior hear this weeping and see these tears! The misery of Tarsus may be theirs."

A lord arrived and asked, "Where's the lord governor?"

"Here," Cleon said. "Speak out your sorrows that you bring in haste, for comfort is too much for us to expect. We no longer expect to hear good news — only bad."

"We have sighted, upon our neighboring shore, stately sails of ships coming here."

"This is bad news," Cleon said. "I thought as much. One sorrow never comes but it brings an heir that may follow as its inheritor. And so it happens with our sorrow. We are weak from famine, and so some neighboring nation, taking advantage of our misery, has stuffed these hollow vessels with their soldiers to beat us down, although we are down already. They want to make a conquest of unhappy me, although there is no glory in overcoming someone as weak as me."

"We need not worry about that," the lord said, "for, by the appearance of the white flags the ships are displaying, they bring us peace and have come to us as helpers, not as foes."

"You speak like a person who has not been taught to recite this proverb: Who makes the fairest show means the most deceit. But bring them what they will and what they can, what need we fear? The ground's the lowest we can fall, and we are halfway there. We are on our knees and stooped over. Go tell their general we await him here to find out

why he comes, from where he comes, and what he wants.”

“I go to do my duty, my lord.”

The lord exited.

“Welcome is peace, if their general on peace insists. If he insists on war, we are unable to resist,” Cleon said.

Pericles arrived with some attendants and said to Cleon, “Lord governor, for so we hear you are, let not our ships and the number of our men be like a beacon set on fire to terrify your eyes.”

People of the time guarded the coast. If they saw enemy ships arriving, they lit beacon fires to alert others that an invasion was coming.

Pericles continued, “We have heard about your miseries as far away as Tyre, and we have seen the desolation of your streets. We do not come to add sorrow to your tears, but to relieve them of the heavy sorrows that cause them. These our hollow ships, which you perhaps may think are like the hollow Trojan Horse that was stuffed with bloodthirsty soldiers waiting to come out and overthrow the city, are instead stored with grain to make your necessary bread, and give life to them whom hunger has starved half dead.”

Cleon, Dionyza, and the starving citizens of Tarsus who were present knelt and said, “May the gods of Greece protect you! And we’ll pray for you.”

“Arise, please, arise,” Pericles said. Using the royal plural, he added, “We do not look for reverence, but for friendship and harborage for ourself, our ships, and our men.”

Cleon replied, “You will have both friendship and harborage here. When anyone in Tarsus shall not give you those things, or if they repay you with unthankfulness in thought, whether it be our wives, our children, or ourselves,

then may the curse of Heaven and men follow their evils!
Until that time — which I hope never shall come — your
grace is welcome to our town and us.”

“We accept your welcome,” Pericles said, “and we will
feast here awhile, until our stars that now frown lend us a
smile.”

CHAPTER 2 (*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*)

— Prologue —

Addressing you the reader, John Gower said, “Here you have seen a mighty King, Antiochus, indeed, his child to incest bring. You have also seen a better *Prince* and benign lord — Pericles — who will prove to be worthy of awe both in deed and word. He will be quiet and patient, as men should be, until he has endured adversity.

“I’ll show you that those who among troubles reign, by losing a mite, a mountain gain. Pericles, who is good in conduct and to whom I give my blessing, is still at Tarsus, where each citizen thinks that everything he speaks is holy writ, and to commemorate what he does and has done, they build a statue of him to make him glorious. But tidings to the contrary — bad tidings — are now brought before your eyes, so what need do I have to speak?”

A dumb show — a show without speaking — appears in your brain, and you see Pericles and Cleon walk through one door with all their train of attendants following them. A gentleman bearing a letter walks through another door and gives the letter to Pericles, who reads it and then shows it to Cleon. Pericles then gives the messenger a monetary reward and knights him. Pericles exits through one door, and Cleon exits through another door.

John Gower said, “Good Helicanus stayed at home, not to eat honey — the result of the labor of others — like a drone, but instead to strive to kill bad and to keep good alive as well as to fulfill his Prince’s desires. Good Helicanus always sends word to Pericles of all that happens in Tyre. In this letter, he told Pericles about how Thaliard came fully determined to sin and had the intention of murdering him. Helicanus also advised Pericles that he

ought not to stay longer in Tarsus — it was not best for him there to make his rest.

“Pericles, taking Helicanus’ advice, sailed on the seas, where when men are, there is seldom ease. Now the wind begins to blow, and with thunder above and deeps below, the winds create such unquiet that the ship that should keep Pericles safe is wrecked and split, and he, good Prince, having lost everything, by waves from coast to coast is tossed. All the men perish, all possessions are lost, and no one and nothing escapes except himself. Finally, Lady Fortune, tired with doing bad, threw Pericles ashore, to make him glad.

“Look, here he comes. What shall be next, pardon old Gower, for he shall not tell you — what shall be next belongs to the text.”

— 2.1 —

Pericles, dripping wet, stood on a seashore of Pentapolis, whose King was Simonides. The day was still stormy, although the storm was lessening.

Pericles addressed the stars: “Now cease your ire, you angry stars of Heaven! Wind, rain, and thunder, remember that Earthly man is just a substance that must yield to you, and I, as befits my Earthly nature, obey you.

“Unfortunately, the sea has cast me on the rocks, washed me from shore to shore, and left me breath — life — with nothing to think about except my ensuing death.

“Let it suffice the greatness of your powers to have bereft a Prince of all his fortunes, and having thrown him from your watery grave, here to have death in peace is all he’ll crave.”

Three fishermen were on the shore, but they did not notice Pericles. Because of the loudness of the lessening storm,

they talked loudly.

The third fisherman was deep in thought. The first and second fishermen were ready to get to work.

The first fisherman called to the third fisherman, “What, ho, Pilch!”

A pilch is a leather jacket.

The second fisherman called, “Ha, come and bring away the nets!”

The fisherman called, “What, Patchbreech, I say!”

In addition to wearing a leather jacket, the third fisherman wore patched trousers.

“What do you want, master?” the third fisherman asked.

“Look at how you are waking up now! Get busy and start working, or I’ll fetch you with a vengeance. I’ll beat you to wake you so that you can work.”

“Truly, master, I am thinking of the poor men who were cast into the sea and drowned in front of us just now,” the third fishermen said to explain his pensiveness.

“Oh, those poor souls,” the first fisherman said. “It grieved my heart to hear what pitiful cries they made to us to help them, when, sadly, we could scarcely even help ourselves.”

“Master, didn’t I say as much when I saw the porpoise bounce and plunge in the sea — a sure sign of a storm?” the third fisherman said. “People say porpoises are half fish and half flesh — a plague on them. Every time I see them, I expect to be washed into the sea. Master, I wonder how the fishes live in the sea.”

“Why, they live in the sea just like men do on land,” the first fisherman said. “The great ones eat up the little ones. I

can compare our rich misers to nothing as suitably as to a whale. The whale plays and plunges, driving the poor fry — the small fish — before him, and at last devours them all at a mouthful. I have heard that such whales are living on the land; they never close their mouths until after they've swallowed the whole parish — church, steeple, bells, and all.”

Pericles said softly to himself, “A pretty moral.”

The third fisherman said, “But, master, if I had been the sexton, and in charge of the bells, I would have been that day in the belfry.”

“Why, man?” the second fisherman asked.

“So that the whale would have swallowed me, too,” the third fisherman said. “When I would be in his belly, I would have kept such a jangling of the bells that he would never have left until he vomited bells, steeple, church, and parish up again. But if the good King Simonides were of my mind —”

Pericles said softly to himself, “Simonides.”

The third fisherman continued, “— we would purge the land of these lazy drones who rob the bee of her honey.”

Pericles said softly to himself, “These fishermen tell about the infirmities of men, using what they have learned from the finny subjects of the sea. From the fishes’ watery empire, these fishermen gather up all that men may approve or men may detect to be evil!”

Deciding to reveal himself to the three fishermen, Pericles said loudly, “Peace be at your labor, honest fishermen.”

The second fisherman said to Pericles, who looked bedraggled and as if he might be a beggar, “Honest and good fellow, what’s that? Peaceful labor! On a stormy day

like this! If you think this is a good day, take it out of the calendar and examine it closely. Nobody will go looking for it!”

“You may see that the sea has cast upon your coast —”

The second fisherman interrupted, “What a drunken knave was the sea to cast you in our way!”

Pericles continued, “— a man whom both the waters and the wind, in that vast tennis court, have made the ball for them to play with, a man who entreats you to pity him. This he asks of you although he is a man who never used to beg.”

“No, friend, cannot you beg?” the first fisherman said. “Some people in our country — Greece — get more with begging than we do with working.”

“Can you catch any fishes, then?” the second fisherman said.

“I have never done the work of a fisherman,” Pericles replied.

“Then you will surely starve,” the second fisherman said, “for there’s nothing to be got here nowadays, unless you can fish for it.”

“What I have been, I have forgotten,” Pericles said.

Of course, Pericles had lived like the Prince he was, but now he was needy.

He continued, “But what I am, need teaches me to think on — I am a man burdened by cold. My veins are chilled, and they have no more of life than may suffice to give my tongue enough heat to ask for your help. If you should refuse to help me, then when I am dead, please see that I am buried because I am a man.”

“When he is dead, he says?” the first fisherman said. “Gods forbid! I have a sea-coat here. Come, put it on; it will keep you warm. Now, I say, here is a handsome fellow! Come, you shall go home and stay with me, and we’ll have flesh for holidays, fish for fasting days, and also we’ll have sausages and pancakes, and you shall be welcome.”

“I thank you, sir,” Pericles said.

“Listen, my friend,” the second fisherman said. “You said you could not beg.”

Pericles replied, “I did not beg, but I did crave.”

This was a bit of a joke because begging and craving are much the same thing.

“Crave!” the second fisherman said. “Then I’ll turn craver, too, and so I shall escape whipping.”

“Why, are all your beggars whipped, then?” Pericles asked.

In this society, the beadle punished able-bodied beggars by whipping them.

“Oh, not all, my friend,” the second fisherman replied, “not all; for if all your beggars were whipped, I would wish no better job than to be beadle.”

He then said to the first fisherman, “But, master, I’ll go draw up the net.”

The second and the third fishermen exited.

Pericles thought, *How well this honest mirth becomes their labor!*

The first fisherman asked him, “Sir, do you know where you are?”

“Not well.”

“Why, then I’ll tell you,” the first fisherman said. “This place is called Pentapolis, and our King is the good Simonides.”

“The good King Simonides, do you call him?” Pericles asked.

“Yes, sir, and he deserves to be called good because of his peaceful reign and good government.”

“He is a happy King, since he gains from his subjects the name of good for his government,” Pericles said. “How far is his court from this shore?”

“Sir, half a day’s journey, and I’ll tell you that he has a fair daughter, and tomorrow is her birthday; and Princes and knights have come from all parts of the world to joust in a tournament for her love.”

“If my fortunes were equal to my desires, I could wish to make one there,” Pericles said.

“Oh, sir, things must be as they may,” the first fisherman said, “and what a man cannot get, he may lawfully deal for his wife’s soul.”

No man can beget a child by himself alone, but he can beget a child — lawfully — by marrying a woman and becoming one with her. That is the way that things are.

If Pericles is to have his fortunes equal to his desires, he will need help from others. He cannot do it alone. That is the way that things are.

The second and the third fishermen came back, dragging their net.

The second fisherman said, “Help, master, help! Here’s a fish caught in the net, like a poor man who is in the right, according to the law; it will hardly come out.”

This was a cynical joke. A poor man, although he is in the right, may be trapped in the legal system and find it difficult to escape, just like a poor fish caught in a net. Still, the joke did not say that it was impossible to escape.

The second fisherman pulled the “fish” out of the net and said, “Ha! The plague on it! The ‘fish’ has come out at last, and it has turned into rusty armor.”

“Armor, my friends!” Pericles said. “Please, let me see it.”

He recognized it as his father’s armor, which had been on board the ship that wrecked, and he prayed, “Thanks, Lady Fortune, who, after all my crosses, have given me something with which to repair myself.”

Pericles intended to repair his fortunes by fighting in and winning the tournament.

Pericles continued his prayer to Lady Fortune, “You gave this armor to me although it is my own, part of my heritage, which my dead father bequeathed to me. He gave me this strict charge, even as he left his life, ‘Keep it, my Pericles; it has been a metaphorical shield between me and death. Because it saved me, keep it; in like necessity — which I pray the gods will protect you from! — this armor may protect you.’”

He said to the fishermen, “Wherever I have gone, I have taken this armor — I kept it where I kept myself because I so dearly loved it — until the rough seas, which spare no man, took it away from me in rage, although the seas, now calmed, have given it to me again.

“I thank you for it: my shipwreck is now not so ill since I have here a gift that my father gave me in his will.”

“What do you mean, sir?” the first fisherman asked.

“I mean to beg of you, kind friends, this coat of worth,”

Pericles said. “For it was once the protector of a King. I know it by this mark.”

Of course, the armor had been used in battle. Pericles pointed to a mark that an enemy’s weapon had made.

He added, “The King loved me dearly, and for his sake I wish the having of his armor. And I wish that you will guide me to your sovereign’s court, where with this armor I may appear as a gentleman. If my low fortune ever becomes better, I’ll repay you for your good deeds; until then I will be your debtor.”

“Do you intend to compete in the tournament for the lady, the King’s daughter?” the first fisherman asked.

“I intend to show the skill that I have in arms,” Pericles said.

“Take the armor, and may the gods give you good fortune to go with it!” said the first fisherman, who began to help Pericles put on the armor.

“Yes, but listen, my friend; it was we who made up this garment through the rough seams of the waters,” the second fisherman said.

He was punning by using words appropriate to tailoring. One job of tailors is to make up a suit that has seams.

The second fisherman added, “There are certain condolences, certain vails.”

The second fisherman wanted a reward for finding the armor. “Condolements” was a malapropism for “doles,” aka gifts. “Vails” were tips; the word also referred to the scrap material left over after a tailor finished making a garment — the tailor kept the scrap material.

“I hope, sir,” the second fisherman added, “that if you

thrive, you'll remember where you got this armor.”

“Believe it, I will,” Pericles said. He was now wearing the armor, and he looked much more like a gentleman.

He added, “By your assistance, I am clothed in steel, and, despite all the violence of the sea that has violently seized almost everything that was onboard the ship that wrecked, a jeweled bracelet still keeps its place on my arm.”

Pericles said to the jeweled bracelet, “I will use all your value to acquire a courser that I will mount and ride in the tournament. My horse's delightful steps shall make the gazer rejoice to see him tread.”

Pericles then said to the second fisherman, “Only, my friend, I still lack a pair of bases — a divided skirt that knights wear over their armor while on horseback.”

“We'll surely provide it,” the second fisherman said. “You shall have my best sea-coat to make yourself a pair of bases, and I'll bring you to the court myself.”

Pericles replied, “Then let honor be a goal for my will; this day I'll rise, or else add ill to ill.”

— 2.2 —

King Simonides and his daughter, Thaisa, stood by the lists — the ground where the tournament would take place. With them were lords and attendants.

King Simonides asked a lord, “Are the knights ready to begin the tournament?”

The lord replied, “They are, my liege, and they await your coming to present themselves to you and your daughter.”

“Take this answer to them: We are ready; and our daughter, in honor of whose birth this tournament is being held, sits here, like beauty's child, whom nature gave birth to for

men to see and wonder at.”

The lord exited, and Thaisa said, “It pleases you, my royal father, to praise me much more than I deserve.”

“It’s fitting it should be so,” King Simonides replied, “for Princesses are a model that Heaven makes similar to itself. As jewelry loses its glory if neglected, so Princesses lose their renown if not valued and respected.”

He added, “It is now your honorable duty, daughter, to view the purpose of each knight as expressed in his device.”

The device was a small shield that each knight had decorated with a symbol and a motto explaining his purpose for participating in the tournament. Knights hoped to win the tournament, and by so doing, win honor and the hand of Thaisa in marriage. Pericles hoped to improve his fortunes by winning the tournament.

“Which, to preserve my honor, I’ll perform,” Thaisa replied.

Six knights were participating in the tournament. Five of the knights had a page who held up the knight’s small shield so that the King and his daughter could see it.

Simonides asked, “Who is the first who presents himself?”

“A knight of Sparta, my renowned father,” Thaisa said, “and the device he bears upon his shield is a black-skinned Ethiopian reaching at the sun. His motto is ‘*Lux tua vita mihi.*’”

Lux tua vita mihi is Latin for “Your light is life to me.”

Simonides said, “He loves you well who believes his life is dependent on you.”

King Simonides asked, “Who is the second knight who

presents himself?”

“A Prince of Macedon, my royal father, and the symbol he bears upon his shield is an armed knight who has been conquered by a lady. His motto in ... Spanish? ... is ‘*Piu por dulzura que por fuerza.*’”

Simonides did not comment on this motto because neither he nor his daughter could translate it.

The motto was a garbled mixture of Italian and Spanish and perhaps one or more other languages and means, roughly, “More by gentleness than by force.”

The way Thaisa had conquered this knight and made him love her was through her gentleness.

Although the knight was from Macedon and would have been expected to have a motto in either Latin or his native language, he had tried to impress King Simonides and Thaisa with his knowledge of foreign languages. Unfortunately, his knowledge of foreign languages was lacking. Perhaps, so was his knowledge of Latin.

Simonides asked, “And who is the third knight?”

“The third knight comes from Antioch, and his symbol is a wreath of chivalry. His motto is ‘*Me pompae provexit apex.*’”

A wreath of chivalry is a wreath worn as a crown by a victor.

The Latin motto, translated literally, is “The peak of the tournament leads me forth.” It means “The honor of the tournament brings me here.”

“Who is the fourth knight?” Simonides asked.

“One whose shield bears the symbol of a burning torch that’s turned upside down. The motto is ‘*Quod me alit, me*

extinguit.”

The Latin motto means “What inflames me, extinguishes me.”

Wax will put a torch out when the torch is held upside down because the wax will melt and run down the torch and extinguish the flame.

Another — bawdy — interpretation was that what inflamed the knight would kill him. Thaisa inflamed the knight, and if the knight won the tournament he would marry Thaisa and “die” in her arms. In this society, “to die” was slang for “to have an orgasm.”

Simonides’ interpretation was this: “It shows that beauty has its own power and will, which can as well inflame as it can kill.”

The fifth knight appeared and Thaisa said, “The symbol of the shield of the fifth knight is a hand surrounded by clouds, holding out gold that has been tested with a touchstone. The motto is ‘*Sic spectanda fides.*’”

A touchstone is a piece of black quartz. To test the purity of gold, the gold would be rubbed on the touchstone. The mark it left behind told how pure it was. The touchstone came to be a symbol of faithfulness.

The Latin motto means “Thus faithfulness is tested.”

Now the sixth knight — Pericles, clad in rusty armor — arrived.

Simonides asked, “And who is the sixth and last knight, who himself presents his shield with such a graceful courtesy because he has no page?”

Thaisa replied, “He seems to be a stranger, a foreigner, but his symbol is a withered branch that’s green only at the top.

The motto is ‘*In hac spe vivo.*’”

The Latin motto means “In this hope I live.”

Simonides said, “This is a pretty moral. From the dejected state he is in, he hopes that by winning you his fortunes yet may flourish.”

The first lord said, “I hope that his inward intentions are better than his outward show, which can hardly recommend him. Judging by his rusty exterior, he appears to have practiced more the whipstock than the lance. He seems to be more experienced at using a whip as a driver of a cart than using a lance as a knight in a tournament.”

The second lord said, “He well may be a foreigner, for he has come strangely equipped to an honorable tournament.”

The third lord said, “He must have let his armor rust on purpose just so he could scour it in the dust in this tournament.”

The three lords were judging the knight by the rusty armor he was wearing.

Simonides was a better man than that. He said, “This way of forming an opinion is that of a fool. A fool will scan the outward clothing and think that he is seeing the inward man.

“But wait, the knights are coming into the lists. We will go now and watch the tournament.”

They left.

Soon, lots of people shouted, “The badly armored knight!”

Pericles had scored a great victory in the tournament.

In a hall of state was a banquet that was being served after the tournament. Among those present were King Simonides, Thaisa, lords, and attendants. Also present, of course, were the knights who had participated in the tournament. So were a number of ladies.

King Simonides said, “Knights, to say you’re welcome is unnecessary. And I need not praise your deeds of valor today because they speak for themselves. I need not be the title page of a book about your deeds — a title page that praises the worth of the book. That would be more than you expect, or more than is fit, since, as I said, every worthy deed of valor commends itself. Prepare to be mirthful, for mirth becomes a feast. You are Princes and my guests.”

Thaisa said to Pericles, “But you are my knight and guest. To you I give this wreath of victory, and I crown you King of this day’s happiness.”

She placed a wreath on his head.

“My success in the tournament came more by luck, lady, than by merit,” Pericles said modestly.

“Call it by what you will, the day is yours,” King Simonides said to Pericles. “You are the victor, and here, I hope, is no one who envies your success.

“In fashioning an artist, art has thus decreed to make some good, but others to exceed. She makes some good, and some better. She has labored to make you into a scholar.”

He said to Thaisa, “Come, Queen of the feast — for, daughter, so you are — here take your place.”

He then said, “Marshal, show the others to their places, according to their status.”

The knights said, “We are much honored by good Simonides.”

“Your presence gladdens our days,” Simonides replied. “We love honor; whoever hates honor hates the gods above.”

The Marshal showed Pericles the seat of honor and said, “Sir, yonder is your place.”

“Some other knight is more fitting to sit here,” Pericles said modestly.

The first knight said, “Don’t argue, sir; for we are gentlemen who neither in our hearts nor with outward eyes envy the great or despise the low.”

Pericles was both high and low. He was the Prince of Tyre, yet he was wearing rusty armor.

He replied, “You are right courteous knights.”

“Sit, sir, sit,” Simonides said.

He thought, *By Jove, who is King of thoughts, I wonder how it is that I lose my appetite for the delicacies before me when I think about the knight in rusty armor.*

He was so impressed with the tournament’s victor, despite his rusty armor, that when he thought about the knight in rusty armor’s virtues, he did not feel like eating. Partly, he was wondering what his daughter thought about the knight in rusty armor, and partly, he was wondering if it was a good idea to marry his daughter, a Princess, to someone who apparently lacked material resources and was forced to wear rusty armor.

Thaisa thought, *By Juno, who is Queen of marriage, all the food I eat seems tasteless. I wish that the knight in rusty armor were my meat — my mate.*

She said out loud to her father, “It is certain that the knight in rusty armor is a gallant gentleman.”

Simonides replied, “He’s only a country gentleman; he has done no more than other knights have done. He has broken a spear or two, so let it pass.”

Thaisa thought, *To me the knight in rusty armor seems like a diamond compared to glass.*

Pericles looked at King Simonides and thought, *Yonder King seems to me very much like my father’s picture. The picture tells me about that glory that he once had. Princes used to sit, like stars, around his throne, and my father was the Sun for them to revere. All who beheld him were like lesser lights, and they lowered their crowns to acknowledge his supremacy. Whereas now his son — me — is like a glowworm in the night; the glowworm has fire in darkness, but none in light. By this I see that Time is the King of men. Time is their parent and their grave, and he gives them what he will, not what they crave.*

“Are you merry, knights?” King Simonides asked.

A knight replied, “Who can be other than merry in this royal presence and at this feast?”

“Here,” Simonides said. “With a cup that’s filled to the brim — it is filled as full as you are filled with love for a woman, if you are in love — we drink this health, aka toast, to you.”

The knights replied, “We thank your grace.”

“Yet wait a moment,” Simonides said, looking at Pericles. “Yonder knight sits too melancholy, as if the entertainment in our court lacked a show that might equal his worth.”

Simonides was still worried about marrying his daughter to a country gentleman — someone of high enough status to be a knight, but nevertheless lacking in manners. Pericles was in fact lacking in manners. At a banquet, good manners

require that a guest enjoy himself — or at least fake it. However, Simonides was a good host and rather than blaming Pericles for not having a good time, he decided to make more of an effort to entertain him.

“Do you notice that the knight in rusty armor is melancholy, Thaisa?” he asked.

“What is that to me, my father?” she replied.

Father and daughter were wondering how the other felt about the knight in rusty armor. Neither was willing to reveal how he or she felt until he or she knew more about how the other felt.

“Listen carefully, my daughter,” Simonides said. “Princes in this world should live like the gods above, who freely give to everyone who comes to honor them. Princes who do not do that are similar to gnats, which make a sound, but when they are killed, they are wondered at — how can something so tiny be so annoying?”

“The knight honored us by participating in our tournament, and we gave him and the other knights a banquet, but he is not responding as we want — he is not having a good time.

“Let’s try to make him have a good time. To make his presence at this banquet sweeter, tell him that we drink this ceremonial bowl of wine to him.”

“My father, it is not suitable for me to be so bold to a strange and foreign knight,” Thaisa objected. “He may regard as offensive what I say to him, since some men take women’s gifts for impudence.”

Thaisa wanted to behave as a maiden of good reputation; she could not do so by being forward, although she was attracted to the knight with rusty armor.

Simonides believed that maidens of good reputation obeyed

their father.

“What!” Simonides said. “Do as I tell you, or you’ll anger me.”

Thaisa thought, *Now, by the gods, I can obey his order without harming my reputation. His order could not better please me.*

Using the royal plural, Simonides added, “And furthermore tell him that we desire to know from him where he came from and what is his name and parentage.”

Thaisa went to Pericles and said, “The King my father, sir, has drunk to you —”

“I thank him,” he replied.

“— wishing that it would enrich your blood.”

“I thank both him and you, and I drink his health freely.”

Thaisa continued, “And furthermore he desires to know from you where you have come from, your name, and your parentage.”

“I am a gentleman of Tyre; my name is Pericles. My education has been in liberal arts and arms. While looking for adventures in the world, I was by the rough seas bereft of ships and men, and after being shipwrecked, I was driven upon this shore.”

Pericles did not say that he was the Prince of Tyre. A knight from Antioch was present, and Pericles did not want to reveal everything about himself.

Thaisa returned to her father and said, “He thanks your grace; his name is Pericles, and he is a gentleman of Tyre, who only by misfortune of the seas became bereft of ships and men and was cast on this shore.’”

This information relieved Simonides. Pericles was not a country gentleman; Tyre was a notable city. And Pericles had been rich but had suffered misfortune. Also, his misfortune was a good reason for his being melancholy at the banquet.

“Now, by the gods, I pity his misfortune,” King Simonides said, “and I will awaken him from his melancholy.”

He then said to the knights, “Come, gentlemen, we have sat too long and discussed trifles and wasted the time, which now requires other revels. Your armor, in which you are still dressed, will very well become a soldier’s dance. I will hear no excuse, so do not say that this loud music — the clashing of armor as you dance — is too harsh for ladies’ heads, since they love men in arms as well as in beds.”

The knights, including Pericles, danced.

King Simonides said, “It is good that I asked for the dance, since it was so well performed.”

He then said to Pericles, “Come, sir; here is a lady — my daughter — who wants exercise, too. And I have heard that you knights of Tyre are excellent in making ladies trip; and that their measures are as excellent.”

King Simonides’ words included a — perhaps unintentional — indelicate jest. Ladies who trip are ladies who dance — or ladies who trip and fall sexually. Measures can be rhythmic dance movements — or rhythmic sex movements.

“In those who practice them they are, my lord,” Pericles replied.

“You are denying that you are a practiced dancer out of politeness,” Simonides said.

The knights and the ladies danced.

The dance of Pericles and Thaisa turned into a dance of courtship, and when the two began dancing too closely, King Simonides said, “Enough! Let go of each other!”

He then said, “I give my thanks, gentlemen, to all; all have done well.”

He said to Pericles, “But you have done the best of all.”

He referred to both his winning the tournament and what seemed as if it would quickly occur — his winning Thaisa.

King Simonides then ordered, “Pages, bring lights so you can conduct these knights to their different lodgings!”

Using the royal plural, he said to Pericles, “We have given orders for your lodging to be next to our own.”

He may have wanted to discourage bed-hopping during the night.

“I am at your grace’s pleasure,” Pericles said. “I will stay wherever your highness chooses.”

King Simonides said, “Princes, it is too late to talk of love; and that’s the mark I know you aim at. Certainly, there are ladies enough here for you to aim at. Therefore, each of you go to your rest. Tomorrow you can all do your best to achieve success at love.”

Some of the knights may have wanted to pursue Thaisa. Pericles had won the tournament, which made him a clear favorite to marry Thaisa, but it did not necessarily mean that he would marry her. The tournament had been held to celebrate her birthday — not to choose a husband for her.

— 2.4 —

Helicanus and Escanes spoke together in a room in the governor’s house at Tyre. Pericles had given Helicanus authority to govern Tyre in his absence, and Escanes was a

loyal lord whom Helicanus respected.

Helicanus said, “No, Escanes, learn this from me. Antiochus from incest lived not free. For this sin, the highest gods did not intend any longer to withhold the vengeance that they had in store. Due to this heinous capital offence, even in the height and pride of all his glory, when he was seated in a chariot of inestimable value, and his daughter was with him, a fire from Heaven came and shriveled up their bodies and made them loathsome. They so stunk that all those eyes that adored them before their fall scorned now that their hands should give them burial.”

“It was very strange,” Escanes said.

“And yet it was only justice because although this King was great, his greatness was no guard to stop Heaven’s arrow — sin had its reward.”

“It is very true.”

Three lords entered the room.

The first lord said, “See, not a man has influence — either in private conference or public council — with Helicanus except Escanes.”

“We shall no longer suffer our grievance in silence,” the second lord said. “We shall express our disapproval.”

“And cursed be he who will not second it,” the third lord said. “We three must put up a united front.”

“Follow me, then,” the first lord said.

He said loudly, “Lord Helicanus, may we have a word with you?”

“With me?” Helicanus said. “Yes, and welcome. Happy day, my lords.”

“Know that our grievances are like a river risen to the top, and now finally they overflow their banks.”

“Your grievances?” Helicanus said. “Do not wrong your Prince whom you love.”

“Wrong not yourself, then, noble Helicanus,” the first lord said. “But if Prince Pericles is alive and in this country, let us greet him, or let us know what ground’s made happy by his breath — let us know in which country he is. If he is still alive in the world, we’ll seek him out. If he rests in his grave, we’ll find him there. We will be resolved that he is still alive and can govern us, or if he is dead, then let us mourn at his funeral and allow us to hold a free election to choose his successor.”

“In our opinion, it is most likely that Pericles is dead,” the second lord said. “If so, then this kingdom is without a head — and like admirable buildings that are without a roof, it will soon fall to ruin. Therefore, we submit ourselves and make ourselves subjects to your noble self, who best knows how to rule and how to reign. We make you our sovereign.”

The three lords shouted, “Live, noble Helicanus!”

“For the sake of honor, withdraw your votes to make me your sovereign,” Helicanus said. “If you love and are loyal to Prince Pericles, withdraw your votes. If I were to obey your wish, it would be like I leapt into the seas, where there is an hour’s trouble for a minute’s ease. Such is the burden of governing as a sovereign — a burden that I do not wish to take on, although as a loyal subject I accepted the responsibility of governing in the Prince’s absence. Wait a twelvemonth — one year — longer. Let me persuade you to bear patiently the absence of your King. If he has not returned to Tyre within that year, I shall with aged patience bear your yoke.

“But if I cannot persuade you to be this patient, go and search for him like nobles — like the noble subjects you are — and in your search spend your adventurous worth. Be like the Knights of the Round Table and go on this adventure. If you find Prince Pericles, and if you persuade him to return to Tyre, you shall sit around his crown like diamonds.”

“A person is a fool if he will not yield to reason,” the first lord said, “and what you have advised us to do is wise.”

He said to the other lords, “Since Lord Helicanus has advised us to do this, we will undertake these travels and travails.”

Using the royal plural, Helicanus said, “So then, you respect us, and we respect you, and we’ll clasp hands. When peers thus knit, a Kingdom ever stands. When nobles are united, their Kingdom stands forever.”

— 2.5 —

King Simonides read a letter in a room of his palace at Pentapolis. Some knights entered the room.

The first knight said, “Good morning to the good Simonides.”

Simonides said, “Knights, from my daughter I let you know that for the next twelve months she will not undertake a married life. Her reason is known only by herself, and by no means can I get that reason from her.”

The second knight asked, “May we get access to her and talk to her, my lord?”

“Indeed, by no means,” Simonides replied. “She has so strictly kept herself to her chamber that it is impossible. For twelve moons more she’ll wear Diana’s livery and remain a virgin and serve the goddess. This by the eye of Cynthia

she has vowed and on her virgin honor she will not break it.”

Diana was a virgin goddess; she was also a tripartite goddess, and as Cynthia she was the goddess of the Moon.

The third knight said, “Although we are loath to bid farewell, we take our leaves.”

The knights exited.

“So, they are well gotten rid of,” Simonides said to himself. He was pleased that his lie had worked. “Now to my daughter’s letter. She tells me here that either she will wed the foreign knight — Pericles — or she will never again look at day or light.

“It is well, mistress; your choice agrees with mine. I like your choice of husband well. Look how resolute she is in her decision, not caring whether or not I agree with her choice of husband!

“Well, I do commend her choice and will no longer have their match be delayed.

“Quiet! Here he comes: I must pretend that I don’t agree with my daughter’s choice of him as her husband.”

Pericles walked over to King Simonides and said, “All good fortune to the good Simonides!”

“To you as much, sir!” Simonides replied. “I am beholden to you for your sweet music last night. My ears were never better fed with such delightful and pleasing harmony.”

“It is your grace’s pleasure to praise me,” Pericles said. “I do not deserve such high praise.”

“Sir, you are music’s master.”

“I am the worst of all her scholars, my good lord.”

“Let me ask you one thing: What do you think of my daughter, sir?”

“She is a very virtuous Princess.”

“And she is beautiful, too, isn’t she?”

“She is as beautiful as a fair day in summer,” Pericles replied. “She is wondrously fair.”

“Sir, my daughter thinks very well of you,” Simonides said. “Yes, she thinks so well of you that you must be her master, and she will be your scholar. Therefore, be her music master.”

“I am unworthy to be her schoolmaster.”

“She does not think so,” Simonides said. “If you don’t believe me, read this letter.”

He handed the letter to Pericles, who read it and thought, *What’s here? A letter in which she says that she loves me, the knight of Tyre! This must be a cunning trap set by the King to have an excuse to take my life.*

Pericles said out loud to King Simonides, “Seek not to trap me, gracious lord. I am a stranger and a distressed gentleman, who never aimed so high as to love your daughter, but bent all my efforts to honor her.”

“You have bewitched my daughter, and you are a villain.”

“By the gods, I have not bewitched your daughter,” Pericles replied. “Never did any thought of mine intend offence; and never have my actions yet began a deed that might gain her love or cause you to be displeased with me.”

“Traitor, you lie,” King Simonides said.

“Traitor!”

“Yes, traitor.”

“Even in his throat — unless it be the King — anyone who calls me traitor, I return the lie. I say that anyone — except the King — who says that I am a traitor is lying in his throat.”

To lie in one’s throat is the worst kind of lying.

King Simonides thought, *Now, by the gods, I applaud his courage.*

Pericles said, “My actions are as noble as my thoughts, that never have had a taste of a base descent. I came to your court for the sake of honor, and not to be a rebel to her state. This sword shall prove whoever who thinks otherwise about me is the enemy of honor.”

“Is that so?” Simonides said. “Here comes my daughter; she can witness it.”

Thaisa walked over to the two men.

Pericles said to her, “Since you are as virtuous as you are beautiful, tell your angry father whether my tongue and hand have ever flirted with you — even a single syllable — or tried to seduce you.”

“Why, sir, if you had, who would take offence at something that would make me glad?” Thaisa replied.

“Young lady, are you so determined to have him?” Simonides said.

He thought, *I am glad with all my heart that you are.*

He said out loud to his daughter, “I’ll tame you; I’ll bring you into subjection. Will you, without having my consent, bestow your love and your affections upon a stranger?”

He thought, *This stranger, for all I know, may have — and*

I can't think the contrary is true — as noble blood as I have.

He said, “Therefore listen to me, young lady; either accommodate your will to mine, and you, sir, listen to me, either be ruled by me, or I will make you two — man and wife.”

He smiled and said, “Come, your hands and lips must seal your engagement. Kiss each other and shake hands. Good, now that your hands are joined, and you are engaged, I'll destroy your hopes and give you this further ‘grief’ — I pray that God will give you joy! Are you both pleased?”

Thaisa said to her father, “Yes —”

Then she said to Pericles, “— if you love me, sir.”

“I love you as I love my life, and the blood that fosters my life,” Pericles replied.

“Are you both agreed that you shall be wed?” Simonides asked.

Both replied, “Yes, if it pleases your majesty.”

Simonides replied, “It pleases me so well that I will see you wed and then see with what haste you can get yourselves to bed.”

CHAPTER 3 (Pericles, Prince of Tyre)

— Prologue —

John Gower said to you the reader, “Now sleep has slaked the drunken revelers at the marriage. No din can be heard except snores throughout the house, snores made louder by the overfed stomachs resulting from this most ceremonious marriage-feast. The cat, with eyes of burning coal — they glow in the dark — now crouches before the mouse’s hole, and crickets sing at the oven’s mouth, ever the happier because of their dry abode.

“Hymen, god of marriage, has brought the bride to bed, where, by the loss of her maidenhead, a babe is created. Be attentive, and use your fine imaginations to ingeniously augment what you will see in your brain — it will briefly cover what takes a long time in real life.

“What’s dumb in show I’ll explain with speech.”

A dumb show — a show without speaking — appears in your brain where you see Pericles and Simonides together and a messenger meeting them, kneeling, and giving Pericles a letter. Pericles reads the letter and shows it to King Simonides. The lords kneel to Pericles. Thaisa, pregnant, enters the room, accompanied by Lychorida, a nurse. The King shows Thaisa the letter, and she rejoices. Pericles and Thaisa, accompanied by Lychorida and some attendants, leave King Simonides, who then leaves, accompanied by all who remained.

Gower said, “With many a dark and painstaking journey, a careful search for Pericles is made with all due diligence throughout the four corners of the world. The journeys are made with horses and ships and high expense — whatever can assist the quest.

“At last from Tyre, after reports answered the most foreign and faraway inquiries, to the court of King Simonides a letter is brought. The content of the letter is that Antiochus and his daughter are dead, and that the men of Tyre would like to set the crown of Tyre on the head of Helicanus and make him King, but he immediately resists the mutiny and says to them that if King Pericles does not return home in one year, then he, Helicanus, obedient to their judgments, will take the crown. The gist of this, once brought to Pentapolis, enraptures the regions round about, and everyone applauds and begins to shout, ‘Our heir-apparent — Pericles — is a King! Who dreamed, who thought of such a thing?’

“In brief, Pericles must depart from Pentapolis and go to Tyre. His Queen with child makes her desire known — which who shall oppose? She wishes to accompany her husband.

“We omit all their distress and woe.

“Thaisa takes Lychorida, her nurse, and so they go to sea. Their vessel shakes on Neptune’s waves; half the flood has their keel cut — they have completed half their voyage. But Lady Fortune’s mood changes again; the grisly north wind disgorges such a tempest forth that, like a duck that dives to save its life, so up and down the poor ship drives. The lady shrieks, and because of fear begins to give birth.

“What ensues in this fierce storm you shall read next. I nothing will relate, but the next few pages may conveniently convey the rest better than I can tell it.

“In your imagination see the ship, upon whose deck the sea-tossed Pericles appears and is about to speak.”

— 3.1 —

On board a storm-tossed ship, Pericles said, “Neptune, you

god of this great vast sea, rebuke these high waves, which wash both Heaven and Hell. And you, Aeolus, who have command over the winds, call them away from the deep sea, bind them, and keep them behind your brass wall. Jupiter, calm your deafening, dreadful thunders; gently quench your nimble, sulfurous flashes of lightning!”

Pericles’ wife, Thaisa, was giving birth. Like other men of the time, he was not present. Understandably, he was worried — childbirth at this time was dangerous.

He called, “Lychorida, how is my Queen doing?”

He then said to the tempest, “You storm, will you maliciously spit all your winds? The seaman’s whistle that calls orders to sailors is like a whisper in the ears of a dead person — it is unheard.”

He called again, “Lychorida!”

Then he prayed, “Lucina, goddess of childbirth, divinest patroness, and gentle midwife to those who cry at night, convey your deity aboard our dancing boat; make swift the pangs of my Queen’s birth-giving! Let her give birth quickly!”

Carrying an infant, Lychorida walked over to Pericles.

“What is the news, Lychorida?” Pericles asked.

“Here is a creature too young for such a place, who, if it had rational understanding, would die, as I am likely to do. Take in your arms this piece of your dead Queen.”

The word “piece” has a double meaning. The infant was the Queen’s masterpiece; in addition, it was a piece of the Queen — she had given birth to it, and so it carried some of her chromosomes.

Hearing the phrase “dead Queen,” Pericles said, “What,

Lychorida!”

“Have patience, good sir,” Lychorida said. “Be calm. Do not assist the storm by adding your violent emotions to it. Here’s all that is left living of your Queen: a little daughter. For the sake of it, be manly, and take comfort in the birth of your daughter.”

Pericles, who was not calm, said, “You gods! Why do you make us love your good gifts, and then immediately snatch them away? You gave me Thaisa, and then you took her away from me! We here below do not take back what we give to you — our sacrifices — and therein we treat you honorably.”

“Have patience and be calm, good sir,” Lychorida said. “Do it for this infant.”

Pericles said to his infant daughter, “May the rest of your life be mild! A baby never had a rougher and stormier birth than you. May your life be quiet and gentle. You have had the roughest welcome to this world that any Prince’s child has ever had. May what follows be happy and fortunate! You have had as noisy a nativity as fire, air, water, earth, and Heaven can make to herald you from the womb. Even at the beginning of your life your loss — the death of your mother — is more than can be repaid with all you find during your journey through life! Now, may the good gods throw their most propitious eyes upon this infant and its journey!”

Two sailors came over to Pericles.

The first sailor asked Pericles, “What courage do you have, sir? May God save you!”

“I have courage enough,” Pericles said. “I do not fear the squall. It has already done to me the worst it can do — it has killed my wife. Yet, because of the love I have for this

poor infant, this fresh and new seafarer, I wish that the weather would be quiet.”

The first sailor ordered some other sailors, “Slacken the bow-lines there!”

He then shouted at the squall, “You won’t be quiet, will you? Then blow, and split yourself!”

The second sailor said, “As long as we have enough sea-room to maneuver and stay away from the rocks, then I don’t care if the seawater and spray kiss the Moon.”

The first sailor said, “Sir, your Queen must be buried at sea; she must go overboard. The waves are tossed high, the wind is loud, and all will not be calm until the ship is cleared of the dead.”

“That’s your superstition,” Pericles said.

“Pardon us, sir,” the first sailor said. “This has been always observed by us sailors at sea, and we strictly observe our traditions. Therefore, quickly yield her corpse to us, for she must go overboard right away.”

“Whatever you think is fitting,” Pericles said to the sailors.

He then said, “Queen, I am sorry that this is so!”

Lychorida opened the door to the room where Thaisa lay and said to Pericles, “Here she lies, sir.”

Pericles said to his wife, “You have had a terrible childbed, my dear. No light, no fire — the rooms in which women give birth are dark. The unfriendly elements forgot you utterly and raged when they should have been quiet. Nor do I have time to give you a proper funeral before you go to your grave, but immediately, with scarcely enough time to put you in a coffin, I must cast you into the sea where you will settle in the ooze at the bottom. There, in place of your

tomb and the candles that would burn around your body if you were entombed on land, you will have the spouting whale and turbulent water that must overwhelm your corpse as it lies with simple shells.”

Because Pericles thought that there was a chance that the coffin would be driven ashore, he ordered, “Lychorida, tell Nestor to bring me spices to anoint the body, and ink and paper so that I can write a note to put in the coffin. Also tell him to bring me my casket and my jewels. And tell Nicander to bring me the satin coffer.”

Pericles wanted to put jewels in the coffin with Thaisa. The casket and the satin coffer would hold the jewels and a document that he intended to write.

He then said, “Now lay the babe upon the pillow by Thaisa.

“Hurry, while I say a priestly farewell to her. Be quick, woman.”

Lychorida put down the infant and then exited.

The second sailor said, “Sir, we have a chest beneath the hatches; it is already caulked and sealed with pitch. It is waterproof, and it can serve as her coffin.”

“I thank you,” Pericles replied. “Mariner, tell me what coast is this?”

“We are near Tarsus,” the second sailor said.

“We will go there, gentle mariner, instead of going to Tyre,” Pericles said. “Alter the course of this ship. When can we reach it?”

“By break of day, if the wind stops,” the second sailor said.

“Then let’s make for Tarsus! There I will visit Cleon, for the babe cannot survive the trip to Tyre, and it needs a wet nurse. There I’ll leave it so it can be carefully raised. Go to

your work, good mariner. I'll bring you the body of my wife soon."

— 3.2 —

Cerimon, a lord of Ephesus, was in a room of his house. With him were two people who were seeking medical help — one for his master. They were wet and cold because they had walked in stormy weather to see Cerimon. It was the morning after the storm, but the weather was still bad.

Cerimon called for his servant: "Philemon, come here!"

Philemon entered the room and said, "Does my lord call?"

"Get fire and food for these suffering men," Cerimon ordered. "It has been a turbulent and stormy night."

Philemon exited.

One of the suffering men said, "I have been in many stormy nights, but such a night as this, until now, I have never endured."

Cerimon said to the man, "Your master will be dead before you return; there's nothing in nature that can be administered to him that can save his life."

Cerimon listened to the second man's heart and then wrote something down, gave it to the man, and said to him, "Give this to the apothecary, and later tell me how it works."

The two men exited. First they would eat and get warm, and then they would leave.

Two gentlemen entered the room.

The first gentleman said, "Good morning."

The second gentleman said, "Good morning to your lordship."

“Gentlemen, why are you up and about so early?” Cerimon asked.

The first gentleman replied, “Sir, our lodgings, standing exposed to the sea, shook as if the earth quaked. The main rafters seemed to break, and it seemed as if the building would topple. Utter surprise and fear made me leave the house.”

The second gentleman said, “That is the reason we trouble you so early. It is not because we are eager to get up early and work.”

“You say the truth,” Cerimon said.

Cerimon was the type to get up early and work hard, but he knew that the two gentlemen were not that type.

The first gentleman said, “I much marvel that your lordship, having rich luxury around you, should at these early hours shake off the golden slumber of repose. It is very strange that human nature should be so acquainted with work when it is not required to work. You have money; you need not work such early hours.”

“I have always believed that virtue and skill were endowments greater than nobleness and riches. Careless heirs may the latter two — nobleness and riches — darken and expend. Heirs can act ignobly and be spendthrifts. But immortality attends the former two: virtue and skill. These can make a man a god.

“It is known that I have continually studied medicine, through which secret art, by turning over pages written by authorities, I have, together with my personal efforts, made familiar to me and to my aide the blest liquid extracts that dwell in plants, in metals, and in stones. And I can speak of the disturbances that nature works, and of her cures. This gives me more content and more true delight than to be

thirsty after tottering, unstable honor, or to tie my treasure up in silken moneybags and please the fool and death. To chase money for the sake of money is the way of the fool, and when we die we can't take our money with us."

The second gentleman said, "Your honor has throughout Ephesus poured forth your charity, and hundreds owe their lives to you because you have restored to them their lives. Not just your knowledge and your personal labor, but also your wallet, which is always open, has built you, Lord Cerimon, such strong renown as time shall never decay."

Two servants carrying a chest entered the room.

The first servant said to the other servant, "Carry it over there."

They moved closer to Cerimon.

"What is that?" Cerimon asked.

The first servant replied, "Sir, just now the sea tossed upon our shore this chest. It is from some shipwreck."

"Set it down, and let's look at it."

Cerimon helped them put the chest down on a table.

The second gentleman said, "It is like a coffin, sir."

"Whatever it is, it is wondrously heavy," Cerimon said. "Wrench the lid open immediately."

The chest was so heavy that he wondered whether it contained gold, so he said, "If the sea's stomach is distressed because it contains too much gold, Lady Fortune does us a good turn by making the sea belch this upon us."

"That is true, my lord," the second gentleman said.

"How tightly it is caulked and smeared with pitch,"

Cerimon said. “It is waterproof.”

Because the chest was so heavy, he asked, although he had already heard the answer, “Did the sea cast it up?”

The first servant replied, “I never saw so huge a billow, sir, as tossed it upon our shore.”

“Wrench it open,” Cerimon said.

The servants partially opened the chest, and Cerimon said, “Wait! It smells very sweet to me.”

“It is a delicate odor,” the second gentleman said.

“As delicate an odor as ever hit my nostrils,” Cerimon said. “Lift up the lid.”

The servants opened the lid, and Cerimon looked inside the chest and said, “Oh, you most powerful gods! What’s here! A corpse!”

“Very strange!” the first gentleman said.

“It is shrouded in cloth of state — cloth for royalty,” Cerimon said. “It is anointed with full bags of spices — that is what I was smelling! This corpse is safely stored up as if it were in a treasury!”

At this time, spices were very expensive and were kept locked up.

He opened one of the boxes inside the chest and said, “I see a passport, too!”

A passport is a travel document. Corpses travel from the Land of the Living to the Land of the Dead; this passport contained instructions for the disposal of the body.

Cerimon picked up the passport and said, “Apollo, help me to read these words!”

He read the words out loud:

“Here I give you to understand,

“If ever this coffin is driven to land,

“I, King Pericles, have lost

“This Queen, who is worth all our Earthly treasure.

“Whoever finds her, give her a burial.

“She was the daughter of a King.

“In addition to your keeping this treasure as your fee,

“May the gods reward your charity!”

Inside the chest was Queen Thaisa. Also inside the chest were jewels to pay for her burial.

Cerimon said, “If you still live, Pericles, you have a heart that forever breaks for woe!”

He looked at Thaisa and said, “All this happened last night.”

“Most likely, sir,” the second gentleman said.

“Not most likely — most certainly,” Cerimon said. “It happened last night. Look how fresh she looks! Whoever threw her in the sea were too rough — they did not check her thoroughly enough for signs of life.”

He ordered, “Make a fire, and bring here all my boxes in my private room.”

A servant left to carry out the order.

Cerimon said, “Death may usurp on nature many hours, and yet the fire of life may kindle again the overwhelmed spirits. I have heard of an Egyptian who had for nine hours lay dead, yet he was revived by good medical care.”

The servant returned with boxes and cloths and materials for a fire. The servant, who was competent, knew that cloths would be needed and so had brought them without being asked.

The servant gave Cerimon the boxes and cloths.

“Well done, well done,” Cerimon said. “You have brought the fire and cloths.”

The servant then left to build a fire in an adjoining room that Cerimon used as a room for patients.

Cerimon said to a second servant, “We need rough and woeful music to help awaken her. Cause it to sound, I ask you.”

He rubbed Thaisa’s arms as the second servant left to get a viola.

He was annoyed by the second servant’s slowness and shouted, “You move like molasses! Faster, blockhead!”

The second servant returned and Cerimon ordered, “Play the music!”

Thaisa began to move, and the gentlemen crowded around her.

Cerimon said, “Please, give her air. Gentlemen, this Queen will live. Nature awakens a warm breath out of her. She has not been in a coma more than five hours. See how she begins to blossom into life’s flower again!”

The first gentleman said, “The Heavens, through you, increase our wonder and set up your fame forever. Your fame will never die.”

“She is alive,” Cerimon said. “Look! Her eyelids, which are cases to those Heavenly jewels — her eyes — that Pericles has lost, begin to part their fringes — her eyelashes — of

bright gold. The diamonds — her eyes — of a most praised luster appear, to make the world twice rich. Her eyes are two treasures.”

He said to the reviving Thaisa, “Live, and make us weep to hear your fate, fair creature, rare as you seem to be.”

Thaisa moved and said, “Dear Diana, goddess, where am I? Where’s my lord? What world is this?”

The second gentleman said, “Isn’t this strange?”

“It is very rare,” the first gentleman replied.

“Hush, my gentle neighbors!” Cerimon said. “Lend me your hands and lift the chest; carry her into the next chamber.”

He ordered the second servant, “Get linen.”

Then he said, “Now we must take good care of her because if she relapses she will die. Come, come; and may Aesculapius guide us!”

Aesculapius, god of medicine, had been a mortal physician who was capable of bringing the dead back to life.

— 3.3 —

In a room in Cleon’s house were Pericles, Cleon and Dionyza, and Lychorida, who was holding in her arms Pericles’ infant daughter.

Pericles said, “Most honored Cleon, I must leave. I had a year to get back to my Kingdom, and my twelve months are expired. Tyre has now an uneasy peace. You, and your lady, receive from my heart all thankfulness! May the gods give you the remaining thanks I owe to you!”

Cleon replied, “Your shafts of fortune, although they hurt you mortally, glance off you and hurt us. You have been

badly hurt by the death of your wife; we are also hurt by her death.”

“Oh, your sweet Queen!” Dionyza said. “I wish that the strict Fates had allowed you to bring her here, so that our eyes would have been blessed by seeing her!”

“We must obey the gods above,” Pericles said. “Even if I would rage and roar as does the sea my wife Thaisa lies in, yet the end must be as it is. My raging and roaring would change nothing. I have named my gentle babe Marina because she was born at sea. Now I turn her over to you and your charity, leaving her as an infant in your care and beseeching you to give her a royal education, so that she may be as well mannered as she is born.”

Cleon replied, “Fear not, my lord, but think that your grace, who fed my country with your grain, a good deed for which the people’s prayers still fall upon you, must in your child be thought on. We will treat her as we treat you: well and as a savior of ourselves. If I should be so vile as to neglect your infant, the common people, whose famine you relieved, would force me to do my duty. But if I would ever need to be spurred to do my duty, may the gods revenge my neglect of duty upon me and mine, until my descendants die out and no longer exist!”

“I believe you,” Pericles replied. “Your honor and your goodness are evidence that make me believe you — you need not vow to me to do your duty.”

He said to Dionyza, “I make this vow to my bright Diana, whom we honor: Until my daughter is married, madam, all unscissored shall this hair of mine remain, although I may seem to be willful in making this vow. So I take my leave. Good madam, make me blessed in the care you take in bringing up my child.”

Dionyza replied, “I have a daughter myself, who shall not

be dearer to me than your daughter, my lord.”

“Madam, I give you my thanks and prayers,” Pericles said.

“We’ll bring your grace to the edge of the shore, and then give you up to the masked Neptune and the gentlest winds of Heaven. Although the sea, the god Neptune’s domain, can be dangerous, right now that danger is masked by calm.”

“I embrace your offer to accompany me that far,” Pericles said.

“Come, dearest madam,” he said to Dionyza.

“No tears, Lychorida, no tears,” he said to his daughter’s nurse, who would stay behind to take care of her. “Look after your little mistress, on whose grace you may depend hereafter. When she is older, she will treat you well.”

Pericles said to Cleon, “Come, my lord.”

— 3.4 —

Cerimon and a fully recovered Thaisa were talking in a room in Cerimon’s house in Ephesus.

“Madam, this letter, and some jewels, lay with you in your coffin. All of these are yours. Look at the letter. Do you recognize the handwriting?”

“It is my husband’s,” she replied. “That I was on a ship at sea, I well remember, all the way to the time of giving birth, but whether I delivered my baby at sea, by the holy gods I cannot rightly say. But since King Pericles, my wedded lord, I never shall see again, I will wear the clothing of a chaste vestal votary and never again feel joy.”

Thaisa did not remember giving birth. She did not remember what had happened to her husband and her child, if it had been born live, but she felt that they were both

dead now. She remembered the storm — terror of the storm had caused her to go into labor early. Due to the ferocity of the storm, a shipwreck seemed certain in these times when travel was very dangerous, and her husband had not been heard from or of. She was so discouraged that she did not want to return to her home or go to her husband's home.

“Madam, if you intend to do that,” Cerimon said, “Diana’s temple is not far distant. You may live there until your time of death. Moreover, if you please, a niece of mine shall go with you there and serve you.”

“My recompense to you is thanks and that’s all,” Thaisa said. “Yet my good will is great, though the gift of my thanks is small.”

CHAPTER 4 (*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*)

— Prologue —

John Gower said to you, the reader, “Imagine that Pericles has arrived at Tyre, where he was welcomed and settled to his own desire. His woeful Queen Thaisa we leave at Ephesus, where she is a votaress to Diana.

“Now to Marina bend your mind, whom our fast-growing — fourteen years have passed — story must find at Tarsus, and by Cleon trained in music and letters. Marina has gained of education all the grace, which makes her both the heart and place of general wonder. People wonder at her great artistry.

“But, alas, that monster envy, which is often the ruin of those who have earned praise, seeks to end Marina’s life with the knife of treason.

“This is why:

“King Cleon has one daughter, who is a wench full grown, and is now ripe for the marriage-rite. This maiden is named Philoten, and it is said for certain in our story that she was always with Marina, whether it be when she would weave the finely divided silk with fingers long, slender, and as white as milk, or when she with a sharp needle would wind the cambric cloth, which she improved by hurting — embroidering — it, or when she would sing to the music of the lute and make mute the nightingale, which sings so mournfully, or when she would pen rich and constant verses of homage to her mistress Diana.

“Always this Philoten competes in skill with the perfect Marina. Similarly, a crow might compete with a dove sacred to Venus to see which has whiter feathers.

“Marina gets all the praises, which are paid as debts due to her, and are not given as unearned compliments. In short, Marina’s accomplishments outshine all of Philoten’s accomplishments.

“Because of this, Queen Dionyza — King Cleon’s wife — with exceptional and malicious envy, gets ready a murderer to immediately kill good Marina so that Dionyza’s daughter, Philoten, might not be eclipsed by her.

“Because Lychorida, Marina’s nurse, is dead, Queen Dionyza is all the easier able to implement her vile thoughts.

“Cursed Dionyza now has the pregnant instrument of wrath impressed to give this blow — that is, she has prepared and made ready the instrument of wrath to give this blow.

“The unborn event — it has not yet happened — I do commend to your attention.

“I can carry winged time only on the lame feet and halting verses of my rhyme. I cannot convey the passage of so much time without the help of your imagination.

“Dionyza now appears, with Leonine, who is a murderer.”

— 4.1 —

Dionyza and Leonine talked together outside near the seashore at Tarsus.

Dionyza said to Leonine, “Remember your oath; you have sworn to murder Marina. It is only a blow, which never shall be known. You cannot do a thing in the world so quickly that will yield you so much profit. Let not conscience, which is cold at first, become inflamed and make you too scrupulous. And don’t let pity, which even women have cast off, melt you, but be a soldier to your purpose — be resolute in doing what you have sworn to

do.”

“I will do it,” Leonine said, “but still she is a good and beautiful creature.”

“It is all the fitter, then, that the gods should have her,” Dionyza replied. “Here she comes weeping for her sole mistress’ death — she is weeping because her nurse, Lychorida, died. Are you resolved to kill her?”

“I am resolved.”

Marina was picking flowers and putting them in a basket.

She said, “Now I will rob Tellus — Mother Earth — of the flowers that serve as her clothing so that I can use them to strew your grass-covered grave: The yellows, the blues, the purple violets, and the marigolds shall be like a carpet that covers your grave while the days of summer last.

“I am a poor maiden who was born in a tempest when my mother died. This world to me is like a lasting storm, whirling me away from my family.”

“How are you, Marina?” Dionyza said. “Why are you alone? How is it that my daughter is not with you? Do not consume your blood with sorrowing.”

In this society, people believed that a sorrowful sigh would take a drop of blood away from one’s heart.

Dionyza continued, “I will be your nurse now. Lord, how your appearance has changed with this unprofitable woe! Come, give me your flowers. On the seashore, walk with Leonine; the air is invigorating there, and it pierces the body and sharpens the appetite.

“Come, Leonine, take Marina by the arm and walk with her.”

“No, thank you,” Marina said. “I’ll not bereave you of your

servant.”

Marina, who was bereaved of her nurse, did not want to take Dionyza’s servant away from her.

“Come, come,” Dionyza said. “I love King Pericles, your father, and yourself with more than foreign heart — I love you two as if I were related to you. We every day expect your father to arrive here. When he shall come and find you, who are regarded as a paragon in all reports about you, thus blighted, he will repent the length of his great voyage, and he will blame both my lord and me and say that we have not taken the best care of you.”

Dionyza was evil. She wanted to get rid of Marina, and to do so all she had to do was to wait for Pericles to come and take her away, but she preferred to have Marina murdered.

Dionyza continued, “Go, please. Walk, and be cheerful once again; preserve your excellent complexion, which has stolen the eyes of young and old. You are so pretty that people like to look at you. Don’t worry about me. I can go home alone.”

“Well, I will go and walk on the seashore with Leonine, yet I don’t want to,” Marina said.

“Come, come, I know that a walk on the seashore will be good for you,” Dionyza said to Marina.

She then said, “Walk half an hour, Leonine, at least. Remember what I have said.”

“I do indeed, madam,” he replied.

Dionyza said to Marina, “I’ll leave you, my sweet lady, for a while. Please, walk slowly so you do not heat your blood. I worry about you.”

“I give you my thanks, sweet madam,” Marina replied.

Dionyza left.

Marina asked Leonine, "Is this a west wind?"

"South-west," he replied.

"When I was born, there was a north wind."

"Is that so?"

"My nurse told me that my father was never afraid; instead, he shouted, 'Good seaman!' to the sailors as he worked with them, chafing his Kingly hands as he pulled ropes. Claspng the mast, he endured a sea that almost broke the deck."

"When was this?"

"When I was born," Marina said. "Never were waves or wind more violent. From a rope ladder a canvas-climber was washed off a sail into the sea. With black humor, another sailor cried, 'Ha! Must you leave us?' Soaked and dripping, they worked hard from stem to stern. The boatswain whistled, and the master called, and all the noise trebled their confusion."

"Come, say your prayers now," Leonine said.

"Why?" Marina asked. "What do you mean?"

"If you require a little time for prayer, I grant it," Leonine said. "Pray, but don't take a long time, for the gods are quick of ear when it comes to hearing prayers, and I am sworn to do my work with haste."

One reason to pray is to make one's peace with God before dying.

Marina asked, "Why are you going to kill me?"

"To satisfy my lady: Queen Dionyza."

“Why would she have me killed? As far as I can remember, truly, I never did anything to hurt her in all my life. I have never spoken a bad word or done an ill turn to any living creature. Believe me, I have never killed a mouse or hurt a fly. If I even stepped unintentionally on a worm, I wept for it. How have I offended her that she believes that my death might be beneficial to her? How have I offended her that she thinks that my life is a danger to her?”

“My commission is not to talk about the deed, but to do it,” Leonine replied.

“You will not do it for all the world, I hope,” Marina said. “You are good looking, and your looks show that you have a gentle heart. I saw you recently, when you were injured as you parted two who fought. Truly, that good deed showed you in a good light. Do now what you did previously. Your lady seeks my life; come in between us, and save poor me, who is the weaker.”

“I have sworn to kill you,” Leonine said, “and I will keep my oath.”

He grabbed Marina.

Three pirates arrived suddenly.

The first pirate shouted, “Stop, villain!”

Leonine ran away.

Referring to Marina, the second pirate shouted, “A prize! A prize!”

The third pirate said, “Equal shares, mates. We will share this prize equally. Come, let’s take her onboard ship immediately.”

The three pirates left with Marina as their captive.

Leonine came back. He had not been close enough to hear

what the third pirate had said.

“These roguing thieves serve the great pirate Valdes,” Leonine said to himself, “and they have seized Marina. Let her go. There’s no hope she will return. I’ll swear that she’s dead and I have thrown her into the sea. But I’ll spy further on her and the pirates. Perhaps they will only please themselves upon her and not carry her onboard their ship. If they rape her and then leave her on the seashore, then I will kill her.”

— 4.2 —

A male pandar, a female bawd, and their servant Boul were in a room in their brothel in the city of Mytilene on the island of Lesbos.

“Boul!” Pandar shouted.

“Sir?”

“Search the market closely and see if you can find a woman we can buy. Mytilene is full of gallants who are willing to frequent brothels. We lost too much money this latest market time by being too wenchless. We need another prostitute.”

“We were never so much out of creatures,” Bawd said. “We have only three prostitutes, who are of poor quality, and they can do no more than they can do, and they with continual action in entertaining customers are just as good as rotten.”

“Therefore let’s have fresh whores, whatever we pay for them,” Pandar said. “If there be not a conscience to be used in every trade, we shall never prosper.”

By that, he meant that every business needed to follow ethical business principles. Since he and his wife, Bawd, ran a brothel, they needed to provide good whores in return

for good money.

“You say the truth,” Bawd said. “It is not our bringing up of poor bastards — as, I think, I have brought up some eleven —”

She meant that ethical business principles meant more than bringing up the bastard children who had been born to the whores.

Bolt interrupted, “— yes, you brought them up to eleven years of age, and then you brought them down again; that is, you made them work in the brothel. But shall I search the market?”

“What else, man?” Bawd said. “The stuff we have, a strong wind will blow it to pieces — these whores are so pitifully sodden.”

The whores were sodden because they had spent time soaking in hot tubs as a treatment for venereal disease.

“You say the truth,” Pandar said. “They’re too unwholesome; they are diseased — my conscience makes me admit that. A Transylvanian lay with the little baggage — one of our whores — and now the poor man is dead.”

“Yes, she quickly cheated him: He gave us money and she made him roast-meat — that is, he acquired a venereal disease, roasted himself in hot water, hoping for a medical cure, and then became food for worms,” Boulton said. “But I’ll go search the market.”

He left to carry out his errand.

Pandar said, “Three or four thousand chequins — Italian gold coins — would be a pretty good nest egg that would allow us to live quietly, and so stop running a brothel.”

“Why should we stop running a brothel, I ask you?” Bawd

said. "Is it shameful to make money when we are old?"

"Our reputation is not as good as our profit, and our profit is not good enough to justify the dangerous risks we take," Pandar said. "Therefore, if in our youths we could pick up some pretty fortune and property, it would be a good idea to keep the door to our brothel closed. Besides, the bad relationship we have with the gods is a persuasive reason for us to retire from this line of work."

"Come, other kinds of people offend the gods as well as we," Bawd said.

"As well as we!" Pandar said. "Yes, and better, too; we offend worse. Our profession is not a trade; it's no calling. It is certainly not a religious calling. But here comes Boulton."

Boulton entered the brothel, with the pirates and Marina following him. Marina was still wearing the clothing of an upper-class woman.

Boulton said to Marina, "Come this way."

He then said to the pirates, "My masters, you say that she's a virgin?"

"Sir," the first pirate said, "there is no doubt about it."

Boulton said to Pandar, "Master, I have gone through negotiations for this piece — this woman — whom you see. If you like her, good; if not, I have lost my deposit I gave these pirates to bring her here so you could see her and decide whether to buy her."

Bawd asked, "Boulton, has she any accomplishments?"

"She is pretty, speaks well, and is wearing excellent clothing. She needs no other accomplishments than these for this line of work."

Bawd asked, “What’s her price, Boulton?”

“I cannot negotiate a price even a cent lower than a thousand gold coins.”

Pandar said to the pirates, “Well, follow me, my masters, you shall have your money at once.”

He then said, “Wife, take her under your care; instruct her in what she has to do, so that she may not be raw in her entertainment. She needs to know how to entertain her customers.”

Pandar and the pirates went into another room of the brothel where Pandar kept his money.

Bawd ordered, “Boulton, note her distinguishing physical characteristics: the color of her hair, complexion, height, and age. Go to the marketplace and describe her and say that her virginity is guaranteed. Cry, ‘He who will pay the most money shall have her first.’ Such a maidenhead will not sell cheaply, if men still are as they have been in the past. Do this now.”

“I shall do it,” Boulton said as he exited.

Marina said, “I regret that Leonine was so slack — so slow — in doing his duty! He should have struck me down without speaking to me! I regret that these pirates were not barbarous enough! They should have thrown me overboard into the sea so that I could go and seek my mother!”

“Why are you crying, pretty one?” Bawd asked.

“Because I am pretty,” Marina replied.

“Come, the gods have done well by you.”

“I am not accusing them of anything.”

Bawd said, “You have fallen into my hands, and here you

are likely to live.”

“I blame myself for escaping from the hands of the person who was likely to kill me,” Marina replied. “It was very likely that I would die.”

“You are likely to die here,” Bawd said. “Here you shall live in sexual pleasure.”

In the slang of that time and place, “to die” meant “to have an orgasm.”

“No,” Marina said.

“Yes, indeed you shall,” Bawd said, “and you shall taste gentlemen of all fashions. You shall fare well. You shall have the difference of all complexions. You will have sex with men of all kinds and colors. Why are you covering your ears?”

“Are you a woman?”

“If I am not a woman, then what do you think I am?” Bawd asked. “What would you have me be, if I am not a woman?”

“I would have you be an honest — that is, chaste — woman, or no woman at all.”

“Darn you, little goose — you greenhorn,” Bawd said. “I think you are going to give me some trouble. Come, you’re a foolish young sapling, and you must be bent as I would have you. You must do what I tell you to do.”

“May the gods defend me!”

“If it pleases the gods to defend you by men, then men must comfort you, men must feed you, men must sexually stir you,” Bawd said. “You will make your living by men. Look, Boults returned.”

Boult entered the brothel.

“Now, sir, have you advertised her throughout the marketplace?” Bawd asked.

“I have cried loudly and described her in detail, almost even telling potential customers the number of her hairs. I have drawn her picture with my voice.”

“Please tell me what was the reaction of the people, especially of the younger sort?”

“Indeed, they listened to me as they would have listened to their father’s last will and testament to see what he had left them. There was a Spaniard whose mouth drooled; he was so taken by my advertisement that he metaphorically went to bed with her description.”

“We shall see him here tomorrow with his best clothing on,” Bawd said.

“He will be here tonight, tonight,” Boult predicted. “But, mistress, do you know the French knight whose legs are unsteady?”

Unsteady legs were a sign of syphilis.

“Who, Monsieur Veroles?” Bawd asked.

The name was derived from the French word for syphilis, so it was as if the Frenchman’s name was Mr. Syphilis.

“Yes, he,” Boult said. “He attempted to cut a caper — jump in the air and click his heels together — after hearing my proclamation, but he could not and groaned, and he swore that he would see her tomorrow.”

“Well, well,” Bawd said. “As for him, he brought his disease hither: Here he does but renew it.”

Syphilis was known as the French disease. The Frenchman

had already been infected with the disease before he entered the brothel; once inside the brothel, he made sure that the disease would not be cured.

Bawd continued, “I know he will come in our shadow — under our roof — to scatter his crowns of the Sun.”

French crowns were known as crowns of the Sun; they were gold coins on which the Sun was shown over a depiction of a shield.

“Well, if we had of every nation a traveller, we should lodge them here with this sign,” Boulton said, motioning to Marina.

He meant that every traveler would want to have sex with Marina.

Bawd said to Marina, “Please, come here for awhile. You have a fortune coming to you. You will make a lot of money. Listen to me: You must seem to do that fearfully which you commit willingly, and you must seem to despise profit where you have most gain. You must pretend to cry because you live as you do — as a prostitute. You must pretend to hate being a prostitute. If you do that, your lovers will pity you and give you money. It is seldom in life that pity will give you a good reputation and that a good reputation will make a good profit.”

“I don’t understand what you are saying,” Marina said.

“Take her home, mistress, and speak plainly to her,” Boulton said. “These blushes of hers must be quenched with some immediate practice.”

“You say the truth, indeed,” Bawd said. “These blushes of hers must be quenched. Brides go to do the act with shameful blushes although the brides are allowed to do the act by law. Brides blush, but they do the act.”

“Some brides blush, and some do not,” Boulton said. “But, mistress, since I have bargained for the joint —”

Bawd, who knew what he wanted, said, “— you may cut a morsel off the spit.”

Pandar, Bawd, and Boulton all regarded the prostitutes as merchandise rather than full human beings. To them, prostitutes were creatures and stuff and pieces, and now a piece of roast meat. Certainly, Marina was a piece — a masterpiece of virtue, not the piece of ass they thought she was.

Bawd would allow Boulton to have sex with Marina — after her virginity had been sold.

“I have permission, then?” Boulton asked.

“Who would deny you permission?” Bawd replied.

She said to Marina, “Come, young one, I like your clothing well.”

Boulton said, “Yes, indeed. Her clothing shall not be changed yet.”

He meant that soon enough Marina would wear the clothing of a prostitute, but for now her fine clothing increased her price.

Bawd gave Boulton some money and said, “Boulton, spend that in the town. Tell everyone what a guest we have here. You’ll lose nothing by men visiting our guest because you shall earn some tips.

“When nature formed this piece, she meant you a good turn. You will make some money from this piece and have a turn with her in bed. Therefore, tell everyone what a paragon of beauty she is, and you will make a profit out of your advertising.”

“I tell you, mistress, thunder shall not so awaken the eels in their muddy beds as my describing her beauty shall stir up the trouser-snakes of the lewdly inclined,” Boulton said. “I’ll bring home some customers tonight.”

Boulton exited.

“Come,” Bawd said to Marina, “and follow me.”

“If fires are hot, knives sharp, or waters deep, untried I still my virgin knot will keep,” Marina said.

She meant that she would commit suicide if that was what it took to remain a virgin.

She then said, “Diana, virgin goddess, aid me and help me keep my virginity!”

“What have we to do with Diana?” Bawd asked, amused. “Please, come with me.”

— 4.3 —

Cleon and Dionyza were talking together in a room of their palace.

“Are you foolish?” Dionyza asked. “Can the murder be undone?”

“Oh, Dionyza, the Sun and Moon have never looked upon such a piece of slaughter!”

“I think you’ll turn into a child again,” Dionyza said. “You’re acting like a baby.”

“Were I the chief lord of all this spacious world, I would give all this spacious world to undo the deed,” Cleon said. “Marina was a lady much less in blood than virtue. She was much more virtuous than she was noble, and yet she was a Princess whose crown would equal any single crown of the Earth in a fair and just comparison! Leonine, who was a

villain, you have poisoned. If you had drunk the poison as a toast to him, it would have been a kindness — much better than the deeds you have actually committed. What will you say when noble Pericles returns to claim his child?”

“I will say that she is dead. Nurses are not the Fates. They don’t control death. They can try to foster a child so that it will live and grow up, and yet they do not always have the power to keep the child alive.

“Marina died at night — that is what I’ll say. Who can contradict it? No one, unless you play the pious innocent, and in order to acquire a reputation for honesty, cry out, ‘She died by foul play.’”

“I won’t do that,” Cleon said. “Well, well, of all the sins beneath the Heavens, the gods like this one the worst.”

“Be one of those who think the petty wrens of Tarsus will fly away from here, and reveal this crime to Pericles,” Dionyza said.

In folktales and ballads, birds sometimes communicated information about a person who had committed a murder. Such stories may have had their origin in this ancient tale: Robbers murdered the ancient Greek poet Ibykos (who lived in the 6th century B.C.E.). Before dying, he exclaimed to the robbers that some birds — cranes — nearby would be his avengers. The robbers laughed at him. When the robbers later entered a city, one of the robbers saw some cranes and shouted, “Look — the avengers of Ibykos.” This aroused the curiosity of the citizens of the city, who — after investigating and discovering that the robbers had murdered Ibykos — put the robbers to death.

Cleon said, “Whoever simply adds his approval after the fact to such an evil proceeding as a murder like this, although he did not give consent before the murder occurred, does not flow from honorable sources. His

ancestors cannot be noble people.”

In this society, people believed that nobility was a result of the honorable deeds of one’s ancestors.

“Be it so, then,” Dionyza said. “Yet no one, except you, knows how she came to be dead. No one knows, since Leonine is gone.

“Marina overshadowed my daughter, and Marina stood between my daughter and her fortunes. No one would look at my daughter; instead, they cast their gazes on Marina’s face, while our daughter was scorned and regarded as a drab not worth the time of day — people did not even regard her as worth a greeting when they met her.

“This treatment of our daughter pierced me through, and though you call my course of action unnatural — in which case you do not much love your daughter — yet I find that my course of action is an enterprise of kindness that I have done for the benefit of your only daughter.”

Cleon replied, “May the Heavens forgive what you have done!”

Dionyza said, “As for Pericles, what can he say? We wept as we followed Marina’s hearse, and we still continue to mourn. Her tomb is almost finished, and her epitaphs in glittering golden letters express a widely made praise of her, and it shows that we care about her since the tomb is being built at our expense.”

“You are like the Harpy, which has the face of a woman and the wings and talons of an eagle,” Cleon said. “In order to betray others, you deceive them with your angel’s face and then seize them with your eagle’s talons.”

“You are like a person who superstitiously swears to the gods that winter kills the flies,” Dionyza replied. “You are

so afraid of the gods that you fear them blaming you for the death of flies at the coming of winter. But I know you'll do as I advise — you'll keep this murder secret.”

— 4.4 —

Standing in front of Marina's tomb, John Gower said to you the reader, “We make time pass quickly, and we make the longest distances short. We sail the seas in mussel shells, if we wish to. We make the wish to travel, and then our imagination takes us from boundary to boundary, region to region. Our imagination allows us to travel quickly wherever we want to go.

“Pardon me, but we commit no crime when we use one language in each of the several lands where our scenes are set.

“Please learn from me, who stand in the gaps of our story so that I can teach you the stages of our story — my job is to fill in the gaps. Pericles is now again traversing the hostile seas, attended by many a lord and knight, so that he can see his daughter, who is all his life's delight.

“Old Escanes, whom Helicanus recently advanced to great and high rank and status, has been left behind to govern Tyre. Bear in mind that old Helicanus sails along with Pericles.

“Well-sailing ships and bounteous winds have brought King Pericles to Tarsus — your thought is his pilot, and so your thoughts shall steer his ship — so that he can fetch his daughter home, but she has already left Tarsus.

“Now see in your mind some of our characters move awhile like shadows and motes of dust dancing in Sunlight. I will tell you what is going on so that your ears will understand what your mind's eyes are seeing.”

A dumb show — a show without speaking — appears in your brain, and you see Pericles and his train of attendants arrive at Tarsus. Cleon and Dionyza meet him and show him the tomb of Marina. Pericles mourns, puts on sackcloth, and departs with much grief.

Gower said, “See how belief may suffer by foul show! The hypocritical acting of Cleon and Dionyza makes Pericles mourn. The pretended passion of Cleon and Dionyza stands in for truly felt woe, and Pericles is all devoured with sorrow, with sighs shot through his body, and the biggest tears shower his body.

“Pericles leaves Tarsus and again embarks on a journey. Previously, he had sworn never to cut his hair until his daughter was married. Thinking that now his daughter will never be married, he vows never to wash his face, and never to cut his hair. He puts on sackcloth, and he goes to sea. He carries inside himself a tempest, which tears his mortal vessel — his body — and yet he rides it out.

“Now please know that the following epitaph was written for Marina by wicked Dionyza.”

He read this inscription that was written on Marina’s tomb:

“The fairest, sweetest, and best lies here,

“Who withered in her spring of year.

“She was the King of Tyre’s daughter,

“On whom foul death has made this slaughter.

“Marina was she called; and at her birth,

“Thetis, being proud, swallowed some part of the Earth.

“Therefore the Earth, fearing to be overflowed,

“Has Thetis’ birth-child on the Heavens bestowed,

“Wherefore she does — and swears she’ll never stint —

“Make raging battery upon shores of flint.”

Dionyza had made a mistake in the epitaph. Thetis was a sea goddess who was the mother of Achilles, the greatest Greek warrior in the Trojan War. Dionyza had meant to refer to Tethys, the wife of Oceanus, the god of the ocean.

Marina was the birth-child of Tethys because Marina had been born at sea. Tethys was so proud of Marina that the sea swelled with pride and so the sea flooded the seashores. In Dionyza’s epitaph for Marina, the land, fearing that it would be completely flooded, had caused Marina to go to Heaven. In retaliation, sea waves continually batter the seashores.

John Gower continued, “No mask becomes black villainy as well as soft and tender flattery.

“Now we will let Pericles believe that his daughter’s dead, and Pericles will allow Lady Fortune to determine where he goes.

“But we will visit his daughter and witness her woe and heavy grief in her unholy service as a prostitute. Have patience, then, and think that you now are all in Mytilene. If you think you are there, you will be there.”

— 4.5 —

Two gentlemen came out of the brothel in Mytilene.

The first gentleman asked, “Did you ever hear the like?”

The second gentleman replied, “No, I never have, and I never shall again in such a place as this, once she — Marina — has gone.”

“To have divinity preached there! In a brothel! Did you ever dream of such a thing?

“No, no. Come, I am for no more bawdy houses. I want nothing more to do with brothels. Shall we go and hear the vestal priestesses sing?”

“I’ll do anything now that is virtuous, but I am out of the way of rutting forever. No more unethical sex for me!”

— 4.6 —

In a room of the brothel, Pandar, Bawd, and Boulton talked about Marina.

“I would pay twice what I paid for her if it meant that she never would have come here,” Pandar said.

“Darn her!” Bawd said. “She’s able to freeze the god Priapus, and undo a whole — as well as hole — generation.”

Priapus was the male god of fertility, and his idols depicted him with a huge erection. Cold results in shrinkage, and freezing cold results in lack of erections. Marina was so talented at not losing her virginity that she could freeze Priapus and so prevent a new generation of children from being born.

Bawd continued, “We must get Marina to lose her virginity. We must either get her ravished — rape is what I mean — or get rid of her.”

The phrase “to ravish” is odd. One meaning is “to rape”; another meaning is “to fill with delight.”

Bawd continued, “When Marina is supposed to do for clients what prostitutes are supposed to do and show them the kindness of our profession, she instead has her quirks, her reasons, her master reasons, her prayers, and her knees.”

One of Marina’s “quirks” was an unwillingness to be

forced to have sex for the financial improvement of Pandar, Bawd, and Boulton.

Bawd continued, "Marina would make a Puritan of the Devil if he should ever attempt to buy a kiss from her."

Boulton said, "Indeed, I must rape her, or she'll disfigure us of all our cavaliers, and make our swearers priests. We will lose all our customers because she will make them virtuous."

Pandar said, "I wish that the pox — syphilis — would fall upon her greensickness for me!"

Maidens sometimes suffered from greensickness when they reached puberty. People of the time felt that the sickness resulted from unrequited love. If the love were requited — cynical people might say, with a roll in the hay — the sickness would be cured.

Bawd said, "Indeed, there's no way to be rid of greensickness except by the way that leads to the pox."

She heard a noise, looked up, and said, "Here comes the Lord Lysimachus; he is disguised."

Boulton said, "We should have both lord and lower-down, high-class and low-class, if the peevish baggage would just give way to customers. If she would just do what a prostitute is supposed to do, she would be a very successful prostitute."

Lysimachus said, "How is everyone?" and then he joked, "How much does it cost to buy a dozen virginities?"

"Now, may the gods thoroughly bless your honor!" Bawd said.

"I am glad to see that your honor is in good health," Boulton said.

Anyone interested in deflowering a dozen virgins must be in good health.

“You may be glad indeed,” Lysimachus replied. “It is better for you if your customers stand upon sound legs. If their legs are unsteady, they may have the pox — and may have gotten it here! What wholesome iniquity do you have that a man may deal with, and yet defy the surgeon? Do you have a healthy whore I can sleep with and not have to see a doctor later?”

Bawd replied, “We have here one, sir, if she would — but there never came her like in Mytilene.”

“If she would do the deed of darkness, you would say,” Lysimachus said. “That is what you were going to say, right?”

“Your honor knows well enough what I was going to say.”

“Well, call her forth, call her forth.”

Pandar left to get Marina.

Boult said, “Flesh and blood, sir, are white and red. When you see her, you shall see a rose; and she were a rose indeed, if she had but —”

He stopped.

Lysimachus knew the proverb: No rose is without a thorn — that is, a prick. He also knew that the word “rose” was slang for “vagina.”

“If she had but what?” he asked.

“Sir, I can be modest,” Boult replied.

“Modesty dignifies the reputation of a bawd, no less than it gives a good report to a member to be chaste,” Lysimachus said.

He meant that modesty was as useful to a bawd or a pandar as it is to a male member, aka penis.

Pandar returned with Marina.

Bawd said, “Here comes that which still grows attached to the stalk; this rose has never yet been plucked, I can assure you. Isn’t she a beautiful creature?”

“Indeed, she would serve after a long voyage at sea. A sex-starved sailor would love to have a go at her. Well, there’s some money for you. Leave us.”

“I ask your honor to give me permission to say a word to her,” Bawd said. “I’ll be done quickly.”

“I give you permission, but be quick.”

Bawd said privately to Marina, “First, I would have you note that this man is an honorable man.”

By “honorable,” Bawd meant “high-ranking.” By “note,” she meant “know.”

Marina replied, “I hope to find him honorable, so that I may worthily note him.”

By “honorable,” Marina meant “virtuous.” By “worthily note,” she meant “treat him with respect.”

“Next, I want you to know that he’s the governor of this country, and a man to whom I am bound,” Bawd said.

She was bound to him because he had not shut down her brothel.

“If he governs the country, you are bound to him indeed — you are a citizen of his country and you should be a good citizen. However, I don’t know how honorable he is as governor.”

“Please tell me, without any more virginal fencing — without any fencing with words to guard your virginity — will you treat him kindly? He will line your apron with gold.”

Women in some professions can lift their aprons and catch money in them. The lifting of the aprons — and other articles of clothing — can result in financial gain.

“What he will do graciously, charitably, and like a gentleman, I will thankfully receive.”

Bawd lifted her eyes to the Heavens.

Impatient, Lysimachus asked, “Are you done yet?”

Bawd replied, “My lord, she’s not paced yet. She has not been broken in. You must take some pains to work her so that she will do what you want her to do.”

She was referring to Marina as if she were a horse that needed to be broken and trained.

She then said to Pandar and Boulton, “Come, we will leave his honor and her together. Let’s go.”

Pandar, Bawd, and Boulton exited.

Lysimachus was cynical; he doubted that Marina was a virgin. Therefore, he said to her, “Now, pretty one, how long have you been at this trade?”

“What trade, sir?”

“Why, I cannot name it without causing offense.”

The trade Lysimachus meant was prostitution, but Marina now interpreted the word “trade” as meaning “way of life.” Her way of life was being a virgin.

“I cannot be offended by my trade,” Marina said. “Please

name it.”

“How long have you been of this profession?”

The profession that Lysimachus meant was prostitution, but Marina now interpreted the word “profession” as meaning “character or nature.” Again, she was a virgin.

“Ever since I can remember,” she replied.

“Did you go to it so young? Were you a gamester at five or at seven?” Lysimachus asked.

Lysimachus was using “go to it” to mean “to have sex,” and he was using “gamester” to mean “prostitute.”

A gamester plays a game, and Marina knew that she was a virginal player in the game of life.

“Earlier, too, sir, if now I be one,” Marina said.

Thinking that there was no “if” about it, Lysimachus said, “Why, the house you dwell in proclaims you to be a creature of sale.”

A creature of sale is a prostitute.

“Do you know this house to be a place of such entertainment, and yet you will come into it?” Marina said. “I have heard that you are a man of honorable qualities and that you are the governor of this place.”

“Why, has your principal told you who I am?”

A principal is a manager or superior.

“Who is my principal?” Marina asked.

“Why, your herb-woman,” Lysimachus replied. “She plants seeds and roots of shame and iniquity. She helps men to plant their seeds — their semen. Oh, you have heard something of my power, and so you stand aloof for more

serious wooing. You want a long-term relationship with me. But I protest to you, pretty one, my authority shall either not see you, or else it will look friendly upon you. I will not use my power to hurt you as you practice your profession. I will either ignore you or perhaps even help you. Now take me to some private place with a bed. I am impatient.”

“If you were born to honor, show it now. Act like the honorable man you are,” Marina said. “If you have acquired the reputation of being honorable, then show that the judgment is good that thought you worthy of it. By acting honorably, you can show that you deserve your reputation of being an honorable person.”

“What’s this? What’s this?” Lysimachus said. He was impressed by Marina’s words. “Speak some more; be sage. Speak wisdom.”

“I am a maiden, although most ungentle fortune has placed me in this pigsty, where, since I came here, venereal diseases have been sold for a higher price than medicine. I wish that the gods would set me free from this unhallowed place even if it meant that they would transform me into the humblest bird that flies in the pure air!”

In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, the gods sometimes transform maidens such as Daphne and Syrinx into other beings such as a laurel tree or a bed of reeds to help them escape rape. In one story, Neptune pursued a virgin named Cornix as he tried to rape her. Minerva, a virgin goddess, pitied the girl and transformed her into a crow. John Gower wrote about her escape in his *Confessio Amantis*.

Like other lecherous men to whom Marina had spoken, Lysimachus reformed. He was embarrassed about his lechery, and he now tried to deny that he had been lecherous.

“I did not think you could have spoken so well,” Lysimachus said. “I never dreamed that you could. Had I brought here a corrupted mind, your speech would have altered it. Wait, here’s gold for you. Persevere in that clear way you are going, and may the gods strengthen you!”

“May the good gods preserve you!” Marina replied.

“As for me, think that I came here with no ill intent because to me even the doors and windows here stink vilely. Fare you well. You are a masterpiece of virtue, and I doubt not that your training has been noble.

“Wait, here’s more gold for you. A curse upon that man — may he die like a thief! — who robs you of your goodness! If you ever again hear from me, it shall be for your good.”

Lysimachus opened the door to exit. Boulton, who was standing outside the door, said, “I beg your honor, give me a tip — one coin.”

“Get away from me, you damned doorkeeper!” Lysimachus said.

Boulton did keep the door. Part of his job was to stand outside the door until the john had finished doing the deed with the whore.

Lysimachus said, “Your house, except for this virgin who props it up, would fall and bury you. Get away from me!”

He exited, and Boulton entered the room.

“What’s this?” he said to Marina. “We must take another course of action with you. If your obstinate and perverse chastity, which is not worth a breakfast in the cheapest country under the sky, shall ruin a whole household, then let me be gelded like a cocker spaniel. Come with me.”

“Where are you taking me?” Marina asked. “What do you

want with me?"

"I must have your maidenhead taken off, and if I don't, I'll make sure that the common hangman executes your maiden's head," Boulton said. "I am going to take your virginity away from you. Come with me. We'll have no more gentlemen driven away. Instead, you shall do your duty like other whores. Come with me, I say."

Bawd entered the room and said, "What's going on? What's the matter?"

"Things get worse and worse, mistress," Boulton said. "Marina has spoken holy words to the Lord Lysimachus."

"How abominable!" Bawd said.

"She makes our profession out to be one that would stink before the face of the gods."

"Hang her up at the end of a rope forever!"

"The nobleman would have dealt with her like a nobleman and tipped well, but she sent him away as cold as a snowball," Boulton said. "He was saying his prayers, too."

"Boulton, take her away," Bawd said. "Use her at your pleasure; do what you want with her. Crack the glass of her virginity. Break her hymen, and make the rest malleable. Once she ceases to be a virgin, she will become a whore."

"Even if she were a thornier piece of ground than she is, she shall be plowed," Boulton said.

Plowing this particular ground sometimes results in the crop of a baby.

"Pay attention, you gods!" Marina cried.

"She conjures!" Bawd said. "She is calling for supernatural help! Away with her! I wish that she had never come

within my doors!”

She said to Marina, “May you be hanged!”

She said to Boulton, “She was born to ruin us.”

She said to Marina, “Will you not go the way of womankind? At one point or another, women cease to be virgins! Accept it, you fancy dish of chastity with rosemary and bay leaves!”

To Bawd, Mariana was a dish — an object — to be consumed.

Bawd exited.

“Come, mistress,” Boulton said to Marina. “Come with me.”

“What do you want with me?”

“I want to take from you the jewel — your virginity — that you hold so dear.”

“Please, tell me one thing first.”

“I am thinking about your one thing.”

In this culture, “thing” was slang for genitals.

“What can you wish your enemy to be?”

“Why, I could wish my enemy to be my master, or rather, my mistress,” Boulton replied.

He meant that if his enemy should be his master or, better, his mistress, then he would have no enemy because his enemy would be his friend.

“Neither of these — master nor mistress — are as bad as you are; they better you by giving you a job. In addition, they are better than you since they have an advantage over you because you are in their command — they give you

orders.

“However, although they benefit you by giving you a job, you hold a position for which the most tortured fiend of Hell would not exchange places with you for fear of hurting its reputation. You are the damned doorkeeper to every scoundrel who comes here looking for a whore. Your ear is liable to be pounded by the angry fist of every rogue. Your food has been belched on by infected lungs.”

“What would you have me do?” Boulton asked. “Would you have me go to the wars where a man may serve seven years and lose a leg, and not have money enough in the end to buy himself a wooden one?”

“Do anything except what you do now,” Marina said. “Empty filth from old receptacles such as sewers and use the common shores to remove it.”

The common shores were places on the seashore where the general public was allowed to put filth to be swept out to sea at high tide. Boulton’s job would be to remove sewage by placing it on the common shores.

Marina continued, “Serve as an apprentice to the common hangman. Any of these ways of making a living are better than this job that you are doing now. If a baboon could speak, he would say that he would not do your job because it would lower his reputation. I wish that the gods would safely deliver me from this place!

“Here, here’s gold for you. If you want to benefit your master, proclaim in the marketplace that I can sing, weave, sew, and dance. I have other virtues that I’ll keep myself from boasting about. Say that I will undertake to teach all these. I don’t doubt that this populous city will yield many scholars. I am sure that this city has many pupils whom I can teach for money.”

“But can you teach all these things that you speak of?”
Boult asked.

“If you prove that I cannot, then take me into your home — this brothel — again, and prostitute me to the basest fellow who frequents your house.”

“Well, I will see what I can do for you,” Boult said. “If I can find a place for you, I will.”

“Be sure to find me a place among honest — chaste — women.”

“Indeed, my acquaintance lies little among them,” Boult said. “I can’t say that I know many chaste women. But since my master and mistress have bought you, I can do nothing except with their consent; therefore, I will tell them what you are proposing. I am sure that I shall find them agreeable enough. Come with me, and I’ll do for you what I can. Come with me.”

CHAPTER 5 (*Pericles, Prince of Tyre*)

— Prologue —

John Gower said to you the reader, “Marina thus escapes from the brothel, and it happens that she comes into an honest house, our story says. She sings like an immortal goddess, and she dances like a goddess to her admirable songs. Learned scholars are struck dumb by her intelligence, and with her needle she embroiders nature’s own shapes, whether of bud, bird, branch, or berry, so well that her art seems to be twin sisters of the natural roses. Her linen thread and silk seem to be a twin to the ruby-red cherry, and so she does not lack pupils who are noble. They wish to learn how to embroider as she does and so they pour their bounty on her, and whatever she makes she gives to the cursed bawd.

“Here we leave her, and we turn our thoughts again to her father, where we left him, on the sea. We lost him there, but now, driven before the winds, he has arrived here where his daughter is dwelling, and so suppose him now to be at anchor on this coast.

“The city has been celebrating the sea-god Neptune’s annual feast. From that feast, Lysimachus sees the Tyrian ship. Its banners are sable — black — and they are trimmed with rich expense. Lysimachus now hurries to that ship in his barge.

“In your imagination once more put your sight on Pericles, who is sorrowing because he believes that his daughter, Marina, is dead. Imagine his ship and let it take up a big space in your imagination. Soon, much shall be revealed. Sit back, read, and pay attention.”

Pericles, who had not washed or cut his hair for months, and who had lost weight, sat on a couch on the deck of his ship in the harbor of Mytilene. A barge had just sailed up to his ship. Standing near Pericles was Helicanus.

Two sailors arrived on deck. One sailor was from Pericles' ship, which was from Tyre; the other sailor was from Lysimachus' barge, which was from Mytilene.

The Tyrian sailor said to the sailor from Mytilene, "I am looking for Helicanus; he can give permission for your governor to come aboard. Oh, here he is."

He then said to Helicanus, "Sir, there's a barge that has come from Mytilene, and in it is Lysimachus the governor, who desires to come aboard. What is your will?"

"That he have his," Helicanus said. "Summon some gentlemen."

The Tyrian sailor shouted, "Ho, gentlemen! My lord calls."

Two or three gentlemen arrived.

The first gentleman asked, "Does your lordship call for us?"

"Gentlemen, there's some people of worth — members of the nobility — who want to come aboard. Please, greet them well."

The gentlemen and the two sailors left and went on board the barge.

Lysimachus and some lords exited the barge, along with the gentlemen and the two sailors.

The Tyrian sailor said to Lysimachus, indicating Helicanus, "Sir, this is the man who can answer all of your questions."

"Hail, reverend sir!" Lysimachus said. "May the gods

preserve you!”

“And may the gods cause you, sir, to outlive the age I am, and die as I would die — honorably,” Helicanus replied.

“You wish me well,” Lysimachus said. “Being on shore, holding festivities in honor of the sea-god Neptune, and seeing this handsome vessel anchoring before us, I made my way to it, to know from where you came.”

“First, what is your position?” Helicanus asked.

“I am the governor of this place you lie at anchor before — Mytilene.”

“Sir, our vessel is from Tyre, and in it is King Pericles, who for the past three months has not spoken to anyone, nor has he taken sustenance except just enough to keep himself alive and prolong his grief.”

“What is the reason for his malady?” Lysimachus asked.

“It would be too tedious to repeat, but his main grief springs from the loss of a beloved daughter and a wife.”

“May we not see him?”

“You may, but seeing him will do no good,” Helicanus said. “He will not speak to anyone.”

“Yet let me obtain my wish,” Lysimachus said.

“Here he is,” Helicanus replied, walking Lysimachus and the others over to Pericles. “He was a handsome person, until the disaster that, one deadly night, drove him to this.”

Pericles’ misfortunes had started when he lost his wife; they had intensified when he was told that his daughter was dead.

“Sir King, all hail!” Lysimachus said. “May the gods

preserve you! Hail, royal sir!”

“It is in vain,” Helicanus said. “He will not speak to you.”

The first lord said, “Sir, we have a maiden in Mytilene, whom I dare to wager would win some words from him. She can make him speak.”

“That is a good idea,” Lysimachus said, immediately realizing which maiden the first lord was referring to. “She with her sweet harmony of voice and with her other chosen attractions, would without question allure — win — him over. Just like soldiers forcing their way through a gateway, she would make a passage through his deafened parts, which now are halfway closed. She is the one who can make his half-deaf ears hear. She is most fortunate in being the most beautiful of all, and with her fellow maidens she is now upon the leafy shelter that abuts against the island’s side.”

The festivities honoring Neptune were taking place outside on the shore. A shelving — gently sloping — bank was on the side of the island, and it seemed to support the island. Some trees grew where the shelving bank met the island. Marina — the fairest maiden — and her female companions had seated themselves under those trees because their leaves provided shelter from the Sun.

Lysimachus ordered a lord to take the barge and get the fairest maiden. The lord exited.

Helicanus said, “To be sure, nothing has been effective in curing King Pericles, yet we’ll do anything that might result in his recovery. But, since we have imposed on your kindness thus far, let us further ask you that in return for our gold we may have provisions. We need provisions not because we are destitute and lack money, but because we are weary of the staleness.”

In this culture, keeping fresh food was difficult at sea. Canning had not yet been invented, and fresh fruits and vegetables had to be eaten quickly, as did non-preserved meat. Malnutrition was rampant among sailors, who often got the disease scurvy.

Lysimachus replied, “Sir, that is a courtesy that if we should deny it, the most just gods would send caterpillars to eat all the cultivated plants we have and so afflict our province with famine. Once again let me ask you to tell me — in more detail — the cause of your King’s sorrow.”

“Sit, sir. I will recount the story to you,” Helicanus said.

He looked up and said, “But I see that I am prevented from doing so.”

The lord had returned with the fairest maiden — Marina — who was accompanied by another young maiden who was carrying a harp.

“Oh, here is the lady whom I sent for,” Lysimachus said. “Welcome, fair one!”

He asked Helicanus, “Isn’t she attractive?”

“She’s a gallant lady.”

Lysimachus said, “She’s such a lady, that, were I well assured that she was born into an aristocratic and noble family, I would wish no better choice to be my wife, and I would think myself extremely well wed.”

He said to Marina, “Fair one, all goodness that consists in bounty expect even here, where is a Kingly patient who does not speak. You will be well rewarded if you can help this King. If your beneficial and skillful abilities can draw him out so that he speaks a few words in answer to you about anything, your sacred medicine shall receive such pay as your desires can wish.”

“Sir, I will use my best skills in his recovery,” Marina replied, “provided that none but I and my companion maiden are allowed to come near him.”

“Come, let us leave her, and may the gods make her prosperous!” Lysimachus said.

He and the others withdrew from Pericles, Marina, and her maiden companion. They were not far away, but they did not look at Marina as she attempted to cure Pericles.

Marina sang, and her companion accompanied her on the harp.

Once the song had finished, Lysimachus came over and asked, “Did he pay any attention to your music?”

“No,” Marina replied. “He did not even look at us.”

Lysimachus went back to his companions and said, “Watch, she will speak to him.”

“Hail, sir!” Marina said, going close to Pericles. “My lord, lend me an ear. Listen to me.”

Pericles made a noise and pushed her away from him.

“I am a maiden, my lord, who never before has invited eyes to look at me, but I have been gazed on as if I were a comet — something rare. I who am speaking, my lord, am one who, perhaps, has endured a grief that might equal yours, if both were justly and fairly weighed.

“Although wayward, capricious fortune has maligned and harmed me, I am descended from ancestors who were the equivalent of mighty Kings. But time has uprooted my parentage, and time has bound me in servitude to the world and to painful chance accidents.”

Marina thought, *I will stop talking to him.*

She hesitated and thought, *But there is something inside me that causes my cheeks to glow and whispers in my ear, "Don't leave until he speaks."*

Pericles said, "My fortunes' — 'parentage' — 'good parentage' — to equal mine! Was that what you said? What did you say?"

"I said, my lord, that if you knew my parentage, you would not do me violence," Marina said.

"I think you are right," Pericles replied. "Please, turn your eyes upon me."

A vision of his wife, Thaisa, began to fill his mind: "You are like something that — what country are you from? Are these shores where you were born?"

"No, nor was I born on any shores," replied Marina, who had been born at sea. "Yet I was mortally brought forth, and I am no other than I appear to be. I am a human being."

"I am great — pregnant — with woe, and I shall deliver tears with my weeping," Pericles said. "My dearest wife was like this maiden, and my daughter might have been such a one as this maiden. She has my Queen's high forehead. She has my wife's stature to an inch; her posture is as wand-like straight; she is as silver-voiced; her eyes are as jewel-like and are encased in eyebrows as beautiful. In her walk she is another Juno, Queen of the gods. And she starves the ears she feeds and makes them hungry the more she gives them speech — the more she speaks, the more her audience wants her to speak."

He said to Marina, "Where do you live?"

"Where I am only a stranger. From the deck you may see the place I live."

"Where were you raised? And how did you achieve these

accomplishments, which you make richer because you have them?”

“If I should tell my history, it would seem like lies disdained in the reporting,” Marina said. “You would not believe what I tell you.”

“Please, speak,” Pericles requested. “Falseness cannot come from you; you look as modest as Justice, and you seem to be a palace for the crowned Truth to dwell in. I will believe you, and I will make my senses believe you if you relate things that seem to be impossible because you look like someone I loved indeed.

“Who was your family?”

“Didn’t you say, when I pushed you away from me — which was when I first perceived you — that you came from good ancestors?”

“So indeed I did,” Marina replied.

“Tell me your parentage. I think you said that you had been tossed from wrong to injury, and that you thought your griefs might equal mine, if both your griefs and mine were disclosed.”

“Some such thing I said,” Marina replied, “and I said no more but what I believe is likely to be true.”

“Tell me your story,” Pericles said. “If your griefs, carefully considered, prove to be one thousandth of the griefs that I have endured, then you are a man, and I have suffered like a girl — only a man could endure what I have endured and still live.

“Yet you look like a statue of Patience gazing on Kings’ graves in a cemetery and smiling the most extreme calamities out of existence. One such as you would reject suicide.

“Who was your family? How did you lose them? What is your name, my most kind virgin?”

“Tell me your story, I ask you. Come, sit by me.”

“My name is Marina.”

“Oh, I am being mocked,” Pericles said. “Some angry god has sent you here to make the world laugh at me.”

“Be calm, good sir, or I’ll stop telling you my story.”

“I’ll be patient and calm,” Pericles promised, “but you little know how much I was startled when you told me your name is Marina.”

“The name was given to me by one who had some power: my father, who was a King.”

“What!” Pericles said. “You are a King’s daughter! And you are named Marina?”

“You said that you would believe me, but so that I am not a troubler of your peace, I will end my story here.”

“But are you flesh and blood? Have you a working pulse? And are you no fairy?”

He felt her pulse and said, “Motion! I feel a pulse! Well; speak on. Where were you born? And why are you named Marina?”

“I was named Marina because I was born at sea.”

“At sea! Who was your mother?”

“My mother was the daughter of a King; she died the minute I was born, as my good nurse, Lychorida, has often told me as she wept.”

“Oh, stop there for a little while!” Pericles cried.

He thought, *This is the most excellent dream that dull sleep has ever mocked sad and distressed fools with. This maiden cannot be my daughter: My daughter's buried.*

He continued, "Well, where were you raised? I'll hear more, all the way to the bottom — the end — of your story, and I will never interrupt you."

"You are scornful of my story," Marina said. "Believe me, it is best that I stop telling it."

"I will believe every syllable of what you tell me. Still, let me ask these questions: How came you to live in these parts? Where were you raised?"

"The King my father left me in Tarsus until cruel Cleon, with his wicked wife, sought to murder me. They persuaded a villain to murder me, and after he had drawn his sword to do it, a crew of pirates came and rescued me. They brought me to Mytilene. But, good sir, where are your questions leading me? Why do you weep? It may be that you think I am an impostor. No, indeed. I am the daughter of King Pericles, if good King Pericles is still alive."

"Helicanus!" Pericles shouted.

"Is my lord calling me?"

"You are a grave and noble counselor, very wise in many things. Tell me, if you can, who this maiden is, or what she is likely to be, who thus has made me weep?"

"I don't know, sir," Helicanus replied, "but here is the regent of Mytilene. He speaks nobly of her."

Lysimachus said, "She would never tell us her parentage. If we asked her to tell us, she would sit still and weep."

"Helicanus, hit me, honored sir," Pericles said. "Give me a gash and immediate pain lest this great sea of joys rushing

upon me overpower the shores of my mortality and drown me with their sweetness.”

He said to Marina, “Oh, come here, you have given birth to that man who begat you. You have given me a rebirth — you who were born at sea, buried at Tarsus, and found at sea again!”

He then said, “Helicanus, get down on your knees and thank the holy gods as loudly as thunder threatens us. This is Marina.”

He asked her, “What was your mother’s name? Tell me that because truth can never be confirmed enough even when all doubts sleep. I definitely know who you are, but please tell me this one additional detail.”

“First, sir, let me ask you this: What is your title?”

“I am King Pericles of Tyre, but tell me now my drowned Queen’s name. In all the rest that you have said, you have been as perfectly correct as a god would be, and you are the heir of Kingdoms and another life to me, Pericles, your father.”

“All I have to do to be acknowledged as your daughter is to say my mother’s name was Thaisa?” Marina asked. “Thaisa was my mother, whose life ended the minute mine began.”

“Now I give you my blessing!” Pericles said. “Rise — you are my child.”

He ordered an attendant, “Give me fresh garments.”

Pericles was wearing dirty sackcloth in mourning; now he wanted his clean royal clothing.

He said, “She is my own daughter, Helicanus. She is not dead at Tarsus, although reports stated that savage Cleon killed her. She shall tell you everything, and you shall

kneel, and acknowledge that she is your true Princess.”

Looking at Lysimachus, he asked, “Who is this?”

Helicanus replied, “Sir, he is the governor of Mytilene, who, hearing of your melancholy and depressed state of mind, came to see you.”

“I embrace you,” Pericles said to Lysimachus, doing just that.

He ordered again, “Give me my royal robes. I am wild in my appearance.”

He said, “May the Heavens bless my girl! But, listen. What music is that?”

He then said, “Tell Helicanus, my Marina, tell him what you have told me, point by point, for yet he seems to doubt that you are truly my daughter. But, what is that music?”

“My lord, I hear no music,” Helicanus said.

“None!” Pericles said. “I hear the music of the spheres — the music of the planets and the stars as they move through the sky! Listen to it, my Marina.”

“It is not good to contradict him,” Lysimachus said. “Let him have his way.”

“These are the rarest sounds! Do you not hear the music?” Pericles asked.

Humoring Pericles, Lysimachus said, “Yes, my lord, I hear it.”

Music sounded. You, the reader, may hear it.

“This is most Heavenly music!” Pericles said. “It compels me to listen to it, and thick slumber hangs upon my eyes. Let me rest.”

He began to sleep.

“Give him a pillow for his head,” Lysimachus said. “Let all of us leave him. Well, my companion friends, if this but answer to my just belief, I’ll well remember you.”

Already, he was thinking of marrying Marina. He had just heard that she was the daughter of a King, and if so, she would be a good wife for him.

All except Pericles withdrew a short distance away, and the goddess Diana appeared to Pericles in a dream.

The goddess said to him, “My temple stands in Ephesus. Hurry there, and sacrifice upon my altar. There, when my chaste priests and nuns are met together, before all the people, reveal how you lost your wife at sea. To mourn your own sufferings, as well as your daughter’s sufferings, recall them and speak about them accurately.

“Either perform my bidding, or you will live in woe. Do what I tell you to do, and you will be happy. I swear this by my silver bow!

“Awake, and tell everybody your dream.”

The goddess disappeared.

Pericles woke up and said, “Celestial Diana, goddess argentine — goddess of silver — I will obey you.”

He called, “Helicanus!”

Helicanus, Lysimachus, and Marina went to him.

“Sir?” Helicanus said.

Pericles said to Helicanus, “My plan was to sail for Tarsus, there to strike the inhospitable Cleon, but I have something else to do first. Turn our full sails toward Ephesus. Soon I’ll tell you why.”

He then said to Lysimachus, "Shall we refresh ourselves, sir, upon your shore, and I shall give you gold for such provisions as our plan will need?"

"Sir, with all my heart," Lysimachus said, "and, when you come ashore, I have another suit."

The first suit was Pericles' asking for provisions; Pericles was able to guess the second suit, which was Lysimachus'.

"You shall prevail if your suit is to woo my daughter, for it seems that you have nobly treated her."

"Sir, lend me your arm," Lysimachus said.

"Come, my Marina," Pericles said.

— 5.2 —

John Gower said to you, the reader, "Now our sands have almost run through the hourglass. Just a little more, and I will be silent. Please grant me this, my last request, because such kindness must relieve me.

"I want you to readily imagine with what pageantry, what feasts, what shows, and what minstrelsy and pretty sounds of celebration, the regent — Lysimachus — made in Mytilene to greet King Pericles. Lysimachus so thrived that he has been promised that fair Marina will be his wife. But this in no way will happen until King Pericles has made his sacrifice as the goddess Diana told him to do.

"Please make time pass quickly, and winged time fly. Now, winds fill sails, and things happen as our principals desire them to happen.

"So now imagine King Pericles and all his company at Ephesus, looking at the temple of Diana. That he can come here so soon is due to your imagination, for which I thank you."

At the temple of Diana in Ephesus, Thaisa — a high priestess — stood near the altar. A number of virgins were on each side of her. Also present were Cerimon and some attendants.

Pericles and his attendants entered the temple. Also with him were Lysimachus, Helicanus, Marina, and a lady.

Pericles said, “Hail, Diana! To perform your just command, I here confess myself the King of Tyre. I fled in fright from my country, and I wed at Pentapolis the fair Thaisa. She died at sea, but first she gave birth to a girl named Marina, who, goddess, still wears your silver livery — she is still a virgin. She at Tarsus was raised as a member of Cleon’s family, but when she was fourteen years old, he sought to murder her. A better fortune brought her to Mytilene. My ship anchored by that country’s shore, and her fortunes brought the maiden aboard, where, by her own very clear memory of past events, she made known to me that she is my daughter.”

After hearing his voice, a shocked Thaisa looked at Pericles, although as a priestess, she was not supposed to. She said, “Voice and appearance! You are, you are — oh, royal Pericles!”

She fainted.

“What does the nun mean?” Pericles asked.

Thaisa was wearing a veil, so Pericles did not recognize her.

He said, “She is dying! Help, gentlemen!”

Cerimon quickly went to Thaisa’s side, and immediately knew that she had only fainted and would quickly recover.

He said to Pericles, “Noble sir, if what you have said before Diana’s altar is true, this is your wife.”

“Reverend sir, no,” Pericles replied. “I threw my wife’s body overboard with these very arms.”

“You did that when you were near this coast, I am sure,” Cerimon said.

“That is most certainly true,” Pericles replied.

“Look after the lady,” Cerimon said to some attendants.

He then said, “She has fainted from an excess of joy. Early on a blustery morning, this lady was thrown upon this shore. I opened her coffin, found rich jewels inside, revived her, and placed her here in Diana’s temple.”

“May we see the jewels?” Pericles asked.

The jewels would confirm Thaisa’s identity.

“Great sir, they shall be brought to you at my house, where I invite you — look, Thaisa is recovering.”

“Oh, let me look at him!” Thaisa said, aware that as a priestess of the virgin goddess Diana, normally she would not look at a man. “If he is not my husband, then my position as holy priestess will not allow me to feel any sexual desire for him. If he is not my husband, then my position as holy priestess will curb my sexual desire, no matter what I see.”

She looked at Pericles and said, “Oh, my lord, aren’t you Pericles? You spoke like him; you look like him. Didn’t you mention a tempest, a birth, and a death?”

“It is the voice of dead Thaisa!” Pericles said.

“I am Thaisa, whom you supposed to be dead and drowned.”

“Immortal Diana!” Pericles said.

“Now I know you better,” Thaisa said. “When we with tears departed from Pentapolis, my father the King — Simonides — gave you a ring like this.”

She showed him a ring that she was wearing. Pericles immediately recognized it.

“This ... this ... no more, you gods!” he said. His happiness filled him; he had no room for more.

He continued, “Gods, your present kindness makes my past miseries mere entertainments. You shall do well, if once I touch her lips I melt and am seen no more. I shall die of happiness.”

He said to Thaisa, “Oh, come, and be buried a second time within these arms.”

They hugged.

Marina said, “My heart leaps to go into my mother’s bosom.”

She knelt.

“Look at who is kneeling here!” Pericles said. “She is flesh of your flesh, Thaisa. You gave birth to her at sea, and she was named Marina because she was born at sea.”

“We are blest — she is my own!” Thaisa said. She raised Marina up from her kneeling position and hugged her.

“Hail, madam, and my Queen!” Helicanus said.

“I don’t know you,” Thaisa said to him. She had never met him.

“You have heard me say that when I fled away from Tyre, I left behind an old man to rule as my substitute,” Pericles

said. "Can you remember what I called the man? I have often said his name."

"Helicanus," Thaisa said.

"This is still more confirmation that you are my wife," Pericles said. "Embrace him, dear Thaisa; this is he."

Thaisa and Helicanus hugged.

Pericles said to Thaisa, "Now I long to hear how you were found, how your life could possibly be preserved; and whom to thank, besides the gods, for this great miracle."

"You can thank Lord Cerimon, my lord," Thaisa replied. "Lord Cerimon, through whom the gods have shown their power, is the man who can from first to last answer your questions."

Pericles said to Cerimon, "Reverend sir, the gods can have no mortal officer more like a god than you. Will you tell me how this once-dead Queen lives again?"

"I will, my lord," Cerimon said. "But please, first go with me to my house, where you shall be shown everything that was found with her in the coffin. I will tell you how she came to be placed here in the temple. I will omit no important information."

Pericles prayed, "Pure and chaste Diana, bless you for your vision! I will offer night devotions to you."

He then said, "Thaisa, this Prince, Lysimachus, the fair-betrothed of your daughter, shall marry her at Pentapolis. And now, this ornament — my shaggy hair and beard — that makes me look unkempt and dismal I will clip so that I have a respectable haircut."

He said to Marina, "What no razor has touched for fourteen years, I'll beautify to grace your marriage-day."

Thaisa said, “Lord Cerimon has credible letters, sir, that say my father, Simonides, is dead.”

“May the Heavens make a star of him and put him in the firmament! Yet there in Pentapolis, his Kingdom, my Queen, we’ll celebrate Lysimachus and Marina’s nuptials, and we ourselves will in that Kingdom spend our following days. Our son-in-law and daughter shall reign in Tyre.”

He then said, “Lord Cerimon, we have been putting off our desire to hear the rest of the story. Sir, lead us to your house.”

— Epilogue —

John Gower said to you, the reader, “You have seen Antiochus and his daughter, who engaged in monstrous and incestuous lust, receive their due and just reward.

“Pericles, his Queen, and his daughter, as you have seen, although they were assailed with fortune fierce and keen, preserved their virtue from deadly destruction’s blast. Heaven led them, and they were crowned with joy at last.

“In Helicanus you have seen a figure of truth, of faith, and of loyalty.

“In reverend Cerimon there well appears the worth that learned charity always wears.

“After news had spread of the cursed deed of wicked Cleon and his wife, who wanted to murder Marina, the citizens — because of the honored name of Pericles, who had delivered grain to them when they were famished — raged throughout the city and burned Cleon and his wife in his palace. The gods seemed content to punish them for the crime of murder, although the murder was not done, but only meant.

“So, to thank you for your patience in reading this, may

you find new joy! Here our book has its ending.”

Chapter XXXVI: THE TEMPEST

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Tempest*)

ALONSO, King of Naples.

SEBASTIAN, Alonso's brother.

PROSPERO, the rightful Duke of Milan. In Latin, *prospero* means "I make happy, I make fortunate, I make successful."

ANTONIO, Prospero's brother, the usurping Duke of Milan.

FERDINAND, son to the King of Naples.

GONZALO, an honest old Counselor.

ADRIAN and FRANCISCO, Lords.

CALIBAN, a savage and deformed Slave.

TRINCULO, King Alonso's Jester. TRINCULO likes to drink more than enough. His name is based on the Italian *trincare*, which means "To drink."

STEPHANO, a drunken Butler.

CAPTAIN of a Ship.

BOATSWAIN, pronounced Bosun.

SAILORS.

MIRANDA, daughter to Prospero. Her name is based on the Latin *miror* and means "She who is to be admired" or "She who is to be wondered at."

ARIEL, an airy Spirit.

IRIS, goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the gods

and especially messenger of Juno, Queen of the gods.
Played by a spirit.

CERES, goddess of fertility and agriculture, played by
Ariel.

JUNO, Queen of the gods, played by a Spirit. She is the
goddess of marriage.

HARPIES, birds with the face of a woman, played by
Spirits.

NYMPHS, REAPERS, DOGS: played by Spirits.

CHAPTER 1 (The Tempest)

— 1.1 —

Thunder sounded and lightning flashed as a storm struck a ship at sea.

The Captain of the ship shouted, “Boatswain!”

“Here I am, Captain. How goes it?”

“Good fellow, speak to the sailors and give them orders. All of us must get on with the work — and briskly — or else we will run aground. Hurry! Hurry!”

Both the Captain and the Boatswain had a whistle around their necks. At times the sound of wind and waves would drown out human speech, and the sailors had been trained to get their orders from the sounds of the whistles.

The Captain exited, and some sailors came on deck and started working with the ropes.

The Boatswain said to the sailors, “Good work, mates! Work with a good will, sailors! Quickly! Take in the topsail. Listen to the whistle for your orders.”

He shouted at the storm, “Blow as hard as you like, as long as we are on the open sea and not close to sand reefs or rocks!”

Several passengers — members of the upper class — came on deck. They included Alonso, the King of Naples; Sebastian, Alonso’s brother; Antonio, who had stolen the Dukedom of Naples from Prospero, who was his brother; Ferdinand, Alonso’s son, who was a Prince; Gonzalo, an honest old counselor, and others.

King Alonso said, “Good Boatswain, take care. Where’s

the Captain?”

To the sailors, King Alonso said, “Be men now.”

The Boatswain replied, “Please, keep below. Do not be on deck now.”

Antonio, Prospero’s brother, said, “Where is the Captain, Boatswain?”

The Captain’s whistle could be heard, giving orders to the sailors behind the mast. The Boatswain was in charge of the sailors before the mast.

The Boatswain replied to Antonio, “Can’t you hear him?”

To all the upper-class passengers, he said, “You are interfering with our work. Stay in your cabins. You are assisting the storm, not us sailors.”

Gonzalo, an old counselor, said, “Good Boatswain, be calm.”

“I will be calm when the sea is calm,” the Boatswain said. “Get below! Alonso is the King of Naples, but what do these roaring winds and waves care for the title of King? Go to your cabins and be quiet! The only people who should be on deck now are sailors!”

Gonzalo was loyal to King Naples, right or wrong. He said, “Good Boatswain, remember whom you have on board this ship.”

The Boatswain had already made it clear that he was not impressed by his passengers’ titles and positions in society — certainly not when his life depended on competence in dealing with a storm at sea.

He said, “I love none of the ship’s passengers more than I love myself. You are a counselor, so if your talents are useful now, put them to work. If you can command these

winds and waves to be calm and if you can bring peace out of the current turmoil, we sailors will not handle any more ropes. If you can do these things, then do them. If you cannot do these things, then give thanks that you have lived so long, and go to your cabin below and prepare yourself both spiritually and physically for whatever misfortune may occur.”

The Boatswain said to the sailors, “Good work, mates,” and then he said to the upper-class passengers, “Get out of our way.”

The Boatswain left to look after another part of the ship, and Gonzalo said, “I receive great comfort from this Boatswain. I look at him and see no indication that he will die by drowning. No, indeed, but I do see every indication that he will die by hanging. I look in his face, and I see reflected in his eyes a gallows. That is good news for us. If he does not drown today, then we probably won’t drown. Stand fast, good Fate — do not let his destiny change. He who is born to be hanged shall never drown. The Fates spin the thread of life — in the Boatswain’s case, that thread is a rope. Let the rope that will hang the Boatswain be our anchor chain that will keep us safe since the anchor chain we have now does little good for us. If the Boatswain was not born to be hanged, then we are in a bad way.”

The upper-class passengers went below deck, and the Boatswain returned to give the sailors more orders. He wanted the correct amount of sail on the ship: enough to keep the ship moving away from the rocks, but not enough that the winds would capsize the ship and sink it. Right now, the ship was getting dangerously close to the shore of an island, and so the Boatswain wanted to lower the topmost section of the main mast to reduce the amount of weight aloft.

The Boatswain ordered, “Down with the topmast! Quickly!

Lower! Lower! Lower the mainsail and keep as close to the wind as we can!”

The upper-class passengers below shouted with fright and excitement.

The Boatswain said, “Damn this howling! These passengers are louder than the roars of the winds and waves and louder than we sailors are at our work.”

Sebastian, Antonio, and Gonzalo came up on deck again.

“Yet again!” the Boatswain said. “What are you doing here? Shall we give up, stop working, and drown? Do you want the ship to sink?”

Sebastian, an unpleasant man, said, “May you get cancer of the throat, you bawling, blasphemous, uncharitable dog!”

“Do some work, then!” the Boatswain replied.

Antonio, another unpleasant man, said, “Hang from the gallows, cur! Hang, you son of a whore! Hang, you insolent noisemaker! We are less afraid of being drowned than you are!”

Gonzalo said, “I still say that the Boatswain will never drown — I guarantee it — even if the ship were no stronger than a nutshell and as leaky as a menstruating woman.”

The Boatswain was still trying to do his job despite the interference of the passengers: “Lay her close to the wind! Set her two courses off to sea again — let’s use the main sail and the fore sail to reach the open sea again!”

Some thoroughly drenched sailors shouted, “All is lost! Pray! All is lost!”

“What! Must we die with cold mouths?” the Boatswain said. “Must we drown in the cold sea?”

Gonzalo said, “King Alonso and Prince Ferdinand are praying! Let us pray with them. They and we are in the same situation!”

Sebastian said, “I have run out of patience.”

Antonio said, “We will die, and why! Because drunk sailors are cheating us of our lives! This big-mouthed Boatswain — I wish that this rascal would be hung at the low-water mark and left hanging until ten tides had washed over him, although the usual punishment for pirates is to be left hanging until only three tides wash over them.”

“The Boatswain will be hanged yet,” Gonzalo said, “although every drop of water swears that he will be drowned and tries its best to swallow him.”

Several people cried out:

“Have mercy on us!”

“The ship is splitting in two!”

“Farewell, brother!”

“The ship is breaking up!”

Antonio said, “Let’s go to King Alonso and sink with him.”

Sebastian said, “Let’s say goodbye to the King.”

Antonio and Sebastian left, leaving Gonzalo behind, who said to himself, “I would give over a hundred miles of sea for an acre of barren ground that can grow only long heather, brown gorse, or any other kind of weed. May God’s will be done! But I would prefer to die on dry ground!”

— 1.2 —

On the island, the exiled Duke of Milan, whose name was

Prospero, and his daughter, whose name was Miranda, watched the storm at sea.

Miranda said, “If by your magic, my dearest father, you have put the wild waters in this uproar, calm them. The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking and burning — because struck by lightning! — black tar instead of rain, except that the sea, whose high waves climb to the face of the sky, dashes the fire out. I have suffered with those whom I saw suffer. I have seen a splendid ship that had, no doubt, some noble men in her dashed all to pieces. The cries I heard knocked against my very heart and broke it. Poor souls, they have perished. Had I been a god with enough power to control the sea, I would have sunk the sea within the earth before it would have so swallowed the good ship and the cargo of souls it carried.”

“Be calm and collected,” Prospero replied. “Do not be terrified any longer. Tell your heart that pities the souls on the ship that no harm has been done.”

“This is a woeful day!” Miranda cried.

“No,” Prospero said. “No harm has been done. I have done nothing except for you, my dear one, my daughter, who are ignorant of who you are. You know nothing of who I am or where I came from. You do not know that I am of higher rank than the Prospero you know, who is the head of a very poor dwelling and who is your father.”

“I have never thought that I would learn more,” Miranda said.

“It is time that I should give you more information. Help me take off my magic cloak. Thank you.”

Prospero lay his magic cloak on the ground and said, “Lie there, my art.”

As a magician, Prospero used a magic cloak, a magic wand, and books of magic.

Prospero and Miranda sat on the ground.

He said to his daughter, “Wipe your eyes, and be comforted. With my magic, I created this direful spectacle of the shipwreck that has aroused your virtuous compassion; however, I have used my magic in such a way that no one has been hurt. Not a single hair on anyone’s head was harmed in this shipwreck that you saw, despite the cries that you heard. But sit down now because you need to learn more about your family history.”

“You have often begun to tell me who I am and what our history is, but then you have stopped and have not answered any of my questions. You always told me, ‘Wait! I won’t tell you yet!’”

“The hour has now come for your questions to be answered,” Prospero said. “This very minute you should open your ears, listen, and be attentive. Can you remember a time before we came to this island? I do not think you can because when we came here you were not fully three years old.”

“Yes, sir, father, I can,” Miranda said.

“What do you remember? Do you remember a house or a person? Tell me whatever you remember.”

“The memory seems far distant and more like a dream than a definite recollection. But didn’t I once have four or five women who took care of me?”

“Yes, you did, Miranda, and you had more women than that looking after you. But how is it that you remember this when you were so young? What else do you remember from the depths of the past? If you can remember

something from the time before we came here, you may remember how we came here.”

“But I do not remember that.”

“Twelve years ago, Miranda, your father was the Duke of Milan and a powerful Prince.”

“Sir, aren’t you my father?”

“Your mother was a model of virtue, and she said that you are my daughter; as I said, your father was the Duke of Milan, and you are his only heir. You are no less noble in descent than a Princess.”

“What foul play were we the victims of, that we had to leave Milan? Or was it a blessing when we left?”

“Both, my daughter,” Prospero said. “By foul play, as you said, were we heaved out of Milan, but it is a blessing that we came to this island.”

“My heart bleeds when I think of the trouble that I must have been to you, although I cannot even remember that time. Please tell me more.”

“My brother and your uncle, whose name is Antonio — pay attention — I can’t believe that a brother should be so deceitful and untrustworthy. I loved Antonio next to myself of everything in the world, and I allowed Antonio to govern Milan. At that time, Milan was the first among the city-states and I, Prospero, was the Duke of Milan — the most important Duke in Italy. I had a reputation for nobleness and excellence, and no one could rival my learning in the liberal arts, both the *trivium* — grammar, logic, and rhetoric — and the *quadrivium* — arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. I studied constantly and so allowed my brother to rule Milan, delegating to him my state duties. The citizens of Milan grew accustomed to seeing my

brother and seldom saw me. I also studied the art of magic — are you listening to me?”

“Very carefully, father.”

“My brother learned well how to play power politics. He learned how to grant some requests and how to deny other requests. He learned whom to advance and whom to tear down because they had grown too powerful. He created allies for himself out of those who had been my allies. He also changed some people’s positions and brought in new people who were loyal to him. He had the keys of office — the keys that belong to an officer — and the people at court played his tune. He became the parasitic ivy that covered the trunk and leaves of the tree that was me, and the ivy killed the tree’s leaves and so killed the tree’s vitality — you have stopped listening to me!”

“Good sir, I am listening, father,” Miranda said.

Prospero knew that Miranda was listening, but he knew the information he was telling her was important and he wanted her to pay special attention to it.

“Please, pay attention,” Prospero said. “I neglected my worldly duties and dedicated myself to seclusion and the bettering of my mind with knowledge that was of greater value than most people would value it. My trust in my brother was without limit, without bound. A good parent often has a bad child. My trust in my brother was like that of a good parent, but it gave birth in my brother to evil desires — because I neglected my Duke’s duties and remained secluded in order to study, the evil in my brother’s nature awoke. He had the power of the Duke of Milan, and he had the income of the Duke of Milan — along with whatever other income his power allowed him to extort. He became used to the power and the income, and he began to think that he — not I — was the real Duke of

Milan. He told himself this lie so often that he believed it and so made his memory commit a sin against truth. His ambition grew — are you still listening, daughter?”

“Your tale, sir, would cure deafness,” Miranda said.

Prospero thought, *The acquisition of knowledge is good, but so is doing your duty. I neglected to do my duty as Duke of Milan. It would have been better for everyone, including my brother, if I had done my political duty instead of studying magic. In this case, the study I undertook should have been whatever study would help me to become a better political ruler.*

“My brother wanted nothing to separate the real Duke of Milan and the person who performed the role of the Duke of Milan, and so he decided that he needed to be the real Duke of Milan. He thought that for me, poor me, my library was a large enough Dukedom. He thought that I was no longer competent to govern worldly affairs. Therefore, he conspired — he was so thirsty for power — with the King of Naples. He agreed to give the King of Naples annual tribute, do him homage, subject his coronet to the King of Naples’ crown, and make the Dukedom of Milan — which had been previously unbowed — bend in homage to the Kingdom of Naples.”

“Oh, in the name of Heaven!” Miranda said.

“Note the agreement that he made with the King of Naples and the outcome that resulted, and then tell me whether he acted like a brother.”

“I would sin if I were to think anything but that my grandmother was noble. Good wombs have borne bad sons.”

“This is the agreement that my brother made with the King of Naples, who was always an enemy to me. In return for

homage and I know not how much tribute, the King of Naples agreed that he would immediately drive out of Milan my allies and me and allow Antonio, my brother, to be the Duke of Milan. After they made the agreement, the King of Naples raised a treacherous army, and Antonio at midnight opened the gates of Milan, and in the dead of darkness the agents appointed for the purpose hurried away from Milan me and you, my crying daughter.”

“I pity you because of what you went through,” Miranda said. “I don’t remember crying then, so I will cry now. This is a story that wrings tears from my eyes.”

“Hear a little more about the past, and then I will talk about the present business that is now at hand. Unless you understand what has happened in the past, you will not understand what is happening now.”

“Why didn’t our enemies kill us the night they took us from Milan?”

“You ask a good question, daughter,” Prospero said. “My story does need to answer that question. Dear, they dared not kill us outright because my people loved me dearly. They could not kill us openly and bloodily, but instead they had to hide what they wanted to do. Briefly, they hurried us aboard a boat that carried us to the sea. There they prepared a rotten carcass of a boat; it was not fitted out for a sea voyage. It had no ropes, no sails, and no masts. Even the rats had instinctively deserted this rotten skeleton of a boat. Our enemies put us in the boat and left us to cry to the sea that roared at us and to sigh to the winds that pityingly sighed back at us; unfortunately, this added to our discomfort.”

“I must have been a burden to you,” Miranda said.

“You were no burden,” Prospero replied. “You were an angel who saved me. You smiled — you must have been

infused with fortitude from Heaven. After I had cried and added my salt tears to the salt water of the sea and after I had groaned because of our desperate situation, I saw you smile and the courage to endure was born in me and so I was able to bear up against distress and withstand everything that ensued.”

“How did we come ashore?”

“We were assisted by divine Providence,” Prospero said. “A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo, was charitable. He gave us food and fresh water, as well as rich clothing, linens, household equipment, and necessities, which have ever since been very useful to us. He knew that I loved my books, and his noble character led him to supply me with volumes from my own library — books of magic that I prize above my Dukedom.”

“I wish that I could see that kind man someday!”

“Now I will stand up. Stay seated, daughter,” Prospero said. He put on his magic cloak and said, “Listen to the last of our sorrows at sea. Here at this island we arrived; and here have I, your schoolmaster, educated you better than other royal children who have more time to waste and tutors who do not take the pains that I do.”

Prospero thought, *Females should be educated well, just like males; this world needs good brains. If we neglect human female brains, we are neglecting half of the human brains in this world.*

“May God bless you for my education! And now, please, sir, father, for I still want to know, what is your reason for raising this tempest at sea?”

“You should know this. The goddess Fortune, bountiful Fortune, who was once my enemy, now favors me. By a strange accident, Fortune has brought my enemies to this

shore. Because of my studies of magic, I know that my future depends on what I do now. I can reach my zenith — my highest point — if I seize the opportunity promised to me by a most auspicious star. But if I ignore this opportunity, my fortunes will forever after droop. Now ask no more questions.”

Prospero thought, *The same knowledge can result in good or ill. My study of magic helped me lose my Dukedom because I neglected my political duties; however, my study of magic can help me to regain my Dukedom. If I do regain my Dukedom, I will need to concentrate on doing my political duties, not on studying magic.*

With a wave of his hand, Prospero cast a spell to make Miranda sleep. He said to her, “You are growing sleepy. It is a good drowsiness; give in to it. I know that you cannot choose to resist it.”

Miranda slept.

Prospero then said into the air, “Come away from wherever you are, servant, come away. I am ready to talk to you now. Approach, my Ariel, and come to me.”

A shape-shifting immortal spirit of the air, Ariel could appear as either male or female, but was neither.

In the form of a young man, Ariel flew to Prospero and said, “Greetings, great master! Grave sir, greetings! I come to do your will, whatever it is: to fly, to swim, to dive into the fire, or to ride on the curled clouds. Ariel and all of Ariel’s colleagues will do whatever you wish.”

“Have you, spirit, performed in every detail what I told you to do in creating the tempest?”

“Yes, every detail,” Ariel answered. “I boarded the King of Naples’ ship. In the prow, amidships, on the poop deck, in

every cabin, and here and there and now and again I flamed like St. Elmo's fire and caused amazement. Sometimes I would divide myself and burn in many places. I would burn as separate flames on the topmast, the yardarms, and the bowsprit, and then meet and join together as one single flame. The Roman god Jove's lightning bolts, which are the precursors of dreadful thunderclaps, were not more instantaneous and quicker than sight than I was. The fire and the deafening cracks of burning sulphur seemed to besiege the most mighty Neptune, god of the sea, and make his bold waves tremble. Indeed, his dread trident shook."

"My splendid spirit!" Prospero said. "Was anyone so firm, so level-headed, that this disturbed confusion did not infect his reason and make him irrational?"

"Every soul felt a fever such as madmen suffer from; every soul did deeds of desperation. Everyone except for the mariners plunged into the foaming brine and abandoned the ship that was then all afire with me. The King's son, Ferdinand, whose hair was standing on end and looked like reeds, not hair, was the first man who leaped into the sea, crying as he jumped, 'Hell is empty, and all the devils are here.'"

"Why, that's my spirit!" Prospero said. "And did this happen near shore?"

"It happened close to shore, master," Ariel replied.

"Ariel, are the inhabitants of the ship safe?"

"Not a hair was harmed. Their wet garments trapped air and kept them above the water; these garments bear not a single blemish and are fresher than before their wearers jumped into the sea. As you ordered me, I have most of them dispersed in groups about the island. Only the King's son, Ferdinand, is alone. I landed him by himself, and I left him cooling the air with sighs in an odd corner of the

island. He is sitting with his arms crossed together in a sad knot.”

“Tell me what has happened to the ship’s sailors and to the rest of the fleet that was sailing with the King of Naples.”

“The King’s ship is safely in the harbor,” Ariel replied. “It is in the deep bay, where once you called me up at midnight to fetch dew from the storm-vexed Bermuda islands to use in your magic. In that deep bay, the ship is hidden. The sailors are all stowed below deck. I left them asleep, exhausted from their labor and charmed by my sleeping spell. As for the rest of the fleet that I dispersed with the tempest, they all have met together again and are sailing upon the Mediterranean sea, bound sadly home for Naples, believing that they saw the King’s ship wrecked and the King himself drowned.”

“Ariel, you have exactly performed what I ordered you to do, but more work remains to be done. What time is it?”

“It is past noon.”

“It is at least two o’clock,” Prospero said. “The time between six o’clock and now must by us both be spent most preciously and wisely.”

“Is there more toil?” Ariel asked. “Since you give me hard tasks to do, let me remind you what you have promised to me, a thing that you have not yet done.”

Prospero was not happy. Ariel had just promised a willingness to do many tasks — “I come to do your will, whatever it is: to fly, to swim, to dive into the fire, or to ride on the curled clouds. Ariel and all of his colleagues will do whatever you wish” — and now Ariel seemed not so willing to work for Prospero. Important events were at hand, and Prospero needed Ariel’s help. Still, he pretended to be angrier than he really was — he had good news for

Ariel, and pretended anger now would make the later good news a splendid surprise.

“What is this?” Prospero asked. “Are you in a bad mood? What is it that you can demand?”

“My liberty.”

“Before the time of your servitude is over? I want to hear no more about this!”

“Please, remember that I have done worthy service for you. I have told you no lies, made no mistakes, served you without grudge or grumblings. You promised that if I served you well that you would reduce the period of my servitude by one full year.”

Prospero replied, “Have you forgotten from what torment I freed you?”

“No.”

“Yes, you have forgotten, and now you think it is too hard a task for you to do my will and tread the ooze of the bottom of the salty sea, to ride upon the sharp wind of the north, and to do my bidding underground when the earth is hardened with frost.”

“I do not, sir.”

“You lie, rebellious thing!” Prospero said. “Have you forgotten the foul witch Sycorax, who with age and malice and evil grew into the shape of a hoop? She was so stooped over that her chin met her knees. Have you forgotten her?”

“No, sir.”

“You have forgotten her. Where was she born? Speak; tell me.”

“Sir, in Algiers.”

“So you remember that, but because you so often forget the past, I must recount once each month in what a bad situation you have been. This damned witch Sycorax, because of many and various mischiefs and terrible sorceries that human ears ought not to hear, was banished from Algiers, as you know. Because of one thing, the people of Algiers would not take her life. Isn’t this true?”

“Yes, sir.”

“This hag with a bluish shadow on her eyelids — a sign of pregnancy — was brought here heavy with child and here the sailors left her. You, my slave, as you call yourself, were then her servant. Because you were a spirit too delicate to obey her earthy and abhorred commands, you refused to carry out the orders she most wanted you to carry out.”

Prospero thought, *You, Ariel, have never refused to carry out my orders. This is evidence that my orders are not evil.*

Prospero added, “In response, she punished you. With the help of her more potent ministers — the agents of Satan — she confined you within a cloven pine, where you painfully remained a dozen years, within which time she died and left you there. You groaned with pain as often as the paddles of a millhouse wheel strike the water. During that time, this island had no being who bore a human shape, except for the son that she littered here — a freckled whelp given birth to by a hag.”

“Yes, Caliban, her son.”

Prospero, resenting the interruption, said, “You dunce! Of course, I mean Caliban! Caliban now works as my servant. You best know in what torment I found you. Your groans made wolves howl and penetrated the breasts of always-angry bears. The torment you endured was suitable for one of the damned, and Sycorax, being dead, could never free

you from the cloven pine, but when I arrived on this island and heard your groans, I used my magic art and made the pine open and release you.”

“Thank you, master.”

“If you continue to complain, I will rend an oak open and plant you in its knotty entrails until you have howled away twelve winters.”

“I beg your pardon, master,” Ariel said. “I will obey your commands and perform my tasks without complaining.”

Prospero smiled at Ariel, and said, “Do that, and after two days I will set you free.”

The surprise good news had the effect on Ariel that Prospero had hoped for.

“You are a noble master!” Ariel happily exclaimed. “What shall I do? Tell me what you want me to do.”

“Assume the shape of a sea-nymph — a female water spirit,” Prospero ordered. “Be invisible to everyone except you and me. Go now, transform, and return. I know that shape-shifting takes effort and time — do it properly.”

Ariel exited, and Prospero thought, *Ariel will be invisible to everyone except himself and me. Why should Ariel assume the form of a sea-nymph — a beautiful goddess of the sea? I haven't seen a woman in 12 years! Why shouldn't I have something pretty to look at?*

Prospero said to Miranda, “Awake, dear heart, awake! You have slept well. Wake up!”

Miranda said, “The strangeness of your story made me sleepy.”

“Shake it off,” Prospero said. “Come on. We'll visit Caliban, my slave, who never gives us a kind answer.”

“He is a villain, sir, whom I do not like to look at.”

“True, but we cannot do without him. He makes our fire, fetches in our wood, and performs other services that benefit us.”

They arrived quickly at Caliban’s cave, and Prospero called, “Slave! Caliban! Being of earth! Answer me.”

From within the cave, Caliban replied, “You have enough firewood to do you for a while.”

“Come forth from your cave, I say!” Prospero said. “There is other work for you to do. Come, you tortoise! Hurry!”

Having assumed the shape of a water-nymph, Ariel flew to Prospero, who said, “You are a fine apparition! My elegant Ariel, listen to me. I have work for you to do.”

Miranda was used to seeing spirits on the island, although now Ariel was invisible.

Prospero whispered in Ariel’s ear, and Ariel said, “My Lord, it shall be done.”

Ariel exited, and Prospero shouted to Caliban, “You poisonous slave, begotten by the devil himself upon your wicked dam, Sycorax, come here!”

Caliban came out of his cave and said, “May dew as wicked as ever my mother brushed with an ill-omened raven’s feather from an unwholesome marsh drop on you both! May an unwholesome southwest wind blow on you and blister you all over!”

“Because of your ill words, tonight you shall have cramps — side-stitches that will stop your breath,” Prospero said. “Goblins in the form of hedgehogs shall, during nighttime, when they do their evil work, torment you. You shall be tormented as many times as honeycombs have cells. Each

torment will sting you more painfully than each sting of the bees that made the honeycombs.”

“I must eat my dinner,” Caliban said. “This island, which you have taken from me, is mine. I inherited this island from Sycorax, my mother. When you first came here, you patted me and made much of me. You would give me water with berries in it, and you would teach me the name of the bigger light — the Sun — and the lesser light — the Moon — that burn by day and night. Then I loved you and showed you all the features of the island: the fresh springs and the brine-pits as well as the barren places and the fertile places. Cursed be Caliban because Caliban did so! May all the evil spells of Sycorax, as well as toads, beetles, and bats, fall on you! I am all the subjects whom you have: just one. And I used to be my own King. But now here you pen me up like a pig in this cave in this hard rock, and you keep me from visiting the rest of the island.”

“You are a constantly lying slave, whom stripes made by whips may move, not kindness!” Prospero replied. “I have treated you, filth as I now know you are, with humane care, and I lodged you in my own dwelling until you tried to rape my daughter, Miranda.”

“Ha!” Caliban laughed. “I wish that I had raped her! You stopped me, or else I would have populated this island with many Calibans.”

“Abhorred slave,” Miranda replied, “you are incapable of doing any good and you are capable of doing any evil. I pitied you, took pains to teach you to speak, and taught you something new each hour. Back when you did not — savage as you were — know your own meaning, but would instead gabble like a most brutish thing, I endowed you with the power of speech so that you could make your meaning known. But your blood is bad, and although you did learn, good people cannot bear to be around you — a

would-be rapist! Therefore, you have deserved to be confined in this cave. In fact, you deserve to be punished more harshly than merely to be placed in a prison.”

Caliban replied, “You taught me language; and my profit from learning it is that I know how to curse. May the red plague destroy you because you taught me your language!”

Prospero thought, *Education is important, but more important than education is having a good character — one that wishes to do good instead of evil. Miranda benefited greatly from education because she has a good character.*

Prospero said to Caliban, “Hag-seed, go now! Fetch firewood, and be quick to obey — if you know what is good for you — when I have other tasks for you. Do you dare resist me, malicious thing? If you neglect or do unwillingly what I command you to do, I will torment you with cramps and with aches in the bones like those suffered by the old. I will make you roar so loudly that beasts shall tremble at your din.”

“Please, no,” Caliban said.

He thought, *I must obey Prospero; his art is of such power that it could control my dam’s god, Setebos, and make a servant out of him.*

“Slave, leave us now and gather firewood!” Prospero said.

Caliban exited.

In the form of a sea-nymph, Ariel now came toward Prospero and Miranda. Ariel was performing the task that Prospero had earlier given to the spirit: to lead Ferdinand, the son of the King of Naples, to Prospero and Miranda. Ariel was invisible to Ferdinand as Ariel sang and played music.

Ariel sang this song:

“Come unto these yellow sands,

“And then take hands:

“When you have curtsied and kissed

“The wild waves into silence,

“Dance daintily here and there;

“And, sweet spirits, the bass undersong bear.

“Hark, hark!”

This was followed by the spirits barking like dogs here and there.

Ariel sang, *“The watch-dogs bark!”*

This was again followed by the spirits barking like dogs here and there.

Ariel sang again:

“Hark, hark! I hear

“The song of strutting chanticleer

“Cry, Cock-a-doodle-do.”

Spirits sang — not all at the same time — the sound of a crowing rooster.

Ferdinand heard the song and the music, but he could not see Ariel. He said, “Where is this music coming from? The air or the earth? I can no longer hear it. No doubt the music serves some god on the island. As I was sitting on a bank by the seashore, mourning again the shipwreck and the death of my father, Alonso, the King of Naples, I heard this music creep by me upon the water. With its sweet air, the music calmed both the water’s fury and my suffering. I

followed the music, or rather it drew me here. But the music has gone. No, it begins again.”

Ariel sang this song:

“Full five fathoms deep your father lies;

“Of his bones is coral made;

“Those are pearls that were his eyes:

“All of him that does fade

“Will suffer a sea-change

“Into something rich and strange.

“Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.”

This was followed by the spirits ding-donging — not all at the same time — like bells.

Ariel sang, *“Listen! Now I hear them — ding-dong, bell.”*

Ferdinand said, “This song commemorates my drowned father. This is no mortal business; this is no sound that the earth owns. I hear it coming now from above me.”

Prospero said to his daughter, Miranda, “Raise the fringed curtains — the eyelids — of your eyes and tell me what you see over there.”

Miranda replied, “What is it? A spirit? Lord, how it looks around! Believe me, sir, the spirit has assumed a handsome form. But it is a spirit.”

“No, lass,” Prospero said. “It eats and sleeps and has such senses as we have. This fine fellow whom you see was in the ship that wrecked, and, if he were not somewhat stained with grief — a spoiler of good looks — you might call him a good-looking man. He has been separated from his fellow travelers and is looking around for them.”

“I might call him divine, for I have never seen anything natural that looked so noble.”

Prospero whispered to Ariel, “My plan is working. Miranda is falling in love with Ferdinand. Ariel, fine spirit! I’ll free you within two days for helping me accomplish this.”

Ferdinand saw Miranda and said, “This must be the goddess of this island. Music plays for her!”

He said to Miranda, “Grant my request and tell me whether you dwell on this island. Give me good advice about how I may properly behave here. My most important request, which I make last, is — you are a wonder! — tell me whether you are human and whether you are married?”

“I am no wonder, sir,” Miranda said, “but I am certainly an unmarried and human maiden.”

“You speak my language!” Ferdinand said. “Heavens! I am the highest in rank of them who speak this language — if I were where this language is spoken.”

Prospero wanted Miranda and Ferdinand to fall in love, but part of his plan was to make Ferdinand’s life difficult for a while. He said to Ferdinand, “How can you be the highest in rank? What would you be if the King of Naples heard you?”

“I would still be a solitary man — exactly as I am now — who wonders at hearing you speak of Naples,” Ferdinand replied. “The King of Naples does hear me, and because he does hear me, I grieve. I myself am the King of Naples. My eyes have never stopped crying since I saw my father the King shipwrecked and drowned.”

“How awful!” Miranda said.

“Yes, it is,” Ferdinand said. “I saw my father and all his Lords die. Two of those who died were the Duke of Milan

and his splendid son.”

Prospero whispered to Ariel, “The rightful Duke of Milan — me — and his more splendid daughter could challenge that assertion if now was the right time to do so. Soon enough, Ferdinand will find out that his father and everyone else on the ship survived and are in good health. But right now something important is happening. Ferdinand and Miranda have exchanged glances and fallen in love at first sight. Exquisite Ariel, I’ll set you free because of this.”

Prospero said to Ferdinand, “A word, good sir; I fear you have done yourself some wrong. You have said something about yourself that is not true.”

Miranda thought, *Why is my father speaking so rudely? This is the third man whom I have ever seen; the other two are my father and Caliban. This is the first man whom I ever fell in love with and sighed for. May pity for me move my father to like this man.*

Ferdinand said to Miranda, “If you are an unmarried virgin who is not in love with someone else, I will make you the Queen of Naples.”

“Just a minute, sir!” Prospero said. “I have more to say to you.”

Prospero thought, *They are both in each other’s power — they are in love — but I must interrupt this too-swift falling in love. A prize too easily won is not properly valued.*

Prospero said to Ferdinand, “One thing more. You must hear what I have to say to you. You have usurped a title that does not belong to you — you are not the King of Naples. Indeed, you came to this island to be a spy and steal it away from me, its rightful ruler.”

“No, I swear that that is not true!” Ferdinand said.

Miranda said to Ferdinand, “A man as handsome as you is a temple in which nothing evil can dwell. If Satan were as handsome as you, goodness would strive to dwell within him. According to Renaissance Neo-Platonic philosophers, beauty of spirit and beauty of form are inseparable.”

“Follow me,” Prospero said to Ferdinand.

To Miranda, Prospero said, “Don’t try to defend him — he’s a traitor.”

He said to Ferdinand, “Come with me. I will chain your neck and feet together. You will drink seawater, and your food will be inedible fresh-brook mussels, withered roots, and the caps of acorns. Follow me.”

“No,” Ferdinand said. “I will resist such treatment until my enemy has more power and strength than I do.”

He drew his sword, but Prospero used his magic to paralyze him and keep him from moving.

Miranda said, “Dear father, don’t judge him so hastily. He is a gentleman of noble birth whom you ought not to fear.”

“What?” Prospero said. “Will my foot — something that is beneath me — teach my head? Should I take advice from my own very young daughter?”

He said to Ferdinand, “Put your sword away, traitor. You make a show of courage, but you dare not strike me because you have a guilty conscience. Come out of your fencing posture because I can use my wand to easily disarm you and make your weapon drop.”

Ferdinand dropped his sword.

Miranda grabbed her father’s cloak and said, “Please, father, I beg you not to harm him.”

“Get away from me, Miranda! Let go of my clothing!”

“Sir, have pity on him. I guarantee that he will not cause trouble.”

“Silence! One word more shall make me reprimand you and maybe even hate you. What! You want to defend an imposter! Be quiet! Do you think that no more men like him exist because you have seen only him and Caliban? Foolish girl! Compared to most men, this man is a Caliban. Compared to this man, most men are angels.”

“My love, then, is very humble,” Miranda said. “I have no desire to see a better-looking man.”

Prospero said to Ferdinand, “Come on; obey me. Your muscles are once more in their infancy and have no strength. You can move only weakly.”

“You speak truly,” Ferdinand replied. “My strength is gone, and it is as if I were attempting to move in a dream. Still, the death of my father, this weakness that I feel, the shipwreck of all my friends, and the threats of this magician who has taken me prisoner would all be light burdens to me if only once a day I could see this maiden from my prison. Let free men make use of all the rest of the Earth. As long as I can see this maiden once a day, a prison is room enough for me.”

Prospero thought, *He is definitely in love with my daughter. My plan is working.*

To Ferdinand, he said, “Come with me.”

To Ariel, he said, “You have done well, fine spirit!”

To Ferdinand, he said, “Follow me.”

To Ariel, he said, “Listen as I tell you something else I need you to do for me.”

Prospero spoke quietly to Ariel while Miranda spoke to

Ferdinand.

Miranda said to Ferdinand, "Don't worry. My father has a better nature, sir, than he appears to have by his speech now. What he said is uncharacteristic of him."

Prospero said to Ariel, "You shall be as free as the mountain winds, but first do exactly what I tell you to do."

"I will obey every syllable," Ariel replied.

Prospero said to Ferdinand, "Come now and follow me."

He said to Miranda, "Don't try to defend him."

CHAPTER 2 (The Tempest)

— 2.1 —

In another part of the island, several members of the upper class who had escaped from the shipwreck were talking together. They included Alonso, the King of Naples; Sebastian, Alonso's brother; Antonio, Prospero's brother and the usurping Duke of Milan; Gonzalo, an honest old counselor; and two Lords named Adrian and Francisco. Sebastian and Antonio stood a short distance away from the others.

Gonzalo said to Alonso, King of Naples, "Please, sir, be happy. You have cause, as do we all, for being joyful. Our lives are far more important than the material possessions we have lost. What we have suffered in this shipwreck, others have often suffered. Everyday some sailor's wife, the captains of merchant ships and the merchants themselves suffer because of shipwrecks. We ourselves have benefited from a miracle that preserved our lives, which few people out of millions have experienced. Good sir, wisely weigh our sorrows against our blessings."

King Alonso was mourning because he thought that his son, Ferdinand, had died during the shipwreck. He said, "Please, be quiet. Let your mouth be at peace."

Sebastian whispered to Antonio, "Alonso receives comforting words the way that he would receive a bowl of cold porridge that had been made with peas."

Antonio whispered back, "Gonzalo is like a visitor determined to help a sick person. He will not easily give up trying to comfort King Alonso."

Sebastian whispered, "Look, Gonzalo is winding up the

watch of his wit; soon it will strike.”

Gonzalo began to speak to King Alonso: “Sir —”

Sebastian whispered, “It has struck once. Let’s keep count of how many times his wit will strike.”

Gonzalo said, “When we entertain — that is, admit and accept — every grief that comes our way, then there comes to the entertainer —”

Sebastian said, “A dollar.”

He had spoken loudly enough for Gonzalo to overhear him.

Gonzalo was quick witted and punned, “Dolor — that is, sorrow — comes to him, indeed. You, Sebastian, have spoken truer than you supposed.”

“You have taken it wiselier than I meant you should,” Sebastian said.

Gonzalo continued, “Therefore, my Lord —”

Antonio and Sebastian continued to speak to each other. They were annoyed and often did not lower their voices as much as they should have.

Antonio said, “Gosh, what a spendthrift is he of his tongue! He does not save his words!”

King Alonso said to Gonzalo, “Please, stop talking to me.”

Gonzalo replied, “Well, I have finished.” He hesitated and then added, “But yet —”

Sebastian finished the sentence: “— he will be talking.”

Antonio whispered, “Let’s make a bet. Who — Gonzalo or Adrian — will be the first one to talk? Who will be the first one to crow?”

Sebastian whispered, "I bet on the old cock — Gonzalo."

Antonio whispered, "I bet on the young cockerel — Adrian."

Sebastian whispered, "Agreed. What are we betting for?"

"A good laugh. He who wins, laughs."

"Agreed."

Adrian said, "Although this island seems to be deserted —"

Antonio laughed.

Sebastian whispered, "You won — and you have been paid with a good laugh."

Adrian continued, "— uninhabitable, and almost inaccessible —"

Sebastian whispered, "His next word will be 'yet.'"

Adrian said, "— yet —"

Antonio whispered, "He was bound to say that."

Adrian said, "— it has a subtle and tender and delicate and temperate climate."

Antonio said, "I once knew a woman named Temperance — she was a wench who was not temperate when it came to sexual pleasure."

Sebastian agreed, "True, she knew subtle and tender and delicate bedroom tricks. Adrian speaks more interestingly than he knows."

Adrian said, "The air breathes and blows upon us here most sweetly."

Sebastian said, "In my opinion, the blow comes from rotten lungs."

Antonio added, “The breath seems to be perfumed by a swamp.”

Gonzalo said, “On this island is everything advantageous to life.”

Antonio said, “True, except the means to live.”

“Of that there’s none, or little,” Sebastian said.

“How lush and healthy the grass looks!” Gonzalo said, “How green the grass is!”

“The ground indeed is reddish-brown,” Antonio said.

“With a touch of green in it,” Sebastian said.

“Gonzalo does not miss seeing much,” Antonio said.

“No, he doesn’t,” Sebastian said, “but he entirely misinterprets what he sees.”

Gonzalo said, “But the rarity of it is — which is indeed almost beyond credit —”

“— as many vouched-for rarities are,” Sebastian said.

“— that our garments, being, as they were, drenched in the sea, are nonetheless still fresh and appear lustrous. They seem to be newly dyed rather than stained with seawater,” Gonzalo said.

Antonio said to Sebastian, “If one of Gonzalo’s pockets could speak, wouldn’t it say he lies?”

“Yes,” Sebastian said. “If his pocket did not say he lies, his pocket would pocket the evidence and ignore the lie.”

Gonzalo said, “I think that our garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Africa, at the marriage of our King of Naples’ fair daughter, Clarabel, to the King of Tunis.”

Sebastian said sarcastically, “It was a sweet marriage, and we are prospering well in our return.”

Adrian said, “Tunis was never graced before with such a paragon as its Queen.”

Gonzalo said, “Not since the widow Dido’s time.”

Antonio said, “Widow! Please! Yes, Dido was a widow who fled the city of Tyre after her brother murdered her husband, but Gonzalo is using the word ‘widow’ to avoid talking about the illicit affair that Dido had with Aeneas after she founded Carthage. No one thinks of Dido as a widow! We think of her as a woman who was abandoned by her lover!”

Sebastian said, “What if he had said ‘widower Aeneas,’ too? Good Lord, how you would take it! Aeneas was a widower because his wife died during the fall of Troy, but no one thinks of him as a widower. We think of him as a man who abandoned his Carthaginian lover so that he could find a new wife in Italy.”

Adrian said, “‘Widow Dido’ — of Tunis, you said? You make me wonder about that. Dido was of Carthage, not of Tunis.”

“This Tunis, sir, was Carthage in ancient times,” Gonzalo said.

“Was it Carthage?” Adrian asked.

“I assure you that yes, it was Carthage,” Gonzalo said.

Sebastian said, “Actually, Tunis and Carthage were two separate cities that were near each other. After Carthage fell to the Romans, Tunis became the dominant city in the area. Gonzalo has made quite a mistake. According to mythology, the miraculous harp of Amphion raised the walls of the Greek city Thebes. Gonzalo’s mistaken words

have raised not just the walls of a city — where it does not belong — but all the houses of the city, too.”

“What impossible matter will he easily accomplish next?” Antonio asked.

Sebastian replied, “I think he will carry this island home in his pocket and give it to his son and say that it is an apple.”

“And, after sowing its seeds in the sea, he will bring forth more islands,” Antonio said.

“Yes, indeed,” Gonzalo said, referring to his — incorrect — assertion that Tunis was Carthage in ancient times.

“Yes, indeed, he will,” Antonio said, referring to his and Sebastian’s joke that Gonzalo would carry the island home in his pocket, say that the island was an apple, and use its seeds to create more islands.

Gonzalo still wanted to cheer up King Alonso, to whom he said, “Sir, we were saying that our garments seem now to be as fresh as when we were at Tunis at the marriage of your daughter, who is now Queen.”

Antonio said, “She is the most remarkable and most beautiful Queen who ever came there.”

“Except, of course, for widow Dido,” Sebastian said.

“Yes, widow Dido,” Antonio said. “Of course, widow Dido.”

Gonzalo asked King Alonso, “Is not, sir, my jacket as fresh as the first day I wore it? I mean, in a way.”

“That word ‘way’ was well chosen,” Antonio said. “He weighed well his choice of words.”

Gonzalo said, “I wore it at your daughter’s wedding.”

King Alonso was much annoyed and said to Gonzalo, “You cram these words into my ears against my will. I have no stomach for your words. I wish that I had never married my daughter to a King in North Africa! Because I did that, I have lost my son, who has drowned. He is lost to me, and I believe that my daughter is lost to me as well. She is so far from Italy now that I shall never see her again. As for my son — who would have had power in both Naples and Milan — what strange fish are eating my son’s flesh?”

Gonzalo said, “Sir, your son may still be alive. I saw him beat the waves under him and ride upon their backs; he treaded the water, whose hatred he flung aside, and breasted the most swollen waves that came to him. Your son seemed to ride the waves. His bold head he kept above the contentious waves, and with his strong arms he oared himself with lusty strokes to the shore. The bottom of the shore’s bank had been worn away by waves so that the bank seemed to lean over to welcome him. I do not doubt that your son reached land safely.”

“No, no, he’s dead and gone,” King Alonso said.

Sebastian and Antonio resented the situation they were in; that is one reason why they had been so cynical and mocking in their conversation. Now Sebastian’s resentment came pouring forth.

Sebastian, who was King Alonso’s brother, said to him, “Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss of your son. You would not bless our Europe with your daughter by marrying her to a European King; instead, you preferred to lose your daughter by marrying her to an African King. At best, she has been banished from your eyes — you will never see her again. Your eyes have reason to grieve both for your daughter and for your son.”

“Please — shut up,” King Alonso said.

Sebastian continued, “All of us kneeled before you and begged you to marry your daughter to a European King. Your daughter — fair soul — herself wavered over what to do: Should she rebel against a marriage she loathed or be an obedient daughter and marry the African King you chose for her? We have lost your son, I am afraid, forever. Because of this marriage you arranged, Milan and Naples have more widows in them than we will bring men — the survivors — home to comfort them. Yes, we will return — eventually — to Milan and Naples, but the rest of your fleet has been lost and the men in those ships drowned. The blame for all of this loss of life is yours.”

“Also mine is the dearest of the loss of life — the loss of life of my son,” King Alonso replied.

Gonzalo said, “Lord Sebastian, the truth you speak lacks gentleness. This is not the right time to speak these words. You are rubbing the sore and making it hurt when you ought to be bringing bandages and stopping the pain.”

“Very well,” Sebastian said. “I will stop.”

Antonio said, “Gonzalo speaks like a doctor.”

Gonzalo said, “King Alonso, when you are in a bad mood, it affects all of us. Foul weather is inside us all, good sir, when you are cloudy.”

“Foul weather?” Sebastian said.

“Very foul,” Antonio said.

Gonzalo said, “If I were able to colonize this island, King Alonso —”

“He would sow it with the seeds of nettles,” Antonio said.

“Or other kinds of weeds,” Sebastian said.

Gonzalo finished, “— and were the King of this island, do

you know what would I do?"

"Stay sober because of lack of wine," Sebastian said.

Gonzalo said, "In my perfect colony, I would do the opposite of what is expected in all things. I would have no business trade, no judges, no education, no riches, no poverty, no servants, no contracts, no inheritances, no boundaries or division of land, no tillage, no vineyards, no use of metal, no corn, no wine, no oil, and no work. All men would be idle, and all women, too. The women would be innocent and pure. I would have no Kings —"

Sebastian said, "Yet he would be King of the island."

Antonio added, "What he said at the beginning, he has forgotten at the end."

Gonzalo continued, "Nature would produce all things for the use of everybody without human sweat or work. I would not have treason, crime, swords, pikes, knives, guns, or any kind of instrument of war. Nature would bring forth, by itself with no help from humans, everything in abundance to feed my innocent people."

Sebastian asked, "Would there be no marriage among his subjects?"

"Idleness is the nurse of lechery," Antonio said. "All of his subjects would be idle, so they would all be whores and knaves. Besides, marriage is a contract, and he would have no contracts on his island."

Gonzalo summarized his description of his perfect commonwealth, "I would with such perfection govern, sir, that life in my commonwealth would excel life during the Golden Age."

Sebastian exclaimed, "God save his majesty!"

“Long live Gonzalo!” Antonio exclaimed.

Gonzalo said, “And —” But becoming aware that King Alonso was not paying attention, he asked, “Are you listening to me, sir?”

“Please, talk to me no longer,” King Alonso said. “You are talking nonsense.”

“Your Highness is correct,” Gonzalo said. “I have been saying these things to amuse these gentlemen, Antonio and Sebastian, who are of such sensitive and nimble lungs that they always are accustomed to laugh at nothing.”

Antonio said, “It was you we laughed at.”

Gonzalo replied, “I am a man who in this kind of merry fooling is nothing to you; therefore, you may continue as you are accustomed to act and laugh at nothing still.”

“What a blow did Gonzalo give!” Antonio said.

“Yes — if it had not fallen flat,” Sebastian said. “It is like a blow given with a flat side of a metal sword. It is a supposedly cutting remark that does not cut.”

“You are gentlemen of brave mettle,” Gonzalo said. “You would steal the Moon except that she outsmarts you by constantly changing and making you insane.”

Ariel, who was invisible, now walked up to the men and played solemn music.

“We would steal the Moon,” Sebastian said, “and use its light as a lantern to hunt birds at night.”

Antonio said, “Gonzalo, don’t be angry.”

“No, I will not, I promise you,” Gonzalo, who was angry, said. “I will not risk my good reputation for discretion for so weak a reason. Will you laugh me to sleep? I am getting

very drowsy.”

Antonio replied, “Go to sleep, and listen to our laughter.”

Ariel’s task was to use music to make some of the men fall asleep.

Everyone except King Alonso, Antonio, and Sebastian fell asleep.

King Alonso said, “I am surprised that they all fell asleep so quickly! I wish that I could go to sleep and stop thinking my sad thoughts. I do feel drowsy.”

Sebastian said, “Please, sir, do not fight against sleep, which seldom visits sorrowing people. When sleep comes to a mourning person, it comforts that person.”

Antonio said, “We two, my Lord, will guard you while you sleep. We will make sure that you are safe.”

“Thank you,” King Alonso said. “I am amazingly sleepy.”

King Alonso slept, and Ariel stopped playing music and left.

The only two men left awake were Sebastian, who was King Alonso’s brother, and Antonio, who had betrayed Prospero, who was his brother, and become Duke of Milan.

“What a strange drowsiness possesses them!” Sebastian marveled.

“The climate makes them sleep,” Antonio said.

“If that is true, then why aren’t we sleepy? I am not at all sleepy.”

“Neither am I,” Antonio said. “I am wide awake. They fell asleep all at the same time, as if they — or someone — had planned it. They fell to the ground as if they had been hit by

lightning. What might, worthy Sebastian ... oh, what might come from this ... I will say no more ... and yet I think I see in your face that which you should be ... opportunity is knocking for you, and my strong imagination sees a crown dropping upon your head.”

Antonio had gotten an important title through treachery, so why shouldn't Sebastian?

“Are you awake or dreaming?” Sebastian asked.

“Can't you hear me speak?”

“I can,” Sebastian replied, “but you certainly speak a sleepy, dreamlike language, and you are speaking as if you were asleep. What is it that you said? Whatever it was, you are experiencing a strange repose. You are asleep with your eyes wide open. You are standing, speaking, and moving, and yet you are fast asleep.”

“Noble Sebastian, you are letting your fortune sleep — or, more accurately, you are letting it die. You are awake, but your eyes are closed.”

Sebastian replied, “Antonio, you are snoring articulately — your snores have meaning.”

“I am more serious than I customarily am,” Antonio said. “You must be very serious, too, if you want to heed me. If you listen to me and do what I tell you to do, you will become much more powerful than you are now. You can jump over Alonso, Ferdinand, and Claribel to become the King of Naples.”

“I am waiting for you to explain things more clearly,” Sebastian said. “It is as if I am water that stands still. I am not inclined to move one way or another.”

“I'll teach you how to flow,” Antonio said.

“Do so,” Sebastian said. “As a younger brother, I have been forced to be idle and so I know how to ebb. I decline, rather than increase. Younger brothers inherit little.”

“Your words mock ambition, but I know that you are ambitious,” Antonio said. “The more you mock ambition, the more you cherish it. Ebbing men, indeed, decline and stay at the bottom because of their fear or sloth. To change your fortune and cease to be a declining man, you must not be afraid or indolent.”

“Please, say more,” Sebastian said. “Your eyes and face tell me that you have something important to say, but they also tell me that it takes an effort to openly and clearly say it.”

“Let me speak openly and clearly,” Antonio replied.

He pointed to Gonzalo and said, “Although this Lord of weak memory, who shall be little remembered after he has been buried, has almost persuaded King Alonso that Ferdinand, his son, is still alive — Gonzalo is a spirit of persuasion because his job is to offer advice — it is as impossible for Ferdinand to still be alive as it is that Gonzalo here is awake and swimming.”

“Ferdinand has definitely drowned,” Sebastian said. “It is impossible for him to have safely reached this island. There is no hope that he safely reached land.”

“Out of that ‘no hope’ comes great hope for you! No hope that Ferdinand is alive is so high a hope that you can become King of Naples that even the most ambitious man cannot hope for more without doubting that what it hopes for is unreal. Do you really believe — as do I — that Ferdinand has drowned?”

“He is dead and gone,” Sebastian said.

“Then, tell me, who is the next heir of the King of Naples?”

“Claribel.”

“Claribel is Queen of Tunis,” Antonio said. “She dwells in a place that is 30 miles more than the journey of a lifetime. She can receive no news from Naples unless the Sun itself carries a letter to her — the Man in the Moon is too slow because the Moon takes a month rather than a day to complete its cycle. Any letter she receives will be written when a baby boy is born and delivered when the boy begins to shave his beard. Who will undertake to deliver that letter? Claribel is the woman from whom we were sailing when we were swallowed by the sea, though some of us were cast up on shore because we are destined to perform an act whose prologue is the recent past: the tempest and the shipwreck. The future is the part that you and I will play.”

Antonio had exaggerated the distance between Tunis and Naples. In reality, 300 miles lay between the two cities, and merchant ships regularly engaged in trade between Italy and North Africa.

“What stuff and nonsense is this! What are you saying?” Sebastian said. “It is true that my brother’s daughter is the Queen of Tunis; she is also the heir of the King of Naples. It is also true that between Tunis and Naples is a great space.”

“It is a space whose every inch seems to cry out, ‘How can Claribel travel back to Naples? Let her stay in Tunis, and let Sebastian wake himself up and enjoy his good fortune.’ For a moment, imagine that these sleeping men had been seized by death — they would be no worser off than they are now. Other people can rule Naples as well as this King who sleeps. Other Lords can prate as amply and unnecessarily as this Gonzalo; I myself could make a jackdaw chatter as profoundly as Gonzalo. I wish that you thought the way that I do! The sleep of these men can lead

to your advancement — you can become King of Naples! Do you understand me?”

“I think I do,” Sebastian said.

“And what do you think about your opportunity? Are you willing to take action to make your fortune?”

“I remember that you supplanted your brother: Prospero. You drove him out of Milan and seized his title: Duke of Milan.”

“True,” Antonio said, “and look how well my garments sit upon me; they fit me much better than before. When my brother was Duke of Milan, his servants were my fellows; now they are my servants.”

“What about your conscience?”

“What about it?” Antonio said. “If my conscience were a sore on my heel, it would make me wear soft slippers, but my conscience does not bother me. If twenty consciences lay between me and my becoming Duke of Milan, all twenty consciences would have to be coated with sugar and then softened by compassion before they would bother me. Here in front of you lies your brother; he is no better than the earth he lies upon. We can get rid of the people who stand in your way. I, using only three inches of the obedient steel of my sword, can put your brother at everlasting rest. You can do similarly to this ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence, this Gonzalo. As for the other Lords, they will do and say whatever we tell them to do and say as eagerly as a cat laps up milk. They will agree to anything we propose — they will say that the time is whatever we say it is.”

Sebastian made up his mind to murder his brother.

He said to Antonio, “Your biography, my friend, shall be my precedent. The way that you became Duke of Milan is

the way that I will become King of Naples. Draw your sword. With one stroke, you will kill my brother. Your reward will be that you and Milan will no longer have to pay tribute to the King of Naples and that I the new King will be your ally.”

“Let us draw our swords together, and when I rear my hand and sword, you do the same thing. I will kill your brother the King, and you will kill Gonzalo.”

They drew their swords, but Sebastian said, “Just a moment. I have something to say.”

As Sebastian and Antonio talked quietly, Ariel flew to the group of men. He said over the sleeping Gonzalo, “Prospero, my master, has used magic to foresee the danger that you, his friend, are in. He has sent me forth — because otherwise his plan will fail — to keep you and the King of Naples alive.”

Ariel sang this song in Gonzalo’s ear:

“While you here do snoring lie,

“Open-eyed conspiracy

“His opportunity does take.

“If for your life you have a care,

“Shake off slumber, and beware:

“Awake, awake!”

Antonio said, “Let us both act quickly.”

Gonzalo — the only one who could hear Ariel, and even he could not hear Ariel distinctly — woke up, saw Sebastian and Antonio with their drawn swords, shook the King to wake him, and shouted, “Now, good angels preserve the King!”

King Alonso woke up and asked Sebastian and Antonio, “What is going on? Why have you drawn your swords? Why do you look so frightened?”

Gonzalo asked, “What’s the matter?”

Sebastian thought quickly and then lied to his brother, the King, “While we stood here and guarded you as you slept, just now we heard a loud burst of bellowing like bulls, or rather lions. Didn’t it wake you? The bellowing struck my ears most terribly.”

“I heard nothing,” King Alonso said.

Antonio said, “Oh, it was a din to frighten a monster’s ears or to make the earth tremble like an earthquake! Surely, it was the roar of a whole herd of lions.”

“Did you hear this roaring, Gonzalo?”

“Upon my honor, sir, I heard a humming, and that a strange humming, too, which woke me,” Gonzalo said. “As my eyes opened and I saw their weapons drawn, I shook you, sir, and cried out. There was a noise — that is certain. It is best that we stay upon our guard, or that we leave this place. Let’s draw our weapons.”

King Alonso said, “Lead us away from this ground, and let’s make a further search for my poor son, in case he is still alive.”

“May Heaven protect him and keep him away from these beasts!” Gonzalo said. “I am sure that your son is on the island.”

“Lead us away from here,” King Alonso said again.

As they left, Ariel thought, *Prospero, who is my Lord, shall know what I have done. So, King Alonso, go safely on to seek your son.*

Caliban was carrying wood on another part of the island when he heard thunder.

“May all the infections that the Sun sucks up from bogs, waterlands, and swamps fall on Prospero and make him inch by inch a walking disease! I know his spirits hear me, and yet I must curse him. But his spirits will not torment me, frighten me with goblins that have assumed the form of hedgehogs, throw me in the mire, or lead me, like a torch, in the dark out of my way, unless Prospero orders them to. Still, for my every trifling offense Prospero sets them upon me. Sometime the spirits are like apes that make faces and chatter at me and then bite me. Sometimes the spirits are like porcupines that lie in my way as I walk barefooted. Sometimes the spirits are like snakes that wind themselves around me and hiss at me with their cloven tongues and drive me insane.”

Caliban saw Trinculo, the jester of King Alonso, walking toward him.

Caliban said, “Look, now, look! Here comes one of Prospero’s spirits to torment me because I am bringing in this wood so slowly. I will lie flat on the ground and cover myself with my cloak. Perhaps the spirit will not see and bother me.”

Trinculo said, “Here I see neither bush nor shrub that will shelter me from bad weather, and I know that another storm is brewing. I hear the storm sing in the wind. That black cloud yonder — it’s huge — looks like a foul bottle that would like to bombard me with its liquid or like a cannon that would like to bombard me with its hail of cannonballs. If this storm should thunder the way it did before, I don’t know where to hide my head. That cloud cannot do otherwise but shed rain by pailfuls.”

Trinculo looked down, saw Caliban, and said, “What have we here? Is it a man or a fish? Is it dead or alive? It is a fish. It smells like a fish; it has a very ancient and fish-like smell — a smell not of the freshest fish. It is a strange fish! Were I in England now, as once I was, and I had this fish painted on a sign and I exhibited this fish, every fool on holiday there would pay me a piece of silver to see this fish. In England, this monster would make a man monetarily wealthy. In fact, in England this fish might be mistaken for a man — any strange beast there makes a man. Although many Englishmen will not give a dime in charity to relieve a lame beggar, they will pay out ten times as much to see a dead Indian.”

Trinculo looked closely at Caliban and said, “This fish has legs like a man, and this fish’s fins are like arms!”

He touched Caliban and said, “He is warm! I think I was mistaken. This is no fish; instead, this is an islander who was recently hit by lightning.”

Thunder sounded.

Trinculo said, “The storm has come again! My best course of action is to creep under this islander’s cloak; no other shelter is available. Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows. I will here shroud myself with this cloak until the dregs of the storm have passed over me.”

Stephano, the King of Naples’ butler, walked toward Caliban and Trinculo. He had a bottle of wine in his hand, and he was drunk.

He sang this song:

“I shall go no more to sea, to sea,

“Here shall I die ashore —”

He stopped and then said, “This is a very scurvy tune to

sing at a man's funeral. Well, this bottle is my comfort."

He lifted the bottle and drank from it, and then he continued to sing:

"The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I,

"The gunner and his mate

"Loved Mall, Meg, and Marian and Margery,

"But none of us cared for Kate;

"For she had a tongue with a tang,

"Would cry to a sailor, 'Go hang!'

"She loved not the smell of tar or of pitch,

"Yet a tailor might scratch her wherever she itched.

"Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!"

He stopped singing and then said, "A tailor might scratch her wherever she itched' — she did not like real men such as sailors but instead preferred effeminate men such as tailors. Well, as long as her sexual itch gets scratched, she's happy. This is a scurvy tune, too, but this bottle is my comfort."

He drank again.

Trinculo had heard Stephano's voice. He was afraid that it was the voice of a devil, and so he trembled. This frightened Caliban, who thought that a spirit was tormenting him and so moaned, "Do not torment me! Please!"

Hearing Caliban, Stephano looked down, saw the cloak (from which four legs were protruding), and said, "What's the matter? Have we devils here? Are you devils playing tricks on me by showing me savages and men of the West

Indies? I have not escaped drowning to be afraid now of your four legs. An old expression states this: As good a man as ever went on four legs cannot make him retreat. It shall continue to be stated as long as Stephano breathes through his nostrils. I am afraid of no man, including no four-legged man.”

Trinculo continued to tremble, and Caliban moaned, “The spirit torments me!”

Stephano saw the trembling and said, “This is some monster of the island with four legs, who is, I believe, shivering from a fever. He speaks English, but where the devil did he learn our language? I will give him some relief, if only because he speaks English. If I can cure him and tame him and get to Naples with him, I will give him as a present — provided I receive a royal reward — to any emperor who has ever trod on shoes made of leather.”

Caliban said, “Do not torment me, please. I’ll bring my wood home faster.”

Stephano said, “He’s having a fit now and does not talk like a wise man. He shall drink wine from my bottle. If he has never drunk wine before, it is likely to stop his fit. If I can cure him of his fever and keep him tame, I will not sell him cheaply — too much money will not be enough. Whoever wants to buy him shall pay for him — and pay well.”

Caliban said, “So far you have hurt me only a little, but I know that you will hurt me more. I can tell by your trembling that Prospero is giving you orders to hurt me.”

Stephano uncovered Caliban’s head and said, “Come on and open your mouth. I have something that will give you language, cat. You know the old proverb: Ale will make a cat speak. Open your mouth and drink; this will shake your shaking from fever, I can promise you, and it will do that quickly and thoroughly.”

Caliban drank, but never having tasted wine before, it tasted strange to him and he spit it out.

Stephano said, "You don't know who your friends are. Open your mouth again."

Trinculo said, "I should know that voice. I recognize it. It belongs to — but he drowned, and this is a devil who is speaking! Help me, God!"

"Four legs and two voices: a most cunningly made monster!" Stephano said. "The purpose of his forward voice is to speak well of his friend; the purpose of his backward voice is to utter foul and insulting speeches. He resembles the figure of Fame. If all the wine in my bottle will cure him, I will cure his illness. Amen! I will pour some wine in your other mouth."

"Stephano!" Trinculo cried.

"Does your other mouth call me?" Stephano said. "Mercy, mercy! This is a devil, and no monster. I will leave him; I have no long spoon, and he who will eat with the devil must have a long spoon."

"Stephano!" Trinculo shouted. "If you are Stephano, touch me to show me that you are not a devil and then speak to me, for I am Trinculo — don't be afraid. I am your good friend Trinculo."

"If you are Trinculo, come forth," Stephano said. "I will pull this monster's lesser legs. If any of this monster's four legs are Trinculo's legs, these are they."

He pulled Trinculo out from underneath Caliban's cloak — and from between Caliban's legs — and said, "You really are Trinculo indeed! How did you come to be a turd of this Mooncalf? Can this Mooncalf shit Trinculos?"

Mooncalves are misshapen monstrosities. The Moon is

sometimes thought to be not always a benign influence.

Trinculo replied, "I thought that he was an islander who was killed by a thunderbolt. But you are not drowned, Stephano? I hope that you are not drowned. And has the storm blown over us? I hid myself under the dead Mooncalf's cloak because I was afraid of the storm. But you are alive, Stephano. Two Neapolitans have escaped drowning!"

Trinculo danced around Stephano with happiness and jostled him.

"Please, do not bump into me," Stephano said. "My stomach is not settled."

"These are fine things, if they are not spirits. That is a splendid god and he carries celestial liquor," Caliban said to himself. "I will kneel to him."

Caliban's first taste of wine had not been Heavenly to him, but a few swallows had made him like wine.

Stephano asked Trinculo, "How did you escape? How did you come to be here? Swear by this bottle that you will truly tell me how you came to be here. I myself escaped upon a barrel of sack — Spanish Canary wine — that the sailors heaved overboard. I swear that by this bottle, which I made from the bark of a tree with my own hands after I was cast ashore."

"I'll swear upon that bottle to be your true subject," Caliban said. "The liquor in that bottle is not Earthly."

Stephano ignored Caliban and said to Trinculo, "Here. Take the bottle. Swear upon it to tell me truly how you escaped being drowned."

"I swam ashore, man, like a duck," Trinculo said. "I can swim like a duck — I will swear to that."

“Here, kiss the book,” Stephano said.

People sometimes kiss the book — the Bible — to confirm an oath. Stephano had no Bible, but he did have a bottle of wine. By ‘kiss the book,’ he meant for Trinculo to confirm his oath by taking a drink of wine from the bottle.

Stephano added, “Though you can swim like a duck, you look like a goose.”

Trinculo drank some wine, and then he asked, “Oh, Stephano, do you have any more of this?”

“I have a whole barrel of it,” Stephano said. “My wine cellar is in a rocky cave by the seaside — that is where I hid my wine.”

He then said to Caliban, “How are you, Mooncalf! Are you recovering from your illness?”

“Did you drop from the Heavens?” Caliban asked.

“I dropped from the Moon, I assure you,” Stephano joked. “Once upon a time, I was the Man in the Moon.”

Caliban replied, “I have seen you on the Moon, and I do adore you. My female teacher showed me you and your dog and your bush.”

Miranda had taught Caliban the story about how the man became the Man in the Moon. He, accompanied by his dog, was gathering firewood — dry bushes — on Sunday. This was a sin, and as punishment for that sin, he, his dog, and the wood he had gathered were placed on the Moon.

“Come, swear to that,” Stephano said, “Kiss the book. Don’t worry. I will furnish it soon with new contents. Swear on the book.”

Trinculo said, “In this good light provided by the Sun, I can see the monster clearly, and I can see that he is not a deep

thinker — this is a simple-minded monster. I cannot believe that I was afraid of him! He is a very weak-in-mind monster! He believed that you are the Man in the Moon! He is a very poor and credulous monster!”

Caliban drank, and Trinculo said, “Well done! That was a mighty long drink, monster!”

Caliban said to Stephano, “I will show you every fertile inch of the island, and I will kiss your foot. Please, be my god.”

“He is a very perfidious and drunken monster! When his god is asleep, he will steal his wine.”

“I will kiss your foot,” Caliban said to Stephano. “I will swear to be your subject.”

“Come on then,” Stephano said. “Get down on your knees, and swear.”

Trinculo said, “I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed monster. He is a most scurvy monster! I could find in my heart to beat him —”

Stephano gave Caliban the bottle and said to him, “Come, kiss the bottle.”

“— except that the poor monster is drunk. He is an abominable monster!”

Books had already mastered Caliban: Prospero’s books of magic. Now he was being mastered by another “book”: Stephano’s bottle of wine.

Caliban said to Stephano, “I will show you the best springs; I will pluck berries for you. I will fish for you and I will get firewood for you. A plague upon the tyrant whom I serve! I will carry no more sticks to him, but instead I will follow you, you wondrous man.”

“He is a most ridiculous monster — he is calling a poor drunkard ‘wondrous’!” Trinculo said.

“Please,” Caliban said, “let me bring you where crabs shed their shells and grow new ones. I with my long nails will dig peanuts for you. I will show you a jay’s nest and I will teach you how to snare the nimble marmoset monkey. I will lead you to clustering hazelnuts, and sometimes I will get for you young birds that nest in the rocks. Will you go with me?”

“Yes,” Stephano said. “Lead the way without any more talking.” He added, “Trinculo, since the King and all the people we traveled with have drowned, we will inherit this island.”

Stephano said to Caliban, “Carry my bottle.”

Caliban sang drunkenly, “*Farewell, master; farewell, farewell!*”

Trinculo said, “This is a howling monster; he is a drunken monster!”

Caliban sang, “*No more dams I’ll make for catching fish*

“*Nor fetch in firewood*

“*On request.*

“*Nor scrape wooden platters, nor wash dishes.*

“*’Ban, ’ban, Ca-Caliban*

“*Has a new master. My old master can get a new man.*

“*Freedom, hey-day! Hey-day, freedom!*

“*Freedom, hey-day, freedom!*”

Stephano said, “Oh, fine monster! Lead the way!”

Stephano and Trinculo followed Caliban.

CHAPTER 3 (The Tempest)

— 3.1 —

Ferdinand was busy doing the task that Prospero had given to him: moving pieces of logs, which would be used for firewood.

He put down the wood he was carrying and said to himself, “I am a nobleman, and noblemen are not supposed to do hard physical labor. Some jobs take effort, but the delight we get from them outweighs the effort. Some kinds of base jobs are nobly undertaken; even the poorest jobs can have rich ends. Although I am a nobleman, my job now is carrying wood. This mean task would be as wearisome to me as it is odious, except that the young woman whom I serve gives life to what is dead and turns my labors into pleasures. Oh, she is ten times gentler in temper than her father is sour in temper — and he is composed of harshness. My job is to move thousands of pieces of logs and pile them up — Prospero has harshly ordered me to do this job. The sweet young woman whom I just met but whom I love weeps when she sees me work, and she says that such a demeaning task was never performed by such a person as I am. But I had better get back to work and stop daydreaming.”

He picked up the wood and said, “These sweet thoughts refresh me as I work. Still, although my thoughts are sweet while I work, they are even sweeter and come to me in greater number when I take a break from work.”

Miranda now walked up to Ferdinand. Behind her was Prospero. He was invisible, and neither Miranda nor Ferdinand knew that he was present.

Miranda said to Ferdinand, “Please, do not work so hard. I

wish that the lightning had burned up those pieces of logs that my father ordered you to pile up! Please, set the wood down and rest. When this wood burns, the resin that seeps out will be tears shed in repentance for having wearied you. My father is hard at study; please, rest for a while. He will be busy for the next three hours.”

“Dear young woman,” Ferdinand said, “the Sun will set before I shall finish the job that your father ordered me to do.”

“If you’ll sit down,” Miranda said, “I’ll carry your wood for you for a while. Please, give me that wood. I will carry it to the pile.”

“No, precious lady,” Ferdinand said. “I prefer to crack my sinews and break my back rather than allow you to undergo such dishonor while I lazily sit and watch you.”

Miranda replied, “This work is as appropriate for me as it is for you, and I would do it with much more ease because I want to help you and you would prefer not to do demeaning work.”

Prospero thought, *Poor lass, if love is a disease, you have been infected! This visit of yours to Ferdinand shows it.*

“You look tired,” Miranda said to Ferdinand.

“No, noble lady. It is fresh morning with me when you are nearby at night. I do ask you — mainly so that I can mention you in my prayers — what is your name?”

“Miranda — oh, my father told me not to tell you my name!”

“Admired Miranda! ‘Miranda’ means ‘to be admired.’ Indeed, you are the top of admiration! You are worth what is most valuable to the world! Very many ladies I have eyed with highest approval, and many a time the harmony

of their tongues has brought into bondage my too attentive ear. I have liked several women for their various virtues, but never has any of these women had a perfect soul. Always some defect in her quarreled with the noblest virtue she had and defeated it. But you, Miranda, you are so perfect and so peerless — you are created out of the best qualities of every created being!”

“I have never known a woman, and I can remember no woman’s face except for my own, which I see in the mirror. Nor have I seen any men except for you, good friend, and my dear father. What people elsewhere look like I do not know, but I swear by my modesty and my chastity, which are the best jewels in my dowry, that I do not wish any companion in the world but you, and I cannot even imagine a man, besides yourself, whom I would like. But I prattle too wildly and I forget what my father has ordered me not to say and do.”

“I am a Prince, Miranda,” Ferdinand said. “I think, in fact, that I am now a King although I would prefer my father to still be alive and still be King! Except that I am forced by your father’s magic to endure this slavery of carrying wood, I would tolerate it no more than I would tolerate a fly’s laying its eggs in my mouth the way a flesh-fly lays its eggs on rotten meat. Hear me speak from my soul: The very instant that I saw you, my heart flew to serve you and be your slave. For your sake, I endure patiently this work of carrying wood.”

“Do you love me?” Miranda asked.

“May Heaven and Earth listen to what I say and give me good fortune if I speak truly! If I lie, then invert whatever good should come to me and make it evil! I love, prize, and honor you more than everything else in this world.”

Miranda cried and said, “I am a fool to weep because of

what makes me happy.”

Prospero said to himself, “This is a beautiful encounter of two exceptional loves. May the Heavens rain grace on the love that is developing between them!”

“Why are you crying?” Ferdinand asked.

Miranda replied, “I am crying because I am not worthy to give you what I want to give you, and because I am unworthy to take what I am dying to have. But I am speaking in riddles: All the more it seeks to hide itself, the bigger bulk it shows.”

Prospero thought, *My daughter’s words have sexual meanings. She has grown up. All the more a penis seeks to hide itself in a vagina, the bigger bulk it shows.*

Miranda continued, “Go away, bashful cunning! Let plain and holy innocence give me words and allow me to speak openly! I am your wife, if you will marry me; if you will not marry me, I will die your maiden. You may keep me from being your wife, but I will be your servant, whether or not you want me to be.”

“You may command me, lady, and I kneel humbly before you.”

“You will be my husband, then?” Miranda asked.

“Yes, and with a heart as eager as a slave is to be free. Take my hand.”

They held hands.

“My heart is also as eager to marry you,” Miranda said. “And now farewell until half an hour from now.”

“A thousand thousand farewells!” Ferdinand said.

Ferdinand and Miranda left in different directions.

Prospero said to himself, “I cannot be as glad of this as they are — they were taken by surprise at their falling in love, but I was expecting it. Still, nothing can give me greater pleasure than this. I will go to my magic books, for before supertime I must perform many things related to this.”

— 3.2 —

On another part of the island, Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo were still talking and drinking.

“Don’t criticize me,” Stephano said to Trinculo, who had wanted him to moderate his drinking. “When the barrel of wine is empty, we will drink water, but not a drop before. Therefore, bear up, stand firm, and lift the bottle, and then board ’em and attack — drink! Servant-monster, drink to me.”

“Servant-monster!” Trinculo said. “He is the folly of this island! Only five people are on this island; we are three of them. If the other two have drunken brains like ours, this island is in a terrible state and its inhabitants are in a tottering state.”

“Drink, servant-monster, when I tell you to,” Stephano said. “Your eyes are almost drunkenly set in your head.”

“Where else should his eyes be set?” Trinculo said. “He would be a splendid monster, indeed, if they were set in his tail.”

“My man-monster has drowned his tongue with wine,” Stephano said, “As for me, the sea cannot drown me. I swam, before I could reach the shore, thirty-five leagues — around 100 miles — by fits and starts.”

Trinculo thought, *That may be a slight exaggeration.*

Stephano said to Caliban, “By Heaven, you will be my military lieutenant, monster, or my standard-bearer.”

Trinculo said, "You better make him your lieutenant. Because of the wine he has drunk, he is not capable of standing."

Trinculo was punning. An erection is one kind of standing, and as all know, alcohol increases desire but takes away performance.

He added, "But if you enlist him as your lieutenant, he will list to one side like a damaged ship."

Stephano said, "We will not run away from the enemy, Monsieur Monster."

"Nor go — walk — either," Trinculo said, "but you'll lie like dogs and yet say nothing."

"Mooncalf, speak once in your life," Stephano said, "if you are a good Mooncalf."

"How are you, sir?" Caliban said. "Let me lick your shoe. I will not serve Trinculo; he's not valiant."

"You lie, most ignorant monster," Trinculo said. "I am drunk enough to shove a constable. Why, you debauched fish, has ever a man been a coward who has drunk as much wine as I have drunk today? Why are you telling a monstrous lie, you who are only half a monster? Which of us is valiant? I drink like an entire fish, but you are only half a fish."

"Listen at how he mocks me!" Caliban said to Stephano. "Will you let him mock me, my Lord?"

"He called Stephano 'Lord'!" Trinculo said. "I am amazed that a monster should be such a natural fool! Monsters are unnatural!"

"Listen! He mocked me again!" Caliban complained. "Please bite him to death."

“Trinculo, keep a civil tongue in your head,” Stephano said. “If you mutiny against me, I will hang you from the nearest tree! The poor monster is my subject, and he shall not suffer indignity.”

“I thank my noble Lord,” Caliban said. “Will you be pleased to listen once again to the petition I made to you?”

Petitions are made to Princes; petitions often ask for redress of wrongs. Stephano and Caliban now began to act as if they were in a royal court and Stephano was a Prince.

Stephano said, “Yes, I will. Kneel before me, and repeat your petition. I will stand up, and so will Trinculo.”

Ariel, invisible, now came near the three drunks. He stood behind Trinculo, who was a short distance from Caliban and Stephano.

Caliban said to Stephano, “As I told you before, I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, who by his cunning has cheated me out of this island.”

“You lie!” Ariel said.

Because Ariel was standing behind Trinculo — who could not hear Ariel, who had the power of making sounds, including music, audible only to the people he chose to hear them — and because Ariel was invisible, Caliban and Stephano assumed that Trinculo had said, “You lie!”

Caliban angrily said to Trinculo, “*You* lie, you jesting monkey! I wish my valiant master would destroy you! *I* do not lie.”

Stephano said, “Trinculo, if you trouble him any more as he tells his tale, I swear that I will uproot some of your teeth.”

“Why, I said nothing,” Trinculo protested.

“Be quiet, then, and say no more,” Stephano said.

To Caliban, he added, “Proceed.”

“I say, by sorcery he got this island. From me he got it. If your greatness will get revenge on him for what he did to me — I know that you are valiant enough to do that, but I am not —”

“That’s quite certain,” Stephano said.

Caliban finished, “— you shall be Lord of this island and I will serve you.”

“How can we accomplish that?” Stephano said. “Can you take me to this magician?”

“Yes, my Lord,” Caliban said. “I will take you to him while he is asleep. Then you can hammer a nail into his head.”

Ariel said, “You lie! You cannot do that!”

Again, Caliban and Stephano assumed that Trinculo the jester had spoken.

“What a pied ninny is this!” Caliban said, referring to the jester’s clothing made of patches of different colors — a style called pied or motley. You scurvy patch!”

Caliban was capable — occasionally — of wit. The word “patch” referred to the jester’s clothing made of patches — “patch” also meant “fool, clown, simpleton,” words that described Trinculo well. In fact, events would show that Caliban was more intelligent than either Trinculo or Stephano.

Caliban said to Stephano, “I do beg your greatness, give this fool blows and take his bottle from him. When his bottle is gone, he shall drink nothing but brine water because I will not show him where the springs of fresh water are.”

“Trinculo, run into no further danger,” Stephano, who was

a bit of a bully, said. “Interrupt the monster one word further, and, by this hand, I will fire my mercy the way we fire a servant and turn it out of doors, and I will treat you like a salted fish — I will beat you in order to tenderize you.”

“Why, what did I do?” Trinculo complained. “I did nothing. I’ll go farther away from you.”

Stephano asked him, “Didn’t you say that the monster lied?”

Ariel said, “You lie!”

“I lie?” Stephano said. “Do I now? Take that.”

He hit Trinculo and said, “If you like this, then tell me once more that I lied.”

“I did not call you a liar,” Trinculo protested. “Are you out of your mind? Are you deaf? A pox on your bottle! Wine and drinking can make people act like you! May your monster catch the plague, and may the devil take your fingers!”

Caliban laughed at Trinculo’s discomfort.

“Now, monster, go forward with your tale,” Stephano said.

He said to Trinculo, “Please, stand farther away.”

“Beat him up,” Caliban said. “After a little while, I’ll beat him, too.”

“Stand farther away,” Stephano said to Trinculo. To Caliban, he said, “Come on, proceed. Tell me what you have to tell me.”

“Why, as I told you,” Caliban said, “it is a custom with him to sleep in the afternoon. At that time, you can brain him, after you have seized his magic books, or you can use a

piece of wood to batter his skull in, or you can stab him with a stake. Or you can cut his throat with your knife. Remember first to take his magic books because without them he is only a fool, as I am, and he will not be able to command any spirits — they hate him as deeply as I do. Burn only his books. He has fine furnishings — so he calls them — with which he intends to adorn his house, when he has a proper one. Those fine furnishings will be yours. But even more important is that you can win his daughter, who is beautiful. The magician himself calls her a nonpareil — her beauty is supposed to be without equal. I never have seen a woman except for two: Sycorax, who was my dam, and the magician's daughter, who as far surpasses Sycorax in beauty as the greatest surpasses the least.”

“Is she so splendid a lass?” Stephano asked.

“Yes, Lord,” Caliban replied. “She will look good in your bed — I guarantee it — and she will give birth to splendid children for you.”

Caliban had cleverly pointed out the benefits Stephano would receive if he killed Prospero.

“Monster, I will kill this man,” Stephano said. “His daughter and I will be King and Queen — God save our graces! — and Trinculo and you shall be viceroys.”

He added, “Do you like the plot, Trinculo?”

“Excellently.”

“Let's shake hands,” Stephano said to Trinculo. “I am sorry I hit you, but as long as you are alive, keep a good tongue in your head. Don't insult the monster or me.”

“Within this half hour, the magician will be asleep,” Caliban said. “Will you destroy him then?”

“Yes, on my honor,” Stephano replied.

Ariel thought, *I will tell my master about this plot.*

Caliban said, "You make me happy. I am full of pleasure. Let us be jocund. Will you sing the song that you taught me recently?"

"At your request, monster," Stephano said, "I will do anything within reason. Come on, Trinculo, let us sing."

Stephano and Trinculo sang this song:

"Flout 'em and jeer at 'em

"And jeer at 'em and flout 'em

"Thought is free."

They were drunk and sang poorly, and Caliban complained, "That's not the tune."

Ariel began to play the tune with his small drum and wind instrument.

"What is this sound?" Stephano asked.

"This is the tune of our song, played by the picture of Nobody," Trinculo said.

Ariel was invisible, and so he was Nobody because he had no body.

"If you are a man, show yourself in your true shape," Stephano said. "If you are a devil, then I challenge you to a duel."

Afraid that the devil was willing to accept the invitation to fight a duel, Trinculo said, "Oh, God, forgive me my sins!"

Stephano said, "He who dies pays all debts. I defy you, devil."

Drunk Stephano then realized that he had mixed his words

up. He should have challenged the man to a duel and asked the devil to appear in his true shape. Challenging a devil to a duel is not a good idea.

Stephano cried, “God, have mercy upon us!”

“Are you afraid?” Caliban asked him, thinking that he was afraid of the music.

Not wanting to appear to be a coward in front of Caliban, Stephano replied, “No, monster, not I.”

Not convinced, Caliban replied, “Be not afraid. This island is full of noises, sounds, and sweet airs that give delight and do not hurt. Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum about my ears, and sometimes I hear voices that, if I then had waked after a long sleep, will make me sleep again, and then, as I dreamed, I thought that the clouds would open up and show me riches that were about to drop upon me — when I woke up, I cried because I wanted to dream again.”

“This will prove a splendid kingdom to me, where I shall have my music for free,” Stephano said.

“After Prospero the magician is destroyed,” Caliban said.

“That shall be soon,” Stephano said. “I have not forgotten.”

“The music is going away,” Trinculo said. “Let’s follow it, and afterward kill the magician.”

“Lead, monster; we’ll follow,” Stephano said. “I wish that I could see this musician; he plays well.”

Caliban hung back. He wanted to kill the magician first.

“Are you coming?” Trinculo asked Caliban. He said to Stephano, “I will follow you, Stephano.”

Stephano and Trinculo left. Caliban followed them.

King Alonso, Sebastian, Antonio, Gonzalo, Adrian, Francisco, and others had been walking, searching for King Alonso's son, Ferdinand. Sebastian and Antonio stood at a distance from the other men.

"I can go no further, sir," Gonzalo said. "My old bones ache. Here is a maze trod indeed through straight paths and winding ways. Please, sir, I must rest."

"Old Lord, I cannot blame you for wanting to rest," King Alonso said. "I also am worn with weariness, and my spirits have dulled. Sit down, and rest. Now I will stop hoping that my son is alive; I will no longer try to comfort myself with the thought that he may have survived. No, he did not survive. My son, whom we are searching for, has drowned. The sea mocks our useless search for him on land. Well, I will accept that he is dead."

Antonio whispered to Sebastian, "I am very glad that King Alonso has lost hope that his son is alive. He is depressed and discouraged. Do not, although we failed once to assassinate the King and Gonzalo, give up our plan that you agreed to."

Sebastian whispered back to Antonio, "We will seize by the throat the next opportunity we have to do what we planned."

Antonio whispered back, "Let it be tonight; now they are weary with walking, and they will not, and they cannot, use such vigilance as they do when they are fresh and rested."

Sebastian whispered, "Yes, tonight. We are agreed."

Solemn and strange music began to play, and Prospero, who was invisible, stood on a height, and watched the group of men as strange spirits brought a table and put on it

a banquet as they danced as if to welcome King Alonso and the other men. The spirits gestured to the men to eat the banquet, and then the spirits left although the music continued to play.

“What harmony is this?” King Alonso asked. “My good friends, listen!”

“This is marvelous sweet music!” Gonzalo said.

“May the Heavens give us kind keepers!” King Alonso said. “What were these beings?”

“We have seen a living puppet show,” Sebastian said sarcastically. “Now I will believe that unicorns exist, and I will believe that in Arabia on one tree, the phoenix’ throne, one phoenix is right now reigning there. Only one phoenix exists at a time, and every 500 years it bursts into flame and then is resurrected as a young bird.”

“I will believe in both of those mythological beings,” Antonio said sarcastically, “and if anything else wants to be believed in, then let it come to me, and I will swear that it exists. I believe that travelers never lie, although fools at home condemn them.”

Without sarcasm, Gonzalo said, “If I would report in Naples what I just saw with my own eyes, would the people there believe me? If I would say, I saw such islanders — certainly, this island has inhabitants — who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet you shall find that their manners are better and more charitable than the manners of many — make that most — of our human species.”

Prospero thought, *Honest and old Lord, you have spoken truly because some of you humans present here and now are worse than devils.*

“I cannot stop marveling that such shapes, using gestures

and sounds, are able to express, although they lack the use of speech, a kind of excellent silent communication,” King Alonso said.

Prospero thought, *Keep your praise until the end. You may find that you have not received the welcome that you think you have.*

Francisco said, “They vanished strangely.”

“That does not matter,” Sebastian said, “since they have left their banquet behind. We have good appetites.”

He asked King Alonso, his brother, “Will it please you to eat the banquet that is here?”

Afraid of the strange shapes that had brought the food, King Alonso said, “I will not eat that food.”

Gonzalo advised him, “Truly, sir, you need not fear. When we were boys, who would believe that there were mountain-dwellers dew-lapped like bulls, whose throats had hanging from them wallets of flesh that are also known as goiters? Or who would believe that there existed men whose heads were in their breasts? But now that we are grown up, we find that one in five travelers brings us reports of having seen such people.”

“I will eat some of this food,” King Alonso decided, “even though it may be my last meal. That does not matter since I believe that the best part of my life is over now that my son has died. Brother, and my Lord the Duke of Milan, take the risk and eat, also.”

Thunder sounded and lightning flashed. Ariel, who had changed his shape to that of a Harpy, a bird with the face of a woman, entered with two other spirits in the shape of Harpies. Harpies had befouled the food that Aeneas, the survivor of Troy who carried out his fate of going to Italy

and becoming an important ancestor of the Romans, and his men had prepared on the Island of the Harpies during their wanderings around the Mediterranean. Ariel clapped his wings, and the food disappeared.

Still in the form of a Harpy, Ariel said to King Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio, “You are three men of sin, whom Destiny, which has power over this lower world and what is in it, has caused the never-surfeited sea to belch you upon this island where men do not live because you do not deserve to live among men. I have made you insane, and men sometimes hang or drown themselves with their insane courage.”

King Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio — the only men who could hear Ariel — drew their swords.

Ariel continued, “You fools! I and my fellows are ministers of Fate. The elements, of which your swords are created, may as well try to wound the loud winds, or with mocked-at stabs kill the waters that close together again as soon they are parted. They are as likely to do that as to harm one filament of one of my feathers. My fellow ministers of Fate are likewise invulnerable. Even if you could hurt us, your swords are now too heavy for your strength and you can no longer lift them.”

The three men dropped their now-too-heavy swords to the ground.

Ariel continued, “But remember — this is what I must tell you — that you three men deposed Prospero and cast him from Milan, throwing him and his innocent child, exposed to the elements, upon the sea, which has avenged your evil deed. Because of your foul deed, the higher powers, which delayed your punishment but did not forget it, have incensed the seas and shores and all the creatures against you. King Alonso, you have been bereft of your son. The

higher powers have ordered me to inflict on you a lingering, gradual, and slow destruction that will be worse than any quick death can be. Slow destruction will follow you every step of your way. The only way to escape the wraths of the higher powers, which otherwise will fall upon your heads, is for the three of you to repent your sins and to lead a life innocent of sin.”

Amid thunder, Ariel and the two other spirits vanished.

Soft music played, and other spirits danced as they made mocking grimaces and gestures at the three sinners, and then the spirits carried out the table on which the food had been placed.

“You have splendidly acted the role of the Harpy, Ariel,” Prospero said. “Your acting had grace, even as you spirited away the food. You left out nothing of what I commanded you to say in your speech, and the spirits — all of whom are lesser than you — who worked with you performed their roles excellently with great attention to detail. My high magic works, and these my enemies are all confused and distracted. They now are in my power, and in these fits I leave them, while I visit young Ferdinand, whom they think has drowned, and Miranda, whom both he and I love.”

Prospero departed.

Gonzalo, who had not heard Ariel’s speech, said to King Alonso, “In the name of something holy, sir, why do you stand here and seem utterly amazed?”

“Oh, it is monstrous, monstrous,” King Alonso said. “I thought that the billows spoke and told me the name of Prospero; the winds did sing the name of Prospero to me, and the thunder, that deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced the name of Prospero. In a bass voice, the winds and the waves have sung out the name of the man I

wronged. Because of my sin, my son is bedded in the ooze at the bottom of the ocean. I will seek him deeper than ever any plummet has sounded and with him I will lie there in the muddy ooze.”

King Alonso walked away.

Sebastian said, “If I can fight one fiend at a time, I will fight their legions one after another.”

Antonio said to Sebastian, “I’ll be your second in each fight.”

Sebastian and Antonio walked after King Alonso.

Gonzalo said to the other Lords, “All three of them are desperate. Their great guilt for what they did to Prospero, like poison that is designed to work a great time after it is taken, now begins to bite them. I do beg those of you who have suppler joints, follow them swiftly and keep them from doing what their frenzy may provoke them to do.”

Adrian said, “We will go. Follow after us.”

Gonzalo and the other Lords followed King Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio.

CHAPTER 4 (The Tempest)

— 4.1 —

Prospero was talking to Ferdinand and Miranda outside his dwelling.

He said to Ferdinand, “If I have too severely treated you, the compensation you will receive makes amends because I have given you here a third of my own life: the person for whom I live. Once again I give her to you. All the vexations I have put you through were only my trials of your love — you have wonderfully passed the tests. Here, before Heaven, I certify this my rich gift. Oh, Ferdinand, do not smile at me when I boast about her and show her off because you shall find that she will outstrip all praise and make it limp behind her.”

“I do believe everything you say,” Ferdinand said, “and I would believe it even if an oracle were to contradict it.”

“Then take my daughter as my gift and as your own acquisition that you have deserved to win, but if you take her virginity before the sanctimonious ceremony of marriage has with full and holy rite been ministered, then Heaven will allow no sweet sprinklings of grace to fall to bless this marriage. Instead, barren hate, sour-eyed disdain, and discord shall bestrew your marriage bed. It will not be covered with flowers but with weeds so loathsome that you both shall hate it. Therefore, take heed. If you two behave properly, the torches of Hyman, god of marriage, that we light on your wedding day will burn clearly and with a good light — a good omen. But if you two do not behave properly, the torches of Hyman, god of marriage, that we light on your wedding day will create lots of smoke — a bad omen.”

Ferdinand replied, “As I hope for quiet days, fine children, and long life, with such love as Miranda and I have between us now, I will not allow the murkiest den, the most opportune place, the strongest temptation to make me take your daughter’s virginity before we are married. All of us have a good nature and a selfish nature. I will not allow the selfish part of my nature to take away the anticipation of that day’s celebration of our marriage when I shall think either that Phoebus’ steeds that draw the Sun-chariot have collapsed through overwork and so the daytime will never end or that Night is kept chained below the Earth’s surface and so our wedding night will never arrive.”

“Well spoken,” Prospero said. “Sit and talk with her; she is your own.”

Prospero then called Ariel to appear before him: “Ariel! My industrious servant, Ariel!”

Ariel appeared and said, “What does my powerful master want? Here I am.”

“You and the lesser spirits performed your last task — the tantalizing banquet — well, and I must use you in such another trick. Go bring the other spirits, over whom I give you power, here. Tell them to be quick because I must show the eyes of this young couple an example of my magical art. I have promised to do so, and they expect it.”

“Immediately?” Ariel asked.

“Yes, in the time it takes to wink.”

Mischievously, Ariel said, “Before you can say ‘come’ and ‘go,’ and breathe twice and cry ‘so, so,’ each one, tripping on his toe, will be here in his place, showing off and making a funny face.”

Ariel paused, then added, “Do you love me, master? No?”

“I love you dearly, my delicate Ariel,” Prospero said, and then he added, “Do not approach until you hear me call.”

“I understand,” Ariel replied and then flew away.

Prospero said to Ferdinand, who was hugging Miranda, “Make sure that you are true to the words you said to me just now. Do not engage in heavy petting. Do not allow your passion to run free. The strongest oaths are straw when the fire in the blood is aroused. Indulge yourself less, or else say goodbye to your vow!”

“I promise you, sir, that the white, cold snow of Miranda’s chastity cools the heat of my heart,” Ferdinand replied. “I have taken your words to heart and will not take your daughter’s virginity until she and I are married.”

“That is good,” Prospero said.

He then said, “Now come, my Ariel! Bring too many spirits with you — that is better than not bringing enough spirits. Appear promptly!”

He said to Ferdinand, “No talking — that will break the spell! Be all eyes and no tongue! Be silent.”

Soft music played, and a spirit appeared who played the role of Iris, goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the gods and especially messenger of Juno, Queen of the gods.

Iris said, “Ceres, goddess of fertility and agriculture, you most bounteous lady, I have a message for you. Juno, the Queen of the gods, commands you to leave your rich fields of wheat, rye, barley, tares for fodder, oats, and peas; your grassy mountains, where live nibbling sheep, and flat meadows thatched with winter fodder to feed the sheep; your streams with shaped and reinforced banks, which wet and rainy April at your request adorns with flowers, to make cold virginal nymphs chaste crowns; and your

thickets of broom bushes, whose shadow the rejected bachelor loves, having lost his girl; your pruned vineyard; and your seashore, sterile and rocky hard, where you yourself do take the air. Juno, whose watery arch — the rainbow — and messenger I am, with her sovereign grace commands you to leave these, and here on this plot of grass, in this very place, to come and play. Juno's peacocks fly and quickly pull her chariot here. Approach, rich Ceres, so you can entertain Juno."

Juno's chariot appeared in the sky.

Ceres arrived, stood by Iris, and said, "Hail, many-colored messenger, who never disobeys Juno, the wife of Jupiter, King of the gods. Iris, you with your saffron wings sprinkle honey-drops and refreshing showers upon my flowers, and with each end of your blue bow you crown my bushy acres and my bare plains, rich scarf to my proud earth. Why has your Queen summoned me here to this short-grassed green land?"

"She wants you to celebrate a contract of true love and freely bestow a gift on the blessed lovers."

"Tell me if you know, Heavenly rainbow, whether Venus or Cupid, her son, do now attend the Queen? Venus and Cupid plotted to help dusky Dis, god of the underworld, to kidnap and marry Persephone, my daughter, and so I shun their company."

"Don't be afraid," Iris replied. "You will not see them. I met Venus as her chariot cut the clouds as she flew towards Paphos. Her son was with her in her chariot drawn by doves. They had thought to put some wanton charm upon this man and maiden, Ferdinand and Miranda, who have vowed that they will not sleep together until Hymen's torch has been lit and they have been married. But Venus and Cupid plotted in vain. Mars' lustful mistress, Venus, has

returned again; her spiteful son has broken his arrows. He swears that he will shoot no more arrows but will instead play with sparrows and simply be a boy.”

Juno’s chariot descended, and she walked over to Iris and Ceres.

Ceres said, “The highest Queen of state, great Juno, is coming. I know her by her gait.”

Juno said to Ceres, “How is my bounteous sister? Go with me to bless these two, Ferdinand and Miranda, so that they may be prosperous and have fine children.”

The two goddesses — played by spirits — began to sing to Ferdinand and Miranda.

Juno sang, “*Honor, riches, marriage-blessing,*

“*Long continuance of marriage, with children and love increasing,*

“*Hourly joys be always upon you!*

“*Juno sings her blessings upon you.*”

Ceres sang, “*Earth’s increase, abundance plenty,*

“*Barns and granaries never empty,*

“*Vines and clustering bunches growing,*

“*Plants with goodly burden bowing.*

“*Always you shall have food and wines.*

“*Spring come to you at the farthest*

“*At the very end of harvest —*

“*Never a winter in your lives!*

“*Scarcity and want shall shun you.*

“Ceres’ blessing thus is on you.”

Ferdinand whispered, “This is a very majestic vision, and harmoniously charming.”

He asked Prospero, “Am I right in thinking that these are spirits?”

“Yes,” Prospero said. “They are spirits, whom by my art I have called from their homes to enact this masque.”

Ferdinand said, “Let me live here forever. So rare and wonderful and wonder-working and wise a father-in-law makes this place Paradise.”

Juno and Ceres whispered, and then they sent Iris on an errand.

Prospero said, “Now, silence! Juno and Ceres whispered seriously. Something more is coming. Hush, and be quiet, or else our spell is marred.”

Iris said, “You nymphs, called Naiads, of the winding, wandering brooks, with your crowns woven of water lilies, have ever-harmless and -innocent looks. Leave your small-waved water channels and on this green land answer your summons. Juno commands you to come, chaste nymphs, and help to celebrate a contract of true love; do not be too late.”

Some spirits in the form of water-nymphs entered.

Iris continued, “You sunburnt sicklemen, made weary by August labors, come here from the furrows and be merry. Make holiday. Put on your rye-straw hats and perform a country dance with these pure and innocent nymphs.”

Some spirits dressed like reapers entered and danced gracefully with the nymphs, but Prospero suddenly remembered something.

He thought, *I forgot about that foul conspiracy of the beast Caliban and his confederates against my life. The time they appointed to carry out my murder has almost come.*

He broke the spell by speaking to the spirits: “Well done! Leave now! No more!”

The spirits reluctantly departed.

Ferdinand said to Miranda, “This is strange. Your father is strongly upset about something.”

“Never until this day,” Miranda replied, “have I seen him so overcome by anger.”

Prospero, noticing Ferdinand looking at him, said, “You do look, my son, distressed and dismayed. Be cheerful, sir. Our revels now are ended. Our actors, as I told you before, were all spirits and have melted into air, into thin air.

“Like the baseless fabric of this vision, the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself, and all who live on the Earth, shall dissolve and, like this insubstantial pageant that has faded, leave not a wisp of ourselves behind. We are made of such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is ended with a sleep.

“Sir, I am vexed. Bear with my weakness. My brain is troubled. Be not disturbed by my infirmity. Please retire inside my dwelling and rest there. I will walk for a while to quiet my agitated mind.”

“We wish you peace,” both Ferdinand and Miranda said.

Prospero called Ariel: *Come with a thought. I thank you, Ariel, for this masque. Come.*

Ariel arrived.

“I know your thoughts,” Ariel said. “What is your pleasure?”

“Spirit, we must prepare to meet Caliban.”

“True, my commander,” Ariel said. “When I played the role of Ceres, I thought to have reminded you of Caliban’s plot, but I was afraid that I would anger you.”

“Tell me again. Where did you leave these varlets?”

“As I told you, sir,” Ariel said, “they were red hot with drinking. They were so full of valor that they smote the air because it was blowing in their faces and they beat the ground because it kissed their feet, and yet they always moved toward their project. Then I beat my drum, at the sound of which, like unbroken colts, they pricked up their ears, raised their eyelids, and lifted up their noses as if they smelled music. I charmed their ears so that like calves they followed my lowing music through thorny briers, sharp furzes, pricking gorse, and thorns, which entered their frail shins. Finally I left them up to their necks in the scum-covered pool in back of your dwelling. The water stinks more than their feet.”

“This was well done, my flying bird,” Prospero said. “Stay invisible for now. Go to my dwelling and find rich clothing and bring it here. I will use it as bait to catch these thieves.”

“I go, I go,” Ariel said as he flew away.

Prospero said to himself, “Caliban is a devil, a born devil, on whose nature nurture can never stick and on whom my pains to educate him, all of which were humanely undertaken, were all lost, quite lost. As his body grows uglier with age, so his mind grows uglier day by day. I will plague them all so much that they will roar with pain.”

Ariel returned, carrying a load of rich clothing.

Prospero said, “Hang the clothing on the branches of this lime tree.”

As they waited, Prospero and Ariel were invisible to others. Soon Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo, all wet and stinking, arrived.

Caliban said, "Please, walk quietly, so that even a blind mole — that has excellent hearing — will not hear a foot fall. We are now near the magician's dwelling."

Stephano said, "Monster, your fairy, whom you say is a harmless fairy, has done little better than treat us as knaves. That spirit has played a dirty trick on us."

Trinculo complained, "Monster, I do stink like horse piss, because of which my nose is greatly offended."

"My nose is also offended," Stephano said. "Do you hear me, monster? If I should take a dislike to you, look out —"

"You would be a ruined monster," Trinculo said.

"My good Lord," Caliban said to Stephano, "give me your favor still. Be patient, for the prize I will bring you to will make you forget this mishap. Therefore, speak softly. All is still as hushed as midnight."

"Yes, but we lost our bottle in the pool —" Trinculo complained.

"There is not only disgrace and dishonor in that, monster, but an infinite loss," Stephano said.

"Losing the bottle of wine hurts me more than this wetting, but yet this is your 'harmless fairy,' monster," Trinculo complained.

"I will find my bottle and carry it away even if I have to be in the water over my ears," Stephano said.

"Please, my King, be quiet," Caliban said to Stephano. "Look, this is the mouth of the cave in which the magician dwells. Make no noise, and enter. Do that good evil — a

murder — that may make this island forever your own, and make me, your Caliban, forever your foot-licker.”

“Give me your hand,” Stephano said. “I do begin to have bloody thoughts.”

Trinculo saw the rich clothing that was hung on the lime tree and sang this song:

“King Stephen was and is a worthy peer.

“His breeches cost him but a crown;

“He held them sixpence all too dear.

“With that he called that tailor a lout.”

Then he added, “Oh, King Stephano! Oh, peer! Oh, worthy Stephano! Look what a wardrobe is here for you!”

Caliban said, “Let the clothing alone, you fool; it is only trash.”

Trinculo replied, “Monster, we know what belongs in a secondhand clothing shop, and it is not this kind of clothing!”

Trinculo put on a cloak and said, “Oh, King Stephano!”

Stephano said, “Take off that cloak, Trinculo; by this hand, I swear that I will have that cloak.”

Fearing Stephano’s hand, Trinculo took off the cloak and handed it to Stephano, saying, “Your grace shall have it.”

Keeping his eyes on the prize, Caliban said, “May dropsy drown this fool named Trinculo! What do you mean to dote thus on such unnecessary baggage? Let it alone and do the murder first. If the magician awakes, from toe to crown he’ll mark our skins with torments and turn us into strange stuff.”

“Shut up, monster,” Stephano said. “Tree, or should I say clothesline, isn’t this my jacket?”

He removed the jacket from the tree and said, “Now is the jacket under the line. Now, jacket, you are likely to lose your fur lining through use and prove to be a bald jacket just like sailors traditionally have all their hair cut off when they for the first time cross the line that is the equator.”

“That’s the way to do it,” Trinculo said. “We steal by a plumb line and a carpenter’s level. We steal properly and according to the rules, as I hope that your grace will agree.”

“I thank you for that jest,” Stephano said. “Here’s a garment for it. Wit shall not go unrewarded while I am King of this country. ‘Steal by line and level’ is an excellent sally of wit; there’s another garment for it.”

Trinculo said, “Monster, come, put some sticky lime upon your fingers so that you have the sticky fingers of a thief, and carry away the rest of the clothing.”

“I want nothing to do with that clothing,” Caliban said. “We shall lose our opportunity to kill the magician, and we shall all be turned into barnacles or into apes with villainously low foreheads.”

People in this culture believed that barnacles were a kind of geese that began life as shellfish.

Stephano ordered, “Monster, get to working with your fingers. Help to bear this clothing away to where my barrel of wine is, or I’ll fire you and turn you out of my kingdom.”

He handed Caliban a garment and said, “Come on, carry this.”

Trinculo added another garment and said, “And carry this.”

Stephano added a third garment and said, "And this."

A noise of hunters sounded. Several spirits in the form of hunting hounds chased after Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo.

Prospero and Ariel encouraged the dogs to chase the thieves.

"Hey, Mountain, hey!" Prospero shouted.

Ariel shouted, "Silver! There it goes, Silver!"

"Fury, Fury! There, Tyrant, there! Listen! Hark!" Prospero shouted.

As Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo ran away, Prospero said, "Go order my goblins to make sure the thieves' joints convulse painfully. Tell my goblins to make the thieves' sinews grow shorter with the cramps of old people, and torment the thieves and cause bruises until they are more spotted than a panther or mountain cat."

"Listen to them roar with fright!" Ariel said.

"Let them be hunted soundly," Prospero said. "Now, all my enemies are at my mercy. My labors shall end shortly, and you, Ariel, shall freely fly in the air. For just a little while longer, serve me and obey my commands."

CHAPTER 5 (The Tempest)

— 5.1 —

Prospero said to Ariel, “Now does my plan gather to a head. My charms work, my spirits obey, and time is not burdened by too many remaining tasks. What time is it?”

“Soon it will be six o’clock,” Ariel answered. “At six, my Lord, you said our work should cease.”

“I did say so, when I first caused the tempest. Say, my spirit, how are the King and his followers?”

“They are confined together just as you ordered and just as you left them. They are all prisoners, sir, in the grove of lime trees that shelters your dwelling from the weather. They cannot budge until you release them. The King, his brother, and your brother, are all three out of their wits, and the other Lords are mourning over them, full of sorrow and dismay. The chief mourner is the man whom, sir, you called ‘the good old Lord Gonzalo.’ His tears run down his beard, like drops of winter water from the melting ice on eaves of reeds and thatched roofs. Your spells so strongly work on them that if you now saw them, you would pity them and feel sorry for them.”

“Do you think so, spirit?” Prospero asked.

“I would pity them and feel sorry for them, sir, were I human,” Ariel replied.

“And I shall do the same. You are an airy spirit, yet you have a sense, a feeling, of their afflictions. You are able to feel empathy for them. Shall not I, who am one of their kind, who relishes all as sharply and feels as passionately as they, be kindlier moved than you are? Though I am struck to the quick by their great evils, yet I will side with

my noble reason and not with my ignoble fury. It is nobler to show compassion than to take revenge. As long as they repent, I have achieved my purpose and need cause them no further frowns. Go and bring them here, Ariel. My spells on them I will break, their senses I'll restore, and they shall again be themselves."

"I'll fetch them, sir," Ariel said as he flew away.

Alone, Prospero said to himself, "You elves of hills, brooks, lakes without outlets, and groves, and you who on the sands with print-less feet do chase the ebbing Neptune — the sea — and do flee from him when he comes back ... and you small fairies who by Moonlight dance and create the fairy rings of sour grass, whereof the ewe will not bite ... and you whose pastime is to make mushrooms at midnight, who rejoice to hear the solemn evening bell ring curfew ... by the aid of all of you, weaker agents though you be than others, I have bedimmed the Sun at noon, called forth the mutinous winds, and between the green sea and the bright-blue sky set roaring war in the form of a tempest. I have given fire to the dread rattling thunderbolt and split Jove's stout oak with his own weapon. I have made the strongly rooted cliffs shake and by the roots plucked up pine and cedar trees. At my command, graves have awakened their sleepers, opened, and let them go forth because of my very powerful magic art. But this rough magic — these conjuring tricks — I here renounce, and, when I have requested some Heavenly music, which even now I do, to work my end upon their senses that this airy spell is for, I will break my magic staff, bury it a number of fathoms deep in the earth, and deeper than any plummet has plunged I will drown my magic books."

Solemn music began to play, and Prospero used his magic wand to make a circle big enough for several people to stand in.

Ariel returned, leading King Alonso, Sebastian, and Antonio, all of whom were still under Prospero's spell and making frantic gestures as if they were mad. Gonzalo followed King Alonso. Adrian and Francisco and the other Lords followed Gonzalo. All of them entered the circle that Prospero had made.

Prospero said to King Alonso, "Solemn music is the best comforter for an unsettled fancy. It will cure these distracted men here, whose brains, now useless, have been boiled within their skulls!"

He said to all the men in the circle, "All of you men stand here; you have been stopped by my spell."

Prospero said, "Holy Gonzalo, honorable man, my eyes, in sympathy with the appearance of your eyes, drop tears to keep your tears company."

He said to himself, "The spell dissolves quickly, and as the morning steals upon the night, melting the darkness, so their returning senses begin to chase away the fumes that made them ignorant and that clouded their reason that is now clearing. They will quickly return to their senses."

He added, "Oh, good Gonzalo, my true preserver, you saved my life and the life of my daughter. You are a loyal gentleman to the Lord you follow! I will repay you for your virtuous actions; I will do so both with words and deeds."

Prospero said to King Alonso, "Most cruelly did you, King Alonso, treat me and my daughter. Your brother, Sebastian, was an accessory."

He said to Sebastian, "You are now punished for your evil actions, Sebastian."

He said to his brother, Antonio, "Flesh and blood, you, my brother, welcomed ambition, expelled pity and natural

feeling. You, with Sebastian, whose inward evil is strongest, would here have killed your King. I forgive you, unnatural though you are.”

He said to himself, “Their understanding begins to swell and grow, and the approaching tide of understanding will shortly fill the shores of reason that now lie foul and muddy. But not one of them who looks at me now would recognize me because of the way I am dressed.”

He said, “Ariel, fetch me the hat and rapier in my dwelling. I will take off my magician’s cloak and I will put on the clothing I habitually dressed in when I was Duke of Milan. Quickly, spirit. You shall before long be free.”

Prospero took off his magician’s robe, and Ariel returned with a hat and a sword and helped him dress.

As he helped Prospero dress, Ariel sang this song:

“Where the bee sucks, there suck I:

“In a cowslip’s bell I lie;

“There I rest when owls do cry.

“On the bat’s back I do fly

“Pursuing summer merrily.

“Merrily, merrily shall I live now

“Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.”

Prospero said, “Why, that’s my dainty Ariel! I shall miss you. But you shall have freedom; indeed, you will. Go to the King’s ship, invisible as you are. There you shall find the sailors asleep under the hatches. Awaken the Captain and the Boatswain and compel them to come to this place. Do this immediately, please.”

“I drink the air before me the way that mortals devour the road,” Ariel said, “and I will return before your pulse beats twice.”

Ariel flew quickly away.

Gonzalo came out of the spell first and said, “All torment, trouble, wonder, and amazement can be found here. May some Heavenly power guide us out of this terrifying country!”

The others regained their senses.

Prospero said, “Sir King Alonso, behold me, the wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero. So that you can be assured that a living Prince — not a ghost — does now speak to you, I embrace your body, and to you and your company I bid a hearty welcome.”

Prospero hugged King Alonso, who said, “Whether you really are Prospero or you are some magic trick to delude and harm me, I don’t know. Your pulse beats as if you are flesh and blood, and since I saw you the affliction of my mind mends. I was insane, but now I am becoming sane again. This calls for, if this is real, a very strange story to explain what has happened. I surrender your Dukedom to you, and I entreat you to pardon me for the wrongs I have done to you. But how is it possible that Prospero is alive on this island?”

Rather than answering King Alonso immediately, Prospero went to Gonzalo and said, “First, noble friend, let me embrace your aged self, whose honor cannot be measured or confined. The respect that I owe to you is limitless.”

“Whether this is real or not real, I cannot swear,” Gonzalo said. “I simply don’t know.”

“You still taste some deceptions of the island that will not

let you know for certain what is real. Now good things are happening. The deceptions you taste are like elaborate confections made of sugar that depict allegorical figures and scenes. They are sweet deceptions.”

Prospero then said, “Welcome, my friends. Welcome, all of you!”

He whispered to Sebastian and Antonio, “But you, my two Lords, be aware that were I so minded, I here and now could make King Alonso your enemy by proving that you are traitors, but at this time I will tell no tales.”

Amazed that Prospero could know of Antonio’s and his plot to murder the King, Sebastian whispered to Antonio, “The devil has possessed Prospero’s body and is speaking.”

“No,” Prospero said.

He then said to Antonio, “As for you, most wicked sir, whom to call ‘brother’ would infect my mouth, I forgive your rankest sin; in fact, I forgive all of your sins against me. I also require that you restore my Dukedom to me, which I am sure that you know that you must do. You heard King Alonso.”

“If you really are Prospero,” King Alonso said, “tell us the details of your preservation. Tell us how you were saved. Tell us how you met us here, who three hours ago were shipwrecked upon this shore, where I have lost — how sharp the stab and the pain of this memory is! — Ferdinand, my dear son.”

“I am sorry for it, sir,” Prospero said.

“The loss of my son is irreparable, and it is past the cure of even Patience, the goddess of endurance,” King Alonso said.

“I think that you have not sought her help,” Prospero said.

“The goddess’ soft grace and aid has helped me with a similar loss. Now I rest peacefully.”

Surprised, King Alonso asked, “Have you suffered a similar loss?”

“My loss is as great to me as it is recent,” Prospero said. “To bear my great loss, I have weaker means than you do of supporting me because I have lost my daughter.”

This is true, Prospero thought. I have lost my daughter because I will give her away in marriage. King Alonso’s son, Ferdinand, of course, is still alive, and King Alonso will gain a daughter through marriage.

“A daughter?” King Alonso said. “Oh, Heavens, I wish that they were both living in Naples as the King and Queen there! In order to make that happen, I would be willing to lie in that muddy, oozy bed in which my son lies at the bottom of the sea. When did you lose your daughter?”

“In this last tempest,” Prospero said.

He added, “I see that these Lords at this meeting have so much to wonder at that they have lost the capacity to reason. They scarcely believe what their eyes are telling them. They wonder whether these words I am speaking come from a mortal man who breathes natural air. They wonder whether I am a spirit.”

He said to all the Lords, “Despite the way that your senses have been jostled, know for certain that I am Prospero, the Duke who was thrust out of Milan, who most wonderfully landed on this shore where you were shipwrecked. I then became the ruler of this island.

“I will say no more about this now because it will take days to tell my story. I cannot tell my entire story during a short breakfast, and it is not fitting to tell it at this, our first

meeting.”

Prospero said to King Alonso, “Welcome, sir. This dwelling is my court. I have a few attendants here and no subjects elsewhere on the island. Please, look here. Because you have given me my Dukedom again, I will give you as good a gift. I will show you a wonder that will make you as happy as the recovery of my Dukedom makes me.”

He then pulled aside a curtain and revealed Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess together. Miranda was winning by a large margin.

Miranda said to Ferdinand, “Sweet Lord, you are playing me falsely. You are letting me win.”

“I would not play you falsely, my dearest love, for the world,” Ferdinand said.

“Well, you should play against me as if you were playing for a score of kingdoms — which is less than the world. You should play to the best of your ability, and even cheat, and if you did cheat, I would say that you are playing fairly. I would be happy to lose on purpose to you just as you are happy to lose on purpose to me.”

King Alonso, seeing his son but afraid that he was seeing a spirit, said, “If this vision proves to be an illusion of this island, I shall lose my dear son twice.”

Sebastian said, perhaps ironically, “This is a wonderful miracle!”

Ferdinand had been concentrating on Miranda, but when he heard the voices, he looked up, recognized his father, and said, “Though the seas threaten, they are merciful; I have cursed them without cause. My father, whom I thought was dead, is alive.”

He knelt before his father to show him respect.

King Alonso said, "Now enjoy all the blessings that a glad father can give to you! Arise, and say how you came here."

Miranda looked at the men — she had never seen so many human beings — and said, "Wonderful! How many good-looking creatures are there here! How beautiful humankind is! Oh, brave and splendid new world, that has such people in it!"

"This is new to you," Prospero said. He knew that many of the men Miranda was looking at had sinned grievously.

"Who is this maiden with whom you were playing chess?" King Alonso asked his son, Ferdinand. "You cannot have known her for longer than three hours. Is she a goddess who separated us and then brought us together again?"

"Sir, she is mortal," Ferdinand said, "but by immortal Providence she's mine. I chose her when I could not ask you, my father, for your advice. At that time, I thought that you were dead. She is the daughter of Prospero, this famous and renowned Duke of Milan, of whom so often I have heard, but never saw before. From him I have received a second life after I nearly drowned, and when I marry his daughter he shall be my second father."

"Then I will be her father-in-law," King Alonso said. "But, oh, how odd will it sound that I must ask my child for forgiveness! I must ask Miranda to forgive me for the way that I have treated her and her father."

"There, sir, stop," Prospero said. "Let us not remember bad events that happened in the past. Both of us will benefit from forgetfulness and forgiveness."

Gonzalo said, "I have wept inwardly, or I would have spoken before now. Look down, you gods, and on this couple drop a blessed crown for it is you who have marked out — as with chalk — the path that brought us here."

King Alonso said, “I say, ‘Amen,’ Gonzalo!”

Gonzalo said, “Was the Duke of Milan thrust from Milan, so that his descendants would become Kings of Naples? Oh, rejoice beyond a common joy, and engrave this story in gold on lasting pillars. With one voyage, Claribel found her husband at Tunis, and Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife where he himself was lost. Prospero also found his Dukedom on a poor island, and all of us found ourselves when no man was in his own right mind.”

King Alonso said to Ferdinand and Miranda, “Give me your hands. Let grief and sorrow always embrace the heart of anyone who does not wish you joy!”

“Let it be so! Amen!” Gonzalo said.

Ariel now returned, leading the ship’s Captain and Boatswain.

“Oh, look, sir!” Gonzalo said, “Here are more of us. During the tempest, while we were still on board the ship, I prophesied that if a gallows were anywhere on land, this fellow — the Boatswain — could not drown.”

He said to the Boatswain, “Now, blasphemer, who swear so much on ship that you force the grace of God to go overboard, aren’t you going to swear on land? Have you no mouth on land? What is the news?”

“The best news is that we have safely found our King and his company; the next best news is that our ship — which, only three hours ago, we thought had been split in two — is as watertight and seaworthy and bravely rigged as when we first put out to sea.”

Ariel whispered to Prospero, “Sir, all this service I have done since I left you.”

Prospero replied, “My clever little spirit!”

“These events did not happen naturally,” King Alonso said, “They increase in strangeness — they grow from strange to stranger. How did you come here?”

The Boatswain replied, “If I did think, sir, I were wide awake, I would try to tell you. We were dead asleep, and — we don’t know how — all imprisoned below deck. But just now with strange and several noises of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains, and other kinds of sounds, all of them horrible, we were awakened. Immediately, we were freed. We saw, in all her trim, our royal, good, and gallant ship, and our Captain danced with joy to see her. In an instant, as if in a dream, the Captain and I were separated from the other sailors and were dazedly brought here.”

Ariel whispered to Prospero, “Was it well done?”

“Splendidly, my diligent spirit,” Prospero replied. “You shall be free.”

“This is as strange a maze as ever men walked and there is in this business more than nature can account for,” King Alonso said. “Some oracle of the gods must give us the knowledge we now lack.”

“Sir, my liege,” Prospero said, “do not trouble your mind by thinking about the strangeness of this business. When we have leisure time, which shall be soon, I will tell you what you want to know about everything that has happened here. You will be satisfied with my explanation, which will not need the help of an oracle. Until then, be cheerful and be happy with the events that have occurred.”

Prospero whispered to Ariel, “Come here, spirit. Set Caliban and his companions free; untie the spell that binds them.”

Ariel flew away.

Prospero said to King Alonso, “How are you, my gracious sir? There are yet missing from your company some few odd lads whom you have not remembered.”

Ariel returned, driving before him Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo, the last two of whom were wearing rich clothing that they had stolen.

Stephano said, “Let every man look after all the rest, and let no man look after himself, for all is only fortune and luck. Have courage, gallant monster, have courage!”

“If the eyes I wear in my head truly see what they seem to see, this is a welcome sight,” Trinculo said.

“Oh, Setebos, who is my god,” Caliban said, “these are splendid spirits indeed! How fine my master is! I am afraid that he will chastise me.”

Sebastian laughed at the three newcomers and said, “What things are these, Antonio? Will money buy them?”

“Most likely,” Antonio replied. “One of them resembles a plain fish, and is, no doubt, marketable.”

“Look at the cloth badges these two men are wearing, my Lords,” Prospero said. “Most badges worn by servants are the insignia that tell whose servants they are, but in this case the badges are stolen clothing. Can you look at these badges and say that these men are honest?”

“This third one, a misshapen knave, had a witch for his mother. She was so strong that she could control the Moon, make the sea flow and ebb, and command the tides to ignore the Moon’s power. These three have robbed me, and this demi-devil — for he is a bastard whose father was a devil — had plotted with them to murder me. Two of these fellows you know; they traveled here with you. This thing of darkness belongs to this island.”

Caliban said, "I shall be painfully pinched to death."

King Alonso said, "Isn't this man Stephano, my drunken butler?"

"He is drunk," Sebastian said. "Where did he find wine?"

King Alonso said, "And Trinculo is drunk enough to dance a reel. Where did they find this grand liquor that has flushed their faces?"

He asked Trinculo, "How did you come to be in this pickle?"

"The pickle I am in is both a predicament and a preserving agent, as in pickled cucumbers," Trinculo said. "I have been in such a pickle — a dank and dirty and stinking pool of water — since I saw you last that, I am afraid, I will never get the pickling preservative out of my bones. Flies will ignore my body after I die."

"How are you doing, Stephano?" Sebastian asked.

"Don't touch me! I am not Stephano any more! I am nothing but a painful cramp!"

"So you would be King of the island, pally?" Prospero asked, sarcastically.

"I should have been a sore King then — both a sore-y — that is, sorry — King and a King with sores," Stephano replied.

King Alonso pointed at Caliban and said, "This is as strange a thing as I have ever looked at."

"He is as disproportioned in his manners as in his shape," Prospero said.

He said to Caliban, "Go to my dwelling, and take with you your companions. If you want to have my pardon, decorate

it handsomely.”

“Yes, that I will,” Caliban replied, “and I’ll be wise hereafter and seek your grace. What a thrice-double ass was I to take this drunkard for a god and worship this dull fool!”

“Go now!” Prospero ordered. “Away!”

King Alonso told Stephano and Trinculo, “Go, and put your rich clothing back where you found it.”

“Or stole it, rather,” Sebastian said.

Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo left to obey their orders.

This was the first time that Caliban had been allowed in Prospero’s dwelling since Caliban had tried to rape Miranda. Like Ariel, Caliban would soon be free.

Prospero said to King Alonso, “Sir, I invite your Highness and your followers to enter my poor dwelling, where you shall take your rest for this one night, part of which I will spend telling you things that, I don’t doubt, shall make the evening pass quickly. I will tell you the story of my life and the events that have happened since I came to this island. In the morning, I will take you to your ship and then we shall travel to Naples, where I hope to see the wedding of these our dearly beloved children solemnized. Then I will go to my Milan, where my every third thought shall be about my grave.”

“I long to hear the story of your life, which must sound strange to the ear,” King Alonso said.

“I will tell you everything,” Prospero said, “and I promise you calm seas and auspicious winds. We will sail so quickly that we shall catch up with your royal fleet, which is now far away.”

Prospero whispered to Ariel, “My Ariel, chick, this is your

final order: Ensure good weather for sailing. Then return to the elements and be free, and fare you well!”

Prospero said to his guests, “Please go inside my dwelling.”

EPILOGUE (*The Tempest*)

Prospero remained outside his dwelling to say these words to you, the readers of this book:

“Now my spells are all overthrown,

“And what strength I have is my own,

“Which is most faint. Now, it is true,

“I must be here confined by you,

“Or sent to Naples. Let me not,

“Since I have my Dukedom got

“And pardoned the deceiver, dwell

“On this bare island because of your spell;

“But release me from my binding bands

“With the help of your good hands —

“Applaud me in your minds.

“And write reviews online that say this book is fine.

“Gentle breath and praise of yours my sails

“Must fill, or else my project fails,

“Which was to please. Now I lack

“Spirits to command, art to enchant,

“And my ending is despair —

“Unless I be relieved by my prayer,

“Which pierces so that it assaults

“Mercy itself and frees all faults.

“As you from crimes would pardoned be,

“Let your indulgence set me free.”

Chapter XXXVII: THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Two Noble Kinsmen*)

PROLOGUE.

ARCITE and PALAMON, *the two noble kinsmen, first cousins, nephews of Creon, King of Thebes.*

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons, later Duchess of Athens.

EMILIA, her sister.

PIRITHOUS, friend to Theseus.

Three QUEENS, widows of the Kings killed while laying siege to Thebes.

The JAILER of Theseus' prison.

The Jailer's DAUGHTER.

The Jailer's BROTHER.

The WOOER of the Jailer's daughter.

Two FRIENDS of the Jailer.

A DOCTOR.

ARTESIUS, an Athenian soldier.

VALERIUS, a Theban.

WOMAN, attending on Emilia.

An Athenian GENTLEMAN.

Six KNIGHTS, three accompanying Arcite, and three accompanying Palamon.

Six COUNTRYMEN, one dressed as a BAVIAN or baboon.

A SCHOOLMASTER (Gerald).

NELL, a countrywoman.

A TABORER.

A singing BOY, a HERALD, MESSENGERS, a SERVANT.

EPILOGUE.

Hymen (god of weddings), lords, soldiers, four countrywomen (Fritz, Maudlin, Luce, and Barbary), nymphs, attendants, maids, executioner, guard.

Nota Bene

John Fletcher is thought to be the co-author of this play.

PROLOGUE (*The Two Noble Kinsmen*)

The Prologue says this to you the audience:

“New plays and maidenheads are much alike. Both are much sought after, and for both much money is given, if they stand sound and well. And a good play, whose modest scenes blush on its marriage day and shiver to lose its virginity, is like a wife who after a holy wedding and the first night’s sexual activity is still the image of modesty, and retains still more of the virgin maiden, according to one’s sight, than a woman who has been subject to her husband’s sexual pains and pangs.

“We pray our work of art may be so, for I am sure it has a noble and pure father: A learned and more famous poet never yet has walked between the Po River in Italy and the silver Trent River in England. Geoffrey Chaucer, who is admired by all, gives us the story we will recount. ‘The Knight’s Tale’ lives in his *Canterbury Tales* and is there fixed in eternity.

“If we fail to live up to the nobleness of Chaucer’s story, and the first sound this child — our work of art — hears is a hiss from you the audience, how it will shake the bones of that good man Chaucer and make him cry from underground, ‘Oh, fan from me the witless chaff of such a writer who blasts my laurel wreath and makes my famed works lighter and of less worth than the folktales of Robin Hood!’”

This culture used winnowing fans to blow away the worthless chaff or husks from the valuable grain. This culture also regarded tales of folklore as being of less value than courtly literary romances.

The Prologue continued, “This is the fear we bring. For, to

say the truth, it would be a never-ending, impossible, and too ambitious thing to aspire to match Chaucer, weak as we are. We, almost breathless, are unable to swim in the deep water of his literary worth.

“If you only hold out your helping hands and applaud us, we shall turn about in the wind of your applause and do something to save ourselves. You shall hear scenes that, although they are below Chaucer’s art, may yet be worth two hours’ travel and travail. We will work to take you on an imaginative journey.

“We wish sweet sleep to Chaucer’s bones; we wish happiness to you. If this work of art does not keep dullness away from you for a short time, we perceive that our losses fall so thickly that we must necessarily stop appearing in works of art.”

CHAPTER 1 (*The Two Noble Kinsmen*)

— 1.1 —

Music played as a wedding procession arrived.

Singing and strewing flowers, a boy in a white robe arrived.

Holding a burning torch, Hymen, the god of marriage, arrived.

Bearing a wheaten garland, a nymph with her tresses unbound arrived. Garlands made of wheat stalks are a traditional symbol of fertility.

Between two other nymphs who were wearing wheaten garlands on their heads, Theseus, the Duke of Athens, arrived.

Hippolyta, Theseus' bride, arrived; her hair was loose and hanging down. Theseus' friend Pirithous led her, and another man held a garland over her head. Loose hair is a traditional symbol of virginity.

Emilia, who was holding up the train of Hippolyta's dress, arrived. Emilia was Hippolyta's sister.

Finally Artesius, who was an Athenian soldier, and some attendants arrived.

This is the song the boy sang:

“Roses, their sharp spines [thorns] being gone,

“Not royal in their smells alone,

“But also in their hue;

“Maiden pinks, of odor faint,

“Daisies smell-less, yet most quaint [pretty],

“And sweet thyme true;

“Primrose, firstborn child of Ver [Spring],

“Merry springtime’s harbinger,

“With her bells [its flowers] dim;

“Oxlips in their cradles growing,”

The leaves of the oxlip form a kind of cradle as they grow around the flower’s bud.

“Marigolds on deathbeds [graves] blowing [blossoming],

“Lark’s-heels [Larkspur] trim.”

The boy strew flowers as he sang:

“All dear Nature’s children sweet

“Lie before bride and bridegroom’s feet,

“Blessing their sense.

“Not an angel [good bird] of the air,

“Bird melodious or bird fair [beautiful],

“Is absent hence.

“The crow, the sland’rous cuckoo, nor”

The cuckoo is slanderous because its cry mocks married men by calling them cuckolds.

“The boding [ominous] raven, nor chough hoar [gray-headed jackdaw],

“Nor chatt’ring pie [magpie],

“May on our bridehouse [house that is a wedding site] perch or sing,

“Or with them any discord bring,

“But from it fly.”

Three Queens arrived, dressed all in black, with black veils stained with tears and travel, and wearing imperial crowns. The First Queen fell down at the foot of Theseus; the Second Queen fell down at the foot of Hippolyta; the Third Queen fell down at the foot of Emilia.

The First Queen said to Theseus, “For pity’s sake and the sake of true gentility, hear and respect me. Pay attention to what I have to say.”

The Second Queen said to Hippolyta, “For your mother’s sake, and as you wish your womb may thrive with fair ones, hear and respect me.”

The Third Queen said to Emilia, “Now for the love of your future husband — him whom Jove, King of the gods, has destined to be your distinguished bridegroom and the honor of your bed — and for the sake of pure and unsullied virginity, be the advocate for us and our distresses. This good deed shall erase all your evil deeds that are now set down in the Book of Trespasses kept in Heaven.”

Theseus said to the First Queen, “Sad lady, rise.”

Hippolyta said to the Second Queen, “Stand up.”

Emilia said to the Third Queen, “Bend no knees to me. Whatever distressed woman whom I may help binds me to her — I will help her.”

Theseus said to the First Queen, “What’s your request? Speak for all of you Queens.”

The First Queen replied, “We are three Queens whose sovereigns fell before the wrath of cruel Creon; our husbands have endured the beaks of ravens, talons of kites,

and pecks of crows in the foul fields of Thebes.”

The husbands of the three Queens had taken part in the war of the Seven Against Thebes and had been killed. After King Oedipus of Thebes had died, his two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, quarreled over who should rule Thebes. Polynices gathered other Kings as allies and attacked Thebes. Both Eteocles and Polynices died in the battle, and Creon, their uncle, became the ruler of Thebes. Creon forbid the corpses of those who had attacked Thebes to be buried; those unburied corpses were now being eaten by birds and reduced to skeletons.

The First Queen continued, “Creon will not allow us to burn their bones, to put their ashes in urns, nor to take the offense of mortal loathsomeness from the blessed eye of holy Phoebus, but instead Creon allows the corpses to infect the winds with the stench of our slain lords.”

Phoebus Apollo is the god who drives the Sun-chariot across the sky each day.

Wives in this culture referred to their husbands as lords.

The First Queen continued, “Oh, have pity, Theseus, Duke of Athens! You have purged the Earth of robbers and monsters. You purger of the Earth, draw your feared sword that does good turns to the world; give us the bones of our dead Kings so that we may place them in a chapel. And of your boundless goodness take some note that for our crowned heads we have no roof except this sky above us, which is the lion’s and the bear’s roof and the vault above everything.”

“Please, don’t kneel,” Theseus replied. “Because I was transported with your speech, I allowed your knees to wrong themselves. I have heard about the fortunes of your dead lords, which gives me such lamenting that it awakens my vengeance and revenge for them.

“King Capaneus was your lord and husband. The day that he was to marry you, at such an occasion as now is with me, I met your groom by that altar of Mars. You were at that time beautiful — Juno’s mantle was not more beautiful than your hair, nor did her mantle more luxuriantly envelope her than your hair that was bountifully spread around you. Your wheaten wreath was then neither threshed nor blasted. You were still an unreaped virgin and the future death of your husband had not then blighted you. Lady Fortune looked at you and dimpled her cheek with smiles. Hercules, my kinsman, looked at you and, being made weak by the beauty of your eyes, laid down his club. He tumbled down upon the hide of the lion of Nemea that he had slain and swore that his muscles grew soft.”

Another time that Heracles’ muscles grew soft was when he served Queen Omphale of Lydia as a slave for a year and was forced to do women’s work and wear women’s clothing. Eventually, Queen Omphale freed Hercules and married him.

Theseus continued, “Oh, grief and time, those two fearful consumers, devour everything!”

He was shocked by the transformation of the First Queen from virgin bride to mourning widow.

The First Queen said, “Oh, I hope that some god has put his mercy in your manliness, to which he’ll infuse power, and press you to go forth and undertake to help us bury the corpses of our husbands.”

Theseus said, “Oh, bend no knees to me, bend none, widow! Bend your knees to the helmeted Bellona, Roman goddess of war, and pray for me, who will be your soldier. I am troubled.”

The First Queen rose, and Theseus turned away. He would be her soldier, but he knew that this would be a formidable

undertaking; he would have to make war against Creon and Thebes.

The Second Queen addressed Hippolyta, who had been Queen of the warrior women known as the Amazons. Hippolyta and Theseus had fought each other with their armies. Theseus narrowly won the battle and had fallen in love with Hippolyta; today was their wedding day.

The Second Queen said, “Honored Hippolyta, most dreaded Amazonian, who has slain the scythe-tusked boar; who with your arm, as strong as it is white, was close to making men captive to your sex, except that this Theseus, your lord, who was born to uphold creation in that honor nature first styled it in, shrunk you into the bounds that you were overflowing, at once subduing your force and your affection.”

This culture believed that men were by nature superior to women. Hippolyta had come close to defeating Theseus and his army, but Theseus had been born to uphold the superiority of men and so had eventually defeated Hippolyta and her women warriors. He had defeated Hippolyta and caused her to fall in love with him.

The Second Queen continued, “You, Hippolyta, are a soldieress who equally balances sternness with pity, whom now I know have much more power over him — Theseus — than he ever had on you, who own his strength and his love, too. Theseus is a servant who obeys even the implications of any speech made by you, dear model of ladies. Tell him to help us, whom flaming war scorches, so that we may cool ourselves under the shadow of his sword. Ask him to lift his sword over our heads. Speak your request in a woman’s voice, like such a woman as any of us three; weep rather than fail. Lend us a knee; kneel down with us but touch the ground for us no longer time than a dove moves when its head is plucked off. Tell him what

you would do if he lay swollen on the blood-soaked battlefield, showing the Sun his teeth and grinning at the Moon.”

Hippolyta replied, “Poor lady, say no more. I would rather pursue this good action with you as that to which I am going — my wedding — and yet I have never so willingly gone this way.

“Theseus, my lord, has been affected to the depth of his heart with your distress; let him think for a moment. I’ll speak to him very soon.”

The Second Queen rose.

The Third Queen said, “Oh, I set down my petition coldly, as if I were writing on ice, but my hot grief thawed and melted it into drops of water; in the same way, sorrow, lacking other forms of expression, is pressed out in the form of tears by deeply felt grief. Grief cannot be adequately expressed in a cold petition; it must be felt and expressed in hot tears.”

Emilia said, “Please stand up. Your grief is written on your cheek.”

“Oh, grief!” the Third Queen said. “You cannot read it there on my cheek.”

The Third Queen rose.

She pointed to her eyes and said, “There through my tears, like pebbles that seemed wrinkled and distorted when looked at in a glassy, mirrory stream, you may behold my sorrows. Lady, lady, it’s a pity! He who will know all the treasure of the Earth must dig to the center, too; he who will fish for my smallest minnow, let him put a lead weight on his line to sink it and catch one at my heart. Anyone who wants to know the depth of my sorrow must look into

my heart.”

Realizing that what she had said could be interpreted as implying that Emilia lacked perceptiveness, the Third Queen apologized: “Oh, pardon me! Extreme suffering, that sharpens some minds, makes me a fool who speaks extravagantly.”

“Please say nothing,” Emilia said. “Please. A person who can neither feel nor see the rain, while in it, knows neither wet nor dry.”

She meant that she would have to be like such an insensitive and unintelligent person not to recognize the intensity of the Third Queen’s grief.

Emilia continued, “If you were the masterpiece of some painter, I would buy you to instruct me for when I need to depict the greatest grief — indeed, yours is a heart-pierced demonstration of the greatest grief.

“But, alas, since you are a natural sister of our sex, a real woman rather than an artistic depiction of a woman, your sorrow beats so ardently upon me that it shall reflect from me and go to my brother-in-law’s heart and warm it to feel some pity for you, even if his heart were made of stone. Please feel good comfort.”

Theseus came forward and said, “Let’s go to the temple. We will leave out not even a tiny portion of the sacred ceremony.”

The First Queen said, “Oh, this celebration will longer last and will be more costly than the war that we, your supplicants, are asking you to fight. Remember that your fame resounds in the ear of the world. What you do quickly is not done rashly; your first thought is worth more than others’ hard thinking, and your premeditation is worth more than their actions.

“But, by Jove, your actions, as soon as they move, subdue before they touch, just as ospreys do to the fish.”

This culture believed that ospreys fascinated fish: The fish would turn their bellies to the osprey and allow themselves to be caught.

The First Queen continued, “Think, dear Duke of Athens, think what beds our slain Kings have!”

The beds were the ground of the battlefield, which lay exposed to the elements.

The Second Queen said, “What griefs have our beds because our dear lords have none!”

“They have no beds fit for the dead,” the Third Queen said, “Those who kill themselves with ropes for hanging, knives, drams of poison, or high places from which to throw themselves, those who are weary of this world’s light, those who have to themselves been death’s most horrid agents, are still allowed to have dust and shadow — graves — by human grace and mercy.”

The First Queen said, “But our lords lie blistering underneath the visitating Sun, which visits their corpses the way a plague visits a house of people even though our lords were good Kings when they were living.”

Theseus said, “That is true, and I will give you comfort by giving your dead husbands graves. To do that, I must make some work — fight a war — against Creon.”

The First Queen said, “And that work presents itself to the doing. It must be done quickly. Now it will take form; the heat is gone tomorrow. Then, unprofitable toil must recompense itself with its own sweat.”

Heated metal can be formed into shapes, but once the metal cools, it is no longer malleable. This is expressed in the

proverb “Strike [with a blacksmith’s hammer] while the iron’s [metal’s] hot.”

The First Queen continued, “Now Creon, King of Thebes, thinks that he is secure and he will not be attacked. He does not dream that we three Queens stand before your powerful presence, rinsing with tears our holy begging in our eyes to make our petition clear. Our tears purify our supplication to you, and they make clear why we are supplicating you.”

The Second Queen said, “Now you may conquer Creon, while he is drunk with his victory.”

The Third Queen added, “And while his army is full of food and sloth.”

Theseus said, “Artesius, you who best know how to select, suitable to this enterprise, the best soldiers for this proceeding, and the number of soldiers adequate to fight such a war, go forth and levy our worthiest soldiers while we dispatch this grand act of our life, this daring deed of fate in wedlock.”

While Artesius was drafting good soldiers to fight against Thebes, Theseus intended to finish getting married.

The First Queen said to the other two Queens, “Dowagers, join hands. Let us be widows to our woes — we will feel the woes of widows. Delay commends us to a famishing hope. Because Theseus is delaying attacking Thebes, our hope that our husbands will be honorably buried diminishes.”

All the Queens said to Theseus, “Farewell.”

The Second Queen said, “We come unseasonably — at a bad time — but when could grief select, as judgment that is free from torment can, the fittest time to best solicit help?”

Theseus said, “Why, good ladies, this wedding to which I

am going is greater and more important than any war. It more concerns me and is more important to me than all the actions that I have previously done or will in the future face.”

The First Queen said, “This is making it all the more clear that our suit to you shall be neglected when her arms, which are able to keep Jove away from a council of the gods, shall by permission-granting moonlight enclose you tightly like a corslet, aka defensive armor.”

The three Queens were afraid that Theseus, rather than making war against Creon, would preoccupy himself in making love to his bride, Hippolyta. In Book 14 of Homer’s *Iliad*, Hera, wife of Zeus, King of the gods, whom the Romans knew as Jupiter or Jove (the Romans knew Hera as Juno), seduced him so that he would not pay attention to what was going on in the Trojan War. Because Hera did that, the Greeks were able to rally and fight well against the Trojans, whom at the time Zeus was helping.

The First Queen added, “Oh, when Hippolyta’s twinning cherries — cherry-red lips — shall let their sweetness fall upon your tasteful lips, will you be thinking of rotting Kings or crying Queens? What care will you have for what you don’t feel, when what you feel is able to make Mars spurn his drum? Even Mars, god of war, prefers having sex to fighting in a war.

“Oh, if you spend but one night in bed with her, every hour in it will make you hostage for a hundred more hours, and you shall remember nothing more than what that banquet bids you to remember. You will forget the war we request that you fight, and you will remember only the joys of sleeping with Hippolyta.”

Hippolyta said to Theseus, “Although I think that it is very unlikely you should be so transported by the joys of

bedding me that you will forget your promise to help these three widows, and although I am very sorry that I should be such a suitor, yet I think that if I did not, by the abstaining of the joy I would have in bed on our wedding night — for which abstinence breeds a deeper longing — cure their sickness brought on by an excess of grief that craves an immediate medicine, I should make all ladies think I am acting scandalously.”

She knelt and continued, “Therefore, sir, as I shall here make trial of my entreaties to you, either presuming them to have some force, or concluding forever that they will always be as ineffectual as if I had not made them, postpone this business we are going about, and hang your shield before your heart — about that neck which is my possession, and which I freely lend to do these poor Queens service. I request that you postpone our wedding night and instead first help these three widowed Queens.”

All three Queens said to Emilia, “Oh, help us now! Our cause cries for you to bend your knees and entreat Theseus to help us.”

Emilia knelt and said to Theseus, “If you don’t grant my sister her petition with the same vigor and with the same quickness and passion with which she makes her petition, from henceforth I’ll not dare to ask you anything, nor be so foolhardy as ever to take a husband.”

Theseus said, “Please stand up.”

Hippolyta and Emilia rose.

Theseus then said, “I am entreating myself to do that which you kneel to request me to do.”

He ordered, “Pirithous, lead on the bride; go and pray to the gods for success in and return from the war. Don’t omit anything in the intended celebration.

“Queens, follow me, your soldier.

“Artesius, as I ordered you previously, go hence and at the shores of Aulis in Boeotia meet us with the forces you can raise. In Aulis, we shall find already assembled part of a number of troops for a business expected to be bigger than the war against Thebes.”

Artesius exited.

Theseus kissed Hippolyta and said, “Since our main concern is haste, I stamp this kiss upon your red-as-a-currant lip. Sweetheart, keep this kiss as my token.”

He then said to the wedding procession, “Go forward, for I will see you gone.”

The wedding procession began to exit towards the temple.

Theseus said to Emilia, “Farewell, my beautiful sister-in-law.”

He added, “Pirithous, fully keep the wedding feast. Don’t omit even an hour of it.”

Pirithous replied, “Sir, I’ll follow you at your heels; I will go with you to Thebes. The celebratory feast shall wait until your return.”

Theseus replied, “Fellow noble, I order you not to leave Athens. We shall be returning before you can end this feast, of which I ask you to make no abatement. I expect this war to be over quickly.

“Once more, farewell, all.”

The wedding would occur, but it would be a wedding by proxy. Theseus would not be present. Theseus also knew that the war would not be over before the wedding feast was finished; he knew that he was speaking hyperbolically.

Everyone except Theseus and the three Queens exited.

The First Queen said to Theseus, “Thus you always make good what good things the tongues of the world say about you.”

The Second Queen said to Theseus, “And you earn a deity equal to that of Mars.”

“If not above him,” the Third Queen said, “for you, being only mortal, make your passions bend and submit to godlike honors; the gods themselves, some say, groan under such a mastery. Even the gods find it difficult to control their passions.”

Theseus replied, “As we are men, thus should we do; once overcome by passions, we lose our title of being humans. Be of good cheer, ladies.”

Using the royal plural, he said, “Now we turn towards obtaining your comforts.”

— 1.2 —

Palamon and Arcite talked together in Thebes. They were first cousins, and Creon, King of Thebes, was their uncle.

Arcite said, “Dear Palamon, you are dearer in love and friendship to me than you are in blood relationship. You are my favorite cousin, and you are as yet unhardened in the sins of human nature. Let us leave the city of Thebes, and the temptations in it, before we further sully our gloss of youth. Here in Thebes we are as ashamed to abstain from sin as in other cities we would be ashamed to sin. To not swim with the current is almost to sink in the water; not swimming with the current at least takes an effort that diverts energy from and frustrates striving to do good. And if we follow the common stream in Thebes, it would bring us to a whirlpool where we would either spin around or

drown; if we labor through the eddy, our gain is only life and weakness caused by our struggle.”

Palamon replied, “Your advice is supported by examples. What strange ruins of human beings, since we first went to school, may we perceive walking in Thebes! Scars and poor clothing are the reward of the soldiers, the followers of Mars, god of war. Each soldier proposed as a goal for his bold efforts honor and golden ingots. Although the soldier fought well and won the battle, he did not receive honor and golden ingots, and now he is mocked by the peace for which he fought. Who then shall give offerings to Mars’ so-scorned altar? I bleed pity when I meet such soldiers, and I wish great Juno would resume her ancient fit of jealousy to get the soldier work.”

Juno is a jealous goddess who is capable of great hatred. She once lost a beauty contest and forever hated the city from which the judge of the contest came. The story is that Juno, Minerva, and Venus competed for a golden apple on which were inscribed the words “For the most beautiful.” Paris, Prince of Troy, chose Venus. During the Trojan War, Venus supported Troy, while Juno and Minerva supported the attacking Greeks.

Juno also hated Thebes because her husband, Jupiter, King of the gods, had slept with and had sons by two mortal women associated with Thebes: Semele, who gave birth to the god Bacchus, and Alcmene, who gave birth to Hercules.

Palamon continued, “If Juno were to do that, then peace would be purged with blood to get rid of her soft, easy ways, and retain anew her charitable heart, which is now hard and harsher than strife or war could be.”

This culture believed that a long period of peace was bad and that it was good to have a war once in a while. It believed in this cycle: peace leads to plenty, then pride,

then envy, then war, then poverty, then peace again. Peace leads to overeating, which is unhealthy.

This culture also believed that blood-letting was necessary to cure many kinds of illness. Physicians would make a cut and allow their patients to bleed.

Arcite said, “Are you leaving something out? Do you meet no ruined people except the soldiers in the winding paths and twisting streets of Thebes? You began your speech as if you met decaying people of many kinds. Do you perceive none who arouse your pity except the disrespected soldier?”

Palamon replied, “Yes, I pity decaying humans wherever I find them, but I pity most those decaying humans who, sweating in an honorable toil, are paid with ice to cool them.”

“It is not this I began to speak about,” Arcite said. “The proper consideration of soldiers is a virtue that is not respected in Thebes. I was speaking of Thebes — how dangerous, if we want to keep our honors, it is for our residing. In Thebes every evil has a good appearance, and in Thebes everything that seems good is in reality evil. In Thebes, not to be exactly as the Thebans are is to be regarded as a foreigner, and in Thebes, foreigners are regarded as utter monsters.”

Palamon said, “It is in our power — unless we fear being regarded as utter monsters and fear what apers and imitators can teach us — to be masters of our manners and morals. Why do I need to imitate another person’s manner of acting, which is not contagious where there is faith?

“And why do I need to be fond of another person’s way of speaking, when by using my own speech I may be reasonably understood — and saved, too, if I speak it truthfully? Why am I bound by any obligation of a

nobleman to follow a nobleman who follows his tailor, perhaps as long until the followed make pursuit — the tailor chases the nobleman because the nobleman has not paid his bill? Why should I follow the advice of a tailor and spend all my money on clothing?

“And let me know why my own barber is unblessed, and with him my poor chin, too, because it is not scissored in such a way that it is the exact imitation of the chin of a favorite celebrity? What canon — law — is there that commands me to take my rapier from my hip so that I can show off by dangling it in my hand, or to show off by walking on tiptoe before the street is foul with mud? Either I am the forehorse in the team of horses, or I am none of the horses in the train of horses that follow and draw the carriage or wagon. I am not a follower; I am the first, I am the leader, or I am nothing.

“Still, these poor slight sores I have been talking about don’t need a bandage. That which rips my bosom almost to the heart is —”

Arcite finished the sentence: “— our Uncle Creon.”

“Yes, he,” Palamon said. “Creon is a most unrestrained tyrant, whose successes make people unafraid of Heaven and assure villainous people that beyond the power of evil there’s nothing. He almost makes faith ill and feverous, and the only thing he deifies is changeable fortune. He gives credit to himself alone for the capabilities of those who serve him; what they accomplish he credits to his own strength and actions.

“Creon commands men to serve him, and he commands — takes for himself — what they win in doing that service: profit and glory. He is a man who is not afraid to do harm, but he dares not do good.

“Let the blood of mine that’s related to him be sucked from

me by leeches; let the leeches break and fall off me when they are filled with that corrupted blood.”

Arcite said, “Clear-spirited cousin, let’s leave Creon’s court, so that we may share nothing of his widely famous infamy because our metaphorical milk will taste of the pasture in which we reside, and we must be either vile or disobedient.”

When cows eat onions, their milk tastes like onions.

He continued, “We must not be Creon’s kinsmen in blood with the exception that we are all noblemen in quality.”

“Nothing is truer,” Palamon said. “I think the echoes of his shames have deafened the ears of Heavenly justice. The cries of widows descend again into their throats and are not heard by the gods.”

Valerius arrived.

Palamon greeted him: “Valerius.”

Valerius said, “The King calls for both of you, but be leaden-footed and slow to arrive until his great rage stops riding his back. Phoebus Apollo, when he broke his whip handle and exclaimed against the horses of the Sun, only whispered in comparison with the loudness of Creon’s fury.”

Phoebus Apollo had allowed his son Phaëthon to drive the chariot of the Sun across the sky. Being mortal, Phaëthon was unable to control the immortal horses that drew the chariot, and so the Sun careened wildly across the sky and came so close to the Earth that it was in danger of burning up. Jupiter saved the Earth and all its inhabitants by throwing a thunderbolt that killed Phaëthon. Phoebus Apollo was angry at the death of his son and took out his anger on his immortal horses.

Palamon said, "Small winds shake Creon. But what's the matter?"

Valerius replied, "Theseus, who appalls where and when he threatens, has sent deadly defiance to Creon and pronounces a sentence of ruin to Thebes, and he is at hand to seal with his actions the promise of his wrath. Theseus is ready and at hand to make war against Creon and Thebes."

"Let him approach," Arcite said. "Except that we fear the gods whom he serves, he causes not a jot of terror to us. Yet what man would reduce his own worth to a third — such is the case for both Palamon and me — when it's the case that his action is made cloudy with dregs because his mind is assured that what he goes about doing is bad? When a soldier knows that he is fighting for a bad leader, that knowledge greatly reduces the soldier's effectiveness."

"Don't think about that," Palamon said. "Our services stand now for Thebes, not Creon. We are fighting for our city, not for our King. Yet to be neutral to Creon would be dishonorable, and it would be rebellious to oppose him. Therefore, we must stand with him to the mercy of our fate, which has set the time for our last minute of life."

"So we must," Arcite said.

He then said to Valerius, "Is it said this war's already afoot? Or is it the case that a war will occur if Thebes fails to meet some condition?"

"The war is in motion," Valerius said. "The intelligence of state came in the same instant as the defier did. Theseus and the declaration of war came at the same time. Fighting will take place."

Palamon said, "Let's go to King Creon, who, if he had even a quarter of the honor that his enemy Theseus has, the blood we risk would be for our health. The blood would be

not spent wastefully, but instead it would be invested to purchase honor. But alas, since our hands are advanced before our hearts, and since we are fighting on behalf of a King whom we do not respect, to what will the fall of the stroke of the enemy's sword do damage? If we fight in an honorable cause, we gain honor. What do we risk by fighting for this particular cause?"

Arcite said, "Let the war's outcome, that never-erring arbitrator, tell us when we ourselves know all, and let us follow the beckoning of our fortune. Whatever will be, will be; it has been fated. When we know the outcome of the war, we will know what fate has decreed."

— 1.3 —

Hippolyta and Emilia had traveled a distance with Pirithous, but now they had to say goodbye to him. He was traveling to join Theseus at Thebes. The war against Thebes was taking longer than Theseus had said it would.

"Go no further with me," Pirithous said.

"Sir, farewell," Hippolyta said. "Repeat my wishes to our great lord, of whose success I dare not have any doubt, yet I wish him an excess and overflow of power, if it is possible, to endure ill-dealing fortune. May success speed to him. An abundance never hurts good governors. Theseus can manage well an abundance of soldiers."

Pirithous replied, "Although I know that Theseus' ocean does not need my poor drops, yet they must yield their tribute there. I want to join him and fight in the war."

He then said to Emilia, "My precious maiden, those best emotions and feelings that the Heavens infuse in their most skillfully crafted pieces, keep enthroned in your dear heart!"

“Thanks, sir,” Emilia replied. “Remember me to our all-royal brother-in-law, for whose success I’ll solicit the great Bellona, Roman goddess of war, and since in our Earthly state petitions are not understood without gifts to encourage their reception, I’ll offer to her what I shall be advised she likes. Our hearts are in his army, in his tent.”

Hippolyta said, “And in his bosom. We are Amazons, we have been soldiers, and we cannot weep when our friends don their helmets or put out on the dangerous sea, or tell about babes spitted on the lance, or women who have boiled their infants in — and afterward ate them — the briny salt tears they wept as they killed them.”

Such things happen. 2 Kings 6:28-29 tells this about a famine in Samaria:

28 Also the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow,

29 So we sod [boiled] my son, and did eat him: and I said to her the day after, Give thy son, that we may eat him, but she hath hid her son. (1599 Geneva Bible)

Lamentations 4:10 states, “*The hands of the pitiful women have sodden [boiled] their own children, which were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people*” (1599 Geneva Bible).

In addition, Josephus’ *History of the Jewish War* tells of a mother who ate her son’s flesh during the famine that occurred at a time when Jerusalem was besieged:

“[...] and it was now become impossible for her any way to find any more food, while the famine pierced through her very bowels and marrow, when also her passion was fired to a degree beyond the famine itself; nor did she consult with any thing but with her passion and the necessity she

was in. She then attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said, 'O thou miserable infant! for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? As to the war with the Romans, if they preserve our lives, we must be slaves. This famine also will destroy us, even before that slavery comes upon us. Yet are these seditious rogues more terrible than both the other. Come on; be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a by-word to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.' As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and eat the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed."

Source: Flavius Josephus. *The Works of Flavius Josephus*. Translated by William Whiston. A.M. Auburn and Buffalo, NY: John E. Beardsley, 1895.

Hippolyta added, "So if you stay then to see in us women who stay at home and do household chores and know nothing of the acts of war, we would hold you here forever because Emilia and I will never be such women."

"May peace be to you as I pursue this war," Pirithous said. "That way, when the war is won, peace will already be yours."

Pirithous exited.

Emilia said, "How his longing follows his friend! Since Theseus' departure, although Pirithous' sports and games needed his seriousness and skill, he has played them carelessly and without paying much attention to them. Neither gain made him regard, nor loss consider, his sports and games. Instead, his hands played sports and games, while his head thought about being with Theseus. He was like a nurse taking care of two very different twins. Have

you observed him since our great lord Theseus departed?"

"Very carefully," Hippolyta replied, "and I loved him for it. Theseus and Pirithous have taken shelter in many as dangerous as poor a corner in which peril and poverty contended to see which was worse. They have gone in skiffs over torrents whose roaring tyranny and power in the slightest measure of either of these was dreadful, and they have fought out together where Death's self was lodged. They visited Hell itself, yet fate brought them safely away. Their knot of love, tied, weaved, entangled, with a finger so true, so long, and of so deep a cunning, may be worn out in death, but can be never undone in life.

"I think Theseus cannot be an umpire to himself, cleaving his conscience into two sides and doing each side equal and impartial justice — he loves justice best. Theseus divides his conscience in his consideration of Pirithous, who is his second self, and himself, and he cannot decide whom he loves best."

Emilia said, "Doubtless there is a one he loves best, and reason has no manners if it says that one is not you.

"I was acquainted once with a time when I enjoyed a playfellow. You were at the wars when she died and enriched the grave. She made the bed — the grave — too proud. She took leave of the Moon, which then looked pale at parting, when our count of years was each eleven. With her death, she stopped serving Diana, goddess of the Moon and protector of virgins."

"She was Flavina," Hippolyta said.

"Yes," Emilia said. "You talk of Pirithous' and Theseus' love. Theirs has more ground and a firmer foundation, is more maturely seasoned, and is more held together with strong judgment, and the one of the other may be said to water their intertangled roots of love and to meet each

other's needs.

“But I and the playfellow I sigh about now and spoke of were innocent things.

“We loved each other just because we did, and like the elements that know neither what nor why, yet effect striking and exceptional outcomes through their operation, our souls did so to one another.

“What she liked was then by me approved and what she did not like was then by me condemned without any further consideration.

“The flower that I would pluck and put between my breasts — then but beginning to swell about the nipple — she would long for until she had one like it, and put it in her similarly innocent cradle, where, like the mythic Phoenix that immolates itself on a bier of fragrant wood, the flowers died in the midst of perfume.

“On my head no decorative trinket appeared without her wanting one like it. Her taste in clothing — pretty, although perhaps what she wore was carelessly put on — I followed when I most carefully dressed myself.

“When my ear had stolen some new melody, or randomly I hummed one of my coinage, why, it was a note on which her spirits would sojourn — rather, dwell on — and she would sing it in her sleep.

“This account of my childhood friend and our love for each other — which fury-innocent knows well comes in like a bastard of old importment — has a particular conclusion.”

In other words, “This account of my childhood friend and our love for each other is one that a person innocent of the fury caused by sexual jealousy knows well comes in like a false, illegitimate version of the old, original events, which

were of great importance.”

Strong sexual passion can cause jealousy even between lifelong friends, as it would between Palamon and Arcite, but the love between Emilia and Flavina had none of that. A person who is not innocent of fury might be incapable of understanding the childhood relationship of Emilia and Flavina.

Emilia continued, “My account of this friendship between Flavina and me has this conclusion: The true love between maiden and maiden may be more than in sex individual.”

In other words, “The true love between maiden and maiden may be more than the love shared by a husband and wife who are joined indissolubly in marriage.”

If something is dividual, it can be separated. A husband and a wife can be separated into two sexes: male and female.

If something is individual, it is single and cannot be separated. A husband and wife, although they are different sexes, are joined indissolubly in a single marriage.

Emilia believed that the true love between two virgin females may be more than the true love found in a heterosexual married couple.

Hippolyta replied, “You’re out of breath, and this high-speeded pace of your speech is only to say that you shall never — like the maiden Flavina — love any who is called a man.”

“I am sure I shall not,” Emilia said.

Hippolyta said, “Now, unfortunately, weak sister, I must no more believe you in this point — although I know that you yourself believe this point — than I will trust a sickly appetite, which loathes even as it longs.

“But to be sure, my sister, if I were receptive to your persuasion, you have said enough to shake me from the arm of the all-noble Theseus, for whose fortunes I will now go in and kneel and pray for, with great assurance that I, more than his Pirithous, possess the high throne in his heart.”

“I am not against your faith, yet I continue to believe my faith,” Emilia said.

— 1.4 —

Cornets sounded, along with the many noises of a battle. The call for a retreat sounded.

Theseus, the victor of the battle and of the war against Thebes, arrived, as did the three widowed Queens, who met him and fell on their faces before him. Many lords and soldiers were present.

The First Queen said, “May no planet be malignant to you!”

This culture, which believed in astrology, thought that planets could have a beneficial or a malignant influence on people.

The Second Queen said, “May both Heaven and Earth befriend you forever.”

The Third Queen said, “I cry ‘Amen’ to all the good that may be wished upon your head.”

Theseus replied, “The impartial gods, who from the high Heavens view us, their mortal herd, behold those who sin and, at the time the gods think right, chastise the sinners. Thus the impartial gods have chastised the Thebans.”

He said to the three Queens, “Go and find the bones of your dead lords and honor them with a treble ceremony. Rather than a gap should appear in their dear rites, we would fill

the gap, but we will depute men who shall invest you in your dignities and make right each thing my haste to return to Athens leaves imperfect.

“So, Queens, *adieu*, and may Heaven’s good eyes look on you.”

The three Queens exited.

A herald and some soldiers bearing on biers the badly wounded Palamon and Arcite entered the scene. Palamon and Arcite were expected to die soon.

Seeing Palamon and Arcite, Theseus asked, “Who are those men?”

The herald answered, “They are men of great quality and high rank, as may be judged by their armor and equipment. Some men of Thebes have told us that these two men are sisters’ children and nephews to the King.”

Recognizing the two prisoners, Theseus said, “By the helmet of Mars, I saw them in the war, similar to a pair of lions and smeared with the blood of their prey, make open lanes into the aghast troops opposing them. I fixed my notice constantly on them, for they were a sight worth a god’s view. What was it that prisoner told me when I enquired their names?”

Theseus had been impressed by the military skill of Palamon and Arcite and had earlier asked a prisoner for their names.

The herald replied, “With your leave, they’re called Arcite and Palamon.”

“That’s right,” Theseus said. “Those are the names. They are not dead?”

“Nor are they in a state of life,” the herald said. “Had they

been taken prisoner when their last hurts were given, it is possible that they might have recovered. Yet they breathe and still have the name of men rather than corpses.”

“Then treat them like men,” Theseus said. “The very dregs of such men exceed the wine of others by millions of times. Assemble all our physicians in their behalf. Don’t be niggard with our most expensive balms; instead, use them lavishly. Their lives concern us much more than Thebes’ worth.

“Rather than have them freed of this plight, and in their morning state — alive, healthy, hostile to us, sound, and at liberty — I would prefer them to be dead.”

Using the royal plural, Theseus continued, “But forty thousand times we would rather have them prisoners to us than to Death. Bear them speedily from our kind air, which to wounded men like them is unkind, and minister to them what man to man may do.”

This culture believed that open air was bad for wounds.

Still using the royal plural, Theseus continued, “For our sake, do more than what man to man may do.

“I have known frights, fury, friends’ behests, love’s provocations, zeal, a mistress’ task, desire for liberty, a fever, and madness to each set a target that human nature could not reach without some imposition; in such cases, sickness in will has over-wrestled strength in reason. Strongly motivated men are capable of achieving much more than cold reason says they are capable of achieving.”

This is true, and not just of men. Mothers have performed incredible acts of strength in order to save their children.

Theseus continued, “For our love and the great healer-god Apollo’s mercy, have our best physicians use their best

skill to heal these men.”

Using the royal plural, he then ordered, “Take these men into the city of Thebes. From there, once we have organized disorganized matters, we will speed to Athens before our army goes there.”

— 1.5 —

The Queens had located the corpses of their husbands and had given orders for them to be placed in coffins. The Queens now sang a dirge:

“Urns and odors bring away;

“Vapors, sighs, darken the day;

“Our dole [sorrow] more deadly looks than dying;

“Balms and gums and heavy cheers [sad faces],

“Sacred vials filled with tears,

“And clamors through the wild air flying.

“Come, all sad and solemn shows

“That are quick-eyed [keen-eyed] Pleasure’s foes;

“We convent [call together] naught [nothing] else but woes.

“We convent [call together] naught [nothing] else but woes.”

The Third Queen said to the Second Queen, “This funeral path takes you to your household’s grave. May joy be yours again; may peace sleep with him.”

The Second Queen said to the First Queen, “And this path will take you to your household, where you will bury your husband.”

The First Queen said to the Third Queen, “Your path is this way. The Heavens lend a thousand differing ways to one sure end. A thousand paths lead to death and the grave.”

The Third Queen said, “This world’s a city full of wandering streets, and death’s the marketplace where each one meets.”

Many cities had many streets leading to the marketplace.

CHAPTER 2 (The Two Noble Kinsmen)

— 2.1 —

The jailor was talking to a wooer — a man who was wooing the jailor's young daughter. They were in a garden that the jail overlooked.

The jailor said, "I may give you little wealth while I live; I may give something to you, but not much. Unfortunately, the prison I keep, although it is for great ones, yet great ones seldom come; before one salmon you shall take a number of minnows."

Wealthy prisoners paid the jailor extra for better food and accommodations. This was a way for the jailor to supplement his income.

The jailor continued, "I am rumored to be wealthier than I have reason to believe that the rumor is truthful. I wish that I really were as wealthy as I am rumored to be. But by the Virgin Mary, I say that what I have, be it what it will, I will leave to my daughter at the day of my death."

The wooer replied, "Sir, I demand no more than your own offer, and I will endow your daughter with what I have promised."

"Well, we will talk more about this when the wedding is past. But do you have a definite promise from her that she will marry you? When I see that to be true, then I will give you my consent to marry her."

The jailer's daughter, carrying rushes, arrived. The rushes served as floor coverings for the prisoners.

The wooer said, "I have her promise, sir. Here she comes."

The jailer said to his daughter, "Your friend and I have

chanced to talk about you here, concerning the old business. But no more of that now; as soon as the court commotion is over, we will have an end of it. In the meantime, look carefully after the two prisoners. I can tell you they are Princes.”

“These rushes are for their chamber,” the jailor’s daughter said. “It is a pity they are in prison, and it would be a pity if they should be out of prison. I think they have the patience to make any adversity ashamed. The prison itself is proud of them, and they have all of the world in their chamber. Many people visit them.”

“They are reputed to be a pair of absolute men,” the jailor said.

“Truly, I think the rumor speaks only inadequately about them. They stand a step above what is reported about them.”

“I heard it said about them that in the battle they were the outstanding soldiers,” the jailer said.

“That is very likely, for they are noble sufferers,” the jailor’s daughter said. “I marvel at how they would have looked had they been victors. With their constant nobility, they make a freedom out of bondage, making misery their mirth and making affliction a trifle to jest at.”

“Do they?” the jailer asked.

“It seems to me that they have no more perception of their captivity than I of ruling Athens,” the jailer’s daughter replied. “They eat well, look merrily, talk of many things, but say nothing about their own captivity and disasters. Yet sometimes a broken sigh, martyred as it were in the deliverance, will break from one of them — and then the other immediately gives it so sweet a rebuke that I could wish myself a sigh to be so scolded, or at least a sigher to

be comforted.”

“I never saw them,” the wooer said.

“Duke Theseus himself came privately in the night, and he brought them,” the jailer said.

Palamon and Arcite, in shackles, appeared at the window of the jail.

The jailer continued, “What the reason for it is, I don’t know. Look, yonder they are; that’s Arcite looking out of the window.”

“No, sir, no, that’s Palamon,” the jailer’s daughter said. “Arcite is the shorter of the two; you may perceive a part of him through the window.”

“Stop your pointing,” the jailer said. “They would not point at us. Let’s get out of their sight.”

“It is a holiday to look at them,” the jailer’s daughter said. “Lord, the difference of men!”

The jailer, his daughter, and the wooer exited.

— 2.2 —

Palamon and Arcite talked near the window of the jail cell.

Palamon asked, “How are you, noble cousin?”

“How are you, sir?” Arcite replied.

“Why, I am strong enough to laugh at misery and endure the fortune of war, yet I am afraid that we are prisoners forever, cousin.”

“I believe it, and I have resolved to patiently accept my fate as a prisoner and have put aside my future.”

“Oh, cousin Arcite, where is Thebes now? Where is our

noble country? Where are our friends and families? Never more must we behold those comforts, never more see the hardy youths strive for the games of honor, displaying the brightly colored favors of their ladies like tall ships under sail, then start amongst them and like an east wind leave them all behind us like lazy clouds, while we, Palamon and Arcite, in the time it would take to wag a playful leg, outstripped the people's praises and won the garlands before the people had time to wish them ours.

“Oh, never more shall we two exercise, like twins of honor, our arms and weapons in battle again, and feel our fiery horses like proud seas under us. Our good swords now — Mars, the red-eyed god of war, never wore better — torn from our sides, like age must run to rust and adorn the temples of those gods who hate us. These hands shall never more draw them out like lightning to blast whole armies.”

The victor sometimes dedicated the weapons of defeated enemies to a temple of a god.

Arcite replied, “No, Palamon, those hopes of free exercise are prisoners with us. Here we are and here the graces of our youths must wither like a too-early spring.”

The first warm day or two following winter is usually succeeded by one or more cold days.

Arcite continued, “Here old age must find us and — which is heaviest and most sorrowful, Palamon — must find us unmarried. The sweet embraces of a loving wife, loaded with kisses, armed with a thousand Cupids, shall never clasp our necks. No children of ours will be born and know us — no tiny figures of ourselves shall we ever see, to gladden our old age. We will never teach them like young eagles to gaze boldly at bright armor and we will never say, ‘Remember what your fathers were, and conquer!’”

This culture believed that eagles taught their young to gaze

directly at the Sun.

Arcite continued, “The fair-eyed maidens shall weep about our banishments and in their songs curse ever-blind Lady Fortune until she for shame sees what a wrong she has done to youth and nature.

“This prison is all our world. We shall know nothing here but one another, and we shall hear nothing but the clock that tells our woes. The vine shall grow, but we shall never see it. Summer shall come, and with her all delights, but dead-cold winter must inhabit here always.”

“That is too true, Arcite,” Palamon said. “To our Theban hounds that shook the aged forest with their echoes no more now must we halloo; no more must we shake our pointed javelins while the angry swine flies like a Parthian quiver from our rages, with its back struck with our well-steeled arrows.”

The swine’s back would have so many arrows sticking out of it that it would look like the quiver full of arrows belonging to an archer of Parthia.

Palamon added, “All valiant activities, the food and nourishment of noble minds, in us two here shall perish. We shall die as children of grief and ignorance — which is the curse of honor.”

“Yet, cousin,” Arcite said, “even from the bottom of these miseries, from all these miseries that bad fortune can inflict upon us, I see two comforts rising, two complete blessings, if the gods please: first, to hold here a brave patience and bravely accept our fate, and second, the enjoying of our griefs together.

“While Palamon is with me, let me perish if I think this is our prison!”

“Certainly it is a major goodness, cousin, that our fortunes were entwined together,” Palamon said. “It is very true: Even if two souls who have been put in two noble bodies suffer the bitterness of fate, as long as they grow together, will never sink; they must not, even if they could. A willing man dies sleeping and all’s done — a man who accepts death dies as easily as if he were sleeping.”

Arcite asked, “Shall we make worthy uses of this place — this prison — that all men hate so much?”

“How, gentle cousin?” Palamon asked.

“Let’s think this prison is a holy sanctuary that will keep us from the corruption of worse men. We are young and still desire the ways of honor that liberty and common conversation, the poison to pure spirits, might similar to women woo us to wander from. What worthy blessing can exist but our imaginations may make it ours? And here, being thus together, we are an endless mine of wealth to one another. We are one another’s wife, ever begetting new births of love. We are father, friends, and acquaintances. We are, in one another, families. I am your heir, and you are mine. This place is our inheritance; no hard oppressor dares take this from us; here with a little patience we shall live long and loving. No excesses seek us. The hand of war hurts none here, nor do the seas swallow their youth. Were we at liberty, a wife might part us lawfully, or business might part us. Quarrels might consume us. The malice of ill men might crave our acquaintance. I might sicken, cousin, where you should never know it, and so perish without your noble hand to close my eyes, and without your prayers to the gods. A thousand events, if we were away from here, could sever us.”

“You have made me — I thank you, cousin Arcite — almost delighted with my captivity. What a misery it is to live abroad and everywhere! It is a life like that of a beast, I

think. I find the court here, I am sure, more content than any court elsewhere, and all those pleasures that woo the wills of men to vanity I see through now, and I am able to tell the world that it is only a gaudy shadow that old Time takes with him as he passes by.

“What would we be, if we were to grow old in the court of Creon, the court where sin is justice, and lust and ignorance are the virtues of the great ones? Cousin Arcite, if the loving gods had not found this place for us, we would have died as Creon’s courtiers do — they are ill old men, unwept, and with the people’s curses as their epitaphs. Shall I say more?”

“I want to hear you speak more.”

“You shall. Is there any record of any two who loved each other as friends better than we do, Arcite?”

“Surely there cannot be.”

“I do not think it possible that our friendship should ever leave us,” Palamon said.

“Until our deaths occur, it cannot,” Arcite said.

Emilia and her female attendant entered the garden below the prison window.

Arcite continued, “And after our death our spirits shall be led to those who love eternally in Elysium.”

Palamon caught sight of Emilia and stared at her, silent.

Arcite said, “Speak on, sir.”

Emilia said to her female attendant, “This garden has a world of pleasures in it. What flower is this?”

“It is called narcissus, madam.”

In mythology, Narcissus was a handsome boy who fell in love with his reflection in a stream.

“Narcissus was certainly a fair boy, but a fool to love himself. Weren’t there maidens enough for him to find someone to love?”

Arcite said to Palamon, “Please, continue to speak.”

Palamon replied, “Yes.”

Emilia said to her female attendant, “Or were all the maidens hard-hearted?”

“They could not be to one as good-looking as Narcissus.”

“You would not be hard-hearted to him,” Emilia said.

“I think I should not, madam.”

“That’s a good girl. But take heed about your kindness, though.”

“Why, madam?”

“Men are mad things,” Emilia said.

More than one woman has found her kindness to be misinterpreted as leading a man on.

Arcite said to Palamon, “Will you continue what you were saying, cousin?”

Emilia said to her female servant, “Can you embroider such flowers in silk, girl?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll have a gown full of them, and of these other flowers. This is a pretty color. Won’t it look splendid on a skirt, girl?”

“It will look beautiful, madam.”

Arcite said, “Cousin, cousin! How are you, sir? Why, Palamon!”

“Never until now was I in prison, Arcite.”

“Why, what’s the matter, man?”

“Behold, and wonder!” Palamon replied. “By Heaven, she is a goddess.”

Arcite looked at Emilia and said, “I see!”

“Kneel and pay homage to her. She is a goddess, Arcite.”

Emilia said to her female attendant, “Of all flowers I think a rose is best.”

“Why, gentle madam?”

“It is the very emblem of a maiden,” Emilia said. “For when the west wind courts her gently, how modestly she blossoms and beautifies the Sun with her chaste blushes! When the rough and impatient north wind comes near her, then like chastity she locks her beauties in her bud again, and leaves him to base prickly thorns.”

Emilia’s female attendant said, “Yet, good madam, sometimes her modesty will blossom so far she falls for it.”

A rose blossom can fall because of the way a rough and impatient north wind treats it; it withers and falls off the stem. A maiden who falls for the line of a rough and impatient man can fall in another way — she can fall into bed.

Emilia’s female attendant added, “A maiden, if she has any honor, would be loath to take a rose as a model to follow.”

“You are misinterpreting what I say as being wanton!” Emilia said.

Arcite said to Palamon, "She is wondrously beautiful."

"She is all the beauty that exists on Earth," Palamon replied.

Emilia said to her female attendant, "The Sun grows high. Let's walk in. Keep these flowers. We'll see how near art can come to their colors. I am wondrously merry-hearted. I could laugh now."

A proverb stated, "Laugh and lie down."

Her female attendant said, "I could lie down, I am sure."

"And take someone with you?" Emilia asked.

"That's as we bargain, madam," her female attendant answered.

It could happen.

Emilia said, "Well, agree then."

The two women exited from the garden.

"What do you think of this beauty?" Palamon asked Arcite.

"This beauty is a rare one."

"Is it only a rare one?"

Arcite answered, "She is a matchless beauty."

"Might not a man well lose himself and love her?" Palamon asked.

"I cannot tell what you have done," Arcite said, "but I have lost myself and I do love her, damn my eyes for it! Now I feel my shackles."

"You love her, then?"

"Who would not love her?"

“And desire her?”

“I want her more than I want my freedom,” Arcite answered.

“I saw her first,” Palamon said.

“That’s nothing.”

“But it shall be.”

“I saw her, too,” Arcite said.

“Yes, but you must not love her.”

“I will not, as you do, love her to worship her as she is Heavenly and a blessed goddess. I love her as a woman, and I want to enjoy her. So both of us may love her.”

The kind of enjoying he meant was enjoying her in bed.

“You shall not love her at all,” Palamon said.

“Not love her at all! Who shall deny me?”

“I, who first saw her,” Palamon said. “I, who took possession first with my eye of all those beauties in her revealed to mankind.”

Palamon now began to use the less formal, less respectful pronouns “thou” and “thee” and “thy” to refer to Arcite, rather than the more formal, more respectful pronouns “you” and “your” that he had been using.

One might expect that Arcite and Palamon, who were both relatives and close friends, to regularly use the informal pronouns “thou” and “thee” to refer to each other, but they regularly used the pronoun “you.” Sometimes, close friends can treat each other with excessive formality as a sign of respect.

He said to Arcite, “If thou love her, or entertain a hope to

blight my wishes, thou art a traitor, Arcite, and a fellow as false as thy title to her. Friendship, blood relationship, and all the ties between us I disclaim if thou think once upon her.”

“Yes, I love her,” Arcite said, “and if the lives of all my family members lay on it, I must do so. I love her with my soul. If that will lose you, then farewell, Palamon. I say again, I love her, and in loving her I maintain I am as worthy and as free a lover and have as just a title to her beauty as any Palamon or anyone living who is a man’s son.”

“Have I called thee friend?” Palamon asked.

“Yes, and you have found me to be a friend,” Arcite replied. “Why are you so moved? Let me reason coolly and calmly with you: Aren’t I part of your blood, part of your soul? You have told me that I was Palamon and you were Arcite.”

“Yes,” Palamon said.

“Am I not liable to those emotions, those joys, griefs, angers, and fears that my friend shall experience?”

“You may be.”

“Why then would you deal so cunningly, so strangely, so unlike a noble kinsman, to love alone? Speak truly, do you think me unworthy to look at her?”

“No,” Palamon said, “but I think thee unjust if thou pursue that sight.”

“Because another person first sees the enemy, shall I stand still and let my honor down, and never charge?”

“Yes, if the enemy is only one person,” Palamon said.

“But say that one enemy would rather combat me?” Arcite

asked.

In combat, one person could challenge an enemy to fight in single combat.

“Then let that one say so, and use thy freedom to do what thou wants. Else, if thou pursue her, be like that cursed man who hates his country — be a branded villain.”

“You are mad,” Arcite said.

“I must be,” Palamon said. “Until thou are worthy, Arcite, it concerns me. And in this madness if I put thee at risk and take thy life, I deal but truly.”

“Damn, sir! You are acting exactly like a child. I will love her. I must, I ought to do so, and I dare, and all this justly.”

“Oh, if now thy false self and thy friend — me, Palamon — had the good fortune to have one hour at liberty and grasp our good swords in our hands, I would quickly teach thee what it were to filch affection from another. Thou are baser in it than a pickpocket. Just put thy head a little more out of this window, and as I have a soul, I’ll nail thy life to the window sash.”

“Thou dare not, fool,” Arcite said, beginning to use the less formal, less respectful pronouns that Palamon had been using. “Thou can not; thou are feeble. Put my head out? I’ll throw my body out and leap into the garden when I see her next, and throw myself between her arms to anger thee.”

The jailer arrived.

“Say no more,” Palamon said. “The jailkeeper’s coming. I shall live to knock thy brains out with my shackles.”

“Do it! I dare thee!” Arcite said.

“By your leave, gentlemen,” the jailer said respectfully.

“What is it, honest jailkeeper?” Palamon asked.

“Lord Arcite, you must immediately go to Theseus, the Duke of Athens. I don’t yet know why.”

“I am ready to go, jailkeeper,” Arcite said.

“Prince Palamon, I must for awhile bereave you of your fair cousin’s company,” the jailer said.

Arcite and the jailer exited.

“And you can bereave me, too, whenever you please, of life,” Palamon said to himself. “Why has Arcite been sent for? It may be he shall marry Emilia; he’s a good-looking man, and likely enough the Duke has taken notice of both his noble blood and his noble body. But his falsehood! Why should a friend be treacherous? If that falsehood should get him a wife so noble and so fair, then let honest men never love again.

“Once more I would love to see this fair Emilia. Blessed garden and fruit and flowers more blessed that still blossom as her bright eyes shine on you, I wish I were, in exchange for all my future good fortune, yonder little tree, yonder blooming apricot! How I would spread and fling my wanton arms in at her window. I would bring her fruit fit for the gods to feed on. Youth and pleasure whenever she tasted should be doubled on her; and, if she be not Heavenly, I would make her so near the gods in nature that they should fear her.”

The jailer returned.

Palamon continued, “And then I am sure she would love me.”

Seeing the jailer, he said, “What is the news, jailkeeper? Where’s Arcite?”

“He has been banished and ordered into exile,” the jailer answered. “Prince Pirithous obtained Arcite’s liberty, but never again upon his oath and life must Arcite set foot upon this Kingdom. Arcite has sworn an oath on his life that he will not return here.”

“He’s a blessed man,” Palamon said. “He shall see Thebes again, and call to arms the bold young men who, when he orders them to charge, will fall on the enemy like fire. Arcite shall have a chance, if he dares to make himself a lover worthy of wooing her, yet in the field to fight a battle for her, and, if he loses her then, he’s a passionless coward. How bravely may he bear himself to win her if he is noble Arcite — he has a thousand ways to win her!

“If I were at liberty, I would do things of such a virtuous greatness that this lady, this blushing virgin, should take manhood to her and seek to rape me.”

The jailer said, “My lord, for you I have this charge, this order, to —”

Palamon said, “— to discharge my life?”

One meaning of the word “charge” was to load a firearm. The firearm could be discharged against Palamon and take his life.

The jailer replied, “No, but from this place to remove your lordship. The windows are too open and easy to escape through.”

“May the Devils take those who are so malicious to me!” Palamon said. “Please, kill me.”

“And hang for it afterward!” the jailer said.

“By this good light, the Sun, I swear that if I had a sword I would kill thee.”

“Why, my lord?” the jailer asked.

“Thou bring such paltry, scurvy news continually, that thou are not worthy of life. I will not go.”

“Indeed you must, my lord,” the jailer replied.

“Will I be able to see the garden from my new cell?” Palamon asked.

“No.”

“Then I am determined that I will not go.”

“I must force you to go then,” the jailer said, “and, because you are dangerous, I’ll clap more irons on you.”

“Do, good jailkeeper,” Palamon said. “I’ll shake them so that you shall not sleep. I’ll make you a new morris dance.”

People performing a morris dance shook bells attached to their clothing. Palamon’s new kind of morris dance would involve shaking his shackles.

Palamon asked, “Must I go?”

“There is no alternative. You must go.”

“Farewell, kind window,” Palamon said.

He now used “thee” and “thou” in their informal, affectionate meanings: “May a rude wind never hurt thee, kind window.

“Oh, my lady, if ever thou have felt what sorrow was, dream how I suffer.

“Come, jailer. You can now metaphorically bury me.”

— 2.3 —

In the country outside Athens, Arcite, wearing an ordinary cloak that disguised his nobility, said to himself, “Am I

banished from the Kingdom? It is a benefit, a mercy I must thank them for; but being banished from the free enjoying of that face I die for, oh, it was a carefully planned punishment, a worse death than could be imagined — such a vengeance that, were I old and wicked, all my sins could never pluck upon me. Palamon, thou have the advantage now; thou shall stay and see her bright eyes break like dawn each morning against thy window and let life into thee; thou shall feed upon the sweetness of a noble beauty that nature has never exceeded and never shall.

“Good gods, what happiness has Palamon! Twenty to one he’ll come to a position where he can speak to her, and if she is as gentle and kind as she is fair, I know she’ll be his. He has a tongue that will tame tempests and make the wild rocks frolic.

“Come what can come, the worst that can come is my death. I will not leave the Kingdom. I know my own Kingdom — Thebes — is only a heap of ruins, and I will get no help there. If I go away from Athens, Palamon will have her.

“I am resolved that another shape — a disguise — shall either make me or end my fortunes. Either way I will be happy. I’ll see her and be near her, or I’ll be no more — I’ll be dead.”

Five rustics arrived. The countryman in the lead carried a garland.

Arcite stepped aside.

The first countryman said, “My masters, I’ll be there, that’s certain.”

The second countryman said, “And I’ll be there.”

The third countryman said, “And I will be there, too.”

The fourth countryman said, "Why, then, I'll join you, boys. The worst that can happen to me is I'll get a talking-to. Let the plow play today; I'll whip the jades' tails tomorrow to make them pull the plow faster and make up for today's holiday."

A jade is a horse of low quality.

The first countryman said, "I am sure to have my wife as jealous as a turkey, but that's all one. I'll go through with it; let her grumble."

The second countryman said, "Board her as if she were a ship tomorrow night and fill up her empty lower area as if you were filling an empty hold with cargo, and she will forgive you."

The third countryman said, "Yes, all you need to do is to put a fescue in her fist and you shall see her learn a new lesson and be a good lass."

A fescue was a pointer used in teaching. Metaphorically, a fescue was a penis.

The third countryman then asked, "Will we all keep our promise to participate in the May Day festivities?"

The fourth countryman asked, "What can keep us from doing it?"

The third countryman said, "Arcas will be there."

"And Sennois and Rycas," the second countryman said, "and three better lads never danced under a green tree. And you know which wenches, ha! But will the dainty *domine*, the fastidious schoolmaster, keep his promise, do you think? For he is in charge of everything, you know."

The word "wench" was not necessarily derogatory; it could be used affectionately.

The third countryman said, “He’ll eat a hornbook rather than fail. Come on, the matter’s too far driven between him and the tanner’s daughter to let the matter slip now. The tanner’s daughter insists on seeing the Duke, and she insists on dancing, too.”

A hornbook is a single sheet of paper covered with and protected by thinly sliced and therefore transparent horn. On the paper are the alphabet, numbers, and the Lord’s Prayer.

The fourth countryman asked, “Shall we be merry?”

The second countryman said, “All the boys in Athens can’t compete against us. If this were a race, they would be behind us, huffing and puffing and blowing wind against our butts.”

He started to dance and said, “And here I’ll be and there I’ll be, for our town, and here again, and there again. Ha, boys, hurray for the weavers!”

The first countryman said, “This dance of ours must be done in the woods.”

The fourth countryman started to object, “Oh, pardon me.”

The second countryman confirmed that the dance would be done in the woods during a break in the hunting and along with other rustic celebrations: “By all means. Our thing of learning the schoolmaster says so — in the woods where he himself will edify the Duke most amazingly in our behalves. He’s excellent in the woods, but bring him to the plains and his learning makes no cry.”

The woods were often hilly and always rustic areas; the plains were level sites where cities could be built. The schoolmaster and the dance supervised by the schoolmaster were suitable for the woods, but not noble enough for the

court.

Hunting dogs make a cry when they scent their prey; metaphorically, the schoolmaster's learning would make no cry in the court. It would not be impressive.

The third countryman said, "We'll see the sports, then every man to his tackle."

The tackle was equipment — what was needed for the dance. Performers of a morris dance needed bells.

He added, "And, sweet companions, let's rehearse, by all means, before the ladies see us, and do so sweetly, and God knows what may come of it."

The proverb "To stand to one's tackling" meant "To be ready for anything." The word "stand" also meant "erection." "What may come of it" could be a private activity involving a man and a woman.

The fourth countryman said, "I agree. Once the sports are ended, we'll perform. Let's go, boys, and let's carry on."

Arcite stepped forward and said, "By your leaves, honest friends. Please tell me where you are going."

The fourth countryman asked, "Where we are going? Why, what kind of a question is that?"

Arcite replied, "It is a question to me who doesn't know the answer."

The third countryman answered, "We are going to the games, my friend."

The second countryman asked, "Where were you raised, that you don't know that?"

"I was raised not far from here, sir," Arcite said politely. "Are there such games today?"

The first countryman said, “Yes, indeed, there are, and such as you never saw. Duke Theseus himself will be in person there.”

“What pastimes will there be?”

The second countryman said, “Wrestling and running.”

He then said to the other countrymen about Arcite, “He is a good-looking fellow.”

The third countryman asked, “Will you come along with us?”

“Not yet, sir,” Arcite replied.

“Well, sir,” the fourth countryman said. “Take your own time.”

He then said to the other countrymen, “Come, boys.”

The first countryman said quietly to the other countrymen as they were leaving, “I am worried. This fellow has a formidable way of moving his hips that will be of great advantage in wrestling. Look at how his body seems made for wrestling.”

The second countryman said quietly, “I’ll be hanged, though, if he dares to wrestle. Hang him, the plum porridge! He wrestle? He roast eggs! He’s better suited to be an eater than a wrestler! Come, let’s go, lads.”

The four countrymen exited.

Alone, Arcite said, “This opportunity that I dared not wish for has fallen into my lap. I knew how to wrestle well — the best men called me an excellent wrestler — and I knew how to run swifter than wind ever flew upon a field of corn, furling the abundant ears.

“I’ll venture to be there and compete in these sports while

I'm in some poor disguise. Who knows whether my brows may not be girt with the garlands of a victor, and who knows whether happiness and good fortune will promote me to a position at court where I may always dwell in sight of the woman I love?"

— 2.4 —

Alone, the jailor's daughter said, "Why should I love this gentleman? The odds are that he never will love me. I am lowly born, my father is the lowly keeper of his prison, and the man I love is a Prince. To marry him is hopeless; to be his whore is witless and foolish. Damn it! What extremes are we lasses driven to when our fifteenth year has once found us!

"First, I saw him. I, seeing him, thought that he was a handsome man. He has as much to please a woman in him, if he ever chooses to bestow it, as ever these eyes yet looked on.

"Next, I pitied him, and so would any young girl, on my conscience, who ever dreamed, or vowed to give her virginity to a young handsome man.

"Then, I loved him, extremely loved him, infinitely loved him!

"And yet he had a first cousin, as fair as himself, too.

"But Palamon was in my heart, and there, Lord, what a turmoil he causes! To hear him sing in an evening, what a Heaven it is! And yet his songs are sad ones. Fairer spoken was never any other gentleman. When I would come in to bring him water in the morning, first he would bow his noble body, and then he would greet me like this: 'Fair, gentle maiden, good morning. May thy goodness get you a happy husband.' Once he kissed me; I loved my lips all the better for ten days afterward. I wish that he would kiss me

every day! He grieves much — and I grieve as much when I see his misery.

“What should I do to make him know I love him? I would like to sexually enjoy him. Let’s say I ventured to set him free? What does the law say then?”

Her father the jailer would get in serious trouble if Palamon were to escape from jail.

Snapping her fingers, she said, “Thus much for law or my kindred! I will do it, and this night, or tomorrow, he shall love me.”

— 2.5 —

Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, Emilia, and Arcite talked together. Arcite was in disguise, and he was wearing the garland of a victor. Some attendants and other people were present.

Theseus said to Arcite, “You have done worthily. I have not seen, since Hercules, any man of tougher muscles than you. Whoever you are, you run the best and wrestle the best that these times can boast of.”

Arcite replied, “I am proud to please you.”

“In what country were you raised?” Theseus asked.

“This country, but far away, Prince Theseus,” Arcite answered.

“Are you a gentleman?” Theseus asked.

“My father said so, and he raised me to pursue gentlemanly activities.”

“Are you his heir?” Theseus asked.

“I am his youngest son, sir,” Arcite replied.

The oldest son was the father's heir.

"Your father, surely, is a happy sire, then," Theseus said, politely assuming that the older son or sons would be as excellent as Arcite.

He then asked, "What accomplishments do you profess to have?"

Arcite replied, "I have a little of all the noble qualities. I knew how to keep a hawk, and I have hallooed well to a deep cry of dogs while hunting. I dare not praise my feats in horsemanship, yet those who knew me would say it was my best accomplishment. Last, and greatest, I would be thought to be a soldier."

"You are perfect," Theseus said. "You have all the accomplishments of a gentleman."

"Upon my soul, he is a handsome man," Pirithous said.

"He is, indeed," Emilia said.

Pirithous said to Hippolyta, "How do you like him, lady?"

Hippolyta replied, "I admire him. I have not seen so young a man be so noble a gentleman, if he has said the truth about his accomplishments."

"Believe him," Emilia said. "His mother was a wondrously beautiful woman. His face, I think, shows that."

"But his body and fiery mind show that he has a brave father," Hippolyta said.

"Notice how his virtue, like a hidden Sun, breaks through his baser garments," Pirithous said.

"He's well begotten, certainly," Hippolyta said. "His father is definitely noble."

Theseus asked Arcite, "What made you seek this place, sir?"

"Noble Theseus," Arcite replied, "I came here to earn fame and do my ablest service to such a well-approved, commendable wonder as your worth, for only in your court, of all the world, dwells fair-eyed Honor."

"All his words are worthy," Pirithous said.

Theseus said to Arcite, "Sir, we are much indebted to you and your travel to and your travail in the games. Nor shall you lose your wish to be in my court."

He then said, "Pirithous, find a place at court for this fair gentleman."

"Thanks, Theseus," Pirithous said.

He then said to Arcite, "Whoever you are, you're my servant, and I shall give you to a most noble service: You will serve this lady, this bright young virgin."

He brought Arcite over to Emilia.

Pirithous then said, "Please treat her goodness with all due respect. You have honored her fair birthday with your virtues, and, as your due, you're hers. Kiss her fair hand, sir."

Arcite replied, "Sir, you're a noble giver."

He then said to Emilia, "Dearest beauty, thus let me seal my vowed faith."

He kissed her hand and added, "When your servant, your most unworthy creature, merely offends you, command him to die, and he shall."

"That would be too cruel," Emilia replied. "If you deserve well, sir, I shall soon see it. You're my attendant, and I'll

treat you somewhat better than your rank.”

Pirithous said to Arcite, “I’ll see you equipped with what you need, and because you say you are a horseman, I must ask you this afternoon to ride — but it is a rough ride.”

“I like my horse better that way, Prince,” Arcite said. “I shall not then freeze, be motionless, and feel no emotions in my saddle.”

Theseus said, “Hippolyta, sweet, you must be ready — and you, Emilia — and you, friend — and all, tomorrow by the sunrise, to celebrate flowery May Day in Diana’s wood.”

Diana was the Roman goddess of the hunt; she was a virgin goddess.

Theseus said to Arcite, “Serve well, sir, your mistress.”

Then he said, “Emily, I hope he shall not go afoot.”

Emily said, “That would be a shame, sir, while I have horses.”

She then said to Arcite, “Take your choice, and whatever you lack at any time, let me but know it. If you serve me faithfully, I dare assure you that you’ll find a loving mistress.”

In this culture, the words “servant” and “mistress” had more than one meaning. A mistress could be 1) a female boss or 2) a woman whom a man loved and served. A servant could be 1) an attendant or 2) a lover who served his mistress.

Arcite replied, “If I do not, let me find that which my father always hated: disgrace and blows.”

“Go, and lead the way; you have deserved it.”

Arcite made a gesture of demurrals, but Theseus said, “It

shall be so; you shall receive all dues that are fit for the honor you have won. Otherwise, it would be wrong.”

He said to Emilia, “Sister-in-law, curse my heart, you have a servant here, who if I were a woman would be my master.”

In this culture, “master” sometimes meant “husband.”

He added, “But you are wise.”

Emilia replied, “I hope that I am too wise for that, sir.”

— 2.6 —

Alone, the jailer’s daughter said, “Let all the Dukes and all the Devils roar! Palamon is at liberty. I have risked myself for him, and I have brought him out of prison. I have sent him a mile hence to a little wood where a cedar higher than all the rest spreads like a tall spreading plane tree near a brook, and there he shall stay hidden until I provide him with files and food, for yet his iron bracelets — fetters — are not off.

“Oh, Cupid, god of Love, what a stout-hearted child you are! My father would have preferred to endure cold iron fetters than to do what I have done.

“I love Palamon beyond love and beyond reason or wit or safety. I have made him know it; I have told him. I don’t care; I am desperate. If the law should find me and then condemn me for it, some wenches, some honest-hearted maidens, will sing my dirge and tell future times that my death was noble — that I died almost a martyr.

“Whatever path he takes I intend to be my path, too. Surely he cannot be so unmanly as to leave me here. If he does, maidens will not so easily trust men again. And yet he has not thanked me for what I have done; no, he has not so much as kissed me, and that, I think, is not so good; nor

could I hardly persuade him to become a free man, he made such scruples of the wrong he did to me and to my father.”

Of course, Palamon was reluctant to leave the place where Emilia was near.

The jailer’s daughter continued, “Yet I hope, after he reflects more thoroughly, this love of mine will take more root within him. Let him do what he wants with me, as long as he treats me kindly — benevolently and in the way that a man uses a woman — for use me so he shall, or I’ll proclaim him, and to his face, no man. I’ll tell him that he is impotent.

“I’ll right away provide him with necessities and pack my clothes up and wherever there is a path on ground I’ll venture, as long as he is with me. Beside him like a shadow I’ll forever dwell.

“Within this hour the hubbub will be all over the prison. I will then be kissing the man they are looking for.

“Farewell, father! Get many more such prisoners as Palamon and beget such daughters as myself, and shortly you may keep yourself. You will be in prison and guard yourself, and you will be alone.

“Now I will go to Palamon.”

CHAPTER 3 (The Two Noble Kinsmen)

— 3.1 —

The celebration of May Day was in full swing. The noises of hunting and of celebrating were taking place.

Arcite said to himself, “The Duke has been separated from Hippolyta; each took a separate glade. This is a solemn rite they owe bloom-filled May, and the Athenians perform this rite to the fullest.

“Oh, Emilia, Queen of May Day, you are fresher than May, sweeter than her gold buttons — buds — on the boughs, or all the enameled knick-knacks — brightly colored ornaments, aka flowers — of the meadow or garden.”

Using the royal plural, he said, “Indeed, we claim also that Emilia is lovelier than the bank of any nymph who makes the stream seem like flowers.”

Nymphs are nature spirits who look like young women and who live in or near natural places such as woods and streams. The stream seemed like flowers in May because the stream’s surface reflected the flowers growing on its banks.

Arcite continued, “Emilia, you are the jewel of the wood and of the world. Like a nymph, you have blessed a place with your sole presence. I wish that I, poor man whom I am, might occasionally come into your mind and change some cold, chaste thought! It would be a thrice-blessed event to drop into such a mistress’ thoughts unexpectedly.

“Tell me, Lady Fortune, you who are my sovereign next after Emily, to what extent I may be proud. I have things to be thankful for. Emily takes strong notice of me, she has made me be near her; and this beauteous morning, the best

and most primary of all the year, she presented me with a brace — a pair — of horses. Two such steeds might well be ridden by a pair of Kings in a battlefield where they fought to see who deserved the title to their crowns.

“Alas, alas, poor cousin Palamon, poor prisoner, you so little dream upon my fortune that you think that you yourself are the happier thing because you are so near Emilia. You think that I am at Thebes, and that I am wretched there, although I am free. But if you knew that my mistress breathes on me, and I hear her language, and I live within her eyesight, and sometimes I am so close to her that I can see my reflection in her eyes — oh, cousin, what anger would seize you!”

Palamon, still wearing shackles, emerged from the bush where he had been hiding and shook his fist at Arcite and said, “Traitor kinsman, thou would perceive my anger if these signs of imprisonment — my shackles — were off me, and if this hand of mine owned a sword. By all oaths in one, I and the justice of my love would prove in a trial by combat that thou art a confessed traitor.

“Oh, thou art the most perfidious lord who ever gently looked. You are the lord emptiest of honor who ever bore an honorable coat of arms. You are the falsest cousin whom blood ever made kin!

“Do thou call her thine?”

“I’ll prove in my shackles, with these hands, which are empty of weapons, that thou lies, and that thou art a very thief in love, a worthless-as-chaff lord, not even worth the name of villain.

“If I had a sword, and if these prison restraints were off me —”

Arcite said politely, “Dear cousin Palamon —”

Palamon replied, “Cozener Arcite, talk to me with language such as is similar to the deeds you have done to me.”

A cozener is a cheater, a deceiver.

Arcite said, “Because I do not find inside my breast any gross stuff that makes me anything like what you proclaim me to be, I must continue to use this gentle language I have been using. It is your anger that makes you mistaken about me. Your anger, which is your enemy, cannot be kind to me. Honor and honesty I cherish and depend on, howsoever you fail to see them in me, and with honor and honesty, fair cousin, I’ll continue to act and to speak.

“Please state in well-bred terms your griefs, because your argument is with your equal, who professes to prove his course of action innocent with the mind and sword of a true gentleman.”

“I wish that you dared, Arcite!” Palamon said.

Arcite replied, “My cousin, my cousin, you have been well informed how much I dare; you’ve seen me use my sword against the warning of fear. Surely, you would not hear my bravery doubted by another person without you breaking your silence, even if you were in a religious sanctuary.”

“Sir, I have seen your actions in such a place that well might justify your manhood,” Palamon replied. “You were called a good Knight and a bold Knight. But the whole week is not fair if it rains any day of the week. Men lose their valiant temper when they lean toward treachery, and then they fight like compelled bears — they would flee if they were not restrained.”

In the “sport” of bear-baiting, bears were tied to a stake and then attacked by dogs. The bears could not flee, but were forced to fight.

Arcite said, “Kinsman, you might as well speak this and act it in your mirror as to speak it to the ears of one who now disdains you.”

Palamon said, “Come over to me, relieve me of these cold fetters, give me a sword even though it is rusty, and give me the charity of one meal. Come before me then, with a good sword in thy hand, and just say that Emily is thine. If you do these things, I will forgive the trespass thou hast done me — yes, I will. If thou should defeat me in single combat and relieve me of my life, then when brave souls who have died in a manly way seek from me in Hades some news from Earth, they shall get none but this: Thou art brave and noble.”

“Calm yourself,” Arcite said. “Return to your hawthorn house and hide yourself. With the darkness of the night, I will be here with wholesome food. These fetters of yours I will file off. You shall have garments to wear and perfumes to kill the smell of the prison. Afterward, when you shall stretch yourself and stand up straight and can say, ‘Arcite, I am in good shape again,’ you shall have your choice of both sword and armor.”

“Oh, you Heavens, does anyone so noble dare to engage in such a blameworthy business?” Palamon said. “None but only Arcite. Therefore, none but Arcite in this kind is so bold. Arcite seems to be noble, but he acts ignobly.”

Arcite began, “Sweet Palamon —”

Palamon interrupted, “— I embrace you and your offer; I am doing it only for your offer to duel. Sir, without hypocrisy I may not wish more than my sword’s edge on your person.”

Hunting horns and cornets sounded.

“You hear the horns,” Arcite said. “Enter your muset —

your hiding place — lest this duel between us be thwarted before we meet.”

A muset is literally a hare’s lair.

Duke Theseus was an absolute ruler. If he wished to give two people fighting an illegal duel the death penalty, he could. He would definitely thwart the duel.

Arcite continued, “Give me your hand; farewell.”

They shook hands.

Arcite then said, “I’ll bring you everything you need. Please, take comfort and be strong.”

Palamon replied, “Please keep your promise, and do the deed with a frowning brow. Most certainly you do not love and respect me. Be rough with me, and pour this oil — this false courtesy — out of your language. I swear by this air I breathe, I could hit you for each word you speak, if my anger were not restrained by reason.”

“Plainly spoken,” Arcite said, “yet pardon me for not using hard language. When I spur my horse, I do not chide him; content and anger in me have but one face — they have the same appearance.”

The horns sounded.

“Listen, sir,” Arcite said, “the horns call the scattered hunters to the banquet; you must guess I have a position there.”

“Sir, your attendance there cannot please Heaven, and I know your position is achieved unjustly.”

“It is a good title,” Arcite said. “I have deserved it. I am persuaded that this argument or lawsuit, which is sick between us, must be cured by bleeding.”

Physicians often treated illnesses by bleeding; the bleeding that Arcite meant would be loss of blood in a single combat. Arcite used the word “lawsuit” because quarrels in which someone was accused of treason but the treason could not be proven were settled with a single combat. The two disputants would fight to the death. God was thought to side with the victor, and the victor was in the right and the vanquished was in the wrong.

Arcite added, “I petition you and ask that you will bequeath this quarrel to your sword and talk of it no more.”

“Let me say just one word more,” Palamon said. “You are going now to gaze upon my mistress, for note well, she is mine —”

“No, then —” Arcite began.

“Please,” Palamon said. “You talk of feeding me to breed strength in me. You are going now to look upon a Sun that strengthens what it looks on; there you have an advantage over me, but enjoy it until I may enforce and apply my remedy. Farewell.”

— 3.2 —

The jailor’s daughter was alone in the woods. In her hand was a file she had brought for Palamon to use to release himself from his fetters.

She said to herself, “Palamon has misunderstood which thicket I meant, and he has gone wherever his fancy takes him. It is now almost morning. It doesn’t matter; I wish it were perpetual night, and darkness were the lord of the world.”

A wolf howled.

“Listen, it is a wolf! Grief has slain fear in me, and except for one thing, I care for nothing, and that one thing is

Palamon. I don't care if the wolves would bite me as long as he had this file. What if I hallooed for him? I cannot halloo. If I whooped, what would happen then? If he did not answer, I would call a wolf and do him only that 'service' or service. Either the wolf would find and eat him, or I would save his life by the wolf's finding and eating me.

"I have heard strange howls all this livelong night; why may it not be that the wolves have made prey of him? He has no weapons; he cannot run; the jingling of his fetters might call deadly things to listen, deadly things that have in them a sense to know when a man is unarmed. Deadly things can smell where resistance is possible.

"I'll set it down that he's torn to pieces; many wolves howled together, and then they fed on him; so much for that. Be bold to ring the bell that announces his death.

"How do I stand then? All's done when he is gone. No, no, I lie. My father is to be hanged because of Palamon's escape. I myself will be forced to beg, if I prize life so much as to deny my act of helping Palamon to escape, but that I would not, even if I would try dozens of deaths — die dozens of times in dozens of ways.

"I am bewildered and confused. I have eaten no food for the past two days; I have sipped some water. I have not closed my eyes except when my lids scoured off their brine with tears.

"Alas, dissolve, my life! Let not my sense become unsettled, lest I should drown, or stab, or hang myself.

"Oh, state of nature, fail altogether in me, since your best props are warped! Let me die!

"So, which way now? The best way is the nearest way to a grave. Each step that does not lead me to a grave is torment.

“Look, the moon is down, the crickets chirp, the screech owl and not the rooster announces the dawn.

“All my duties are done except that one I failed at — joining Palamon. But the point is this —”

She hesitated and then said, “An end, which is my death, and that is all.”

— 3.3 —

Arcite, carrying food, wine, and files, arrived in the thicket where he had earlier met Palamon.

He said, “I should be near the place,” and then he shouted, “Ho! Cousin Palamon!”

From his hiding place, Palamon asked, “Arcite?”

“The same,” Arcite said. “I have brought you food and files. Come forth and fear not; here is no Theseus.”

Stepping out of his hiding place, Palamon said, “And here is none as honest as Theseus, Arcite.”

“That doesn’t matter,” Arcite replied. “We’ll argue about that later. Come, take courage. You shall not die like a beast. Here, sir, drink — I know you are faint — and then I’ll talk further with you.”

Palamon said, “Arcite, thou might now poison me.”

“I might,” Arcite said, “but I must fear you first. Sit down and please, let’s have no more of these vain parleys. Let us not, having our ancient reputation for friendship with us, make gossip for fools and cowards.”

He raised a bottle of wine and said, “I drink to your health.”

“Do!” Palamon said. He needed his health if he were to fight and defeat and kill Arcite.

Arcite drank to show that the wine was not poisoned and then said, "Please sit down, then, and let me entreat you, by all the honesty and honor in you, not to mention this woman we are quarreling over. It will disturb us. We shall have time enough to talk about her."

"Well, sir," Palamon replied. "I'll drink to you."

He drank.

"Drink a good hearty amount; it breeds good blood, man," Arcite said.

A proverb stated, "Good wine makes good blood."

Palamon drank some more, and Arcite asked, "Don't you feel the wine thawing you?"

"Wait," Palamon said. "I'll tell you after a drink or two more."

"Don't drink sparingly," Arcite said. "Duke Theseus has more, cousin. Eat now."

"Yes," Palamon said.

He ate greedily.

"I am glad you have so good an appetite," Arcite said.

"I am gladder that I have so good food for it."

"Is it not mad, strange, bizarre lodging here in the wild woods, cousin?" Arcite asked.

"Yes, for them who have wild consciences," Palamon replied.

"How does your food taste? Your hunger needs no sauce, I see."

A proverb stated, "Hunger is the best sauce."

“Not much,” Palamon replied. “But if it did, your sauce is too tart, sweet cousin.”

According to Palamon, Arcite was saucy — impudent and flippant.

Palamon held some meat up and asked, “What is this?”

“Venison.”

“That’s a meat that promotes strength. Give me more wine. Here, Arcite, to the wenches we have known in our days!”

He raised his cup in a toast and said, “The Lord Steward’s daughter! Do you remember her?”

“After you, cousin,” Arcite replied.

He may have meant that he knew her after Palamon had known her, or he may have meant that Palamon should speak first.

“She loved a black-haired man,” Palamon said.

“She did indeed; well, what of it, sir?”

“And I have heard some call him Arcite, and —”

He hesitated.

“Out with it,” Arcite said. “Say what you have to say.”

Palamon was going to bring up one of Arcite’s youthful infatuations, or possibly an early affair, as a way of saying that Arcite was not worthy of loving Emilia.

“She met him in an arbor,” Palamon said. “What did she do there, cousin? Play on the virginals?”

Virginals were an early keyboard instrument. The name was often used to make puns on virginity.

“Something she did, sir,” Arcite answered.

“What she did made her groan a month for it — or two, or three, or ten.”

Possibly, what she did there made her pregnant for nine months and groan in childbirth at the beginning of the tenth month.

Arcite replied — or perhaps counterattacked — by saying, “The Marshal’s sister had her share, too, as I remember, cousin, else there are false tales told abroad about her. Will you drink to her?”

“Yes.”

Palamon lifted his cup and drank.

“She is a pretty brunette wench,” Arcite said.

He hesitated and then added, “There was a time when young men went a-hunting, and a wood, and a broad beech — and thereby hangs a tale.”

He sighed.

“For Emily, upon my life!” Palamon said.

Eavesdroppers, if there were any, ought to be forgiven for thinking that Palamon thought that Arcite meant “And thereby hangs a tail for Emily.” After all, Arcite had a kind of tail hanging from his crotch, and he and Emilia had been a-hunting. But note Palamon’s next words.

Palamon added, “Fool, let’s stop this strained mirth. I say again that sigh was breathed for Emily. Base cousin, do you dare break our agreement first — our agreement not to speak about Emilia?”

“You are wide of the mark,” Arcite said. “You have missed the target.”

“By Heaven and Earth, there’s nothing in thee that is

honest.”

“Then I’ll leave you,” Arcite said. “You are a beast now.”

“I am what thou makes me, traitor,” Palamon replied.

Arcite pointed to a package and said, “There’s everything you need: files and shirts and perfumes. I’ll come again some two hours from now and bring that which shall quiet all.”

“A sword and armor,” Palamon said.

“Don’t fear that I won’t bring them,” Arcite replied. “You are now too foul. Farewell. Once you get your trinkets — your fetters — off of you, you shall lack for nothing.”

“Sirrah —” Palamon began.

The word “Sirrah” was used to address a man of lower social rank than the speaker. The use of the word by Palamon to refer to Arcite, a man of the same social rank, was insulting.

Arcite interrupted, “— I’ll hear no more.”

He exited.

Palamon said, “If he keeps his promise to return here with weapons and armor, he will die as a result of it.”

— 3.4 —

The jailor’s daughter, whose mind was no longer sound, said to herself, “I am very cold, and all the stars are out, too, the little stars and all, that look like spangles or little jewels. The Sun has seen my folly.”

She shouted, “Palamon!”

Then, remembering that she thought he was dead, she said, “Alas, no; he’s in Heaven.

“Where am I now? Yonder’s the sea, and there’s a ship. How it tumbles! And there’s a rock that lies in hiding under the water. Now, now, the ship beats upon the rock; now, now, now, there’s a leak sprung, a sound — a big — one! How they cry!”

She may have been thinking about sex. A “leaky wench” was a woman who had lost her virginity.

She then said, “Open her sails and let her run before the wind, else you’ll lose all. Up with a course or two of sail, and tack about and change direction, boys!

“Good night, good night; you’re gone.

“I am very hungry.

“I could find a fine frog; he would tell me news from all parts of the world.”

She may have possibly thought first of eating the frog and then remembered that animals are often fine helpers in fairy tales.

She continued, “Then would I make a carrack — a large merchant ship — out of a cockleshell, and sail by east and northeast to the King of the pygmies, for he tells fortunes rarely.

“Now my father, twenty to one, will be trussed up in a trice tomorrow morning.”

She meant that the odds were twenty to one that her father would be tied up and hanged in the morning. Birds are trussed — their wings and legs are tied to prevent the meat from drying out — before cooking. The word “truss” originally meant a pulley; “in a trice” meant “at a single pull,” aka instantly.

She continued, “I’ll say never a word.”

She then sang this song:

“For I’ll cut my green coat a foot above my knee,

“And I’ll clip my yellow locks an inch below mine [my] eye.

“Hey nonny, nonny, nonny.

“He’s [He’ll] buy me a white cut [horse, either with a docked tail, or gelded], forth for to ride,

“And I’ll go seek him through the world that is so wide.

“Hey nonny, nonny, nonny.”

She then said, “Oh, for a prick now, like a nightingale, to put my breast against. I shall sleep like a top else.”

Again, she may have been thinking about sex when she said the word “prick.” The nightingale was said to press its breast against a thorn in order to stay awake and sing all night. In mythology, the mortal woman Philomela was turned into a nightingale after being raped by her sister’s husband, Tereus.

“To sleep like a top” means to sleep soundly. A spinning top is said to “sleep” when it spins in one place and does not move or “walk” from that position.

— 3.5 —

A schoolmaster and six countrymen were talking; they intended to dance a morris dance for Duke Theseus and other nobles. One of the countrymen was dressed as a Bavian, or baboon.

The schoolmaster said, “Bah, bah, what tediousity and disinsanity is here among you!”

“Tediosity” and “disinsanity” were words of his own

coinage.

He continued, “Have my rudiments been labored so long with you, milked unto you, and, by a figure, even the very plum broth and marrow of my understanding laid upon you, and do you still cry ‘Where?’ and ‘How?’ and ‘Wherefore?’”

By “figure,” he meant “figure of speech,” something he was fond of. Plum broth and marrow were regarded as tasty foods.

He continued, “You most coarse-frieze capacities, you jean judgments, have I said, ‘Thus let be’ and ‘There let be’ and ‘Then let be,’ and no man understands me?”

“Frieze” was a type of woolen cloth, and “jean” was a type of cotton cloth. Neither was a luxurious cloth, and so the schoolmaster was calling the dancers rough and unsophisticated.

He continued, “*Proh deum, medius fidius!*”

Proh deum is Latin for “Oh, god.” *Medius fidius* is Latin for “Help me!”

He continued, “You are all dunces!”

He then went over the plans for the morris dance again:

“Here stand I; here the Duke comes; there are you, nearby in the thicket; the Duke appears; I meet him and to him I utter learned things and many figures; he hears, and nods, and hums in approval, and then cries, ‘Rare! Marvelous!’ and I go forward. At length I fling my cap up — pay attention to that! Then you do as once did Meleager and the boar — break comely out before him.”

The schoolmaster was mistaken about some of the details of Meleager and the boar. Meleager had hunted and killed

the boar, which had broken out of a thicket ferociously — not comely, which means “daintily and gently.”

He continued, “Like true lovers, cast yourselves in a body — arrange yourselves in a group ready to dance — decently, and sweetly, by a figure, trace and turn, boys.”

The “figure” was a dance-figure; by “trace and turn,” he meant “dance some steps and revolve.”

The first countryman said, “And sweetly we will do it, schoolmaster Gerald.”

The second countryman said, “Draw up the company — bring everyone into the proper order. Where’s the taborer?”

The third countryman called, “Why, Timothy!”

The taborer arrived. The taborer is a musician who plays on a tabor — a small drum. Often, the taborer plays at the same time a pipe — a wind instrument.

The taborer said, “Here I am, my mad boys. Have at you!”

“Have at you!” announces a coming action. Here the taborer played a few beats on his drum.

The schoolmaster asked, “But I say, where’s their women?”

Five women arrived.

The fourth countryman said, “Here’s Friz and Maudlin.”

“Friz” was perhaps short for Frances, and “Maudlin” was perhaps short for Magdalene.

The second countryman said, “And little Luce with the white legs, and bouncing Barbary.”

“Bouncing” meant “vigorous and healthy.”

The first countryman added, “And freckled Nell, who never

failed her master.”

One way to never fail a master is to never say no.

“Where are your ribbons, maidens?” the schoolmaster asked.

The morris dancers sometimes performed while holding streamers.

The schoolmaster continued, “Swim and move gracefully with your bodies, and carry it off sweetly and deliverly, aka nimbly, and now and then make a favor, aka a bow or a curtsy, and make a frisk, aka a caper or jig.”

“Don’t worry about us,” Nell said.

“Where’s the rest of the musicians?” the schoolmaster said.

“Dispersed, as you commanded,” the third countryman said. “They are nearby.”

“Divide up into couples, then, and let’s see what’s lacking,” the schoolmaster said. “Where’s the Bavian, aka baboon?”

Seeing the countryman who would play the baboon, the schoolmaster said, “My friend, carry your tail without offense or scandal to the ladies; don’t pretend it is a penis, and be sure you tumble with audacity and manliness, and when you bark, do it with judgment.”

In this culture, people thought that baboons were half man and half dog.

“Yes, sir,” the countryman who would play the baboon replied.

“*Quo usque tandem?*” the schoolmaster said. “We are lacking a female dancer.”

“*Quo usque tandem?*” is the Latin beginning — “How long

then?” — of Cicero’s first oration against Catiline, who was a danger to the Roman Republic. The speech begins, “*Quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?*” It means, “How long then will you, Catiline, abuse our patience?” The schoolmaster was running out of patience.

The fourth countryman said, “We may go whistle; all the fat’s in the fire.”

“We may go whistle” means “We won’t get what we want, so we may as well leave and whistle.” “To go whistle” is an idiom for “have no chance of success.”

“The fat is in the fire” is an idiom for “Bad consequences will follow.” When fat falls into fire, the result is a burst of flames. Here it also means, figuratively, “Our work was done in vain.” The fat is often tasty, and if the fat falls into the fire, one can’t eat it.

The schoolmaster said, “We have, as learned authors utter, washed a tile; we have been *fatuus* — foolish — and labored vainly.”

“To wash a tile” is a proverb that means “Our work was done in vain.” Tiles are used to line fireplaces. Each time a fire is lit, the tiles get dirty.

The second countryman said about the missing female dancer, “This is that scornful piece, that scurvy hilding — that good-for-nothing — who gave her promise faithfully she would be here. I am talking about Cicely, the tailor’s daughter.

“The next gloves that I give her shall be made of cheap dogskin, if she fails me once more — you can tell everyone, Arcas, that she swore by wine and bread, aka the Eucharist, she would not break her promise.”

The schoolmaster said, “An eel and a woman, a learned

poet says, unless by the tail and with your teeth you hold, will both fail.”

It is difficult to hold a live wet eel by the tail. The schoolmaster’s language brings to mind the image of holding a woman’s “tail” by one’s teeth. A proverb stated, “Who has a woman has an eel by the tail.”

He continued, “In manners, this was false position.”

He meant that this breach of etiquette was analogous to a false premise in logic.

The first countryman said, “May a fire-ill infect her!”

In this culture, “fire” was a slang word for “vagina.” In other words, the first countryman was saying, “May she suffer from a diseased vagina, aka suffer from a venereal disease.”

The first countryman continued, “Does she flinch now?”

The idiom “My ears are burning” means “I think someone is talking about me.” If Cicely, the tailor’s daughter, could hear what the first countryman was saying about her, she would flinch.

“What shall we determine to do, sir?” the third countryman asked.

“Nothing,” the schoolmaster said. “Our business is become a nullity, yes, and a woeful and a piteous nullity.”

A nullity is a no-event, a nothing.

The fourth countryman said, “Now, when the credit of our town lay on it, now to be moody and disagreeable, now to piss on the nettle!”

Nettles sting. Being careless while pissing on nettles could very well make someone moody and disagreeable.

The fourth countryman continued, “Go thy ways; get out of town! I’ll remember thee. I’ll fix thee!”

The jailor’s daughter, now mentally ill, walked over to the group. She sang this song:

“The George Alow [name of a ship] came from the south,

“From the coast of Barbary-a,

“And there he met with brave gallants [sailors] of war,

“By one, by two, by three-a.

“Well hailed, well hailed, you jolly gallants [sailors],

“And whither now are you bound-a?

“Oh, let me have your company

“Till I come to the sound-a.”

She said, “There was three fools, who fell out and argued about an owlet,” and then she sang this song:

“The one he said it was an owl,

“The other he said nay,

“The third he said it was a hawk,

“And her bells were cut away.”

In this culture, falconers tied small bells to the feet of hawks and falcons.

The third countryman said, “There’s a dainty madwoman, master, who comes in the nick of time, as mad as a March hare.”

The word “nick” means “the critical moment.”

Hares are mad in March because that is the mating season.

The third countryman continued, "If we can get her to dance, we are all right again. I promise that she'll do the most marvelous gambols."

"A madwoman?" the first countryman said. "We are made, boys."

To be "made" is to be "assured of success."

The schoolmaster said to the jailor's daughter, "And are you mad, good woman?"

She replied, "I would be sorry else. Give me your hand."

"Why?"

"So I can tell your fortune."

She looked at his hand and said, "You are a fool. Count to ten.

"I have posed for him a task he cannot do. Buzz!"

One way of testing for mental competence is to have someone count to ten on his or her fingers.

She continued, "Friend, you must eat no white bread; if you do, your teeth will bleed extremely."

Two more modern meanings of "to bleed white" are 1) to drain of resources, slowly or completely, and 2) to shed colorless, unhealthy blood (hyperbole). And if someone's gums were diseased, red blood would be readily apparent on white bread.

She continued, "Shall we dance? I know you; you're a tinker. Sirrah tinker, stop no more holes but what you should."

One way to stop a hole is to fill it with a penis.

The schoolmaster said, "*Dii boni!*"

The Latin words mean, “Good gods!”

He then asked, “A tinker, damsel?”

“Or a conjurer,” the jailer’s daughter said. “Raise me a Devil now, and let him play ‘*Chi Passa*’ on the bells and bones.”

“Raise me a Devil” can mean “Erect a penis for me.” Boccaccio wrote a story (Third Day, Tenth Story) in his *Decameron* about putting the Devil in Hell. In the story, of course, Hell was a vagina, and the Devil was a penis.

“*Chi Passa Questa Strada*” is Italian for “Who Passes Through This Street.” It is a dance tune.

Bones were used to make percussion music. A bone and two bells can refer to male genitalia.

The schoolmaster said to the second countryman, “Go, take her, and fluently persuade her to a peace.”

The schoolmaster wanted the second countryman to calm the jailer’s daughter so she could dance.

The schoolmaster continued, “*Et opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira, nec ignis.*”

The Latin words of this incomplete sentence mean, “And I have completed a work of literature that neither Jove’s anger nor fire.”

These Latin words were from the end of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, except Ovid wrote “*Iamque*” instead of “*Et.*” This is the complete sentence: “*Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas.*” In this sentence Ovid boasted that his fame would continue as a result of this literary masterpiece. The Latin words mean, “And I have now completed a work of literature that neither Jove’s anger nor fire nor steel nor

time will destroy.” Jove is Jupiter, the King of the gods.

The schoolmaster meant that he had started but not yet completed a notable work of art.

The schoolmaster continued, “Strike up the music, and lead her in to the dance.”

The second countryman said, “Come, lass, let’s trip it. Let’s dance.”

“I’ll lead,” the jailer’s daughter said.

“Do, do!” the second countryman said.

“You have done it persuasively, and cunningly,” the schoolmaster said to the second countryman.

Horns sounded. Theseus and the other nobles were coming this way. There was no time for the jailer’s daughter to rehearse.

The schoolmaster said, “Away, boys! I hear the horns. Give me some room for solitary meditation, and listen for your cue.”

All but the schoolmaster hid themselves.

The schoolmaster said to himself, “Pallas Athena, inspire me!”

At the beginning of many epic poems, the epic poet asks a deity or deities for inspiration.

Theseus, Pirithous, Hippolyta, Emilia, and a train of others arrived.

Theseus said, “The stag went this way.”

“Stay, and edify!” the schoolmaster said.

By “edify,” the schoolmaster meant “be instructed.”

“What have we here?” Theseus asked.

“Some country entertainment, upon my life, sir,” Pirithous answered.

“Well, sir, go forward,” Theseus said to the schoolmaster.
“Go ahead. We will ‘edify.’”

Attendants brought out a chair and some stools.

Theseus said, “Ladies, sit down. We’ll stay for the entertainment.”

Theseus, Hippolyta, and Emilia sat.

The schoolmaster said, “Thou doughty Duke, all hail! All hail, sweet ladies!”

Punning on the word “hail,” Theseus said quietly, “This is a cold beginning.”

The schoolmaster had referred to Theseus with the informal “thou,” which was taking a liberty, but May Day was a holiday and Theseus was normally a benevolent ruler, and so he let it pass.

The schoolmaster said, “If you but [show us] favor, our country pastime made is.

“We are a few of those collected here

“That ruder tongues distinguish [call] ‘villager.’

“And to say verity, and not to fable,

“We are a merry rout, or else a rabble,

“Or company, or by a figure, chorus,

“That before thy dignity will dance a morris.

“And I that am the rectifier [director] of all,

“By title *pedagogus* [educator], that let fall

“The birch upon the breeches of the small ones,

“And humble with a ferula [cane, using for beating an unruly student] the tall ones,

“Do here present this machine [show], or this frame [framework].

“And, dainty Duke, whose doughty [brave and persistent] dismal fame”

The schoolmaster meant by “doughty dismal fame” that Theseus’ fame was terrible and frightening to his enemies.

“From Dis to Daedalus, from post to pillar,”

Dis was the god of Hades, which Theseus had once visited and from which he had returned alive. Daedalus had constructed the labyrinth on Crete to house the half-man, half-bull monster called the Minotaur. Theseus had killed the Minotaur.

“Is blown abroad, help me, thy poor well-willer,

“And with thy twinkling eyes look right and straight

“Upon this mighty ‘Morr,’ of mickle [great] weight [importance] —

“‘Is’ now comes in, which being glued together

“Makes ‘Morris,’ and the cause [reason] that we came hither.”

The schoolmaster had displayed two placards. On one was written “Morr”; on the other was written “is.” Brought together, they spelled “Morris.”

“The body of our sport, of no small study,

“I first appear, though rude, and raw, and muddy,

“To speak before thy noble grace this tenner [tenor, aka content],

“At whose great feet I offer up my penner [case for carrying pens].”

Now he began to list the characters the dancers would be portraying:

“The next, the Lord of May and Lady bright,

“The Chambermaid and Servingman by night

“That seek out silent hanging;”

The chambermaid and servingman would seek at night an alcove behind a hanging that would hide their amorous activity.

“then mine Host

“And his fat Spouse, that welcomes to their cost

“The galled traveler, and with a beckoning

“Informs the tapster to inflame the reckoning;”

The host of the inn and his fat wife would invite the traveler to have a drink on the house, but the host would signal to the tapster to add the drink to the traveler’s bill.

“Then the beest-eating Clown;”

“Beest” is the milk that a cow gives immediately after giving birth. Some people regard beest as undrinkable, and other people use it in porridges.

“and next the Fool,

“The Bavian [baboon] with long tail and eke [also] long tool [penis],

“*Cum multis aliis* [Latin for ‘and all the others’] that make a dance;

“Say ‘ay,’ and all shall presently advance.”

Theseus said, “Ay, ay, by all means, dear *Domine*.”

Domine is Latin for “schoolmaster.”

Pirithous said, “*Produce!* Lead them forward!”

“*Produce*” is Latin for “Lead forward.”

The schoolmaster said, “*Intrate, filii*. Come forth and foot it. Dance.”

“*Intrate, filii*” is Latin for “Come in, boys!”

Music played. The countrymen, countrywomen, and jailer’s daughter performed a morris dance.

The schoolmaster then made this speech:

“Ladies, if we have been merry

“And have pleased ye with a derry,

“And a derry and a down,

“Say the schoolmaster’s no clown.

“Duke, if we have pleased thee too

“And have done as good boys should do,

“Give us but a tree or twain [two]

“For a Maypole, and again,

“Ere [Before] another year run out,

“We’ll make thee laugh, and all this rout.”

Theseus said to the schoolmaster, “Take twenty, *Domine*.”

He then asked Hippolyta, “How are you, my sweetheart?”

She replied, “I have never been so pleased, sir.”

Emilia said, “It was an excellent dance, and as for the prefacing speech by the schoolmaster, I have never heard a better.”

Theseus said, “Schoolmaster, I thank you. One of you see to it that they are all rewarded.”

An attendant gave the schoolmaster money.

Pirithous also gave the schoolmaster money, saying, “And here’s something to paint your pole with.”

The pole was a May pole, but the schoolmaster could possibly use his share of the money to treat his sweetheart and get a part of his body wet.

Theseus said, “Now let’s return to our sports again. We have a stag to hunt.”

The schoolmaster made this speech:

“May the stag thou hunts stand long [and withstand the dogs],

“And thy dogs be swift and strong;

“May they kill him [the stag] without lets [hindrances],

“And the ladies eat his dowsets.”

“Dowsets” were the stag’s testicles; they were considered a delicacy.

The horns sounded, and Theseus, Hippolyta, Emilia, Pirithous, and the train of attendants exited.

The schoolmaster said to the dancers, “Come, we are all made.”

The dance had been successful, and Theseus and Pirithous had tipped well.

The schoolmaster continued, "*Dii deaeque omnes*, you have danced marvelously, wenches."

"*Dii deaeque omnes*" is Latin for "All you gods and goddesses."

— 3.6 —

Palamon emerged from the bush where he had been hiding.

He said to himself, "My cousin gave his word to visit me again about this hour, and to bring with him two swords and some pieces of good armor for us to wear. If he should fail to show up, he's neither a man nor a soldier. When he left me, I did not think a week could have restored my lost strength to me because I was grown so low and crestfallen with my lack of food and shelter. I thank thee, Arcite, thou art still a fair foe, and I feel myself, with this refreshing, able once again to endure danger. To delay our duel any longer would make the world think, when it heard about it, that I ate as if I were being fattened like a swine for the market and not as if I were a soldier preparing for a fight. Therefore, this blessed morning shall be the last before our duel, and whatever sword he refuses after I offer him the first choice of swords, if it but holds true and does not break, that is the sword I will kill him with. It is justice. So, may love and good fortune be for me!"

Arcite kept his word. He arrived now, carrying pieces of armor and two swords.

"Oh, good morning," Palamon said.

"Good morning, noble kinsman," Arcite replied.

"I have put you to too much effort, sir," Palamon said.

“That too much, fair cousin, is only a debt owed to honor and my duty.”

“I wish that you were so honorable in all aspects of your life, sir,” Palamon said. “I could wish you were as kind a kinsman as you force me to find that you are a beneficial foe so that my embraces, and not my blows, might thank you.”

“I shall think either — blows or embraces — well done, a noble recompense,” Arcite said.

“Then I shall pay you your recompense,” Palamon said.

Arcite said, “Defy me in these fair terms, and you appear more than a mistress to me. No more anger, as you love anything that’s honorable! We were not bred to talk, man; when we are armed and both of us are upon our guards, then let our fury, like the meeting of two tides, fly strongly from us, and then to whom the birthright of this beauty truly pertains, by which I mean to whom Emilia belongs as a birthright — without upbraidings, scorns, despisings of our persons, and such poutings, which are fitter for girls and schoolboys — will be seen, and quickly. We will find out whether Emilia is yours or mine.

“Will it please you to arm, sir? Or if you feel yourself not ready yet and not yet furnished with your old strength, I’ll wait, cousin, and every day I will talk you back into health during my spare time away from my official duties. I am friends with you, and I could wish I had not said that I loved Emilia even though keeping my love secret would have killed me. But I must not flee from loving such a lady and from justifying my love for her in single combat.”

“Arcite, thou are so brave an enemy that no man but thy cousin is fit to kill thee. I am well and vigorous. Choose your arms.”

“You choose, sir,” Arcite said.

“Will thou exceed and outdo me in every respect, including good manners, or are thou doing it to make me spare thee?”

“If you think I am doing it to make you spare me, cousin, you are deceived, for as I am a soldier, I will not spare you.”

“That’s well said,” Palamon said.

“You’ll find that what I said is true,” Arcite said.

“Then, as I am an honest man and love with all the justice of affection, I’ll pay you fully the punishment you deserve,” Palamon said. “I will have justice and love on my side.”

Palamon choose a piece of armor: “I’ll take this.”

Arcite said: “This other piece is mine, then.”

He then said, “I’ll arm you first.”

“Do,” Palamon replied.

Arcite began to put the piece of armor on him.

Palamon said, “Please tell me, cousin, where did thou get this good armor?”

“It is Duke Theseus’,” Arcite answered, “and to say the truth, I stole it.”

He then asked whether the armor was pinching Palamon: “Do I pinch you?”

“No.”

“Isn’t it too heavy?”

“I have worn lighter armor,” Palamon answered, “but I shall make it serve.”

“I’ll buckle it tightly,” Arcite said.

“By all means.”

“Do you care for a grand guard?” Arcite asked.

This was a joke. A grand guard is a heavy piece of armor used in jousting and when fighting on horseback. Arcite and Palamon had no horses, and Arcite was unable to carry two grand guards in addition to everything else he was carrying.

“No, no, we’ll use no horses,” Palamon said. “I perceive that you would like to fight on horseback.”

“I am indifferent,” Arcite said. “It doesn’t matter to me either way.”

“Truly, so am I,” Palamon said. “Good cousin, thrust the buckle through far enough.”

“I assure you that I will,” Arcite said.

“My helmet is next.”

Normally, the next piece of armor would be for the arms.

Arcite asked, “Will you fight bare-armed?”

“If we do, we shall be all the nimbler because of it.”

“But use your gauntlets, though,” Arcite said.

Palamon picked up a pair, but Arcite said, “Those are of lesser quality. Please take mine, good cousin.”

“Thank you, Arcite. How do I look? Has my flesh fallen much away? Have I lost a lot of weight?”

“Truly, very little,” Arcite said. “Love has used you kindly.”

This was an insult. The conventional idea of a lover at the

time was of someone who lost much weight because he was so much in love that he did not eat.

Deliberately no longer using the respectful “you,” Palamon said, “I’ll promise thee that I’ll strike home. I’ll hit my target, which is thee.”

“Do, and don’t spare me,” Arcite said. “I’ll give you cause not to spare me, sweet cousin.”

“Now it’s your turn, sir,” Palamon said.

He began to arm Arcite and said, “I think that this armor’s very like the armor, Arcite, that thou wore that day the three Kings fell, but lighter.”

“That was a very good suit of armor, and on that day, I well remember that you outdid me, cousin. I never saw such valor. When you charged upon the left wing of the enemy, I spurred my horse hard to catch up to you, and under me I had a very good horse.”

“You did, indeed,” Palamon said. “You had a bright bay horse, I remember.”

“Yes, but all my labor was in vain. You outstripped me, nor could my wishes reach you. Yet I accomplished a little by imitating you.”

“Your accomplishments came about more through manly virtue and courage,” Palamon said. “You are modest, cousin.”

“When I saw you charge first, I thought I heard a dreadful clap of thunder break from the troop.”

“But always before that thunder flew the lightning of your valor,” Palamon said. “Wait a little while. Isn’t this piece too tight?”

“No, no, it is fine,” Arcite replied.

“I would have nothing hurt thee but my sword,” Palamon said. “For you to suffer a bruise from my making your armor too tight would be dishonorable to me.”

“Now I am perfectly armed,” Arcite said.

“Draw back, then.”

“Take my sword,” Arcite said. “I regard it as the better sword.”

“I thank you, but no,” Palamon said. “Keep it; your life depends on it. Here’s the other sword; if it doesn’t break, I ask no more for all my future hopes. A sword that doesn’t break is all that I need to achieve my hopes for the future. May my cause and honor guard me!”

“And may my love guard me!” Arcite said.

They bowed in several directions, and then they stood and faced each other.

They were pretending that their illegal private duel was a formal, officially sanctioned trial by combat. In a trial by combat, a crowd of spectators and officials would be present and would be bowed to.

Arcite asked, “Is there anything else you have to say?”

“This only, and then no more,” Palamon replied. “Thou are my aunt’s son and so that blood we desire to shed is mutual — thine blood is in me, and my blood is in thee. My sword is in my hand, and if thou should kill me, then the gods and I forgive thee. If there is a place prepared for those who sleep in honor after death, I wish the weary soul belonging to the one of us who falls and dies will win it. Fight bravely, cousin. Give me thy noble hand.”

Arcite said, “Here, Palamon.”

As they shook hands, Arcite added, “This hand shall never

again come near thee with such friendship.”

“I commend — honor — thee,” Palamon said.

“If I fall, curse me, and say I was a coward,” Arcite said, “for only cowards dare to die in these just trials. Once more I say farewell, my cousin.”

“Farewell, Arcite.”

They began to fight, but hunting horns sounded and they stopped.

Arcite said, “Listen, cousin, listen, our folly has ruined us!”

“In what way?”

“The Duke is hunting, as I told you,” Arcite said. “If we are found dueling, we are wretched. Oh, retire, for honor’s sake, and for your own safety, immediately go into your bush again. Sir, we shall find too many hours to die in. Gentle cousin, if you are seen, you will perish instantly for breaking out of prison, and I, if you reveal to Theseus who I am, will perish instantly because of the contempt I showed for Theseus by not obeying his command to leave this country and never return. Then all the world will scorn us, and say we had a noble quarrel between us, but we had a base way of resolving that quarrel.”

“No, no, cousin,” Palamon said. “I will no more be hidden, nor put off this great adventure to a second trial. I know your cunning, and I know your cause.”

Palamon believed that Arcite did not want to fight because he knew that he was in the wrong.

He continued, “He who faints now, may shame take him! Put thyself upon thy immediate guard —”

Theseus or no Theseus, Palamon wanted to fight to the finish. Either he or Arcite must die.

“You must be mad,” Arcite said.

“If thou don’t put thyself upon thy immediate guard, I will make the advantage of this hour my own. I fear less what shall come to threaten me than I fear my fortune.”

Palamon did not fear Theseus; he did fear that his fortune might be to lose Emilia.

He added, “Know, weak cousin, I love Emilia, and in that I’ll bury thee and everything else that crosses and attempts to thwart my love.”

“Then let come what can come,” Arcite said. “Thou shall know, Palamon, I dare as well to die as to talk or to sleep. Only this frightens me: The law will have the honor of our ends.”

The ends were their deaths, which would be dishonorable because they would be found guilty of fighting an illegal duel. The law would receive honor, however, because Palamon and Arcite would be sentenced to death in accordance with the law, which would be justly and honorably enforced.

Arcite said, “Have at thy life!”

This meant, “Prepare to be attacked!”

Palamon replied, “Look well after your own life, Arcite.”

They began to fight again.

Hunting horns sounded. Theseus, Hippolyta, Emilia, Pirithous, and a train of attendants arrived.

Immediately aware that an illegal duel was taking place, Theseus said, “What ignorant and mad malicious traitors are you, who against the tenor and content of my laws are making battle thus, like Knights appointed, without my permission and without officers of arms?”

He swore, “By Castor, son of Jove, both of you shall die.”

Palamon said, “Keep thy word, Theseus.

“We are certainly both traitors; both of us are despisers of thee and of thy goodness. I am Palamon, who cannot love thee. I broke out of thy prison. Think well what that deserves.

“And this is Arcite. A bolder traitor never trod thy ground, a falser person never seemed to be a friend. This is the man whom Pirithous begged mercy for. Arcite was banished from your Kingdom. This is a man who shows contempt for thee and whatever thou dare to do. And in this disguise, against thine own edict and command, he pursues thy sister-in-law, that benevolent bright star, that bringer of good fortune, the fair Emilia, whose servant — if there exists a right in seeing first and in first bequeathing one’s soul to — justly I am, and which is more, he dares think that Emilia is his.

“Like the most trusty lover that I am, I called him now to answer for this treachery. If thou are as thou are reputed to be, great and virtuous and the true judge of all injuries, say, ‘Fight again,’ and thou shall see me, Theseus, do such a just act that thou thyself will envy it. Then you can take my life; I’ll encourage thee to do it.”

Palamon was using the informal “thou” and “thee” to refer to Theseus. He was angry, and he wanted Arcite and himself to die.

“Oh, Heaven,” Pirithous said. “What more than man is this!”

“I have sworn an oath that both of you shall die,” Theseus replied.

Arcite said, “We aren’t seeking your words of mercy,

Theseus. It is to me a thing as soon and easy to die as for you to say it, and I will be no more moved than you will be.

“Whereas this man calls me traitor, let me say thus much: If being in love is treason, in service of so excellent a beauty, then since I love most, and in that fidelity to that love will perish, since I have brought my life here to confirm it, since I have served her truest, worthiest, since I dare kill this cousin who denies it, so let me be most traitor, and you will please me when you sentence me to death.

“As for scorning your edict of banishment, Duke, ask that lady why she is beautiful, and why her eyes command me to stay here and love her; and if she says that I am a traitor, then I am a villain fit to lie unburied.”

Arcite used the formal “you” to refer to Theseus; he was more polite than Palamon had been.

Palamon said, “You shall have pity on us both, Theseus, if to neither of us you show mercy. Close, as you are just, your noble ears against us. As you are valiant, for your cousin Hercules’ soul, whose twelve strong labors crown his memory, let Arcite and I die together at the same instant, Duke, only let him fall just a little before I do, so that I may tell my soul he shall not have Emilia.”

Palamon’s anger was a little lessened after his initial outburst, and so he used the formal “you” when talking to Theseus.

Theseus said, “I grant your wish, for to say the truth, your cousin has offended me ten times more than you, for I gave him more mercy than you found, sir, although your offenses were no more than his.”

He then ordered, “Let no one here speak for them, for before the Sun sets, both shall sleep forever.”

“It’s a pity,” Hippolyta said. “Now or never, sister, speak in such a way that you will not be denied; otherwise, that face of yours will bear the curses of future ages because of the deaths of these cousins.”

“In my face, dear sister, I find no anger toward them, nor no ruin,” Emilia said. “The misadventure of their own eyes kills them. Yet to show that I am a woman and have pity, my knees shall grow to the ground unless I get mercy for these two men.”

She knelt.

She then said, “Help me, dear sister; in a deed so virtuous, the powers of all women will be with us.”

Hippolyta knelt.

As they spoke, their words followed close upon each other’s.

Emilia said, “Most royal brother —”

Hippolyta said, “Sir, by our tie of marriage —”

Emilia said, “By your own spotless honor —”

Hippolyta said, “By that faith, that fair hand, and that honest heart you gave me —”

Emilia said, “By that which you would invoke to cause pity in another, by your own virtues infinite —”

Hippolyta said, “By valor, by all the chaste nights I have ever pleased you —”

The chaste nights in which Hippolyta had pleased Theseus were the nights in which they engaged in chaste, aka moral, sex — the sex of a married couple.

Theseus said, “These are strange, solemn appeals.”

“I’ll join in, too,” Pirithous said.

He knelt and said, “By all our friendship, sir, by all our dangers, by all you love most: wars and this sweet lady —”

Emilia said, “By that which you would have trembled to deny a blushing maiden —”

According to the protocol of chivalry, a Knight was obliged to help a maiden in distress.

Hippolyta said, “By your own eyes; by strength, in which you swore I went beyond all women, and almost all men, and yet I yielded, Theseus —”

Pirithous said, “To crown all this, by your most noble soul, which cannot hold back the giving of deserved mercy, I beg first —”

Hippolyta said, “Next hear my prayers —”

Emilia said, “Last let me entreat, sir —”

Pirithous said, “For mercy.”

Hippolyta said, “Mercy.”

Emilia said, “Mercy on these two Princes.”

Theseus said to all the petitioners, “You make my faith reel. I swore that they would die, but you make me waver.”

He said to Emilia, “Say that I felt compassion on both of them, how would you say that I should show it to them?”

Emilia, Hippolyta, and Pirithous rose from their knees.

Emilia said, “You should have mercy upon their lives, but with their banishments. Let them live, but in exile.”

“You are a true — typical — woman, sister-in-law,” Theseus said. “You have pity, but you lack the

understanding of where and how to use it. If you desire to save their lives, invent a way safer than banishment. Can these two live, and have the agony of love about them, and not kill one another? Every day they would fight about you; hourly they would fight in public with their swords and they would publicly bring your honor in question.

“Be wise, then, and here forget them; it concerns your reputation and my oath equally. I have said they will die. It’s better that they fall by the law than by fighting one another. Don’t cause my honor to bow. Let my honor stand tall by my keeping my oath.”

“Oh, my noble brother-in-law,” Emilia said, “that oath was rashly made when you were angry. Your reason when you are not angry will not allow you to keep it. If such vows stand for fixed, final, irreversible will, all the world must perish. Besides, I have another oath against yours, an oath you made to me of more authority and I am sure of more love than this rash oath. The oath you made me was not made in passion, either, but in good heed and with careful consideration.”

“What oath is that, sister-in-law?” Theseus asked.

“Urge it home, brave lady,” Pirithous said. “Be persuasive.”

Emilia said, “You swore to me that you would never deny me anything that was fit for my modest petitioning and your free granting.

“I tie you to your word now; if you fail in it, think how you maim your honor — for now that I am set a-begging, sir, I am deaf to everything but your compassion. Think of how the loss of these two men’s lives might breed the ruin of my name. Gossip!

“Shall anything that loves me perish because of me? That

would be a cruel wisdom. Do men prune the straight young boughs that blush with a thousand blossoms because they may be rotten?

“Oh, Duke Theseus, if your vow to have these two men killed stands, the excellent mothers who have groaned in childbirth for these two men, and all the longing maidens who ever loved, shall curse me and my beauty, and in their funeral songs for these two cousins, they will despise my cruelty, and cry for woe to fall upon me, until I am nothing but the scorn of women.

“For Heaven’s sake, save their lives, and banish them.”

“On what conditions?” Theseus asked.

“Make them swear that they never again will fight over me, or even say that they know me. Make them swear never again to tread upon your Dukedom, and to be, wherever they shall travel, always strangers to one another.”

Palamon said, “I’ll be cut to pieces before I take this oath! Forget I love her? Oh, all you gods, despise me then! I don’t dislike your sentence of banishment, as long as we may fairly carry our swords and our argument with us; if we can’t do that, then don’t trifle with us, but instead take our lives, Duke. I must love, and will love, and for that love must kill and dare to kill this cousin on any piece of ground the Earth has.”

“Will you, Arcite, accept these conditions in order to save your life?” Theseus asked.

“He’s a villain, if he does,” Palamon said.

“These are real men!” Pirithous said.

“No, never, Duke Theseus,” Arcite replied. “It would be worse to me than begging to save my life in such a base manner. Even though I think I never shall enjoy Emilia, yet

I'll preserve the honor of affection, and die for her — no matter how horrible a death I suffer and even if you make death a Devil!”

Theseus said, “What may be done? For now I feel compassion.”

“Let your compassion not fall again, sir,” Pirithous said.

“Tell me, Emilia,” Theseus said, “if one of those two men were dead, as one must be, are you content — satisfied and without complaint — to take the other to be your husband? They cannot both enjoy you. They are Princes as excellent as your own eyes, and as noble as fame yet ever spoke of. Look upon them, and, if you can love one of them, end this quarrel. Choose to marry one, and the other will die. I give my consent to this.”

He then asked Palamon and Arcite, “Are you content, too, Princes?”

Palamon and Arcite replied, “With all our souls.”

“The man whom Emilia refuses to marry must die then,” Theseus said.

“He will die any death you can invent, Duke,” Palamon and Arcite replied.

Palamon said, “If I fall and die because of words that come from that mouth, I fall and die with favor, and lovers yet unborn shall bless my ashes.”

Arcite said, “If she refuses to marry me, yet my grave will wed me, and soldiers will sing my epitaph.”

Theseus said to Emilia, “Make your choice of whom to marry, then.”

“I cannot, sir,” Emilia said. “They are both too excellent. A hair shall never fall from these two men on my account.”

“What will become of them?” Hippolyta asked.

“This is what I command,” Theseus said, “and, by my honor, once again, what I command will stand, or both shall die: You shall both return to your country, and each of you within this month, accompanied by three fair Knights, will appear again in this place, in which I’ll plant a pillar, and whichever of you, before us who are here, can force his cousin by fair and Knightly strength to touch the pillar, that victorious man shall enjoy Emilia. The other will lose his head, as will all his three friends who accompanied him. He will accept and not begrudge his fall and death, and he will not think that he dies with interest in this lady.

“Will this content you two?”

“Yes,” Palamon replied.

He added, “Here, cousin Arcite, I am friends again with you until that hour.”

He held out his hand.

They shook hands.

Arcite said, “I embrace you.”

They hugged.

Theseus asked, “Are you content, sister-in-law?”

“Yes, I must be content, sir,” Emilia replied, “or else both will die.”

Theseus said to Palamon and Arcite, “Come, shake hands again, then, and take heed, as you are gentlemen, that this quarrel will sleep until the hour I have named, and hold your course. Be sure not to fight until you have returned with your Knights.”

“We dare not fail thee, Theseus,” Palamon said.

Why “thee”? Palamon preferred to fight Arcite immediately, and so he was expressing his dissatisfaction and yet he was also saying that he would obey Theseus.

Palamon and Arcite shook hands again.

“Come, I’ll give you now treatment that is fitting for Princes and friends,” Theseus said. “When you return, whoever wins I’ll settle here in Athens. Whoever loses, I’ll be sure to weep upon his bier.”

CHAPTER 4 (The Two Noble Kinsmen)

— 4.1 —

The jailer and a friend talked together.

The jailor said, “Have you heard anything more? Was anything said about me concerning the escape of Palamon? Good sir, remember!”

The friend replied, “I heard nothing because I came home before the business was fully ended. Yet I did perceive, before I departed, a great likelihood of both the two Princes being pardoned because Hippolyta and fair-eyed Emily, upon their knees, begged with such proper pity that the Duke, I thought, stood wavering whether he should follow his rash oath or the sweet compassion of those two ladies. And, to support them, that truly noble Prince, Pirithous — half of Theseus’ own heart — set in, too, so that I hope all shall be well. I never heard one question about your name or his escape.”

“I pray to Heaven that continues to be the case,” the jailor said.

Another of the jailor’s friends arrived.

The second friend said, “Be of good comfort, man; I bring you news — good news.”

Good news is welcome,” the jailer replied.

“Palamon has cleared you in his escape and has gotten a pardon for you, and he has revealed how and by whose means he escaped, which was your daughter’s, whose pardon has been procured, too, and the prisoner, Palamon, not to be held ungrateful to her goodness, has given a sum of money toward her marriage — a large one, I assure

you.”

“You are a good man and always bring good news,” the jailer said.

The first friend asked, “How did everything end?”

“Why, as it should have ended,” the second friend said. “They who never begged without prevailing had their petitions fairly granted; the prisoners have their lives.”

“I knew it would be so,” the first friend said.

“But there are new conditions, which you’ll hear of at a better time,” the second friend said.

“I hope they are good,” the jailer said.

“They are honorable,” the second friend said. “How good they’ll prove to be I don’t know.”

“We will find out,” the first friend said.

The wooer of the jailer’s daughter arrived and asked the jailer, “Alas, sir, where’s your daughter?”

“Why do you ask?” the jailer asked.

“Oh, sir, when did you last see her?” the wooer asked.

The second friend whispered to the first friend, “Look at the expression on the wooer’s face!”

“This morning,” the jailer said.

“Was she well? Was she in health? Sir, when did she sleep?” the wooer asked.

The first friend whispered to the second friend, “These are strange questions.”

The jailer said, “I do not think she was very well, for now you make me remember her, and on this very day I asked

her questions and she answered me much unlike her usual self. She answered me very childishly, very sillily, as if she were a fool, as innocent as a young child or a simpleton, and I was very angry. But what of her, sir?"

"She has nothing but my pity," the wooer said. "But you must know why, and it is as good that you learn the reason from me as from another who loves her less."

"Well, sir?" the jailer said.

"No, sir, not well," the wooer said.

"Is she not right in the head?" the first friend asked.

"Is she not well?" the second friend asked.

"It is too true," the wooer said. "She is mad."

"It cannot be," the first friend said.

"Believe that you'll find it's true," the wooer said.

"I half suspected what you told me," the jailer said. "May the gods comfort her! Either this is on account of her love for Palamon, or fear of my suffering bad consequences because of his escape, or both."

"It is likely," the wooer said.

"But why all this haste in coming to me, sir?" the jailer asked.

"I'll tell you quickly," the wooer said. "As I recently was fishing in the great lake that lies behind the palace, from the far shore — which is thickly set with reeds and sedges — as I was patiently attending to my fishing pole, I heard a voice, a shrill one, and I listened attentively. I clearly heard that someone was singing, and by the smallness of the voice I knew it had to be a boy or a woman. I then left my fishing pole unattended, came near to where the voice was

coming from, but did not yet perceive who made the sound because the rushes and the reeds had so enclosed it. I lay down and listened to the words she sang, for then, through a small glade cut by the fishermen, I saw that the singer was your daughter.”

“Please go on, sir,” the jailer said.

The wooer continued, “She sang much, but the song had no sense. I only heard her repeat this often: ‘Palamon is gone, is gone to the wood to gather mulberries; I’ll find him tomorrow.’”

The first friend said, “Pretty soul!”

The wooer continued, “She also said, ‘His shackles will betray him; he’ll be captured, and what shall I do then? I’ll bring a bevy of girls, a hundred black-eyed maidens who love as I do, with garlands of daffodils on their heads, with cherry lips and cheeks of damask roses, and we’ll all dance an antic, aka grotesque dance, before the Duke, and beg his pardon.’”

“Then she talked of you, sir. She said that you must lose your head tomorrow morning, and she must gather flowers to bury you, and see the house made tidy. Then she sang nothing but ‘*Willow, willow, willow,*’ and in between stanzas she said, ‘Palamon, fair Palamon,’ and ‘Palamon was a brave young man.’”

“The place was knee-deep in rushes where she sat. A wreath of bulrushes crowned her careless locks of hair, and on her were fastened a thousand fresh water-flowers of several colors, so that I thought she looked like the fair nymph who feeds the lake with waters, or like the messenger goddess Iris, who is also the goddess of the rainbow, newly dropped down from Heaven.

“She made rings out of rushes that grew nearby, and to

them spoke the prettiest posies: ‘*Thus our true love’s tied,*’ ‘*This you may lose or loose [untie], not me,*’ and many other ones.”

Poesies are brief romantic sayings engraved on the inside of gold and silver rings.

The wooer continued, “And then she wept, and sang again, and sighed, and with the same breath smiled and kissed her hand.”

The second friend said, “Alas, what a pity it is!”

“I made my way to her,” the wooer said, “She saw me, and immediately jumped into the water. I saved her and set her safely on land, and immediately she slipped away, and to the city went with such a cry and swiftness that, believe me, she left me far behind her. Three or four people I saw from far off encounter her — one of them I knew to be your brother — whereupon she stopped and fell, and with difficulty was taken away.”

She may have been exhausted or may not have wanted to accompany her uncle and his companions.

The wooer continued, “I left them with her and came here to tell you.”

The jailer’s brother, the jailer’s daughter, and others arrived.

The wooer said, “Here they are now.”

The jailor’s daughter sang, “*May you never more enjoy the light.*”

She then asked, “Isn’t this a fine song?”

“Oh, a very fine one,” the jailor’s brother replied.

“I can sing twenty more,” the jailor’s daughter said.

“I think you can,” the jailor’s brother said.

“Yes, truly can I,” the jailor’s daughter said. “I can sing ‘The Broom’ and ‘Bonny Robin.’ Aren’t you a tailor?”

“Yes,” the jailor’s brother said.

“Where’s my wedding gown?” the jailor’s daughter asked.

“I’ll bring it tomorrow,” the jailor’s brother said.

“Do so very early,” the jailer’s daughter said. “Otherwise I must go out of my home to summon the maidens and pay the minstrels, for I must lose my maidenhead by cocklight — the time just before the cock crows to announce the dawn. It will never thrive otherwise.”

She sang, “*Oh, fair. Oh, sweet.*”

The jailer’s brother said to the jailer, “You must indeed endure this patiently.”

“That is true,” the jailer said.

“Good evening, good men,” the jailer’s daughter said. “Please tell me, did you ever hear of one young Palamon?”

“Yes, girl, we know him,” the jailer replied.

“Isn’t he a fine young gentleman?”

“He is, love,” the jailer answered.

The jailer’s brother whispered to the others, “By no means contradict her; if you do, she will then be troubled far worse than she is now.”

The first friend said to the jailer’s daughter, “Yes, he’s a fine man.”

“Oh, is he so?” the jailer’s daughter said, suddenly suspicious. “You have a sister.”

“Yes, I do,” the first friend said.

“But she shall never have him — tell her that — because of a trick that I know,” the jailer’s daughter said. “You’d best look after her, for if she sees him once, she’s gone — she’s pregnant. She’s done and undone — seduced and ruined — in an hour. All the young maidens of our town are in love with him, but I laugh at them and let them all alone. Isn’t this a wise course of action?”

“Yes,” the first friend said.

“There are at least two hundred now with child by him — there must be four; yet I keep close for all this, close as a clam.”

“Close as a clam” is an idiom for “safe from harm.” When a clam’s shell is closed, it is safe from harm. She may have been referring to keeping her knees closed.

The jailer’s daughter continued, “And all these must be boys — he has the knack for having only boys — and at ten years old they must all be gelded so they can be musicians and sing about the wars of Theseus.”

“This is strange,” the second friend said.

“As strange as you ever heard, but say nothing,” the jailer’s daughter said.

“No,” the first friend said.

The jailer’s daughter said, “They come from all parts of the Dukedom to him. I’ll promise you, he had last night not so few as twenty to dispatch — to take care of and then send away. He’ll tickle it up in two hours, if his hand be in.”

“To tickle it” means “to bring to a happy ending” and “to tickle up” means “to arouse.” “If his hand be in” means “if he is in good form.”

The jailer said quietly, “She’s lost past all cure.”

The jailer’s brother said quietly, “Heaven forbid, man!”

The jailer’s daughter said to her father, “Come here. You are a wise man.”

The first friend asked quietly, “Does she recognize him?”

The second friend replied quietly, “No. I wish she did.”

The jailer’s daughter asked her father, “Are you the master of a ship?”

“Yes,” he said, humoring his daughter.

“Where’s your compass?”

“Here,” the jailer said, pretending he had a compass.

“Set it to the north,” the jailer’s daughter said. “And now direct your course to the wood, where Palamon lies longing for me. As for the tackling, you can rely on me.”

She said to the others, “Come, weigh anchor, my hearts, and do it cheerily.”

Everyone pretended to be raising an anchor and sailing a ship to humor her:

“Owgh, owgh, owgh!” These are grunting sounds made when doing hard work such as weighing an anchor — raising it when ready to depart.

“The anchor is up!”

“The wind’s fair!”

“Top the bowline!” This means to tighten the rope that steadies a sail’s edge.

“Out with the main sail! Where’s your whistle, master?”

The jailer's brother said, "Let's get her in!"

"Up to the top, boy!" the jailer said. This means to climb to the top of the mast.

"Where's the pilot?" the jailer's brother said.

"Here," the first friend said.

"What can you see?" the jailer's daughter asked.

"A fair wood," the second friend said.

"Bear for it, master. Steer for it," the jailer's daughter said.

"Tack about! Turn the ship's head into the wind!"

She sang, "*When Cynthia with her borrowed light.*"

Cynthia was the goddess of the Moon, whose light is borrowed because it reflects the light of the Sun.

— 4.2 —

Emilia stood alone, holding two miniature pictures. One picture depicted Palamon; the other picture depicted Arcite.

She said, "I could still bandage those wounds up that must otherwise open and bleed to death for my sake."

She meant that she could heal the wounded friendship between Palamon and Arcite so that other, physical wounds would not open.

She continued, "I'll choose one of them, and by so doing end their strife. Two such young handsome men shall never fall and die because of me; their weeping mothers, following the dead cold ashes of their sons, shall never curse my cruelty."

Emilia looked at one of the pictures.

She then said, "Good Heaven, what a sweet face Arcite

has! If wise Nature, with all her best endowments, all those beauties she sows into the births of noble bodies, were here a mortal woman, and had in her the shy, modest denials of young maidens, yet without a doubt she would run mad for this man.

“What an eye, of what a fiery sparkle and lively sweetness, this young prince has! Here in Arcite’s eye, Cupid, the god of Love, himself sits smiling. With just such another smile, frolicsome Ganymede set Jove afire, and he forced the King of the gods to snatch him — the good-looking boy — up and set the boy by him, Jove; the boy became a shining constellation.”

Ganymede was a beautiful human boy whom Jupiter, aka Jove, King of the gods, kidnapped and made his cupbearer. Later, Ganymede was transformed into the constellation Aquarius.

Emilia continued, “What a forehead of what a spacious majesty he exhibits, arched like the great-eyed Juno’s but far sweeter — smoother than Pelops’ shoulder!”

Juno, wife of Jupiter, had large eyes.

Pelops’ shoulder was made of ivory. His father, Tantalus, killed him, cooked him, and served him to the gods. One goddess, Demeter, ate some of his shoulder before the trickery was discovered. The gods brought Pelops back to life and sentenced his father, Tantalus, to everlasting punishment in the Land of the Dead. He stands in a stream of water with fruit-bearing branches above his head. Whenever he stoops to drink, the water level lowers and the stream dries up. Whenever he reaches for fruit to eat, the wind blows the branches just out of his reach. He is forever thirsty and hungry, and water and fruit are always just out of his possession.

Emilia continued, “Fame and Honor, I think, from Arcite’s

brow as from a promontory that ends in a point in Heaven, should clap their wings and sing to all the world under Heaven the loves and fights of gods and men such as are like them.”

Emilia looked at the other picture.

She then said, “Palamon is only a foil to Arcite.”

A foil is a setting for a jewel. The foil is of much lesser value than the jewel and serves to show off the jewel’s luster.

Emilia continued, “Compared to Arcite, Palamon is only a dull shadow. He’s swarthy and thin, of an eye as heavy and sorrowful as if he had lost his mother. He has a lethargic temperament. There is no liveliness in him, no alacrity. Of all this sprightly sharpness there is not a smile — he has no trace of Arcite’s keenness of spirit.

“Yet these things that we regard as errors and flaws may become him. Narcissus was a sad but Heavenly boy.”

Narcissus was beautiful, and he fell in love with his reflection in a stream.

Emily continued, “Oh, who can find the reasoning of woman’s love? I am a fool; my reason is lost in me. I have no ability to choose, and I have lied so vilely that women ought to beat me.

“On my knees I ask you for your pardon, Palamon. You and only you are beautiful, and these are the eyes — these are the bright lamps of beauty — that command and threaten love, and what young maiden dares to oppose them?

“What a bold gravity, and yet inviting, this brown manly face has! Oh, Love, from this hour this is the only complexion for me.”

She put aside Arcite's picture and said, "Lie there, Arcite."

She then said, "You, Arcite, are a changeling compared to Palamon; you are a mere gypsy, and this is the noble body."

Fairies were said to exchange ugly babies for beautiful babies.

She continued, "I am besotted and utterly lost. My virgin's constancy has fled from me. For if my brother-in-law had but just now asked me which of the two men I loved, I would have run mad for Arcite. Now, if my sister would ask me, I would run even madder for Palamon.

"Let both pictures stand side by side. Now, come ask me which man I prefer, brother-in-law. Alas, I don't know! Ask me now, sweet sister. I may as well go and look because I have no answer!

"What a mere child is Fancy, who, having two fair toys of equal sweetness, cannot choose between them, but must cry for both."

A gentleman entered the room.

"What is it, sir?" Emilia asked.

"Madam, I bring you news from the noble Duke, your brother-in-law," the gentleman said. "The Knights have come."

"To end the quarrel?" Emilia asked.

"Yes."

"I wish I might end — die — first!" she said. "What sins have I committed, Diana, goddess of chastity, that my unstained youth must now be soiled with the blood of Princes, and my chastity be made the altar where the lives of lovers — two greater and two better men never yet gave

mothers joy — must be the sacrifice to my unhappy beauty?”

Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, and some attendants entered the room.

Theseus said to an attendant, “Bring them in quickly, by all means. I long to see them.”

He said to Emilia, “Your two contending lovers have returned, and with them their fair Knights. Now, my fair sister-in-law, you must love one of them.”

“I would rather love both, so that neither for my sake should fall and die prematurely.”

“Who saw them?” Theseus asked.

“I saw them for a short time,” Pirithous said.

“And I did, too,” the gentleman said.

A messenger entered the room.

“From whence have you come, sir?” Theseus asked.

“From the Knights.”

“Please tell us, you who have seen them, what kind of men they are.”

“I will, sir,” the messenger said, “and I will say what I truly think. Six braver spirits than these Knights Arcite and Palamon have brought, if we judge by their outside appearance, I have never seen nor read of.

“The Knight who stands in the first place with Arcite, by his appearance, should be a valiant man. Judging by his face, he is a Prince — his very looks say that he is one. His complexion is nearer a brown than black — stern and yet noble — which shows that he is hardy, fearless, and

pleased by dangers. The circles of his eyes show fire within him, and he looks like an angry lion. His hair hangs long behind him, black and shining like ravens' wings; his shoulders are broad and strong. His arms are long and muscular, and on his thigh a sword hangs by a finely made baldric, aka leather shoulder strap. He uses his sword to put his seal on business when he frowns. A better sword, I swear by my conscience, was never a soldier's friend."

"You have described him well," Theseus said.

"Yet he is a great deal short, I think, of the Knight who's the first with Palamon," Pirithous said.

"Please tell us about him, friend," Theseus said.

"I guess he is a Prince, too," Pirithous said, "and, if it may be, greater than a Prince, for his appearance has all the trappings of honor in it. He's somewhat bigger than the Knight the messenger spoke of, but he has a face far sweeter; his complexion is, like a ripe grape, ruddy. He has felt without doubt what he fights for — love — and so he is readier to make this cause his own. In his face appears all the fair hopes of what he undertakes, and when he's angry, then a steady valor, not tainted with extremes, runs through his body and guides his arm to accomplish brave things. He cannot feel fear; he shows no such soft temper. His hair's yellow-blond — tightly curled, thickly twined like ivy bushes, and this Knight is not to be destroyed by thunder and lightning."

The Knight looked like a victor, and people in this culture believed that the wreath of a victor protected him from lightning. People in this culture also believed that some plants, including ivy, were impervious to thunder and lightning.

Pirithous continued, "In his face the uniform of the warlike maiden goddess Athena appears; his face is pure red and

white, for as of yet no beard has blessed him. And in his rolling eyes sits Victory, as if she always meant to crown his valor. His nose stands high, a characteristic of honor. His red lips, after fights, are fit for ladies.”

“Must these men die, too?” Emilia asked.

The others ignored her question.

Pirithous continued, “When he speaks, his words sound like a trumpet. All the parts of his body are as a man would wish them, strong and well built. He carries a well-steeled axe; the handle is made of gold. His age is approximately twenty-five.”

The messenger said, “There’s another — a little man, but of a tough soul. His appearance seems to be as great as any. Fairer promises in such a body I have never yet looked on.”

“Oh, is he the one who’s freckle-faced?” Pirithous asked.

“The same, my lord,” the messenger said. “Are they not charming freckles?”

“Yes, they are,” Pirithous said.

“I think,” the messenger said, “being so few, and well distributed, they show great and fine art in nature. He’s blonde, white-haired — not a dyed wanton white, but such a manly color that is next to an auburn. He is tough and agile, which shows he has an active soul. His arms are brawny, lined with strong muscles — to the shoulder-piece gently they swell, like newly pregnant women, which shows that he is prone to work hard, never fainting under the weight of arms. He is always valiant-hearted, even when at rest, but when he stirs and moves, he is a tiger. He’s grey-eyed, which shows that he yields compassion where he conquers. He is sharp at spying advantages, and where he finds them, he’s swift to make them his. He does

no wrongs, nor does he endure wrongs from others. He's round-faced, and when he smiles he shows that he is a lover; when he frowns, he shows that he is a soldier. About his head he wears the winner's oak — the crown of oak leaves given to a victorious soldier — and in it is stuck the favor of his lady."

Ladies would give favors — scarfs or gloves — that Knights would display conspicuously to show which lady they were fighting for.

The messenger continued, "His age is approximately thirty-six. In his hand he holds a jousting-lance embossed with silver."

"Are they all like this?" Theseus asked.

"All of them are the sons of honor," Pirithous answered.

"Now, as I have a soul, I long to see them," Theseus said.

He then said to Hippolyta, who as an Amazon knew about women fighting, "Lady, you shall see men fight now."

"I wish to see it," Hippolyta said, "but not fighting for this cause, my lord. They would show themselves bravely if they were fighting about the titles of two Kingdoms. It is a pity that love should be so tyrannous."

She said to Emilia, who was crying, "Oh, my soft-hearted sister, what do you think? Don't weep tears until their wounds weep blood. Woman, this duel must happen."

Theseus said to Emilia, "You have steeled and given them strength with your beauty."

He said to Pirithous, "Honored friend, to you I give the management of the field of honor; please prepare it and make it suitable for the persons who must use it."

"Yes, sir," Pirithous replied.

“Come, I’ll go and visit them,” Theseus said. “I cannot wait until they appear — the reports I have just heard about them have set me on fire to see them now. Good friend, be royal; be like a King when it comes to making the field of honor magnificent.”

“No splendor shall be lacking,” Pirithous said.

Everybody but Emilia exited.

She said to herself, “Poor wench, go and weep, because whoever wins will lose a noble cousin on account of your sins.”

Emilia’s “sins” were her beauty and her virtues that had caused both Arcite and Palamon to fall in love with her to the extent that they wanted to kill each other so that the survivor could marry her and have her.

— 4.3 —

The jailer, the wooer of the jailer’s daughter, and a doctor talked together.

The doctor said, “Her insanity is more evident at some phases of the moon than at other phases, isn’t it?”

The jailer replied, “She is continually in a derangement that causes no harm to others. She sleeps little, lacks altogether her appetite, except that she often drinks, dreams of another and a better world, and whatever broken piece of matter — that is, whatever nonsense — she’s about, the name ‘Palamon’ lards it, so that she stuffs every topic with his name and fits it to every question. She stuffs the name ‘Palamon’ into her conversation as if she were stuffing bacon into lean meat to flavor it.”

The jailer’s daughter arrived.

The jailer said, “Look, here she comes. You shall see her

behavior for yourself.”

They stood to the side and watched her.

The jailer’s daughter said, “I have quite forgotten the song. The chorus of it was ‘*down-a, down-a,*’ and it was penned by no worse man than Geraldo, Emilia’s schoolmaster.”

She probably meant the foolish and pretentious Gerald, who was not Emilia’s schoolmaster.

The jailer’s daughter continued, “He’s as full of wild fancies, too, as any man who may walk upon his legs, for in the next world Dido will see Palamon, and then she will be out of love with Aeneas.”

Apparently, Gerald had written, or the jailer’s daughter thought he had written, a song about Palamon, Dido, and Aeneas. In Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Dido, the Queen of Carthage, committed suicide after Aeneas deserted her after a love affair in order to go to Italy and fulfill his fate of becoming an important ancestor of the Romans. Aeneas visited the Land of the Dead and saw Dido, but she would not speak to him.

The doctor whispered to the jailer and the wooer of the jailer’s daughter, “What nonsense is this? Poor soul.”

“This is the way she is all day long,” the jailer said.

The jailer’s daughter said, “Now for this charm that I told you about, you must bring a piece of silver on the tip of your tongue, or else there will be no ferry.”

The ancient Romans put a coin on the tongue of a corpse so that the dead person’s soul could pay the ferryman Charon to ferry the soul across a river to the Land of the Dead.

The jailer’s daughter continued, “Then if it is your opportunity to come where the blessed spirits are, there’s a

sight now! We maidens who have our hearts broken, cracked to pieces with love, we shall come there, and do nothing all day long but pick flowers with Proserpine.”

Proserpine, whose Greek name was Persephone, was picking flowers when Pluto, god of the Land of the Dead, kidnapped her, took her to the Underworld, and made her Queen of the Land of the Dead.

The jailer’s daughter continued, “Then I will make Palamon a nosegay — a bouquet of flowers. Then let him pay attention to me. And then —.”

“How prettily and charmingly she’s out of her senses!” the doctor said. “Let’s watch her a little further.”

“Indeed, I’ll tell you, sometimes we go to barley-break, we of the blessed,” the jailer’s daughter said.

Barley-break was a game played by couples. In the middle was an area called Hell, and the other couples would try to run through Hell without being caught. If they were caught, they became catchers.

The jailer’s daughter continued, “Alas, it is a sore life they have in the other place, in Hell — such burning, frying, boiling, hissing, howling, chattering, cursing — oh, they have a harsh measure, so take heed! They don’t get measure for measure; they get more than a measure for their punishment.

“If one should be mad, or if one should hang or drown themselves, thither they go, Jupiter bless us, and there shall we be put in a cauldron of lead and usurers’ grease, amongst a whole million of cutpurses, and there boil like a lower side of bacon that will never be cooked enough.”

Usurers’ grease was the sweat of usurers.

“How her brain creates fantasies!” the doctor said.

The jailer's daughter continued, "Lords and courtiers who have made maidens pregnant are in this place. They shall stand in fire up to the navel and in ice up to the heart, and there the offending part burns and the deceiving part freezes. Truly, it is a very grievous punishment, so one would think, for such a trifle. Believe me, one would marry a leprous witch to be rid of such a punishment, I'll assure you."

In some cultures, a man's punishment can be waived if a woman agrees to marry him. These seducers in Hell, however, did not marry the maidens they made pregnant.

The doctor said, "How she keeps up this fancy! It is not an engrafted madness, but a very thick and profound melancholy."

The doctor meant that her illness was not firmly implanted insanity, but that she was instead seriously melancholic.

The jailer's daughter said, "To hear there a proud lady and a proud city wife howl together — I would be a beast and I'd call it good entertainment."

The proud lady would be of a much higher social rank than the city lady and would be mortified to be punished with her.

The jailer's daughter continued, "One cries, 'Oh, this smoke!' The other cries, 'Oh, this fire!' One cries, 'Oh, that I ever did it behind the arras!' and then howls. The other curses a persistently wooing fellow and her garden house."

One of the women had had illegitimate sex in an alcove behind a wall hanging — an arras. The other had had illegitimate sex in the garden house.

The jailer's daughter sang, "*I will be true, my stars, my fate.*"

She then exited.

“What do you think of her, sir?” the jailer said.

“I think she has a perturbed mind, which I cannot minister to,” the doctor said.

“Alas, what then can we do?” the jailer asked.

“To your knowledge, did she ever love any man before she beheld Palamon?”

The jailer said, “I had once, sir, great hopes that she had fixed her liking on this gentleman, who is my friend.”

The wooer said, “I did think so, too, and I would think I had made a great bargain if I could give half my wealth so that both she and I, at this present moment, stood unfeignedly and genuinely on the same terms. I would give half my wealth to make her sane again.”

The doctor realized that the jailer’s daughter was ill because of unrequited love — an illness that could definitely be treated. Her illness was a deep melancholy that could be cured with the help of the wooer.

The doctor said, “That intemperate surfeit of her eyes has distempered her other senses. They may return and settle again to execute their preordained faculties, but they are now in a most extravagant vagary.”

This culture believed that love entered one’s body through the eyes. The jailer’s daughter’s love-sickness for Palamon had disordered her other senses, but they could be made to perform their proper function instead of being disordered.

The doctor said to the jailer, “This is what you must do. Confine her to a place where the light may seem to steal in rather than be permitted. A dark room is good for patients like her.”

He then said to the wooer, “Take upon you, young sir, her friend, the name of Palamon; pretend to be him, and say that you have come to eat with her, and to talk of love. This will catch her attention, for this is what her mind beats upon and wholly concerns itself with; other objects that are inserted between her mind and eyes become the tricks and vagaries of her madness. Sing to her such youthful songs of love as she says Palamon has sung in prison. Come to her adorned with as sweet flowers as the season is mistress of, and to them make an addition of some other compounded perfumes that are grateful to the senses.

“All these things shall be suitable for Palamon because Palamon can sing, and Palamon is sweet and every good thing. Desire to eat with her, serve food to her, drink to her, and constantly every now and then intermingle your plea for her grace and your acceptance into her favor.

“Learn what maidens have been her companions and playmates, and let them come to her with the name ‘Palamon’ in their mouths, and appear with love-tokens, as if they were wooing her on his behalf.”

The doctor said to the jailer, “She is living in a falsehood, and it must be combated with other falsehoods. She believes in a false reality, and we will lie to her to bring her back to the real world. This may bring her to eat, to sleep, and to reduce what’s now out of square in her into its former regulated and normal state.”

Tricking a mentally ill patient into eating and sleeping often helped the patient.

The doctor continued, “I have seen this work how many times I don’t know, but I have great hope to make the number one more by doing this. I will between the passages of this project come in with my own remedies. Let us put this plan into execution and hasten the outcome, which we

should not doubt will be good.”

CHAPTER 5 (The Two Noble Kinsmen)

— 5.1 —

Theseus, Pirithous, Hippolyta, and some attendants were present in an area in which three altars were set up. Each of the three altars was dedicated to a god: Mars, god of war; Venus, goddess of love; and Diana, goddess of chastity.

Theseus said, “Now let them enter and before the gods offer their holy prayers. Let the temples burn bright with sacred fires, and the altars in hallowed clouds present their billowing incense to those above us. Let nothing due to the gods be lacking. Those who have a noble work in hand will honor the very gods who love them.”

“Sir, they are entering,” Pirithous said.

Cornets sounded. Palamon and Arcite and their Knights entered.

Theseus said, “You valiant and strong-hearted enemies, you royal related foes, who this day come to blow out that nearness that flames between you, set aside your anger for an hour and, dove-like and peaceably, before the holy altars of your helpers, the feared-by-all gods, bow down your stubborn bodies. Your ire is more than mortal; so may your help be. And because the gods are watching you, fight justly. I’ll leave you to your prayers, and between you I part my wishes. I wish both of you good fortune.”

“May honor crown the worthiest!” Pirithous said.

Theseus, Pirithous, and Theseus’ train of attendants exited.

Palamon said to Arcite, “The sands of the hourglass are running now, and by the time the last grain falls one of us will be dead. Think only this: Think that if there were

anything in me that strove to appear my enemy in this business, were it one eye against another, one arm opposed by my other arm, I would destroy the offender, cousin — I would although it were a part of myself. Then from this gather how I should regard you.”

Palamon intended to kill Arcite.

Arcite replied, “I am working to push your name, your long-established friendship, and our biological relationship out of my memory, and in the selfsame place to seat something I would destroy. So hoist we the sails that these vessels must bring to port even where the Heavenly Limiter pleases.”

Arcite intended to kill Palamon.

The Heavenly Limiter is God, Who sets a limit to the extent of our lives.

“You speak well,” Palamon said. “Before I turn and leave, let me embrace you, cousin.”

They embraced.

Palamon then said, “This I shall never do again.”

“This is one farewell,” Arcite said. “It is our last farewell.”

“Why, let it be so. Farewell, cousin,” Palamon said.

“Farewell, sir,” Arcite said.

Palamon and his Knights exited.

Arcite said, “Knights, kinsmen, lovers, yes, my sacrifices who are risking your lives for me, true worshippers of Mars, whose spirit expels the seeds of fear and the apprehension that is always the father of fear, go with me before the altar of the god of our profession.

“At Mars’ altar, ask him to give you the hearts of lions and the endurance of tigers, yes, the fierceness, too, and yes, the speed, also — to press ahead, I mean; otherwise, we would wish to be snails if we were to retreat.

“You know my prize must be won with bloodshed; strength and great deeds must put a triumphal garland on my head. The garland placed on my head will be made of the Queen of flowers — roses, which are associated with virgins such as Emilia. Our prayer, then, must be to Mars, who makes the battlefield a cistern brimful with the blood of men. Give me your aid, and bend your spirits towards him.”

They went to Mars’ altar, fell on their faces before it, and then knelt.

Mortals’ relationships with the gods can be personal, familiar relationships, and so when praying mortals can use “thou” and “thee” to refer to the gods.

Arcite prayed, “Thou mighty one, who with thy power has turned the green of the ocean to the red color of blood, whose approach the omens of comets prewarn and prophesy, whose havoc proclaims a vast number of unburied skulls in the battlefield, whose breath blows down the teeming harvest of Ceres, the Roman goddess of grain, who plucks with your powerful hand mason-built turrets from blue clouds of smoke, who both makes and breaks the stony girths of cities, I ask that you this day furnish me, your pupil, the youngest follower of your military drum, with military skill, so that to advance your praise I may advance my streamer, and because of you be styled the lord of the day. Give me, great Mars, some sign of your pleasure.”

Here they fell on their faces as they had done formerly, and they heard the clanging of armor, with a short burst of thunder, like the burst of a battle, whereupon they all rose

and bowed to the altar.

Arcite continued his prayer: “Oh, great corrector of disorderly, abnormal times, shaker of over-ripe, rotten states, you grand decider of dusty and old titles, who heals with blood-letting the Earth when it is sick, and cures the world of the excess of people, I take your signs auspiciously, and in your name to my design march boldly.

“I believe that this sign tells me that I will get what I want: victory in this battle.”

He then said to his Knights, “Let’s go.”

Arcite and his Knights exited.

Palamon and his Knights entered, and Palamon said, “Our stars must glisten with new fire, or be today extinct. Either we are victorious in battle, or we die today. Our subject of contention is love, which if the goddess of love grants, she gives victory, too. So then blend your spirits with mine, you Knights whose lavish nobleness makes my cause your personal hazard. You are risking your lives to help me gain the woman I love. To the goddess Venus, we commit our proceeding and we implore her to use her power on our side in the battle.”

Palamon and his Knights went to Venus’ altar, fell on their faces before it, and then knelt.

Palamon prayed, “Hail, sovereign Queen of secrets, who has the power to call the fiercest tyrant from his rage and weep in front of a girl because he loves her. You have the might even with an eye-glance to choke Mars’ drum and turn the battle alarm into whispers — you can quiet threats of war and turn them into whispers. You can make a cripple wave his crutch and cure him even before Apollo, god of healing, can cure him. You can force the King to be his subject’s vassal, and induce stale old men to dance. The

bald bachelor, who, like frivolous boys jumping over small bonfires, skipped over your flame of love in his youth, you can catch at age seventy and make him, to the mockery of his hoarse throat, abuse youthful love songs by singing them.

“What godlike power do you not have power over? To Phoebus Apollo, you added flames hotter than his; the Heavenly fires scorched his mortal son, and your flames scorched him.”

Venus was referring to Phoebus Apollo’s mortal son Phaëthon. Jove’s Heavenly fire — the thunderbolt — had scorched Phaëthon, and Venus’ Heavenly fire — the fire of love — had scorched Phoebus Apollo.

Venus, as the goddess of love, was able to make Apollo feel the fire of love and fall in love with either goddesses or mortal women. Her son Cupid, the god of love, could do the same thing. Cupid looks like a young boy, and he has a bow and arrows. Apollo made fun of him for being a boy who played with a man’s weapons, so Cupid shot him with an arrow that made him fall in love with the mortal woman Daphne.

Palamon continued, “You can also make the huntress Diana, goddess of chastity and of the moist Moon, fall in love and throw her bow away and sigh.”

The Moon is said to be moist because it controls the tides.

Venus made Diana fall in love with the shepherd boy Endymion.

Palamon continued, “Take to your grace me, your vowed soldier, who bears your yoke of love as if it were a wreath of roses, and yet your yoke is heavier than lead itself and stings more than nettles. You have made me fall in love with Emilia.

“I have never been foul-mouthed against your law. I have never revealed love secrets, for I knew none — and I would not reveal them, even if I had known all the love secrets that existed. I have never tried to seduce any man’s wife, nor would I ever read the libelous attacks against women that were written by licentious wits. I never at great feasts have sought to reveal the indiscretions of a beauty, but instead I have blushed at the simpering, affected, smirking sirs who did. I have been harsh to those who boasted about sexual sins, and I have hotly asked them if they had mothers — I had a mother, who was a woman, and these boasters were wronging women.

“I knew a man who was eighty years old — this I told them to show that I understood your power — who made a bride of a lass of fourteen; you have and had the power to put life into dust. The aged rheumatism had twisted his once-healthy foot into an unnatural position, the gout had knit his fingers into knots, and torturing convulsions had almost pulled his globular, protruding eyes from their sockets. The result was that what was life in him seemed to be torture. This man made of skin and bones had by his young and beautiful wife a boy, and I believed it was his, for she swore it was, and who would not believe her?

“In brief, I am to those who prate and have done what they said they did, no companion. I am to those who boast and have not done what they said they did, a defier. I am to those who want to commit sexual sins but cannot, a rejoicer — I rejoice in their impotence. Truly, I do not respect a man who tells about secret intrigues in the foulest way, and I do not respect a man who reveals sexual secrets with the boldest language.

“Such a one I am as I have said I am, and I vow that no lover has ever yet made a sigh truer than I.

“Oh, then, most soft sweet goddess, give me the victory of

this battle, which is true love's merit, and bless me with a sign of your great pleasure."

Music played, and doves fluttered. Palamon and his Knights fell again upon their faces, and then on their knees.

Palamon prayed, "Oh, you who reign from within the mortal bosoms of those from age eleven to age ninety, whose hunting ground is this world and whose game is we herds of humans, I give you thanks for this fair token, which being laid to my innocent true heart, arms in assurance my body to this business. I believe that this sign tells me that I will get what I want: Emilia."

He then said to his Knights, "Let us rise and bow before the goddess."

They rose and bowed.

Palamon said, "The time for the battle is coming on."

They exited.

The soft music of recorders played. Emilia and some of her female attendants arrived. She was wearing white, and her hair was loose about her shoulders. On her head she wore a wreath made of wheat stalks. A female attendant wearing white held up the train of Emilia's dress; the female attendant's hair was decorated with flowers. Another female attendant in front of Emilia was carrying a figure of a deer made of silver. On the deer's back was a place where incense and sweet perfumes could be burned. Her attendants stood to the side, and Emilia put the figure of the silver deer upon the altar of Diana and set fire to the incense and sweet perfumes as a sacrifice. Emilia and her attendants then curtsied and knelt.

Emilia said, "Oh sacred, shadowy, chaste, and constant Queen, abandoner of revels, mute contemplative, sweet,

solitary, you are as white as you are chaste, and you are as pure as is the wind-fanned snow. To your female Knights you allow no more blood than will make a blush, which is their order's robe. I, your female priest, am humble here before your altar. Oh, deign to look on your virgin follower — me — with your rare green eye, which never yet beheld anything spotted and impure. And, sacred silver mistress, lend your ears — which never hear scurrilous words, and into whose ports wanton sounds have never entered — to my petition, which is seasoned with holy fear.

“This is the last of my vestal office; I will no longer serve you as a maiden. I am bride-habited but maiden-hearted; although I am wearing the clothing of a bride, I still have the heart of a maiden. A husband will be given to me, but I don't know who will be my husband.

“Out of two men who wish to marry me, I should choose one, and pray for his success, but I am not guilty of selecting one. Of my eyes, if I were to lose one — they are equally precious — I could doom neither; that which perished should go to its destruction without being sentenced by me. I cannot choose which of my two eyes should become blind.

“Therefore, most modest Queen, the one of my two wooers who best loves me and has the truest title in his love, let him take off my wheaten garland and marry me, or else grant that I may continue to possess the rank and condition of being a virgin so that you may allow me to continue to be in your band of followers.”

The silver deer vanished under the altar, and in its place a rose bush, with one rose on it, ascended.

Emilia said, “See what Diana, our general of ebbs and flows and the tides, from the center of her holy altar with sacred act advances: one rose.

“If I correctly understand this omen, this battle shall confound and destroy both these brave Knights, and I, a virgin flower, must grow alone, unmarried and unplucked.”

Some musical instruments suddenly twanged, and the rose fell from the tree.

Emilia said, “The flower has fallen, and now the rose bush descends. Oh, mistress Diana, you here discharge me from your service. I shall be gathered.

“I will be married and cease to be a virgin: I think that is your will, but I don’t *know* your will. Reveal your mystery!”

She said to her attendants, “I hope that the goddess Diana is pleased; her signs were gracious.”

Being given signs, even when the signs are difficult to interpret, is a gracious act by a god or goddess.

Emilia and her attendants curtsied and exited.

— 5.2 —

The doctor, jailer, and wooer talked together. The wooer was dressed like Palamon, whom he impersonated when around the jailer’s daughter.

The doctor asked, “Has this advice I gave you done her any good?”

“Oh, it has helped very much,” the wooer replied. “The maidens who have kept her company have half-persuaded her that I am Palamon; within this past half-hour, she came smiling to me, and asked me what I would eat, and when I would kiss her. I told her, ‘Immediately,’ and I kissed her twice.”

“That was well done,” the doctor said, “but twenty times would have been far better, for there the cure totally lies.”

“Then she told me that she would stay up with me tonight, for well she knew at what hour my fit would take me,” the wooer said.

A fit is a fever or a seizure.

“Let her do so,” the doctor said, “and when your fit comes, fit her home, and immediately.”

“Fit her home” meant “thoroughly satisfy her.” In this case, it meant, “thoroughly satisfy her sexually.”

“She wanted me to sing,” the wooer said.

“You did, didn’t you?” the doctor asked.

“No.”

“That was very badly done, then,” the doctor said. “You should indulge her in every way. Do whatever she wants you to do.”

“Unfortunately, I have no voice, sir, to strengthen and help her that way.”

“That doesn’t matter,” the doctor said, “as long as you make a noise. If she asks you again, do anything. Lie with her and have sex with her, if she asks you to.”

“Hold on there, doctor!” the jailer said. This was his daughter they were talking about.

“Yes, he should lie with her and have sex with her at her request because it will help to cure her,” the doctor said.

“But first, by your leave, they must be married before they can lie together and have sex honestly and virtuously.”

“That’s but a matter of excessive delicacy,” the doctor said. “Don’t cast your child away and lose her to madness because you are concerned about a lack of chastity. Other

things, such as a cure, are more important. Cure her first in this way; then if she will be an honest wife, she has the path before her. She can get married after the cure.”

“Thank you, doctor,” the jailer said.

“Please bring her in, and let’s see how she is,” the doctor said.

“I will, and I will tell her that her Palamon is waiting for her,” the jailer said. “But, doctor, I still think that you are in the wrong.”

The jailer exited to get his daughter.

The doctor said, “Go, go. You fathers are fine fools. Her honesty and chastity? If we had to only give her medicine and refrain from doing other things that will cure her until we find out whether she is chaste, then we would be losing a fine opportunity to cure her!”

If the jailer’s daughter were known to not be a chaste virgin, perhaps the jailer would not object to this particular cure.

“Why, do you think she is not honest and chaste, sir?” the wooer asked.

“How old is she?”

“She’s eighteen.”

“She may be honest and chaste,” the doctor said, “but that doesn’t matter. Our purpose is to cure her madness, and whether she is chaste or not doesn’t matter. Whatever her father says, if you perceive her mood inclining that way that I spoke of, *videlicet*, the way of flesh — do you understand me? If she wants you to sleep with her, then sleep with her.”

“*Videlicet*” is Latin for “namely” or “that is to say.”

“I understand you very well, sir,” the wooer said.

“Please her appetite, and do it thoroughly,” the doctor said.
“It will cure her, *ipso facto*. It will cure the melancholy illness that infects her.”

“*Ipsa facto*” is Latin for “by that very fact.”

The jailer’s daughter was suffering from unrequited love; if she believed that her love was requited, the doctor thought, that would cure her.

“I am of your mind, doctor,” the wooer said. “I agree with you.”

“You’ll find that what I said is true,” the doctor said.

The jailer returned with his daughter and one of her friends, whose job was to look after her.

“She is coming,” the doctor said. “Please humor her.”

The wooer and the doctor stood to the side.

The jailer said to his daughter, “Come, your love Palamon is waiting for you, child, and has been waiting a long time to visit you.”

“I thank him for his courteous patience,” the jailer’s daughter said. “He’s a kind gentleman, and I am much bound to him.

“Did you ever see the horse he gave me?”

“Yes,” the jailer replied.

“How do you like him?”

“He’s a very good-looking horse.”

“Have you ever seen him dance?”

“No.”

“I have, often,” the jailer’s daughter said. “He dances very finely, very prettily, and for a jig, come cut and long tail to him, he turns you like a top.”

“Come cut and long tail” means “come what may.” Horses and dogs can have either a cut (docked) tail or a long tail, and so “cut and long tail” means “all kinds of horses and dogs” or, metaphorically, “everything.”

“That’s fine indeed,” the jailer said.

“He’ll dance the morris dance at twenty miles an hour, and that will make lame the best hobbyhorse in all the parish, if I have any true judgment, and he gallops to the tune of ‘Light of Love.’”

A hobbyhorse is a morris dancer whose costume includes the figure of a horse. In costume, the morris dancer looked like a rider on a horse.

The jailer’s daughter asked, “What do you think of this horse?”

“Since the horse has these virtues, I think he might be able to be trained to play at tennis.”

“Alas, that’s nothing,” the jailer’s daughter said. “For this horse, that’s not a challenge.”

“Can he write and read, too?”

“He has very good handwriting, and he himself keeps the accounts of all his hay and provender. Any hostler who wants to cheat him must rise very early.

“You know the chestnut mare that Duke Theseus has?”

“Very well.”

“She, poor beast, is horribly in love with that horse that Palamon gave me, but that horse is like his master —

Palamon — he is disdainful and scornful.”

“What dowry has she?”

“Some two hundred bundles of hay, and twenty measures of oats, but he’ll never have her. He lisps in his neighing, and he is able to entice a miller’s mare, which is supposed to be a model of sobriety. He’ll be the death of the chestnut mare.”

“What stuff and nonsense she utters!” the doctor said quietly.

The wooer and the doctor came forward.

“Make a curtsy,” the jailer said to his daughter. “Here comes your love.”

“Pretty soul, how are you?” the wooer asked.

The jailer’s daughter curtsied.

The wooer said, “That’s a fine maiden; there’s a curtsy!”

“I am yours to command in the way of honesty,” the jailer’s daughter said to him. “I will do what you want me to do as long as it is chaste.”

She then asked everyone, “How far is it now to the end of the world, my masters?”

Lovers will follow their loved one to the end of the world. Earlier, the jailer’s mad daughter had talked about seeking Palamon throughout the wide world.

“Why, a day’s journey, girl,” the doctor said.

The jailer’s daughter asked the wooer, “Will you go with me?”

“What shall we do there, girl?” the wooer asked.

“Why, play the game of stool-ball. What else is there to do?”

Stool-ball was a game played by young women, who would catch a ball in their lap. This fact led to sexual joking, such as a young woman being said to have caught two balls in her lap.

“I am happy to play stool-ball,” the wooer said, “if we shall celebrate our wedding there.”

“It is true that we will celebrate our wedding there,” the jailer’s daughter said, “For there, I will assure you, we shall find some blind priest for the purpose, a blind priest who will venture to marry us because here they are too scrupulous and foolish to marry us.”

Palamon was a high-ranking Knight; only a blind priest would marry him to a low-ranking jailer’s daughter because only a blind priest would be unaware of their difference in social rank.

The jailer’s daughter continued, “Besides, my father must be hanged tomorrow, and that would be a blot in the business. It would make us unhappy.”

She then asked, “Aren’t you Palamon?”

“Don’t you know me?” the wooer asked.

“Yes, but you don’t care for me,” the jailer’s daughter said. “I have nothing but this poor long skirt and two coarse smocks.”

A smock is a woman’s undergarment.

“That doesn’t matter,” the wooer said. “I will have you. I will marry you.”

“Will you surely?”

The wooer took her hand and said, "Yes. By this fair hand, I will."

"We'll go to bed then, after we are married," the jailer's daughter said.

"Whenever you wish," the wooer said.

He kissed her.

The jailer's daughter wiped her mouth and said, "Oh, sir, you are eager to be nibbling."

"Why do you rub my kiss off?"

"It is a sweet one, and it will perfume me finely in preparation for the wedding," the jailer's daughter replied.

She then pointed to the doctor and asked, "Isn't this your cousin Arcite?"

The doctor said, "Yes, sweetheart, and I am glad my cousin Palamon has made so fair a choice."

"Do you think he'll have me?" the jailer's daughter asked.

"Yes, without a doubt," the doctor replied.

The jailer's daughter asked her father, "Do you think so, too?"

"Yes."

"We shall have many children," the jailer's daughter said.

She then said to the doctor, whom she thought to be Arcite, "Lord, how you're grown! My Palamon, I hope, will grow too, finely, now he's at liberty. Alas, poor child, he was kept down with hard meat and ill lodging, but I'll kiss him up again."

Her words had a sexual meaning. She wanted her Palamon

to grow — to have an erection. Previously, he had been kept down — he had suffered a lack of sexual excitement in prison and so had not had an erection.

A messenger arrived and said, “What are you doing here? You’ll miss seeing the noblest sight that ever was seen.”

“Are they on the field of battle?” the jailer asked.

“They are,” the messenger said. “You have official duties there, too.”

“I’ll go there right away,” the jailer told the messenger.

He then said to the others, “I must now leave you here.”

“No, we’ll go with you,” the doctor replied. “I will not miss seeing the battle.”

The jailer whispered to the doctor, “What do you think about my daughter?”

The doctor replied, “I promise you that within these next three or four days I’ll make her mentally all right again.”

The jailer and the messenger exited.

The doctor whispered to the wooer, “You must not leave her, but instead constantly look after her in this way.”

“I will,” the wooer said.

“Let’s get her inside,” the doctor said.

The wooer said to the jailer’s daughter, “Come, sweet, we’ll go to dinner and then we’ll play at cards.”

“And shall we kiss, too?”

“A hundred times.”

“And twenty.”

“Yes, and twenty.”

“And then we’ll sleep together,” the jailer’s daughter said.

The doctor whispered to the wooer, “Accept her offer.”

The wooer said to her, “Yes, indeed, we will.”

“But you shall not hurt me.”

“I will not hurt you, sweet.”

“If you do, love, I’ll cry.”

— 5.3 —

Near the place appointed for the combat were Theseus, Hippolyta, Emilia, Pirithous, and some attendants.

“I’ll not go a step further,” Emilia said.

“Won’t you see this battle?” Pirithous asked.

“I would rather see a wren swoop like a hawk at a fly than this way of deciding who will marry me, since whoever loses the battle will die,” Emilia replied. “Every blow that falls threatens a brave life; each stroke laments the place where it falls, and each stroke sounds more like a passing bell announcing a death rather than the stroke of a blade.

“I will stay here. It is enough that my hearing shall be punished with what shall happen — there is no way that I can prevent my ears from hearing the battle, but I will not sully my eyes with dread sights that I may shun.”

Pirithous said to Theseus, “Sir, my good lord, your sister-in-law will go no further.”

“Oh, she must,” Theseus said. “She shall see deeds of honor in their reality, as they actually are — deeds of honor that sometimes are depicted well, either in art or in literature. Nature now shall create and enact the story, the

credibility of which will be sealed with both eye and ear. Rather than just seeing it in a painting or hearing it in a recitation of a heroic poem, she shall both see and hear a real combat.”

He said to Emilia, “You must be present. You are the victor’s reward, the price and garland that will crown the argument’s title. This battle will decide the question of who will win the title to you — this battle will decide who will marry you.”

“Pardon me,” Emilia said. “If I were present at the battle, I’d shut my eyes.”

“You must be there,” Theseus said. “This trial by combat is as it were in the night, and you are the only star that shines.”

“I am extinct,” Emilia said. “My light has gone out. There is only malice in that light that shows one combatant to the other combatant. Darkness, which ever was the dam — the mother — of horror, darkness that stands accursed by many mortal millions, may even now, by casting her black mantle over both combatants, so that neither can find the other, get herself some part of a good name, and be forgiven many a murder of which she’s guilty.”

“You must go,” Hippolyta said.

“By my faith, I will not,” Emilia replied.

“Why, the Knights must kindle their valor at your eye,” Theseus said. “The Knights will grow more courageous by looking at you. Know that of this war you are the treasure, and you must necessarily be present to give the pay to the winning Knight who serves you.”

“Sir, pardon me,” Emilia said. “The title of a kingdom may be tried outside of the Kingdom itself.”

“Well, well, then; do as you please,” Theseus said. “Those who remain with you may wish that any of their enemies would take their place so that they could leave you and see the combat.”

“Farewell, sister,” Hippolyta said. “I am likely to know who your husband will be before yourself by some small space of time. I pray that he whom the gods know to be the better man will be made your husband.”

Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, and the others exited.

Emilia said, “Arcite has a gentle appearance, yet his eye is like a weapon — a bow — bent, or a sharp weapon in a soft sheath. Mercy and manly courage are bedfellows in his face.

“Palamon has a most menacing appearance; his forehead is furrowed, and it seems to bury what it frowns on. Yet sometimes his forehead is not furrowed, but alters to reflect the quality of his thoughts. For a long time his eye will dwell upon the object he is thinking about.

“Melancholy becomes Palamon nobly. Arcite’s mirth becomes him nobly, but Palamon’s sadness is a kind of mirth. The two are mingled, as if mirth made Palamon sad and sadness made him merry. Those darker humors that are placed unattractively on others, on Palamon live in a fair dwelling.”

Cornets sounded, and then trumpets sounded as if to order a charge.

Emily continued, “Listen how yonder spurs to martial spirit incite the Princes to their trial by combat! Arcite may win me, and yet Palamon may wound Arcite and spoil his figure. Oh, what amount of pity would be enough for such a chance event? If I were nearby, I might do harm to the combatants because they would glance towards my seat,

and by doing so might omit a defensive movement or forfeit an offensive movement that needed to be done at that exact time.”

Cornets sounded. The people watching the combat made a great cry and shouted, “Palamon!”

Emilia continued, “It is much better that I am not there. Oh, it would be better to have never been born than to be the cause of such harm!”

An attendant arrived.

“What is happening?” Emilia asked.

“They are shouting, ‘Palamon!’” the attendant answered.

“Then he has won,” Emilia said. “It was always likely that he would win. If you look at him, you see all grace and success, and he is without a doubt the best and first of men. I ask you to run and tell me how it goes.”

People shouted and cornets sounded, and the cry of “Palamon!” filled the air.

The attendant said, “Still they cry, ‘Palamon.’”

“Run and inquire about what is happening,” Emilia ordered.

The attendant exited.

Emilia looked at the miniature pictures of Arcite and Palamon. Both of them were her servants in the sense they thought they were serving the woman they loved.

Addressing the picture of Arcite, she said, “Poor servant, you have lost. Upon my right side, I always wore your picture. I wore Palamon’s picture on my left side — why, I don’t know. I had no reason for wearing it there; I wore it there by chance. On the sinister — left — side, the heart

lies; this was an omen that Palamon had the most auspicious chance of success in the battle.”

Another cry and shouts went up, and cornets sounded.

Emilia said, “This burst of clamor is surely the end of the combat.”

The attendant returned and said, “They said that Palamon had Arcite’s body within an inch of the pillar, and so the cry was generally ‘Palamon!’ But soon, Arcite’s assistants made a brave rescue of him, and the two bold claimants to your title and hand are at this instant hand to hand in combat.”

Emilia said, “Were Arcite and Palamon to be metamorphosed into one man — why, there is no woman who is worth a composite man like that! Their single share of nobleness peculiar to each of them already causes any living, breathing lady to suffer the disadvantage of being inferior to them, of having a shortage of value in comparison to them.”

Cornets sounded. The audience cried, “Arcite! Arcite!”

“More shouts?” Emilia said. “Are they still crying, ‘Palamon’?”

“No,” the attendant said. “Now they are crying, ‘Arcite.’”

“Please pay attention to the cries,” Emilia said. “Listen with both of your ears.”

Cornets sounded. A great shout rose up, and the audience cried, “Arcite! Victory!”

The attendant said, “The cry is ‘Arcite!’ and ‘Victory! Look, Arcite, victory!’ The combat’s end is proclaimed by the wind instruments.”

Emilia said, “Even a half-blind person could see that Arcite

was no babe. By God's eyelid, Arcite's richness and splendiddness of spirit appeared from within him; it could no more be hidden in him than a fire can be hidden in flax, or than humble riverbanks can go to a court of law and sue the waters that driving winds force to rage and flood.

"I thought that good Palamon would lose the battle, yet I don't know why I thought so. Our logical reasons are not prophets although often our imaginative fancies are. They are coming off the field of battle. It's a pity! Poor Palamon!"

Cornets sounded. Theseus, Hippolyta, Pirithous, the victorious Arcite, and some attendants arrived.

Theseus said, "Look, our sister-in-law is waiting expectantly, but she is still quaking and unsettled.

"Fairest Emily, the gods by their divine verdict have given you this Knight to be your husband. He is as good a Knight as any who ever struck a blow at someone's head."

He then said to Emilia and Arcite, "Give me your hands. Arcite, you receive her, and Emilia, you receive him. Accept each other as your spouse. Become engaged to marry with a love that grows as you grow old and decay."

Arcite said, "Emily, to buy you I have lost what's dearest to me — my friend Palamon. He is dearest to me except for what I have bought, which is you. And yet I think that I have made my purchase cheaply, when I consider how highly I rate you."

"Oh, beloved sister-in-law," Theseus said, "he speaks now of Palamon, who is as brave a Knight as ever spurred a noble steed. Surely the gods want him to die a bachelor, lest his children should appear in the world as too godlike. Palamon's behavior so charmed me that I thought Hercules was an ingot of lead compared to him. But even if I would

praise each part of Palamon the way I have praised the whole Palamon, your Arcite would not lose by it, for he who was that good has yet encountered his better — Arcite is better than the much-praised Palamon. I have heard two emulous Philomels — nightingales — beat the ear of the night with their contentious throats. Now one sang the higher, and then the other did, and then again the first did, one out-breasting the other until the senses could not judge between them which of the two was the better. So it fared for a good amount of time between these kinsmen, until the Heavens made one the winner by a little.”

Theseus said to Arcite, “Wear with joy the garland that you have won.”

He then ordered, “As for the defeated, give them our immediate justice, since I know their lives now are only a torment to them. Let the executions be done here. The scene’s not for our seeing. We will go from here very joyfully, but with some sorrow.”

He said to Arcite, “Take your prize by the arm. I know you will not lose her.”

He then looked at his wife and said, “Hippolyta, I see one eye of yours conceives a tear, which it will deliver.”

“Is this winning?” Emilia said. “Oh, all you Heavenly powers, where is your mercy? Except that your wills have said it must be so, and your wills charge me to live to comfort this unfriended, miserable Prince, who has cut away a life from him — a life more worthy than all women — I should die and I would wish to die, too.”

Hippolyta said, “It is an infinite pity that four such eyes should be so fixed on one woman with the result that two eyes must necessarily be blind in death as a result of it.”

“So it is,” Theseus said.

A guard entered with Palamon and his three Knights; all of the prisoners were tied up. The jailer, an executioner, and others arrived. The executioner was carrying an ax. Palamon and the three Knights who had fought with him were sentenced to die by beheading. A chopping block had already been set up on a platform.

Palamon said to his Knights, “There’s many a man alive who has outlived the love of the people; yes, and in the same situation stands many a father with his child. Some comfort we have by so thinking. We will die, but not without men’s pity. We have men’s good wishes that we should continue to live. By dying now, we avoid the loathsome misery of old age, beguile the gout and catarrh that in the last hours of life wait for gray-haired men who are approaching their graves. By dying now, we come towards the gods young and unwearied, not limping under the weight of many old sins. We surely shall please the gods better than such old sinners, and the gods will give us nectar to drink with them because we will be spirits with fewer sins than if we had lived a long time. My dear kinsmen, whose lives are laid down for this poor comfort that I have just spoken about, you have sold your lives too, too cheaply.”

The First Knight said, “What death could be happier? Over us the victors have had good fortune, which is as momentary as to us death is certain. They defeated us through good luck. Their honor does not outweigh our honor by even a grain.”

The Second Knight said, “Let us tell each other farewell, and with our patience let us anger unsteady Lady Fortune, who even at her steadiest reels.”

Lady Fortune is often depicted in works of art as standing

on a ball.

The Knights embraced each other.

“Who will be the first to die?” the Third Knight asked.

Palamon said, “He who led you to this banquet shall be the taster to you all. I will die first.”

Kings employed people who would taste food to see if it was poisoned before the Kings ate it.

Palamon said to the jailer, “Ah, my friend, my friend, your gentle daughter gave me freedom once; you’ll see to it just now that I am given freedom forever. Please, tell me, how is your daughter? I heard she was not well; her kind of illness — madness — has caused me some sorrow.”

“Sir, she’s well restored,” the jailer said, “and she will be married soon.”

“By my short life, I am very glad to hear it,” Palamon said. “It is the very last thing I shall be glad of. Please, tell her that. Commend me to her, and to increase the amount of her dowry, give her this.”

He gave money to the jailer.

The First Knight said, “Let’s all be givers and increase the amount of her dowry.”

The Second Knight asked, “Is she a maiden — a virgin?”

“Truly, I think so,” Palamon said. “She is a very good creature, and she deserves more from me than I can give her or speak of.”

All three Knights said, “Commend us to her. Give her our compliments.”

They gave money to the jailer.

The jailer accepted the money and said, “May the gods reward you all and make my daughter thankful!”

Palamon said, “*Adieu*, and let my life be now as short as my leave-taking.”

He put his head on the chopping block.

The First Knight said, “Lead, courageous cousin.”

The Second and Third Knights said, “We’ll follow cheerfully.”

A great noise sounded. People shouted, “Run! Save! Stop!”

A messenger ran quickly over to the executioner and said, “Stop, stop! Oh, stop, stop, stop!”

Pirithous arrived and ran quickly over to them and said, “Stop! It is a cursed haste you have made if you have already killed Palamon!”

Seeing Palamon, he said to him, “Noble Palamon, the gods will show their glory in a life that you are yet to lead. You won’t die yet.”

Palamon asked, “How can that be when I have said that Venus is false? What has happened?”

Pirithous said, “Stand up, great sir, and hear tidings that are both most dearly sweet and bitter.”

Palamon stood up and asked, “What has awakened us from our dream?”

An attendant untied his hands.

“Listen,” Pirithous said. “Your cousin Arcite mounted a steed that Emily first gave to him — a black one, with not a single white hair, which some will say lowers his price, for many will not buy an otherwise good horse that has this

bad characteristic; this is a superstition that people here believe.”

According to that superstition, an all-black horse is a vicious horse.

Pirithous continued, “Riding on this horse, Arcite trotted the stones of Athens — which the heels of the horse’s shoes tapped as if it were counting rather than trampled, for the horse would make the length of his stride a mile, if it pleased his rider to put mettle in him.

“The black horse thus went counting the flinty pavement, dancing, as it were, to the music its own hooves made — for, as they say, from iron came music’s origin.”

According to a folktale, a blacksmith whose hammers rang out different notes when striking the anvil invented music. In another folktale, the Greek philosopher Pythagoras visited a blacksmith shop and invented music.

Pirithous continued, “An envious piece of flint, cold as the old god Saturn, and like him possessed with malevolent fire, may have darted a spark when struck by a horseshoe. Or else it was fierce sulphur, aka brimstone, expressly made for the purpose of spooking Arcite’s horse. I won’t comment on which I think it was, but the hot horse, hot as fire, took fright and shied at it and began to do whatever misconduct its power and strength could give its will. It jumped and stood upright, having forgotten what it learned in the stable where it was trained to properly obey its rider. Like a pig, it cried in pain as Arcite used the sharp rowel of his spurs. It fretted at the use of the spurs rather than obey them even a little. It sought to use all the foul means of boisterous and rough jades’ tricks to unseat Arcite, its lord who bravely kept his seat.”

Jades are bad horses.

Pirithous continued, “When nothing served, when the strap under the horse’s jaw would not crack, nor the strap under its belly break, nor different leaps and plunges uproot its rider from the saddle and instead Arcite kept the horse between his legs, then on its hind hoofs the horse stood up, and Arcite’s legs were higher than his head. For a moment, the figures seemed to hang in the air with a strange magic. Arcite’s victor’s wreath then fell off his head, and immediately the jade fell over backward, and his full weight fell on Arcite and became his — the rider’s — load.

“Arcite is still living, but his life is a vessel that floats only until the next wave comes and hits it. He much desires to speak with you.

“Look, here he comes.”

Theseus, Hippolyta, Emilia, and Arcite appeared. Attendants carried the dying Arcite in a chair. As they approached, attendants untied the hands of the three Knights who had fought with Palamon.

Palamon said, “Oh, this is a miserable end to our friendship! The gods are mighty, Arcite. If your heart, your worthy, manly heart, is still unbroken, tell me your last words. I am Palamon, one who still loves the dying you.”

Arcite said, “Emilia is yours. Take her, and with her take all the world’s joy.

“Reach out your hand to me. Farewell. I have reached my last hour, and the bell that announces the end of my life is tolling.

“I was false, yet never treacherous.”

He meant that he was false in not allowing Palamon to pursue Emilia without his competition because Palamon had first seen her and had first loved her. Yet his —

Arcite's — love for and pursuit of Emilia had not been treacherous because he had sincerely loved Emilia.

Arcite added, "Forgive me, cousin. I want one kiss from fair Emilia."

She kissed him.

Arcite said, "It is done. Take her. I die."

He died.

Palamon said, "May your brave soul seek Elysium, the abode of honorable men in the Land of the Dead!"

Emilia said, "I'll close your eyes, Prince. May the blessed souls be with you! You are a very good man, and as long as I live, I will devote the anniversaries of this day to tears."

Palamon said, "And I will devote them to honor."

Theseus said, "In this place you two first fought; exactly here is where I separated you and stopped you from fighting. Acknowledge to the gods our thanks that you are living. Arcite's part in life has been played, and though his part was too short, he played it well. Your days of life have been lengthened, and the blissful dew of Heaven sprinkles on you.

"Powerful Venus has well graced her altar and given you your love. Our master, Mars, has made good his oracle, and to Arcite he gave the grace — the victory — of the battle. So the deities have shown due justice."

He then ordered, "Carry Arcite's body away to be buried."

Palamon said to the body, "Oh, cousin, what a pity that we should desire things that cost us the loss of our desire. It's a pity that nothing could buy dear love except the loss of dear love."

Some attendants carried away Arcite's body.

Theseus said, "Lady Fortune never played a subtler game. The conquered Knight has the triumph, while the victorious Knight has the loss, yet in this contention the gods have been most equitable and just."

He then said, "Palamon, your kinsman Arcite confessed that the right to the lady Emilia was yours because you first saw her and at that time you proclaimed that you loved her. He restored her as if she were your stolen jewel and he requested your spirit to send him forgiven to the afterlife.

"The gods took my justice from my hand. I have the power of life and death over my subjects, but here the gods took that power for themselves.

"Lead your lady, Emilia, away, and call your friends — the three Knights who fought with you — away from the platform of death where the chopping block is located. I adopt these three Knights as my friends.

"For a day or two, let us look and be sad and pay proper attention to the funeral of Arcite.

"After the funeral, we'll put on the happy faces of bridegrooms and smile with Palamon — for whom just one hour ago I was as dearly sorry for as I was glad for Arcite, and now I am as glad for Palamon as I am sorry for Arcite."

Theseus then prayed, "Oh, you Heavenly charmers, you gods who work charms, what things you make of us! We laugh on account of what we lack, we are sorry on account of what we have, and always we are children in some way.

"Let us be thankful for that which is, and with you gods we will leave disputes that are above our heads and that we cannot resolve."

He then said to everybody present, "Let's go now and

conduct ourselves in a manner appropriate to this time.”

EPILOGUE (*The Two Noble Kinsmen*)

Back in William Shakespeare's day, the boy who has played Emilia in a production of the play comes out on stage and says this:

"I would now ask you how you like the play,

"But, as it is with schoolboys, cannot say [am tongue-tied].

"I am cruel [very] fearful! Pray [Please] yet stay a while,

"And let me look upon you. [Will] No man smile?

"Then it goes hard [for us], I see. He that [who] has

"Loved a young handsome wench, then, show his face —

"It is strange if none be here — and, if he will,

"Against his conscience let him hiss and kill [ruin]

"Our market [profits]. It is in vain, I see, to stay [prevent] you.

"Have at [Let's face] the worst [that] can come, then! Now what say you?

"And yet mistake me not: I am not bold [being impudent].

"We have no such cause [reason to be impudent]. If the tale we have told —

"For it is no other [nothing other than a story] — [in] any way content you —

"For to [do] that honest purpose it was meant [for] you —

"We have our end [done what we intended to do]; and you shall have ere [before] long,

"I dare say, many a better [play], to prolong

“Your old loves [and patronage] to us. We, and all our
might [all we can do],

“Rest at your service. Gentlemen, good night.”

Chapter XXXVIII: THE WINTER'S TALE

CAST OF CHARACTERS (*The Winter's Tale*)

MALE CHARACTERS

LEONTES, King of Sicily.

MAMILLIUS, young Prince of Sicily.

CAMILLO, ANTIGONUS, CLEOMENES, and DION,
Lords of Sicily.

POLIXENES, King of Bohemia.

FLORIZEL, his Son.

ARCHIDAMUS, a Lord of Bohemia.

A Mariner.

A Jailer.

An old Shepherd, reputed Father of Perdita.

CLOWN, his Son. The son of the shepherd is a Clown character — a comic character. In this retelling of the play, I made “Clown” his nickname because I did not want to continually refer to him as the old shepherd’s son. Shakespeare did not use “Clown” as a nickname.

Servant to the old Shepherd.

AUTOLYCUS, a Rogue.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

HERMIONE, Queen to Leontes, King of Sicily.

PERDITA, Daughter to Leontes and Hermione.

PAULINA, Wife to Antigonus.

EMILIA, a Lady.

Other Ladies, attending the Queen.

MOPSA and DORCAS, Shepherdesses.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Sicilian Lords and Ladies, Attendants, Guards, Herdsmen dressed as Satyrs, Shepherds, Shepherdesses, etc.

Time, as Chorus.

SCENE

Sometimes in Sicily, sometimes in Bohemia.

CHAPTER 1 (*The Winter's Tale*)

— 1.1 —

In an antechamber in the palace of Leontes, King of Sicily, two courtiers were conversing. Archidamus was a courtier from Bohemia, and Camillo was a courtier from Sicily. For the past nine months, Polixenes, King of Bohemia, had been visiting Leontes, a childhood friend. Now, however, Polixenes wanted to return to his Kingdom. The two courtiers were formal as they spoke to each other.

Archidamus said, “If you should happen, Camillo, to visit Bohemia on a similar diplomatic visit such as that on which my services are now engaged, you shall see, as I have said, great differences between our Bohemia and your Sicily.”

Archidamus was speaking truer than he knew. Soon, a great difference — a great quarrel — would arise between the King of Bohemia and the King of Sicily.

“I think that this coming summer the King of Sicily intends to pay Bohemia the visit that he justly and reciprocally owes him,” Camillo replied.

“During that visit, our hospitality shall shame us because of its poverty; however, our good will toward you shall excuse us because indeed —”

“Please —” Camillo interrupted.

Archidamus interrupted Camillo: “Truly, I speak what I know. We cannot entertain you the way that you have entertained us with such magnificence — which is so rare that I don’t know what to say. We will give you sleep-inducing drinks so that you, unaware of the insufficiency of our hospitality, may, although you cannot praise us, criticize us as little as possible.”

“You pay a great deal too much for what’s given freely,” Camillo said. “I want to freely pay you a compliment, but you will not allow me to.”

“Believe me, I speak what I know to be true, and my honesty makes me say it to you,” Archidamus said.

Camillo, the courtier from Sicily, replied, “The King of Sicily cannot be too kind to the King of Bohemia. They were trained together in their childhoods; and there rooted between them then such an affection that cannot choose but branch now.”

Camillo was also speaking truer than he knew. “Trained” was a horticultural word, as were “rooted” and “branch,” the latter of which had two meanings: 1) to branch out, aka produce branches and grow, and 2) to go in two different directions. Soon, the two Kings would quarrel and go in two different directions.

He continued, “They grew up, and then their high position and duties and obligations in adult life caused them to be separated; however, the two kept in touch. Their deputies have done an excellent job of delivering gifts and letters and making friendly embassies from one King to the other King. The two Kings, although in different countries, have seemed to be together. Although separated from each other, they have seemed to shake hands over a vast ocean, and embraced, as it were, from the ends of the Earth. May the Heavens help their friendship to continue!”

“I think there is nothing in the world — such as malice and evil will or any factual matter — that can stop their friendship,” Archidamus said.

The two courtiers had been speaking formally, but now they loosened up and soon they began to joke with each other.

Archidamus said, "You have an inexpressibly great comfort in your young Prince Mamillius: He is a gentleman of the greatest promise who ever came into my notice."

"I very much agree with you," Camillo said. "We have great hopes for him. He is a gallant child: one who indeed is a tonic for all the citizens of Sicily. He makes old hearts fresh. Old people who walked with crutches before he was born hope to stay alive long enough to see him become a man."

"If not for that desire, would they be content to die?"

"Yes, if there were no other excuse why they should desire to live."

"If King Leontes had no son, they would desire to live on crutches until he had a son," Archidamus said.

— 1.2 —

In a room of state in the palace were Leontes, King of Sicily; Hermione, his wife; Mamillius, their son; Polixenes, King of Bohemia; Camillo, a courtier from Sicily; and some attendants.

Using the royal plural, King Polixenes said, "Shepherds have seen the Moon, the watery star that controls the tides, go through nine cycles since we left our throne without an occupant. I have been away from Bohemia for nine months. We could thank you, Leontes, my brother King, nine months for your hospitality, but yet we should, for perpetuity, still owe you thanks. Therefore, let my 'We thank you' be like a zero that when added to other numbers multiply by many thousands the numbers that go before it. Let my one 'We thank you' stand for all the many thousand thank-yous we owe to you."

King Leontes replied, "Do not say thanks now; say thanks

when you depart from Sicily.”

“Sir, that will be tomorrow,” King Polixenes said. “My fears make me ask what may happen or what trouble may breed because of my long absence from Bohemia. I fear that sneaping, aka cutting, winds may blow at home — winds that will make us say, ‘Yes, we had just cause to be afraid of what might happen during our long absence.’ Besides, I have stayed too long here and I am tiring your majesty.”

“We are tougher, brother King,” Leontes said, “than any ‘trouble’ you can give us.”

“I can no longer stay here. I must return home.”

“Stay one week longer,” King Leontes requested.

“Truly I must leave tomorrow.”

“We will compromise and split the time between us,” King Leontes said. “Stay half a week longer and know that I won’t take ‘no’ for an answer.”

“Do not press me to stay,” King Polixenes said. “Please do not press me. No tongue that moves, none — none in the world — could persuade me as quickly as yours. You could persuade me now if you had a good reason for needing me here, even if I had a good reason to deny your request. My affairs drag me homeward: I am needed there. If you were to hinder me and prevent me from leaving, it would be like a whip to me even if you wanted me to stay longer because of our friendship. My stay here costs you expense and trouble. To save you from both, I will leave. Farewell, our brother.”

King Leontes said to his wife, Hermione, “Tongue-tied, our Queen? Speak to him.”

“I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until you had

drawn from him oaths not to stay and then I would come and save the day,” Hermione said. “You, sir, try to persuade him too coldly. Tell him that you are sure that everything in Bohemia is well. This is supported by the news that we received yesterday from Bohemia. Tell him this. By doing so, you will beat his best argument for returning to his home.”

“Well said, Hermione,” King Leontes said.

“Another good and strong argument for him to return to his home,” Hermione said, “is for him to say that he longs to see his son. If that is his reason for going, let him say so then, and let him go. If he swears that that is his reason for leaving, he shall not stay here. We women will thwack him away from here. We will hit him with the distaffs that we use when we spin wool.”

Hermione said to King Polixenes, “Yet of your royal presence I’ll venture to borrow a week. When in Bohemia you entertain my lord, I’ll pay back the loan of a week by giving him permission in advance to stay in Bohemia a month longer than the time fixed for his departure back to Sicily.”

She added, “But indeed, Leontes, my husband, I love you not a jot less than any woman who loves her lord and husband.”

King Leontes walked over to his son.

Hermione asked King Polixenes, “You’ll stay?”

“No, madam.”

“Won’t you stay?”

“I cannot, truly and verily.”

“Verily!” Hermione exclaimed. “You put me off with limp

and weak vows; but I, even if you were to try to shake stars out of the sky with your oaths, would still say, ‘Sir, you shall not go.’ Verily, you shall not go. A lady’s ‘verily’ is as potent as a lord’s. Women can make oaths as strong as the oaths of men. Do you still insist on going? You will force me to keep you as a prisoner, not as a guest. In that case you shall pay your fees when you depart the way that a prisoner pays a fee to the jailer when he departs, and you will save your thanks. What do you say now? Will you be my prisoner or my guest? I swear by your dread ‘verily’ that you will be one of them.”

“In that case, I will be your guest, madam,” King Polixenes replied. “To be your prisoner implies that I would have offended you by committing an offense. I would find it less easy to commit an offense than you would to punish it.”

“So I will not be your jailer then, but instead your kind hostess,” Hermione said. “Come, I’ll ask you questions about my husband’s tricks and yours when you were boys.”

She asked him, “You were pretty lordings — fine young boys — then?”

“We were, fair Queen,” King Polixenes said. “We were two lads who thought there was nothing more to come except a day tomorrow that was like the day today. We thought that we would be boys forever.”

“Was not my lord — my husband — the greater rascal of you two?”

“We were like twin lambs frisking in the Sun, and each of us bleated at the other. What we exchanged was innocence for innocence; we knew nothing about evil and we did not dream that anyone committed evil acts. Had we pursued that life, and had our youthful innocence never been replaced by mature thoughts because of our growing up, we should have answered Heaven boldly ‘not guilty of

personal sin' on the Day of Judgment. Our only sin would have been the original sin we inherited from Adam, the first man."

"By this I gather that you have tripped and sinned since you were boys," Hermione said.

"My most sacred lady!" King Polixenes said. "Temptations have since then come to us. In those unfledged days my wife was only a girl, and your precious self had then not crossed the eyes of my young playfellow."

"May Heaven help us!" Hermione said. "Don't continue speaking, lest you say that your Queen and I are devils who made you two sin. Yet go on. The offences that your Queen and I have made you do we'll answer to, assuming that you first sinned with us and that you continued to sin with us and that you did not sin with anyone but us."

Leontes came closer to them and asked Hermione, "Is he won over yet?"

"He'll stay, my lord."

"At my request, he would not," King Leontes said. "Hermione, my dearest, you have never spoken better and for a better purpose."

"Never?" she replied.

"Never, except once," her husband said.

"What! Have I twice spoken well? When was the other time? Please tell me. Cram us women with praise, and make us as fat as tame things such as household pets. One good deed that is not praised slaughters a thousand good deeds that would have been done if that good deed had been praised. Praises are the wages of women. You may ride us with one soft kiss a thousand furlongs before we would gallop an acre as a result of being spurred. You will

receive more from a woman if you treat her with kindness than if you treat her harshly.

“But to get to the point: My most recent good deed with words was to persuade King Polixenes to stay here longer. What was my first good deed with words? It has an elder sister — it was done previously to this good deed unless I mistake you. I hope that my other good deed has won me grace and favor. Once before today I spoke to the purpose. When? Tell me. I long to know.”

“Why, that was when three crabbed months had soured themselves to death,” King Leontes said. “It took me three months before I could make you open your white hand and accept my hand. When I succeeded, then you uttered, ‘I am yours forever.’ At that time, you agreed to marry me.”

“That good deed brought me grace indeed,” Hermione said. “Why — look at that! — I have spoken to the purpose twice. Once I forever earned a royal husband; the other time I earned for a longer time the presence of a friend.”

A man can fall in love with a glance; a man can also become jealous with a glance. Such feelings can be incredibly strong.

Hermione took King Polixenes’ hand.

Seeing this, King Leontes instantly became jealous and thought, *They are too hot, too hot! To mingle friendship too far is mingling bloods. A man and a woman who take friendship too far end up in bed together and mingle their bodily fluids. I have tremor cordis — a trembling of my heart — in me. My heart dances, but not for joy — not joy. This hospitality can have an innocent face. This liberty can come from sincerity, from generosity, and from a warm heart. It can well become the agent — Hermione, who may simply be a good hostess. I grant all that, but Hermione and King Polixenes are now paddling palms and pinching*

fingers — they are holding hands. And they are smiling at each other as if they were smiling into a mirror, and they are sighing deep sighs like those of a dying deer. This is hospitality that my heart does not like — or my brows! I can almost feel the horns of a cuckold growing from my brows!

King Leontes went over to his son and asked him, “Mamillius, are you my boy?”

“Yes, my good lord.”

“So you are, in faith,” King Leontes said. “Why, that’s my bawcock, aka fine fellow. What, have you smudged your nose? They say that your nose is a copy of mine. Come, young captain, we must be neat.”

He thought a moment about the horns of a cuckold, and he remembered that one meaning of the word “neat” in their society was “horned cattle.”

He added, “Not neat, but we must be clean, captain. The steer, the heifer, and the calf are all called ‘neat.’”

King Leontes looked over at his wife, Hermione, and King Polixenes, who were still holding hands.

He said, “She is still virginalling upon his palm!”

The virginals was a keyboard instrument that women played.

He said to his son, “How are you, you playful calf! Are you my calf?”

“Yes, if you want me to be, my lord,” Mamillius said.

“You lack a rough head and the shoots that I have, so you are not exactly like me,” King Leontes said.

By “shoots,” he may have meant his beard — or the horns

that he imagined to be growing from his head.

He continued, “Yet they say we are almost as alike as eggs. Women say so; women will say anything. They are as false as dyed black clothing that hides the real color. They are as false as wind and water — the words of a woman are written on wind and running water. They are as false as the dice of a gambler who recognizes no distinction between what is mine and what he wants to be his. Yet it is true to say that this boy looks like me.

“Come, sir page, look at me with your sky-blue eyes, sweet villain! You are very dear to me! You are a piece of me!”

He began to wonder if Hermione were unfaithful to him:
Can your dam — is it possible?

A dam is an animal’s mother. King Leontes was unwilling to think of his wife as human.

He thought, *Jealousy! Your intensity stabs the center of my being and heart! You make it possible to think things that were not thought to be possible. You communicate with dreams and illusions — but how can this be? You join and act in concert with what is unreal, and so you are able to join and act in concert with nothing. You make me think things that I thought not to be possible. Since you can do this, it becomes very believable that you may join and act in concert with something that is real. You have made me think that things that I thought to be impossible are in fact quite possible, and those things go beyond what is permitted — my wife is having an affair with my best friend! I find this to be true, and that has infected my brains and caused horns to grow on my brows.*

King Leontes realized that jealousy is often not justified, but he believed that in his case it was justified.

King Polixenes looked at King Leontes and asked

Hermione, “What is wrong with your husband?”

“He seems somewhat unsettled,” Hermione replied.

“How are you, my lord?” King Polixenes asked. “How do you feel? How is it with you, my best friend and brother and fellow King?”

Hermione said to her husband, “You look as if you have a lot on your mind. Are you angry about something, my lord?”

King Leontes replied, “No, truly I am not angry. Sometimes nature will betray its folly, its tenderness, and show that it is silly and sentimental. In doing so, it makes itself a laughingstock to people who lack sentimentality.

“Looking at the lineaments of my boy’s face, I thought I had gone back twenty-three years, and I saw myself as a boy not yet old enough to wear pants. I was wearing my green velvet coat of the type that both young boys and young girls wear. My dagger was sheathed, lest it should bite its master, and so prove, as ornaments often do, to be dangerous. My dagger then was for show, not for use.

“How like, I thought, I then was to this kernel, this unripe peapod, this young gentleman, my son.”

He asked his son, “My honest friend, will you take eggs for money?”

This was a proverbial expression that literally meant, Will you accept inexpensive goods rather than money? Figuratively, it meant, Will you allow yourself to be imposed upon?

Mamillius replied, “No, my lord, I’ll fight.”

This answer relieved King Leontes because this answer was the one that he would give. His son was like him both

physically and mentally. His son was honest in two senses: He was honorable and legitimate.

“You will!” King Leontes happily exclaimed. “Why, good luck to you! May your lot in life be that of a happy man!”

He asked King Polixenes, “My brother King, are you as fond of your young Prince as we are of ours?”

“When I am at home, sir, my son keeps me busy and he is everything to me. He makes me laugh, and I am seriously concerned about his wellbeing. At one time he is my sworn friend, and at another time he is my enemy. He is my parasite who eats at my table, he is my soldier, he is my statesman — he is everything to me. By making me happy, he makes a day in July as short as a day in December. And with his varying childish whims he cures in me thoughts that would thicken my blood and make me sluggish and depressed.”

“My own young squire, aka son, does the same things for me,” King Leontes said. “My son and I will walk, my lord, and leave you and my wife to your graver and more mature steps.

“Hermione, show how you love us in our brother King’s welcome. Let what is dear in Sicily be cheap. Next to yourself and my young rover here, King Polixenes is heir apparent — the person closest to my heart.”

“If you want us, we will be in the garden,” Hermione replied. “Shall we wait for you there?”

“Do whatever you please,” King Leontes replied. “You’ll be found as long as you are beneath the sky.”

He thought, *By “found,” I mean “found out.” I am angling now, although you do not see me giving you line. I am giving you enough rope to hang yourself. Go on! Go on!*

Look at how my wife holds up her beak, her bill, her mouth, to him! And she takes his arm in hers with the boldness of a wife taking her approving husband's arm!

King Polixenes, Hermione, and the attendants exited.

King Leontes thought, *My wife is gone already! She is lost to me, and she has fallen into sin by committing adultery with King Polixenes. The evidence for her adultery is as solid as an inch-thick board. She is knee-deep in sin. Most people are over head and ears in love, but I am over head and ears a forked one — the horns of a cuckold fork out of my forehead!*

He said to his son, “Go, play, boy, play.”

He thought, *Your mother plays and commits adultery, and I play a part, too. I pretend to be an uncuckolded husband. I play so disgraced a part that I will be hissed to my grave like a bad actor being hissed off the stage. Contempt and clamor will be my funeral bell.*

He said again, “Go, play, boy, play.”

He thought, *There have been, or I am much deceived, cuckolds before now; and many a man exists, even at this present time, right now while I think this, who holds his wife by the arm and little thinks that he has been sluiced in his absence and his pond fished by his nearest neighbor, by Sir Smile, his neighbor.*

“Sluiced” means “showered with water,” but the “water” that King Leontes was thinking about was semen. He was also using the word “pond” as a synonym for “vagina.” He would do the same thing with the word “gate.”

He thought, *There's comfort in thinking that I am not the only cuckold. Other men have gates and those gates are opened, as mine is, against their will. If all men who have*

adulteress wives were to despair, a tenth of mankind would hang themselves. No medicine can cure a cuckold. Adultery is like a bawdy planet that in astrological terms will strike whenever it is in the ascendant. This planet is powerful — believe it! — in the east, west, north, and south. Let us realize that no vagina can be barricaded; a vagina will let in and out the enemy with bag and baggage — with scrotum and its contents. Many thousands of us have the disease of cuckoldry and don't know it.

He said to his son, "How are you, boy?"

"I am like you, they say."

"Why, that's some comfort," King Leontes said.

He noticed a man and said, "What, is that my courtier Camillo there?"

"Yes, my good lord," Camillo replied.

King Leontes said, "Go play, Mamillius; you are an honest man."

Mamillius departed, and King Leontes thought, *You are legitimate; you are my son.*

King Leontes said, "Camillo, this great sir — King Polixenes — will stay a while longer."

"You had much trouble to make his anchor hold," Camillo replied. "When you cast the anchor out, it always dragged the bottom and came back."

"Did you see that?" King Leontes asked.

"King Polixenes would not stay here longer when you asked him to," Camillo said. "He always insisted that his reasons for returning to his Kingdom were more important."

“Did you perceive that?” King Leontes asked.

He thought, *They are already aware that I am a cuckold. They are whispering in corners, “The King of Sicily is a so-and-so.”*

He did not want to put the word “cuckold” in the mouth of his subjects.

He thought, *News of my cuckoldry must have been known for a long time if I am the last to learn it.*

He asked, “How did it come to be, Camillo, that King Polixenes finally agreed to stay longer here?”

Camillo replied, “He agreed to stay longer because Queen Hermione asked him to stay longer.”

“At the Queen’s — so be it. ‘Good’ should be pertinent here, but as it happens, it is not. Did any other intelligent head but yours notice that? I ask because your intelligence is absorbent and draws in more information than the ‘intelligence’ of any common blockheads. No one noticed, I suppose, except some individuals of exceptional intelligence? People of lower intelligence are perhaps totally unaware of this business? Tell me what you think.”

Camillo was puzzled by the questions. He was completely unaware of any suggestion that Queen Hermione had ever even thought of committing adultery.

He said, “Business, my lord? I think that most people understand that King Polixenes of Bohemia will stay here longer.”

“What!” Leontes said.

Camillo repeated, “King Polixenes of Bohemia will stay here longer.”

“Yes, but why?” King Leontes asked.

“To satisfy your Highness and the entreaties of our most gracious Queen Hermione.”

“Satisfy! The entreaties of your Queen! Satisfy!” King Leontes exclaimed.

He was thinking of sexual satisfaction.

He said, “That’s enough! I have trusted you, Camillo, with all the personal things nearest to my heart, as well as my thoughts about the affairs of state. I have confessed my feelings to you, and like a priest you have cleansed my bosom. I have departed from you like a reformed penitent.”

He began to use the royal plural: “But we have been deceived in your integrity, deceived in that which only seems to be integrity.”

“God forbid, my lord!” Camillo said.

“To say more on this subject,” King Leontes said, “you are not honest, or, if you incline toward honesty, you are a coward. Your cowardice hamstringing your honesty, preventing it from doing what needs to be done. If that is not true, then you must be a servant whom I trust in serious matters but who is negligent. Or you may be a fool who sees a game played for high stakes — you actually see someone win the prize and yet you do not believe the game was played for real.”

King Leontes was thinking that perhaps Camillo believed that what was really a seduction was instead a harmless flirtation.

“My gracious lord,” Camillo said, “I may be negligent, foolish, and fearful. No man is completely free of each of these. In the infinite doings of the world, sometimes a man will be negligent, foolish, and fearful.

“However, in your affairs, my lord, if ever I was willfully

negligent, it was due to my foolishness, and if ever I willfully played the fool, it was due to my negligence — I did not understand how important the matter was. If ever I was fearful to do a thing that I doubted would achieve the desired end, a thing that, once done, did in fact achieve the desired result and was clearly what needed to be done, mine was a fear that often infects the wisest.

“My lord, honesty is never free of such allowed infirmities as these. All of us make mistakes.

“But I beg your grace to be plainer with me; let me know specifically what you think that I have done wrong. If I deny doing it, then take my word that I am not guilty of it.”

King Leontes replied, “Haven’t you seen, Camillo, but there is no doubt that you have, for if you haven’t, then the lens of your eye is thicker than a cuckold’s horn ... or heard, for rumor cannot keep quiet about something that can be so easily seen ... or thought, for any man who is capable of thought must have thought this — that my wife is slippery?”

“If you will admit that you have — for to admit that you have not is to say that you are incapable of seeing, hearing, and thinking — then say that my wife is a hobby-horse, a whore, that anyone can ride. Say that she deserves a name as rank as any lower-class wench who puts out even before she is engaged. Say it and swear that it is true.”

Shocked, Camillo said, “I will not be a bystander who hears my Queen so clouded and criticized with words — not without immediately speaking up in her defense and defending her.

“Curse my heart, but you have never spoken what becomes you less than this which you have spoken just now.”

Camillo was angry. He had not used “my lord” or “your

grace” or “sir” when speaking to the King. He had also forcefully criticized his King — as a good advisor should have done. Still, he knew that he should have called King Leontes “my lord” or “your grace,” and he believed that he could have expressed his criticism in other, less offensive words.

He said, “To reiterate what I have just said would be a sin as deep as the sin of the words you just spoke, although the criticism I made of you is true.”

King Leontes produced his “evidence” that his wife and King Polixenes were having an affair: “Is whispering nothing? Is leaning cheek to cheek? Is touching noses during a kiss? Is kissing with the inside of the lips? Is stopping the act of laughing with a sigh? Here is infallible evidence of breaking honesty. Is playing footsie nothing? Hiding in corners? Wishing that clocks were swifter? Wishing that hours were minutes? Wishing that noon was midnight? Wishing that all eyes were blind with cataracts except theirs, theirs only, so they could be wicked without being seen? Is this nothing?

“Why, if so, then the world and all that’s in it is nothing. The covering sky is nothing. The King of Bohemia is nothing. My wife is nothing. These nothings are nothing, if this is nothing.”

“My good lord, be cured of this diseased opinion of yours, and quickly, because this diseased opinion is very dangerous,” Camillo said. “Don’t be jealous.”

“Even if it is dangerous to say so, it is true, Camillo,” King Leontes said. “It is true. My wife is having an affair.”

“No, no, my lord,” Camillo replied.

“It is true,” King Leontes said. “You lie! You lie! I say that you lie, Camillo, and I hate you. I say that you are a gross

lout and a mindless slave. Or else you are a vacillating opportunist. You see at the same time good and evil, and you incline toward one or the other in accordance with which one will most benefit you.

“If my wife’s heart — the seat of her passion — was as infected as her life, she would not live even an hour longer.”

“Who infects her with passion?” Camillo asked.

“Why, he who wears her like a miniature portrait, hanging around his neck,” King Leontes said. “The King of Bohemia, who, if I had loyal servants around me, who had the eyes to see that what affects my honor also affects their own good and their own personal profit, they would do that which should undo more doing — they would do something that would prevent King Polixenes from further doing my wife. Yes, and you, King Polixenes’ cupbearer — whom I from a meaner position in life have raised to a high position and a seat among the powerful — you, who may see as plainly as Heaven sees Earth and Earth sees Heaven, how I am galled — you might ‘spice’ a cup with poison so that my enemy will have an everlasting sleep. Such a poisoned draught for him would be a medicine for me.”

“Sir, my lord,” Camillo said, “I could do this, and with no quick-acting potion. I could add to his drink a slow-acting dram that would not work quickly and obviously like many poisons would, but I cannot believe this crack — this sin of adultery — to be in my highly respected mistress, she who has always been so honorable. I have loved you —”

King Leontes interrupted, “If you don’t believe me, then go rot! Do you think that I am so confused, so unsettled, that I would put myself in this vexing situation without good reason? Would I sully the purity and whiteness of my marriage sheets? To preserve their purity and whiteness

leads to healthful and soothing sleep. But to spot their purity and whiteness leads to goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps! Would I bring scandal to the blood of the Prince my son, and make people wonder if he is legitimate? I think the Prince my son is legitimate and mine, and I love him as mine. Would I put myself in this vexing situation without good reason? Could any man so delude himself and turn away from reason and a loved one?"

"I must believe you, sir," Camillo said. "I do believe you; and I will fetch off — remove — the King of Bohemia because of it."

Camillo was perhaps being deliberately ambiguous. To "remove" the King of Bohemia could mean to kill him, or to send him safely away.

Camillo continued, "I will fetch off — remove — the King of Bohemia provided that, when he's removed, your Highness will take again your Queen as yours as you did at first. Do it for your son's sake; by doing so you will seal up and prevent gossiping tongues from doing you injury in courts and Kingdoms that are known and allied to yours."

"You advise me to do what I have already decided to do," King Leontes said. "I'll give no blemish to her honor — none at all."

"My lord, go then, and with a countenance as clear as friends have at feasts, be with the King of Bohemia and with your Queen. Pretend to be friendly to him. I am the King of Bohemia's cupbearer, and if he receives a wholesome and healthy beverage from me, then do not believe that I am your loyal servant."

"This is all that I have to say," King Leontes said. "If you kill King Polixenes, you will have one half of my heart. If you do not kill King Polixenes, you will split your own heart in two."

“I will do it, my lord,” Camillo said.

“I will seem friendly, as you have advised me to be,” King Leontes said.

He exited.

“Oh, miserable lady!” Camillo said. “But, as for me, what is my situation? I must be the poisoner of good King Polixenes. My reason for killing him is that I am obedient to my King, a King who is in rebellion against his true self and so will have all his followers also rebel against their true selves. If I do this deed, I will supposedly be rewarded — promotion supposedly follows the doing of this deed. Even if I could find thousands of examples of people who had killed anointed Kings and then flourished afterward, I would not do it; but since documents of brass or stone or parchment present not even one example of good things happening to the murderer of a King, then villainy — evil — itself ought to refuse to do such an evil act. I must leave King Leontes’ court. Whether I kill King Polixenes, or I don’t kill King Polixenes, bad things are certain to happen to me if I stay here.”

He saw King Polixenes walking toward him and said, “My happy star, may you reign now! May I have good luck! Here comes the King of Bohemia.”

King Polixenes said to himself, “This is strange. I think that my popularity here begins to wane. I met King Leontes, and he did not speak to me. Why?”

He then said out loud, “Good day, Camillo.”

“Hail, most royal sir!”

“What is the news in the court?”

“Nothing unusual, my lord.”

“King Leontes looks as he had lost some province — a region that he loves as he loves himself. Just now I met him with my customary compliment and greeting to him, but he hurriedly turned his eyes away from me and with a contemptuous sneer on his lips sped away from me and so he left me to consider what is happening that makes him change how he treats me.”

“I dare not know, my lord,” Camillo replied.

“What! Dare not! Or do not? Do you know, and dare not? Tell me what you know. You must know something. What you do know, you must know. If you cannot say something, it must be the case that you dare not say something. Good Camillo, your changed facial expression is like a mirror to me — my facial expression is also changing because of the changing way that King Leontes treats me. I must be somehow involved in what is happening because of how it is affecting me.”

“A sickness is giving some of us distemper, but I cannot name the disease; and you are spreading the disease although you are healthy.”

“Camillo — as you are certainly a gentleman, and educated as a scholar; education no less adorns our good social position than our parents’ noble names, by descent from whom we are gentlemen — please, if you know anything which I ought to know, do not conceal it and keep me in ignorance.”

“I may not answer your appeal,” Camillo said.

“A sickness caught from me, and yet I am well!” King Polixenes said. “My appeal must be answered. Listen to me, Camillo. I urge you, by all the parts of Mankind that honor acknowledges, whereof the least is not this appeal of mine, that you declare what probability of harm toward me you think may be coming. Tell me how far off or how near

the harm is. Tell me how to prevent the harm, if that is possible. If that is not possible, then tell me how best I can bear it.”

“Sir, I will tell you,” Camillo said, “since you, whom I think to be honorable, have made an appeal to my honor. Therefore, listen to my counsel, which must be as swiftly followed as I mean to utter it, or both yourself and I will cry out that we are lost, and that will be good night to our lives!”

“Speak on, good Camillo.”

“I have been ordered by him to murder you.”

“By whom, Camillo?”

“By King Leontes.”

“For what reason?”

“He thinks — no, with all confidence he swears, as if he had seen it or had himself encouraged you to commit this vice — that you have touched his Queen in a way that is forbidden.”

“Oh, if I have ever committed adultery with Queen Hermione, then may my royal blood turn into diseased jelly and may my name be yoked with Judas, who betrayed the Best — Jesus! May my freshest reputation turn into a stench that strikes the dullest nostril wherever I arrive, and may my approach be shunned — hated, too — worse than the greatest disease that anyone ever heard or read about!”

“You can try to deny his accusation by swearing by each individual star in Heaven and by all their astrological influences, but you will be as successful at forbidding the sea to obey the Moon as you will be using either sworn oaths of innocence or serious arguments to keep King Leontes from believing his foolish belief that you and his

Queen have committed adultery. He believes strongly in this foolishness and will continue to believe it as long as his body is standing and he is alive.”

“How did this belief come into existence and grow?” King Polixenes asked.

“I don’t know,” Camillo replied, “but I am sure that it is safer to avoid what is grown than to question how it was born. If therefore you dare to trust my honesty that lies enclosed in this trunk of mine that you shall take away with you as a pledge of my good faith, then let us leave tonight! I will whisper to your followers and inform them about this business, and I will by twos and threes at several back gates get them away from the city.

“As for myself, I’ll put my fortunes at your service. I have no good future here because of what I have told you. Believe that what I have told you is true. I swear by the honor of my parents that I have said the truth. If you try to get evidence that what I have said is true, I dare not stand by. I will be in danger if I stay here. You yourself shall be no safer than a man who has been condemned by the King’s own mouth, which has ordered you to be executed.”

“I believe what you have told me,” King Polixenes said. “I saw King Leontes’ heart in his face. Give me your hand. Be my pilot and guide me, and your place shall be at my side. My ships are ready; my people expected me to leave here two days ago.

“King Leontes’ jealousy is for a precious creature. Because Queen Hermione is splendid and rare, his jealousy must be great. Because his person and position are mighty, his jealousy must be violent. And because he believes that a man who has always professed friendship to him has dishonored him, why, his revenges must be bitterer.

“Fear casts a shadow over me. May a speedy departure be

my friend, and may only comfort come to Queen Hermione from King Leontes and none of his ill-taken suspicion!

“Come, Camillo. I will respect you as a father if you save my life by carrying it away from here. Let us leave.”

“I have the authority to order all the posterns to lock or unlock gates,” Camillo said. “May it please your Highness to leave immediately and urgently. Come, sir, let us go.”

CHAPTER 2 (The Winter's Tale)

— 2.1 —

In a room in King Leontes' palace, Queen Hermione; her son, Mamillius; and some ladies were present.

Playfully, Queen Hermione said to the first lady, "Take the boy. He so pesters me that I can't endure it."

The first lady said to Mamillius, "Come, my gracious lord, shall I be your playfellow?"

"No, I'll have nothing to do with you."

"Why not, my sweet lord?"

"You'll kiss me hard and speak to me as if I were still a baby," he replied.

He then said to the second lady, "I love you better than I love her."

"Why, my lord?" she asked.

"Not because your brows are blacker," he said, "yet black brows, they say, become some women best, as long as there is not too much hair there, but only a semicircle or a half-Moon made with a pen."

"Who taught you this?" the second lady asked.

"I learnt it from women's faces," Mamillius replied. "Please, tell me what color are your eyebrows?"

The first lady replied, "Blue, my lord."

"No, that's a joke," Mamillius said. "I have seen a lady who had a blue nose, but not blue eyebrows."

"Listen," the first lady said. "The belly of the Queen your

mother grows round quickly. She is pregnant, and we ladies shall soon present our services to a fine new boy or girl one of these days; and then you will want to play with us, if we will let you.”

The second lady said, “The Queen’s belly has grown recently into a good size. May the childbirth go well!”

“What are you talking about?” Hermione asked the ladies.

She then said to her son, “Come, sir, I am ready now for you again. Please, sit by me and tell me a tale.”

“Shall the tale be merry or sad?” Mamillius asked.

“As merry as you want,” Hermione replied.

“A sad tale’s best for winter. I have a tale about ghosts and goblins.”

“Let’s hear that, good sir,” Hermione said. “Come on, sit down. Come on, and do your best to frighten me with your ghosts. You’re good at it.”

“There was once a man —”

Hermione said to Mamillius, “Come, sit down; then go on with your story.”

“He dwelt by a churchyard. I will tell it softly; yonder crickets shall not hear it.”

The “crickets” were the ladies, who were chirping — talking — among themselves.

“Come on, then,” Hermione said, “and whisper it in my ear.”

King Leontes entered the room. With him were his advisor Antigonus, some other lords, and some attendants.

“Was King Polixenes seen there?” King Leontes asked.

“Was his entourage? Was Camillo with him?”

The first lord said, “I saw them behind the grove of pines; never have I seen men hurry so on their way. I watched them until they reached their ships.”

“How blessed am I in my just censure, in my true opinion!” King Leontes said. “All my suspicions are justified. But I wish that I had lesser knowledge! How accursed I am by being so blessed with knowledge! I would be much happier if I did not know what I know.

“A spider may be steeped in a cup, and one may drink, depart, and yet suffer from no venom, for the drinker’s knowledge is not infected, but if one should show the spider to the drinker and make known to him what he has drunk, then the drinker vomits, and his sides heave violently.

“I have drunk, and I have seen the spider.

“Camillo was King Polixenes’ accomplice in this; he was his pander. There is a plot against my life and my crown. All’s true that I mistrusted — all that I suspected is true. That false villain — Camillo! — whom I employed was pre-employed by King Polixenes. Camillo has revealed to King Polixenes what I learned, and I remain a tortured thing. Yes, I am a counter in a game for them to manipulate at will.

“How is it that the back gates were opened to them so easily?”

“They opened because of Camillo’s great authority,” the first lord said. “They open at Camillo’s orders no less than at your orders.”

“I know that to be true only too well,” King Leontes replied.

He said to Queen Hermione, “Give me the boy, our son. I am glad you did not breastfeed him. Although he bears some signs of me, yet you have too much blood in him.”

“What is this?” Hermione asked. “Some kind of game or joke?”

“Take the boy away,” King Leontes ordered. “He shall not come into her presence. Take him away! Let her entertain herself with the child that is now swelling her belly.”

He said to Queen Hermione, “King Polixenes has made your belly swell up like this.”

Thinking still that this must be some kind of game or joke, Hermione replied, “But I say that he did not, and I will be sworn that you will believe what I say, no matter how much you might be leaning to the wrong belief.”

Swearing and saying are different. Hermione at this time believed that if she merely said something without swearing to it that her husband would believe her.

King Leontes said, “My lords, look at her. Look at her carefully. If you were to be about to say, ‘She is a good lady,’ the justice of your hearts would add, ‘It is a pity she is not honest and honorable.’

“Praise her only for her exterior form and beauty, which truly deserve high praise, and immediately will come the shrug, the hum, aka hmm, or ha, these hints of deficiency that the voice of defamation uses — oh, I am mistaken because I should have said that the voice of mercy uses because the voice of defamation will sear virtue itself. Mercy requires you to use these shrugs, these hums and ha’s, after you say, ‘She’s beautiful,’ but before you can say, ‘She’s honest and chaste.’ Mercy does not want to say the truth openly and clearly. But let it be known from the man who has the most reason to grieve the truth — Queen

Hermione is an adulteress.”

“Should a villain say that I am an adulteress,” Hermione said, “even if he were the most complete villain in the world, his saying this would make him twice the villain he was. You, my lord, are mistaken.”

“You are mistaken,” King Leontes replied. “My lady, you have mistaken King Polixenes for King Leontes! You thing! I will not call a creature of your place the word that you ought to be called —”

He thought, *Whore!*

“— lest uncivilized people, making me the precedent, should use such language to refer to people of all social classes and neglect to make a civilized distinction between a Prince and a beggar.”

He said to the other adults in the room, “I have said that she’s an adulteress. I have said with whom. In addition, she’s a traitor and Camillo is her accomplice. Camillo is a man who knows what she ought to be ashamed of, even if it were known only by her most vile principal, King Polixenes — she’s a bed-swarver and adulteress. She is even as bad as those whom vulgar people give the nastiest names, yes, and she knew in advance about King Polixenes’ and Camillo’s recent escape from me.”

“No, I swear by my life,” Hermione said, “I know nothing about any of this. After you have come to clearer and true knowledge, you will be grieved because you have thus accused me in public! My good lord, when you say then that you were mistaken now, it shall scarcely fully make up for this accusation.”

“You are wrong that I am mistaken,” King Leontes said. “If I am mistaken in those foundations that I build upon, then the entire Earth is not big enough to bear the weight of a

schoolboy's toy top.”

He said to his attendants, “Take her away! Take her to prison! Anyone who will speak up for her is himself implicitly guilty because he is speaking up for her.”

“Some ill planet is reigning now and casting bad astrological influences,” Hermione said. “I must be patient until the Heavens look at me more favorably.

“My good lords, I am not prone to weeping, as women commonly are. The lack of such useless dew perhaps shall make you lack pity for me, but I have lodged here in my heart honorable grief that burns worse than tears drown. I ask you all, my lords, to judge me as your benevolent tendencies shall best instruct you. Now let the King's will be performed!”

No one had moved to take Hermione to prison because no one believed that she was guilty of adultery and everyone was impressed by her dignity.

King Leontes asked, “Shall I be obeyed?”

“Who is it who goes with me?” Hermione asked. She was soon to give birth, and so she needed attendants to take care of her.

She asked her husband, “Please, your Highness, allow my women attendants to be with me; for as you can see my plight requires it.”

She said to her servants, “Do not weep, good fools; there is no cause for weeping. If you should know that your mistress has ever deserved prison, then you may abound in tears as the truth about me comes out. But right now this imprisonment I go to is for my better grace. I shall gain spiritual rewards by suffering.”

“*Adieu*, my lord. I never wished to see you sorry; now I

trust I shall.

“My women, come; you have permission to go with me.”

King Leontes ordered his attendants, “Go, do our bidding; take her away!”

Hermione, guarded, exited with her female attendants.

The first lord said, “I beg your Highness, call the Queen back again.”

Antigonus, a lord and advisor who was married to Paulina, one of Queen Hermione’s confidants, said to King Leontes, “Be certain that you are doing the right thing, sir, lest your justice result in violence, in which case three great ones will suffer: yourself, your Queen, and your son.”

The first lord said, “For Queen Hermione, my lord, I dare to lay my life down and I will do it, sir, if it pleases you to accept it. I swear that the Queen is spotless in the eyes of Heaven and to you — I mean that she is innocent of this adultery that you accuse her of.”

Antigonus said, “If it should be proved that Queen Hermione is guilty of adultery, I will watch where I lodge my wife — as I keep my mares away from stallions, I will keep my wife away from men. I’ll go about with a leash tied to her so that I can keep an eye on her. I will trust her no farther than I can feel and see her because every inch of every woman in the world — indeed, every gram of every woman’s flesh — is false, if Queen Hermione is false and an adulteress.”

“Be quiet, everyone!” King Leontes ordered.

The first lord began, “My good lord —”

Antigonus interrupted and said to King Leontes, “It is for you we speak, not for ourselves. Some manipulator who

will be damned for misleading you has abused you. I wish that I knew who the villain is — I would make his life on Earth a living Hell!

“If Queen Hermione is honor-flawed, I know what I will do. I have three daughters; the eldest is eleven years old, and the second and the third are nine and about five years old. If it is true that Queen Hermione is an adulteress, they’ll pay for it, I swear. I’ll sterilize all my daughters. By age fourteen, they shall not be able to give birth to bastards. My daughters are co-heirs; I have no sons and so my daughters will inherit and share my possessions. I would rather sterilize myself and remove all chance of my ever having sons than to allow my daughters to give birth to bastards.”

“Stop talking,” King Leontes ordered Antigonus. “I want to hear no more. You smell this business with a sense as cold as a dead man’s nose, but I see it and feel it as you feel me doing this” — here King Leontes grabbed and pulled Antigonus’ beard — “and as you see my fingers.”

Antigonus replied, “If it is true that Queen Hermione is an adulteress, we need no grave in which to bury honesty and chasteness because there’s not a grain of it left to sweeten the face of the whole dungy earth.”

“What!” King Leontes said. “You do not believe me! Do I lack credit?”

The first lord said, “I swear upon this ground that I would prefer that you lacked credit than I, my lord. You say that Queen Hermione is guilty; I say that she is innocent. It would please me better to have her honor proved true than your suspicion, no matter how you might be blamed for being wrong.”

Using the royal plural, King Leontes replied, “Why, what need have we to debate with you about this? We will

instead follow our own powerful feelings. Our prerogative has not been to ask you for your advice; instead, our natural goodness has given you information and facts. If you lack or pretend to lack the intelligence to understand what we have told you — if you cannot or will not admit that this is true, as we have done — then know that we need no more of your advice. The matter, the loss, the gain, and the ordering of it are all properly our own business.”

“And I wish, my liege,” Antigonus said, “that you had kept quiet and only in your silent judgment had worked out the problem, without making it public.”

“How could that be?” King Leontes said. “Either you are very ignorant because of your age, or you were born a fool. Camillo’s flight, added to the intimacy in public between King Polixenes and Hermione, which was so shameless and obvious that it gave rise to great suspicion of adultery — a suspicion that lacked only seeing them actually commit adultery — along with all the other evidence, show that I am right and that we must take action.

“Yet, for a greater confirmation, because in an act of this importance it would be a shame to be rash, I have sent to sacred Delphos, to Apollo’s temple, Cleomenes and Dion, whom you know to have more than adequate competence. They will consult the oracle of Delphos, who is known to tell the truth, and they will bring back the words of the oracle. The spiritual counsel of the oracle will be revealed, and it shall either stop or spur me. Have I done well?”

Delphos is a name for Delos, the island where the god Apollo was born.

The first lord approved of this action: “Well done, my lord.”

“Though I am satisfied that I know the truth and I do not need more than what I know,” King Leontes said, “yet the

oracle shall give rest to the minds of other people, such as that man whose ignorant credulity will not believe the truth.”

He was speaking in particular about Antigonus.

King Leontes added, “We have thought it good that Hermione shall be confined away from our presence lest that the treachery of the two fled from here — King Polixenes and Camillo, who planned to murder me — be performed by her.

“Come, follow us; we will speak in public. This business will cause everyone concern. It will arouse everyone.”

Antigonus thought, *It will arouse everyone to laughter, I believe, if the good truth were known. It is ridiculous to think that Queen Hermione has committed adultery.*

— 2.2 —

Paulina was visiting the prison in which Queen Hermione was kept. She was trying to see her and talk to her. Accompanying her were a gentleman and some female attendants.

Paulina said to the gentleman, “Call the jailer to come to me; tell him who I am.”

Paulina’s husband was Lord Antigonus; her rank was high in Sicily.

The gentleman exited to carry out the errand, and Paulina said to herself about Queen Hermione, “Good lady, no court in Europe is too good for you, so why are you in prison?”

The gentleman came back with the jailer.

Paulina said to the jailer, “Now, good sir, you know who I am, don’t you?”

“I know that you are a worthy lady and one whom I much respect,” the jailer replied.

“Then please take me to Queen Hermione.”

“I cannot, madam,” the jailer replied. “King Leontes has given explicit orders that prevent me from doing that.”

“Here’s a lot of ado,” Paulina said. “You lock up honesty and honor from the access of noble visitors!”

She said sarcastically, “Is it lawful, do you think, for me to see her female attendants? Can I see any of them? Can I see Emilia?”

“Madam,” the jailer said, “if you will order your attendants to leave, I shall bring Emilia here.”

“Please, bring her here,” Paulina said to the jailer.

To her attendants, she said, “Please go into another room.”

Her female attendants and the gentleman left.

The jailer added, “Madam, I must be present during your conversation with Emilia.”

“Well, so be it,” Paulina replied.

The jailer departed, and Paulina said to herself, “Here’s such ado to make no stain a stain that cannot covered up with a dye job. Queen Hermione has committed no sin and yet people are going to a lot of trouble to make it seem that she has committed a sin that cannot be concealed.”

The jailer returned with Emilia.

Paulina asked Emilia, “Dear gentlewoman, how is our gracious Queen Hermione doing?”

“She is doing as well as one so great and so forlorn can bear up. Because of her frights and griefs, which are greater

than any tender lady has ever borne, she has given birth prematurely.”

“To a boy?” Paulina asked.

“A daughter, and a good, healthy baby; she is vigorous and likely to live. The Queen receives much comfort from her daughter, and she says, ‘My poor prisoner, I am as innocent as you.’”

“I agree,” Paulina said. “Queen Hermione is as innocent as a newborn babe. Curse these dangerous unsafe fits of lunacy in King Leontes! He must be told about the birth of his daughter, and he shall. A woman should tell him, and I will take the job upon me. I will tell the truth and not flatter the King. If I prove honey-mouthed and flatter the King, let my tongue blister from the lies I tell. Also, let my tongue never again be the trumpeter to my red-faced anger.”

In this society, a herald, dressed in red, sometimes bore an angry message. A trumpeter would precede the herald. Paulina planned to bear an angry message to King Leontes; she would be red-faced because of her anger, and her tongue would trumpet her angry message.

Paulina added, “Please, Emilia, present my compliments to the Queen. If she dares trust me with her little babe, I’ll show it to the King and undertake to be her loudest, most vigilant advocate. We do not know how he may soften at the sight of the child. The silence of pure innocence often persuades when speaking fails.”

Emilia replied, “Most worthy madam, your honor and your goodness are so evident that this your voluntary undertaking cannot miss having a successful result. No other lady living is so suitable to undertake this mission. If it will please your ladyship to wait in the next room, I’ll immediately tell the Queen of your most noble offer. Just today she vigorously debated whether to implement this

same plan you are advocating, but she dared not ask any worthy official to carry it out because she was afraid that they would refuse to do so.”

“Tell her, Emilia,” Paulina said, “that I’ll use the tongue I have in the Queen’s behalf. If words of wisdom flow from it the way that courage and boldness will flow from my heart, let no one doubt that I shall do good.”

“May you be blest for it!” Emilia said. “I’ll go to the Queen. Please, come a little nearer.”

The jailer, who was concerned that King Leontes could punish him, said to Paulina, “Madam, if it pleases the Queen to send the babe, I do not know what will happen to me if I allow the babe to leave the prison. I do not have an order to allow the babe to leave.”

“You need not fear anything, sir,” Paulina said. “This child was a prisoner in the Queen’s womb and is by the lawful process of great nature freed from it and therefore is a free being. The babe is not a party against whom the King is angry, and the babe is not guilty of — if the sin should exist — the sin of the Queen.”

“I believe what you say,” the jailer said.

“Do not be afraid,” Paulina said. “I swear by my honor that I will stand between you and danger.”

— 2.3 —

King Leontes was alone in a room in his palace.

He said to himself, “I cannot sleep either at night nor during the day. I am showing weakness — mere weakness — in this. If only the people who caused my distress were not still alive — well, if one of the causes of my distress were not still alive. The adulteress Queen Hermione is within my power, but the licentious King Polixenes is quite

beyond the reach of my arm. He is out of range of any plot my brain can come up with, but I can hook her to me the way that grappling hooks can seize a ship at sea. If she were gone, given a death by being burned alive, I may be able to sleep a little again.”

He heard a noise and asked, “Who’s there?”

A servant entered the room and asked, “My lord?”

“How is my son?” King Leontes asked.

“He slept well last night; it is hoped that his sickness is over.”

“This shows his nobleness!” King Leontes said. “Learning about the dishonor of his mother, he immediately declined, drooped, took it deeply, fastened and fixed the shame of it in himself; this harmed his spirit, affecting his appetite and his sleep, and he completely languished.

“Leave me alone. Go and see how he fares.”

The servant exited.

“Damn! Damn!” King Leontes said. “Let me not think about King Polixenes. Thoughts about me getting revenge upon him end up hurting only myself. He is a very mighty King, and his supporters and his allies are also very mighty — so mighty that I cannot get revenge upon him. So I will let him be until a time may be right for me to get vengeance against him.

“But I can get vengeance against Queen Hermione right now. Camillo and King Polixenes are both laughing at me; they are entertained by my sorrow. They would not laugh if I could reach them, nor shall she — because she is within my power.”

Paulina, carrying the daughter of King Leontes and Queen

Hermione, entered the room. With her were Antigonus, some lords, and some attendants. Antigonus and the lords were trying — but failing — to prevent her from entering the room.

The first lord said, “You must not enter.”

“My good lords,” Paulina said, “instead of resisting me, be my supporters. Do you fear King Leontes’ tyrannous passion more than you fear for Queen Hermione’s life? She is a gracious and innocent soul; she is more free from sin than he is jealous.”

Antigonus, her husband, said, “That’s enough.”

A servant said, “Madam, King Leontes has not slept tonight; he has commanded that no one should come and see him.”

“Don’t be so vehement, good sir,” Paulina said. “I have come to bring King Leontes the ability to sleep. Such people as you who creep like shadows by him and pity every one of his needless and unnecessary sighs do him no good. It is such people as you who nourish the cause of his inability to sleep. I have come with words that are as medicinal as they are true; my words are honest and they will purge King Leontes of that mood that keeps him from sleeping.”

“What is that noise?” King Leontes asked.

Coming closer to King Leontes, Paulina replied, “This is not noise, my lord; this is a necessary conference about getting some godparents for your Highness’ daughter.”

She showed King Leontes’ infant daughter to him.

“What!” King Leontes said. “Take that audacious lady away! Antigonus, I ordered you to not allow her to come near me. I knew she would try to see me.”

“I told her not to try to see you, my lord,” Antigonus said. “I told her that if she tried to see you she would arouse both your displeasure and mine.”

“What! Can’t you make your wife obey your orders?” King Leontes asked.

“When he orders me to avoid all dishonesty, he can,” Paulina said. “In this business, however, he cannot make me obey his orders unless he takes the course that you have done with your own wife — commit me to prison because I have committed an honorable action.”

“You heard her,” Antigonus said to King Leontes, “When she takes the reins and thereby takes control, I let her run, but she will not stumble.”

He meant that he gave his wife much freedom, but his wife acted correctly. In fact, his wife was acting ethically by ignoring his and the King’s orders and insisting on talking to the King.

“My good liege,” Paulina said, “I have come to you. I beg that you listen to me — your loyal servant, your physician, and your most obedient counselor — yet I am the person who dares to appear less than those things in your eyes because I will not approve of your evils, unlike most of the people who only appear to be loyal to you and only appear to serve you well. I say to you that I have come from your good Queen.”

“Good Queen!” King Leontes said.

“Good Queen, my lord,” Paulina repeated. “Good Queen; I say good Queen. If I were a man, I would prove her innocence with a trial by combat, even if I were the most menial and the weakest man around you.”

“Force her to leave,” King Leontes ordered.

“Let the man who regards his eyes as mere trifles be the first to lay hands on me,” Paulina said. “I will leave under my own power, but only after I have finished my business here. The good Queen, and yes, she is good, has given birth to your daughter. Here she is; your Queen commends this girl to your blessing.”

Paulina lay the infant Princess on the floor.

“Out!” King Leontes ordered. “You are a mannish witch! Take her away! Throw her out the door! She is a bawd who keeps the secrets of those illicit lovers for whom she is the go-between!”

“That is not true,” Paulina said. “I am as ignorant of such an occupation as you are when you call me a bawd, and I am no less honest and chaste than you are mad. That is enough, I say, as this world goes, for me to be regarded as honest and chaste.”

“Traitors!” King Leontes shouted. “Will you not push her out of the room? Give her the bastard.”

He shouted at Antigonus, “You dotard! You are hen-pecked. Your dame Partlet has shoved you from your roost. Pick up the bastard. Pick it up, I say, and give it to your crone.”

Paulina said to her husband, “Your hands will be forever despised if you pick up the Princess and so acknowledge that false and base name of ‘bastard’ that King Leontes has unjustly given to her!”

King Leontes said about Antigonus, “He is afraid of his wife.”

“I wish that you were afraid of your wife,” Paulina replied. “If you were, you would acknowledge that your children really are your children.”

“This is a nest of traitors!” King Leontes shouted.

“I am not a traitor,” Antigonus said. “I swear it by the Sun.”

“And I am not a traitor,” Paulina said, “nor is any man here except one, and that man is the King himself because he is betraying and slandering the sacred honor of himself, his Queen, his son who hopes to become King one day, and his infant daughter. Slander has a sting that is sharper than the sword’s. King Leontes will not remove the root of his opinion, which is as rotten as ever oak or stone was sound. As the case now stands, slander is a curse that he cannot be compelled to remove. As King, Leontes is above the law; if he were not King, Hermione could seek justice in a court of law.”

“She is a nag and a scold who recently beat her husband and now torments me!” King Leontes said. “This brat is no child of mine; it is the child of King Polixenes. Take it away, and together with its dam — Queen Hermione — throw it into fire!”

“This child is yours,” Paulina said. “And, if I may lay the old proverb to your charge, it is all the worse for looking like you.

“Behold, my lords, this infant girl. She is a copy of her father. Although the print is little, the whole matter and copy of the father — his eye, nose, lip, the way he wrinkles his forehead, the cleft in his chin and the pretty dimples in his cheeks, his smiles, the very mold and frame of his hands, fingernails, and fingers — can be found in her.

“Good goddess Nature, you who have made this infant resemble so much her father, if you have the ordering of her mind, too, do not give her jealousy, lest she suspect, as he does, that her future children will not be her husband’s!

“King Leontes’ jealousy is silly. How silly is it? It is as silly as a jealous woman who has always been faithful to her husband but who is nevertheless afraid that her husband’s infidelity may cause the children to whom she has given birth to be illegitimate!”

King Leontes shouted, “You are a gross and rude hag and, you, Antigonus, you loser, you ought to be hanged because you will not make your wife shut up.”

“If you hang all the husbands who cannot make their wives shut up, you’ll find yourself with hardly one subject,” Antigonus replied.

“Once more, take her away,” King Leontes ordered.

“A most unworthy and unnatural lord can do no more evil than you have done,” Paulina said.

“I’ll have you burnt to death,” King Leontes said.

“I don’t care,” Paulina said. “If you have me burnt to death, the heretic will be the person who causes the fire to be made, not the woman who burns in it. I will not call you a tyrant, but this most cruel treatment of your Queen, with you unable to produce any evidence against her except your own weak-hinged imagination, stinks somewhat of tyranny and will make your reputation in the world ignoble and scandalous.”

“By the oaths of loyalty that you have sworn to me,” King Leontes said, “I order you to throw this woman out of my chamber! If I were a tyrant, would she still be alive? If I were a tyrant, she would not dare to call me a tyrant. Throw her out!”

Finally, some lords approached Paulina to physically throw her out.

“Please, do not push me,” Paulina said. “I am leaving. Look

after your baby, my lord; it is your legitimate offspring. May Jove send her a better guiding spirit than you! Why are you lords using your hands to throw me out? You lords who ignore the King's foolish behavior will never do him any good — not one of you. And so farewell; we are gone.”

She departed. A couple of lords followed her to make sure that she was really leaving.

King Leontes said to Antigonus, “You, traitor, have set on your wife to do this. This is my child, she said? Take it away! You, Antigonus, who have a heart that pities it, take it away and see that it is immediately thrown into a fire and burnt up. You, Antigonus, and only you do this. Do this immediately, and within this hour bring me word that it has been done, and bring me evidence — good testimony — that it has been done, or I'll seize your life and all the property that you call your own. If you refuse to obey my order and want to encounter and suffer my wrath, say so. The bastard's brains with these my own hands I shall dash out. Go, take it and throw it in the fire because you are the one who made your wife, Paulina, do this.”

“I did not do that, sir,” Antigonus said. “These lords, my noble fellows, if they please, can testify that I am innocent of that charge.”

A lord said, “We can.”

Another lord said, “My royal liege, Antigonus is not guilty of Paulina's coming here.

“All of you are liars,” King Leontes said.

A lord replied, “Please, your Highness, give us better credit than that. We have always truly served you, and we beg you to acknowledge that, and on our knees we beg, as recompense of our valuable services to you both in the past and to come, that you change your mind about throwing

this infant into the fire. That deed is so horrible and so bloody that it must lead on to some foul result. We all kneel before you.”

“Each wind that blows treats me like a feather,” King Leontes said. “Shall I live on to see this bastard kneel before me and call me father? It is better to burn it now than to curse it then. But so be it; let it live.”

He instantly changed his mind and said, “No, it shall not live.”

He then said, “You, sir, Antigonus, come here. You have been so tenderly officious along with your wife, Paulina — or should I call her Lady Margery Hen, your midwife there — to save this bastard’s life. Yes, it is a bastard. I am as sure of that as I am that your beard is grey. What will you do to save this brat’s life?”

“Anything, my lord, that I have the ability to do and that is honorable. I will do at least this much — I will pawn the little blood and few years that I have left to save this innocent baby. I will do anything that is possible.”

“What I ask you to do shall be possible,” King Leontes said. “Swear by the cross-piece of this sword that you will perform my bidding.”

“I will swear, my lord.”

“Listen carefully and do what we tell you to do,” King Leontes said, using the royal plural. “If you fail to do exactly what we tell you to do, the result shall not only be death to yourself but to your lewd-tongued wife, whom for now we pardon. We order you, who have sworn to obey us, to carry this female bastard away from here and bear it to some remote and deserted place quite out of our dominions, and that you leave it there, without any more mercy. Let it protect itself; let it be exposed to wild animals and the

weather. As by strange — unusual and foreign — fortune this baby came to us, I do justly order you, on your soul's peril — if you break your oath, your soul will be sent to Hell — and your body's torture, to leave it in some foreign place where fortune and luck shall either bring it aid or death. Pick up the infant.”

Antigonus picked up the baby girl and said, “I swear to do this, although an immediate death would have been more merciful for the baby.

“Come on, poor babe. I hope that some powerful spirit will instruct the hawks and ravens to be your caretakers! Wolves and bears, they say, have cast aside their savageness and done such offices of pity.”

Antigonus was thinking of such stories as that of a she-wolf suckling the infants Romulus and Remus, who founded the city of Rome. He may have also been thinking of 1 Kings 17:6: “*And the ravens brought him [the prophet Elijah] bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.*”

Antigonus then said to King Leontes, “Sir, I hope that you are more prosperous than you deserve to be because of this deed!”

He then said to the baby girl, “And may Heaven send mercy to fight on your side against this cruelty. Poor thing, you are condemned to die!”

Antigonus departed, carrying the baby girl.

King Leontes said, “No, I'll not rear the child of another man.”

A servant entered the room and said, “If it please your Highness, an hour ago messages came from the men whom you sent to the oracle. Cleomenes and Dion have safely

arrived from Delphos. Both of them have landed on our country's shore, and they are hurrying to your court."

A lord said, "If it please you, sir, their speed has been unprecedented."

"They have been absent twenty-three days," King Leontes said. "They made good speed. This is evidence that the great god Apollo wants the truth about my wife to be known quickly.

"Prepare yourselves, lords. Summon a session of court so that we may arraign our most disloyal lady. She has been publicly accused, and so she shall have a just and open trial. As long as she lives, my heart will be a burden to me.

"Leave me, and do what I have ordered you to do."

CHAPTER 3 (The Winter's Tale)

— 3.1 —

Outside an inn in Sicily, Cleomenes and Dion were talking.

Cleomenes said about Delphos, which was sacred to the god Apollo, whose birthplace it was, “The climate is delightful, the air most sweet, the island fertile, and the temple much surpassing the usual praise said about it.”

Dion replied, “I shall talk about, because they are what most impressed me, the celestial vestments — that is the name that I think I should use to describe them — and the reverence of the serious people who wore them. And, oh, the sacrifice! How ceremonious, solemn, and unearthly it was in the offering!”

“But out of everything, the blast of thunder and the ear-deafening voice of the oracle, which was like the thunder of Jove, so overwhelmed my senses that I was nothing,” Cleomenes said.

“If the result of the journey prove as successful to the Queen — I hope that it will be so! — as it has been to us rare, pleasant, speedy, the time it took to make the journey is very well spent.”

Cleomenes said, “May great Apollo make everything turn out for the best! I do not like these proclamations we have seen that cast aspersions on Queen Hermione and accuse her of serious crimes and sins.”

“Our violently speedy journey and carrying of the oracle written by the priest at Delphos will either clear Queen Hermione’s name by pronouncing her innocent or end this business by pronouncing her guilty. Inspired by the god Apollo, his priest knows whether Queen Hermione is

innocent or guilty. Apollo's great divine sealed up the oracle — the god's words — and when those words are read, something remarkable will become known. Let's go! We have fresh horses! May the outcome of our journey be good and gracious!"

— 3.2 —

In a court of justice were King Leontes and some lords and officers.

King Leontes said, using the royal plural, "Let this trial begin, although it causes us great grief and strikes right at our heart. The defendant is the daughter of a King, our wife, and one too much beloved by us. Let this trial clear us of the charge of being tyrannous, since we so openly proceed in justice, which shall have due course, whether the trial ends with the defendant being pronounced guilty or ends with the defendant being pronounced innocent.

"Produce the prisoner."

An officer said, "It is his Highness' pleasure that the Queen appear in person here in this court. Silence!"

Queen Hermione, her guards, Paulina, and some female attendants entered the courtroom.

King Leontes ordered, "Read the indictment."

The officer read, "Hermione, Queen to the worthy Leontes, King of Sicily, you are here accused and arraigned of high treason in committing adultery with Polixenes, King of Bohemia, and conspiring with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign lord the King, your royal husband. When the murder plot was partly revealed by circumstances, you, Hermione, contrary to the faith and allegiance of a true subject, advised and aided the would-be assassins, for their safety, to flee by night."

Queen Hermione said, “Since what I will say must be only that which contradicts my accusation and since no one except me will testify on my behalf, it shall scarcely help me to say ‘not guilty.’ My integrity is already thought to be nonexistent, and so my plea of ‘not guilty’ will not be believed.

“But there is this: If divine powers see our human actions — and they do — I do not doubt but innocence shall make false accusation blush and patience make tyranny tremble.

“You, my lord the King, best know, although you will pretend not to know, that my past life has been as continent, as chaste, and as true as I am now unhappy. This is more than a play can equal, even if it is created and played in order to fascinate spectators. Look at me! I am a fellow of the royal bed, wife to the King. I own a share of the throne. I am a great King’s daughter. I am the mother to a Prince who hopes to rule the Kingdom one day. Yet here I am standing so I can plead in vain for life and honor in front of anyone who wants to come and hear.

“As for life, I prize it as much as I prize grief, which I can do without. As for honor, it is a heritage that descends from me to my children, and I will fight for only that.

“I appeal to your own conscience, sir, King, before Polixenes came to your court. Remember how I was in your favor and how I deserved to be so. Since Polixenes came to visit you, what behavior so wrong have I committed that I am forced to appear now in court? If I have gone one jot beyond the boundary of honor, either in act or intention, may the hearts of all who hear me be hardened, and may my closest relatives cry ‘Damn you!’ as they stand by my grave!”

King Leontes said, “I have never heard yet of anyone who had the impudence to commit a bold sin but lacked the

impudence to deny that he or she had committed that sin.”

“That’s true enough,” Queen Hermione said, “although it is a saying, sir, that does not apply to my actions.”

“You will not admit it,” King Leontes said.

“I will not at all acknowledge sins other than the so-called ‘sin’ I am accused of. That is what I will talk about. Let me talk about Polixenes, with whom I am accused of committing adultery and treason. My friendship with him was such as he honorably deserved. I gave him the friendship that becomes a lady like me; that friendship was even such as you yourself wanted me to show him. I did not go beyond that kind of friendship, and if I had not shown that kind of friendship I think that I would have been showing both disobedience and ingratitude to you and to your friend, who had freely expressed his friendship for you ever since he could speak, from infancy.

“Now, as for the charge of conspiracy, I do not know how it tastes; and I would not even if it were dished on a plate so I could taste it. I know nothing about conspiracy. All I know of the charge of conspiracy is that Camillo was an honest man. As for why he left your court, the gods themselves, if they know no more than I do, are ignorant.”

King Leontes said, “You knew of his departure, as you know what you have undertaken to do in his absence.”

King Leontes was accusing his wife of planning to murder him following the flight of Camillo and King Polixenes.

“Sir, you speak a language that I do not understand,” Queen Hermione said. “My life is being targeted by your dreams, and I will lay my life down.”

“Your actions are my dreams,” King Leontes said sarcastically. “You had a bastard by Polixenes, and I only

dreamed it. As you were past all shame — those who are guilty of your crime are past all shame — so you are past all truth. Denying this will hurt you more than help you. Just like your brat has been cast out, left by itself, with no father owning it — which is, indeed, a criminal act that you are more responsible for than it — so you shall feel our justice, whose easiest punishment will be no less than death.”

A harder punishment would be to have her tortured and then killed.

“Sir, spare your threats,” Queen Hermione said with dignity. “The bugbear — death — that you would frighten me with is something that I seek. To me life can be no profitable existence. The crown and comfort of my life — your favor — I give up as lost; for I feel that they are gone, although I do not know how they vanished.

“My second joy is my son, the first-fruits of my body, but I am barred from his presence as if I were infected with a contagious disease.

“My third comfort is my daughter, who was born under a very unlucky star. She has been taken from my breast, with the innocent milk in its most innocent mouth, so it can be murdered.

“I myself am proclaimed to be a strumpet on proclamations that have been displayed on every post. With immodest hatred, people have denied me a period of rest following childbirth, which is a privilege that belongs to women of every social class. Finally, I have been rushed to this place, in the open air, before I have gotten my strength back following childbirth.”

In their society, fresh air was regarded as unhealthy for invalids.

Queen Hermione continued, “Now, my liege, tell me what blessings I have here while I am alive that should make me fear to die? Therefore proceed. But yet hear one more thing: Do not misunderstand me. I do not value my life as much as I value a straw, but I do value my honor, which I want to be cleared. If I am judged guilty and condemned because of mere surmises, without any other evidence, I tell you that the judgment is tyranny and not law.”

She said to the court, “Your honors, I submit myself to the oracle. Let Apollo be my judge!”

The first lord said, “Your request is entirely just. Therefore, officers, bring forth, and in Apollo’s name, his oracle.”

Some officers exited to get Cleomenes and Dion and the oracle that they had brought back from Delphos.

Queen Hermione said, “The Emperor of Russia was my father. I wish that he were alive, and here watching his daughter’s trial! I wish that he could see the completeness of my misery with his eyes filled with pity, not revenge!”

The officers returned with Cleomenes and Dion.

An officer said, “You shall swear upon this sword of justice, that you, Cleomenes and Dion, have both been at Delphos, and from thence have brought back this sealed-up oracle, which was by the hand of great Apollo’s priest delivered to you, and that, since then, you have not dared to break the holy seal nor read the secrets in it.”

Cleomenes and Dion said, “All this we swear.”

King Leontes said, “Break the seals of the oracle and read it out loud.”

The officer read, “Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his innocent babe truly begotten and legitimate; and the King

shall live without an heir, if that babe who is lost is not found.”

The lords recited, “Now blessed be the great Apollo!”

Hermione said, “May Apollo be praised!”

King Leontes asked, “Have you read truthfully what is written in the oracle?”

The officer replied, “Yes, my lord; exactly as it is here set down.”

King Leontes said, “There is no truth at all in the oracle. The trial shall proceed: This is mere falsehood.”

By saying that, King Leontes committed blasphemy. He was calling the priest of Apollo a liar, and by extension he was calling the great god Apollo a liar. Insulted gods often quickly take vengeance.

An excited servant entered the courtroom and said, “My lord the King! The King!”

“What is the matter?” King Leontes asked.

The servant said, “Sir, I shall be hated for reporting this news! The Prince your son, through merely imagining and fearing what would happen to his mother the Queen, is gone.”

“What do you mean? Gone?” King Leontes said.

“He is dead,” the servant replied.

King Leontes repented immediately, saying, “Apollo is angry; and the Heavens themselves strike at my injustice.”

Queen Hermione fainted.

King Leontes said, “What is happening there?”

Paulina replied, "This news is mortal to the Queen. Look down and see what death is doing to her."

"Take her away from here and care for her," King Leontes ordered. "Her heart is only over-stressed; she will recover. I have too much believed my own suspicions. Please, tenderly give her some remedies to help her."

Paulina and the ladies exited, carrying Queen Hermione.

King Leontes said, "Apollo, pardon my great profaneness against your oracle! I'll take steps to be reconciled with Polixenes, newly woo my Queen, and recall the good Camillo, whom I proclaim to be a man of truth and of mercy.

"When I was carried away by my jealousies and began to think bloody thoughts about revenge, I chose Camillo to be the person to poison my friend Polixenes. This would have been done, but the good mind of Camillo delayed implementing my command to quickly murder Polixenes, although I threatened him with death if he did not kill Polixenes and although I promised to reward him if he did kill Polixenes. Camillo, who is very humane and filled with honor, went to my Kingly guest and revealed my plot. He left his fortune and possessions, which you know are great, here, and he committed himself to the hazard of all uncertainties, with no riches other than his honor. How he glistens through my rust! And how his pity makes by contrast my deeds all the blacker!"

Paulina returned and said, "Grief and pain! Cut the tight laces of my bodice so that I can breathe, or my pounding heart will break the laces and break itself, too."

The first lord said, "What is wrong, good lady?"

Paulina said to King Leontes, "What well-thought-out torments, tyrant, do you have for me? What wheels upon

which to break my body? Racks? Fires? What flaying — being skinned alive? Boiling, either in cauldrons filled with lead or with oil? What old or newer torture must I receive, whose every word deserves to suffer your very worst torture?

“Your tyranny working together with your jealousies — imaginings too weak for boys, and too simple-minded and silly for nine-year-old girls — think what your tyranny and jealousies have done and then run mad indeed, stark mad! Why? Because all your former foolish actions were but tastes of this new evil you have caused.

“That you betrayed Polixenes is nothing; that merely showed that you, a fool, are inconstant and damnably ungrateful. Nor did it count for much that you would have poisoned good Camillo’s honor by making him kill a King. These are poor sins in comparison with your more monstrous sins.

“Another poor sin was your casting forth to crows your baby daughter, although a Devil would have shed tears in Hell before he had done such an action. Nor is it directly your fault that the young Prince, whose honorable thoughts — thoughts lofty for one so young — cleft the heart that could believe that a grossly foolish father had blemished his gracious dam. This is not, no, your responsibility, but this sin — lords, when I tell you what that sin is, mourn greatly — the Queen, the Queen, the sweetest, dearest creature is dead, and vengeance for her death has not yet dropped down from Heaven.”

“May Heaven forbid it!” the first lord said.

“I say that the Queen is dead,” Paulina said. “I will swear it. If you won’t believe either my words or my oath, then go and see her for yourself. If you can bring color or luster to her lips and her eyes, make her body warm again, or make

her breathe again, I'll serve you as I would the gods.

“But, oh, you tyrant! Do not repent these sins, for they are heavier than all your sorrow can expiate; therefore, do nothing except despair. A thousand knees kneeling for ten thousand years, the penitents naked and fasting upon a barren mountain during a perpetual winter storm could not move the gods to look in your direction and forgive your sins.”

King Leontes said, “Go on. Continue. You can not criticize me too much; I have deserved for all tongues to talk their bitterest about me.”

The first lord said to Paulina, “Say no more. Whatever happens as a result of the King's actions, you have committed a fault by being too bold in your speech to him.”

“I am sorry,” Paulina said. “All the faults I make, when I come to know that I have committed them, I repent. Look! I have showed too much the rashness of a woman: King Leontes is touched all the way to his noble heart.”

She said to the King, “What's done and gone and what's past help should be past grief. Do not grieve because of my words. I beg you to instead punish me, who has reminded you of things that you should forget. Now, my good liege, sir, royal sir, forgive a foolish woman. The love I bore your Queen — ah, I am a fool again! — I'll speak of her no more, nor of your children. I will not remind you of my own husband, Antigonus, who is lost to me, too. Be patient and endure your suffering, and take your patience to you — I'll say nothing.”

“You spoke well when you spoke the truth,” King Leontes said. “You were speaking the absolute truth. I much prefer to hear you tell me my sins than to hear your words of pity. Please, take me to the dead bodies of my Queen and my son. They shall be buried in one grave. On the grave

monument shall appear the causes of their death, which will always shame me.

“Once a day I’ll visit the chapel where they lie, and I shall shed tears there as my recreation. As long as my health will allow me to do this exercise, so long I daily vow to do it.

“Come and lead me to these sorrows.”

The word “recreation” meant “exercise,” but repentance and suffering were to lead to re-creation. Repentance and suffering — and the grace of God — would make King Leontes a better person.

— 3.3 —

Antigonus, who was carrying Queen Hermione’s infant daughter, and a mariner talked on the seacoast of Bohemia.

Bohemia is a landlocked country that has no seacoast. Strange things happen in Bohemia.

Antigonus asked, “You are certain then that our ship has reached a deserted part of Bohemia?”

“Yes, my lord,” the mariner replied, “and I fear that we have landed at a bad time. The skies look grim and threaten immediate storms. By my conscience, I think that the Heavens are angry at us and frown at us because of this action you are about to do.”

“May the sacred wills of the gods be done!” Antigonus said. “Go, get on board. Look after your ship. It will not be long before I return to it.”

“Make your best speed, and do not go too far into the land. The weather is likely to be loud and foul; besides, this place is famous for the animals of prey that live here.”

“Go now,” Antigonus said. “I will follow you quickly.”

The mariner replied, "I will be glad at heart when this business is over and done with."

He exited.

Antigonus said, "Come, poor babe. I have heard, but not believed, that the spirits of the dead may walk again. If such things are true, your mother appeared to me last night, for never was a dream so much like being awake. To me came a creature, sometimes her head leaning to one side and sometimes to the other. I never saw a vessel so filled with such sorrow and so beautiful. She was wearing pure white robes and looking like the true embodiment of saintliness. She approached the ship cabin where I lay; she bowed before me three times, and while she gasped for breath to begin some speech, her eyes became two spouts of tears. When her passionate outburst of sorrow was spent, she immediately said, 'Good Antigonus, since fate, against your better disposition, has made you the person to throw out my poor babe, according to your oath, let me tell you that Bohemia has very remote places. Take my daughter there, and then weep and leave it crying. And, because the babe is thought to be lost forever, call it Perdita, which means *the lost female*. Because of this ignoble business put on you by my husband, King Leontes, you shall never see your wife, Paulina, again.' And then, with shrieks, she melted into air.

"Although I was very frightened, I did eventually collect myself and thought this was real and not only sleep. Dreams are trifles. However, for this once, yes, superstitiously, I will be ruled by this vision. I believe that Queen Hermione has died."

He thought, *If what I saw is real, and I really did see the ghost of Queen Hermione, it must be the case that she is in Purgatory and so is repenting her sins. One of those sins must be adultery. Previously, I was sure that she was*

innocent of adultery, but now I believe that I was wrong.

Antigonus was incorrect when he thought Queen Hermione had committed adultery; because of that, he felt that the god Apollo wanted the infant girl to be exposed to the elements. The gods often punish such mistakes.

He said, “I believe that Apollo wishes, since this baby is indeed the issue of King Polixenes, that it should here be laid, either to live or to die, upon the earth of its rightful father. You blossom, you infant girl, I hope that all may go well for you!

“Now I put you down here, and also I put down a document that states some of your history, and finally I put down a box containing gold and jewels. I hope that they, if fortune will allow it, will pay for your upbringing, pretty child, and I hope that something will remain that you will get when you come of age.

“The storm begins; poor wretch, because of your mother’s sin you are exposed to what may follow your being thrown out! Weep I cannot, but my heart bleeds; and I am most accursed because I must do this because of the oath that I swore. Farewell! The day frowns more and more. You are likely to have too rough a lullaby. I never saw the sky to be so dim by day.”

He heard the sounds of roaring and said, “A savage clamor! I hope that I can get aboard the ship!”

He saw a bear coming toward him and said, “This is the chase. I am being hunted. I am gone forever.”

He ran away, pursued by the bear. Readers who someday see the bear on stage may think it is an actor in a bear costume.

An elderly shepherd arrived and said, “I wish there were no

age between sixteen and twenty-three, or that youth would sleep during those years; for there is nothing between age sixteen and age twenty-three except getting wenches pregnant, upsetting old people, stealing, and fighting — here's an example! Would anyone but these boiled brains — hotheads — of nineteen to twenty-two years old hunt in this kind of weather? They have scared away two of my best sheep, which I fear the wolf will find sooner than I, their owner, will. If I find them anywhere, it will be by the seaside, grazing on ivy. God, send me good luck, if it be Thy will."

He saw the baby Perdita and said, "What have we here! May God have mercy on us. It is a baby, a very pretty baby! Is it a boy or a girl, I wonder? It is a pretty one — a very pretty one. Surely, it is the result of some escapade. Although I am not bookish, yet I can read that a waiting-gentlewoman is involved in this escapade. Some man has gone up the back stairs, or hidden in a trunk, or hidden behind a door. The man and woman who created this baby were warmer than the poor thing is here. I'll take it and raise it up out of pity for it, but I'll tarry until my son comes; he hallooed just a moment ago."

The old shepherd called, "Halloo!"

The old shepherd's son, who was nicknamed "Clown," called back, "Halloo!" He then walked to the old shepherd.

"What, are you so near? If you want to see a thing to talk about when you are dead and rotten, come here," the shepherd said.

Seeing that his son looked excited, he asked him, "What is wrong with you, man?"

Clown replied, "I have seen two such sights, by sea and by land! But I am not able to say it is a sea because it is now the sky. In this storm, the sky and the sea are so close that

you cannot thrust the point of a pin between them.”

“Tell me more,” the shepherd said.

“I wish that you could see how the sea chafes, how it rages, how it swallows up the shore! But that’s not the point. Oh, I heard the most piteous cries of the poor souls! Sometimes I could see them, and sometimes I could not see them. At one time the ship rose high and drilled the Moon with her mainmast, and then the ship sank low and was swallowed by foam and froth. The ship was stuck into the sea the way that you would stick a cork into a barrel.

“And then as for the man serving on land — I saw how the bear tore out his shoulder-bone; he cried to me for help and said his name was Antigonus and he was a nobleman. He was food served to the bear on land.

“But I also saw the end of the ship at sea. I saw the sea swallow it like a man would swallow a raisin that was floating in brandy that had been set on fire. But before the ship sank, the poor souls roared, and the sea mocked them; and I saw how the poor gentleman roared and the bear mocked him — both were roaring louder than the sea or weather.”

“In the name of mercy, when did this happen, boy?”

“Just now. I have not even blinked since I saw these sights: the men are not yet cold under water, and the bear has not half dined on the gentleman. The bear is still eating him at this moment.”

The shepherd said, “I wish that I had been near so I could have helped the old man!”

Clown, who did not believe that his father could have helped the old man, said, “I wish that you had been by the ship’s side so you could have helped her. There your

charity would have lacked footing.”

Of course, no footing can be found at the top of the deep sea; in addition, a charity can lack proper footing — a foundation.

The shepherd said, “These are heavy matters, heavy matters! But look here, boy. Bless yourself now. You met with things dying, while I met with something newborn. Here’s a sight for you. Look here, this is a rich shawl in which a squire’s child would be carried to church so it can be baptized! Look here; here is a box. Pick it up, boy. Pick it up, and open it. So, let’s see what it is. I remember that I was once told that the fairies would make me rich. I think that this child is a human child that the fairies stole. What’s inside the box, boy?”

Clown replied, “Old man, you are made. You are prosperous. As long as the sins of your youth are forgiven, you will live a good life. Gold is inside the box! Lots of gold!”

“This is fairy gold, boy,” the shepherd said. “I am sure of it. Pick it up, and carry it, and let’s go home by the quickest way. We are lucky, boy; and to always continue to be so requires nothing but secrecy. It is bad luck to tell people about the gifts of the fairies. Let my sheep go. Come, good boy, let’s get home quickly.”

“You go home quickly with these things you found,” Clown said. “I’ll go see if the bear has gone away from the gentleman and how much he has eaten. Bears are never ill tempered except when they are hungry. If there is any of the gentleman left, I’ll bury it.”

“That’s a good deed,” the shepherd said. “If you can learn anything about the gentleman from what is left of him, come to me and take me to see him.”

“Indeed, I will,” Clown replied, “and you shall help me to put him in the ground.”

“It is a lucky day for us, boy, and we’ll do good deeds on it.”

CHAPTER 4 (*The Winter's Tale*)

— 4.1 —

The personification of Time, an old man who was winged and carried an hourglass, said, “I, one who pleases some, tests all, brings both joy and terror to both the good and the bad, and both makes and reveals errors, now take upon myself, in the name of Time, to use my wings and fly past time.

“Do not call me a criminal or my swift passage a crime now that I am sliding over sixteen years and leaving the events of that wide gap of time undescribed, since it is in my power to overthrow law. In one and the same hour (that I myself made) I can establish and obliterate traditions. Believe that I am the same now that I have always been; I was the same before the establishment of laws and customs as I am now with the current traditions that are now in vogue.

“I witnessed the times that started civilization and the times that started the most recent traditions now reigning, and I will see the glistening of this present time grow old, as my tale will now reveal to you.

“With your permission, I turn my hourglass and start a new hour. The events that you have been reading about are now sixteen years in the past. Other events have happened that you are unaware of, as you would be if you had been asleep.

“Let us leave behind King Leontes, who has been so sorrowful over the bad consequences of his foolish jealousy that he shuts himself up.

“Now imagine, gentle readers, that I am now in fair

Bohemia. Remember well that I mentioned that King Polixenes has a son, and I now reveal to you his name: Florizel.

“Speeding on, let me tell you about Perdita, whose grace has grown as much as the admiration she receives has grown.

“What happens to her I prefer not to prophesy here; instead, let Time’s news be known when it is brought forth, as it will be. A shepherd’s daughter, and what happens to her, whom and which you now will read about, is the theme of Time.

“Whether or not you have spent your time worse than you are now doing, believe that Time himself says that he wishes earnestly you never will.”

— 4.2 —

In the palace of King Polixenes in Bohemia, the King and Camillo were speaking.

“Please, good Camillo, ask me no more about this. It makes me ill to deny you anything, but if I were to grant you your request, it would be the death of me.”

“It has been fifteen years since I last saw my country,” Camillo said. “Although I have for the greater part of my life breathed air abroad, I desire to lay my bones there. I want Sicily to be the land I am buried in. Besides, the penitent King Leontes, my master, has sent for me. I may help alleviate his distressing sorrows, or so I flatter myself to think so, which is another spur to make me seek my departure from Bohemia.”

“If you respect me, Camillo, do not wipe out the rest of your services to me by leaving me now. Your own goodness and competence have made me need you; it

would have been better for me to have not had you serve me than to now be without you. You, having started some projects that no one else can sufficiently manage without your help, must either stay to execute them yourself or take away with you the very services you have done. If I have not enough rewarded you, as too much I cannot, I will take care to be more thankful to you, and my profit will be more service from you.

“Please speak no more about that fatal country, Sicily; the mere act of saying its name punishes me with the memory of that penitent, as you call him, and reconciled King Leontes, my brother, whose loss of his most precious Queen Hermione and children are even now to be freshly lamented.”

He hesitated a moment and said, “Tell me, when did you last see Prince Florizel, my son? Kings are no less unhappy when their children do not act graciously than they are in losing their children when they have proven to have virtues.”

Camillo replied, “Sir, it has been three days since I saw the Prince. What his business is that makes him happier than being here, I do not know, but I noted that he has been absent. He recently has spent much time away from court and spends less time doing his usual activities than he did formerly.”

“I have noticed that, too, Camillo,” Polixenes said, “and I have been and am worried about my son. I am worried enough that I have eyes under my service that are spying on him. From my spies I have received a report that he is seldom away from the house of a very humble shepherd, a man, they say, who from very poor circumstances, and beyond the knowledge and imagination of his neighbors, has acquired inestimable riches.”

“I have heard of such a man, who has a daughter who is said to be very remarkable,” Camillo said. “The reports of her are so widely spread that one would not think that she came from such a cottage.”

“That’s likewise part of what I learned from the reports I received,” King Polixenes replied. “She is said to be remarkable, but I fear that she is the baited fishhook that plucks our son thither.”

Concern about his son made him use the royal plural.

He continued, “You shall accompany us to the cottage, where we will, not appearing as what we are but instead wearing a disguise, have some conversation with the shepherd so we can ask him questions. Because of the shepherd’s rusticity, I think it will not be difficult to get the reason for my son’s going there.

“Please, be my partner now in this matter, and lay aside your thoughts of Sicily. Stay and help me; do not go to Sicily.”

“I willingly obey your command.”

“You are the best, Camillo! We must disguise ourselves.”

— 4.3 —

Autolycus, a scamp who lacked morals, sang on a road near the shepherd’s cottage. Autolycus was thoroughly selfish, but he was not below occasionally doing a good deed, as long as it happened by accident.

Autolycus sang, “*When daffodils begin to appear,*

“*With heigh! The doxy over the dale,*

“*Why, then comes in the sweet of the year;*

“*For the red blood reigns in the winter’s pale.*

*“The white sheet bleaching on the hedge —
“With heigh, the sweet birds, oh, how they sing! —
“Does set my thievish tooth on edge;
“For a quart of ale is a dish fit for a King.
“The lark, that tirra-lyra chants,
“With heigh! With heigh! The thrush and the jay,
“Are summer songs for me and my aunts,
“While we lie tumbling in the hay.”*

Autolycus was singing about the arrival of spring, flowers, and songbirds. He was also singing about some of his major concerns in life: women and thievery. A doxy is a beggar woman, who is also often the girlfriend of a beggar. By “aunts,” Autolycus meant “prostitutes.” Because it was spring, housewives were doing laundry and leaving their sheets outside to dry. As a thief, Autolycus was on the lookout for sheets so he could steal them, sell them, and buy ale.

Autolycus said, “I have served Prince Florizel, and in my time I have worn the very best velvet clothing, but now I am out of service — I have no position.”

He sang, *“But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?”*

*“The pale Moon shines by night:
“And when I wander here and there,
“I then do most go right.
“If tinkers may have leave to live,
“And bear the sow-skin budget,
“Then my account I well may give,*

“And in the stocks avouch it.”

As a wandering thief, Autolycus believed that all roads led the right way. It did not matter to him where he went. But he was concerned about being punished for being a vagabond and a thief, one punishment for which was being put in the stocks. The stocks immobilized the thief’s hands and/or feet, and if someone in the crowd, such as one of the thief’s victims, wanted, he or she could torment the thief. Autolycus, however, planned to claim that he was a wandering tinker. He would carry a pigskin budget, aka bag, of the kind that tinkers used to carry their tools. Of course, Autolycus hoped to keep his bag filled with stolen loot.

Autolycus said, “My trade is sheets; I steal them and sell them. When the kite builds a nest in the spring, housewives need to look after their lesser linen because these birds will steal small pieces of linen and use them to line their nests. My father named me Autolycus. Being, as I am, littered when the planet Mercury was ascendant, according to the astrologers, my father was likewise a snapper-up of trifles that housewives did not carefully enough watch.”

Autolycus knew that he had a good name for the kind of person he was. The pagan god Mercury was the patron god of thieves, and with a mortal woman named Chinoe, he had fathered a child named Autolycus, who like his father, Mercury, was a skilled thief.

Autolycus continued, “With die and drab I purchased this caparison. In other words, with gambling and whores, I ‘purchased’ this outfit of rags that I am wearing. My main source of revenue is the silly cheat, aka petty thievery. Gallows and hard knocks are too powerful on the highway: Being beaten and/or hanged is a terror to me, and I hope to escape being punished for petty thievery — let the officers of the law pursue those who commit grand thievery! As for

the life to come, I sleep and do not think about it.”

Seeing Clown, the old shepherd’s son, walking toward him, Autolycus said to himself, “A prize! A prize!”

A pirate seeing a ship that he could rob would also say, “A prize! A prize!”

Clown was trying to figure out how much money his father would make during the forthcoming sheep shearing: “Let me see. Every eleven sheep yield a tod of wool: about 28 pounds. Every tod yields one pound and odd shillings; fifteen hundred sheep will be shorn. What total will the sale of the wool come to?”

Autolycus said to himself, “If the trap works, the woodcock’s mine.”

A woodcock is a proverbially stupid bird that is easily caught in a trap.

Clown said, “I cannot do it without counting-disks. Let me see. What am I to buy for our sheep-shearing feast? Let me read my list. Three pounds of sugar, five pounds of currants, rice — what will this sister of mine, Perdita, do with rice? But my father has made her mistress of the feast, and she makes the most of it. She has made twenty-four nosegays for the shearers. All of them sing parts in songs that are written for three men, and they are very good singers, but most of them are tenors and basses and cannot sing treble. Only one Puritan is among them, and he sings psalms to the gay music of hornpipes. I must have saffron to color the pear pies, and mace, which is a spice. How many dates? None, dates are not on my list. Seven nutmegs; a root or two of ginger, but that I may ask for as a favor; four pounds of prunes, and as many pounds of sun-ripened raisins.”

Autolycus set his trap. He lay on the ground and acted as if

he had been beaten and was in pain.

He cried, "I am sorry that I was ever born!"

Clown said, "In the name of me —"

He may have been about to say, "In the name of mercy."

"Oh, help me, help me!" Autolycus said. "Pluck these rags off my body and then let me die, die!"

"Alas, poor soul!" Clown said. "You need more rags to put on you, rather than have these rags taken off."

"Sir, the loathsomeness of these rags offends me more than the stripes I have received from being beaten; the stripes are mighty ones and in the millions."

"Alas, poor man!" Clown said. "A million stripes from being beaten is rather a lot of stripes."

"I have been robbed, sir, and beaten; my money and apparel have been taken from me, and these detestable rags were put upon me."

"Who did it?" Clown asked. "A robber on horseback, or on foot?"

"He was on foot, sweet sir; he was a footman."

"I can believe that," Clown said, "because of the garments he has left with you. Anyone who can afford a horse can afford better clothing than this. If this is a horseman's coat you are wearing, it has seen very hot service in battle. Give me your hand. I'll help you up. Come, give me your hand."

"Good sir, gently help me up," Autolycus said. "I am in pain."

"Alas, poor soul!"

"Oh, good sir, gently, good sir! I fear, sir, my shoulder

blade has been dislocated.”

“How are you?” Clown asked. “Can you stand now?”

Autolycus said while picking Clown’s pocket, “Gently, dear sir; good sir, gently. You have done me a charitable deed.”

Clown asked, “Do you need any money? I have a little money that I can give you.”

Autolycus, who did not want Clown to reach for his money and find that it was missing, replied, “No, good sweet sir; no, but thank you, sir. I have a kinsman not more than three quarters of a mile from here, to whom I was going. I shall there have money, or anything I want. Don’t give me any money, please; that would kill my heart.”

“What kind of fellow was he who robbed you?”

“He was a fellow, sir, whom I have known to go about with troll-my-dames, a game that women often play and gamble on. I know that he was once a servant of Prince Florizel. I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whipped out of the court.”

Clown said, “His vices, you should say; no virtues are whipped out of the court. People at court cherish virtues and want them to stay, and yet virtues stay only a short time before leaving.”

“In the case of this man, ‘vices’ is the right word, I would say, sir,” Autolycus said, “I know this man well. He has been in the past a traveling showman with a monkey, and then he was a process-server, aka a bailiff, and then he traveled with a puppet show that told the story of the Prodigal Son, and then he married a tinker’s wife within a mile of where my land and living lie. Finally, having tried his hand at many knavish professions, he settled on being

only a rogue. Some call him Autolycus.”

“Damn him!” Clown said. “He is a thief, I declare by my life — he is a thief! He haunts rural festivals, fairs, and bear baitings; those are the places he commits his crimes.”

“That is very true, sir,” Autolycus said. “He is the rogue who put me in these rags.”

“There is not a more cowardly rogue in all Bohemia,” Clown said. “If you had only looked mean and spit at him, he would have run.”

“I must confess to you, sir, that I am no fighter,” Autolycus said. “I am false of heart that way, and I bet that he knew it.”

“How are you now?”

“Sweet sir, much better than I was; I can stand and walk. I will now take my leave of you, and walk slowly towards my kinsman’s.”

“Do you want me to walk with you there?” Clown asked.

“No, good-faced sir; no, sweet sir.”

“Then may you fare well,” Clown said. “I must go buy spices for our sheep-shearing feast.”

“May God make you prosper, sweet sir!”

Clown departed.

Autolycus said to himself, “Your purse is not hot enough for you to purchase your spices. Money is not burning a hole in your pocket because now you have no money. I’ll be with you at your sheep shearing, too. If I cannot make this trick lead me to another, and if the shearers do not prove to be my sheep, let my name be taken out of the roll of thieves and put in the book of virtue!”

He sang, "*Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,*

"And merrily jump the stile-a:

"A merry heart goes all the day,

"A sad heart tires in a mile-a."

— 4.4 —

Prince Florizel and Perdita talked together in front of the old shepherd's cottage. Both were dressed for the festival. Florizel was dressed as a shepherd because he was in disguise, but because Perdita was the Hostess of the Festival, she was dressed in fine clothing, and she was carrying flowers.

Florizel said, "Your fine clothing, which you do not normally wear, gives you a new life. You seem to be a different person. No longer are you a shepherdess; instead, you are Flora, goddess of spring, as she looks during the beginning of April. This sheep-shearing festival is like a meeting of the minor gods, and it is as if you are the Queen of the Festival."

"Sir, my gracious lord, it does not become me to protest your exaggerations," Perdita replied. "Pardon me for even mentioning them! Your social position is high, and everyone in the country knows who you are, but you have disguised yourself by wearing the clothing of a shepherd. I am a lowly maiden, but now I am wearing the fancy clothing of a goddess. Except that every feast has its share of foolishness and the feeders digest the foolishness because they are accustomed to seeing it at feasts, I would blush to see you in such clothing, and I believe that I would faint if I saw my reflection in a mirror."

"I bless the time when my good falcon made her flight across your father's grounds," Florizel said. "That is how I

came to meet you.”

“May Jupiter give you a good reason to be happy about meeting me!” Perdita said. “As for myself, the great difference in our social status causes me to feel dread; you, because of your high social status, are not accustomed to fear anything. Even now I tremble to think that your father, by some accident, should pass this way as you did. Oh, may the Fates give you, dressed as you are in shepherd’s clothing, good fortune! How would your father look if he were to see his so noble work so vilely bound? You are like a good book that has been badly bound. What would your father say? How would I, dressed in all this unaccustomed finery, stand the sternness of his presence?”

“Foresee nothing but jollity and happiness,” Florizel said. “The gods themselves, humbling their deities because of love, have even taken the shapes of beasts upon themselves. Jupiter, the King of the gods, became a bull and bellowed so that he could be with the mortal woman Europa. The green Neptune, god of the sea, became a ram and bleated so that he could be with the mortal woman Theophane. The fire-robed god, Golden Apollo, the god of the Sun, became a poor humble shepherd, like me, so that he could be with the mortal woman Issa, as we learn from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.

“Their transformations were never for a masterpiece of beauty such as yours, and their lusts were never as chaste as mine, since my desires do not overwhelm my honor, nor do my lusts burn hotter than my faith. My love for you is honorable.”

“But, sir, your resolution cannot hold when it is opposed, as it must be, by the power of King Polixenes, your father. One of these two things must happen, and we will find out which one at that time: either you must change your purpose, or I must change my life.”

If Florizel changed his purpose, he would obey his father and not marry Perdita. If Florizel did not change his purpose, then Perdita would change her life. One way for her to change her life would be to run away with Florizel, but Perdita may have meant that the King would force her to change her life by giving up Florizel.

“Dearest Perdita,” Florizel said, “do not darken the mirth of the feast with these unlikely and negative thoughts. Either I’ll be yours, my fair one; or if I cannot, then I will not be my father’s son. I shall not be any good to myself or to anyone if I cannot be yours. To this I am and will be most constant — it does not matter if destiny and fate oppose me.

“Be merry, gentle one. Strangle such thoughts as these with the sights of the feast that is starting. Your guests are coming, so brighten your countenance and smile as if today were the day of celebration of that nuptial that we two have sworn shall come. I swear that we shall be wed.”

“May Lady Fortune bring us good luck!” Perdita said.

Florizel said, “Look, your guests are approaching. Devote yourself to entertaining them sprightly, and let’s be red-faced with mirth.”

The old shepherd, Clown, and other revelers walked toward them, including the shepherdesses Mopsa and Dorcas. Disguised with false beards, King Polixenes and Camillo also walked toward them.

The old shepherd said, “Come on, daughter! When my old wife was alive, on this feast day she served as keeper of the pantry, keeper of the wine cellar, cook, head of the household, and servant of the household. She welcomed all and served all. She would sing her song and dance her turn. Now she would be here, at the upper end of the table, and then she would be in the middle. She would lean over the

shoulder of one man and then of another. Her face would be on fire because of her labor, and the drink she took to quench the fire she would use to toast each guest. You are shy and retiring as if you were a guest and not the Hostess of the Feast. Please, greet warmly these two friends whom we do not know; that is the way to make good friends. By knowing them, we become better friends. Come, quench your blushes and present yourself as the person whom you are: the Hostess of the Feast.”

The disguised King Polixenes said, “Do so, and bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing. If you do that, your good flock shall prosper.”

Perdita said to him, “Sir, welcome. My father wishes me to serve as the hostess on this day.”

To the disguised Camillo, she said, “You’re welcome, sir.”

She then said, “Give me those flowers there, Dorcas.”

Dorcas handed her the flowers, and Perdita gave them to the two disguised old men, saying, “Reverend sirs, for you there’s the flower rosemary for remembrance and the flower rue for grace; these keep their appearance and scent all the winter long. May both of you have grace and remembrance, and welcome to our shearing!”

The disguised King Polixenes said, “Shepherdess, you are a pretty girl — you do well to give us flowers that suit our age.”

“Sir, the year is growing older, although it is not yet the death of the summer or the birth of trembling winter. Therefore, the fairest flowers of the season are carnations and streaked, multicolored gillyflowers, which some call nature’s bastards. We do not have that kind of flower in our garden, and I do not care to get cuttings of them to put in our garden.”

The disguised King Polixenes asked, “Why, gentle maiden, do you neglect them and do not want them in your garden?”

“I have heard it said that the streaks of color in these flowers were created by gardeners and not by Nature,” Perdita replied.

The disguised King Polixenes said, “Let us say that is true. Should it matter? How is Nature made better? Nature is made better by no means except what Nature makes. If a gardener is able to breed flowers that have beautiful streaks of color, so what? Nature made the gardener. A man may add art to Nature, but Nature made the art that made the man.

“You see, sweet maiden, we marry a gentler scion to the wildest stock, and make a bark of baser kind conceive by a bud of nobler race. For example, we can graft a branch of a tree that bears tasty apples to a crabapple tree. This improves Nature — rather, it changes Nature — but the art that creates the change is itself created by Nature. The gardener must work in accordance with what Nature teaches him.”

“That is so,” Perdita said.

“Then make your garden rich in gillyflowers, and do not call them bastards.”

Perdita had another reason for not wanting to have gillyflowers in the garden. The colors in gillyflowers reminded many people of painting, which was associated with the makeup worn by prostitutes. Also, she regarded makeup as unnatural.

She said to the disguised King Polixenes, “I’ll not put a spade in earth to create a hole to plant one cutting of them, no more than were I painted I would wish this youth to say

it were well and only because of the makeup would he desire to make me pregnant.”

She said to the disguised Camillo, “Here’s flowers for you. Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram. Here is the marigold, which goes to bed with the Sun and with him rises, weeping tears of dew. It closes its petals when the Sun sets and opens them when the Sun rises. These are flowers of middle summer, and I think they are given to men of middle age. You’re very welcome here.”

The disguised Camillo complimented her beauty: “I would stop grazing, if I were one of your flock, and live only by gazing.”

“If you were to do that,” Perdita replied, “you would become so lean that the windy blasts of January would blow right through you.”

She said to Florizel, “Now, my fairest friend, I wish that I had some flowers of the spring that might become your time of day —”

She then said to the young shepherdesses, Mopsa and Dorcas, “— and yours, and yours, who still wear upon your virgin branches your growing maidenhood: You wear the garments of young virgins.”

Perdita then said, “Proserpina, I wish I had the spring flowers that you dropped when Dis, god of the underworld, frightened you by kidnapping you to make you his wife. From his chariot, you dropped daffodils, which come up in the spring before the swallow dares to return from the South and which charm the winds of March with beauty. You dropped violets that droop, but are sweeter than the eyelids of the goddess Juno or the breath of the goddess Venus. You dropped pale primroses that die unmarried, before they can behold the bright Sun in his strength. They die unmarried — because they grow in the shade and are

unkissed by the Sun — in the early spring before the Sun reaches its full strength in the summer; this is a malady that often affects maidens.”

The disease called green sickness, which is known today as hypochromic anemia, sometimes afflicted young girls in this society. The disease gave the sufferer’s skin a greenish tint.

Perdita continued, “Proserpina also dropped bold oxlips and the crown imperial, and lilies of all kinds, the flower-de-luce being one! I lack these flowers, or I would make garlands of them for you, Mopsa and Dorcas, and I would make my sweet friend, Florizel, garlands that I would strew all over him!”

“What, like a corpse?” Florizel said.

In this society, people strewed flowers over corpses.

“No, like a riverbank for lovers to lie and play on,” Perdita said, “Not like a corpse; or if like a body, a body not to be buried, but one that is alive and in my arms.

“Come, take your flowers. I think that I am playing the Queen as I have seen people do in Whitsuntide festivals. Surely, this fancy robe I am wearing has changed my disposition and personality.”

“Whatever you do betters whatever you have already done,” Florizel said. “When you speak, sweetheart, I want you to speak forever. When you sing, I want you to sing while you are buying and selling, while you are giving alms, while you are praying, and while you are doing other things. When you dance, I wish that you were a wave of the sea, so that you might forever do nothing but continually move — always and forever. Each thing you do, unique in each detail, crowns whatever you are doing at whatever time, and all your actions are supreme.”

Perdita said to Florizel, who was using a pseudonym, “Oh, Doricles, your praises of me are excessive. Except that your youth, and the true blood that peeps fairly through your skin, plainly show that you are an unstained shepherd, I might fear, if I were wise, my Doricles, that you wooed me the false way.”

Perdita knew that Florizel’s intentions toward her were honest; otherwise, she might have been afraid that he was trying to flatter her into bed. In fact, Florizel was unstained. True, he was not a shepherd, but Perdita had to call him that because they were in the presence of other people.

Florizel replied, “I think you have as little reason to fear me as I have intentions to do anything that would make you fear me. But come; let us dance, please. Give me your hand, my Perdita. In this way, turtledoves form a pair. They mate for life and never mean to part.”

“I swear that is true,” Perdita said.

Florizel and Perdita danced.

The disguised King Polixenes said, “This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever ran on the grassy ground. Everything she does or seems to be makes her appear to be better than a peasant. She seems as if she is too noble for this place. It seems that she ought to be a Princess, not a shepherdess.”

“Doricles is telling her something that makes her blush,” Camillo said. “Truly, she is the Queen of curds and cream — she is the May Queen.”

Clown said to the band of musicians, “Come on, strike up the band! Start playing!”

He wanted to dance with Mopsa, so a jealous Dorcas said, “Mopsa is your partner in the dance, which involves

kissing. Give her some garlic to eat so it will improve her breath and her kissing.”

An indignant Mopsa said, “Hey!”

Clown said, “No arguing. No arguing. We need to be on our best manners here.”

Clown and Mopsa joined a dance of shepherds and shepherdesses.

The disguised King Polixenes asked, “Please, good shepherd, tell me who this handsome shepherd is who is dancing with your daughter?”

“They call him Doricles,” the old shepherd said, “and he boasts that he has lots of good pastureland, but he has told me this himself, and I believe it — he looks honest. He says he loves my daughter; I think so, too. Never has the Moon gazed upon the water the way he so often stands and looks into my daughter’s eyes as if he were reading them. To speak plainly, I think there is not half a kiss’ difference in the love one feels for the other — they love each other a lot, and equally.”

The disguised King Polixenes said, “She dances well.”

“That is how she does everything,” the old shepherd said, “although I should be silent since I am biased. But if young Doricles marries her, she shall bring him good things that he does not dream of.”

A servant entered and said to the old shepherd, “Master, if you could hear the peddler who is at the door, you would never dance again to a drum and fife; no, the bagpipe could not move you. This peddler sings several different tunes faster than you can count money; he utters them as if he had eaten and lived on ballads and all men’s ears were glued to his tunes.”

Clown said, "He could never have come at a better time; he shall come in. I love a ballad only too well, if it has sad lyrics set to a merry tune, or if it is a very pleasant thing indeed and sung sadly and lamentably."

The servant said, "He has songs for man or woman, of all sizes."

The servant meant that the songs were of various lengths.

The servant continued, "No haberdasher can so fit his customers with gloves as the peddler can fit his customers with ballads. He has the prettiest love-songs for maidens; the love-songs are without bawdry, which is strange and unusual. They have such delicate refrains of dildos and fadings, '*jump her and thump her,*' and where some dirty-mouthed rascal would, as it were, mean mischief and break a foul gap into the song so he can make a dirty joke, the peddler makes the maiden say, '*Whoop, do me no harm, good man.*' The maiden puts the dirty-minded man off and slights him with '*Whoop, do me no harm, good man.*'"

The servant apparently did not know the meaning of "dildo" when he said that the peddler did not sing bawdy songs. The servant also apparently did not know that many of the other words the peddler said and many of the lyrics the peddler sang were bawdy in nature.

The disguised King Polixenes said about the peddler, "This is a splendid fellow."

"Believe me," Clown said, "you are talking about a wonderfully inventive fellow."

He then asked the servant, "Has he any wares that are not shop-soiled?"

The servant replied, "He has ribbons of all the colors in the rainbow. He has points more than all the lawyers in

Bohemia can learnedly handle, although they come to him by the gross.”

The points were laces that were used to attach hose to a jacket, but the servant was also punning on legal points.

The servant continued, “He has linen tapes, caddis-ribbons for garters, and delicate fabrics such as cambrics and lawns for dressmaking. Why, he sings a song about the stuff he has for sale. He sings about and praises his wares as if they were gods or goddesses; you would think a smock were a she-angel, he sings such praise about the sleeve cuffs and the embroidery on the front of it.”

“Please bring him in,” Clown said, “and let him approach while singing.”

Perdita said, “Warn him not to use any scurrilous words in his tunes.”

The servant left to tell the peddler to come in.

“Some of these peddlers,” Clown said, “have more in them than you would think, sister.”

“Yes, good brother,” Perdita said, “or more than I wish to think.”

Autolycus, who was disguised enough that Clown did not recognize him, entered the scene. (He was wearing a false beard.) He had put the money that he had stolen from Clown to good use. He sang this song about the wares he had for sale:

“Lawn as white as driven snow;

“Crape black as ever was a crow;

“Gloves as perfumed as damask roses;

“Masks for faces and for noses;

*“Black bead bracelet, necklace amber,
“Perfume for a lady’s chamber;
“Golden coifs and stomachers,
“For my lads to give their dears.
“Pins and poking-sticks of steel,
“What maidens need from head to heel.
“Come buy from me, come; come and buy, come and buy;
“Buy, lads, or else your lasses will cry. Come and buy.”*

Lawn is a kind of linen. Stomachers are stiff embroidered bodices, and poking-sticks are used to maintain ruffs.

Clown said to the peddler, Autolycus, “If I were not in love with Mopsa, you would get no money from me; but being as enthralled and in bondage to love as I am, it will lead to the bondage of certain ribbons and gloves. You will tie them into a bundle after I buy them.”

The archaic meaning of “enthrall” is “to enslave.” A “thrall” is a slave.

“I was promised the ribbons and gloves as gifts in time for the feast, but they are not too late now,” Mopsa said.

“He has promised you more than that, or there are liars,” Dorcas said.

“He has paid you all he promised you,” Mopsa said. “Maybe he has given you more than he promised, and it will shame you to give to him that extra back again.”

Dorcas and Mopsa were fighting over Clown. Dorcas had been Clown’s girlfriend, but Mopsa was now his girlfriend. Mopsa may have been hinting that the extra that Clown had given Dorcas was a child and that Dorcas would give

Clown the child after it was born.

Clown, who was embarrassed by the fighting, complained, "Are there no manners left among maidens? Will they wear their undergarments where they should bear their faces?"

He felt that they were airing dirty laundry in public, and he felt that this conversation, if made at all, ought to be made in private.

He continued, "Is there not milking-time, or when you are going to bed, or when you are in front of the kiln-hole, to whistle off these secrets? Can't you talk about this at those more private times? Do you have to be tittle-tattling in front of all our guests? It is good that our guests are whispering so that we cannot hear what they are saying. Clam up your tongues, and say not a word more. Tie up your tongue as one could tie up the clapper of a bell."

"I have said what I had to say," Mopsa said. "Come, you promised to give me a tawdry-lace and a pair of sweet gloves."

In this society, gloves were perfumed, and a tawdry-lace was a brightly colored scarf that was worn around the neck.

"Haven't I told you how I was cheated on the road and lost all my money?" Clown said to Mopsa.

Autolycus said, "Indeed, sir, conmen are abroad; therefore, men ought to be wary."

"Fear not, man," Clown said. "You shall lose nothing here."

"I hope that you are right, sir," Autolycus said, "because I have about me many parcels of value."

"What do you have here?" Clown asked. "Ballads?"

"Please, buy some," Mopsa said. "I dearly love a ballad in

print because then we are sure they are true.”

“Here’s one set to a very sad tune,” Autolycus said. “It is about how a usurer’s wife was brought to bed of twenty moneybags at a burden and how she longed to eat adders’ heads and sliced, broiled toads.”

One way to interpret what Autolycas had said was that a usurer’s wife had given birth to twenty moneybags all at once. Another way to interpret it was that a usurer’s wife had been persuaded by the gift of twenty moneybags to go to bed with the giver — her husband? — and bear the burden of his weight on her.

“Is it true, do you think?” Mopsa asked.

“Very true, and only a month old,” Autolycus replied.

“May God keep me from marrying a usurer!” Dorcas said.

“Here’s the midwife’s name on it as a witness,” Autolycas said. “Her name is Mistress Taleporter, and here are the names of five or six honest wives who were present. Why should I carry lies abroad?”

“Please,” Mopsa said to Clown, “buy it.”

“Come on, set it aside,” Clown said, “and let’s first see more ballads; we’ll buy the other things soon.”

Autolycus said, “Here’s another ballad. This one is about a fish that appeared upon the coast on Wednesday on the eightieth of April, forty thousand fathoms above water, and sang this ballad against the hard hearts of maidens. People think that the fish was a woman who was turned into a cold fish because she would not exchange flesh — have sex — with one who loved her. The ballad is as sad as it is true. The ballad is pitiful.”

“Is it true, too, do you think?” Dorcas asked.

“Five justices have certified that it is true, and there were more witnesses than my pack will hold,” Autolycus replied.

“Lay it aside, too,” Clown said. “Let’s see another.”

“This is a merry ballad, but it is a very pretty one,” Autolycus said.

“Let’s have some merry ones,” Mopsa said.

“Why, this is a very merry one and goes to the tune of ‘Two maids wooing a man.’ There’s scarcely a maiden westward who is not singing it,” Autolycus said. “This song is in demand, I can tell you.”

“We can both sing it,” Mopsa said to Dorcas.

She then said to Autolycus, “If you’ll take a part —” then she said to Clown, “— you shall hear it; it is in three parts.”

“We learned the tune a month ago,” Dorcas said.

“I can bear my part,” Autolycus said. “You must know that singing is my occupation. Let’s start.”

Autolycus sang, “*Get you hence, for I must go*

“*Where it does not suit you to know.*”

Dorcas sang, “*Whither?*”

Mopsa sang, “*Oh, whither?*”

Dorcas sang, “*Whither?*”

Mopsa sang, “*It becomes your oath full well,*

“*You to me your secrets tell.*”

Dorcas sang, “*Me, too — let me go thither.*”

Mopsa sang, “*Or you go to the farm or mill.*”

Dorcas sang, “*If to either, you do evil.*”

Autolycus sang, "*Neither.*"

Dorcas sang, "*What, neither?*"

Autolycus sang, "*Neither.*"

Dorcas sang, "*You have sworn to be my love.*"

Mopsa sang, "*You have sworn it more to me.*

"Then whither do you go? Tell us, whither?"

Clown said to Mopsa and Dorcas, "We'll sing this song ourselves soon. My father and the gentlemen are having a serious talk, and we'll not trouble them."

He said to Autolycus, "Come, carry your pack and follow me. Girls, I'll buy for you both. Peddler, we want to have the first choice. Follow me, girls."

Clown exited with Mopsa and Dorcas.

Autolycus said, "And you shall pay well for them."

He followed them, singing this song:

"Will you buy any tape,

"Or lace for your cape,

"My dainty duck, my dear-a?

"Any silk, any thread,

"Any trifles for your head,

"Of the newest and finest, finest wear-a?

"Come to the peddler;

"Money's a meddler

"That does offer for sale all men's ware-a."

The last two lines meant, “Money gets involved in everything, and it keeps everything in circulation.”

A servant said to the old shepherd, “Master, there are three drivers of carts, three shepherds, three cowherds, and three swineherds, who have made themselves all men of hair by wearing animal skins. They call themselves Saltiers, or Leaping Satyrs, and they have a dance that the wenches say is a gallimaufry, aka hodgepodge, of gambols, because they — the wenches — are not in it, but the Saltiers themselves are of the opinion that if it is not too rough for some who know little but the genteel game of bowling, it will plentifully please the audience.”

“Away with them!” the old shepherd said. “We’ll have none of it. We have had too much low-down tomfoolery already.”

He said to the disguised King Polixenes, “I know, sir, that we weary you.”

The disguised King Polixenes replied, “You weary those who refresh and entertain us. Please, let us see these four trios of country workers.”

“One trio of them, by their own report, sir, has danced before the King; and even the worst of the trios jumps twelve foot and a half by the furniture maker’s ruler,” the servant said.

“Stop your prating,” the old shepherd said. “Since these good men would like to see their dance, let them come in, but quickly.”

“Why, they are waiting at the door, sir,” the servant said, and then he left to carry out his orders.

The twelve Satyrs danced — wildly — and the old shepherd and the disguised King Polixenes talked.

After the dance, the disguised King Polixenes said to the old shepherd, "Father, you'll learn more about that soon."

In their society, old men were often addressed as "father" as a term of respect. It did not necessarily mean that the old man was the biological father of the person addressing him.

The disguised King Polixenes went to Camillo and asked, "Has the obvious love relationship of my son the Prince and this young shepherdess gone too far? Yes. It is time to part them. The old shepherd is a simple man and has told me what I need to know."

The disguised King Polixenes said to Florizel, his son the Prince, "How now, fair shepherd! Your heart is full of something that takes your mind away from feasting. Truly, when I was young and in love as you are now, I was wont to load my girlfriend with small gifts. I would have ransacked the peddler's silken treasury and have poured it upon her to gain her approval; you, however, have let the peddler leave and have bought nothing from him. If your lass should misinterpret this as you lacking love or generosity, you would be at a loss for a reply, at least if you want to make her happy."

Florizel replied, "Old sir, I know that she does not prize such trifles as those that the peddler has. The gifts she looks for from me are packed and locked up in my heart, which I have given to her already, but not delivered. I love her, but I am not yet legally married to her."

He said to Perdita, "Listen as I utter vows that I shall keep all my life. I will say them with this ancient sir as my witness; he, it seems, has once loved! I take your hand, this hand, as soft as the down of a dove and as white as it or the tooth of a dark-skinned Ethiopian, or the fanned snow that's sifted by the northern blasts of icy wind twice over."

"What can follow such an elaborate preface?" the disguised

King Polixenes asked. "How prettily the young shepherd seems to wash and make whiter the hand that was already white!"

He said to Florizel, "I have interrupted you. Continue your speech; let me hear what you have to say."

"Do, and be a witness to it," Florizel said.

"And shall this my neighbor be a witness, too?" the disguised King Polixenes asked, indicating the disguised Camillo.

"And he shall be a witness, and more than he. Let men, the Earth, the Heavens, and all know that, if I were crowned the most imperial monarch, and if I were very worthy of the crown, and if I were the handsomest youth who ever made eyes swerve to look at him, and if I had strength and knowledge more than was ever mortal man's, I would not prize them without her love. For her I would employ them all. I would commend them to the service of Perdita or condemn them to their own perdition. I want to marry Perdita."

"Well spoken," the disguised King Polixenes said.

"This shows a sound affection," the disguised Camillo said.

"But, my daughter," the old shepherd asked, "do you feel the same way about him?"

"I cannot speak as well as he, not even close," Perdita replied, "but all meaning will be the same. I understand that he feels about me the same way I feel about him."

Using a dressmaking metaphor, she said, "By the pattern of my own thoughts, I cut out the purity of his." In other words, she was saying that the purity of her thoughts validated the purity of his thoughts because her thoughts mirrored his. She added, "I want to marry him."

The old shepherd rejoiced and said, "Hold hands! You have made a bargain!"

The old shepherd said to the disguised King Polixenes and the disguised Camillo, "Unknown friends, you shall bear witness to this engagement. I give my daughter to him, and I will make her portion equal his. My daughter's dowry will equal what he brings to the marriage."

"Oh, her equal portion must be the virtue of your daughter," Florizel said. "Once a certain person is dead, I shall possess more than you can dream of now; later you can marvel at all I possess. But, come on, let us make a legal and binding engagement before these witnesses."

The old shepherd said to Florizel, "Come, hold out your hand," and he said to Perdita, "Daughter, hold out your hand."

"Wait," the disguised King Polixenes said to Florizel. "Wait a moment, young shepherd, please. Do you have a father?"

"Yes, I do, but what about him?"

"Does he know about this?"

"He does not, and he shall not."

The disguised King Polixenes said, "In my opinion a father is very suitable to be a guest at the wedding of his son. Please tell me these things. Has your father grown incapable of reason? Has he become stupid with age and mind-altering illnesses? Can he speak? Can he hear? Can he distinguish one man from another man? Can he manage his own estate? Is he bed-ridden? Is he in his second childhood?"

"No, good sir," Florizel replied. "He has his health, and he is stronger than most men his age."

“By my white beard,” the disguised King Polixenes said, “You are doing him, if what you said is true, a wrong that is somewhat unfilial. A good son would not treat his father this way. It is reasonable that my son should choose a wife for himself, but it is also reasonable that the father, all of whose joy comes from fair and good and worthy descendants, should give his advice when it comes to making such a choice.”

“I agree with what you say, my grave sir,” Florizel said, “but for some other reasons, which are not suitable for you to know, I will not tell my father about this engagement.”

“Let him know it,” the disguised King Polixenes said.

“He shall not.”

“Please, let him know it.”

“No, he must not.”

The old shepherd said to Florizel, “Let him know, my son. When he knows your choice, he will have no reason to grieve. Perdita will be an excellent wife for you.”

“Come, come, he must not,” Florizel said. “Let us make a legal and binding engagement.”

Pulling off his fake beard, King Polixenes said, “I now make for you a binding divorce, young sir. I dare not call you my son. You are too base to be acknowledged as my son. You, a scepter’s heir, are in love with a shepherd’s crook — a shepherdess!”

He said to the old shepherd, “You old traitor, I am sorry that by hanging you I can shorten your life by only one week.”

He said to Perdita, “And you, young masterpiece of excellent witchcraft, you cunning young witch, who of

course must know the Prince, that royal fool you are involved with —”

Shocked at seeing his King, and shocked at knowing that his King was angry at him and his daughter, the old shepherd said, “Oh, my heart!”

King Polixenes said to Perdita, “I’ll have your beauty scratched with briars, and you will be made more homely and lowly than your social status.”

He said to his son, Prince Florizel, “As for you, fond and foolish boy, if I should ever know that you even sigh because you shall never again see this trifle of a woman — and I do mean never — we will bar you from succession. You will never become King. We will not regard you as being of our blood — no, you will not be our kin. You will be a more distant relative to me than is Deucalion, the only man to survive the Great Flood and therefore the father of all men. Listen to us. Follow us back to the court.”

Continuing to use the royal plural, he said to the old shepherd, “You churl, for this time, although we are full of displeasure at you, yet we free you from the deadly blow of it. We will not kill you at this time.”

He said to Perdita, “And as for you, enchantment, you are beautiful, and full of virtue, although you are low born. You are worthy enough to marry a herdsman. Yes, you are also worthy enough to marry my son — if he were not a Prince. Because of his actions, however, my son has made himself unworthy of you. If ever henceforth you leave these rural latches open so that my son can enter here, or if you ever use your arms to make a hoop around his body with your embraces, I will devise a death as cruel for you as you are vulnerable to it.”

He departed.

Perdita said, “Despite the King’s threat to have me killed, I was not much afraid because once or twice I was about to speak and tell him plainly that the same Sun that shines upon his court does not hide its visage from our cottage but looks on all alike.”

She said to Florizel, “Will it please you, sir, to leave? I told you what would come of this. Please, take care of yourself and do not endanger your position — make sure that you will someday become King. Being engaged to you has been a dream of mine — but now that I am awake, I’ll Queen it not an inch farther. Instead, I will milk my ewes and weep.”

Camillo, still disguised, said to the old shepherd, “How are you, father? Speak before you die. Keeping your emotions bottled up can kill you.”

“I cannot speak,” the old shepherd replied, “nor think nor dare to know that which I know.”

He said to Prince Florizel, “Sir! You have undone a man who is 83 years old. I thought that I would go peacefully to my grave and even die in the same bed in which my father died, and then lie close by his honest bones, but now some hangman must put on my shroud and lay me in a grave in which no priest shovels in dust. I will not receive a Christian burial.”

He said to Perdita, “Oh, cursed wretch, who knew that this man was the Prince, and dared to be engaged to him! Undone! Undone! If I might die within this hour, I would have lived long enough to die when I desire.”

The old shepherd departed.

Florizel said to the disguised Camillo, “Why are you looking that way at me? I am sorry that this has happened, but I am not afraid. My intention of being married to Perdita is delayed, but my intention has not changed. What

I was, I still am. I am like a dog who strains to go forward, resisting the leash that is trying to pull him back; I am not following my leash, even unwillingly.”

Camillo said, “My gracious lord, you know your father’s temper. At this time he will allow no speech about you marrying this shepherdess, and I guess that you do not intend to talk to him. I also think that he will hardly endure your sight now and for a while, I fear. Therefore, until the fury of his Highness settles, do not see him.”

“I do not intend to,” Florizel said.

He looked closer at the disguised Camillo and said, “I think that you are ... Camillo?”

“I am he, my lord,” Camillo replied as he removed his false beard.

Perdita said to Florizel, “How often have I told you that this would happen! How often have I said that my being your beloved would last only until your father found out about it!”

“Our engagement cannot fail except by me violating my faith and my word,” Florizel said, “and if that ever happens then let Nature crush the sides of the Earth together and destroy all the seeds of generation on Earth! Let all life end!

“Lift up your head, Perdita, and look more cheerfully. My father can take away my succession as King, if he wishes. What I wish to acquire is you. I prefer love of a woman to love of a crown.”

“Be advised,” Camillo said.

He meant, “Be careful,” but Florizel pretended that he had meant, “Be counseled.”

Florizel said, "I am being counseled, and by my fancy — my true love. If my reason will obey my love, then I will have reason and be sane. If not, then my senses, being better pleased with madness, will bid it welcome. If I cannot have my love, I will go insane."

"This is desperate, sir," Camillo replied.

"Call it desperate if you want," Florizel said, "but since it fulfills the vow I made to Perdita, I must call it honesty. Camillo, I will not break my oath to Perdita, my fair beloved, for Bohemia, or for the pomp that may be gleaned there, nor for all the Sun sees or all that the Earth holds enclosed within its womb or the profound sea hides in unknown fathoms. Therefore, I ask you, since you have always been my father's honored friend, that when he shall learn that I am gone — as, truly, I do not intend to see him any more — to give him good advice during his anger. Let fortune and me fight it out to determine my future. This you may know and so tell my father: I am going to sea with Perdita, whom I cannot hold on to and love on the shore of Bohemia. Fortunately for us, I have a vessel anchored nearby, but unfortunately for us it is not prepared for this plan. What course I mean to hold you need not know, and I will not tell you."

"Oh, my lord!" Camillo said. "I wish that your spirit were more inclined to listen to my advice, or more focused on what you need!"

"Listen, Perdita," Florizel said. He added to Camillo, "I'll talk to you in a moment." Florizel and Perdita talked together quietly.

Camillo said to himself, "He has made up his mind and won't change it. He has resolved to flee from his father and Bohemia. Now I would be happy if I could make his going from Bohemia do these things: serve my needs, save him

from danger, show him respect and honor, and allow me to see again my dear Sicily and that unhappy King Leontes, my master, whom I so much thirst to see.”

Florizel said, “Now, good Camillo, we can talk. I am so weighed down with business that requires my careful attention that I am forgetting my manners and ignoring you.”

“Sir, I think that you have heard of my poor services that I have done for your father because of my respect for him.”

“You have given my father very noble service and you have deserved very noble recompense,” Florizel said. “It is my father’s music to speak about your deeds, and he takes care to recompense them as you deserve.”

“Well, my lord,” Camillo said, “if you may please to think I love the King and through him love the person nearest to him, who is your gracious self, embrace my advice. If your more ponderous and settled project may suffer alteration, on my honor I’ll point you to where you shall have such a reception as shall become your Highness. It will be a country where you may enjoy your betrothed, Perdita, from whom, I see, you will not be separated except — God forbid! — by your ruination. If you go to this country, you may marry her, and I will do my best in your absence to mollify your father and bring him to accept your marriage.”

“How, Camillo, may this, which is almost a miracle, be done?” Florizel asked. “If you do this, I will call you something more than a man and afterward always have trust in you.”

“Have you thought about the place where you will go to?” Camillo asked.

“Not yet,” Florizel replied. “We did not expect my father to discover our engagement, and because it was discovered

we must take action without preparation — we acknowledge that we are the slaves of chance and that every wind may blow us where it pleases.”

“Then listen to me,” Camillo said. “If you will not change your mind and stay in Bohemia, and if you insist on fleeing from your father, then sail to Sicily and present yourself and your Princess, as I see that she will become, before King Leontes. Perdita shall be dressed as becomes the partner of your bed. I think I can foretell that King Leontes will freely open his arms and weep as he welcomes you. He will ask you, King Polixenes’ son, for forgiveness, as if you were your father. He will kiss the hands of your young and lively Princess. Again and again King Leontes will talk about his repentance for the unkindness he showed to your father and about the kindness and affection that he feels now for your father and you. He will chide to Hell his unkindness and will bid his kindness to grow faster than thought or time.”

“Worthy Camillo, what reason for my visit shall I tell King Leontes?”

“Tell him that you were sent by King Polixenes, your father, to greet him and to give him comfort. Sir, I shall write down how you will behave toward King Leontes and the information that you will say your father told you to tell him. I know things that are known only by King Polixenes, King Leontes, and me, and I will write them down for you. That will let you know the things you should say when you meet with King Leontes. That way, he will think that you have your father’s permission to be at his court and that you are telling him things that your father wants him to know.”

“I am bound to you,” Florizel said. “Some sense is in this.”

“This course of action is more promising than a wild

abandoning of yourselves to uncharted waters and undreamed-of shores. That course is very certain to bring you miseries enough, with no hope to help you, for as soon as you shake off one misery you will take on another. Your course of action is in no way as certain as your anchors, which at best can keep you in a place where you will hate to be. Besides, as you know, prosperity is what keeps love whole; affliction alters love's fresh complexion and heart."

"One of these is true," Perdita said. "I think that affliction may alter for the worse one's complexion, but not alter one's heart and mind."

"Do you think so?" Camillo asked. He liked her comment. He added, "There shall not in your father's house be born another as wise as you for a very long time."

"My good Camillo," Florizel said, "Perdita is as above her breeding as she is below our birth. Her birth may be below that of a Prince, but her character is much above that of a peasant."

"I cannot say that it is a pity that she lacks education," Camillo said, "because she seems to be the superior of most people who teach."

"I beg your pardon, sir," Perdita said. "For your kind words I will blush my thanks."

"You are my prettiest Perdita," Florizel said, "but we are in a mess. It is as if we were standing on thorns!"

He added, "Camillo, you have been the preserver of my father, and now you are my preserver. You, the medicine and physician of our house, have saved the life of my father and are now saving my life. How can we carry out your plan? We are not equipped like the son of the King of Bohemia, nor shall we appear as such in Sicily until we find proper clothing and equipment."

“My lord,” Camillo said, “fear not. I think you know that all my fortune and possessions still remain in Sicily. I will make sure that you will be as royally dressed and equipped as if I myself were you, a Prince. Let me talk to you a moment so that I can prove to you that you shall lack nothing.”

They talked quietly.

Meanwhile, Autolycus, who thought that he was alone, walked to a spot near them and said to himself, “Ha, ha! What a fool Honesty is! And Trust, his sworn brother, is a very simple gentleman! I have sold all my trumpery. Not a counterfeit stone, not a ribbon, mirror, bag of sweet-smelling herbs, brooch, notebook, ballad, knife, tape, glove, shoelace, bracelet, ring made of horn remains to keep my pack from fasting — my pack is completely empty of merchandise. The peasants thronged to see who would buy first, as if my trinkets were sacred and brought a benediction to the buyer. Because of that, I was able to see whose purse or wallet was fattest. What I saw, I remembered, and I put it to my own good use. Clown, who lacks something that would make him a reasonable man, grew so in love with the wenches’ song that he would not stir his feet until he had learned both the tune and the words; the singing so drew the rest of the herd to me that all their senses other than hearing melted away. You might have stolen someone’s underwear because the wearer was paying so little attention to anything but the song. It was nothing to steal a moneybag that was hanging from someone’s belt. I could have filed keys off of chains because the peasants had no hearing and no feeling except for my Sir Clown’s song, and admiring the nonsense of it. Therefore, during this time of their lethargy I picked pockets and cut the strings of most of their bags filled with money to spend at the festival. If the old shepherd had not come in with a hubbub because of his daughter and the

King's son and scared my pigeons away from my trap of trumpery, I would not have left a purse alive in the whole army."

Camillo said to Florizel, "No, that is not a good objection. My letters, by the means I told you about, will be in Sicily as soon as you arrive."

Florizel started to ask, "And those that you'll procure from King Leontes —"

Camillo finished for him, "— shall satisfy your father."

Perdita said to Camillo, "May good luck come to you! All that you have said seems reasonable and favorable."

Seeing Autolycus, Camillo said, "Who have we here? We'll make use of this man; we ought to omit nothing that may give us aid."

Camillo's plan was for Florizel and this man, Autolycus, to exchange clothing. That would help disguise Florizel's identity.

Autolycus heard them talking and, shaking with fear, said to himself, "If they have overheard me talking to myself just now, why, I will be hanged."

Camillo said, "How are you, good fellow? Why are you shaking? Do not be afraid, man. We mean no harm to you."

"I am a poor fellow, sir," Autolycus said.

"Continue to be poor," Camillo replied. "No one here will steal your poverty from you. Yet for the outside of your poverty — your clothing — we must make an exchange; therefore, take off your outer clothing now. You must realize that there's a necessity in it — we want you to exchange garments with this gentleman. Although the bargain is worst on his side — his clothing is better than

yours — yet wait just a minute. Here is some money for you.”

“I am a poor fellow, sir,” Autolycus said.

He thought, *I know you well enough. I know who you are, and I know that you are planning a trick of some kind.*

Camillo said, “Please, hurry. The gentleman is half flayed — half undressed — already.”

“Are you in earnest, sir?” Autolycus said. “Are you serious about this exchange of clothing?”

He thought, *I smell the trick of it.*

Florizel said, “Hurry, please.”

“Indeed, you have paid me, but I cannot with conscience take it,” Autolycus said.

“Unbuckle, unbuckle,” Camillo said.

Florizel and Autolycus exchanged clothing. Florizel’s clothing was much better than the clothing of Autolycus. Although Florizel’s clothing was not as fancy as that of a Prince, it was fancy enough to be worn at a festival by a shepherd who owned much pastureland — the kind of person whom Florizel had pretended to be. Autolycus had spent much of the money he had stolen from Clown on trumpery to fill his peddler’s pack.

Camillo said to Perdita, “Fortunate mistress — let my words be a prophecy that will come true for you! You must go into some shrubbery that will hide you so you can take off some of your exterior fancy clothing that you wore as Queen of the sheep-shearing festival. Take your sweetheart’s hat and pluck it down over your brows, hide your face, take off your mantle, and, as much as you can, disguise the truth of your own appearance. Do this so that

you may — for I am afraid of spying eyes — get onboard the ship without being seen.”

The words “disguise the truth of your own appearance” were interesting. Perdita was dressed as if she were the Queen of the Festival — she was dressed as royalty — and in fact she was a Princess. The way she appeared to be was in fact what she really was.

Perdita said, “I see the play so lies that I must bear a part. I see that our plan requires that I hide my identity.”

“Yes,” Camillo said. “It is required.”

He asked Florizel, “Are you ready now?”

Florizel said, “If I should happen to meet my father, he would not know that I am his son.”

Camillo said, “You shall not wear a hat.”

He took Florizel’s hat and gave it to Perdita, saying, “Come, lady, come. This is for you.”

He said to Autolycus, “Farewell, my friend.”

“*Adieu*, sir,” Autolycus said.

“Oh, Perdita,” Florizel said, “we two have forgotten something! Let me speak to you.”

While they talked together, Camillo said quietly to himself, “What I will do next shall be to tell King Polixenes about this escape and where Florizel and Perdita are bound. By doing that, I hope that I shall persuade the King to follow them. In his company, I shall once again see Sicily, for whose sight I have the longing of a woman. I want to see Sicily as strongly as a pregnant woman wants to eat strange foods.”

Camillo was not intentionally betraying Florizel and

Perdita. He believed that the two ought to arrive in Sicily in plenty of time for them to be married before King Polixenes arrived. If the two lovers were already lawfully married, King Polixenes would be much more likely to accept their marriage. Rough weather, however, could slow their journey.

“May Fortune speed us on our way!” Florizel said. “Thus we set out, Camillo, to go to the seashore.”

“The swifter your speed, the better,” Camillo replied.

Florizel, Perdita, and Camillo departed.

“I understand the business, and I hear it,” Autolycus said to himself, “To have an open ear, a quick eye, and a nimble hand is necessary for a cutpurse; a good nose is also needed to smell out work for the other senses. I see that this is a time in which the unjust man thrives. What an exchange had this been even without booty! What booty is here with this exchange! I greatly benefited by this exchange of clothing, and I got some money in addition!

“Surely the gods this year are conspiring with us, and we may do anything extempore, without planning it in advance. The Prince himself is guilty of a piece of iniquity; he is stealing away from his father with his clog — Perdita — at his heels.

“If I thought it were a piece of honesty to tell King Polixenes what his son the Prince is doing, I would not do it. I am a knave, and I believe it to be more knavish to conceal what the Prince is doing. I will act in such a way that I am loyal to my profession.”

The old shepherd and his son, Clown, walked toward Autolycus, but they did not see him.

Autolycus said to himself, “Let me move aside. I don’t

want them to see me now. Here is more matter for a hot brain to think about. Every lane's end, shop, church, court session, and hanging yield a careful man work. I may be able to benefit by eavesdropping on these two."

Clown said to his father, the old shepherd, "See, see — what a man you are now! You are in so much trouble! The only thing we can do is to tell the King that Perdita is a changeling; she is not of your flesh and blood. Instead, she is a child left by the fairies."

"Listen to me," the old shepherd said.

"No, *you* listen to me."

"Go on, then."

Clown said, "Because Perdita is not of your flesh and blood, your flesh and blood have not offended King Polixenes, and so your flesh and blood are not to be punished by him. Show King Polixenes those things you found around her when you found her when she was an infant. Show him those secret things, all but what she has with her — what she is wearing as Queen of the Sheep-shearing Festival. Once you do this, you need not fear being punished, I assure you. You can let the law go whistle."

"I will tell the King everything, every word, yes, and his son's pranks, too," the old shepherd said. "The Prince, I say, is no honest man, neither to his father nor to me — not when he attempts to make me the King's brother-in-law."

Of course, the old shepherd would have been the father of the King's daughter-in-law; he would not have been the King's brother-in-law.

Clown said, "Indeed, brother-in-law was the farthest-off relative you could have been to the King and then your

blood had been the dearer by I know how much an ounce. By being related to King Polixenes, your blood would be more valuable than if you were just a simple shepherd.”

Autolycus said to himself, sarcastically, “These puppies are very wise!”

“Well, let us go to the King,” the old shepherd said. “There are things in this bundle that will make him wonder, think hard, and scratch his beard.”

Autolycus said to himself, “This complaint may in some way be an impediment to the flight of my master: Prince Florizel. At least, he is my old master: I used to serve him.”

“Pray heartily that King Polixenes is in the palace,” Clown said.

“Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance,” Autolycus said to himself. “Let me take off my peddler’s disguise.”

He removed his false beard and said, “How now, rustics! Where are you bound?”

The old shepherd and his son did not recognize Autolycus, who was now wearing fancy clothing as well as being beardless.

The old shepherd said, “We are going to the palace, if it is all right with your worship.”

Autolycus asked for much information: “Tell me the business you have there, the nature of that bundle, the place of your dwelling, your names, your ages, what property you have, your upbringing, and anything else that is fit to be known.”

“We are but plain fellows, sir,” Clown said.

“That is a lie,” Autolycus said. “You are rough and hairy.

Tell me no lies. Lying becomes none but tradesmen, and they often give us soldiers the lie by giving us poor quality or short quantity ... no, wait — we pay them for their goods with stamped coins, not stabbing steel, so therefore they do not give us the lie; instead, they sell it.”

“Your worship almost gave a lie,” Clown said, “but fortunately you caught yourself and corrected yourself.”

“Are you a courtier, if you don’t mind my asking, sir?” the old shepherd said.

“Whether I mind it or not, I am a courtier,” Autolycus said. “Don’t you see the air of the court in the clothing I am wearing? Doesn’t my gait have in it the measure of the court? Doesn’t your nose smell court-odor emanating from me? Don’t I look down on your baseness because I am a member of the upper class? Do you think that because I am talking to you in order to learn your business that I am therefore no courtier? I am a courtier from top to bottom, and I am a courtier who will either push on or pluck back your business at the palace. And now I command you to tell me what business you have at the palace.”

“My business, sir, is with King Polixenes,” the old shepherd said.

“What advocate do you have to go to him?” Autolycus asked.

“I don’t know what you mean, sir,” the old shepherd replied.

Clown said to the old shepherd, “The court-word for ‘advocate’ is a pheasant. Say that you don’t have one.”

Clown thought that “advocate” meant “influence.” One way to influence a judge of a local court was with a bribe. A common bribe was poultry.

“None, sir,” the old shepherd said. “I have no pheasant, rooster, or hen.”

“How blessed are we who are not simple men!” Autolycus said proudly. “Yet nature might have made me as these are. Therefore I will not look down on them.”

Autolycus was talking much like the Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14:

“He [Jesus] spake also this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were just, and despised others.

“Two men went up into the Temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican.

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘O God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.

‘I fast twice in the week: I give tithe of all that ever I possess.’

“But the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to Heaven, but smote his breast, saying, ‘Oh, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’

“I tell you, this man departed to his house, justified rather than the other: for every man that exalteth himself shall be brought low, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Autolycus began to pick his teeth with a toothpick. This was a recent fashionable activity among the upper class.

Clown said to his father, “This man cannot be anything but a great courtier.”

“His garments are rich, but he does not wear them well,” the old shepherd said.

Fancy clothing is uncomfortable for those who are not accustomed to wear it and for those whom it does not fit.

“He seems to be all the more noble in being eccentric,” Clown said. “He is a great man, I promise you. I know that because he picks his teeth.”

“What is in that bundle you are carrying?” Autolycus asked. “Why are you carrying that box?”

The old shepherd replied, “Sir, secrets lie in this bundle and box that no one but the King must know, and he shall know those secrets within this hour, if I may come into his presence and talk to him.”

“Old man, you have lost your labor,” Autolycus said. “That will not happen.”

“Why, sir?”

Autolycus, thinking quickly of a plan, lied, “The King is not at the palace; he has gone aboard a new ship to purge his melancholy and get fresh air for himself. If you are capable of knowing serious things, you must know that the King is full of grief.”

“So it is said, sir,” the old shepherd said. “He grieves that his son wanted to have married a shepherd’s daughter.”

“If that shepherd is not under arrest, let him flee from here,” Autolycus said. “If he is arrested, the curses he shall have and the tortures he shall feel will break the back of a man and the heart of a monster.”

“Do you think so, sir?” Clown asked.

“Not the old shepherd alone shall suffer whatever heavy and bitter vengeance ingenuity can make, but those who are related to the old shepherd, even if they are distantly related and removed fifty times, shall also all come under the

jurisdiction of the hangman. Although it is a great pity, yet it is necessary. This old sheep-whistling rogue — this ram-tender — attempted to have his daughter become a member of the nobility by marrying Prince Florizel! Some say the old shepherd shall be stoned, but that death is too soft for him, in my opinion. He attempted to drag our country's throne into a shelter for sheep — a sheepecote! For him, all deaths are too few, and the sharpest death is too easy."

"Has the old man a son, sir?" Clown asked. "Have you heard whether he has a son, sir?"

"He does have a son, who shall be flayed alive," Autolycus said. "Then honey will be poured over him and he will be set on the top of a wasp's nest, and then he will be forced to stand until he is three quarters and a little bit more dead. After that, he will be revived with strong drink, and as raw as he is at that time, on the hottest day the almanac forecasts, he shall be set against a brick wall, with the Sun shining on him from the South, and the Sun shall see him swollen because of horsefly bites.

"But why are we talking about these traitorous rascals, whose miseries are to be smiled at because their offences are so great?" Autolycus said. "Tell me, for you seem to be honest plain men, what business you have with King Polixenes. For a consideration, aka bribe, I will take you to the ship where he is onboard. I will take you into his presence, and I will whisper to him and plead on your behalf. If it is possible for any man other than the King to accomplish your purposes, I am the man who can do it."

Clown said to his father, "He seems to be very powerful. Make a deal with him, and give him gold. Although a powerful person can be a stubborn bear, with the gift of gold, one can often lead a powerful person by the nose. Show the inside of your wallet to the outside of his hand, and we can solve our problem. Remember 'stoned,' and

‘flayed alive.’”

“If it please you, sir, to undertake the business for us, here is the gold I have on me,” the old shepherd said to Autolycus. “I’ll give you as much more as this and leave this young man as security until I bring you the additional gold.”

“After I have done what I promised to do?” Autolycus asked.

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, give me the gold you have on you,” Autolycus said.

He then asked Clown, “Are you a party in this business?”

“In some way I am, sir,” Clown replied, “but although my case is a pitiful one, I hope I shall not be flayed out of it.”

Clown was punning. A case is a situation that law enforcement officers investigate, and a case or a casing is a covering. Clown’s body was covered with skin.

“Oh, that’s the case of the shepherd’s son,” Autolycus said. “Hang him; he’ll be made an example to others.”

Clown said to his father, “Take comfort, good comfort! We have a plan. We must go to the King and show him our strange sights — this bundle and box. King Polixenes must know that Perdita is not your daughter nor my sister; we are done for otherwise.”

Clown said to Autolycus, “Sir, I will give you as much as this old man does when the business is performed, and I will remain with you, as he said, as your security until the gold is brought to you.”

“I will trust you,” Autolycus said. “Walk ahead of me and go toward the seashore. Go on the right. I will look upon the hedge and follow you.”

“Look upon the hedge” was a euphemism for “urinate.”

Clown said to his father, “We are blessed that we met this man — yes, we are blessed.”

“Let’s walk ahead of him as he asked us to,” the old shepherd said. “God sent him to us so he could do us good.”

The old shepherd and his son walked away.

While urinating, Autolycus said to himself, “If I had a mind to be honest, I see that Fortune would not allow me to be honest. She drops rewards in my mouth. I am presented now with a double opportunity: gold and a means to do my former master Prince Florizel good. Who knows how this may turn out to be to my advantage?”

“I will bring these two moles, these blind ones, onboard the ship that Prince Florizel is on. If he thinks it fit to put them on shore again and if he thinks that the information they want to present to the King does not concern him, let him call me a rogue for being so officious. I am impervious against that insult and the shame that goes with it. I will present these two men to him; there may be something good in it for me.”

CHAPTER 5 (*The Winter's Tale*)

— 5.1 —

In a room of the palace in Sicily, King Leontes, Cleomenes, Dion, and Paulina were speaking. Some gentlemen were also present. Cleomenes and Dion were the two lords whom King Leontes had sent to consult the oracle of Apollo sixteen years earlier.

Cleomenes said to King Leontes, “Sir, you have done enough; you have performed a saint-like penitence. No sin could you have committed that you have not redeemed; indeed, you have paid down more penitence than you have done trespass. Now, finally, do as the Heavens have done: Forget your sins, and with them forgive yourself.”

“While I remember Hermione and her virtues,” King Leontes said, “I cannot forget my blemishes in comparison to her virtues, and so I continually think of the wrong I myself did, which was so great that it has made my Kingdom heirless and destroyed the sweetest companion who ever gave a man hope for the future.”

“That is true, too true, my lord,” Paulina said. “If, one by one, you wedded all the women in the world, or from each of the women who exist took something good in order to make a perfect woman, the woman — Hermione — you killed would still be unparalleled.”

“I think so, too,” King Leontes said. “Killed! The woman I killed! I did kill her, but you strike and hurt me sorely, when you say I killed her; it is as bitter upon your tongue as in my thoughts. Now, please, say only seldom that I killed her.”

Cleomenes said to Paulina, “It is best not to say it at all,

good lady. You might have spoken a thousand things that would have been more beneficial and kinder.”

“You are one of those people who want King Leontes to get a new wife,” Paulina replied.

“If you don’t want the King to remarry,” Dion said, “you don’t pity the state, nor the continuance of the King’s most sovereign name. King Leontes — and Sicily — needs a royal heir. You are not thinking about what dangers, because his Highness has no living heir, may drop upon his Kingdom and devour citizens who are not sure what to do. What is more holy than to rejoice that the former Queen is well in Heaven? What would be holier than — for the sake of the King and Sicily, for our present comfort, and for our future good — to bless the bed of majesty again with a sweet spouse in it?”

“There is none worthy to grace the bed of the King,” Paulina said. “None is worthy when compared with the Queen who is gone. Besides, the gods must have their secret purposes fulfilled. Has not the divine Apollo said, and is it not the tenor of his oracle, that King Leontes shall not have an heir until his lost child — his daughter — is found? But that his daughter shall be found is altogether as unnatural from the point of view of our human reason as it would be for my husband, Antigonus, to break out of his grave and come again to me. Antigonus, I swear on my life, perished with the infant. It is your counsel that King Leontes should be contrary to the Heavens and oppose the will of the gods.”

Paulina then said to King Leontes, “Don’t worry about having an heir. The crown will find an heir. Remember that Alexander the Great left his crown to the worthiest; that way, his successor was likely to be the best.”

“Good Paulina, who I know honors the memory of

Hermione,” King Leontes said, “I wish that I had always obeyed your counsel! If I had, even now I might have looked upon my Queen’s full, not hollow, eyes, have taken treasure from her lips —”

“— and left them richer for what they yielded,” Paulina said.

“You speak the truth,” King Leontes said. “There are no more such wives; therefore, there is no wife for me. A wife worse than Paulina, and better treated by me, would make her sainted spirit once again possess her corpse, and on this stage, where I would stand, offending her, she would appear soul-vexed, and begin, ‘Why are you insulting me by treating better than you treated me a wife who is worse than me?’”

“Had she such power, she would have just cause to do that,” Paulina said.

“She would have,” King Leontes said, “and she would provoke me to murder the new wife I married.”

“I would do the same thing,” Paulina said. “Were I the ghost who walked, I would tell you to look at your new wife’s eyes, and then I would ask you to tell me because of what dull part in them you chose to make her your wife, and then I would shriek so that your ears would split to hear me, and the words that would follow the shriek would be ‘Remember my eyes.’”

“Her eyes were stars, stars,” King Leontes said, “and all other eyes else were dead coals! You need fear no wife. I will have no wife, Paulina.”

“Will you swear never again to marry except with my freely given permission?” Paulina asked.

“I swear,” King Leontes said, “on my immortal soul!”

“Then, my good lords,” Paulina said, “bear witness to his oath.”

“You tempt him to swear to follow the wrong path,” Cleomenes said. “He should not swear this oath.”

“He shall not marry unless another woman, as like Hermione as is her picture, appears in front of his eyes,” Paulina replied.

“Good madam —” Cleomenes began.

“I am finished,” Paulina said to him.

She then said to King Leontes, “Yet, if my lord does marry again — if you will, sir; I make no promise, but if you do — give me the duty of choosing a Queen for you. She shall not be as young as was your former Queen, but she shall be such as, if your first Queen’s ghost should walk on this Earth, it should feel joy if it saw her in your arms.”

Using the royal plural, King Leontes said, “My true Paulina, we shall not marry until you allow us.”

“That shall be when your first Queen is alive again,” Paulina said. “You shall not remarry until that happens.”

A gentleman entered the room and said, “A man who says that he is Prince Florizel, son of King Polixenes of Bohemia, along with his Princess, the most beautiful woman whom I have ever seen, desires to speak to your Highness.”

“Who is with him?” King Leontes asked. “He has not come here in a manner befitting his father’s greatness. His approach, so lacking in ceremony and so sudden, tells us that this is not a planned visit, but has been forced on him by need and accident. What train of followers does he have with him?”

“He has very few followers, and those are lower class,” the gentleman replied.

“Did you say his Princess is with him?”

“Yes, she is the most peerless mortal piece of earth, I think, that the Sun has ever shone brightly on.”

“Oh, Hermione,” Paulina said, “as every present time boasts itself to be better than a better age that has passed, so must your grave give way to what’s seen now! This living Princess is being called more beautiful than you, my late Queen!”

She said to the gentleman, “Sir, you yourself have spoken and written about Queen Hermione’s beauty, but your writing now is colder than that theme. You wrote about her, ‘She had not been, nor ever was to be equaled.’ Your verse flowed with her beauty once: it is shrewdly ebbd now that you say that you have seen a better woman than Hermione.”

“Please pardon me, madam,” the gentleman said. “I have almost forgotten Hermione — I beg your pardon — but this new woman, when you see her, will have your praises, too. This is a creature who, if she were to begin a religious sect, might quench the zeal of all followers of other religions, and make proselytes of everyone whom she asked to follow her.”

“Men, perhaps, but not women,” Paulina scoffed.

“Women will love her because she is a woman more worthy than any man,” the gentleman said. “Men will love her because she is the rarest of all women.”

“Go, Cleomenes,” King Leontes ordered. “You, assisted with your honored friends, will bring them here so that we can welcome them. Still, it is strange that Prince Florizel

should visit us without previous notification.”

Cleomenes and a few other gentlemen departed.

Paulina said, “If our Prince Mamillius, that jewel of children, had seen this hour, he would be much like this lord. There is not even a month’s difference in the time of their births.”

“Please, say no more about Mamillius,” King Leontes said. “Cease talking about him. You know that he dies to me again when I hear him talked about. I am sure that when I shall see this gentleman, your speeches will make me think about my son’s death, and that may take away my reason.”

He looked up and said, “Here they come.”

Cleomenes and the other gentlemen escorted Prince Florizel and Perdita into the room and the presence of King Leontes.

King Leontes said, “Prince Florizel, we know that your mother was completely true to her husband because she made an exact copy of your royal father when she conceived and gave birth to you. If I were twenty-one years old again, your father’s image is so stamped in you — his exact appearance, manner, and bearing! — that I would call you brother, as I did him, and speak about some wild deed that he and I did together.

“You are very dearly welcome! And your fair Princess — she is a goddess! Sadly, I lost a couple — my wife and my son — who between Heaven and Earth might have stood begetting wonder as you and your Princess, a gracious couple, do. I also lost — through my own folly — the society and the friendship of your splendid father, whom, although my life is miserable, I hope to live long enough to once more see.”

Prince Florizel said, “By my father’s command, I have here landed on Sicily and from him I give you all greetings that a King, in friendship, can send his brother. Except that the infirmity that attends old age has somewhat seized hold of and taken away some of the ability he wishes he had, he himself would have traveled the lands and waters that lie between your throne and his so that he could see you, whom he loves — he told me to tell you this — more than all living Kings who bear scepters.”

“Oh, King Polixenes, my brother, you good gentleman!” King Leontes said. “The wrongs I have done you stir afresh within me, and these your official friendly greetings, which are so wonderfully kind, show me that I have been remiss in not sending you such friendly greetings.

“You, Prince Florizel, are as welcome here as is the spring to the Earth. And King Polixenes has also exposed this paragon — your Princess — to the fearful, or at least, rough treatment of the dreadful Neptune, god of the seas, to greet a man not worth her trouble, much less the risk of her life.”

“My good lord,” Prince Florizel said, “my Princess came from Libya.”

“Isn’t Libya where the warlike Smalus, that noble and honored lord, is feared and loved?” King Leontes asked.

“Yes, most royal sir, she came from there,” Prince Florizel said. “When she parted from him, his tears proclaimed that she was his daughter. From Libya, a friendly and helpful south wind helped us sail here so we could obey the order my father gave me to visit your Highness. I have sent away from your Sicilian shores the best part of my train of followers. They are heading for Bohemia to tell my father the good news of my success in getting a wife from Libya and the good news that my wife and I have safely arrived in

Sicily.”

“May the blessed gods purge all disease from our air while you stay here!” King Leontes said. “You have a holy father, a graceful gentleman, against whose person, as sacred as it is, I have sinned, for which the Heavens, taking angry note of my sin, have left me without a child. In contrast, your father is blessed — and he deserves to be blessed by Heaven — with you, who are worthy of his goodness.

“I wish that I had acted differently so that now I might have a son and daughter to look on — a son and daughter as good as you!”

A lord entered the room and said, “Most noble sir, that which I shall report would not be believed if the proof of it were not so near. If it should please you, great sir, King Polixenes of Bohemia greets you from himself by me. He wants you to arrest his son, who has — casting aside his dignity as a Prince and his duty as a son — fled from his father, from his hopes of inheriting the crown, and with a shepherd’s daughter.”

“Where’s the King of Bohemia?” King Leontes asked. “Tell me.”

“He is here in your city,” the lord said. “I just now came from him. I speak amazedly; and my confused speech is suitable for my wonderment and my message. While he was hurrying to your court, chasing, it seems, this fair couple here, he met on the way the father of this woman — who has the appearance of a lady — and her brother, both of whom fled from their country with this young Prince.”

“Camillo has betrayed me,” Florizel said, “although his honor and honesty until now endured all weathers. Never before has he betrayed me.”

The lord said, “You will be able to charge him with that.

He's with the King, your father."

"Who? Camillo?" King Leontes asked.

"Yes, Camillo, sir," the lord said. "I spoke with him; he is now interrogating these two poor men whom I mentioned. I have never seen wretches so quake in fear like them. They kneel, and they kiss the earth; they perjure and contradict themselves as often as they speak. The King of Bohemia stops his ears, and he threatens them with different ways of torturing them to death."

"Oh, my poor father!" Perdita said. "The immortal gods have set informers upon us. The immortal gods will not allow us to be formally married."

"Are you formally married?" King Leontes asked.

"We are not, sir, nor are we likely to be," Prince Florizel replied. "The stars, I see, will kiss the valleys first. The odds of a high-born person marrying a low-born person are the same as that of all the stars kissing the valleys."

"My lord," King Leontes asked, "is this woman the daughter of a King?"

"She is," Prince Florizel replied, "when once she is my wife."

"That 'once' I see by your good father's speed will come on very slowly," King Leontes said. "I am sorry, very sorry, you have displeased him and ignored your duty to obey him, and I am as sorry that your choice to be your wife is not as rich in birth as she is in beauty. If she were, then you might very well enjoy her."

Prince Florizel said to Perdita, "Dear, look up and cheer up. Although Lady Fortune, who is clearly an enemy to us, should chase us with my father, she has no power at all to change our love for each other."

He then said to King Leontes, “I beg you, sir, remember when you were as young as I am now. Remember the love that you felt then, and step forth and be my advocate. At your request, my father will grant precious things as if they were trifles.”

“If he would do so,” King Leontes said, “I would beg to be given your precious woman here, whom he considers to be only a trifle.”

“Sir, my liege,” Paulina said, “your eye has too much youth in it. Not a month before your Queen died, she was worthier of such gazes of admiration than the woman you look on now.”

“I was thinking of my late Queen even as I gazed at this woman,” King Leontes replied.

He said to Prince Florizel, “But I have not yet answered your petition. I will do that now. I will go to your father. As long as your honor is not overthrown by your desires — as long as you do not have premarital sex with this woman — I am a friend to your desires and to you. I now go to your father as your advocate; therefore, follow me and see what progress I make as your advocate. Come, my good lord.”

— 5.2 —

Autolycus and a gentleman talked together in front of King Leontes’ palace.

Autolycus asked the gentleman, “Please tell me, sir, if you were present at this narration of events.”

“I was present at the opening of the old shepherd’s bundle, and I heard the old shepherd tell the manner of how he found it. After a period of amazedness, we were all ordered out of the chamber. One more thing I thought I heard the shepherd say is that he found the child.”

“I would very gladly know what else happened,” Autolycus said.

“I can give you only an incomplete account of what happened,” the gentleman replied, “but the changes I perceived in King Leontes and Camillo were exclamation marks of admiration. They seemed almost, with staring at one another, to tear the lids of their eyes — it was as if their eyes were starting out of their heads. Speech was in their dumbness, and language in their very gestures; they looked as if they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed. A notable passion of wonder appeared in them, but the wisest beholder, who knew no more than what he saw, could not say if the meaning were joy or sorrow, but it had to be one or the other to an extreme degree. They were either very happy or filled with much sorrow.”

Another gentleman arrived, and the first gentleman said, “Here comes a gentleman who perhaps knows more than I know.”

He asked the newly arrived gentleman, “What is the news, Rogero?”

Rogero replied, “We can see nothing but bonfires everywhere in celebration of the news: The oracle is fulfilled because the King’s daughter has been found. Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers will not be able to express it.”

A third gentleman arrived, and Rogero said, “Here comes the Lady Paulina’s steward; he can tell you more.”

Rogero said to the third gentleman, “How goes it now, sir? This news that is called true is so like an old tale that the truth of it is in strong suspicion. Has the King truly found his heir?”

“That is very true,” the third gentleman said, “if truth ever

were made pregnant — filled out — by circumstantial evidence. That which you hear you'll swear you see because there is such consistency in the evidence. The mantle of Queen Hermione's, her jewel on the mantle's neck, the letters of Antigonus found with it that are known to be in his handwriting, the majesty of the daughter in her resemblance to her mother, the quality of nobleness that her nature shows above her upbringing, and many other evidences proclaim Perdita with all certainty to be the King's daughter. Did you see the meeting of the two Kings: Leontes and Polixenes?"

Rogero replied, "No."

"Then you have lost a sight, which needed to be seen, as speaking is not sufficient to convey it. At the two Kings' meeting, you might have beheld one joy crown another, so and in such manner that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears. The Kings cast up their eyes and held up their hands, and their countenances were so distorted by their emotion that the two Kings had to be distinguished by their clothing rather than by their faces. Our King, who was ready to leap out of his skin because of his joy at finding his daughter, as if that joy had now become a loss, cried, 'Oh, your mother, your mother!' Then he asked the King of Bohemia for forgiveness, then he embraced his son-in-law, and then again he vehemently embraced his daughter. Next he thanked the old shepherd, who stood by like a weather-bitten conduit of many Kings' reigns — the old shepherd looked like a gargoye from whose mouth rainwater pours. I never heard of such another encounter, which lames any report that tries to follow it and undoes any description that tries to describe it."

"Can you tell me, please, what became of Antigonus, who carried the child away from here?" Rogero asked.

“That is like an old tale still, which will have content to relate, although everyone has stopped believing the tale and no one is listening to it. Antigonus was torn to pieces by a bear. The shepherd’s son witnessed this. He has not only his innocence and guilelessness, of which he seems to have much, to justify him, but he also has a handkerchief and rings that Paulina recognized as belonging to Antigonus.”

The first gentleman asked, “What became of Antigonus’ ship and his followers?”

“They were shipwrecked at the same instant of their master’s death and in the view of the old shepherd’s son so that all the people who helped to expose the child were lost at the moment when it was found. But a noble combat between joy and sorrow was fought in Paulina! She had one eye declined because her husband has been confirmed to be dead, and the other eye elevated because the oracle has been fulfilled; she wept with one eye and laughed with the other. Paulina lifted Princess Perdita from the earth, and so locked her in her hug that it was as if she wanted to pin her to her heart so that she might never again be in danger of being lost.”

The first gentleman said, “The dignity and excellence of this scene were worth the audience of Kings and Princes; for by such was it acted.”

The third gentleman said, “One of the prettiest touches of all was some angling that caught the water — my tears — although not the fish of my eyes. During the telling of the Queen’s death, with the manner how she came to it bravely confessed and lamented by King Leontes, his daughter, who paid close attention, was wounded. She made one sign of dolor after another, and with a sign of mourning she — I dare say — bled tears. I am sure that my own heart wept blood. Whoever was most marble there changed color; even those who were the most hard-hearted melted. Some

fainted, and all sorrowed. If everyone in the world could have seen it, the woe would have been universal.”

“Have they returned to the court?” the first gentleman asked.

“No,” the third gentleman replied. “The Princess heard about her mother’s statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina. The statue is a masterpiece many years in the making and has been just now completed by that talented Italian master Julio Romano, who, if he had eternity and could put breath into his work, would take away from Nature her job of creating living human beings, so perfectly is he her imitator. He has made his statue so closely resemble Hermione that they say a person would speak to the statue and wait in expectation of an answer. They have eagerly gone to see the statue, and there they intend to dine.”

The second gentleman said, “I thought that Paulina had some great matter going on there because she has privately twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that remote house. Shall we go there and add our company to the rejoicing?”

The first gentleman said, “Who would be anywhere else if he had the benefit of access? With every wink of an eye some new grace will be born. Our absence makes us unthrifty to our knowledge — we are wasting an opportunity to add to our knowledge. Let’s go.”

The gentlemen departed.

Alone, Autolycus said, “Now, if I did not have a dash of my former life in me, good things would drop on my head. I brought the old shepherd and his son aboard the Prince’s ship, and I told him that I had heard them talk about a bundle and I know not what. Unfortunately, the shepherd’s daughter, as the Prince then thought her to be, although he

was overly fond of her, began to be very seasick, and the Prince was almost as seasick, and so the solution of this mystery remained undiscovered. But it is all one to me. Even if I had been the finder out of this secret, it would not have been appreciated because of my many criminal actions.”

The old shepherd and Clown walked toward Autolycus. They were dressed in the clothing of gentlemen.

Autolycus said, “Here come those I have done good to against my will; they are already appearing in the blossoms of their good fortune.”

“Come, boy,” the old shepherd said. “I am past fathering more children, but your sons and daughters will be all gentlemen born.”

This was not quite accurate — daughters cannot be gentlemen. In addition, a gentleman born has to have had three generations of nobility on both sides — the paternal and the maternal. The old shepherd’s grandchildren — Clown’s children — would most likely have three generations only on the paternal side.

Clown said to Autolycus, “You are well met, sir. You declined to fight with me the other day because I was not a gentleman born. Do you see these clothes? Say to me that you do not see them and that you still think that I am not a gentleman born. You had best say that these robes are not gentlemen born. Give me the lie, do, and try whether I am not now a gentleman born. As a gentleman, I must fight anyone who says that I am lying and that I am not a gentleman.”

“I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born,” Autolycus replied.

“Yes, and I have been a gentleman born for these last four

hours,” Clown said.

“And so have I, boy,” the old shepherd said.

“So you have, but I was a gentleman born before my father because the King’s son took me by the hand, and called me brother first,” Clown said, “and then the two Kings called my father brother; and then the Prince my brother and the Princess my sister called my father, father; and so we wept, and those were the first gentleman-like tears that ever we shed.”

“We may live, son, to shed many more.”

“Yes, or else it would be hard luck, being in so preposterous estate as we are.”

Clown meant that they were in a *prosperous* state, but “preposterous” seems more apt.

“I humbly ask you, sir,” Autolycus said, “to pardon all the faults I have committed to your worship and to give a good report about me to the Prince my master.”

“Please do, son,” the old shepherd said. “We must be gentle now that we are gentlemen.”

The old shepherd’s notion of gentlemen was that they are generous.

“Will you amend your life?” Clown asked Autolycus.

“Yes, if your worship wants me to.”

“Give me your hand,” Clown said. “I will swear to the Prince that you are as honest and true a fellow as any fellow is in Bohemia.”

“You may say it, but do not swear it,” the old shepherd said.

“Not swear it, now I am a gentleman?” Clown said. “Let peasants and farmers say it, I’ll swear it.”

“Suppose that you swear to something that is false, son?”

“Even if it is false, a true gentleman may swear it on behalf of his friend,” Clown replied.

He said to Autolycus, “I’ll swear to the Prince that you are a brave fellow and good with weapons and that you will not be drunk; but I know that you are not a brave fellow and are not good with weapons and that you will be drunk. Nevertheless, I’ll swear it, and I wish that you were a brave fellow and good with weapons.”

“I will try to be one to the best of my ability,” Autolycus said.

“Yes, by any means prove that you are a brave fellow,” Clown said. “If I do not wonder how you can dare to be drunk when you are not a brave fellow, then do not trust me. Listen! King Polixenes and King Leontes, and the Prince and the Princess, our kindred, are going to see the Queen’s image. Come and follow us — we’ll be your good advocates.”

— 5.3 —

In the chapel of Paulina’s house were King Leontes, King Polixenes, Prince Florizel, Princess Paulina, some lords, and some attendants.

King Leontes said, “Oh, dignified and good Paulina, I have received great comfort from you!”

“Sovereign sir, I have always meant well even if sometimes I have not done well. All my services you have paid for in full, but you are more than gracious when, with your crowned brother — King Polixenes — and these your engaged heirs — Prince Florizel and Princess Perdita — of

your Kingdoms, you visit my poor house. This is an honor that I will never be able to repay you.”

“Oh, Paulina,” King Leontes said, “we are giving you the trouble of hosting us, but we came to see the statue of our Queen. We have passed through your art gallery, which has many notable artworks, but we have not seen the artwork that my daughter came to look upon: the statue of her mother.”

Paulina replied, “As she lived peerless, so her dead likeness, I do well believe, excels whatever yet you looked upon or the hand of man has done; therefore, I keep it lonely, apart from the other artworks. But here it is, in my chapel. Prepare to see life as closely imitated as ever still sleep has imitated death. Look at it, and say it is well created.”

Paulina drew a curtain and revealed the artwork. All were silent as they looked at the statue of Hermione.

Paulina said, “I like your silence; it very much shows your wonder. However, you should speak. First, you, my liege, don’t you think that it comes very near to life?”

King Leontes said, “This is Hermione’s natural posture! Criticize me, dear stone, so that I may say indeed you are Hermione. Or rather, you are she in that you are not criticizing me because Hermione was as tender and gentle as infancy and grace. But, Paulina, Hermione was not as wrinkled as this statue is. She was not as old as this statue seems to be.”

King Polixenes said, “Not as old by many years.”

“This reveals the excellence of the sculptor,” Paulina said. “He has sculpted Hermione as if sixteen years had passed. He has sculpted her as she would be if she were still alive today.”

“The statue looks as she would look now if she were still alive,” King Leontes said. “She would have added much to the quality of my life, and my soul is pierced because she is not alive. Oh, in life she stood like this statue. She had such life of majesty, warm life — but the statue coldly stands — when I first wooed her! I am ashamed. Doesn’t the stone rebuke me for being more stone — in my heart — than it? Oh, royal sculptural masterpiece, there’s magic in your majesty, which has conjured me to remember and has taken the ability to move from your daughter, Perdita, who is standing as still as stone, like you.”

Perdita said, “Give me permission — and do not say that it is superstition — to kneel before this statue and implore her blessing.”

She said to the statue, “Lady, dear Queen, whose life ended when my life had just began, give me that hand of yours to kiss.”

“Be patient!” Paulina said. “Do not touch the statue. It has been newly set on the pedestal and newly painted — the paint is not dry.”

Camillo said to King Leontes, “My lord, your sorrow was too sorely laid on you. The winds of sixteen winters cannot blow away your sorrow, and the Suns of sixteen summers cannot dry up your sorrow. Scarcely any joys have lasted that long, and all other sorrows have killed and ended themselves before that length of time.”

“My dear brother,” King Polixenes said to King Leontes, “let me, who was a cause of this, have permission to take off so much grief from you as I will bear myself. Let me share your sorrow and so relieve you of a part of it.”

“Indeed, my lord,” Paulina said to King Leontes, “if I had thought the sight of my poor image of Hermione would have so affected you — for the stone sculpture is mine — I

would not have showed it to you.”

She moved to draw the curtain shut.

King Leontes said, “Do not draw the curtain.”

“You shall not look any longer at the statue,” Paulina said, “lest your imagination make you think that the statue moves.”

“Let it be so, let it happen,” King Leontes said. “May I die if I don’t already think that —”

He was going to say “the statue moves,” but instead he asked, “— who was the sculptor who created this?”

He then asked King Polixenes, “Look at it, my lord. Wouldn’t you say that the statue breathes — and that those veins do truly carry blood?”

“The statue is masterly created,” King Polixenes said. “Life truly seems warm upon her lips.”

King Leontes said, “The way that the eyes are set seem to make them move. Art is mocking us by making us think that art is life.”

“I’ll draw the curtain,” Paulina said. “My lord is almost so far transported that he’ll soon think that the statue is alive.”

“Sweet Paulina, make me think that for the next twenty years!” King Leontes said. “No sane senses of the world can match the pleasure of the madness of thinking that this statue is alive. Let the curtain alone.”

“I am sorry, sir, that I have thus far afflicted you, but I could afflict you farther,” Paulina said.

“Do that, Paulina,” King Leontes said, “because this affliction has a taste as sweet as any heart-warming drink. Still, I think, breath is coming from her. What fine chisel

could ever cut breath? Let no man mock me, for I will kiss her.”

“My good lord, don’t kiss the statue,” Paulina said. “The ruddiness upon her lips is wet paint. You’ll mar the statue if you kiss it and stain your own lips with oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain?”

“No,” King Leontes said. “Do not draw the curtain for the next twenty years.”

“I could stand here for that long and look at this statue,” Perdita said.

Paulina said, “Either stop and immediately leave this chapel, or prepare yourself to experience more amazement. If you can behold it, I’ll make the statue truly move, descend from the pedestal, and take you by the hand; but then you’ll think — which I protest is not true — that I am assisted by wicked powers.”

King Leontes said, “What you can make her do, I will be happy to see. What you can make her speak, I will be happy to hear. It is as easy to make her speak as move.”

“It is required that you awaken your faith,” Paulina said. “Everyone stand still, and let’s go on. Anyone who thinks that what I am about to do is unlawful business can depart.”

“Proceed,” King Leontes said. “No foot shall stir away from here.”

Paulina said, “Music, wake her; begin to play!”

Music started to play.

Paulina said to the statue, “It is time; descend.”

The statue, of course, did not move.

“Be stone no more.”

The statue, of course, did not move.

“Approach.”

The statue, of course, did not move.

“Strike all who look upon you with marvel and wonder.”

The statue, of course, did not move.

“Come, and I’ll fill your grave up.”

The statue, of course, did not move.

“Move, and come here. Bequeath to death your numbness, because dear life redeems you from death.”

The statue moved.

Paulina said, “You can see that she moves.”

The living Hermione came down from the pedestal and went to King Leontes and held out her hand to him.

Paulina said to King Leontes, “Do not be startled. Her actions shall be as holy as you hear my spell is lawful. I am not practicing black magic. Do not shun her until you see her die again because if you shun her then you kill her twice. Do not hold back. Present your hand to her. When she was young, you wooed her; in old age is she now to become the suitor?”

King Leontes held her hand and said, “Oh, she’s warm! If this is magic, let it be an art as lawful as eating.”

King Polixenes said, “Hermione is embracing him.”

Camillo said, “She is hanging on his neck. If she is alive, let her speak, too.”

“Yes,” King Polixenes said, “and tell us where she has been living — or how you stole her from the Land of the Dead.”

“That she is alive,” Paulina said, “you would scoff at if it were merely told to you as in an old tale, but you can see that she is alive, although she has not yet spoken. Wait a little while longer.”

She said to Perdita, “It is your time to intervene, please, fair madam. Kneel and ask for your mother’s blessing.”

She said to Hermione, “Turn, good lady; our Perdita is found.”

Hermione said, “You gods, look down and from your sacred vials pour your blessings upon my daughter’s head! Tell me, my own daughter, where have you been preserved? Where have you lived? How did you come to your father’s court? You shall hear that I, learning from Paulina that the oracle gave hope that you were still alive, have preserved myself so I could see you again.”

“There’s time enough for telling our stories,” Paulina said. “Others may at this time interrupt your joy as they tell their own parts of the story. Go together, all you precious winners, and share your exultation with everyone. I, an old turtledove, will fly to some withered bough and there until I am dead I will lament my mate, who is dead and will never again be found.”

“Be at peace, Paulina!” King Leontes said. “You should take a husband on my recommendation, as I have taken a wife on your recommendation. This is an agreement that was made between us by vows. You have found my wife, but how you found her is a question to be answered because I saw her, as I thought, dead, and I have in vain said many prayers upon her grave.

“I’ll not seek far — as for him, I partly know his mind — to find you an honorable husband.”

He then said, “Come, Camillo, and take Paulina by the

hand. Her worth and honesty are very well known and here vouched for by Polixenes and me, a pair of Kings.

“Let’s go from this place.”

He then said to Hermione, who was uncertain how to act with King Polixenes, “What! Look upon my brother King. I beg both your pardons that ever I put between your holy and chaste looks my ill suspicion.

“This is Prince Florizel, your future son-in-law, and son of King Polixenes. Prince Florizel, as directed by the Heavens, is engaged to your daughter.”

He then said, “Good Paulina, lead us away from here to some place where we may leisurely learn from each one which part he or she performed in this wide gap of time since first my wife and I were separated. Lead us hastily away.”

APPENDIX A: BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

KING RICHARD I: 1189-1199

He was also known as Richard the Lionheart because of his military prowess as a leader and soldier. He was a Christian commander in the Third Crusade. As King, he spent little time in England. Much of his time was spent defending his lands in France. He also spent time in captivity.

KING JOHN: 1199-1216

He was also known as John Lackland because he lost the Duchy of Normandy and most of his lands in France. In 1215, he signed the Magna Carta. King John is a bad king in Robin Hood stories.

KING HENRY III: 1216-1272

Son of King John, he reigned for 56 years. At the beginning of his reign, much of England was controlled by the French Prince Louis (later King Louis VIII), but at the end of his reign, England was controlled by the King of England.

KING EDWARD I: 1272-1307

Edward Longshanks fought and defeated the Welsh chieftains, and he made his eldest son the Prince of Wales. He won victories against the Scots, and he brought the coronation stone from Scone to Westminster.

KING EDWARD II: 1307-deposed 1327

At the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the Scots defeated his army. His wife and her lover, Mortimer, deposed him. According to legend, he was murdered in Berkeley Castle by means of a red-hot poker thrust up his anus.

KING EDWARD III: 1327-1377

Son of King Edward II, he reigned for a long time — 50 years. Because he wanted to conquer Scotland and France, he started the Hundred Years War in 1338. King Edward III and his eldest son, Edward the Black Prince, won important victories against the French in the Battle of Crécy (1346) and the Battle of Poitiers (1356).

One of King Edward III's sons was John of Gaunt, first Duke of Lancaster.

Another of King Edward III's sons was Edmund of Langley, first Duke of York.

During his reign, the Black Death — the bubonic plague — struck in 1348-1350 and killed half of England's population.

KING RICHARD II: 1377-deposed 1399

King Richard II was the son of Edward the Black Prince. In 1381, Wat Tyler led the Peasants Revolt, which was suppressed. King Richard II sent Henry, Duke of Lancaster, into exile and seized Henry's estates, but in 1399 Henry, Duke of Lancaster, returned from exile and deposed King Richard II, thereby becoming King Henry IV. In 1400, King Richard II was murdered in Pontefract Castle, which is also known as Pomfret Castle.

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

KING HENRY IV: 1399-1413

Henry, Duke of Lancaster, was the son of John of Gaunt, who was the third son of King Edward III. He was born at Bolingbroke Castle and so was also known as Henry of Bolingbroke. Returning from exile in France to reclaim his estates, he deposed King Richard II. He spent the 13 years of his reign putting down rebellions and defending himself against those who would assassinate or depose him. The

Welshman Owen Glendower and the English Percy family were among those who fought against him. King Henry IV died at the age of 45.

KING HENRY V: 1413-1422

The son of King Henry IV, King Henry V renewed the war with France. He and his army defeated the French at the Battle of Agincourt (1415) despite being heavily outnumbered. He married Catherine of Valoise, the daughter of the French King, but he died before becoming King of France. He left behind a 10-month-old son, who became King Henry VI.

KING HENRY VI: 1422-deposed 1461; briefly returned to the throne in 1470-1471

The Hundred Years War ended in 1453; the English lost all land in France except for Calais, a port city. After King Henry VI suffered an attack of mental illness in 1454, Richard, third Duke of York and the father of King Henry IV and King Richard III, was made Protector of the Realm. England suffered civil war after the House of York challenged King Henry VI's right to be King of England. In 1470, King Henry VI was briefly restored to the English throne. In 1471, he was murdered in the Tower of London. A short time previously, his son, Edward, Prince of Wales, had been killed at the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471; this was the final battle in the Wars of the Roses. The Yorkists decisively defeated the Lancastrians.

King Henry VI founded both Eton College and King's College, Cambridge.

WARS OF THE ROSES

From 1455-1487, the Yorkists and the Lancastrians fought for power in England in the famous Wars of the Roses. The emblem of the York family was a white rose, and the

emblem of the Lancaster family was a red rose. The Yorkists and the Lancastrians were descended from King Edward III.

HOUSE OF YORK

KING EDWARD IV: 1461-1483 (King Henry VI briefly returned to the throne in 1470-1471)

Son of Richard, third Duke of York, he charged his brother George, Duke of Clarence, with treason and had him murdered in 1478. After dying suddenly, he left behind two sons aged 12 and 9, and five daughters.

His surviving two brothers in Shakespeare's play *Richard III* are these: 1) George, Duke of Clarence. Clarence is the second-oldest brother; and 2) Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and afterwards King Richard III. Gloucester is the youngest surviving brother.

William Caxton established the first printing press in Westminster during King Edward IV's reign.

KING EDWARD V: 1483-1483

The eldest son of King Edward IV, he reigned for only two months, the shortest-lived monarch in English history. He was 13 years old. He and his younger brother, Richard, were murdered in the Tower of London. According to Shakespeare's play, their uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who became King Richard III, was responsible for their murders.

KING RICHARD III: 1483-1485

Brother of King Edward IV, Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, declared the two Princes in the Tower of London — King Edward V and Richard, Duke of York — illegitimate and made himself King Richard III. In 1485, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, a descendant of John of

Gaunt, who was the father of King Henry IV, defeated King Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field in Leicestershire. King Richard III died in that battle.

King Richard III's father was Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York. His mother was Cecily Neville, Duchess of York.

King Richard III's death in the Battle of Bosworth Field is regarded as marking the end of the Middle Ages in England.

A NOTE ON THE PLANTAGENETS

The first Plantagenet King was King Henry II (1154-1189). From 1154 until 1485, when King Richard III died, all English Kings were Plantagenets. Both the Lancaster family and the York family were Plantagenets.

Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, was the founder of the House of Plantagenet. Geoffrey's son, Henry Curtmantle, became King Henry II of England, thereby founding the Plantagenet dynasty. Geoffrey wore a sprig of broom, a flowering shrub, as a badge; the Latin name for broom is *planta genista*, and from it the name "Plantagenet" arose.

The Plantagenet dynasty can be divided into three parts:

1154-1216: The Angevins. The Angevin Kings were Henry II, Richard I (Richard the Lionheart), and John I.

1216-1399: The Plantagenets. These Kings ranged from King Henry III to King Richard II.

1399-1485: The Houses of Lancaster and of York. These Kings ranged from King Henry IV to King Richard III.

BEGINNING OF THE TUDOR DYNASTY

KING HENRY VII: 1485-1509

When King Richard III fell at the Battle of Bosworth, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, became King Henry VII. A Lancastrian, he married Elizabeth of York — young Elizabeth of York in *Richard III* — and united the two warring houses, York and Lancaster, thus ending the Wars of the Roses. One of his grandfathers was Sir Owen Tudor, who married Catherine of Valoise, widow of King Henry V.

KING HENRY VIII: 1509-1547

King Henry VIII had six wives. These are their fates: “Divorced, Beheaded, Died, Divorced, Beheaded, Survived.” He divorced his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. Because of this, England divorced itself from the Catholic Church, and King Henry VIII became the head of the Church of England. King Henry VIII had one son and two daughters, all of whom became rulers of England: Edward, daughter of Jane Seymour; Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon; and Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn.

KING EDWARD VI: 1547-1553

The son of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour, King Edward VI succeeded his father at the age of nine; a Council of Regency with his uncle, Duke of Somerset, styled Protector, ruled the government.

During King Edward VI’s reign, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer wrote the 1549 Book of Common Prayer.

When King Edward VI died, Lady Jane Grey was proclaimed Queen, but she ruled for only nine days before being executed in 1554, aged 17. Mary, daughter of Catherine of Aragon, became Queen. She was Catholic, thus the attempt to make Lady Jane Grey, a Protestant, Queen.

QUEEN MARY I (BLOODY MARY) 1553-1558

Queen Mary I attempted to make England a Catholic nation again. Some Protestant bishops, including Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, were burnt at the stake, and other violence broke out, resulting in her being known as Bloody Mary.

QUEEN ELIZABETH I: 1558-1603

The daughter of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Queen Elizabeth I was a popular Queen. In 1588, the English navy decisively defeated the Spanish Armada. England had many notable playwrights and poets, including William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, during her reign. She never married and had no children.

KING JAMES I OF ENGLAND: A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF STUART

KING JAMES I OF ENGLAND AND VI OF SCOTLAND: 1603-1625

King James I of England was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Lord Darnley. In 1605 Guy Fawkes and his Catholic co-conspirators were captured before they could blow up the Houses of Parliament; this was known as the Gunpowder Plot.

In 1611, during King James I's reign, the Authorized Version of the Bible (the King James Version) was completed.

Also during King James I's reign, in 1620 the Pilgrims sailed for America in their ship *The Mayflower*.

A NOTE ON SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare lived under two monarchs: Queen Elizabeth I and King James I.

APPENDIX B: SOME BOOKS BY DAVID BRUCE

Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature

Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings

Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text

Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: Retellings

Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose

The Famous Victories of Henry V: A Retelling

From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica

George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: A Retelling

The History of King Leir: A Retelling

Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose

Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose

*Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of
Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica*

John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Retelling

John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Retelling

King Edward III: A Retelling

Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Retelling

Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling

*The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic
Poems*

Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose

*William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in
Prose*

William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 38 Plays: Retellings in Prose

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1:
A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2:
A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1:
A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2:
A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3:
A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: A
Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: A Retelling
in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's As You Like It: A Retelling in
Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: A Retelling
in Prose*

William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's King John: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose

*William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in
Prose*

William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Retelling in Prose

*William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Retelling
in Prose*

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: A

Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Richard II: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Richard III: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: A

Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: A Retelling in Prose

Children's Biography

Nadia Comaneci: Perfect Ten

Personal Finance

How to Manage Your Money: A Guide for the Non-Rich

Anecdote Collections

250 Anecdotes About Opera

250 Anecdotes About Religion

250 Anecdotes About Religion: Volume 2

250 Music Anecdotes

Be a Work of Art: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

The Coolest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in the Arts: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes

The Coolest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes

Create, Then Take a Break: 250 Anecdotes

Don't Fear the Reaper: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Books, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Dance: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 4: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 5: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Families, Volume 6: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Music, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Neighborhoods: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Relationships: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Sports, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Television and Radio: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People in Theater: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes

The Funniest People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 1: 250 Anecdotes

The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

Maximum Cool: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Religion: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes

The Most Interesting People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes

Reality is Fabulous: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

Resist Psychic Death: 250 Anecdotes

Seize the Day: 250 Anecdotes and Stories

Previously Published Under a Pseudonym

Candide's Two Girlfriends

The Erotic Adventures of Candide

Honey Badger Goes to Hell — and Heaven

I Want to Die — Or Fight Back

Free Discussion Guide Series

Dante's Inferno: A Discussion Guide

Dante's Paradise: A Discussion Guide

Dante's Purgatory: A Discussion Guide

Forrest Carter's The Education of Little Tree: A Discussion Guide

Homer's Iliad: A Discussion Guide

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Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: A Discussion Guide

Jerry Spinelli's Maniac Magee: A Discussion Guide

Jerry Spinelli's Stargirl: A Discussion Guide

Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal": A Discussion Guide

Lloyd Alexander's The Black Cauldron: A Discussion Guide

Lloyd Alexander's The Book of Three: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Discussion Guide

Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper: A Discussion Guide

Nancy Garden's Annie on My Mind: A Discussion Guide

Nicholas Sparks' A Walk to Remember: A Discussion Guide

Virgil's Aeneid: A Discussion Guide

Virgil's "The Fall of Troy": A Discussion Guide

Voltaire's Candide: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Discussion Guide

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Discussion Guide

William Sleator's Oddballs: A Discussion Guide

APPENDIX C: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine's brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka "The Joker," decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn't been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don't often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for "sounds like" and "two words," then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn't let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor's degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a master's degree in English and a master's degree in Philosophy.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and

veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.